

# MF Behind the Scenes

Rick Wood, Managing Editor



## Strategic Giving—Appearances Can Be Deceiving

Every day our mailbox is full of them—appeals for financial support from various ministries and organizations each hoping to convince us that their ministry is the one that is truly worthy of our support. The glossy color brochures and magazines they send us offer compelling visual evidence of the desperate needs that they are seeking to meet. Our hearts break as we see the needs and we feel obligated that we should do something.

As members of our local church we receive appeals there too. Missionaries from our church are needing supporters to launch out into the mission field. The youth group needs funds for a short-term trip to Mexico. It can be overwhelming.

With all of the appeals that we receive each day, how do we decide which ministry is most strategic—with the greatest possible impact on the expansion of God's Kingdom around the world? In making our giving decisions we may be tempted to respond out of guilt or because of personal pressure rather than out of a real vision for the ministry or as a result of a well-informed, well-thought-out decision. What can we do to make sure we are giving wisely?

In this issue, starting on page 10, we have done our best to provide you with some sound guidelines for making wise and strategic giving decisions. When it comes to communicating the

Gospel cross-culturally, what may look like a good missions investment may actually accomplish the opposite of what we intended. The farther we are from the destination of the funds and the people who receive them, the harder it is to accurately evaluate the impact this money is having.

Here in the pages of *Mission Frontiers* we have pointed out many times that dependence on Western funds by pastors and evangelists on the mission field can have a devastating impact on church growth. It can cripple the mission-established churches from growing and naturally reproducing the way we would like them to because the abundance of outside funds has robbed the local people of the initiative to support their own outreach. Foreign funds can never be an adequate substitute for the devoted, passionate involvement of local people using locally developed resources to do church planting in their area. See the article by Glenn Schwartz on page 20 for more on this subject.

## MF in Transition

For the last four years I have had the tremendous privilege and honor of working with two exceptionally talented colleagues here at *Mission Frontiers*. Ian Downs and Russ Shubin joined me here in 1997 and have been a major force in moving *MF* forward in its quality and impact on missions thinking.

With our combined efforts *MF* improved graphically and with more original well-edited articles in each issue. Many have commented on the improved quality. *Mission Frontiers* was even awarded a Certificate of Merit from the Evangelical Press Association in the Most Improved Publication category in 1999. The impact of their efforts has been clearly seen and felt through the pages of *Mission Frontiers* and on the Internet.

It was also during this time that the *Mission Frontiers* website at [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org) was established. It has been recognized as one of the best mission sites on the Internet with over 1,000 pages of articles covering 15 years and dozens of topics. It is a rich history of the global efforts to reach the unreached peoples. The site also includes hundreds of links to mission, Christian and world news. Ian has done a marvelous job with putting each issue on the Web after we go to press and keeping things organized. Check out the site and see all that it has to offer. The last issue is now available in Adobe PDF format for easy download.

As of July 31, 2001, Russ and Ian have completed their work with *Mission Frontiers* and have moved on to other endeavors. Russ has taken a position with the Salem Communications Corporation, which owns 79 Christian and family-values radio stations. Ian is going to go full-time with his schooling to complete his degree. While we will certainly miss their continued contributions, we send them off with our sincere thanks for a job well done and our prayers for God's richest blessings to be revealed in their lives as He continues to lead them according to His will.

Even with their departure we will do our best to maintain the quality that you have come to expect from *Mission Frontiers*, but some cutbacks are inevitable since this departure will reduce our editorial staff from three to one. Please pray for God's provision as we attempt to move forward with reduced staffing.

For His glory,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Rick".

Please continue to remember our need for your financial support by sending in a gift of \$18 or more. We'd be grateful if you could take a moment now to make out your check to *Mission Frontiers* and return it in the reply envelope provided. Thank you! —Rick