

Dr. J. Russell Turney

LEAVE A LEGACY

Increasing Missionary Longevity

FOREWORD
Dr. Greg Mundis



Leave a Legacy

Increasing Missionary Longevity

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Leave a Legacy is the second volume in our new APTS Press Monograph Series. This series, in keeping with the core values of the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, our parent organization, is to provide a forum for publishing theses and dissertations reflecting the issues facing the church in the Asia Pacific and Pacific Oceania regions of the world.

The first volume, *Theology in Context: A Case Study in the Philippines*, by Dr. Dave Johnson, was published in January of this year. More volumes, both by Asian scholars and expatriates working in Asia, are anticipated as the Lord leads.

For further information on this series and other information about APTS Press, please contact us through the APTS website, www.pts.edu.

Thank you,

The Publisher

FOREWORD

I am privileged to recommend this book by Russ Turney, who has wonderfully served the Assemblies of God over several decades. His experiences, expertise, and educational contribution are evidenced in this writing, and I know it will be a blessing to the body of Christ and particularly to the missionary family.

Russ recognizes from Scripture the conflicts that can develop among children of the Kingdom (i.e. believers) and offers sound advice for biblical resolution. He also offers modern educational methodologies and helps that are available to alleviate and resolve conflict, thus enabling missionaries to remain on the field for the long haul.

I highly recommend this for your reading and encourage you to implement its principles in your life and ministry.

Dr. Greg Mundis Executive Director
Assemblies of God World Missions (USA)

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

“Today we will hear from one of God's heroes who gave up everything to follow Him. . . .” Missionaries have heard this or similar statements repeatedly in church services when they return in the U.S., and many are uncomfortable with them. Often placed on a pedestal, those who serve in other countries know well their own humanity and need for daily surrender. As a youth more than fifty years ago, I had a deep respect and appreciation for those serving in distant lands. When missionaries came to our church sharing their vision and telling their stories, my own spiritual growth was challenged.

My appreciation for these special servants continued to grow as we interacted with missionaries during fifteen years of pastoral and youth ministry. Our family prayed for and supported them, and on several occasions traveled to the field to work with them in outreaches and church planting events. The two churches we were privileged to pastor encouraged missions, held mission conventions, and enthusiastically helped those who were living in other cultures in fulfillment of God's call on their lives.

Later, when God called us to Asia as missionaries with the Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM), each member of our family faced his/her own challenges. We felt the impact of separation from loved ones, isolation, and occasional confusion. We encouraged our three children to see life and ministry as an adventure, and the unknown as an opportunity for the Lord to show us His greatness. They responded well and over the next ten years, as each left home to begin their own journey, we again faced all of the normal emotions of joy, anticipation, emptiness and loss, along with a recognition that God's miraculous hand was guiding our children as He had us in earlier years.

Now, after forty-five years of full time ministry with thirty of those in missions, my love and appreciation for my fellow missionaries has continued to increase immeasurably. I have seen those who finished their missionary careers with grace, joy, dignity, and with a clear sense of fulfillment. We have seen others because of health issues or situations beyond of their control, challenged to readjust their goals. Mixed in were a few who left missions for other difficult and heart breaking reasons bringing great stress to them and others around them.

The focus of this project emerged out of their struggles and our experiences. My initial desire was to research, identify, and evaluate the major reasons people who had been serving within the Asia Pacific Region left missions. This would include a

twenty-year timeframe to help provide a cross section of people, time, and countries. Two things emerged from that research. The first was a realization that not all of the information I needed was available. The files did not provide the underlying, hidden reasons people resigned, which left gaps in the research. The second was a realization that the primary focus should not be on the past, but the future. How this material might help new candidates coming into missions emerged as a strategic goal. What lessons could be learned from past mistakes that would help new personnel adjust better, serve longer, and be more effective in missions? These questions helped shape the research and focus of this project. If reading this material helps clarify some of the issues that will be faced, if it strengthens the resolve to stay focused on Jesus' plan, if it perpetuates greater effectiveness in cross-cultural ministry, if it helps those at home to better support those who are on the field, then my goal will have been achieved.

J. Russell Turney

Asia Pacific Regional Director

AGWM - U.S.A.

Springfield MO

May 2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Completing the program has been the culmination of several years of classes, research, reading, discussion, learning, writing, fulfillment, some sleepless nights, and a few stressful days. Preparing for my project to be put into book form was far more enjoyable and relaxing. Let me begin with the final product by expressing thanks to Dave Johnson, fellow missionary and newly appointed director of the APTS Press for taking the initiative of putting my dissertation into book form and keeping this phase fairly easy for me. My thanks also to Lindsay Crabtree and Frank McNelis, my editors at the APTS Press, for making me a better author.

Over the past several years as I completed the doctoral program at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS), it was a delight to learn from the excellent faculty and interact with President Yee Tham Wan. A great team serves this outstanding seminary. Judy Cagle initially and then Kay Fountain provided exceptional guidance in their role as the doctoral program director. Through Kay's suggestion, Betsy Glanville became my supervisor, and she helped keep me focused. Fellow missionaries Terry Hanna, Kim Snider and others provided encouragement, suggestions, guidance, and research, which helped me stay on track during the entire program. I must add that former APTS Academic Dean, Wonsuk Ma (now Director of Oxford Centre for Mission Studies) initially encouraged me to complete my doctoral studies. His encouragement convinced me to begin a journey which was completed with this project now in print.

The greatest thanks go to my family. Patsy has been my wife and partner in ministry for forty-six years. She experienced her own personal call to the mission field while the Lord was sharpening my vision for the Asia Pacific Region. She participated in church planting outreaches, lead children church programs, included our children in ministry, helping in a variety of capacities. Our kids joined us in ministry and were good examples for others to follow.

Now thirty years later, we continue to see the fruit of their obedience. Mark and Victoria have lived in Africa for more than twenty years training leaders and planting churches. Nathan, Lisa and their children are a part of the Asia Pacific Region, overseeing a ministry called Asia's Little Ones, which helps thousands of children on a regular basis. Rebekah, David with their children are church planters in the U.S., leading a great church, which has a strong mission emphasis. Patsy has continued

developing her own ministry, speaking at ladies retreats, sharing recipes from her cookbook, sending a by-monthly letter to ladies in our region, and encouraging missionary wives and singles in their walk with God.

Our goal is to finish well the work that God has called us to do. My prayer is for our family and fellow missionaries to keep God's plans as the highest priority. It is a privilege to work with a great team of almost four hundred fellow missionaries in the Asia Pacific Region and twenty seven hundred within the Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) U.S.A. AGWM is committed to a sending out healthy, effective mission personnel who value working with National Churches and at the same time give priority to unreached and forgotten places where the gospel has not been heard. We gladly choose to spend ourselves in the Lord's work. May the Holy Spirit work mightily as He helps guide the Church in completing this great task.

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