

POSTINGS

articles for missions mobilizers



May 2021 | Vol. 16 | Issue 5

Leading While Busy

Four church missions leaders
discuss how they do it

On a recent Zoom call, four missions leaders talked about what it means to lead global outreach as a busy lay person or when it's only a small part of your job as a pastor. Our guests were:



Gary Eberly is a non-staff pastor/elder at Brandywine Grace Church in Downingtown, PA, where his primary sphere of responsibility is providing global missions leadership. His full-time day job is working in the public sector as a real estate supervisor in Philadelphia. Gary and his wife, Laura, have four teenage/college-age children at home.



Jordan Stolhammer lives in northern Minnesota with his wife and four young children. He's missions committee

chairman at Kabekona Community Church, a small non-denominational church. Jordan also runs a sheet-metal company with his brother, and currently he serves on the transition team as his church seeks a new pastor.



Kitty Holt has been chair of the Global Outreach team at Cranston Christian Fellowship in Cranston, RI, for over

five years. Kitty also works full time in compliance for a non-profit, and runs a financial coaching business on the side, helping people learn to budget and get out of debt. She and her husband carry major care responsibilities for his elderly parents.



Tom Turley is the executive pastor of Independent Bible Church (IBC) in Martinsburg, WV. He

and his family served as missionaries in Brazil, including time as the missions pastor of a large church in Sao Paulo. Missions is just one of the many responsibilities Tom carries at this large church.

Q

Postings: Each of you is extremely busy. How do you find time to lead missions well in your church? What are some practical things you do to carve out time for this significant role?

JORDAN: You have to live a disciplined life. I do that imperfectly, but I come back to it over and over. There is so much to be done, and it's almost all good...but it's not all possible. So it's determining what is best to invest my time in. I have no hobbies left. Well, that's not quite true, but they're diminished. But what I put in their place I love even more—meeting with people, communicating with missionaries, etc. Even the time I take off, I want to use intentionally, so sometimes I read a missions book.

KITTY: I had to learn to say “no” to things. I had to drop off a board I was on, and I was a mentor in our women's program, but I just couldn't do it all. Missions is the most rewarding thing that I do and I feel like God gave me a gift to do this, so I know that I just have to “say no” to other things. I commit a couple of hours on Saturday morning and again on Monday night. I always carry a to-do list with me, and if I have any time at all, I am working at something on that list.

GARY: You do have to be willing to make some sacrifices. And like Kitty said, you kind of have to fill in the cracks. Where's the time that can be redeemed for missions planning, thinking, organizing, jumping on the phone with someone? This approach may not be as ideal as having blocks of time you can set aside to do missions, but it seems to work for me.

Having times of prayer, like prayer walks where I can hear from the Lord, helps me. As I'm walking and praying, I'm also doing a lot of dreaming and being envisioned by the Lord. I come back from those times of prayer with ideas of what I want to do to lead my church forward.

TOM: I need to remind myself to separate myself out first of all for prayer, especially prayer for our missionaries. I have a box next to my desk that holds their prayer cards. At least once or twice a week, I pick up the top cards and pray for them. And I'm thankful for our missions committee so that I don't have to do all of the missions work alone.

"Keep giving people opportunities to serve."

JORDAN STOLHAMMER



Postings: That's a good segue into the topic of how you delegate to others. What helps you find the right people and successfully delegate responsibility to them?

TOM: When I was a missions pastor in Brazil, the pastor wanted me to do something that would revolutionize our church. We found that the best place to start was in the children's ministry. The kids loved to hear missionary stories, and their teachers got excited about it. We got them reading books about missionaries. The kids' excitement was contagious, and as adults caught the missions fervor, we found more people who would help lead. So start with the kids!

JORDAN: Delegating is tough. If you want to avoid getting help, put an ad in the bulletin, and if you want to absolutely not get help, announce your need for help from the pulpit! [Laughter] Seriously, if I can show my committee the big picture and clarify the follow-through, I find that we have people who are willing to work hard and fill in the details. But you have to provide the big picture.

The [Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions](#) advises, "Don't let the missions trip die. Capitalize on it!" So when our short-term team returned from Kenya, I asked two of the women who had been part of the team if they would join the missions committee. They said yes right away.

KITTY: Weekly in our worship service, we pray for one of our global partners and include a write-up in the bulletin. It takes quite a bit of time to prepare the schedule,

reach out to the missionaries ahead of time to get the content, etc. So I recruited missions team members and *Perspectives* alumni to help. It was hard because I love communicating with the missionaries, but getting that off my plate was something I needed to do.

I also offloaded the budgeting to someone who loves math and Excel. My issue is that I like it done my way because I know my way. And I've had to accept that they aren't going to do it my way and that's okay.

GARY: I've found two challenges with delegating. First is having realistic, grace-filled expectations of people. My boss at my day job says, "No one rises to low expectations." So yes, I want to have high expectations of others because that helps them improve, but not make it about doing it my way or with perfection. Second, frankly, sometimes I just want the recognition or acclaim for myself, so delegating requires me to die to that selfish desire. I haven't always been the best example of these things, but I'm growing, I think.

Another thing is identifying roles for people rather than just delegating one task at a time. I've been able to delegate the prayer ministry to a young woman in the church who does a fantastic job in leading the prayer meetings so that has been really helpful. And I've delegated the organization and leadership of short-term trips to other people. I give it oversight but don't get down in the details.

"It's crucial to be reminded that what you do is making an eternal difference." KITTY HOLT

Q *Postings: Are you intentional in how you keep growing in missions understanding? With everything on your plate, it is easy to let learning slide. How do you get your vision reignited?*

KITTY: This is an area I do the worst in. I get so many newsletters from organizations, and I can't read them all. I volunteer as a grader for *Perspectives* just to keep in contact with the material. The presenters are always sharing new material, so I keep up that way. I read *World magazine*. I try to see if members of my team have time to listen to a webinar and then bring back pertinent info to the rest of us.

GARY: I really believe in being a continual learner, so I'm a bit of a bookworm for starters. There are so many great webinars and events that I try connect to often. I really like learning cohorts. I'm in one right now with The [Upstream Collective](#) where several of us talk through our challenges. They have tons of great resources for people like us. Finally, it's important to get out of the country and get your feet on the field to see and interact with the unreached to keep your vision alive, so I try to do that when possible.

JORDAN: I have three primary resources: (1) *Postings* by Catalyst Services. Usually I read them cover to cover since they're a manageable length, although I admit that recently I haven't always kept up. (2) [Mission Frontiers](#) magazine by Frontier Ventures. (3) [Global Missions Podcasts](#)—there are over 100 original ones on the site. I listen to them multiple times while I'm welding or doing other things that don't demand a lot of focus.

I love biographies, and I started a little missions library at the church. I've gone to a couple of missions conferences at Bethany Global University just to be around people who are passionate about missions; it revives me for another year of leadership.

TOM: My wife and I love hosting missionaries. And I call missionaries regularly and ask how to pray for them. This also keeps me abreast of what's going on all around the world—and I hear it straight from those on the front lines.

"I call missionaries regularly and ask how to pray for them. This also keeps me abreast of what's going on all around the world." **TOM TURLEY**

Q *Postings: What final advice would you have for others? What keeps you excited in your missions leadership role and helps you avoid burnout?*

GARY: Our church held a David Platt's Secret Church simulcast last Friday. Being reminded of the three billion unreached and that Jesus deserves their worship was moving. Stay close to Jesus or everything is worthless. That's the only reason for doing what we are doing.

TOM: An amazing mentor of mine was asked late in life what he wished he had done differently. He said that his only regret was that in his early years he had focused too much on "doing" rather than "being." Whatever missions looks like in your church, abide in Him and the rest will happen.

JORDAN: 1 Cor. 4:2 reminds me that it's required of a steward to be found faithful. Just be faithful and don't worry about the results. They're in God's hands. Christ made disciples, and that was his last command, so be a disciple maker. And keep giving people opportunities to serve.

KITTY: Every once in a while, I feel like quitting because I don't have the time. When I feel like that, my husband reminds me that of everything I do, missions is my favorite activity. I also have a tee-shirt that says, "Where the glorious light of Christ is not seen, sins are not forgiven and souls are not saved. This is why we share the good news." It's crucial to be reminded that what you do is making an eternal difference. Some day when we are gathered around the throne, it's going to be, "Wow! How cool that God let us do missions!"

"Identify roles for people rather than just delegating one task at a time." GARY EBERLY

Catalyst's *Postings* e-newsletter is a free, monthly publication of practical articles highlighting what churches and agencies are doing to mobilize untapped potential for global impact.

SUBSCRIBE at catalystservices.org/postings
READ past *Postings* articles at catalystservices.org/postings-gallery-of-archives