
Family Update

Micah (22) graduated from Covenant College with honors in May, Seth (21) is a senior and Andrea (19) is a sophomore at Covenant College. Audrey (16) is home schooling, but is also auditing a German class at the college. Gary continues his ministry with Mission to the World. He has been collecting data for his dissertation in the Organizational Development doctoral program at George Washington University. Phyllis is working as a nurse about 3 days a week.



Gary, Phyllis
Seth, Andrea, Audrey, Micah

Bio

Gary and Phyllis Waldecker have been missionaries since 1980. Gary has been a church planter in Chile, has served as the Regional Director of South America, and is presently the leader of a Resource Team for Latin America. Mission to the World has asked Gary to pursue studies in Education with a focus on Organizational Development to help with this task of resourcing our personnel in Latin America. Gary spends part of his time studying and part in his role as Resource Team leader. The latter involves making trips to Latin America.

Future Plans

Once Gary finishes his doctoral program—hopefully in 2006—Gary and Phyllis plan to travel around Latin America to be a help to MTW's teams. The plan is to live and work with a team for a number of months at a time (as long as the team wants up to 8 months) instead of just popping in for a weekend visit.

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MISSION
to the
WORLD

Prayer Letter from the Waldeckers

Mission: Latin America October 2005



Gonzalo. A Mexican elder
and pastoral candidate.

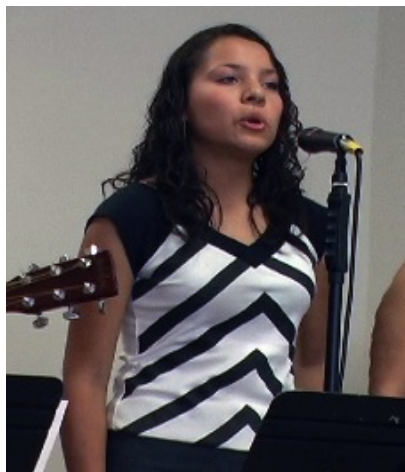
Missions and Learning: Part I

An important and often over-looked aspect of missions is the learning that goes on in the body of Christ as the gospel takes root in different cultures. It is over-looked in part because we tend to see cultural differences merely in terms of different behaviors or customs. For example, in the United States most people greet each other with a minimum of physical contact and emotional display: a nod of the head, a handshake, an occasional hug for special situations. In Latin America, on the other hand, the behaviors involve one, two or three kisses, bear hugs, pats on the back, handshakes, and plenty of verbal and emotional expressions. In the minds of many, missionaries need to learn these behaviors in order to plant a church. But the learning is not often seen as deep, challenging, growth producing or necessary except to get the job done.

The real situation, however, is more complex. These behaviors—readily visible—are reflections of less visible, deep-seated cultural values and assumptions about what is important. These values and assumptions are more fundamental in that they can help us understand the meaning of the behaviors. Cross-cultural church planters need to learn not only about the different *behaviors* of a foreign culture, but also about *why* they are important to people. All the hugs and kisses are concrete expressions of deeply held values and beliefs. The diagram below indicates this relationship between behaviors and customs on the one hand, and values

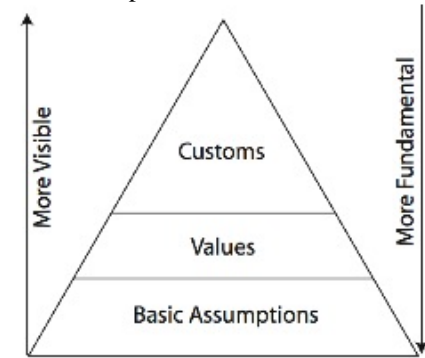
Prayer Requests

1. Pray that Gary will be able to recruit more people to help on the Latin America Resource Team.
2. Gary recently had a meeting with some MTW leaders in Mexico to plan for leadership training, which is needed all over Latin America.
3. Our support account has been slowly getting better. Please keep praying as it is not yet in great shape.
4. Pray for the data collection and analysis phase of Gary's doctoral studies. The data collection is being conducted in Latin America. Gary has made three trips for this purpose and will make two more.
5. Audrey's mission trip to the Bronx went very well. Thanks for your prayer.



Part of Worship Team
in a church started by MTW in Mexico.

and assumptions on the other.



So, for example, the cultures of Latin America tend to prioritize relationships and the enjoyment of life over efficiency. We might say they value “being” over “doing.” Our culture, on the other hand, tends to be very goal and efficiency oriented. Although all these values may be twisted by sin and made too important, it is clear that they are biblical, and reflections of God’s glory. We are commanded, for example, to subdue the earth and to work six days out of seven. We are also to enjoy God, the world and the relationships he has given us.

We all know people whose personality is more oriented either toward getting things done, or toward relating harmoniously with others. But a culture is like a raised banner that says: look what happens when a whole culture is organized around this aspect of God’s glory! Living and working in a different culture is an invitation to learn in deep ways about the aspects of God’s glory reflected in it. It is also an invitation to learn that the values of our own culture are only a partial reflection of God’s glory, and not the only or necessarily the best way to look at things. Missions is for the learning of the body of Christ. It is only together with all the saints that we can learn about the fullness of God.