
Family Update

Micah (23) 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 December 2005



Pray for the Church in Chile

Missions and Learning: Part II

In Part I of this article I said that different cultures reflect God's glory in different ways. 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. As we learn from each other, we gain greater insight into the multi-faceted wisdom and glory of God.

In this part I want to show how sin at the cultural level complicates the learning that could come through missions. The flesh against which we struggle continually (Romans 7:14ff) tempts us to depend on our strengths instead of on Christ. The Bible calls this misplaced source of strength "idolatry." To some extent our sense of worth and identity become wrapped up in the object of our trust.

Since in our culture we are good at getting things done, we are tempted as a culture to depend on these abilities and then ask the Lord to bless our efforts. We plow ahead with our planning and implementing techniques, and then sometimes remember that we're supposed to be praying about it. But somehow the urgency of prayer fades into the background.

The church in the Latin culture, on the other hand, is tempted to depend on its ability to develop relationships, maintain harmony and enjoy life, instead of depending on Christ. This

Prayer Requests

1. The Leadership Team of MTW Latin America would like to see a greater sense of unity and cooperation developing among missionaries and national leaders across the region.
2. Pray for the development of effective and contextualized leadership training models across Latin America. Gary has received requests from many places to help them with this process.
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 studies. The process of transcribing interviews has been very slow, and is holding up the next visit to the site in Latin America.



Micah, Audrey, Seth, Andrea

can lead to problems like not confronting people with the truth in order to maintain harmony, or allowing the enjoyment of life to postpone important things that need to be accomplished. Let me illustrate my point about learning by taking you to an imaginary weekly planning meeting of a church plant in Latin America, with an equal number of Latin American and US leaders.

Although they all love and appreciate one another, the LA leaders don't like the way the US leaders focus the conversation on the bare facts: who, what, where, when, how, and then on to the next point. It's a very efficiency way of talking, but it seems very superficial to the LA leaders. From the LA perspective, you can go deeper by focusing first of all on how people are feeling and by bringing in all the contextual factors that are affecting them. In fact, the LA perspective is, "If the meeting doesn't display this relational priority, I don't feel free to tell you what's really on my heart."

The US perspective is, "let's get to the point and be as efficient as possible so we can finish the meeting and have time for fellowship afterwards. Otherwise we'll never get anything done."

The US ideal is that efficiency allows time for developing relationships. The LA ideal is that developing relationships allows you to see more deeply into an issue. Both see the value of both relationships and efficiency, but they each give priority to one or the other. To the extent that this priority reflects an over-dependence on one's cultural strengths, mutual learning will be inhibited. (In Part III I will talk about what can be done about this.)