

An aerial photograph of a lush tropical forest. In the center, a small clearing contains two traditional thatched-roof huts. The surrounding forest is dense with various shades of green, including ferns and other tropical plants. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

# NEW TRIBES MISSION **NTM@work**

your connection with tribal missions

where we go  
why we go  
and how **page 16**

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## WHERE WE GO AND WHY

# 16

With 6,500 people groups in the world, how do you figure out which ones to minister in? It doesn't help a lot to decide 2,500 still need to be reached. That's still a lot more than NTM has missionaries to reach. Which people groups will hear? And why?

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## online [ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)

- < **Watch video** from the missionary team working among the Phu Thai people
- < **See a photo gallery** of the Phu Thais
- < **Find news articles** about other tribes and the NTM missionaries who are looking into serving them

## NTM@work

(ISSN 1527-9057)

### Here to serve you

**NTM@work** connects you with tribal missions and provides opportunities for increased involvement in taking the Gospel to ethnic groups who have yet to hear about Jesus.

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NEW TRIBES MISSION

# NTM@work

your connection with tribal missions



Dear Reader,

Change is scary.

There, I said it. You may have already noticed that your copy of **NTM@work** looks a little different from past issues. We've made some changes to give you more opportunities to get involved in tribal missions, and I'd like to tell you about that process.

We talked with readers over the past year and received a lot of feedback about the magazine.

We heard things like "keep the content fresh but shorter," "maintain the focus on tribal missions," "consider some different approaches," and even "don't do anything different."

Our team of writers, editors and designers took all those ideas and considered how each of them could better connect you with tribal missions.

What has resulted is the February issue in your hand. It comes with a new look and some updated features.

For example, some articles have bonus content in the online version of the magazine. You can experience videos, audio files, pictures, and additional stories on the web. Just type [www.ntm.org/magazine](http://www.ntm.org/magazine) to see this issue right now. Pretty cool.

The Connect section gives you plenty of opportunities to tune in to tribal missions through prayer, humor, tribal quotes, and even recipes that you may (or may not) want to try.

There are a few other changes in the magazine, and I encourage you to give us your feedback. Tell us what you like, and even (gulp) what you don't like.

Thanks for reading,

Macon G. Hare  
Executive Editor

# [ connect ]

**Matu was frustrated at the pounding rain.** If it didn't stop, they couldn't meet tomorrow to learn more about God. He wondered if he should use his old magic again.

Before becoming a believer, Matu was the local "rainmaker" for his Bagwido village. It was his job to make the rain come or go away. Shouldn't he try to help now?

Then Matu remembered the truth. Magic was not the answer anymore.

Looking up into the black clouds that night, he prayed, "Oh, God, our Great Creator Being. You are the one who made the rain and the clouds and the thunder and the lightening. So, please, God, I am asking in the name of Your Son Jesus, to give us a dry day tomorrow."

The morning in Papua New Guinea dawned bright and clear. Matu smiled. The true Rainmaker had answered.



NTM founder Paul Fleming 70 years ago visiting the people of Malaysia

## INDONESIA HELICOPTER FUND

Jagged mountains and swampy valleys have helped isolate tribal people in Indonesia from the Gospel. Helicopters can jump those gaps and help missionaries live among and serve unreached men and women. But helicopters are expensive to operate. By funding helicopter flights, you enable tribal people who live in remote, rugged locations to experience the abundant life that Jesus came to give.

Every \$280 funds one hour of flight time; \$8,400 is needed each month.

Find out more:  
[ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)



Missionary aircraft and pilots are key to overcoming the isolation that separates tribal people from the Gospel.

## New Missionary Vocabulary Word: k'nicy

: this word is chanted by children after having their picture taken with a digital camera.

\From Ace and Ang Glidewell\

"God, thank you that you give me the opportunity to walk on the right trail with Jesus. I am tired of life just going by without any meaning."  
— Manuel, Tarahumara tribe, Mexico

6,500 unique languages in the world.  
863 of them are in Papua New Guinea.

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A VOWEL MAKES

**Tohotong = right, correct**

**Tohotung = porcupine**

This may not mean much to you, but I was sobered by the realization that I am just one wrong vowel away from saying "Are my words a porcupine or not?" instead of "Are my words correct or not?" You know you're learning a language when you lie awake at night worrying about the substitution of a "u" for an "o" and the possible lifelong implications of being known as the foreigner whose words were a porcupine.

— Jennifer Searcy, Indonesia

Laura Aijian



connect with...



**Ministry:** Hospitality/Food Services

**Sending churches:** Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, California

I became a Christian when I was 5 years old. I grew up in a Christian home with strong examples of faith both on and off the mission field. In Junior high school I fully realized what it meant to be a Christian and re-committed my life. The message of the Gospel spoke to me and I fully felt the depth of what life is without Christ. I began to bear fruit as I got deeper into the Scriptures and began to develop more mature relationships, which lead to high accountability and growth. I became more involved in ministry, which helped me stay committed to the body of believers and active in sharing my faith.

When I was young I would listen to my grandparents speak about their missions experience and long for that calling. As I grew in spiritual maturity and faith I felt that call become real in my life. I majored in intercultural studies in college. For the last eight years I have felt the Spirit's leading in missions, but for the first five of them it was in a more short-term missions role.

I have had the opportunity to see missionaries on the field in multiple countries and my passion for seeing God glorified in this work has grown immensely.

[ntm.org/laura\\_aijian](http://ntm.org/laura_aijian)

# [ connect ]

## Sharing corn on the cob...it's all in your prespective

Situation: We are hanging around outside and it's market day. A tribal kid offers some of her half-eaten corn on the cob to my 3-year-old daughter and she takes it and begins to finish the corn, thankful that her friend has shared.

The friendly tribal kid's thoughts: "I like you and you're my friend, so I will give you the rest of my corn"

My 3-year-old daughter's thoughts: "Yippee, corn on the cob! My favorite! Do you have any more?"

My thoughts: "I better run inside and make sure I have the right antibiotics for every possible sickness and that she is up-to-date on immunizations!"

— From Jason and Nisae Williamson, Papua New Guinea, Tobo tribe

## Fighting Infanticide

Infanticide is something that the community and the church are fighting against. In their culture it isn't really a baby until someone picks it up. The babies are born onto banana leaves and as soon as someone picks the newborn up they will keep it, but if they don't want it they will allow it to die with no feelings of sadness or remorse.

— From Mike and Diane Hartman, Yanomami tribe, Brazil

**DID YOU KNOW...** there are more than **100** teaching opportunities

in NTM schools around the world?

**FIND OUT MORE:**

[ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)



## LANGUAGE LEARNING

When John and Maria Van Wormer were learning Spanish in preparation for their ministry in Mexico, the whole family left amused smiles wherever they went.

John told friends that their family ate *dust* for Thanksgiving instead of *turkey* (polvo instead of pavo).

Maria kept getting the words for leaf, eye and garlic mixed-up (oja, ojo, ajo). She told people her soup recipes included *leaves* or *eyes* when she meant to say *garlic*.

And when one daughter was asked if she wanted an apple, their other little daughter chimed in, "Yo dos!" (Me two!).



[ntm.org/GO](http://ntm.org/GO)

“We want to hear this Creator’s Talk. We want it so much that we are waiting for the time that you, along with the Bible teachers, will bring it to us. When the time comes that you are ready to tell us of the Creator’s message just send us word and we will come. We will gather everybody from our area. We will all hike the trails all the way down to where you are and we will live in your area for as long as two moons [months]. We will do this all just so that we can hear the Creator’s message. If you would rather hike to our territory and tell us in our own houses, we will wait for you here. When you come we will provide everything you need, including food, so that you can live among us. We will provide for you so that you can stay and we can finally hear this big message. We want to hear this message and we even now wait for the day you can teach it to us.”

— *Ekapitaa, unreached tribe, Indonesia*

“The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.”

— Carl F. H. Henry



“We don’t need more Bibles on the mission field; we need more Christians on the mission field living the Bible.” — Edwina Patterson from “Redeeming the Time.”

## Aaron & Amy Speitelsbach



**Ministry:** Church planting among the Glaro people  
**Sending church:** Grace Baptist Church, Dickson, Tennessee

Amy’s desire to go into missions began when she was young as a result of her home church being very missions-focused. But it wasn’t till she was in Bible college taking a missions class that she heard about unreached people groups and became convinced that she too should be a part of taking the Gospel to them. While training with NTM she met her husband-to-be, Aaron. He became interested in missions by hearing the need for missionaries while in Bible college in Switzerland.

[ntm.org/aaron\\_speitelsbach](http://ntm.org/aaron_speitelsbach)

connect with...



# [ connect ]

## EDUCATION

Tribal people benefit when missionaries are able to rely on quality schools for their children.

### Paraguay School Renovation

Missionaries are usually most effective in helping tribal men and women discover new life and hope when they live in remote tribal villages. Yet remote tribal villages offer limited educational opportunities for missionaries' children. When you help provide schools for the children of missionaries, you're helping the tribal people whom their parents serve. Missionaries have more freedom and time to evangelize and disciple tribal people when their children are receiving a quality education in a good, safe environment.

**Still needed: \$15,188**

**Find out more: [ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)**

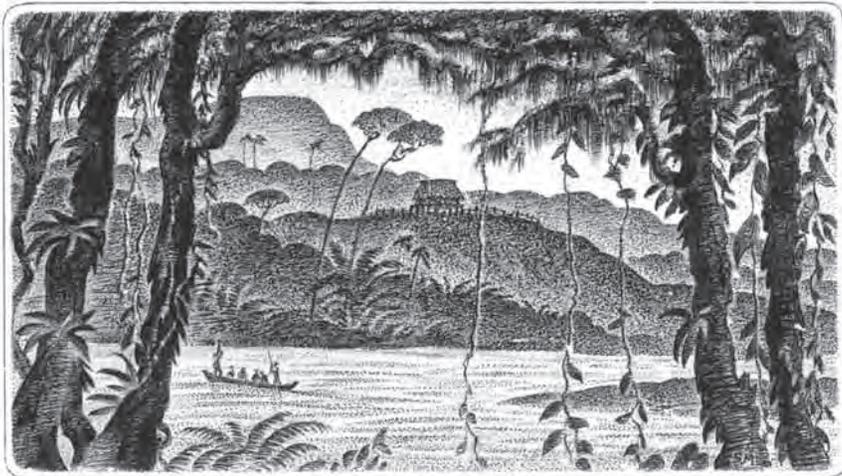
"I realize now that Jesus died for all of my sins, past, present and future. And all I have to do is believe in Him, that He died and rose again for me."  
— Siasi, Nimo tribe, Papua New Guinea

The aged missionary stood before the large crowd holding aloft a book that said "Holy Bible."

"My friends," he said, "I want to show you the Bible in more than 2,500 languages. It's all in this book."

As he walked up and down the aisles, flipping through the pages of the book, each page was blank — totally empty.

"More than 2,000 people groups do not have one word of the Bible in their language," he said. "They are empty just like this Bible. And they are without hope unless someone leaves home, learns their culture and language, and brings them the Gospel message. *Are you that someone?*"



Drawing by NTM missionary Sophie Muller, circa 1950

## Venture into the heart of missions with Wayumi

—a five-day in-depth missions course in central Pennsylvania. Explore the replica tribal village. Interact with "tribal people." Discover what tribal church planting takes. Learn from experienced missionaries. Enjoy fun and fellowship with others interested in being light to the dark places of the world. Ignite your passion for God.

[ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)



There are over 50 complete modern translations of the Bible in English.

**The Palaka people of the Ivory Coast still don't have the full New Testament.**



photo by Nate Griffin

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel, where Christ was not known.

Romans 15:20

**IN PRODUCTION** Our team brought back hours of video (and two cases of malaria) from the Moi tribe in Indonesia, so we can bring you a short film about Awayo's new life.

Tom & Beth Carlton



**Ministry:** Church Planting  
**Sending churches:** Grace Point Evangelical Free Church, Adrian, Michigan

Tom trusted Christ as his Savior at age 17 and Beth at 4. We met and began dating when we were students at New Tribes Bible Institute in Jackson, Michigan. Shortly after Bible school we were married, and a year and a half later entered the Missionary Training Center.

It was during our time at New Tribes Bible Institute that we were challenged to be a part of taking the Gospel where it had never been. Together, we came before the Lord and said, "Here we are Lord. Send us." The Lord used the two years of intense Bible study, as well as the faithful examples of men and women who have gone before us, to communicate to us that this is what He wanted from our lives.

Romans 12:1 tells us that our reasonable act of worship is to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to our Lord. We are convinced that for us, our full-time involvement in taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth is our most reasonable act of worship and love for our Heavenly Father.

[ntm.org/tom\\_carlton](http://ntm.org/tom_carlton)

# [ connect ]

**Are you ready for this?** INTERFACE is more than a four-to six-week college course. It's an intense immersion into tribal missions, set among tribal villages in the rugged Highlands of Papua New Guinea. **Go. Learn. Change.**  
[ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)



“When I was growing up, I was very disobedient to my parents. I was just plain bad, and I didn't care. It never bothered me, but since I have been a Christian God has put different thoughts in my heart. To Him obedience is important. As I walk with Him I have changed and find in my heart a desire to obey Him and others whom God has put over me. I have apologized to my Dad for the way I treated him growing up, and now I am raising my own son, Daniel. I understand that if I don't pass God's thoughts and teaching on to my son he will grow up just as disobedient and rebellious as I did.”  
 —**Mario**, Guanano tribe, Brazil



photo by Dale Stroud

**Play a key role in what God is doing for unreached peoples through prayer.** Stay informed with prayer updates available daily and weekly, online and via e-mail.  
[ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)



## \* pray

**Four Abau believers in Papua New Guinea started teaching** a seven-week evangelistic Bible course in February to clarify God's Word to a group of Abaus who have shown confusion in some areas. Please pray that the Gospel will be communicated clearly and that this group will come to understand scriptural truth and place their faith in Christ.



**Look farther.**

[ntm.org/explore](http://ntm.org/explore)

One Moi man in Indonesia has the whole genealogy in the Bible memorized, from Adam on through Jesus. How many in that line can you name?



**The rain pelted our faces as we flew along the muddy jungle trail** in the Philippines. Riding 150 cc motorbikes in a constant downpour, we passed village after village of folks who had never heard the Gospel.

After several hours, we arrived at the remote tribal village in the mountains. The Banwaon tribe has a thriving church and growing body of believers.

One of the ladies from our group asked why those other tribes we had passed along the way had no missionaries.

Albert Castelijn, missionary to the Banwaons, answered frankly, "Because they said no when we asked if we could give them Good News."

**"Our mission effort, motivation and challenge should focus more on the Lord of the harvest rather than the harvest."** — Dean Van Vliet

[Dean helped lead New Tribes Mission through the difficult years following the death of our founder, Paul Fleming. Dean would tell you God did that.]

## SOUNDS FISHY

One of the men's babies had gotten really sick and was going to be sent out to Boa Vista to see a doctor. Mike went downriver yesterday to bring the father back so he could accompany his wife and child. While on the trip a guy asked him, "Are there really women that are half fish?" So Mike explained that there are stories of mermaids but that it isn't true at all. Somewhere someone must have seen a picture of a mermaid. It is so interesting the questions that we get. We pray that they will understand the Gospel in a real way and without any confusion or syncretism (mixing old beliefs with new).

—**Mike and Diane Hartman**  
 Yanomami tribe, Brazil

gracias merci kalaro xie xie  
 danke thank you  
 arigatou

Many languages have a word for thank you, but some don't. How then do you explain gratitude, and our motivation to serve and worship Him?



“ **Please pray for me.** I know that I cannot do this on my own. And I know the enemy will try and do everything possible to hinder this. Pray that I will rely totally on the Holy Spirit and will not grow weary though the responsibility is heavy. ”

—MaeJo, Bruu tribe, Thailand

# Where, precisely?



by Chet Plimpton  
General Secretary  
NTM USA Executive Board

As His hour drew near, Jesus prayed. “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:18). His prayer included His disciples but reached thousands of years forward to encompass those who would be called His Body, the Church. “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word” (John 17:20). In His prayer Jesus revealed the work of the Church in the world, “that the world may believe that You sent me” (John 17:21). The work of the Church is to let the world know “that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world” (1 John 4:14).

The world is a big challenge! More than 6 billion people in 6,500 people groups. The work is staggering!

The Church in every century has been sent into the world, but where, precisely?

The Scriptures do not give us a formula to apply, but they do provide examples from the lives of believers in the early Church that have been true of the Church of all centuries, including today.

As Saul persecuted the believers, the Church was scattered. If that were the end of the story, it would be devastating, but it was not. Acts 8:4 says, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” The meaning of “scattered” is to “sow throughout.” The church was scattered but not shattered. They knew what work they had been entrusted to do, and now the Lord had sowed them where He wanted them to multiply.

There are occurrences when the Church is invited to present the Gospel. Three men arrived at Peter’s door and said, “Cornelius the centurion . . . was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you” (Acts 10:22). When Paul waited in Troas he received a vi-

sion of a man pleading, “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9). Paul’s response was immediate, recognizing the Lord had prepared the hearts of those who had invited them.

Christ intended the Church to be systematic and methodical in determining where and how to work in the world. The Holy Spirit made it apparent that Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were to be set apart for a specific work. Both men had already been involved in ministry for about eight years, but this event marked a change in how the Church determined where and how to work in the world. After the Church had “sent them away” (Acts 13:3), Paul and Barnabas began a systematic, methodical approach to covering the known world that included three journeys and about 15 years. The first of these journeys carried the Gospel to Asia Minor, the second to Greece, and the third focused on Ephesus but included methodical return visits to Asia Minor and Greece where Paul sought to strengthen the disciples (Acts 18:23).

Christ instructed the Church to work in the whole world, but He also seems to have clearly burdened

His Church to work among certain people. Paul recognized the Lord had burdened him to work among the Gentiles. To the Jews who scorned and rejected the Gospel, Paul boldly exclaimed, “We turn to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46b-47a).

Since the Church began, confinement has been a reality for some. Political and religious leaders in the world have repeatedly told the Church, “You can’t work here.” However, when confined and restricted, the Church is still effective in the world. Paul, confined as a prisoner of the state, was allowed to receive “all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30b-31).

Where, precisely, should the Church work? That is sometimes determined by where the Church has been scattered or invited. It is often determined by how the church sets about to systematically and methodically accomplish the task. It is determined by a burden to reach a certain people. It is also sometimes determined by the restrictions and confinement the world is allowed to place upon the Church.

## think about it

- Would you agree that the work of the Church is to let the world know “that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world?” Why or why not?
- When you consider the Church in 2009, do you feel each of the five examples are still occurring and relevant?
- How would you best describe the responsibility of the Church in light of the fact that although Christ clearly sent the Church into the world, some world leaders violently oppose the work of the Church?



# Where we go why we go and how we go.

The canoe slipped through the black water threading its way toward the distant river island. Huge trees and dense vegetation lined the banks dwarfing the tiny vessel.

The only sound was an occasional splash as two men dipped their paddles in the murky water. Anticipation hung in the air as the missionaries headed for unknown territory.

As they neared the island, their strokes increased in intensity and they quickly arrived and pulled the canoe onto the white sandy beach. The men got out, flexing stiff muscles, and gazed at their surroundings. Adobe huts dotted the area; the embers of a cooking fire waned, but there were no visible signs of life. Yet the two missionaries sensed that hidden eyes were observing every move.

Suddenly several nearly naked men came toward them, speaking in a language the missionaries did not know. As the two groups stepped forward to greet each other, one of the missionaries chuckled ruefully and wondered aloud, “What in the world are we doing here?”

“What in the world are we doing here?”

Scenes like this are repeated over and over in different countries and different contexts and often bring up the questions: Why do New Tribes missionaries go to remote places where there are unknown, unwritten languages? And how do they decide where to go?

The compelling reason to go, of course, is the biblical imperative. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:19, 20).

God’s command accompanied by the promise of God’s presence has empowered and motivated New Tribes Mission from its origins.

In the spring of 1942, Paul Fleming, Robert Williams, Cecil Dye and Lance Latham formulated the principles that would guide New Tribes Mission. One of the main thrusts was that all efforts be directed

toward places where there was no missionary effort and where no witness of the Gospel had reached. The intent was to plant New Testament churches among those tribal groups.

In August of that year they agreed, among other things, to do nothing that would detract from reaching the last unevangelized tribe with the Gospel.

For the last 67 years New Tribes Mission has remained steadfast in the goal of taking the Gospel where Christ is not yet named. While jet planes and modern technology have made the “end of the world” nearer than ever before, New Tribes missionaries still serve in remote areas accessible only by helicopter, motorboats, canoes and at times hiking several days to get to their destination.

While our purpose remains the same, the criteria used to decide where to go has changed dramatically. Mission leaders decide where to begin church-planting efforts based on information gathered from many sources, including missionaries whose ministry focuses mainly on visiting people groups in a geographical area to



Don Roberto, Eldon Hunter, Dave Bacon, Cylda Collins, George Hosbach and Bob Dye on their way to attempt to make peaceful contact with the Ayoré people of Bolivia in 1943

determine if a church plant is needed.

The missionaries, who focus on visiting tribal groups and identifying needs, and mission leaders have established some pre-determined principles to identify what makes a people group. Any group of people sharing a common culture and language, as well as common values, beliefs and behaviors constitutes a people group. These groups are not limited to country borders or geographical areas but rather by a shared culture and language.

Several criteria are used to determine whether a church plant is needed:

1. Missionaries determine whether there are measurable differences that distinguish one language from another. The highest priority is given to a people group whose language is unique – isolating them linguistically from the Gospel message.

2. The set of beliefs and values held by a people group make up their worldview. New Tribes Mission plants churches in areas where their worldview isolates them from the Gospel.

3. Some people groups are proficient in more than one language. Once again, the highest priority for a church planting team would be a group that does not have the Gospel in any language in which they are proficient.

4. Field leaders process the information they receive and make their decision as to whether a new work should begin among that people group.

5. NTM leaders then determine the identity and boundaries of the people group and the stability of the language and culture by asking whether the culture will last several more generations and whether the younger generations still speak the language. Then they figure out if there is a church in that tribe or in a neighboring tribe that can reach that group.

6. The final decision is based on whether resources are available to supply the team and maintain the work on a long-term basis and whether the tribal people invite the missionaries to come to the village.

One example of a tribal survey comes from Indonesia. Jereb Mclain and Scott Flaughter, along with field

leader Kevin Miles, began a survey trip to seek the best place to begin a ministry among the Elsenz people.

The ten-hour hike deep into the Indonesian jungle had some interesting moments and Scott shared some of his jottings in his journal: “We climbed the steep embankment of the river and continued on very slippery and narrow ridges with great

drop-offs on either side. By the side of the river we roasted our snake, fixed up some oatmeal and made a regular breakfast of it. I wasn't much in the mood for swimming at that point, so I washed my hands, dumped water out of my boots and wrung water out of my two layers of socks.”

“Scott and I found ourselves in many situations where we could only wait and pray,” Jareb continued. “There were floods and wild pigs and cassowary birds and snakes and leeches and thorny vines, soaring trees and breathtaking mountaintop views.”

They also met many new Elsenz people during their trip, began to build relationships and shared their desire to move into a village and learn the language. The Elsenzs welcomed Jareb and Scott at each village and finally they were invited to move into a village and begin to build homes for their families.

And the ministry continues, driven by the biblical mandate to reach those isolated from the Gospel message. New Tribes missionaries continue to travel to remote places and learn the culture and language of the people, build relationships, translate Scriptures and plant indigenous churches where Christ is not yet named.

by Dena McMaster  
contributing editor

“And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation.”

Romans 15:20



Early contact with the Palawano tribe, Philippines  
photo by Byrd Brunemeier



Survey of Elsenz Tribe



photo by Dale Stroud



# Square 1

How does a missionary team determine where to minister when there are 130 villages to choose from?

Missionaries Mike Lynch and Dan Cullet began their search by looking at 88 villages in one province. When that ended up going nowhere they moved on to another province of about 50 villages.

It soon became apparent to Mike and Dan that they had to narrow their focus to discover the best place to begin a ministry among the Phu Thai people of Thailand. They chose 12 villages to visit on their first concentrated trip to the tribe.



The missionaries and the people exchanged a mutual curiosity about each other ...

They looked to God to guide them and to give them understanding and wisdom as they and missionary Sorin Joensen, who accompanied the missionary team on their initial surveys, started their trip.

The men traveled for ten days and made it to nine villages. They found the people to be friendly and helpful, and not at all shy about laughing at some of the missionaries' language mistakes.

As missionaries search for the right place to establish their home in the tribe, they want to determine the long-term language viability of a people group and find a village that is central to their main dialect. "This is important so that when we translate the Bible into their language we will be using the mainstream dialect of the Phu Thai," Sandy Lynch wrote.

The men were excited to learn that one of their fears—that the language was in the process of slowly dying out—was unfounded. "We do not want to spend years learning a language and translating the Bible into a language that is on the verge of extinction," wrote Mike.

The team was told that the children learn the Phu Thai language as their first language, and the people believe that it will be this way for a long time.

"I believe that if we live in a Phu Thai village we could not help but learn Phu Thai," Dan wrote.

"One of the negative things that we learned," wrote Mike, "was that a large number of the young people, ages 20-35, leave the village to go to work in the main cities of Thailand. They do this because the Phu

Thai people are relatively poor and there just isn't enough work for them in the village. They can work in a city such as Bangkok and make a lot more money than they could if they stayed in the village. We're not sure how this may affect our ministry in the future."

At each village the men visited they first asked where the village leader's house was located. At one village the woman they asked pointed in a direction and said that it was far away.

"At that point, she must have noticed the helpless look on our faces and decided that she would take us there," Mike wrote. "She climbed into the truck with her grandchild and led us to the village leader's house.

"The village leader wasn't home when we arrived, so the woman offered to take us to visit with the *Kamnam*, an official that oversees all the village leaders in that area. He was attending a meeting that the *Phu Waa*, the governor of the province, was speaking at. Once we arrived there, the lady disappeared into a crowd of over 400 people sitting under a large tent

and soon emerged with the *Kamnam*."

After introductions and a little talking, the missionaries were invited to eat lunch with the governor.

"Needless to say this was a little more exposure than we were ready for, and we soon found ourselves praying silently for wisdom while talking and eating with the governor's assistants."

At another village the missionaries again asked for directions.

"Hi, we're looking for the headman," asked Sorin in Thai. "Can you tell us where his house is?"

The villager gave them a curious smile and said "Down the road and..." The rest of his directions were beyond the reach of their language comprehension. So they thanked him and drove on, dodging

dogs and chickens as they searched for another person to ask, and another, until at last they reached the home of the village leader.

They greeted the ladies who stood chatting outside and explained that they were researching the Phu Thai language and wished to speak with their leader.

One of the ladies disappeared into the house and soon, in a flurry of activity, the missionaries were welcomed to the center of the house. Chairs were situated and glasses filled with water, which the headman's son-in-law thoughtfully reassured them was clean rain water.

The headman and his household listened as Mike told of their language research. Then, as is customary in Thailand when visiting someone, the missionaries gave a small gift: pig skins

and candy exclusive to Chiang Mai. Their hosts were delighted and in no time every mouth was full of candy.

The missionaries and the people exchanged a mutual curiosity about each other as Sorin and Mike sought specific information about their language.

With the villagers' help and a picture book, Mike recorded 100 samples of the Phu Thai language to aid in distinguishing variations in dialects. The process included much laughter, especially when Mike attempted to pronounce the Phu Thai words.

After warm thanks and goodbyes, Mike and Sorin left the village, tired but praising the Lord for the productive visit, anticipating the day when the Phu Thai will have the opportunity to praise the Lord too.



Photos by Mike Lynch



Before their next round of visits the missionaries would begin acquainting themselves with the words they had extracted. They would revisit the villages a second time and narrow their list to five. During further visits they hoped to get an invitation to move into one of the villages.

When their list got to five villages Mike and

Dan took their wives, Sandy and Beth, to help in the last phase of their search.

In one village they learned how to harvest rice.

“[The workers in the field] loaned us a hand-held sickle that was in the shape of a hook. Then they demonstrated that we were to grasp a group of rice stalks with the left hand, and

then with the right hand wrap the sickle around the group and pull the cutting tool towards our body,” wrote Mike.

“Be careful; [the workers] urged us. So we ‘helped’ harvest the rice for a while and were relieved that we came away with the same number of fingers we had when we started.”

At the end of the day the missionaries were invited to return to help thresh the rice.

During their visits to these villages they continued collecting language data to verify that a Bible translation in one village’s dialect would be clear to other villages.

Finally, the invitation came.

A headman in one of the villages told the missionaries that they and

their families were welcome to rent buildings among his people. He took them to see some available housing.

“The houses are adequate and even appear to be very nice from the outside view. They even have a Cullett-sized house,” wrote Dan, who has six children.

The search was over. Now the team began the process of moving in and the next step of church planting—building relationships and learning the culture and language of the people.

Taking a break from fixing up their rented homes, missionaries Dan Cullett and Mike Lynch launched their culture and language learning by attending their first Phu Thai rocket festival.

The morning began

with a parade and in the afternoon Dan and Mike watched various styles of rockets in competition. The rockets were judged by how they look, how high they went and how long they stayed in the air.

For 11 hours the men circulated among the people, taking video and photos, making relationships and asking questions. The men had to be alert as rockets were going off all around them.

“We are excited as we move forward, thinking about how friendly and welcoming the Phu Thai people are and how they love to use their language,” wrote Dan. “This should help us a lot as we learn to speak their language and understand their culture.”

“Imagine that you are

a child who is trying to play a new game with friends and you don’t know the rules,” Mike wrote. “This is exactly how we feel. We don’t know the language, the culture, the different relationships among the people and how they affect one another.

“We are attempting to fit into a culture that is very different than our own and most of the time we are not sure how our actions or decisions are received or perceived by the people that we are attempting to befriend.”

“Needless to say, this gives us even more reason to be looking to the Lord for His wisdom and grace,” Mike wrote.

by David Bell  
contributing editor



Photos by Mike Lynch



“Imagine that you are a child who is trying to play a new game with friends and you don’t know the rules. This is exactly how we feel.”

More photos and video from the Phu Thai search: [ntm.org/magazine](http://ntm.org/magazine)





The Fleming Center is being built with tomorrow's needs and God's goals in mind.

**Twenty centuries after Jesus gave us His only prayer request, 2,500 people groups are still beyond the reach of the Gospel:**  
*"Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers"*  
 (Matthew 9:38 and Luke 10:2).

### This is not the time to pull back.

It's time to defy circumstances and reverse trends — time to take our Lord at His Word. Jesus' command to make disciples of all people groups comes on the heels of Him saying all authority is His, and is followed by His assurance, *"I am with you always."* (Matthew 28:18-20)

People are answering God's call for laborers. NTM's Missionary Training Center is consistently full of people who are willing to serve. We haven't needed to turn

away many students yet. But should we be turning away any students? Shouldn't we be equipping even more people to expand the reach of the Gospel to every tribe? Shouldn't we push for even more missionary candidates, and more space to train them? We think so, and we hope you will join us. New Tribes Mission is trusting God to expand the training center so more people can be sent out and more people groups can hear the Good News.



Jesus had only one prayer request ...

photo by Dale Stroud

The centerpiece of this expansion is the new Fleming Center, a classroom, office and student center complex that is the hub of the reorganized campus in Missouri.

With the Fleming Center:

- Offices for teachers and disciplers at the Missionary Training

- Center are gathered in one location, making it easier for students and staff to connect. This is even more important in missionary training than in a typical school, because the goal is to equip students academically **and** spiritually.
- Classrooms are flexible, with spaces that can be one large class-

- room, two medium rooms or four smaller rooms. Even the smaller rooms accommodate more students than most of the current classrooms, many of which were designed for fewer than a dozen students. Each classroom also accommodates current and coming technologies, enabling instructors

- to teach larger groups more effectively.
- The new student center lets students interact more with each other and staff members. Besides improving the quality of life on campus, this facilitates discipleship and friendships that strengthen students in their future ministries.

At the training center, students get a foundational understanding of issues they will encounter in church planting, including:

- Learning a culture and language
- Writing an unwritten language
- Teaching people to read
- Bible translation
- Evangelizing people who know little or nothing about the Bible or God
- Recognizing and equipping leaders

They also receive instruction in practical areas such as solar power, small engine repair, health care and educating their children. Further training takes place on the job, as missionaries need it.

The Fleming Center is being built with God's

goals in mind. It accommodates the students currently seeking training, and those still needed to make a serious dent in the number of people groups who have never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

The overall cost of the Fleming Center is \$8 million—far less than most college classroom buildings. The Fleming Center is a concrete investment in planting churches among unreached people groups.

by Ian Fallis  
contributing editor



Photos by Gordon Wohlgemut



**To find out more or to invest in the Fleming Center:**  
Stewardship Development Office  
1000 E. First St., Sanford, FL 32771  
800-813-1566 | [sdo@ntm.org](mailto:sdo@ntm.org)  
[ntm.org/fleming](http://ntm.org/fleming)

**Learn more about NTM's missionary training at** [ntm.org/train](http://ntm.org/train)



## A God-sized Goal

Humanly speaking, the task of making disciples of every people group is impossible.

If we were to focus on our own efforts and resources, New Tribes Mission is unlikely to make any real dent in the number of unreached people groups this year, next year, or ever.

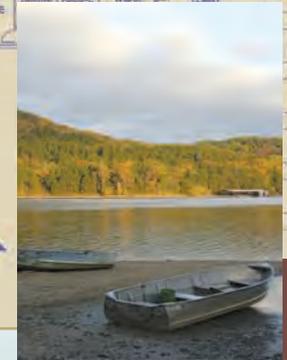
So let's remember that God never asks us to focus on ourselves.

He asks us to trust Him, and to keep our eyes on Him as you and NTM work together as his co-laborers in the task that He has set before us.

That's what led New Tribes Mission USA to set a goal of beginning ministries in 50 more unreached people groups by 2014. We're moving toward that goal—and giving you opportunities to take part—while trusting God to make it a reality.

The Fleming Center is a key part of that.

**Please join us in humbly acknowledging our reliance on God to work mightily and glorify His name among the nations. And please pray about what He would have you do to expand the reach of the Gospel to all people groups.**



### Fleming Center facts

The heart of the reorganized Missionary Training Center campus

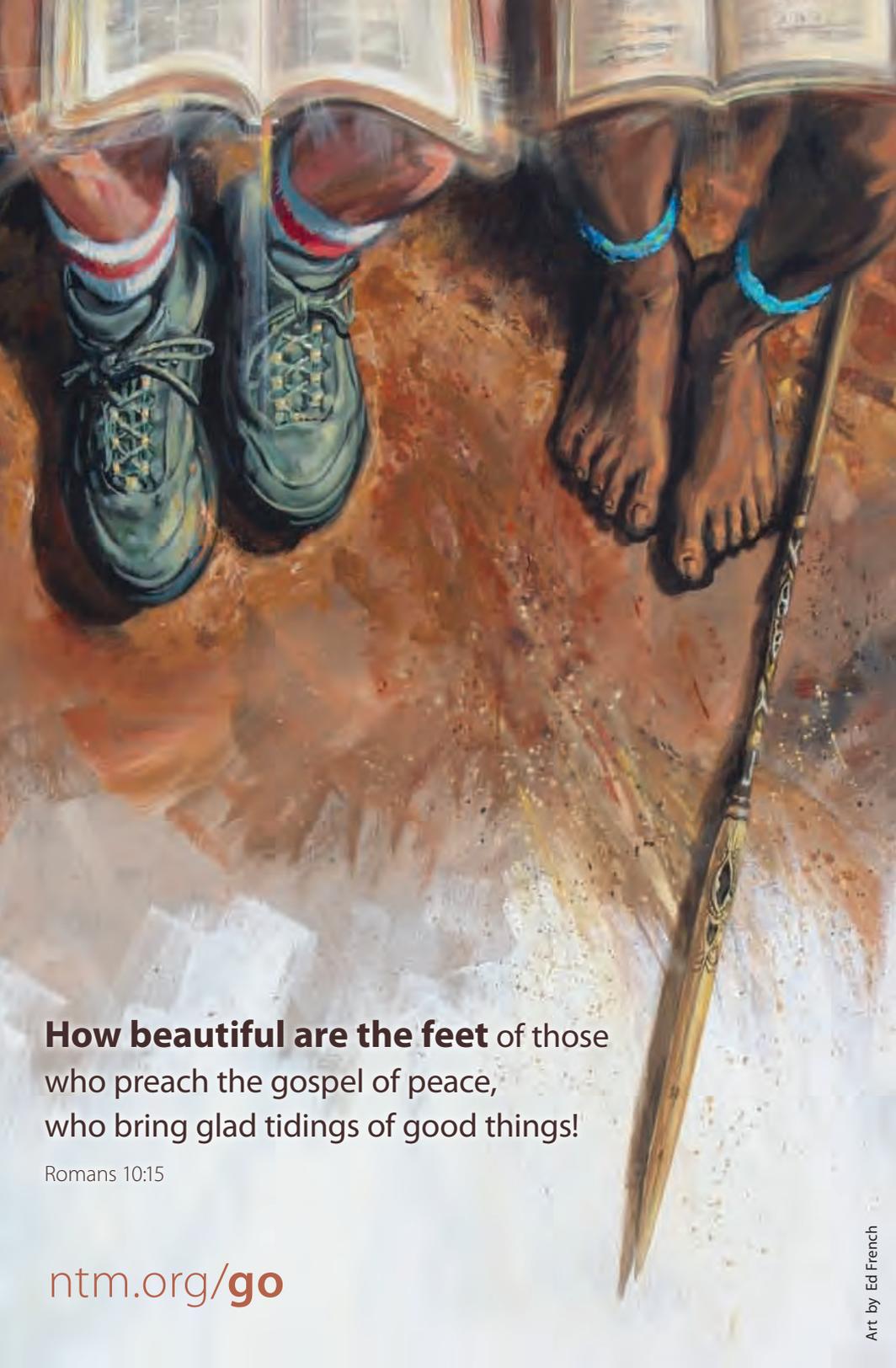
- Classrooms
- Trainer and discipler offices
- Student Center

Groundbreaking: June 2009 | Completion: Fall 2010

Size: 56,000 square feet

Cost: \$8 million

Proposed Fleming Center



**How beautiful are the feet** of those  
who preach the gospel of peace,  
who bring glad tidings of good things!

Romans 10:15

[ntm.org/go](http://ntm.org/go)