

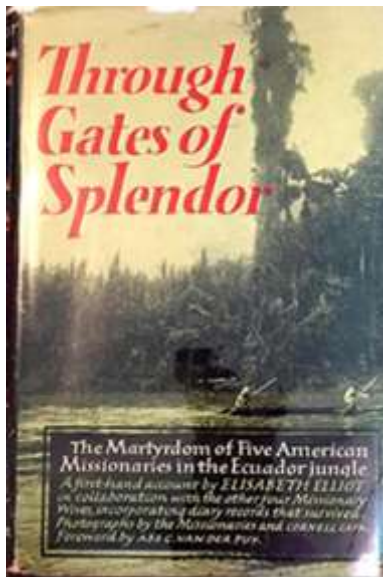
Catalyst to Answer the Call

By Bill Moberly

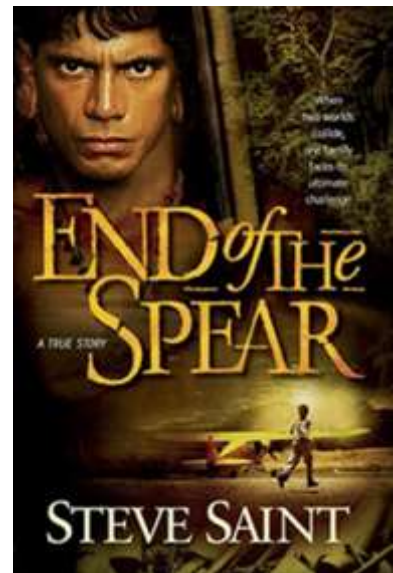
From the Editor, September 2026

Classic Mission Books Inspire and Convict!

The differences in Global Mission between “then” and “now” are *inspiring* and *convicting*! What do I mean? Let me explain!

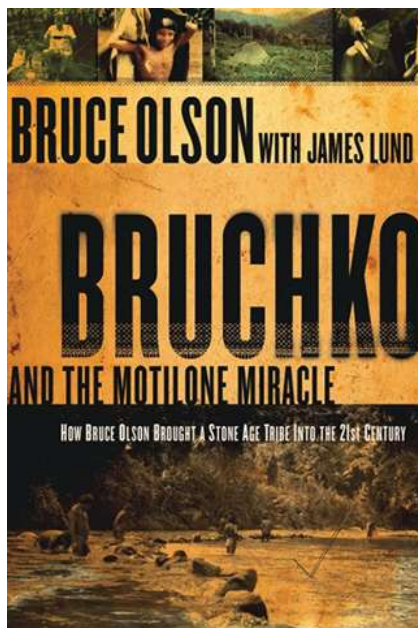
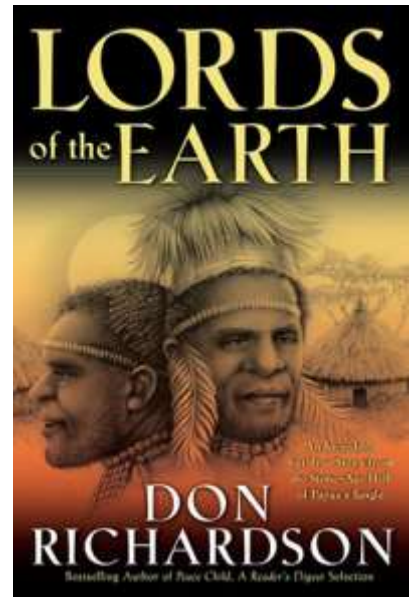
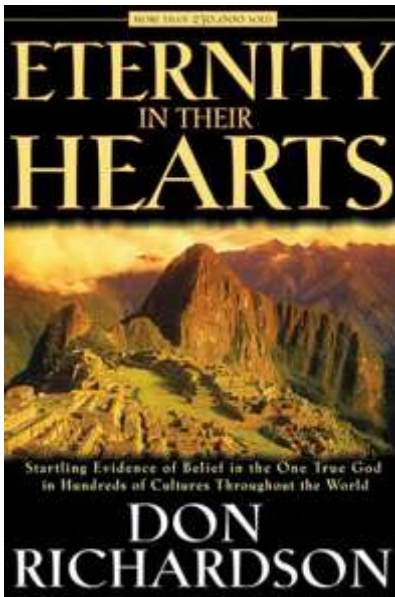
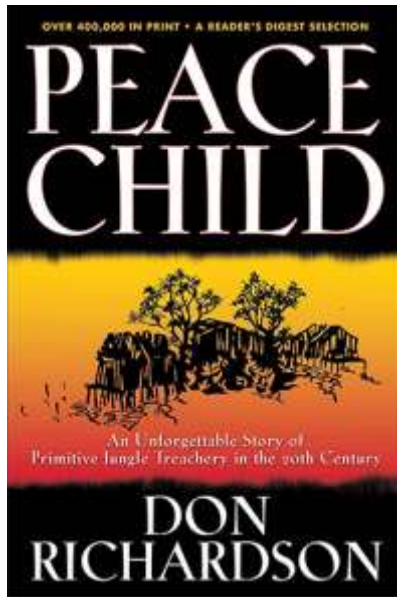


Through most of my life, even back to my young adult years in the 1970s and 1980s, I have been interested in Global Mission. I read many of the classic mission books such as ***Through Gates of Splendor***, written by Elisabeth Elliot, the story of her husband Jim Elliott and the other four young missionaries martyred in 1956 in Ecuador.

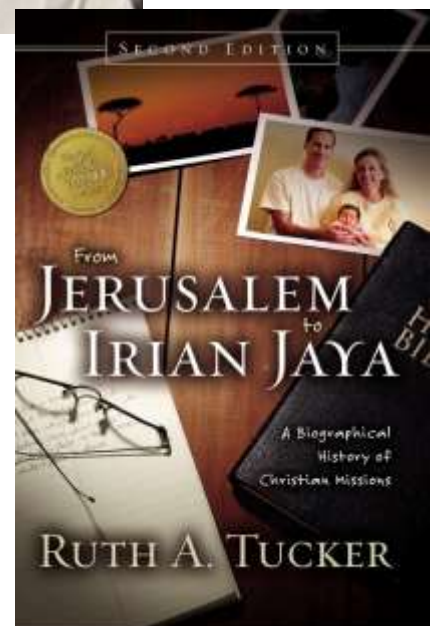


The follow-up story by Steve Saint (son of the missionary pilot martyred the same day) called ***The End of The Spear*** was another favorite, as it shared the exciting story of the conversion of the Waorani tribe that killed the five young men, even some of the actual killers came to faith in Christ!

I devoured books by former missionary Don Richardson, including ***Peace Child***, ***Eternity in Their Hearts***, ***Lords of the Earth***, and more. Another classic is ***Bruchko*** by Bruce Olson, a young Lutheran who felt called to Colombia, bypassing the counsel of his congregational leaders to go to seminary first. Though often unwise to bypass counsel like that, in this instance Bruce did hear and follow God's unusual leading – it's an amazing and exciting story! These and more made for fascinating and inspiring recreational reading – usually having time only if home sick or on vacation!



Bruce Olson



I remember well reading Ruth Tucker's 528-page book ***From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*** throughout one three-week family camping trip in our old Jayco tent trailer. With seven children the days were busy with fun family activities, but I would read it often late in the night!

My Call to Global Mission

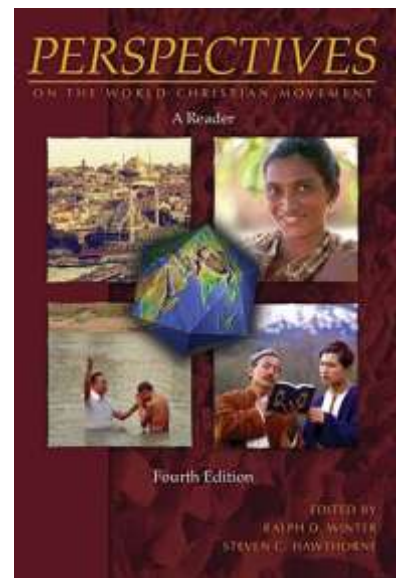
My call to an active role in Global Mission started in 1990, beginning with our first mission trip to Indonesia to visit missionaries supported by a congregation I served as pastor. Looking back, it was an ironic time to launch into what has become more than 36 years in world missions, with 22 of those years as a mission agency leader! This coincided with the beginning of the overt shift in ELCA global mission as they intentionally pivoted away from the core of Matthew 28.18-20 — evangelism and discipleship. The decline in a Biblically-grounded focus had started a few decades earlier, but now it was out of the closet.



At the same time, Lausanne Global Mission movement was increasingly affecting the evangelical world! The first Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization was in 1974, focusing on the unfinished task, unreached peoples, collaboration and much more. This conference was also a catalyst for the birth of the U.S. Center for World Mission under Dr. Ralph Winter in 1976. Through their **Perspectives on the World Christian Movement** course, for the first time concepts like “unreached” and “least reached” peoples were being defined and taught in hundreds of congregations – even as these concepts were helping frame global mission strategy.



Dr. Ralph Winter



As many Lutherans were ***moving away*** from the priority of God’s call to “go and make disciples of all the nations”, many of our evangelical brothers and sisters were ***marching forward to reach the nations***.

Obedience to the Call

So, my passion and calling over last 35 years of Global Mission ministry is to encourage active obedience to the Great Commission, returning to God's primary task in the life of the local church as Scripture describes. If you go back a generation or more in our Lutheran family, you encounter a time when, whether it was with World Mission Prayer League (now simply [Prayer League](#)), or many of the various Lutheran denominational groups prior to 1960, many were actively focused on taking the Gospel to the least reached and unreached!

For those who have only seen Global Mission at the national level in our Lutheran families over the last 35 or 40 years, the statistics might be a surprise! Going back to the 1850s, more Lutheran missionaries were sent to [China](#) and [India](#) than anywhere else. You can add in countries like [Madagascar](#) and [Papua New Guinea](#), places that were desperately in need of the Gospel! "Back in the day" – in the midst of the challenges inherent in local congregational ministry and discipleship – there was also a willingness to answer and invest in God's call to the nations!

Examples of Obedience "Before My Time"

I heard a little more about that season "before my time" recently! I was in the Texas Hill country near San Antonio for the [LCMC Texas District's](#) Annual Gathering. One my personal highlights from the weekend was time I spent with Pastor Dave and Tanya Mayer. Dave serves at Trinity Lutheran in Blanco, Texas, which is one of our [ALWM](#) partner churches. In addition to their friendship, which goes back many years, we had some time for conversation. Particularly encouraging and challenging to me was hearing the story of their immediate families, who had served as missionaries in India and Papua New Guinea many years ago.

Pastor Dave was born in the mission field in India in the 1950's. His wife Tanya moved to New Guinea with her Lutheran missionary parents and family at age 7 and grew up there. Both of their parents served for 30+ years in their respective countries! Actually, Pastor Dave's grandparents first went as missionaries to India in 1925. Each of their parents and his grandparents spent 30+ years planting churches and preaching the Gospel in difficult places.

Hearing the stories was a glimpse into another day and time when the inconveniences and discomforts inherent in God's call to the nations didn't deter the "sent ones". I remember when my wife and I visited a

cemetery for hundreds of Lutheran Missionaries who went to China and were buried there after a lifetime of service to Christ. It was a moving experience as we looked at the gravestones and digested many names and dates.

All Are Called!

Not everyone is called to go, but all are called to be a part of the praying, the sending, and the going. My recent weekend with my dear friends was a reminder that once upon a time Lutheran believers rallied around the call to the nations, simply because the Word instructed us to do so.

CGM magazine exists to be one of the catalysts used by Gods Spirit to restore that sense of urgency to answer the call!

In Christ for the Nations,
Bill Moberly, CGM Editor



Rev. Bill Moberly, director of Awakening Lives to World Missions (ALWM), helps churches with global mission outreach. He authored *Igniting a Passion for Missions: A Guide for Church Leaders*. He and wife Sally have 7 children, 23 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, and have traveled to 23 countries to share the Gospel and equip leaders.

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Links:

Elizabeth Elliot: <https://elisabethelliot.org/about/>

Jim Elliot: <https://elisabethelliot.org/about/jim-elliott/>

Ecuador: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ecuador>

Steve Saint: <https://www.missionary.com/biographies/steve-saint>

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Colombia: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Colombia>

Ruth Tucker: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruth_Tucker

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Lausanne: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lausanne_Committee_for_World_Evangelization

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Dr. Ralph Winter: <https://rdwrc.wciu.edu/collections/winter-collection/ralph-winter-bio/>

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Madagascar: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Madagascar>

Papua New Guinea: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Papua-New-Guinea>

LCMC: <https://www.lcmc.net/>

Texas District: <https://www.lcmctexas.org/>

ALWM: <https://www.alwm.org/>

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