

MAKING LIFE COUNT

God designed us and made us. He has given us the gift of life and has a purpose and specific plan for each of us.

The apostle Paul wrote, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”**

Paul clearly says that we are not saved by good works, but we are created for good works — works that God has already prepared for us.

There are two great moments in life: when you are born and when you discover why you were born. It is important to discover how God wants you to be personally involved in His mission in the world through praying, giving, going — or all three. You need to know not only what you should be doing, but where and with whom.

God has a plan for you. But, your destiny is not your fate. It is your choice.



It's up to you
to make
your life count.

*Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV

INTO ALL THE WORLD

BY RANDY HURST



▶ The Assemblies of God was birthed almost 100 years ago when a fresh move of the Holy Spirit resulted in an immediate concern for a lost world.

Unlike many missions organizations that focused only on certain parts of the world, early AG leaders were compelled by the Spirit to obey our Lord's command to "go into all the world and preach the gospel."¹ Their boldness was astounding.

How could such a small group of Christians even consider attempting to preach the gospel in all the world? They accepted Jesus' command to reach the whole world. They also believed His promise of the Holy Spirit's enablement to do it.²

Our early leaders were actually against organization, but they knew they could not attempt to reach the whole world unless they worked together. As a result, they founded a fellowship of local churches to accomplish a global mission.

The priorities and methods of our mission are not ideas formed by a strategy committee. The four facets of our mission — reaching, planting, training and touching — are not separate objectives but an integrated and comprehensive plan. They are biblical mandates we strive to obey — evangelizing, establishing churches, training national church leaders, and demonstrating Christ's compassion to poor and suffering people.

Each facet of our mission is important, but what is distinctive is how all four work together to achieve our primary objective. The heart of our mission is to establish indigenous churches around the world that develop and multiply to reach the lost. Our strategy is to cooperate with the Lord of the harvest as He fulfills His promise to build His Church.

¹ Mark 16:15, NKJV

² Acts 1:8

THE DNA OF A GLOBAL MISSION



INTO ALL THE
WORLD

REACHING

▶ We are proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ to the spiritually lost in all the world through every available means.

Evangelism — penetrating spiritual darkness with the light of the gospel — has always been the first priority of our mission. Jesus' Great Commission to His followers is, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."* This requires us to reach people with the message of Christ in every possible way.

The essence of the gospel is Jesus — our Savior, Healer, Baptizer and coming King. He has called us to proclaim the good news of God's forgiveness and His gift of everlasting life wherever His name is not yet known.

*Mark 16:15, NIV



PLANTING

PLANTING

▶ We are establishing churches in 212 countries and territories, following the New Testament pattern.



INTO ALL THE
WORLD

The Great Commission involves more than proclamation. Jesus also commanded, “Go and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”*

His command to make disciples includes establishing churches. We are called not only to reap a worldwide harvest, but also to help conserve it.

Since the 1920s, Assemblies of God missionaries have planted indigenous churches that support and govern themselves. These local bodies of believers can live and grow without dependency on the church that sent the missionaries.

*Matthew 28:19,20, NIV

INTO ALL THE
WORLD

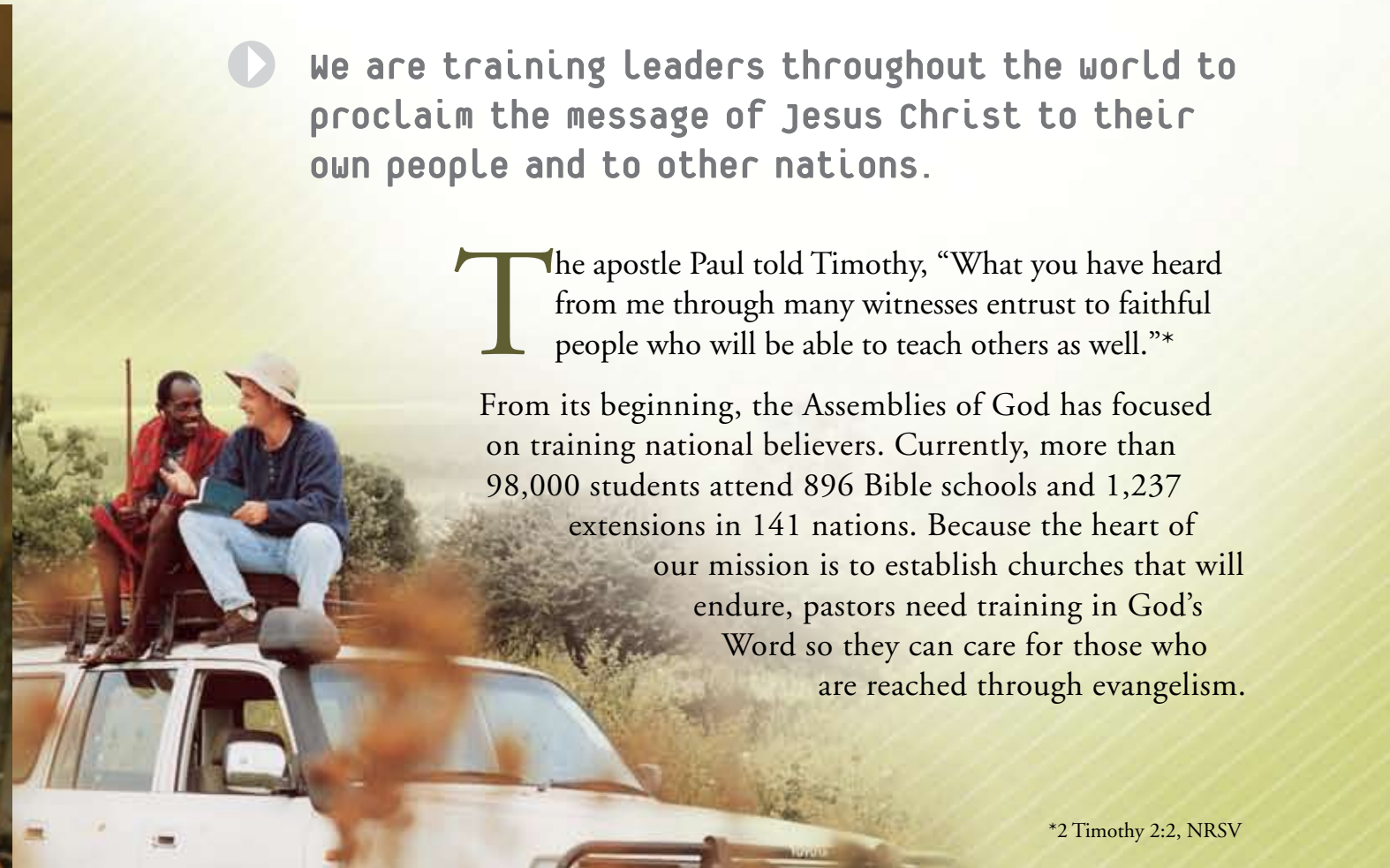
TRAINING

▶ We are training leaders throughout the world to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to their own people and to other nations.

The apostle Paul told Timothy, “What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well.”*

From its beginning, the Assemblies of God has focused on training national believers. Currently, more than 98,000 students attend 896 Bible schools and 1,237 extensions in 141 nations. Because the heart of our mission is to establish churches that will endure, pastors need training in God’s Word so they can care for those who are reached through evangelism.

*2 Timothy 2:2, NRSV



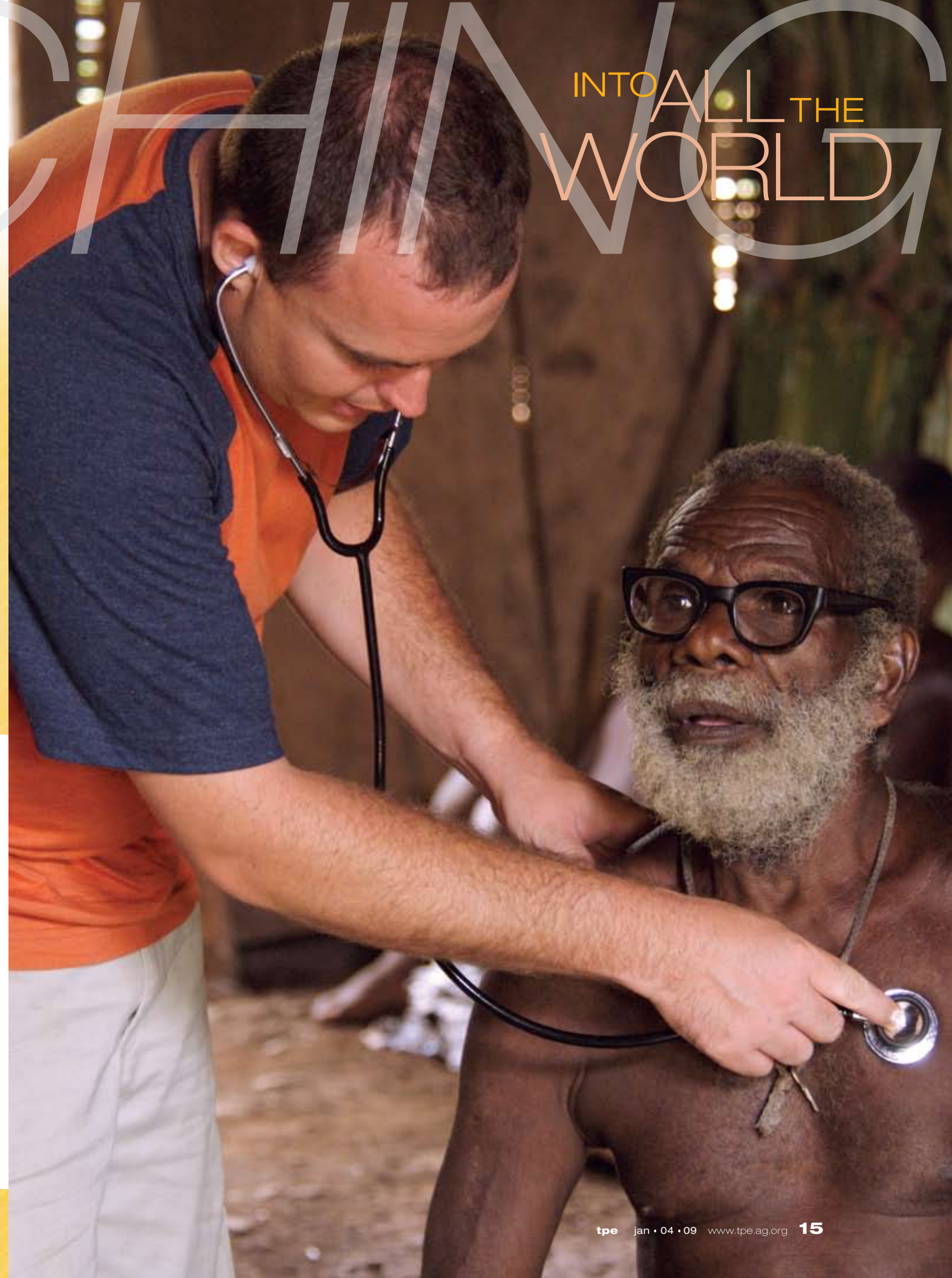
TOUCHING

▶ We are touching poor and suffering people with the compassion of Christ and inviting them to become His followers.

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."*

Our most effective means of ministering to physical need is the network of more than 300,000 local Assemblies of God churches around the world. By touching the hungry, sick and broken with the compassion of Christ, they can share the gospel of eternal life and offer them a church — a spiritual family where they can grow in the Lord.

*Matthew 25:40, NIV



INTO ALL THE WORLD



REACHING THE UNREACHED

More than two-thirds of the world's population has never been given the opportunity to hear the message of Christ. Entire groups of people either do not have a Christian neighbor or anyone willing to become one to share the gospel with them. Any serious contemplation of the billions of unreached must address the reasons why.

Remote

While modern missionaries do not face the same time-consuming transportation issues that missionaries did many decades ago, they still deal with daunting challenges in reaching remote places.

Remoteness can apply to age groups as well as physical distance. The chasms that must be

bridged to reach the lost relate not only to space but also to time. Every new generation is an unreached people group, yet in many places the church remains distant to the culture's spiritually lost youth.

Rejected

Some people groups today are unreached because of rejection by the major populations of their country. They are marginalized because of prejudice and long-standing intercultural hostilities.

Many groups of people today are deprived of the gospel simply because the church nearest them does not care about their spiritual need or lostness. Without the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of God's people that moves them to reach out with His love and compassion, even the lost nearby will remain unreached.

Resistant

Spiritually resistant people groups have brought great discouragement and even heartbreak to missionaries. Though God uses the arduous toil of faithful missionaries, a breakthrough of God's Spirit is needed before a spiritual harvest can begin.

The spiritual climate of cultures is a significant factor in why people are unreached. A sovereign work of the Holy Spirit penetrates even the most spiritually resistant culture.

Restricted

Worldwide, the most significant barrier to reaching the more than 4 billion unreached is government restrictions to missionary activity. Still, restricted access can be transformed to creative access as God opens doors of ministry opportunity. Testimonies of how this is taking place today are numerous, but often they can't be told

because of risk to missionaries and the people they are working to reach.

Individual obedience

Neither remoteness, rejection, resistance nor restriction presents an impossible task. Each circumstance can be overcome. But each requires a level of commitment and sacrifice equal to the challenge, and a dependence on the Holy Spirit.

At the core of the issue is individual obedience.

Christ's directive to His first followers applies to us as well: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* Each messenger who carries the gospel of Christ must make a personal sacrifice. Whatever holds us back from accomplishing the mission to which the Master has called us must be overcome.

Denial of "self" can mean sacrificing life goals, personal ambitions and even friendships. It requires a deep work of the Spirit to move us to a passion and compassion for the lost that reflects the heart of our Savior. For some it will mean placing careers and life dreams on the altar of consecration to the mission of Christ.

May the Spirit search our hearts and help us follow our Master's commitment, "Not my will, but Yours be done." **tpe**

More than 4 billion people wait for our response.

*Matthew 16:24, NIV

RANDY HURST is communications director for AG World Missions. E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

