

# Mars • Hill Update

MINISTRY THROUGH MEDIA August 2009

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## Metrics & Ministry

### Pursuing the Ministry Model & Metric of Jesus

In the world of nonprofit ministry, the term “metrics” is being used more than ever. From those who lead ministries to those who fund them, there is a growing trend to use metrics as a basis for decision making.

Yes, metrics (quantifiable benchmarks by which we measure performance) are vital in just about every area of life. Metrics help us measure progress and provide accountability.

However, when we overemphasize metrics as the basis for assessing the success or the value of a ministry, we are in danger of missing God. Metrics consist of what we can see. But what man can see is not the complete picture. Only God has the complete picture.

This is why we are to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor.5:7). Faith is “the conviction of things unseen” (Heb.11:1). Like the people of faith we read about in the Bible (Heb.11:7ff.), God may call us to a course of action that makes no sense based on what we can see. When He calls us to such a course, the value of metrics is not in determining if we should go forward, but rather how to trust Him as we go.

#### The Metrics of Jesus

From the life of Jesus we observe that He did nothing of His own initiative, but only what His Father was doing (i.e.- John 14:10-11). The ministry

metric of Jesus was simply this: moment by moment faithfulness to the Father. How unpredictable! How powerful! How immeasurable!

How did this play out in the earthly ministry of Jesus? He spent most of His time discipling just 12 men, common men with little apparent potential for worldly influence. Early in His ministry the masses flocked to Him, but

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by the end, few rallied around Him. And then there was the cross; in the eyes of the world a tragic failure. As one writer put it, “*In the crucifixion, more than*

*in any other event in history, we see the ultimate failure of what the world would call success, and the ultimate success of what the world would call failure.*”

If on the day of His death the earthly ministry of Jesus had been evaluated according to ministry metrics of our day, the value of His ministry would have been in doubt. But Jesus did not come to earth to live or die for the metrics of men. He came to make His Father known by living out His Father’s will. Few if any understood it at the time. Yet through His faithfulness, Jesus fulfilled the pivotal role in a plan so epic it is beyond measure!

#### People or Projects?

Along with an increasing emphasis on metrics, there is a growing trend among

donors and those who influence donors to support projects rather than people (those who do ministry). Projects are measurable. With projects we know if we are getting what we expected. And after all, isn't it just good stewardship to expect an identifiable return on your investment, preferably the highest return possible? Supporting people on the other hand, well that gets messy. A donor can never truly measure the return on an investment in a person. Only God can do that.

In the early days of the modern world missions movement (1700s - 1800s), pioneer missionaries often labored for years enduring great obstacles before seeing any fruit at all. William Carey in India, Adoniram Judson in Burma, and Robert Morrison in China each invested 6-7 years before seeing a single convert. Robert Moffat persevered for 10 years in South Africa before his first convert! Had these men (or their funding sources) been driven by today's focus on metrics, they might have packed it up and headed home long before seeing any results. But like Jesus, they faithfully persevered, and ultimately opened the door for incredible harvests of souls!

## The Metrics of Mars Hill

With Jesus as our model, the staff and board of Mars Hill desire that the metric of this ministry be faithfulness to what God is calling us to do, and to the way He is calling us to do it. If there are results to report, then that is great. If there is great leverage in how we do what we do, then that is great as well. But if not, then God is still God and we must be faithful to what we believe He is calling us to do.

By God's grace, we can report some wonderful results from the ministry of The HOPE. We can also show amazing leverage in how we arrive at those results. However, we cannot take the credit. It was God who raised up the people to support The HOPE when it was only a vision, and when it took more time to create than we anticipated. Then God led us into a

strategy to leverage the potential of what He empowered us to create. And now He is causing that strategy to unfold daily as we prayerfully follow Him step by step.

Our mission strategy to fulfill the potential of The HOPE is built on the idea of leveraging our capacity through divinely orchestrated partnerships and alliances with other ministries worldwide. Within a relatively short period of time this strategy has resulted in:

- *Nearly 30 translations of The HOPE used by ministries worldwide*
- *About 30 translations of The HOPE currently in process*
- *6 websites streaming The HOPE video in 5 languages for a multitude of visitors daily*
- *Several study guides for The HOPE (most created by other ministries)*
- *Derivative projects such as an English as a second language software curriculum built entirely around The HOPE*
- *Thousands of reported decisions for Christ related to use of The HOPE*

Most of the above was initiated by - and for the most part funded by - other ministries in the Body of Christ. In most of this activity, Mars Hill served primarily in the role of a facilitator.

Based on our current flow of activity, an average year will result in: a) 9-10 new translations of The HOPE, b) ongoing ministry strategies with other ministries using existing translations, c) television broadcasts and Internet streaming of The HOPE reaching millions of people, and d) the creation of additional support materials and derivative projects using The HOPE.

We have a staff of 5 full-time people and 4 contract and/or part-time people. If Mars Hill built an organization capable of accomplishing this amount of activity ourselves, our annual budget would easily be 2-3 million dollars. However, by partnering with other ministries in the Body of Christ and sharing the cost of ministry

activity, our annual budget is currently around \$800,000. That is leverage! That is evidence of the unseen God working through His Body on earth!

It is good to be able to point to metrics that substantiate the role and reality of God in what has been accomplished. One can only imagine the "ministry metrics" related by those who witnessed the feeding of 5,000 with only a handful of bread and fish. Yet let us not forget, our Father is also the kind of God who might ask us to leave the flock in order to save the one that has strayed. He is the kind of God who might lead us to prioritize reaching an unreached tribe with the Gospel in order that every tongue, tribe and nation might be represented in heaven. Remember, the metric that pleases God is faithful obedience to His unique call in our life.

This article comes from an expanded position paper to be posted on the [Mars Hill website](#).

## Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to use The HOPE



Mars Hill is pleased to announce that NAMB is licensing The HOPE to use in a new initiative to share the Gospel with every person in North America by 2020. [NAMB](#) coordinates outreach among Southern Baptist churches in North America, which number over 42,000!

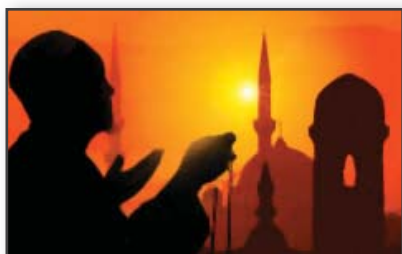
## One World Project



The HOPE has recently been included in an incredible new missions mobilizing tool produced by One World Missions. The One World Project DVD-ROM has literature, charts, maps, databases, prayer

guides and more from partners such as WORDsearch, World Bible Translation Center, Ethne, Joshua Project and many others. This significant resource will be highlighted in the US Center for World Mission magazine - Mission Frontiers, and made available to the public this fall.

## The Arabic HOPE



Editing of the Arabic HOPE was completed in July. Praise be to God! And thanks to the Arab World Evangelical Ministers' Association and Second Presbyterian Church of Memphis for their perseverance! DVDs should be available to the public later this fall. Plans for the Arabic HOPE include broadcasts throughout the Middle East and inclusion in the upcoming Arabic Treasures CD being produced by the Digital Bible Society.

## The HOPE ESL Software Curriculum being used by Missionaries Worldwide



The growing global demand for English as a second language has created a great opportunity to share the Gospel with an ever widening number of students. With dozens of interactive games and exercises, all built around the story of God's promise, The HOPE ESL software curriculum has become a key tool for hundreds of missionaries worldwide. To learn more visit [www.thehopeesl.org](http://www.thehopeesl.org).

# MARS HILL - Michigan

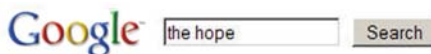


David Zeoli (standing) and Marty Hogan

At the end of 2008, after more than 50 years of proclaiming the Gospel through media, one of our most beloved ministry partners closed their doors. Over the past three decades, Gospel Communications and Mars Hill partnered in projects that were used by God to bring thousands of people around the world to faith in Christ. We praise God for all He did through our relationship with past president Billy Zeoli and his team!

In their final chapter of ministry, Gospel Communications blessed Mars Hill yet again by donating all of their production and post-production equipment to Mars Hill in order to further the mission of The HOPE. What's more, Gospel's International Director, David Zeoli (Billy's son), has decided to continue working with us to produce translations of The HOPE. In his role with Gospel Communications, David was involved in the production of the Bambara, Swahili, and Romanian versions of The HOPE.

David is so committed to the ministry of The HOPE that he is raising the funds to produce 2-3 translations a year. David's first translation project of this year is Tagalog, a major language of the Philippines. Next, he's looking at a Hungarian version and several African versions. David, along with his editor, Marty Hogan, will be working out of the studio we set up in Michigan with the equipment we received from Gospel.



If you did a Google search for *the hope*, the first 2 website listings you'd get would be for sites streaming The HOPE video. Every day people around the world are finding The HOPE in this way.

Many of them are in areas hostile to the Gospel. One such man, a physician in Malaysia, explained that leaving Islam means prison. He wrote to let us know he had decided to live for Jesus after viewing The HOPE online. We praise God for using The HOPE online 24/7!



## Bringing HOPE to the Villages of the World



In a remote Cambodian village Kirk Richter sets up to show The HOPE.

Despite a dramatic global trend toward urbanization, nearly half the world's population still lives in rural areas and villages. From the mountains of Tibet, to the plains of Africa, to the rainforests of the Amazon basin, missionaries are taking The HOPE to out-of-the-way places around the world to reach the unreached. In Honduras, evangelist Edwin Villafranca has gone to the most remote parts of his country with La Esperanza (the Spanish HOPE). God has used his efforts to bring thousands of villagers to faith in Christ.

## Broadcasting The HOPE of Christ in India



**India** - Gospel for Asia will be broadcasting up to four language versions of The HOPE on an ongoing basis. India has more

unreached people groups (2,952) than any other country in the world. GFA has over 16,500 active missionaries.

## Milestones for The HOPE

In August, distribution of The HOPE DVD passed the 250,000 mark. This does not include the thousands of ESL HOPE and Chinese Treasures CDs that have been distributed. Most HOPE DVDs are sold at quantity discounts to facilitate outreach initiatives.

We anticipate the completion of nine HOPE translation projects this year, bringing our total number of available

languages to 35. For the status of translations (completed and in process) visit [www.thehopewebsite.org](http://www.thehopewebsite.org).

## Hearing of HOPE in the Former Soviet Union . . .

We are hearing wonderful stories of how God is using The HOPE in the former Soviet Union.



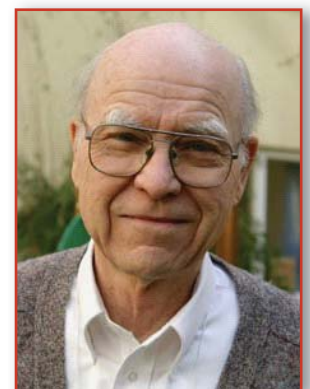
The Romanian Hope is actually used in public schools to teach the Bible. In another country (unnamed for security reasons), the Art School Dean in the State University has begun a program whereby as many as 500 students will view the Russian HOPE this year. They will then compete in a contest to illustrate the stories they have seen. To what degree the Dean is spiritually motivated is unclear. We do know that she likes The HOPE, and we know that God is behind this story!

## Tribute to a Life Well Spent

Dr. Ralph Winter recently celebrated his homecoming with Jesus. According to The Christian Post, Dr. Winter is regarded by many as the most influential missiologist in the latter half of the 20th Century, if not the entire century. John Piper said, "Nobody in the area of missions had a greater impact on me." Billy Graham credited Dr. Winter for having "accelerated world evangelization."

Dr. Winter founded the U.S. Center for World Mission which has played a key role in mobilizing thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of Christians worldwide to become strategically involved in fulfilling the Great Commission by prioritizing the thousands of remaining unreached people groups in the world.

Mars Hill's Fred Carpenter was blessed to receive advice from Dr. Winter in the early stages of developing the dissemination strategy for The HOPE. In a conversation with Dr. Winter just prior to a Mars Hill board meeting, Fred asked, "Do you have a word of advice or insight for me that I could share with my board?", to which Dr. Winter replied (in a tone reminiscent of Winston Churchill), "Fred, tell them we're in a war!" After waiting for some further comment, but receiving none, Fred asked, "Is that it?" To which Dr. Winter replied, "If they really get that, it will be enough."



Dr. Ralph Winter  
December 8, 1924 - May 20, 2009

Affiliate Member  
of the Evangelical  
Council for  
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Accountability



Mars • Hill is a non-profit ministry dedicated to using media to draw people to Jesus Christ. For more than 30 years, award-winning Mars • Hill films and videos have been used around the world to introduce thousands of people to Jesus Christ.

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