



Update on the Worldwide Ministry of The HOPE . . .

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Reflections from 40 Years with Mars Hill

4 Things I Have Come to Value in Ministry

For 40 years, I have been blessed to serve as the president of the media ministry, Mars Hill Productions. I am truly grateful to know that, over the years, thousands upon thousands of people around the world have come to faith in Christ after viewing a Mars Hill film or video. But looking back, even more than what has been accomplished in the world, what I value most are the things God taught me personally in the process. After all, I just work in the vineyard. God brings the fruit! But the lessons He has etched into my being while in the vineyard, those will stay with me for eternity! As I reflect on what I have learned over these years, there are 4 things I have come to value in ministry.

Celebrating
40 Years
 of Ministry Through Media

Purpose – Webster defines purpose as the reason for which something is done or created or for which it exists. All Christians have one common purpose; to glorify God! But the way that purpose is worked out in the lives of individual Christians is often very different. So it is with ministries. There are many ministries (both Church-based and para-Church) called of God to share the Gospel so people might come to faith and life-change in Christ. Mars Hill was raised up to create media tools that help those ministries fulfill that calling.

It is important for those who work in a ministry to know what God has raised up that ministry to do. It is just as important to know what it should not be doing. Mars Hill is a toolmaking ministry. We make media tools for workers. That is our purpose. It has been worked out in unique ways at different times.

In the early days, Mars Hill was focused on creating media tools for youth ministry; evangelism, discipleship and mobilization. At one point, we diverted from that track to create a tool (a video driven curriculum)

to help adults discover the abundant Life and freedom that is ours in Christ. Now, through The HOPE, God has immersed us in His global movement to bring people from every tongue, tribe and nation to Himself. As a toolmaker, we are helping ministries worldwide, reach the unreached!

Each of these out-workings of our main purpose was, and is, a distinct mission with its own mission strategy. These were not just “good ideas and plans.” They were the result of an intense process of seeking God for the next thing He would have us do to work out our main purpose; our calling as toolmakers. Often, the “next thing” was confirmed as God surrounded us with ministry partners; people who needed the tool we were creating, or had created, in order to help fulfill their mission.

When your specific God-given purpose is clearly understood, your values will be well-defined. When your values are well-defined, the decisions you make along the way will be consistent with your God-given purpose. When you lose sight of that purpose, you are at risk of inventing one on your own.

People – Some might say it is a “no-brainer;” the quality and success of an organization is a function of the quality and success of its people. But the Church, the Body of Christ, is more than just an organization, it is an organism. As a ministry raised up by God to serve the Church, Mars Hill is part of that organism. And those who make up the various communities that define Mars Hill (the staff, board, donors, intercessors, ministry partners, etc.) are much more than just a means to get a job done.

God did not create us because He needs us to get a job done for Him. He can do

anything, and apart from Him we can do nothing! As previously stated, God created us for His glory. What brings God glory is not what we do for Him, but what He does through us. We are His instruments; conduits of His life. As such, that life must be fed. I believe my role as “president” of Mars Hill includes a pastoral responsibility to foster a culture that feeds the life of Christ in every person involved in this ministry.

That is why we publish updates like this one; so that donors and intercessors may be encouraged by the way God has used them to help make the ministry possible. That is why, from the beginning, both our staff and board have prioritized time together in the Word, and in prayer. That is what keeps us in sync with our common purpose, and the God of all purpose.

I also believe it is important to remember that what we are doing now, in this world, is really training for what we will be doing for eternity. The implications of that truth should profoundly affect how we view and treat the people we interact with at every level in this ministry.

Perseverance – Oh the value of “a long obedience in the same direction!” Eugene Peterson borrowed this phrase from Friedrich Nietzsche for the title of one of his books. The point of it is that some things not only take time, but often, a great amount of effort over a long period of time.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Mars Hill! Certainly, creativity and commitment to a standard of excellence have played a role in the story of what God has done through this ministry. But without hesitation, I can say that the greatest factor in whatever impact we’ve had is perseverance . . . that “long obedience in the same direction.”

There is a reason I’ve listed perseverance after purpose and people. If the understanding of your God-given purpose is clear

enough and the commitment to those on your team and in your community is deep enough, then you will persevere!

Providence - This is defined as the protective care of God. Without that, all else is meaningless. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” - Psalm 127:1.

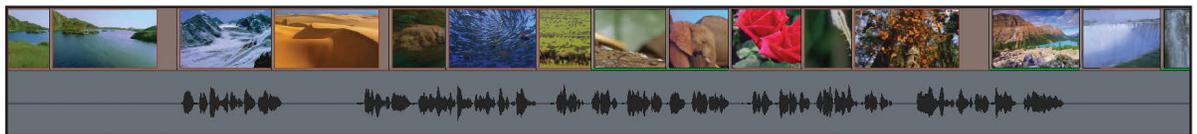
It is said that hindsight is 20/20. Looking back, I see clearly that Mars Hill has not been my story. Nor has it been the story of the staff, the board or those who surround us with prayer and giving. This has been God’s story, in which our stories play a part. Our stories derive their meaning and value from His story.

If we were to study a 50% completed Persian rug on the loom, we would see in the first half, a complex pattern. From that pattern, we could not only anticipate the next few inches to be weaved, we could know that, by the hands of a master weaver, the second half will identically mirror the first half. God is the ultimate master weaver. The tapestry of His story will incorporate our story exactly as it is intended. This truth can give us confidence and comfort, and change the way we respond to any circumstance. It can keep us reliant on God, rather than our own fleshly tactics, to move the ministry forward.

Through the years, there’ve been times we’ve misstepped, thinking we were doing the right thing when we were really veering off track. But God has always been faithful to correct our course. Forty years of ministry has shown me that His grip on us is always more important than our grip on Him. It is a wonderful thing to realize that our inability to follow God perfectly does not affect His ability to lead us perfectly. I love Psalm 57:2 from the ESV Bible, “I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me.” All glory to God!!!

- Until All Have Heard,
Fred Carpenter - President, Mars Hill

Updating The HOPE



Several scenes including Adam & Eve, Babel and Creation (above) will be updated.

The original idea for The HOPE may have come from a moment of creative inspiration, but the actual design of The HOPE was less about creativity, and more about “market research” with missionaries in the Body of Christ worldwide.

Before deciding to produce The HOPE, we asked many, many missionaries, “Do you even need another media tool?” and if so, “What should it look like?” The answer to the first question was a resounding, “Yes!” And from their answers to the next question, we came up with a list of criteria that The HOPE has to satisfy. For instance, a) It had to tell the whole story, from creation to Christ, b) It had to accomplish the first expectation, “a” in less than 90 minutes, c) It had to be adaptable for any people group, and d) It had to be adaptable for any situation; i.e.- viewed entirely in a single evangelistic event or viewed over time in segments for a discipleship study.

What resulted from taking this input seriously was a very different kind of media project than we had ever produced. In fact, our president and director of The HOPE says it violated most of the rules he learned in film school. If the chief goal was creative expression, he never would have made The HOPE. That said, the proof is, as they say, “in the pudding!” With nearly 70 translations in use around the world and about 25 new translation projects in process, God is confirming how He led us in making The HOPE.

The HOPE was designed to be a living project. In this sense it is actually less like a typical motion picture that is released once for all time, and more like a software program with updated versions. As such, we are now on a track to update many of the images in The HOPE to give it a more contemporary feel, and to incorporate some of the things we’ve learned over the years about what does and doesn’t work with different people groups in different parts of the world. You will hear more about this in the coming year, so please pray for us in this process!



The Power of Partnering in a Digital World

Some of the stories below are about ministry in regions of the world where security is a significant issue. If hostile people were to track these stories back to our ministry partners, the ministry activity, and sometimes even the lives of those involved, could be at risk. For this reason, we hope you will understand why we use symbols (****) to guard the identity of certain people and places.

Millions of M***** Seekers View Clips from The HOPE Thousands Engage in Conversation

Our ministry partners in ***** use a Facebook page designed to reach M***** seekers who would like to know more about the God of the Bible. The HOPE is made up of 36 Biblical events, which are organized into 12 Chapters. These partners have uploaded video clips of the 36 events in a special section of their Facebook page to highlight the unified story.

Some of these clips have had millions of views, and as a result, thousands of online conversations have begun between our partners and M***** seekers. This is a very fruitful and dangerous strategy. Some of the conversations were with very hostile viewers seeking to eliminate Christians.



This clip from Facebook on a mobile phone shows 10.4 million views of the burning bush scene from The HOPE.



TGC & The HOPE Partnering to end theological famine worldwide!

Helping End Theological Famine

Globally, 85% of evangelical churches are led by pastors who have no access to formal education or training. To aid in relieving this theological famine, The Gospel Coalition has been translating theological and biblical resources (ie; John Piper books, study bibles, etc.) for the pastors and elders of churches in these least reached areas. Mars Hill has been invited to collaborate with The Gospel Coalition by making The HOPE available in a variety of new ways so international church planters can be equipped to teach the meta-narrative of scripture to their congregations.

The Farsi HOPE and Study Guide are on this TGC website: <http://www.mahfeleenjil.com/the-hope-film/>. TGC intends to share The HOPE in all available languages with their global network of reformed missionaries and church planters. Currently, The HOPE is the only video/film that TGC is planning to use in this strategy. They like The HOPE's versatility to aid in teaching Biblical theology to oral peoples.

Telegram App Offers Secure Means for Sharing the Truth

Every month, SAT-7 Media broadcasts The Farsi, Arabic, and Turkish HOPE across the Arab-speaking world via satellite TV. In the Persian Gulf and parts of North Africa, SAT-7 uses the Telegram app as their primary audience relation tool to engage with millions of Muslim viewers. Because Telegram users are not able to see or interact with other users, the app is a safe and secure way for seekers to reach out with questions about programing they have seen. SAT-7 recently approached Mars Hill requesting clips of The HOPE to use for a daily Bible study within the Telegram app. This project, coming soon, will share The HOPE with as many as 80,000 people who currently engage with SAT-7 via Telegram.



HOPE from the heavens via Satellite Television, and on the ground via a secure Web-based App!

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow . . . but the Gospel Remains



In security sensitive areas downloads of The HOPE are shared in the underground Church.

In May, the Southern Baptist's International Mission Board, together with another one of our ministry partners, built a website to covertly share the Gospel with M***** seekers in ****. This secure website was promoted in a variety of security sensitive ways, not the least of which was word of mouth in the underground Church. The site was only up for 30 days to keep its originators from being tracked.

The site contained two video streams of The HOPE in **** and ***** as well as a first-of-its-kind download option for visitors to receive a copy of The HOPE. The website was also equipped with a live chatroom, where 5 **** speakers, based in the U.S., were available 24/7 to follow up and minister to visitors. During that month, there were 357 downloads of The **** HOPE from within ****.

A New Internet Strategy for Reaching the World!

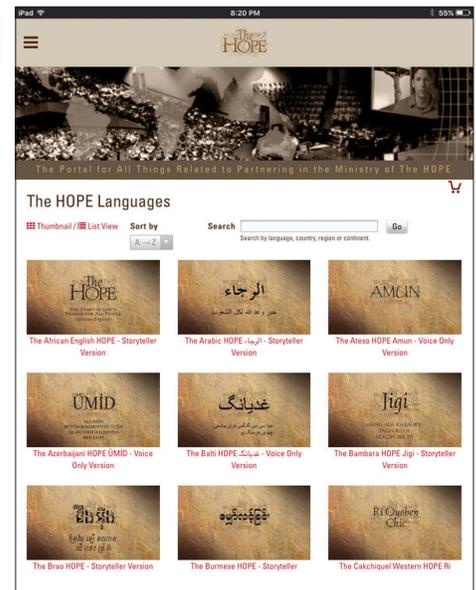
Well, maybe it is not a new strategy, but it's new for us. Hardly anyone else is doing anything like it . . . and it will reach the world!

www.TheHOPEProject.com is our website for streaming The HOPE and providing our companion Study Guide. By March 2018, we expect to be streaming 70 languages of The HOPE on this website. Hundreds of people from around the world visit this site daily. If someone indicates a decision to follow Christ, they can connect to an online missionary with one of our ministry partners. Since its inception, we've viewed the Internet as one of the main venues where our ministry happens . . . but no longer!

For much of the world, particularly where most of the unreached people groups live, video streaming is just not possible. The Internet pipeline is too slow, or non-existent. In these regions, someone wanting The HOPE needs to be able to download it, even if it takes all night because of slow Internet. And the download file needs to be small enough to work on a mobile phone. The current data shows that the majority of people in the world now access the Internet on their mobile devices.

To meet the need, we've invested a lot of time, energy and resource into updating www.HOPEPartnering.com, our web portal "For All Things Related to Partnering in The HOPE." Historically, this was the place where people learned how to partner in creating translations of The HOPE. It is now a part of the main Mars Hill website, and moving forward, it will be our main portal for delivering The HOPE. We even foresee a time when downloads will replace DVDs. Check out the section of this website that shows all The HOPE languages - www.TheHOPELanguages.com. It is really amazing to see what God has done through our partners worldwide.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this new development is the way it has returned us to our roots. We've always believed that the highest use of media for ministry is as a tool in the hands of a Christian working to reach another person (or people) for Christ. Until now, we've viewed the Internet as one of our primary venues for ministry. We now view it more as our primary means for delivering The HOPE to those doing the ministry. Our goal is to provide The HOPE to the "boots-on-the-ground" Christian workers around the world whenever, wherever and however they need it!



Tablet screen-shot of our new website for delivering The HOPE ... at your fingertips, 70 translations and counting!

Quotes

"The HOPE" is a real gift to the UPGs abroad and around the block. Neo pagan America needs a primer in biblical literacy ... We appreciate your awesome work. - **David B., SaturateNYC**

"The HOPE is a great overview of the big picture of the Bible and the story of the Gospel" - **Phil Thompson, Online Learning Coordinator, The Gospel Coalition**

"... a perfect partnership for our ministry ... The HOPE is designed intelligently to be more accessible than a lot of Christian media." - **Ethan H., Medical Missionary to W. Africa**

The Help Reach Them Campaign

God desires to populate heaven with people from every tongue, tribe and nation. But so many are still unreached! In fact missiologists tell us that, of the world's approximately 16,500 "ethne" (the Biblical word for nations), around 7,000 have yet to be reached with the Gospel!

The HOPE was designed to overcome 4 obstacles to reaching unreached people groups (nations) with the Gospel. Recently, we created a 3.5 min. video explaining how and why. Never before have we stopped our work on The HOPE to create a media piece about The HOPE. But it was time!

God, through His people, is using The HOPE to reach the nations. But with some help, we could do so much more! This video is part of a larger, Help Reach Them, campaign. To seize the opportunities before us, we are in need of key personnel, donors, intercessors, community networkers, social media advocates, ministry partners and more! Please visit our "Get Involved" page at www.HelpReachThem.com to watch our new video and learn about all the ways you could get involved to reach the nations! And please, feel free to share this video with as many people as possible. That is one way you can Help Reach Them!



Please share our new video about The HOPE, and the need to reach the nations with the Gospel!



The HOPE is a project of Mars Hill, a non-profit ministry dedicated to ministry through media. For 40 years, award-winning Mars Hill films and videos have been used around the world to introduce thousands of people to Jesus Christ.

The Mars Hill website - www.mars-hill.org
Email us at hopeinfo@mars-hill.org

The HOPE Partnering Portal - <http://www.hopepartnering.com/>
The HOPE Ministry website - www.TheHOPEProject.com

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