

The Grace of an Overwhelming Assignment  
by Bob Scudieri

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In a presentation to the Overseas Missions Study Center, Prof. Phillip Jenkins, author of *The Next Christendom*, observed, “*If I had not believed it, I would not have seen it with my own eyes.*” This is more than postmodern kitsch. Augustine observed something similar: “*Nisi credideritis, non intelligitis*”—“Unless you believe, you will not understand.”

Ken Behnken has given me the privilege of sharing some thoughts in this newsletter from time to time. The thought I want to share now is the value of believing.

Mission planters, those called to bring something out of nothing, have to believe—believe in the mercy of God who works through tired sermons and anxious lives. Believe in the One who gives life to new churches—each new church is a gift from God. But also to believe in a vision, a picture of an ideal state which is imparted to the new church developer by this One.

A study done by seven U.S. denominations looked at the top characteristics of successful church planters. Through interviewing hundreds of church planters, one of the most important characteristics was found to be the ability to cast a vision of what the new church could look like in ten years—and the ability to get people in the core group to own this vision. If you do not know where you are going, any road will get you there. Having a vision for a mission, old or new, is a powerful tool—one which allows the developer and core group to set goals and objectives and to allocate resources as good stewards.

Several years ago in a series of meditations I shared with new church planters in Australia, I focused on “Grace Points” for new missionaries. In the midst of tremendous challenges, God’s grace was not only required, but it was already present.

One of these “grace points” was the grace of an overwhelming assignment. Every new mission developer has sat back sometime and said, “I just can’t do this—it is too much.” Right. Most of these developers then came to the realization that they were not doing it—that every new mission was a gift from God. For these people this is a grace point.

When overwhelmed by challenges of mission, those challenges may just be a gentle reminder to trust in Him who is the author of mission, our Lord Jesus—who, when overwhelmed by death, brought the victory of life.

If I hadn’t believed it, I would not have seen it with my own eyes!■