

Update on the Worldwide Ministry of The HOPE . . .

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MINISTRY THROUGH MEDIA

Compelled by the Story of His Glory

What Happened on the Road to Making that Blockbuster Film

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." - Ephesians 2:10

Every person is moved through life by the power of a story. Some people attempt to live out a story of their own making. Others attempt to live out a story they feel that others, such as a parent or a peer group, have written for them. Blessed is the person who discovers the story that God Himself has written for their life, the story that is uniquely theirs within His greater story.

"I had always felt life first as a story and if there is a story there is a storyteller."

- G.K. Chesterton

My Story: The One I Was Writing for Myself

- In 1977 God opened the door for me to launch Mars Hill as a division of Youth for Christ/Houston. For more than a decade He allowed me to write and direct numerous award-winning short dramatic films that were used by youth workers across America to lead thousands upon thousands of young people to Christ. In 1987 Mars Hill was spun off as a separate ministry. For several years, Mars Hill continued to produce media for youth ministry. We were making a difference. But deep down, I was not content. I had a strong desire to make a movie that would effectively convey the Gospel in theaters nationwide. The storyline I was writing for myself had Mars Hill going down a road that would ultimately lead us to the creation of a blockbuster "Christian" film. What could be more worthwhile than that, right?

His Story: The Story of His Glory

- In the mid-90's, God did something I wasn't expecting. He gave me an understanding of the Great Commission that I'd somehow missed, even after twenty years of ministry. Prior to that time, I thought that our mission as Christians was simply to reach as many people

for Christ as possible, and then at the appointed time Jesus would return, and we'd all go to heaven. At the risk of oversimplifying, what I came to see was this.

a) The scope of the Great Commission is defined not only in terms of individual people, but also people from every tongue, tribe and nation. b) Biblically speaking, a nation is not simply a country. It is a distinct people group. c) There are thousands of people groups (nations) in the

world. Thousands have yet to be reached with the Gospel. And finally, d) reaching every nation is a pre-condition for the completion of the Great Commission, the return of Christ and ultimately, our worship of God as He forever intends it.

Seeing the connection between world missions and worship was especially transformative for me. In the words of John Piper, *"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. The glory of God is the ultimate goal of the church—because it's the ultimate goal of God. The final goal of all things is that God might be worshiped with white-hot affection by a redeemed company of countless persons from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). Missions exists because worship doesn't. When the kingdom finally comes in glory, missions will cease. Missions is penultimate; worship is ultimate. If we forget this and reverse their roles, the passion and the power for both diminish."* The understanding of this truth framed God's story for me in a compelling new way. God's story is the story of His glory!

His Story for Me: My Story within His Story

- When I finally got hold of this picture, or should I say when it got hold of me, there was no turning back. I knew I had to let God realign my story (the one I had written) to line up with His story

for me, the one He'd written from before time (Eph. 2:10). I began to see how much selfishness was in my desire to create that blockbuster film. I knew I had to use everything He had entrusted to me for the purpose of helping to bring the unreached nations to the throne of the Lamb!

That is soil in which the seeds for our video, The HOPE, were planted. And to be clear, The HOPE is unlike any movie I would have ever created on my own. It violates many of the principles I learned in film school. It is essentially the result of what missionaries around the world told us they needed, an overview of God's redemptive story from creation through Christ. But the proof of its value is as they say, "in the pudding." There are over 70 translations/adaptations in use around the world with over 25 new translations in process. Of all these translations, Mars Hill has initiated only about a dozen. All the others are the result of missionaries and ministries who have approached us requesting a translation for the people group they are working to reach. And the requests continue to come!

Sure, there have been many moments when my resolve to follow His storyline for my life has been tested. With the current wave of "Christian films" in the mainstream marketplace, I am constantly reminded of the dream I once held dear. But I can also remember very clearly the morning that our Father showed me that I will have eternity to explore new creative endeavors, but I can only follow this storyline now. The type of Christian films that are now finding an audience in North America would not work with tribal groups on the Amazon or with those living in closed access Muslim countries. In fact, they would not work with most of the world's unreached people groups. (To better understand why The HOPE is uniquely suited to reach unreached people groups watch our 3.5 minute video at www.HelpReachThem.com.)

Has it been easy to give myself to a storyline I would not have written for myself? No! Has it been worth it? Oh yes!!! Not long ago, I was telling a friend about the reach of The HOPE. From the analytics on our main website, www.TheHOPEProject.com, which streams The HOPE video in several languages, we know this site has received visitors from every country in the world. With all the broadcasts of The HOPE into Latin America and the Middle East, in addition to all of the other types of distribution around the world, it is very likely The HOPE has been seen by over a billion people. We know of thousands of people who have come to Christ after watching The HOPE, but only God knows how many more there really are.

My friend asked if it was fulfilling to know how The HOPE is

being used today. I thought before answering. Of course it is fulfilling, but not nearly so much as knowing that I heard my Father and followed His storyline for my life! That is fulfilling in a way that words cannot describe.

Many Stories into One: His Body on Earth - I am aware that what is happening with The HOPE is not the result of my creativity and hard work. It is the result of the sovereign Spirit of God, working in and through many others in the Body of Christ. This includes those on staff at Mars Hill and their families. Each one has chosen to let God line up their personal stories with His grand story. This also includes our board and the many people who have faithfully prayed for and given to our work with The HOPE. Such choices often come with a sacrifice. Sometimes a dream or desire must be released to make way for a better one. What is happening with The HOPE is only possible as many people are willing to pursue God's story for their lives, and He weaves many stories into one!

Jesus's Story: Our Example - Even Jesus submitted Himself to the script the Father had written for Him. Several times in the book of John we see that Jesus did not act or speak on His own initiative, but rather He came to do the will of the Father (John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, 8:28, 8:42, 12:49, 14:10) We read in First Peter 2:23-24 that, "... while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Had Jesus not followed the storyline the Father had written from before time, even to death, we would not know Him today!

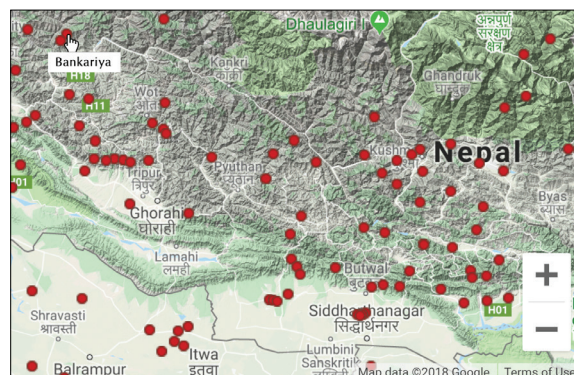
Your Story – The One He has Written for You - How about you? Is the story you are living out, the one He has written for you? If so, though it may at times be difficult, perhaps even very difficult, I assure you that the time will come when you will know indescribable fulfillment in our Father's pleasure. I believe He has created every person to live out a very uniquely personal story within His greater story. I know that God doesn't call everyone to be a part of the Mars Hill story and our work with The HOPE. But I am convinced that each of us is called to find our personal story within the greater story of His glory! May He live large in you so that you might know the joy of walking in the story He has written for you! And may you be blessed so that you might be a blessing to others and bring glory to God!

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

The First Believers in Their Village

In April, in a remote Bankariya village in Nepal, one of our ministry partners showed The Nepali HOPE on a solar powered video projector. The Bankariya are an unreached people group of about 500 people. They live in several small villages. Excited to see the movie, Lalita invited her father to join her. After viewing The HOPE, they both gave their lives to Jesus! Our partner told us Lalita and her father are the very first Believers in their village. From the map at the right, the labeled red dot in the top left corner represents the Bankariya. The other red dots represent other unreached people groups! This is why we continue to do what we do!

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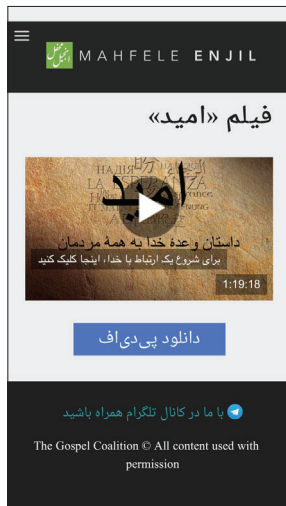


The Reach of The HOPE - How & Where It Is Used

To understand the ministry of The HOPE, it is first helpful to be aware of these two things. a) The HOPE is not an entertainment product. It is an adaptable and versatile media tool. By definition, a tool is a device used to perform a particular function. Some tools can be used to perform multiple functions. Many people have a "go-to" tool, like a favorite kitchen knife.

For many Christian workers around the world, The HOPE has become a "go-to" ministry tool. b) The power of The HOPE does not come from its production value (technical and stylistic merits.) The power comes from the script, which is essentially God's redemptive story from creation through Christ. It is the Gospel, "... the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ..." - Romans 1:16. That said, these are some of the ways The HOPE has been used around the world in 2018 . . .

- **HOPE on World Wide Web** - Our main website, www.TheHOPEProject.com, now streams The HOPE in 25 languages and provides a 65-lesson study guide in several of these languages. This site has received visitors from every country in the world. In addition to our main site, many of our ministry partners have created websites and apps that bring The HOPE to the language groups they are working to reach.



Gospel Coalition mobile site w/The Arabic HOPE

Last year, one of our partners put up a Facebook page in the main language of one of the most populated Muslim countries in the world. This page streams video clips of the 36 Biblical events that make up The HOPE. Several clips have been viewed by millions of people. Tens of thousands of people have posted comments on these clips. Replying to these posts, our partners begin online conversations about Jesus. This has been a very fruitful strategy! We are now working with other partners to set up Facebook pages for their language groups.

- **HOPE for International Students** - There are now more than 1 million International students in the U.S. The nations have come to our doorstep! Many ministries continue to use The HOPE in their outreach to International students. Many of these students will return to their countries after coming to faith in Christ and having been trained to share their faith with others.

- **HOPE for Those Learning English** - Billions of people around the globe are learning English out of economic necessity. Teaching English as a Second Language is a great bridge for sharing the Gospel. Read about The ESL HOPE in "A Never Ending Story of HOPE" - page 4.

- **HOPE in Isolated Places** - Many unreached people groups live in very isolated areas where there is little or no adequate electricity or access to the Internet. If they are going to be reached, someone has to go. And when that someone brings The HOPE on a solar powered video projection system that fits into a backpack, the whole village shows up to watch it! And so it goes, again and again. Unreached people experience The HOPE. For many it is their first time to see a movie and to hear the Gospel. Some (often many) come to Christ. A Bible study is started with a missionary pastor returning on a regular basis to lead it. Eventually a village pastor is raised up, and a Church is planted! For a related story, see "The First Believers in Their Village" - page 2.

Some places are politically isolated. People must break the law to share and receive the Gospel, often at great personal risk. In places like this, on Micro SD cards, The HOPE can be shared discreetly, copied and distributed widely through the underground Church. Hundreds of thousands of copies of The HOPE have been disseminated this way.



Missionary charging up the projector on the way to a showing in the next village



HOPE from above knows no bounds!

- **HOPE from the Heavens** - Several times in 2018, The HOPE was broadcast throughout the Middle East, primarily in Farsi and Turkish. Each of these broadcasts goes out to tens of millions of households. Our broadcast partners have secure methods to respond to viewers requesting spiritual help.

- **HOPE for the Infirm** - Medical and dental missionaries show The HOPE to people waiting to see a doctor. Doctors have told us that one of their greatest joys in these situations is talking with patients about what they saw in The HOPE.

- **HOPE for Refugees** - Because they are often traumatized, vulnerable and ready for a new start, refugees can be very open to the love of Jesus and the Word of God. Several of our partners use The HOPE to lead refugees to know and grow in Him.

- **HOPE in the Hands of His People** - Some of our favorite stories come from individual Christ followers who simply have a passion to lead others come to Christ. Danny had a 2018 goal to share the Gospel by giving out 30 HOPE DVDs every month. Since 2009, he has given out 609 DVDs! Mike's story with The HOPE is inspiring! Read it on page 4, "15 Years of HOPE."

A Never Ending Story of HOPE

About 10 years ago, we received a call from Pete. He said that as a former missionary in Vietnam, he loved using The HOPE, and that he was a fan of teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) as a bridge to share Christ, and that he knew something about software programming. He asked if he could create an ESL software program built around The HOPE. We thought it was a great idea and encouraged Pete to go for it!

Soon, Pete came back to us with The ESL HOPE. Loaded with interactive curriculum and games, we were amazed! We offered the software on DVD and online as a free download, and before long, thousands were in circulation. Missionaries around the world were using Pete's software to teach English and share the Gospel.

Five years ago, an associate of Pete's, named Brendon, went to Vietnam to do HOPE ESL training for some Filipino Church planters. They immediately began using this tool to run gospel focused English clubs in the capital city of Vietnam,.

In July of this year, Brendon received a hero's welcome when he returned to Vietnam for a visit. He discovered 3 churches that did not exist 5 years ago. And he learned of many salvations, and much growth resulting in several committed Vietnamese disciples of Jesus who are serious about serving God with all their lives, some of whom want to church plant or pastor themselves. Brendon's Aussie friends and the Filipino Church planters credit The ESL HOPE as a significant part of this fruit.

Think about it. Many of the Believers who were part of this exciting story knew Brendon, the man who brought The ESL HOPE to their land. Less, if any, knew of Pete, the man who created this tool. And it is unlikely that any of them knew about Mars Hill; the staff, board, funders and intercessors, who originally created The HOPE movie around which the tool is built. This wonderful story is a living example of 1 Co. 3:6-7, "6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." The Gospel is the never ending story!



In the middle, a sister who came to Christ in the first ESL HOPE group and Brendon. On the outside, two of the Church planters who love to use The ESL HOPE

15 Years of HOPE

Mike works in maintenance inspection for a major airline in California. He is passionate about sharing the Gospel! Mike began using The HOPE when it was first released in 2003. He gave copies to his co-workers, to students at a local high school, and people he would meet in restaurants. He gave copies to visitors at church and followed up when possible; as he did with one family whose son watched The HOPE over and over and trusted Christ as Savior. Or the visitor who watched the movie 3 times in 2 days receiving Christ and declaring that The HOPE made God's story so clear to him.

Since 2015, we've heard from Mike often. In a local mall, he helped his Church do an outreach. They rented a kiosk, invited passers-by to visit their church, and gave them a copy of The HOPE. For the church's latest outreach, they set up a table at a local Farmer's Market. In addition to handing out tracts and HOPE DVDs, they gave out cards inviting people to visit their church, and to watch The HOPE online by scanning a QR code. Through 15 years of ministry, we have watched Mike help his church flex with ever-changing technology (from VHS to DVD to QR codes), while continuing to prioritize sharing the Gospel!



Card with QR code to The HOPE

Our Newest Team Member

The Staff and Board of Mars Hill are pleased to welcome our new Ministry Partnering Director and his family to the team! In this role, Rob Watt will focus on building and nurturing ministry partnerships with those who help create new translations of The HOPE, as well as those who use existing translations worldwide. The Watt family has come to us from the mission field in Micronesia. The agency they were with traces its roots to Hudson Taylor's Inland China Mission. As do all full-time salaried staff, Rob is now building a team of people who will partner with their ministry at Mars Hill through prayer and funding. Please pray for Rob! Contact us if you would like to learn more, or if the Lord is prompting you to join his team.



The beautiful Watt family

We won! See our 3.5 min. video at www.HelpReachThem.com. It has now won 10 awards!



The HOPE is a project of Mars Hill, a non-profit ministry dedicated to ministry through media. For more than 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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