



Dr. Layton Burkart



Beulah Missions Team



Seamless Links: Beulah Style

*Weaving an enlarged vision of missions into
the cultural fabric of the local church*

BY ERIC PERSSON

Dr. Layton Burkart, an emergency room physician, finds his heart stirred in new ways. He is discovering exciting opportunities to live out his faith among his peers in the medical profession, as they begin to inquire about the things that motivate his life. The catalyst behind this freshness breathed into his life was his leadership of three teams to conduct medical clinics in remote villages of Niger.

Victim Service's police sergeant Bob Pagee participated with a children's ministry team providing children's activities at a team conference for the Asian Spice Region. Within a year of that experience, he and his wife Anne-Marie took an early retirement. They and

their two teenagers moved to Penang, Malaysia, to minister in the Penang International Church. After two years in Penang, the family continues to marvel at the ways God has enriched and empowered their lives.

These two stories flow from an initiative of the Alliance in Canada along with steps taken by their local congregation, Beulah Alliance Church, to remove the seam that seemed to separate their lives from the concerns and the work of their international partners around the world.

Seamless Links is all about removing or shortening the gap between "Jerusalem, Judea and the ends of the earth." It is about establishing dynamic partnerships between Alliance churches and our international partners



working around the world. It seeks to discover contemporary ways that will make our global responsibility fresh and sustainable. It is about engaging a whole new generation of globally-minded believers and churches who will take the mandate of the Canadian Alliance to unprecedented levels.

It is about engaging a whole new generation of globally-minded believers and churches

On the ground level, in a local church like Beulah Alliance, embracing the Seamless Link model has meant some significant paradigm shifts that have breathed new life and excitement into an already substantial history of Alliance

missions awareness and endeavours.

The first step, for us, was to establish a formal partnership agreement with the Desert Sand region, in general, and specifically, with our international partners in Niger. The goal was that, in direct and significant ways, Beulah could participate in bringing North Africa back to faith in Christ.

These formal partnerships do not exclude us from meaningful relations and support for the work of our Canadian Alliance International Workers in the other regions of the world. Two-thirds of our missions giving are still designated to Global Advance, but the final third is ear-marked for the Desert Sand region.

These agreements were forged after a year of conversations with Tim Tjosvold, one of Beulah's cluster International Workers and team leader in Niger. They were preceded by a visit to Niger by our senior pastor and global missions pastor. Subsequently, Beulah pastoral staff and elders participated with our partners in a think tank discussion, on-site, in Niamey, Niger. This process finally led to a formally written and signed partnership agreement that spelled out our individual roles and responsibilities over the next five years.

As we began to engage our Beulah community in fulfilling our partnership responsibilities, we came up with our own style of Seamless Link. In this framework, individuals and ministries at Beulah are asking how they can take their passions, their spiritual gifts, their resources and their ministry and discover how far they can go into the world to bring the message of God's love to the least-reached peoples of the world.

These reflections have spawned 53 different ministry-related short-term mission projects in the last six years with over 350 individuals taking who God has made them to be, into partnership missions


projects—young adults with their keen sensitivity to social injustice; children's ministry workers with their passion for molding young lives; intercessors with their ears attune to the voice of God's Spirit; men and women with hearts of compassion.

Farmers, gardeners, trades people, teachers, techie geeks... they are all discovering that their steps of faith and obedience can start individuals, from the least-reached people groups of the world, on a journey toward faith in Christ.

Out of that number, a dozen have been lead into medium-length international ministries, lasting from several months to several years. A half dozen are now moving towards careers in international ministries. One individual and three couples are actually now overseas on assignments.

Just as significantly, decision-makers and influencers within the congregation are beginning to change the culture of Beulah Alliance Church, as they weave their enlarged vision of broad global horizons into the fabric of the church. ☪

Eric Persson is an Associate Pastor at Beulah Alliance Church in Edmonton, Alberta



Perspectives™

on the World Christian Movement

"The mission oriented church of the 21st century will very likely be lead by laity who have graduated from the Perspectives course. So why not consider having a group of people from your church participate in a "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" course offered in your area?"

Dr Charles Cook, Professor of Global Studies and Mission, Ambrose Seminary.

CHECK FOR A CLASS NEAR YOU

www.perspectivescanada.org