

History of the *Mission Handbook*

For more than fifty years the *Mission Handbook*, under different names, different publishers and in different formats, has been providing thousands of readers with comprehensive information on U.S. and Canadian-based Protestant mission agencies engaged in overseas missions. The 20th edition of the *Handbook* includes complete information on more than eight hundred U.S. and Canadian-based ministries that are changing the world for Jesus Christ. This invaluable resource includes information such as agency name and contact information, purpose statement, areas of ministry, countries of ministry, number of personnel and more.

The 2007-2009 edition of the *Mission Handbook*

The research for the 2007-2009 *Mission Handbook* took over a year. Research was gathered via mail, email, fax or phone. Each agency received the same questionnaire. As times and mission agencies have changed, so too has certain aspects of the questionnaire. Key questions, however, have stayed the same. For example, questions relating to financial data have used the same definitions since the late 1970s. The countries of service and field personnel questions have remained the same since the early 1990s when the “more than four years” definition for long-term personnel was instituted. These definitions were determined in consultation with editors of other mission directories and leaders in national mission associations.

Dr. Scott Moreau, a former missionary to Africa who is currently serving as editor of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and as head of the Intercultural Studies department at Wheaton College Graduate School (Wheaton, Illinois), did an overview of the survey database. The result was a comprehensive analysis of trends in U.S. and Canadian-based ministries serving overseas.

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The *Mission Handbook* first appeared in 1953 with the title *Foreign Missionary Agencies in the United States: A Check List*. It was compiled and mimeographed by the Missionary Research Library (MRL) in New York. The MRL was founded in 1914 at the initiative of John R. Mott who chaired the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910 and headed its continuation committee.

In 1968 the publication became a cooperative effort of MRL and the Missions Advanced Research and Communication (MARC) Center, a division of World Vision International near Los Angeles, California. The title was changed to *North American Protestant Ministries Overseas Directory*. In 1973 the title included “Mission Handbook” as the publication began to include related articles and expanded analyses of the survey data. In 1976 MARC became the sole publisher. The Mission Handbooks of the 1990s contained chapters by MARC director Bryant L. Myers which provided a global perspective of evangelism and missions using maps, charts, graphs and pictures. Also in the 1990s, chapters from the Catholic (www.uscatholicmission.org) and Orthodox (www.ocmc.org) mission communities were added and “Protestant” in the title was changed to “Christian.” Presently, readers are referred to the websites of these two groups for their mission data.

For nearly two decades, John A. Siewert of MARC served as editor of the *Handbook*. In 2000 the Evangelism and Missions Information Service (EMIS) of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College near Chicago, Illinois became the publisher of the *Mission Handbook*. Under the transitional leadership of Siewert and the guidance of EMIS executive editor Kenneth Gill, the 18th edition (copyright 2000) was the first volume to be produced by EMIS. This edition is the third volume published by EMIS.

