

## 2017 Overview

Dear Friends,

This past year was another fruitful season in the life of the Mustard Seed Foundation. Members of our small MSF staff team continue to travel the world to meet with church leaders that are working to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to disciple new believers, and to transform their communities by loving and serving their neighbors. MSF partners with these local congregations by giving small grants to match their budgets and to encourage their efforts.

Out of a total operating budget of nearly \$2.7 million, our giving in 2017 was about \$2 million. Our dedicated Board and staff reviewed and approved 220 church grants in 49 countries, ranging from church planting grants, to youth discipleship, to outreach to Muslim refugees, to small enterprise loan funds in economically distressed cities. Our average grant size was \$6,000, ranging from smaller grants of \$2,500 in South Asia to significantly larger grants in the US, Europe, and Japan.

The Harvey Fellows program continues to flourish, with support for 32 gifted Christian graduate students totaling \$384,000. Our Theology of Work program in 2017 supported 35 courses and seminars worldwide with \$221,000 in grants. 5,964 students graduated from these courses, and evaluations indicate that lives are changed and people empowered by understanding how God works through our vocations and endeavors.

We are grateful for the diligence and wisdom of the Mustard Seed Board, comprised of three generations of members of the Harvey and Bakke families. In 2017 Tucker Laffitte rotated off the Board after five years of service and Elizabeth Bakke retired after a decade of service. New members Margaret Bakke and Dargan Thompson began serving on the Board.

Our Junior Board had an exciting and productive year. Brian Bakke and Jesus Canales led a group of four teens on an “urban plunge” to Guatemala City, where they visited grantees and were able to better understand the challenges

of poverty in the developing world. Moved by their experiences with school children in Guatemala City, they decided to collect money from their own funds to pay for one child’s school scholarship. Eleven grants were approved, totaling \$40,648.

As we look for trends in world affairs and in our giving, we are encouraged by the renewal of faith and church planting, small but steady, in Western and Eastern Europe, especially in former communist countries. We are heartened by the sacrificial ways many churches respond to suffering from natural disasters and from the refugee displacement caused by war, famine, or political upheaval. We remain concerned about the suffering and exodus of Christians in the Middle East, and about persecuted Christians around the globe. We see evidence that faith in Christ often flourishes under persecution, as is happening in Egypt and China. We continue to pray for an explosion of the gospel in nations caught in conflict, suffering under religious repression or culturally resistant to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Reflecting on 2017 in the life of the Mustard Seed Foundation, we are aware that God has plans and designs that we often can only dimly see. It is a privilege and a delight to be children of God and part of his son Jesus Christ’s body of believers. As each of us trusts in Christ and walks with him, listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and obeying his words to us, God in his wisdom unfolds plans that we could never imagine in our limited minds! We pray this will be a reality in your life.



Eileen & Dennis Bakke