

CMI & MTW: A 25-Year Partnership

by Katie Weaver

When missionary kid Beth Martin grew up attending Children's Ministry International (CMI) workshops at MTW retreats, she had no idea the impact it would have on her as an adult. "Even today, the songs, verses, and truths I was taught as a small child will come to mind." She adds, "I often find myself singing them to my own children!"

This year marks the 25th anniversary of MTW's partnership with CMI, an organization dedicated to biblically-based children's curriculums. Through this relationship, CMI has provided children's programs at MTW's worldwide conferences and events, while MTW has enabled CMI to "establish key relationships with missionary families who now translate the CMI material for work in their countries," according to CMI's director, Brad Winsted. "Our teachers at the MTW regional conferences come from the PCA and other Reformed churches that use our material, and we're always looking for more."

When Hank and Carolyn Thigpen founded Children's Ministry International (CMI) in 1981, they wanted to "teach teachers how to teach." However, they struggled to find support materials that were solidly biblical and systematic. Eventually, they created a curriculum based on the catechism for young children taken from the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Today, CMI's *The Bible Building Blocks of the Faith* encompasses 14 series, each with several groups of topical lessons. The lessons include memory verses, songs, review games, Bible lessons, and crafts.

Over the last 25 years, thanks to CMI's *Building Blocks*, hundreds, if not thousands, of MTW's missionary kids have received a solid foundation in the faith. "I was always amazed at how much they retained," explains Robin White, a long-time missionary with MTW, whose children—including Beth Martin—participated in CMI programs.

Robin White also remembers the importance of CMI curriculum to her family's work in Mexico. "We used it for teaching VBS out in the *colonias*. We even had moms who hung around at VBS and listened to the

Bible stories." And they weren't the only moms learning core truths from the engaging songs and colorful presentations. "I feel like I personally learned from teaching CMI," admits Robin.

Christine and Scott are MTW missionaries in a restricted-access country who have worked to translate CMI's *Building Blocks* curriculum into their area's local language. So far, Christine and Scott have published six of the curriculum books in the local language where they are being used by several churches. Christine loves that the materials are multi-sensory, adding that "the books have been a great guide and model for new teachers in learning the basic components of a Sunday school lesson."

From growing MTW's kids in the faith, to teaching new believers core truths in their own language, CMI's 25-year relationship with MTW has affected the hearts and minds of thousands of children and families across the globe. ■



To learn more about CMI, or to learn how to become a CMI teacher, visit www.childministry.com.