

‘Mission to Unreached Peoples’ Names Kent Parks as International Director

DALLAS—S. Kent Parks, 50, a veteran of 20 years of Baptist mission service in Southeast Asia, will become the international director of Mission to Unreached Peoples (MUP), effective November 1.

MUP, a broadly interdenominational agency, bases its U.S. office in Seattle, WA, and a Canadian office in Abbotsford, BC. Parks will establish the international office initially in Dallas, Texas, and will work in close relationship with the other two offices. His wife, Erika, will also join MUP as a missionary.

The 25-year-old MUP agency focuses on spiritual and physical ministries to unreached peoples around the world, and currently has 300 personnel who raise their own support and serve a number of people groups in 22 countries.

As MUP’s international director, Parks will focus on helping stimulate a global movement to raise up thousands of strategy teams to reach the almost two billion people who are from the least evangelized people groups.

He will continue to emphasize MUP’s mission—“to obey the Great Commission of Jesus Christ by investing our lives, gifts, resources, and vocational skills in God’s work.” MUP seeks evangelists, church planters, disciplers, teachers, community development and healthcare workers, vocational tentmakers, and many more.

The MUP network will continue to expand its role and vision and work to multiply its connections with other like-minded organizations and churches in North America and in other countries, Parks said.

“MUP is multi-denominational but part of our hope is that we could offer another option to Baptist churches who still want to prioritize sending long term workers to unreached people groups,” Parks said. “We will retain our strong Baptist ties and identity.”

Parks, born in Indonesia to missionary parents, brings a lifetime of experience to his new position, including 12 years in Indonesia and seven years in Malaysia. He has served since 2002 as co-facilitator of Ethnê (www.ethne.net), the global Unreached People Initiative of mission leaders from every continent, and since 2001 as co-facilitator of SEALINK, the SEAsia UPG network.

These positions derived out of his role (since 1999) as Southeast Asia regional facilitator for the Network for Strategic Mission on loan from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He and his wife, Erika, joined CBF in 1995 as strategy coordinators for an unreached people group in Indonesia after eight years in Indonesia with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board).

Along the way, he served as pastor of Megargel (Texas) Baptist Church for six years, as a seminary teacher and administrator in the U.S. and Southeast Asia, and as an innovator in initiatives to reach the nearly 28 percent of the world “that has little or no access to any form of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Born in Kediri, Java, Indonesia, he comes from a rich missions heritage. His parents, Keith and Helen Jean Parks, are former missionaries to Indonesia. His father is former president of the Foreign Mission Board and former global missions coordinator for CBF. A brother, Stan Parks, also born in Indonesia, was formerly a strategy coordinator for an unreached people group with CBF and is currently serving in

Singapore as a strategy coordinator and trainer for church planting among unreached people groups.

Kent Parks is married to the former Erika Alcorn of Valdosta, GA, and they have two daughters in college, Katy and Lindsay. He earned a B.A. degree in 1979 from Hardin Simmons University, Abilene, Texas; a Master of Divinity in 1982 from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas; and a Ph.D. degree (majoring in missiology and minoring in Biblical theology) in 1993 from Southwestern Seminary.