**Ed Giles: Global Citizen Farmer**

“Pastor, I have the summer off. Do you know of any missions where I could go?” “Yes, Ed. I can think of 300 right off the bat.”

The first Sunday in 1978 when Beverly and I and our family were assigned to what we would call, “The Three Strongholds of Faith,” the Trousdale Church sponsored an all-church reception and carry-in meal in the basement of the Trousdale Church. The place of our conversation remains clear to me. Ed Giles and I were standing on the steps while bringing up the rear when he posed his question to me.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs is the international organization that was training global rural communities and helping them rebuild a more humane place to live. That afternoon, I called our head office in Chicago to present them with Ed’s offer of service.

The reply was, “Can he put together a little tractor and take it to the Maliwada projectin India?” With some deep hesitancy, but with a lot of bravado, I affirmed that Ed was a Kansas Farmer and Teacher. Ed accepted the challenge of a free trip to India. What lay ahead for him made him a “global citizen farmer.”

Giles had a son who was struggling through what it means to be a responsible citizen. He was interested in going with his dad. When we put Ed on the train to Chicago, his son was nowhere to be found; Ed left without him on the adventure of his life.

A group of United Methodist Men somewhere in Iowa invented a little farm vehicle useful to rural areas. It was named the “TRAG.” It had a Kohler engine, three planetary gears and a small mower-like body. This was something like the lawn mower invented in Macksville.

Ed spent a couple of days in Chicago getting acquainted with the equipment and the arrangements to get it into the heart of the back country in India. The airline shipped it for us for free.

Ed flew to New York and landed at one airport and discovered he was scheduled out at the other airport. He was shocked at the $40 taxi bill. When he landed in Bombay, no one met him—the ICA was noted for missing meeting like this. One can imagine what Ed was experiencing: alone in a very foreign country; unfamiliar with the telephone system and the local money.

At last the lost was found. The ICA House in India gave Ed a couple days of rest along with an orientation about the community to which he was to take the TRAG, put it together and teach the local farmers how to use it.

But to get it there, there is no way to appreciate what he would endure. The India Rural Project at Maliwadi was a three-day journey on an Indian train on which people, produce and pigs shared space together—people were everywhere on this three-day journey into Ed’s global adventure.

When Ed returned, I spent several hours with him to let him tell his story. I asked, “Ed, after you rebuilt the TRAG and taught farmers how to use it, what did you do with your time? His reply was informative. “Oh,” he replied, “I’d walk around the village to see some farmer repairing equipment just like we do at home using bailing wire and chewing gum. I’d kneel by him and hand him a tool.”

“Yes”, I noted, “but you don’t speak Hindi, and the local men didn’t speak English?”

Ed replied, “The language barrier was no problem at all. We spoke farmer.”

Life in the project was not easy. The staff house was an old abandoned castle, with no running water. Each weekend, the staff went to a nearby city to check into a hotel in which they bathed.

One day, Ed was snooping around to discover the castle had a cistern on the roof. This indicated the presence of water somewhere. Ed looked around to discover a well. He called for a rope by which he was lowered into the well. Here, he discovered a new Sears pump. He called for an electric cord to which he attached the pump. Now, the cistern began to fill, but hampered by the number of leaks.

Ed fixed the leaks, and filled the cistern. Now, the project had water, but no shower head. The next weekend, the staff again went to the city and the hotel. It appeared, however, that when Ed returned to the staff house, he carried with him a shower head.

I looked at Ed in amazement. Then I asked, “You didn’t did you?”

Ed smiled in his own charming way, and said nothing.”

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One more note about the TRAG. While we lived on the Korean Island of Jeju-do, we were given one of these little tractors. It would be ideal to use it around the fruit tree orchards. One day, our staff invited all of the men in our village of Kwang-yung il, to attend a demonstration. We would plow our own garden with it. On the day of the invitation, the men in our staff took turns plowing back and forth. It looked messy.

Finally, one of the local men spoke a little English. He said, “Tomorrow, I will bring my bullock and do it right. . . and he did.

Eventually, the village chief accepted the TRAG to plow under and around the fruit trees in the orchard.

(Story told by Pastor Bill Salmon as part of the 130th anniversary of the Trousdale ministry.)