

Kneisel has kept missionaries rolling for more than three decades

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HOUSTON—Foreign missionaries feel called to go and tell, but they also need to be able to "go" when they return home on furlough. Retired missionary Harvey Kneisel founded the [Macedonian Call Foundation](#) to meet that need.



Since he founded the ministry in 1979, Harvey Kneisel's Macedonian Call Foundation has provided more than 1,400 missionaries with transportation during stateside furloughs.

(PHOTO/George Henson)

When he and his family served as Southern Baptist missionaries to India and Guyana, he said, one of their greatest frustrations was trying to find transportation during furloughs. If they purchased a car, they could lose thousands of dollars when they sold it just a few months later.

After his retirement from foreign missionary service, a friend gave him the idea of creating a nonprofit organization to collect cars from church members to provide transportation for furloughing missionaries.

Since 1979, the Macedonian Call Foundation has supplied more than 1,400 missionary families with transportation while stateside.

"That's a lot of cars. That's a lot of trips to the airport to pick up missionaries, a lot of trips to the mechanic to get work done, and a lot of trips to the title office to get titles changed. It's been a lot of work, but it's been a delight," said Kneisel, minister of missions emeritus at [First Baptist Church in Houston](#).

Missionaries pay no fee for use of the car, but they do pay the cost of insurance—\$100 a month—and take care of maintenance of the vehicle while it is in their possession. In order to keep the mileage on the vehicles as low as possible, missionaries are asked to confine their travels in the vehicle to Texas and bordering states.

All the cars are donated to the ministry. While some spring from the generosity of Texans, Kneisel and his wife, Charlene, have driven all over the country to pick up donated vehicles.

A deacon from Oklahoma heard about Macedonian Call and has donated 11 cars he bought at auto auctions.

"What a godly man—what a good thing. He's investing in the lives of all these missionaries—every one of them," Kneisel said.

Kneisel keeps 26 cars in the hands of missionaries and another three or four in reserve in case a switch needs to be made.

In recent years, similar ministries have sprung up in Georgia, North Carolina and Mississippi.

"We would love to see one of these in every state in the Union, because then every missionary would have free transportation," Kneisel said.

But the work in Texas, while rewarding, is becoming taxing.

"I'm 81 years old now, and I'm ready for a little help," he said.

While Kneisel would welcome more volunteers to help find cars for the ministry, pick up missionaries at airports or drive cars to the mechanic, he wouldn't mind handing over the reins of the ministry to someone else altogether.

"I could use someone to help me run the organization. At my age, it doesn't go as easy as it used to, but it's still exciting," he said.

"I've never seen a day that wasn't exciting. When someone gives that car, and I get that car fixed up and a missionary comes in and I hand him that key and he takes off in that vehicle, that is a very great gratification to me."

He also is eager to find someone in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to start a similar or affiliated ministry.

"It has been one of my dreams to see a branch in Dallas," Kneisel said.

The ministry is ideal for someone to take up after retirement, he said.

"There's a Scripture in 3 John, and it says that what you do for those who come to minister ... for what you do to send them on their way, you become a part of their ministry," he said.

"Every time I help a missionary drive off in a car to use for six months or a year, I get the privilege of entering into their ministry. There are a lot of deacons and laymen who are retired that would love to do that."

People interested in donating a vehicle or becoming a volunteer in the

ministry can contact Kneisel at (713) 436-6092, or email him at inquiries@mcftx.org.