

# Missions

## Angola

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# Thinking It Through

BY THOMAS J. SCHELICH

## Clean Stalls

*“Where there are no oxen, the stalls are clean; but much is produced by the strength of an ox.”*  
(Proverbs 14:4, CJB)

As Christians, we are called to live as a community, engaged in one another’s lives. This is the subject of much discussion and writing. The Bible is much more plainspoken than we are. It describes our relationship to one another in simple words—one of which is that we are to help one another.

We read that “everyone helped his neighbor” (Isaiah 41:6), that we must “surely help him” whose donkey has fallen (Deuteronomy 22:4), and “help him” who has fallen into poverty (Leviticus 25:35). Missions is described in Paul’s dream of a man pleading “come over to Macedonia and help us.” (Acts 16:9) In prayer we find grace and strength “to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16) There is a spiritual gift of helps (1 Corinthians 12:28). Phoebe was commended as a helper (Romans 16:1–2). The first description of marriage in the Bible is “a helper.” (Genesis 2:18)

Joab, the commander of David’s army, once faced battle with the Syrians at his front and the Ammonites at his rear. He divided his army, with his brother Abishai and himself in command, and said: “If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you.” (2 Samuel 10:11) Abishai was an experienced soldier who had once withstood 300 men. But Joab said that he might need help.

As Christians, we face challenges on many fronts. There are personal trials and temptations. We care for our families, work in our churches, and are involved in ministries that reach out into the world. There are many front lines in these battles. Some enemies may be too strong for us. We all will need help. And we all should give help. Giving help means that we must be involved in the lives of others, bearing one another’s burdens, praying for one another, and sometimes undertaking difficult or unpleasant

tasks. King Solomon expressed the same sentiment in one of his Proverbs: “Where there are no oxen, the stalls are clean; but much is produced by the strength of an ox.” (Proverbs 14:4, CJB).

Stalls are where oxen stay when they are not in the field. After hosting an ox, the stall will be particularly dirty. Someone could say that if you want clean stalls, then just don’t have any oxen since then there will be no manure in the stalls. Personally, I like my life to be orderly. At work, I like my desk clean and my day scheduled. I keep my finances organized. My business and my study are purposeful. In short, I like clean stalls. Clean stalls are good. But it is a great mistake to think that, because clean stalls are good, you should not have any oxen. Much increase

comes from the strength of an ox. If there is going to be increase, if there is going to be a crop, then the fields have to get plowed, and if you have oxen to plow the fields, then there is also going to be manure.

If we want people to come to salvation in Jesus, if we want Christians to develop, if we want

churches to be active and growing, then we need to exercise our spiritual gifts and be involved in one another’s lives, giving help to one another—and sometimes that means cleaning out dirty stalls. It is easy to avoid it—just don’t have any oxen, don’t get involved or do ministry. Your stalls will be clean, but your increase will be zero.

If you are ever tempted to think like that, remember that Jesus did not. Christ came into a world whose stalls were filthy, and with such a stench that had gone on for so long, we had gotten used to the smell. He saw that there was no one to help us (Isaiah 63:5), and so He did. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves, and by His death He wrought our salvation. ■

*Thomas Schetelich is a CMML director and an attorney at Ferguson, Schetelich & Ballew, P.A.*

**Giving help means that we must be involved in the lives of others.**

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# Journey to Angola

## A Missionary Visits His Birthplace

BY PETER CERQUEIRA



"Gather the people together . . . that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 31:12)

The red sun of dawn stretched its golden arms over the eastern horizon of the centuries-old city of Luanda. Many inhabitants of that African city still slept, but one Portuguese couple had been awake all night. On that July day in 1971, shortly after sunrise, their middle child, a boy, was born.

A few years later, due to a violent revolution, that family moved from their beloved Angola to a faraway land. And that couple raised their children in the United States among New Testament assemblies. I am that middle child, and I would not return to Angola until 2018.

### An answered prayer

In 2004, I was invited to speak at a conference in Guinea-Bissau, a small Portuguese-speaking country just south of Senegal. I was struck by how close Africa is to Portugal. I remember praying about the possibility of someday being used of the Lord in Africa, taking short trips there from Portugal, as it has six countries, including Angola, which name Portuguese as the official language.

Last year in May, I was honored and thrilled to be invited to Angola to speak at a yearly Bible camp conference among the Chokwe people. It seemed to be an answer to prayers from years ago, and it was a chance to return to the land of my birth.

I arrived in Luanda, the capital city, late at night. The next day, Sunday, I attended an assembly that was started in my parents' living room in the 1960s through the ministry of my father. This was the first New Testament assembly in Luanda that survived the test of time.

On that Sunday, they asked me if I, the son of one of their founders, would give them the honor of being their preacher. Incidentally, on that day, the assembly was celebrating its 49th anniversary! How moving it was to speak from the pulpit that my dad spoke from so many years before.

How moving it was to speak from the pulpit that my dad spoke from so many years before.

### Courageous servants

The following day, I flew to Saurimo. Joel Griffin (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 1), whom I had befriended in Portugal while he was learning Portuguese, was there to receive me.

Joel and Kaleigh Griffin, with their three little girls, were called of the Lord to serve in Angola. They prayerfully went to an eastern area of the Chokwe people in Angola, near a small town called Luau, in the province of Moxico, just over the border from DR Congo.

Joel drove his Land Cruiser more than four hours to get to the Saurimo airport. Saurimo is a small city, but it has stores and services not found near Luau. Joel took this chance to stock up on much needed supplies for his family.

In one store, Joel noticed a small bundle of roses. They were not in pristine condition. Still, he was surprised. He had never seen roses for sale before in eastern Angola. I could see he was debating whether he should buy them or not. After a few moments of thought, he told me he was going to get them. He explained that doing something special for his wife is hard. He couldn't do things that are simple to do in North America, like take her to a restaurant or get her a special gift. I gave him my wholehearted approval.



**Above (from top; L-R):** In Luanda, believers from Bairro do Café assembly, which Peter's parents started, gather for a photo; Peter and Joel drive around Saurimo, stopping to see Ruth Hadley's former house which, although she passed away, missionaries still use as a resting place; Peter helps the Griffin girls play with the kite he gave them; In Chokwe villages, most homes have tin roofs and mud-brick walls.

The Griffins are courageous in every sense of the word. Joel, an engineer, and Kaleigh, a nurse, work close to Luau. No missions exist anywhere near them, and they do not live in an established compound with other Western missionaries. They live in an unfinished house they are building near the people they serve. The closest Western believer in Angola is about four hours away. Internet and telephone signals are so weak that they often only function after midnight, but even then it might be too weak to send or receive messages.

The nearest trustworthy health-care facility is seven hours away. Imagine something serious happening to your child—and many serious things can happen in the jungle of Africa—and being seven hours from reliable health professionals!

For the Griffins, building a house that provides a suitable en-

vironment for their kids and a place to invite Africans has been challenging because many of the materials do not exist near them. It is a long-term project that involves ongoing expenses, long hours, distant trips for materials, and many headaches.

### **An eager people**

When we arrived at Joel's home, about 10 Chokwe believers were waiting out front. As the Land Cruiser stopped, they sang a hymn to welcome me. The Chokwe sing beautifully. Their glorious voices of extended ranges, their harmony, descants, rounds, and rhythms—all without instruments—are jaw-dropping.

*Chokwe* is the name of the people and their language. Hundreds of Chokwe villages dot the vast jungles and wilderness, with many of the people still living the way they lived for thousands of years. Most have no electricity; the people cart water on foot over long distances; they have no medical facilities and no Gospel. Hygiene, malaria, and malnutrition are significant problems, and schooling is non-existent, or very poor, in most villages.

After singing, the believers came to me individually. First, they clapped softly a couple of times while bowing slightly and smiling with their eyes closed. Then they put their left hands on their right elbows as they gently shook my right hand. A Chokwe assembly elder prayed, in Portuguese so I could understand, for God's blessing on me and the conference.

### **A time of growing**

The next day, we went to the conference. Chokwe people from near and far came to an opening in the jungle, surrounded by huge mango trees, several kilometers from Luau. Most walked the entire distance from their villages. They carried everything they needed for the one-week conference. Some brought tents; many made small, temporary straw huts around the conference area.

Attendance was always more than 600 people and sometimes over 1,000. The Chokwe thought nothing of a sermon that was over three hours long. Some Chokwe people speak Portuguese, yet many do not. I preached in Portuguese, and a Chokwe brother interpreted into Chokwe.

It was nice to see many young people. They dressed for the occasion, with many of the young men in western-styled suits. Most probably have one change of clothing to wear all week, and one suit for church. They had a keen interest in the things of the Lord, asking many questions after each service on topics like spiritual gifts, security of salvation, music and dancing in church, and elders' authority.

Because of a lengthy civil war from the 1970s to 1990s, many African leaders from the assemblies either left the country or were killed. The elders that exist today are doing the best they can to continue the truths and practices of our assemblies, but they face many challenges.

A Chokwe brother explained to me that new churches were coming into the region, attracting young believers. These new churches are “word and faith” (extreme “health and wealth”) churches. This explained the questions the young believers were asking.

Joel and I encouraged the youth to dive into the Word of God and show respect to their assembly elders. We tried to show them from Scripture the errors of some of the new churches.

Issues come from the inside too. Within the assemblies, constant repentance is often emphasized in a way that suggests that salvation can be lost. Joel patiently teaches salvation’s security. During the conference, I supported Joel by teaching that repentance is important but that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ grants us eternal salvation.

Joel preached a terrific message on the different judgments, emphasizing the bema seat judgment, at which believers’ service for Him, not their sins, is judged. He taught that the great white throne judgment is only for unbelievers. This message was very helpful to the Chokwe.

### Needs supplied

Joel and Kaleigh invested their lives in the people that week. Some villagers walked several miles to the conference every day. Joel often gave rides to the elderly. On a few occasions, attendees’ children fell ill. Joel and Kaleigh helped them and, in one case, drove them to a health center.

Joel brought Bibles, hymn books, and Christian books in Chokwe and Portuguese from the Angolan Literature Fund and Everyday Publications. Accessible, subsidized prices were charged for fairness and to support the supply of future literature. The Chokwe literature went faster than the Portuguese literature. For some titles that sold out, people would have to wait a few months until the next container arrived with more literature.

People crowded desperately around the Griffins, who were providing reading glasses for those who could read. They charged a small fee to avoid disorder and manage the large demand. The Griffins first evaluated if the interested person could read and, then, which strength of reading glasses he or she needed.

On the second-to-last day of the conference, 110 people were baptized. On the last day, I had the privilege of preaching the Gospel. Even though the majority of attendees were believers, two women made professions of faith.

The conference lasted seven days. At the end, I was exhausted. I could tell that Joel and Kaleigh were too. The conference attendees packed their things and made their way home. As the African sky quickly darkened that evening, I heard several Chokwe believers say, “I wish the conference could last a month!”



**Above (from top; L-R):** Rui interprets Peter’s Portuguese preaching into Chokwe at the conference; The Griffin family attends the baptisms held on Saturday during the conference; A group of Chokwe women stew leaves for supper in the jungle clearing; Kaleigh helps one Chokwe woman test different reading glasses; Throughout the week, Joel made Portuguese and Chokwe Christian literature available to those at the conference.



*Peter Cerqueira was commended by Christian Brethren of Pawtucket in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in 1995; he serves with Nelly, his wife, who was commended by Bethel-Park Chapel in Brantford, Ontario, in 2015.*

# JAPAN

## Untangling the Web of Tradition to Reveal CHRIST

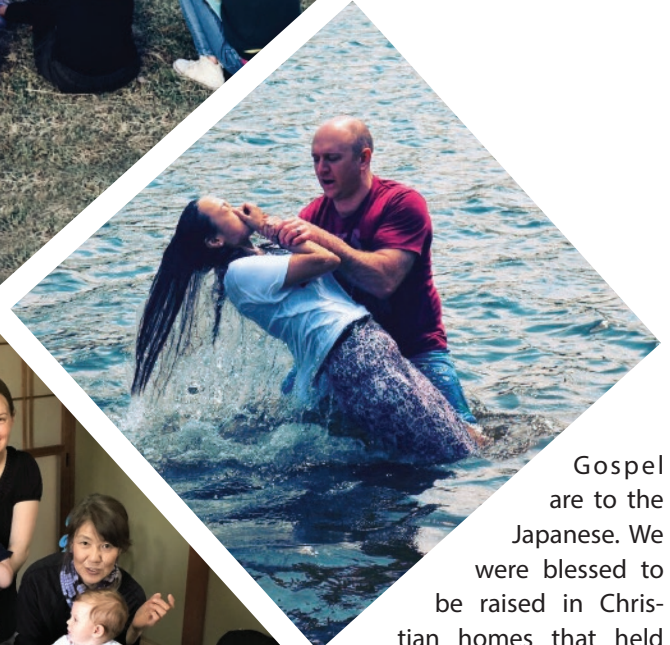
BY BROCK JAMES SMITH

Japan, called *Ni-hon* by its people, meaning “the sun’s origin,” is one of the last surviving ancient cultures on earth yet, simultaneously, a modern society thriving in a modern world. Its history spans over 2,500 years, with some traditions older than Christianity. Of its 126 million souls, only 1 in 400 believe the Gospel and are saved. The culture is steeped in ritual and tradition and crafted by the strong molds of Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. They are a people so homogenized and unchanged that their word for *difficult* or *dreadful* translates literally as “big change.” It is a nation dwelling in darkness, without hope and without God.

These are some of the characteristics of the Land of the Rising Sun, and as distinct and unique as this island people’s life is, the same doom and despair of the human condition—sin and separation from God—lies at the heart of it all. The Japanese are no different than any other people group; they are in need of the grace and Gospel of God.

### Understanding Japan

When Kelly and I first arrived in Japan four years ago, we had little understanding of how foreign the grace of God and the



Gospel are to the Japanese. We were blessed to be raised in Christian homes that held to strong biblical values and truths. Our worldview was formed by the Bible and asserted that a sovereign Creator made all things and that the Scriptures are His revelation to us. Growing up, we came to understand our sin, our separation from God, and our Savior, the Lord Jesus.

However, in Japan, this is not the reality. Japan’s understanding of the world can hardly be called a *worldview*—*Japanview* would be a more fitting term! Of course, every people group has its own way of interpreting the world around them, but the Japanese view of reality rarely escapes from the shores of Japan. Like the ancient Japanese individual, the mind of the modern *nihonjin* (Japanese person) is imprisoned in the strong web that was woven centuries ago.

To understand the modern Japanese mind, one must understand, at a minimum, Japan’s recent history. During the feudal “Warring States” period, different lords, *daimyos*, competed

for power and land and had no qualms about destroying one another. At this time, Catholicism arrived in Japan via a Jesuit priest. One daimyo, Oda Nobunaga, began to unite much of the country under his clan and rule, seeking to become shogun, or military lord. Though ambivalent to the Catholic faith himself, he knew that it was incompatible with the code of the samurai, for Christ taught that you are to love your enemy, not behead

## Bible-believing Christianity's influence in Japan is a recent effort—less than 160 years old.

them. And so, his successors began a policy of extreme isolation. The Jesuits were driven out, and no other nation, except the Dutch, were permitted to trade. The Japanese themselves were not allowed to leave Japan's shores. All Japanese were forced to profess Buddhism, and any who had converted to the Catholic faith were made to recant or face death by a myriad of tortures and persecutions, initiating a 250-year period of isolation, persecution, and tyranny.

When America leveled the Treaty of Kanagawa against the Japanese in 1854, Japan's ports opened for the first time in 250 years, and the first Protestant missionaries were able to enter the country. Hence, Bible-believing Christianity's influence in Japan is a recent effort—less than 160 years old.

To a culture that has existed for nearly three millennia, the Bible and the Gospel are still viewed as entirely foreign and in no way Japanese. And that is a root problem in Japan; in their view, the Bible and the Gospel are not for them because neither are native to Japan. This then sums up the Japanese worldview: to be Japanese is to remain unchanged.

## Proclaiming the Gospel

Online mission data shows that the Japanese people are the second most unreached people group in the world. Nearly 2,500 more gospel workers are needed for the Japanese to be reached for Christ.

But how are the Japanese to be reached? How is a nation with so little gospel exposure, and so little desire for true change, to be won for the Lord Jesus, who died for them? How will the Japanese ever realize their sin and separation from God, in order to receive the grace and Gospel of God? They need first a knowledge of God.

The Bible provides the foundation for a true knowledge of whom God is. From Old Testament to New, the building blocks are laid, and a progressive understanding of God's perfections, promises, and plan are made known, culminating in the revelation of Jesus Christ, the solution to all problems. For those who lack this framework or knowledge, like the Japanese, quoting John 3:16 to them makes little sense because they have no place to fit that piece of the puzzle. If you don't know or believe in a Creator God, then what difference does it make that He "gave His only begotten Son"?

And so, you can't just hand the Japanese a tract on John 3:16 and expect them to understand what it means, nor your intentions. You have to begin at the very beginning; you have to begin with "This is the Bible, and this is what it says about the world, Japan, you, and a Being who is so mighty that He is the Creator of all. And this Bible—this book—is *His* book!"



**Opposite page (from top):** Brock leads young believers in prayer before their baptisms; Brock teaches a creation-to-the-cross gospel message to kids at a park in Saga Prefecture; The Smiths are overjoyed to see nearly a dozen individuals saved and baptized; The Smiths share refreshments with guests after a Bible study in their home. **Above (from left):** Brock distributes literature outside the famous Atsuta Shrine in Nagoya; Like her parents, Evangeline hands out gospel literature to local people; Zion helps his dad pass out tracts whenever he gets the chance.

## Winning souls

After three years in Nagoya, Japan's third largest city, studying the Japanese language and culture, we now find ourselves in the rural Mie Prefecture. We fellowship at a meeting called Ichishi Christian Assembly and seek to bring this knowledge to those in unreached rural Japan.

Our first three years of ministry in Nagoya were different from our life in Mie. In Nagoya, we felt lost in a population of 10 million. City life was fast and hectic, with few willing to stop to speak with us, although we were surrounded by so many. The small assembly we joined with had a hard time making its presence known; outreach was limited, and the fact that the assembly met on the 10th floor of a high-rise apartment building was intimidating to outsiders, to say the least. We found it difficult to make contacts, and those we did meet were only interested in having American friends or learning English. Our goal in Nagoya was to win one soul to Christ, preferably a Japanese male whom we could disciple. That prayer never fully materialized, even as we distributed upward of 6,000 pieces of literature, did street preaching and music ministry at the local train station, and sought various ways to reach neighbors and others within our influence. In the end, through God's leading, the door in Nagoya closed temporarily, and in His providence, He guided us to the saints meeting in rural Ichishi, in Mie Prefecture.

Without any effort from us, the Lord provided a bigger, cheaper home. The Japanese owners had no misgivings about renting to foreigners, which is a big deal in rural Japan. Step by step, the pieces fell into place, though we didn't have a clue what was waiting around the corner.

During our time in Nagoya, Kelly had a miscarriage that ended our third pregnancy. It was a very tough time. We also nearly lost Jubilee, our third-born child. Kelly's water ruptured without explanation 12 weeks into the pregnancy. She was hospitalized

and the whole story could fill an article itself, but in brief, God performed several miracles and spared Jubilee's life.

I recall speaking with my dad during this period, and he told me, "Son, I have been praying that 10 souls would be saved in connection to your ministry. Let's pray about it together." Though I agreed, I rolled my eyes at the time and thought, "That's impossible!"

It was impossible for us but not for Jesus. As of the writing of this piece, not only 10 but 12 souls have been saved, with 11 obeying the Gospel through baptism. Of these, eight are Filipino; the other three are Japanese. We are praying the 12th receives baptism soon.

We know that Japan remains a land in spiritual darkness. Ironically, the Land of the Rising Sun is eclipsed by Satan's darkness, lacking "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 4:6) Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus has promised to build His church, and we take comfort in His promise to do so. Moreover, we praise Him that He has allowed us to be a part of His work and to see the hand of the Lord with us and active in building His church. Please pray for the Japanese, for their knowledge of God, and for more workers. Pray that God will send you. ■

*Brock and Kelly Smith were commended from The Bible Chapel of Shawnee in Shawnee, Kansas, in 2014.*



**Above:** Kelly and baby Jubilee prepare to leave the hospital five days after birth. **Left (L-R):** Ichishi Christian Assembly welcomes guest speakers, such as Alessandro Esposito (seated next to Brock); The Smith kids participate in Japan's cultural festivities, such as summer festival at Evangeline's preschool.



# Home with the Lord

## Anita Clark

June 7, 1924 – January 5, 2019 • Missionary to Peru

Anita Clark, née Geissele, lived purposefully in partnership with her husband, Bill, serving the Lord full-time in teaching and church planting. They were commended to the work in Peru by Maplewood Bible Chapel in Maplewood, New Jersey, in 1951. On Saturday, January 5, at age 94, Anita went home to be with the Lord, whom she loved.

After Pop (Bill) passed into the presence of the Lord in July 2000, Mom (Anita) returned to Peru until 2016, briefly visiting Chicago several times for health reasons but always returning to Peru. While staying with her daughter Nancy for six months in Chicago, she said she didn't know anyone up there and returned to more meaningful activity in Peru. Until 2016, she served by encouraging and teaching and, increasingly, as time went by, a steady stream of people visited "Mama Anita" to receive encouragement and counsel.

Mom came to know the Lord in her teens when friends invited her to the Bible chapel in Maplewood. When she questioned her priest about what she was reading, she was told the Bible was not hers to read but that she should simply accept Church doctrine.

Some years later, in 1945, during World War II, Anita Dorothy Geissele and William James Clark married while he was stationed in Indiana. Shortly after he came out of the Army Air Force at the end of the war, Mom and Pop attended Emmaus Bible School in Toronto, Canada, under the GI Bill.

Returning to Maplewood for a season, they were then commended to the Lord's work in Peru in 1951. They started in Pucallpa, a port on the Amazon river basin, intending to join veteran missionaries Joe and Jeanette Hocking to learn the language and culture and further develop their "craft." After five years, Mom and Pop moved to the southern coastal city of Ica to pioneer what has now become a network of churches and outreaches. After 21 years, they turned to itinerate ministry

through Mexico and Guatemala while still keeping in touch with believers in Peru.

Mom saw the better side of people and the best possibilities in a situation. Accordingly, she moved forward with faith

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She usually had a Scripture verse in mind to encourage and counsel.

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in the Lord's direction and provision. With a gentle and firm spirit, she usually had a Scripture verse in mind to encourage and counsel. She knew God was active among His people and was ready for Him to use her and Bill in the lives of others, smoothing and encouraging the efforts of anyone they came in contact with.

My clearest memory of Mom is of her sitting with her Bible open and a cup of coffee next to her at the dining room table during our siesta hour. This was her one daily quiet hour to herself, to draw close to God, where she could read, pray, and meditate. Otherwise, she administered our home, teaching school to the six of us and feeding us from scratch, all the while participating with other women and children in the Lord's work. As a result, Tom and his wife, Carol, (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 24) serve the Lord in northern Peru; Becky and her husband, Craig, live outside Chicago; Nancy teaches school in a bilingual program; Joel (MPH Day 23) just recently returned home for medical reasons from full-time service in Lima, Peru; Jonathan is in Bolivia; and Jim and his wife, Sandie, are both retired and live in Durham, North Carolina. Each of us has served the Lord in whatever way we could, as we benefited from Mom's example and her encouragement. As she would have said, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)



JIM CLARK

# Haiti

## The Start of an Unexpected PRISON MINISTRY

BY TONY JONES

It all started when Franz (a coworker of mine) and I got caught in a torrential downpour while driving my motorcycle to the next town west of us. It was raining so hard that we had to pull over at the local police station to take cover. While we waited for the rain to stop, we heard two boys yell my name, "Blau Tony." When I looked around, I saw a bunch of teenage prisoners staring out at us from a locked cell.

### An unplanned encounter

Normally, no one is allowed to go over to the cell to talk to any of the prisoners, but it just so happened that the new prison director is a Christian. I asked if I could go speak to the kids and, knowing that we are Christians as well, he allowed it.

When I approached the cell, I could not believe what I saw. The kids inside were 14 to 16 years old and some had been in that cell for a year and a half. These poor teens, 20 in total, were crammed into this small cell with no beds. They sleep on a concrete floor.

It turned out the two kids who yelled to me are from my town and had seen me driving around before they were imprisoned. They were all very hungry and asked if I would get them something. Then, Franz and I started to ask them questions about why they were in there.

### Neglected youth

A 14-year-old had stolen a CD player and had been in that cell for four months. A 15-year-old got in a fight and had been there nine months. One of the boys who knew me had also been in a fight and had been in that cell for 18 months. I couldn't believe it. All of the boys had been in that cell for at least three months for petty crimes.

While talking with the kids, I asked if people from the local missions come to see them. They told me a few have but only for a few minutes at a time. I asked them, "What do they do when they come?" They told me some of them pray and others give cookies. I asked, "Do they ever talk to you about Jesus?"

The kids said, "No, they just come and leave." You can imagine what I felt when I heard that!

The rain then stopped and I told the kids that I didn't have anything to give them, but I would come back to see them.



## Attentive care

Two days later, Franz and I returned. I brought enough money with me so that all the kids could get a good meal. Again, we talked with them, and this time, I asked if they would please stop swearing and put down the tough act. I said, "I am here because Jesus loves you, and He is the only reason I am talking to you right now." The kids just stared at me, and it was like a whole different attitude came over that cell; you wouldn't believe it. The Lord seemed to have touched their hearts, and they became much calmer. They were even polite with us.

We asked if any of their parents come to see them. Only one child said that his mother had visited. The rest said "never." This is easy for me to understand, knowing their loveless culture.

The 14-year-old boy actually started to tear up while we were talking with them about Jesus. He and another 16-year-old then told us they used to go to church but stopped. After witnessing to them for about 45 minutes, we asked if it would be OK for us to come weekly to talk with them. The response was an overwhelming yes! The police chief also agreed, so we then gave the kids money for food and headed back home.

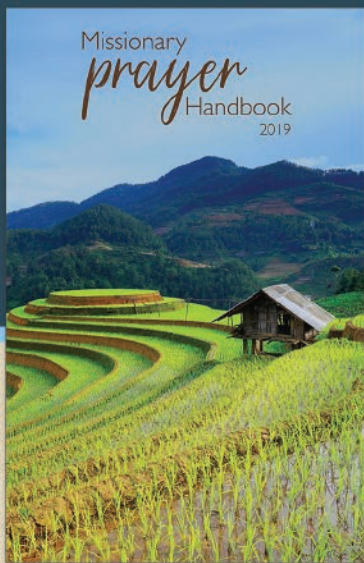
I never thought I would be in the prison ministry, let alone in Haiti! God is surely moving, and I am blessed to be part of what He is doing. Please keep the prison kids in your prayers—I feel that God will do great things in their lives. ■



*Tony and Edna Jones are commended from River Drive Park Bible Chapel in Bradford, Ontario.*



**Opposite page (L-R):** Enoc, a local pastor whom Tony works with, shares the Romans Road with the teens; Tony and his coworkers visit the boys weekly, working to meet some of their physical and spiritual needs. **Above:** The boys live in shocking conditions in prison, despite having committed petty crimes.



## 2019 MISSIONARY PRAYER HANDBOOK

The 2019 *Missionary Prayer Handbook* features 33 new missionaries and two new country listings.

To facilitate prayer and communication, this vital tool lists more than 700 missionaries commended from assemblies in the US and Canada and includes a description of their ministries and contact information.

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The challenges behind blessings

# Looking Inside a Missionary's Heart

BY BRAD & CATHERINE DICKSON

Recently, we've been thinking that our updates and prayer letters talk mostly about our activities and that we tend to speak more about our success stories than our disappointments and challenges. We do need prayer for our activities, but we have also remarked that biblical prayers are more often about our minds and hearts than about our activities. We would like to open our hearts here so that you can pray about a few of our personal issues.

## Changing focus

I, Brad, am trying to grow out of having my spirits too closely linked to results in my ministry. I feel great when things go well: when lots of people show up for a meeting I've organized, when I think I've preached a great sermon, when someone shows interest in the Gospel, or when someone tells me what a great teacher I am. I feel down when things don't go so well: when people I've been investing in drift away from the faith, when I wasn't properly prepared for a teaching session, when I feel like an unfair part of the work in our church falls on my shoulders.

In a country like France (but also everywhere in the world, I imagine), there are lots of disappointments in ministry; there are, perhaps, more disappointments than success stories, if I am to be honest. Intellectually, I know that my value and dignity are not linked to my performance as a Christian worker. That truth just needs to filter down another foot from my head to my

heart! Would you pray about that? Pray that God would be my all in all and that my glory would be in Christ and in His work for me, rather than in my work for Him.

## Learning patience

I, Catherine, have a big area of struggle: my impatience. I tend to be impatient with everything that is slow, like traffic jams, French administration, committees, and sometimes people. I prefer to do a job alone, well and quickly, rather than "losing time" in team meetings. Yet God brought me to the south of France to a team setting where everything takes a little more time and isn't as organized as I would like it to be. I knew that before coming, and I knew I needed this training to shape me in Christlikeness, but it's more difficult than I thought. If I were to use an image to describe my way of doing things, I would say I'm more of a cowboy than a shepherd, so you can see the job ahead of me!

Please pray for me, that I would be willing to let God use this context to keep on developing gentleness and patience in me. ■



*Brad and Catherine Dickson were commended by Fairhaven Bible Chapel in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Assiniboia Charleswood Community Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1985.*

# REACHING 2019 HIGHER

## Real Talk: Addressing Today's Issues

BY ANNIE ELLIOTT

In its ninth year, Reaching Higher took place at the CMML Guest Home February 8 to 10, 2019. A conference for men and women in their 20s and 30s, Reaching Higher provides a time of deep study and refreshing fellowship. Intentionally kept to a smaller group to allow for greater unity, approximately 50 young people came from throughout the US and even Canada for this three-day event. Starting Friday evening and ending Sunday afternoon, the time was filled with five ministry sessions, a question and answer time, three special-topic breakout sessions, a Breaking of Bread service, and lots of fellowship time.

This year, Ken Barrett, a local brother, skillfully spoke on the topic "Real Talk: Addressing Today's Issues." Ken reminded us that culture changes and isn't inherently bad but that Scripture does warn us against "the world," which is opposed to God. He challenged us to love our neighbors—whomever they may be—and to purposefully reach out to share the Gospel with all people. Ken stated that "The battle isn't *against* people, it's *for* people!"

The ministry was further developed during three informative breakout sessions led by Jonathan Hayes (Special Areas), Ken and Rose Barrett, and Lisa Leibowitz. A worshipful Breaking of Bread service was encouraging as participants representing many different assemblies came together to focus on Christ. Fellowship times with pizza, games, a tour of the historic CMML building, and even an optional trip to the nearby beach rounded out the weekend.

Additional photos from this year's Reaching Higher can be viewed at [Facebook.com/cmmlus](https://www.facebook.com/cmmlus) and the messages can be listened to at [CMML.us](https://www.cmml.us). Lord willing, next year's Reaching Higher will take place February 7 to 9, 2020, with Dr. Steve Price. Please encourage those in your assembly who are in their 20s and 30s to attend! ■

Annie Elliott is the editor of Missions.

