

Missions

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2019 MOP Report



BY KEN FLEMING

God's Work Among the Waorani

My bookshelf and files contain 17 books and dozens of articles on the missionary work among the Waorani people who live in the Ecuadorian Amazon Rainforest. The Waorani became more widely known after a group of Waorani warriors speared five missionaries to death on a sandy Curaray River beach, nicknamed Palm Beach, in 1956.

Three of the five men killed were commended by their local assemblies for work with the Quichua people in the jungle of eastern Ecuador. They were Jim Elliot from Grace and Truth Gospel Hall (now Grace Bible Fellowship) in Portland, Oregon, Ed McCully from Good News Chapel (now Wauwatosa Bible Chapel) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Peter Fleming (my brother) from Hope Gospel Hall (now Hope Bible Fellowship) in Seattle, Washington. In just over three years, these three men and their wives learned Spanish and the Quichua language, saw people saved, and disciplined believers to the point that they could start assemblies in three locations: Shandia, Arajuno, and Puyupungu.

Then God used them to reach one of the world's wildest cultures. Two other evangelical missionaries joined the assembly men: Nate Saint, a missionary pilot associated with Missionary Aviation Fellowship, and Roger Youderian, a missionary to the Shuar Tribe in southeastern Ecuador with Gospel Missionary Union, now known as Avant. All five were devoted to the Lord and formed a close-knit team. They were all married to dedicated wives, and four of the couples had young children.

The Waorani's need for the Gospel was a high priority for Jim, Ed, Pete, Nate, and Roger. The five men found a Waorani jungle settlement and began to drop gifts to them from a plane. After doing this once a week for three months, they noticed many friendly signs. So Nate found a Curaray River sandbar where they could land his plane and take off. The men made a tree

house they could attach to a tree and safely sleep in and then, using a loudspeaker from the plane, they invited the Waorani to visit them. On January 6, 1956, three Waorani (a woman, a younger man, and a teenage girl) arrived and spent a friendly afternoon with the men. The younger two left before dark, but the woman spent the night by the fire on the beach while the missionaries slept in the tree house. The men were pleased and hoped that others would come soon. Two days later, Nate saw from the plane a group crossing the river. The men expected a great meeting that afternoon, but instead, Waorani warriors armed with long spears attacked them. In a short time, the five men were dead. They risked their lives and lost them in their hopes and prayers to peacefully contact the Waorani.

God used their obedience to open the door for Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel Saint (Nate's sister) to befriend and witness to the Waorani. The result has been that some of the 15 settlements will allow outsiders to safely visit them, there is now a New Testament in their language, and more than 200 Waorani have accepted Christ as Savior.

Thinking it through, we can conclude that God has been working all along to reach the Waorani. Rachel Saint began learning their language from Dyomae, a Waorani woman. Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel were willing to live with the Waorani at Taeweno. The first converts were Dawa and her husband, Quimo—the man who speared my brother, Peter. All the warriors who killed the men on Palm Beach were eventually saved. An orthography was developed for the Waorani language. Schools were started in jungle settlements. As more and more Waorani were saved, killings were drastically reduced. In January 2006, more than 200 Waorani believers attended a 50th anniversary conference held at Tonampari. On Sunday, January 8, exactly 50 years since the killings, we gathered on Palm Beach to baptize some recent young converts and enjoy the Breaking of Bread. Lloyd Rogers (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 22) ended with a challenge to live for the Lord. We closed with singing in several languages, "I have decided to follow Jesus; no turning back." ■

More than 200 Waorani have accepted Christ as Savior.

Ken Fleming is a commended worker based in Iowa.

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CREATION and the GOSPEL

BUILDING
CONFIDENCE IN
SCRIPTURE FROM
VERSE ONE

BY BRUCE NEWSHAM



▲ The Newshams help teach students of all ages the truth about creation.

Since the Lord called us to serve Him, He has opened several doors to share the Gospel with different people groups and teach His Word in assemblies and Bible colleges in South Africa and Zimbabwe. What a great privilege it is to be instruments in the hands of our Master Builder in building His church!

DESIRING TO GIVE ANSWERS

Having worked in the scientific world for 20 years, a subject that I have come to love and view as of great importance is creation. Although it is not the main focus of our ministry here in southern Africa, we are involved with the creation-based ministry Creation Ministries International. Our role in the ministry is mainly to support the full-time speakers who go to schools, universities, and churches and use PowerPoint presentations to show the relevance of creation to the Gospel and give evidence for biblical creation. Over the years, we have gone on several ministry tours, served at book tables, shared about available resources, worked in the office, and given talks at schools, churches, and home-school book fairs.

The response has been quite varied, but the trend is very clear. Those groups that have a high view of the Word of God are often very grateful to hear the message and to have the creation and evolution issues explained to them in simple terms. Groups that embrace theological liberalism and have accepted atheistic evolution can often be quite hostile. Nevertheless, we are very grateful to be able to help people who are genuinely seeking answers to questions they have never had biblically based answers to.

One recent testimony came from a man who said that, because of unanswered questions about creation and evolution, he was unable to accept Christ. However, after attending one of our presentations, the chains fell off, he committed his life to Christ, and he is now defending the Bible!



▲ While his passion is teaching about creation, Bruce also enjoys teaching Bible school students to study Scripture.



▼ Together, Bruce and Bonnie encourage believers and share the Gospel with unbelievers in southern Africa.



STARTING WITH THE FAMILIAR

Over the past few decades, teaching evolution has become compulsory in many schools and universities around the world. For many people, this has changed their worldview and their thoughts about origin issues. Indoctrination with evolution has brought a number of challenges to world missions and the way we witness to people.

Good communication is fundamental to sharing the Gospel with the lost. But speaking the same language does not mean that we are connecting well. We may be talking about God, Jesus Christ, sin, and repentance, but those listening may have very different ideas about and definitions of what we are saying. Even in countries that were once filled with many Christians, communication can be a real problem. Those who have only been taught Darwinian evolution have little to no knowledge of a loving creator God, let alone terms like *being lost*.

So, in sharing the Gospel, where do we begin? How quickly can we get to the message of the cross? On the day of Pentecost, Peter got there very quickly. But we should remember that he was speaking to Jews and proselytes to Judaism. They were well acquainted with a creator God and His Word, so there was no need to belabor that point. But notice Paul's approach with the pagan Greeks in Acts 17. Those Athenians worshipped an "unknown God," and Paul went on to introduce them to the "God who made the world and everything in it." (Acts 17:24) He took them back to creation. In some cultures today, even our own, we may need to go back to Genesis.

BEGINNING IN GENESIS

Because of the controversies surrounding the creation account, many evangelists today prefer to avoid bringing Genesis into their witnessing. They argue that it is nonessential to the Gospel. But is this really true? How do we present the good news without first talking about the bad news? The Gospel only makes sense when we tell people they have a creator God who made them in a perfect world—it was "very good," meaning there was no death at this point (Genesis 1:31). All sickness, disease, and death came as a result of the fall, as depicted in Genesis 3.

The apostle Paul says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12) The implication is that any view embracing millions of years of death, disease, and suffering before the fall is contrary to Scripture. Paul also adds, "The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (1 Corinthians 15:45) Hence, people need to know where they came from, whom they are accountable to, and what problem their sin creates. Only then can they fully understand their need for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel begins in the garden of Eden.

KEEPING OUR BIBLICAL LENSES ON

In order to be more compatible with the world's view of origins, many believers have reinterpreted the early chapters in Genesis. But the marriage of worldly philosophy and Scripture that results in old-earth theories is really an unsatisfactory compromise. The apostle Paul warns us against this in Colossians 2:8. To reinterpret Scripture after embracing man's opinion, even though it is labeled as "science," is to undermine the authority of Scripture. The Bible should never come second to the wisdom of man.

Experimental science has no clash with Scripture, and believers should never feel threatened with verifiable scientific data. But we have no need to try to reconcile atheistic origin theories with the Bible. Unfortunately, many believers are bullied into believing these theories when they are told that they have been proved.

One example is the question of dinosaurs. The Bible says that God made all the land animals on day six of the creation week. This day is the same one on which He made humankind. Yet some believers embrace the secular view that dinosaurs existed and died out about 65 million years ago. Much evidence exists for dinosaurs having lived only a few thousand years ago, not millions of years. The Bible speaks of creatures that could well have been dinosaurs, such as those in Job 40:15. In the last 1,000 years, reliable historians have described enormous creatures that fit the description of dinosaurs. Within the last 15 years, scientists have confirmed red blood cells and soft tissue in dinosaur bones. But these things are to be expected when we look at dinosaurs through our biblical lenses!

Another simple example is the illustrations of the ark we find in children's story books. We make it difficult for our children to accept the biblical account of the universal flood in Genesis when we show them cute pictures of a bathtub-like ark. Many children then ask, and rightly so, how the various kinds of animals could have fit into such a structure. Is it not better to keep our biblical lenses on and show them a picture based on the correct biblical dimensions? Showing them the wrong kind of image is to sow the seed of doubt in them.

EQUIPPING EACH GENERATION

Unbelievers ask several other questions about creation and origins that many believers struggle with. Who did Cain marry? Are the days of creation literal? What about carbon dating? What about the Ice Age? What about the fossils? Where did the different races come from? If there is a good God, why is there so much death and suffering in the world? Our children ask the same questions, and many of us don't have answers. They go to university and, from a professor, hear a convincing argument that seems to support evolutionary theory. Without a solid biblical foundation, their faith is often shattered. How common are testimonies like this?

Peter exhorts us to "always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15) The good news is that there are several ministries and many resources available today to help equip us, our children, and our fellow believers. My wife and I believe that this kind of equipping is so important that we, for the past 10 years, have been assisting with the work of Creation Ministries International. We want to encourage believers to trust God's Word from the very first verse in Genesis and to provide answers to common questions people ask about creation issues.

Please pray for us as we seek to serve the Lord in South Africa and Zimbabwe through teaching God's Word, giving encouragement, and discipling. We ask you to pray that doors for sharing the Gospel will remain open and that ministries like Creation Ministries International will be free to teach the biblical view of origins in schools and other institutions. Our desire is that unbelievers will come to faith in the God who made them and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and that they will have full confidence in the Bible from the first verse. ■



▲ Appropriate biblical literature ensures that people continue to grow in their understanding of creation.



Bruce and Bonnie Newsham are commended from Southwest Bible Chapel in Lakewood, Colorado, and from Avenue 54 Bible Chapel in Los Angeles, California.



Scripture Memory Challenge

Becoming Capable Witnesses
for Christ in Ghana

BY DANIEL WEBSTER

My wife, Priscilla, and I serve the Lord in Kumasi, Ghana. In addition to our weekly Bible-teaching program on a local radio station, we work alongside the believers at Believers Bible Assembly to host meetings and mission trips while teaching and discipling believers. In 2005, Believers Bible Assembly held its first annual Scripture memory challenge by taking on the book of James. While many were able to recite one or more chapters, 10 young people managed to memorize the entire book of James chapter by chapter. When we realized that the youth who attended the church were keen to memorize Scripture, we, as a church, decided to continue the challenge annually. Because the participants did so well, we arranged to give even greater challenges, offering larger sections or multiple books of the Bible for memorization. The enthusiasm continued to grow with some remarkable results.

AN IMPRESSIVE RESPONSE

As the annual Scripture memory challenge increased in scope, so did the results. In 2010, Psalms was added to the challenge, and two individuals learned the entire book with the exception of Psalm 119. In 2011, we challenged the participants to memorize chapters from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Once again, the effort and enthusiasm only increased, and at the end of that year's challenge, 71 participants said 550 chapters, which amounted to 21,490 verses.

Over the past 14 years, the annual Scripture memory challenge has attracted 247 participants and holds a collective total of 3,060 chapters memorized, which translates to 78,108 verses. These figures are dynamic and can change daily as participants recite chapters they have learned. Our top memorizer is a young man named Isaac Sarfo. To date, Isaac has memorized 331 chapters for a total of 8,708 verses. He has also recited 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Peter, and 2 Peter, each in entirety. Another bright teenager, Daniel Opoku, said the entire book of Hebrews verbatim in 35 minutes.

A WELL-EARNED REWARD

Each year, after the memory challenge ends, we treat all participants to a picnic at Lake Bosomtwe, where they enjoy lunch, swimming, games, a variety of sports, and other activities. Certificates that note their memorization accomplishments are issued along with their prizes on the celebration day. The prizes highly motivate the children, and the more memorization that they complete, the greater the prize they receive. Progress is posted weekly on the church's bulletin board along with the children's photos and a list of the chapters recited. As the children view the results on the board, they are inspired to accomplish more.

We believe that memorization of chapters and books of the Bible is an excellent tool that the Holy Spirit can use to bring spiritual fruit into the lives of those who apply themselves to

it. We have seen spiritual development in some of these young believers to the point that they are now able teachers in the assembly and capable witnesses for Christ in the community. The annual Scripture memory challenge is also a catalyst to inspire other believers around the world to incorporate similar memory programs into their churches and ministries. Perhaps it will inspire you to do the same. To God be the glory! ■



Daniel and Priscilla Webster are commended from Westbank Bible Chapel in Westbank, British Columbia.



Believers Bible Assembly Scripture Memory Challenge Statistics

YEARS	BOOKS MEMORIZED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	TOTAL VERSES QUOTED	TOP MEMORIZERS	TOP MEMORIZER VERSE TOTALS
2005	James	26	1,556	10 memorizers	108
2006	1 Peter	33	1,278	8 memorizers	105
2007	Ephesians	52	2,967	10 memorizers	155
2008	100 gospel verses	47	2,574	15 memorizers	100
2009	John 13–17	51	4,081	19 memorizers	155
2010	John 18–21, Psalms	44	18,770	Emmanuel Agyeman	2,423
2011	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	71	21,490	Isaac Sarfo	3,164
2012	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John	73	7,873	Kwaku Musah	2,032
2013	Romans	84	5,521	Isaac Sarfo	775
2014	1 Corinthians	59	3,652	Isaac Sarfo	1,244
2015	2 Corinthians	61	2,757	Isaac Sarfo	257
2016	Gal., Eph., Phil., Col.	48	2,957	Isaac Sarfo	503
2017	1 & 2 Thessalonians	(no records available)			
2018	Hebrews	43	2,016	Daniel Opoku	303
2019	1 & 2 Peter	10	616	(ongoing through August)	
TOTALS:		698	77,811	ACCUMULATED TOTALS (Top 3 Memorizers)	
				Isaac Sarfo	8,708
				Kwaku Musah	7,848
				Emmanuel Agyeman	5,523

Above photos, from left: Top memorizer Isaac Sarfo receives a certificate and prize for memorizing four books of the Bible; As a church, Believers Bible Assembly encourages its young people to memorize Scripture and inspires others to do the same.

The forgotten Jungles

RIVER MINISTRY
IN PERU



BY JESSE MATTIX

South America's jungle lands are deep in the middle of the continent and stretch into the neck of Panama. The jungle is almost forgotten, but a careful reading of colonial history and archaeology reveals places where the Inca people took refuge as they retreated from the Spanish on the western side of the continent, later known as Peru. To the Spanish who took the Pacific side, the jungle was a place of abandonment and exile; fear of wild animals and disease kept them at a distance.

The Portuguese, who colonized the eastern side of the continent, were quicker to face the challenge of the jungle. They made the rivers of the Amazon their highways and developed farming communities along the river banks. In 1854, Peru and Brazil came to an agreement for the free navigation of the Amazon River, creating a massive continental highway. More recently, the Peruvian government has begun to pay attention to this asset by establishing a paved roadway into the headwaters of the Amazon with deeper water ports for commercial traffic.

The river people

The river people are a reflection of their history with a combination of indigenous and mestizo ancestry and aboriginal languages and Spanish. Colonial Catholicism is mixed with other belief systems, such as animism and spiritism, and superstitions are still talked about when the sun goes down. The Gospel has impacted them and many have come to Christ. However, the worldly ways of the jungle are often reasserted. Drunkenness and promiscuity are difficult to stand against when faith is not well grounded.

Above: Two river-ministry participants enjoy a moment of rest at a natural hot spring.

Opposite page (from top): Children in Navarro, a river village, enthusiastically greet a Bible student; Bible school participants and various believers gather for a baptism during the river assemblies' conference.

Life beside the river is calm and relaxed as the river and jungle provide for people's basic needs. Yet the jungle can be harsh with the river's changing course, waterborne diseases, accidents, and isolation. There have been great bonanzas as industrialists have come to reach into the jungle's hidden resources and provide the world with what it seeks. Rubber barons send men into the jungle to harvest the caucho tree sap and transport it down the rivers. Cacao, coffee, and palm oil are becoming the regional cash crops. The coca leaf, once a garden plant of the Incas, is now valuable to drug cartels, which take it to North America and Europe as cocaine. Although the industries provide jobs and money, they have taken a toll on the people, and those who live along the river remain poor.

Missionary work through the years

In 1949, Bert and Colleen Elliot (CMML missionaries, now home with the Lord) came to Peru to serve the Lord. They were not the first, but they left a quiet legacy. These brave mission workers went to the end of the road, Yurimaguas, where they established their home. They purchased a river boat, the *Maranata*, on which they lived while visiting villages, teaching the Gospel, helping with medicines, and establishing churches.

Peru went into political turmoil from 1980 to 2000, and terrorism struck in the jungle as well as the cities. The Elliots and other mission workers were forced to leave the jungle due to the security risks. Death was an everyday occurrence. The military was as bad as the revolutionaries, and the drug lords were worse. Terrible stories of shootings and stepping over bodies on the way to school are still told. As peace returned, we learned of the persecution of believers.

Jungle churches

During this difficult period, the national churches had to mature quickly. When peace returned, they prayed for missionaries to return, but no one came. The circumstances were less than ideal, but as the churches waited, it dawned on them that they would have to step into leadership positions themselves. The church in Yurimaguas began to establish clear leadership and multiplied into six assemblies around the city. They started to visit the river villages where Bert and Colleen had planted assemblies. Their reach is still limited by distance and finance. Certain brothers in the jungle villages have been recognized as evangelists and are partially supported by various churches and mission groups to serve in their areas.

From the early 2000s to 2016, Micah and Amy Tuttle (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 29) served the Lord in the jungle town of Tarapoto, where a small assembly of believers had started

with villagers who migrate to the city for work and education. Micah's focus was to visit the villages along the Huallaga River, upstream of Yurimaguas. A collection of young men joined him on various trips, and having been discipled, they have a passion to travel and encourage the villagers. Twice a year, they hold a conference among the Huallaga River churches. This is the highlight of Bible teaching for these little churches where there is often just an *encargado* (attendant) to open the doors on meeting days. Some assemblies are better equipped in Bible knowledge and visit the smaller villages to encourage them.



A Bible school for Peru

Among Peru's believers there is a growing interest in Bible education. As a result, teaching is now available in various formats. Capacitacion Biblica is a one- to two-week program, which has been available for more than 50 years within local assemblies. On the coast, a Bible institute has started with a month-long period of study and a youth focus. GLO missionaries to Peru, Luis Mostacero and Rich Harknett, with an interest in leadership training, developed IBEM as a Bible school. Beginning with one-



Facultad Biblica Selva is a seven-month Bible curriculum for up to 12 students who live in dormitories. Students come from Peru and beyond, bringing diverse cultures to the mix. We use many IBEM-developed Bible teachers who teach their classes for two weeks before we rotate in new teachers and subjects.

Into the jungle

In addition to their classroom studies, students also focus on ministry in the neighborhood, local assembly, and villages. We implemented a two-week trip to the jungle where students are accompanied to a village, and a Christian family takes them in. Their assignment is to get involved with the community and the local assembly while keeping up on personal disciplines and developing a ministry of their own. Often, they work with children or youth and speak at a church or women's group. Great friendships and relationships are established as they work side by side and share in the local life. At the end of their time away, we meet for the weekend conference. Students return focused, ready to learn and develop the experience they gained on their ministry trip.

Camila Fonseca, a past student of the Bible school, said, "Even though I fell (literally) often, I was able to get back up, laugh it off, and give thanks to God. In the midst of trials, I was able to see God's will and even enjoy this with wonderful people. I thank God for the opportunity to come and learn more of His Word each day and live through unforgettable opportunities." By the end of their year, students have a glimpse of the strategic picture for meeting the needs that surround them. Three of last year's graduates went back to a village to minister for more than a month, working on a farm for room and board. Other students go on to university without losing their spiritual compass. We miss the help of the Tuttles and the Cachos, who now focus on other ministries, but the Lord is good, and we have been joined by the Sosa family from Uruguay. We plan to continue training young people in God's Word.

Our part in the jungle feels small as we look at the pressing needs for church leadership, solid Bible teaching, and evangelism. Our ministry is a long-term solution as we try to address the immediate needs. Our strategy is to keep training more workers for the Lord, even in the forgotten jungle. ■



Jesse and Janel Mattix are commended from Northgate Gospel Chapel, Seattle, Washington.

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Above (from top): The Bible school's 2018 graduates are now involved in various ministries or continuing their education; Jesse and Janel Mattix distribute diplomas to students; The 2018 Bible school students prepare for their two-week ministry trip.

month courses on the coast, IBEM had a dream of developing a yearlong program for students. That is where we come in.

We joined the ministry in Tarapoto in 2015, having previously worked for 11 years to develop a Bible school in Bolivia. We felt the Lord was opening a door to work with the Tuttles and the Cachos (MPH Day 23). Both families were connected to IBEM, and we imported much from the yearlong discipleship program in Bolivia. Our first year was difficult with shaping a new vision and establishing a pattern, but it was a successful year for the nine students who graduated from the program.

