

Missions

Inside the Dublin Christian Mission

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Thinking It Through

BY KEITH R. KEYSER

Missionary Lessons from a Depressed Worker

At the peak of his abilities, an accomplished prophet was suddenly struck down by depression. Although he had recently participated in a great victory for God's glory over Baal worship, Elijah was suddenly discouraged by the idle threats of wicked Jezebel. His prayer reveals his desperation: "I have had enough! Lord, take my life, for I'm no better than my fathers."¹ What led to this dramatic collapse? Elijah's experience and the Lord's response are instructive for God's servants on foreign or domestic fields.

The physical and emotional component

After three and a half years of dwelling in remote places—a kind of divine witness protection program—Elijah expended tremendous mental, physical, and emotional energy in the contest on Mt. Carmel.² He vividly established God's real identity through the demonstration of Yahweh's burnt offering against the backdrop of the vain sacrificial efforts of Baal's false prophets.³ Then, the divinely empowered prophet ran to the king's Jezreel palace—a distance of 16 to 20 miles, depending on where he began.⁴ Clearly all of these events were incredibly taxing on his mind, body, and spirit.

After much labor, an emotional or physical crash often occurs. A missionary to Native Americans, David Brainerd overworked himself into exhaustion. He frequently suffered bouts of depression and died young from tuberculosis. Jonathan Edwards describes his friend's ministry in the following way. "By the seeming calls of Providence, as made it extremely difficult for him to avoid doing more than his strength would well admit of; yea, his circumstances and the business of his mission among the Indians, were such, that great fatigues and hardships were altogether inevitable. However, he was finally convinced, that he had erred in this matter, and that he ought to have taken more thorough care, and been more resolute to withstand temptation to such degrees of labor as injured his health; and accordingly warned his brother, who succeeds him in his mission, to be careful to avoid this error."⁵

The divine remedy

Believers who are called by God for special service are hard-working, determined laborers. To become a missionary, one nor-

mally faces learning foreign languages and cultures, as well as leaving family, friends, and homeland to work in sometimes difficult conditions and climates. Overcoming such challenges requires commitment to, and dependence on, the Lord. Having worked so tirelessly to get to the field, they are then confronted with tremendous needs in their adopted land. Evangelism, teaching, and pastoral service are no easier on the field than they are at home. All of this conspires to make the missionary an overworked emotional and spiritual wreck. If they are not careful, the struggle against evil forces can lead them to an Elijah-like collapse.

God ministered to His servant in this situation by first listening to His complaint.⁶ Secondly, He provided needed refreshment to the overtaxed Tishbite.⁷ Thirdly, He manifested His power, which doubtless reminded Elijah of his Master's vast resources.⁸ Fourthly, He reminded Elijah that he was not the last man standing (i.e. he was not alone in the work): the Lord still had 7,000 faithful believers who refused allegiance to Baal.⁹ Finally, God spoke to His servant in a voice of stillness, foretelling a glorious future for the divine work in Israel, as well as naming various people who would carry on the ministry.¹⁰ Elisha, his successor, would eventually eclipse his mentor in the number of miracles that he performed for the Lord and would carry on the vanquishing of idolatry.

Supporting God's servants

How can the church help our faithful laborers to not break down? Firstly, encourage them to get proper rest and take care of their physical health. Send them on a real vacation on a regular basis. If needed, help them get good medical checkups and treatment. Secondly, listen to their struggles; if you are not able to visit, Skype or call them. Thirdly, assure them that they are not alone; their commending assembly stands with them in prayer, and other workers are laboring for Christ worldwide. It is God's work, and victory is not dependent on them solely. Finally, point them to the all-sufficient High Priest, Who succors them in all of their trials and temptations.¹¹ ■

Keith Keyser is a US commended worker based in Pennsylvania.

¹ 1 Kings 19:4, CSB; ² 1 Kings 18; ³ 1 Kings 18; ⁴ 1 Kings 18:46; ⁵ Jonathan Edwards, "Preface to *Brainerd's Memoir*," in *The Works of President Edwards*, Vol. 10. (New York: S. Converse, 1829), 31; ⁶ 1 Kings 19:4&10; ⁷ 1 Kings 19:5–8; ⁸ 1 Kings 19:11–12; ⁹ 1 Kings 19:18; ¹⁰ 1 Kings 19:15–17; ¹¹ Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16.

DUBLIN

The Blessing of Changing Seasons

BY JOE MURPHY



“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity . . .” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Three years have passed since a season of serving in one ministry ended and a new one began. In 2014, excited yet facing an unknown future, I found myself on a train heading into Dublin to engage with new people, a new community, and new opportunities. The physical move is relatively easy for a missionary, but the transition is as difficult as it is for any person. Yet the Lord was well aware of that!

I knew this season of change was a time to be sensitive; it was a time to wait upon the Lord, patiently looking for opportunities to connect exactly as the Lord would do! Personally, this was a special time of intimate prayer and dependency on the Lord. Feelings of inadequacy and loneliness plagued me, but looking back, I was exactly where the Lord wanted me. This time was more for following than for leading.

In this new season, I would be joining the Dublin Christian Mission, the second oldest city mission in the world. The community was hurting, but I began to witness the Lord restor-

ing one block of the neighborhood at a time. Beginning with a few remaining and new volunteers, a Saturday-night meal was served to the homeless community, and, on the first night, about 50 attended. I quickly realized local “Dubs” would be an essential part of the new team. For example, Sean, a Dublin native who became homeless at age 13 and lived on the street since, is now committed to serving Jesus. Together, we would begin rebuilding the homeless ministry.

Today, The Light House is open five days a week, serves three meals per day for three days each week, and offers daily activities, recovery meetings and Bible studies, a prayer room, and personal-care items. All of these provisions create a warm, welcome place where we share our hope and faith in Jesus.

A time for laboring

Although the Lord works in different ways each day, a typical Tuesday at The Light House involves the following: In the early hours of the morning, a few volunteers collect food donations. Upon returning, they participate in a Bible study before food preparation and setup for the day. As the morning progresses, others arrive eager to serve the homeless community. Some days, visitors from churches or businesses join us. Prior to opening the mission, Sean leads the group in worship, prayer, and job assignments. We complete



Top: Dublin, Ireland ©iStockPhoto.com/littleny Above (L-R): Started in 1828, the Dublin Christian Mission is the second oldest independent mission in the world; As a formerly homeless individual, Sean's testimony and work are a blessing to all at The Light House; After collecting food donations, interns and volunteers prepare their hearts and minds for the day's service at the morning Bible study.



From left: Our volunteers reach out to and connect with those in need; All of our volunteers, like our Saturday group, are committed to serving those in need; Our volunteers are excited to engage in street work in the surrounding community.

the meal preparation and set the dining room as a queue forms outside.

It's 1:00 p.m., and the drop-in opens. Volunteers greet our guests with smiles and hugs; then, everyone gets busy serving, chatting, listening, sharing, praying, and loving. One recent guest from a local business commented, "It is amazing the way your volunteers engage with your guests; this feels like a family, a home!"

It's 3:00 p.m., and many have arrived with the effects of homelessness evident on their faces—it seems like a place Jesus would attend! The dining room is full, so now is the perfect time for a volunteer to share his or her testimony. Nathan takes the microphone and tells his story of restoration and hope. The room becomes amazingly quiet, and several guests pray in response to what they heard about Jesus. One guest, tired of addiction, discusses treatment options with a volunteer who once faced the same struggle. Several head to the prayer room for an intimate time of conversation and prayer. Others receive encouragement from the Christian witness of love and provision. Conversations and laughter continue and tears of healing are shared as the day comes to an end.

It's 5:00 p.m., and the drop-in time closes. Goodbyes are said and cleanup begins. More than 100 guests have come through the doors this day, and 20 volunteers greeted them in the name and love of Christ. Tomorrow we start all over again!

A time for planting seeds

As days like these end, we are exhausted but grateful. Over the months, we have seen many lives restored—some enter Christian rehabilitation, and many are now involved in churches. One guest commented, "The Light House is different! I don't

"The Light House is different! I have decent conversations with people who really care and give me good advice."

come just for the food, although it's always nice; here I have decent conversations with people who really care and give me good advice."

Another guest shared, "When I came to The Light House, my life started to change." Comments like these keep us pressing on. Although we represent the Light, darkness often prevails.

Yet we know we are where God has called us.

Another way we have witnessed God's working is in allowing nonbelievers to volunteer with us. It is amazing to see how God has used our serving together to reach lives for Him. We have seen many individuals, such as college students and community-service participants, come to faith through their experience at The Light House. Serving is truly a powerful testimony to the Christian witness.

A time for digging deeper

As the homeless work began to show signs of new life during my first few months at Dublin Christian Mission, questions about a youth work continued to arise. It was still a time to wait upon the Lord. Over a year later, at the end of 2015, the Lord brought Anthony to the mission through an amazing set of circumstances. Anthony, whom we call Anto, grew up in Dublin among poverty, drugs, and crime and became a product of his environment, like most. After Anto came to the Dublin Christian Mission, God restored him and sent him back to his community in Dublin to be a witness. Through his efforts alongside the mission, the Freedom Club began in his community.

Initially, we tried to connect with existing works in the area; however, our efforts were unsuccessful. So, Anto began bringing a soccer ball to a nearby sports field, and youth gathered quickly. What started on one field has grown into a thriving youth work in four different areas. Clubs now meet at our Chancery Place facility, but we remain committed to an active presence in the community.

After months of nurturing relationships with youth and parents, our young participants are now inviting friends to "their club." We often hear comments like, "This is the best club ever!" On a recent day trip—for some, their first glimpse outside the city—one young boy said, "This was the best day of my life."

Amid the challenges of inner-city living, Freedom Club is an alternative, a refuge, and a testimony to the Christian way of life. The name "Freedom Club" reflects the freedom found in Jesus—our purpose for reaching young lives. We pray that God might use the Freedom Club team to transform young lives through His love.

The food pantry helps those in our local area who are in need. Through the 60 to 100 food parcels distributed monthly,

the pantry demonstrates God’s love and compassion. One family commented, “It’s not just the food parcel we are thankful for but the way we were treated, which is just as important.”

Transitional housing offers assistance in practical needs, life skills, and faith during a significant change in someone’s life. We praise God for these opportunities to strengthen relationships and share our faith through basic necessities, like food and housing.

A time for growing personally

What began three years ago as a meal once a week has transformed into an amazing ministry for God’s glory: homeless work, street outreach, youth clubs, summer community days, camps, transitional housing, a food pantry, courthouse prayer meetings, and a future café and gathering place. All the activities are our means of building relationships, nurturing trust, offering a listening ear, and sharing the hope of Jesus. The mission welcomes short-term volunteers and provides an internship program for others to experience missions. Our desire is that those serving with us will gain a greater appreciation and vision for being “Christians on the mission” locally and internationally.

From new seasons in life, I learned, first, to be willing to walk into the unknown. God is faithful, and the Lord works mightily in new beginnings. Second, I learned to be open to God’s leading and have the courage to follow. The future may look different, but that is often a good indicator of God’s presence. Third, I learned not to let minor barriers in the Christian faith hinder what God is doing for the Gospel. I must always be willing to engage and serve with other believers and nonbelievers. Fourth, I learned to equip others for ministry and then step back. I must look at how God is working, not at my own capability—empowering others creates great joy.

Since being on the mission field, one gospel principle has become especially relevant to me: Jesus was often busy with crowds and activities, but He always took time to enter into personal encounters with individuals or small groups. In these settings, we see the power and transformation of the Gospel. I continually remind myself, amid the busyness of mission and church life, that the love and power of Jesus is most evident in our individual relationships.

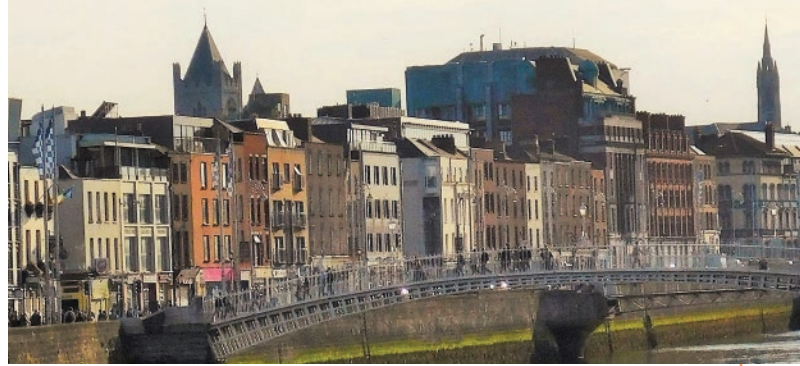
A time for looking ahead

This time is exciting for the Gospel in Dublin. As Ireland transitions from a religious to a secular nation, sharing the true meaning of the Gospel and a personal relationship with God, as shown through the grace and love of Jesus, is especially important. With this change, the church needs to reengage with the community.

I thank God for each of my supporting churches and friends, as well as my commending assembly, Cheshire Bible Chapel, for their prayers and their hearts for missions. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing can be taken from it. ■



Joseph Murphy was commended in 2011 by Cheshire Bible Chapel in Cheshire, Connecticut.



Top (L-R): Homeless when he came to us, David is now a Christian, a volunteer, and a transitional-housing resident; Children enjoy the activities at Freedom Club, especially craft time. **Middle:** Dublin Christian Mission is impacting the city of Dublin through the Gospel. **Bottom (L-R):** Joe and Anto during a community barbecue outreach; After living on the streets for most of his life, Willie is now undergoing Christian rehab.

Interview with Amanda Delzer



A New Missionary Shares about Daily Life

Just over a year ago, Amanda arrived in the city of Potosi, a place that she has come to care for deeply. To reach Potosi, a small city with many unique traditions, you must travel high into the Andes Mountains in Bolivia.

What is the weather like?

Potosi is nearly always cold. The winter is cold and dry, while the summer tends to be cold and rainy. There have been only a dozen days in which I haven't worn my coat, and I haven't worn shorts once all year. Looking out over Potosi from my window or a hillside, a distinct lack of green is very notable. I would not describe this part of the world as beautiful in a typical way, but the big exception is the sky. Deep blue in the day, brilliantly colored sunsets in the evening, and bright stars at night make me look up more frequently now than I had before.

Have you acclimated to living at such a high altitude?

At 14,000 feet above sea level, Potosi is one of the highest cities in the world. The locals don't even notice the altitude since they have been used to it since birth, but anyone from another place definitely feels the effects. The lack of oxygen in the air can provoke what Bolivians call *soroche* (altitude sickness). It takes about two weeks to acclimate to the altitude. I make sure that I give myself a day of bedrest whenever I arrive home from a trip, and for the first week I don't do anything physically demanding. For day-to-day living I try to get enough sleep and avoid walking uphill. Sometimes I feel out of breath or extra tired after activities, but I have acclimated enough now to go weeks without thinking about the altitude.

What cultural tradition do you find interesting?

The local culture is a blend of traditions originating in both the ancient animistic religion of the native Quechua people and the Roman Catholicism that the Spanish brought with them when they conquered the area. In February, a big festival is held right before Lent. People visit the cathedrals and dance in parades so that the Virgin will bless them in the coming year. This continues throughout an entire weekend.

Then, the following Tuesday, rituals are performed in honor of the *Pachamama* (the ancient mother earth goddess). Alcohol is poured on the ground as an offering to her, and a cardboard table covered in special foods is laid out and set on fire. Some believe that if the whole table and everything on it burns up completely it means that the *Pachamama* is pleased with the offering and will give them a fruitful year. Firecrackers are also lit and thrown into houses' front halls to scare away any bad spirits, and a dried cornstalk is nailed outside above the front door. This is a symbol of prosperity, and some families will leave them up throughout the rest of the year.

What is challenging?

Potosi is heavily influenced by its history. It lies adjacent to *Cerro Rico* (the rich mountain), a mountain that houses the largest silver mine ever discovered. Memories of the greed, oppression, and pain caused by this discovery still shape the culture and mindset of the people who live here today. Cautious, reserved, and suspicious are fairly accurate descriptions of Potosinos. Trust is hard earned and takes time. People tend to assume the worst of others and hold grudges. These are all big challenges that I think about frequently. How do I truly get to know people if they are so guarded? How do I avoid getting caught up in grudges between people, or becoming the recipient of one?

People cling strongly to their cultural and family traditions. The mining portion of the community is particularly closed off. Although they will listen to the message of the Gospel, people regard highly community and family pressures that often carry more weight. As a result few have become believers.

Living in this climate can also be a challenge. Despite the cold, there is strong solar radiation due to the altitude so it's easy to get sunburned, even while just doing errands around town. I also have to be careful with food. I avoid eat-

I feel greatly privileged when I receive a visit or when I am asked to give advice or pray for someone.

ing raw vegetables and boil my drinking water as precautions. It's easy to get infected with parasites and other more serious diseases.

What is exciting?

I love getting to know the culture better. One of the main ways I get to know people is through the English language classes I teach, and several of my students have been very open to sharing about local customs and beliefs. It's fascinating to understand what beliefs and values are behind people's actions.

About half a dozen ladies from my church here in Potosi have dropped by my house over the last six months. Receiving that demonstration of trust from someone always makes me very happy and humbled. It's so difficult for people to trust others, and I feel greatly privileged when I receive a visit or when I am asked to give advice or pray for someone. I am beginning to build relationships with several young ladies from the church and have even begun to disciple one of them.

I am also very excited with the opportunities that have opened up in the area of Bible teaching. I have been so privileged to have had many wonderful Bible teachers in my life, and now I have the chance to pass on that knowledge and training. I give the devotional at my church's ladies' meeting about once every two months, and I was also recently asked to be the guest speaker at another church's ladies' meeting. I get to meet with the volunteers at a children's program to help them prepare their Bible lessons, and I recently started to help teach a young ladies' monthly small group at my church.

I can't wait to see what the Lord does this new year, both though the English classes and the girls I've been getting to know at church. Please pray for this city and for me. ■



From top: The city of Potosi, Bolivia; Young women enjoying a meal together while attending a youth retreat; Cornstalks hung over doorways as a symbol of prosperity.

May We Introduce

Phil & Trena Gould

Serving in St. Lucia



Phil's Testimony

I was privileged to be born to Christian parents who, soon after, were commended to serve the Lord in St. Lucia. Hearing the clear Gospel preached nightly was a way of life, and I don't remember when I first started to understand my need as a sinner for God's salvation. While on furlough, and during a series of gospel meetings, I was troubled about the Lord's second coming. God used the hymn "Life at Best is Very Brief," and especially the repeated line "Be in time," to show me that there was a God in heaven who desired me to be with Him and that I was not ready. One morning, before kindergarten, I knelt by my bed and, in true child-like faith, simply prayed that God would forgive my sins. The peace of God was immediate and I no longer feared the Lord's coming. Continuing with my family in St. Lucia until I was 12, I appreciated seeing the Gospel spread and how God works to draw people to Himself. God planted the seed of desire within me to serve Him, and that would be drawn out in later years. A sense of God's greatness has continued with me; when asked to provide a meaningful verse for high school graduation, I chose Acts 11:17: "What was I, that I could withstand God?"

Trena's Testimony

I was raised in a godly home where the Word of God was read and followed. My family attended an evangelical church and placed an emphasis on obedience to God's Word and service to the Lord. I remember knowing at a very young age that I needed to be saved. Salvation was spoken of often and, as a young child, it was clear to me. I remember asking my mom about it and praying. But what I remember most is the joy and security I had. At different times through my childhood I would think to myself, "I'm so glad I'm saved!" After the age of 18, I came to a fuller appreciation of salvation, who I am

in Christ, and being gathered to His name alone. Over those years, as I grew in the Lord, I developed a strong desire to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21) The Lord led me in many ways where each step of obedience only taught me more of Him and led me closer to the next step. I have come to appreciate that we cannot project ourselves into someone else's obedience. I must obey what the Lord has personally asked me to do; it is there that we have the power of His Grace to carry it through.

Together

We were married in 2005 and brought into our marriage our individual commitments to serve in whatever way the Lord has for us. Our desire has been to serve within our local assembly in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in gospel outreach, teaching, and practical service. Keeping in touch with the believers in St. Lucia was important to us, and during the following years we made a few trips to St. Lucia to help in the local assemblies there. Over the past year the Lord has been working very strongly in our lives to bring us to the point where there is only one question to answer: "Am I willing to surrender and do as He asks?" The Lord's question "Lovest thou me?" from John 21:17 taught us that He first calls us unto Himself. During many months of prayer, a few areas of service opened up to us, but the Lord gave us direction and confirmation of His call to full-time service on the island of St. Lucia. We are thankful that the Lord called us individually and now has directed us together into this work. With our three children, Seraiah (9), Vashti (7), and Titus (5), we value your prayers as we seek to be a help to the local assemblies in St. Lucia and also to work in areas that need to hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ■



New 2018 Missionary Prayer Handbook Section

Cross-Cultural Ministries in the US & Canada

BY TOM TURNER

A new section has been added to the 2018 *Missionary Prayer Handbook* to encourage prayer for those who minister to distinct foreign or aboriginal people groups in the United States and Canada.

For many years immigrants have come to North America. However, over the past few years, we have seen that the flow of people has increased in diversity, if not numbers. We believe that the Lord is calling attention to the foreign mission field right at our doorstep. Many people have emigrated from other countries with the hope of finding better opportunities for their families in the United States or Canada. Some are refugees fleeing war-torn countries and looking for a safe place to raise their children in an environment of freedom.

These distinct people groups generally settle in geographic pockets, in close proximity to those of like ethnic background and language. However, many times they do not assimilate easily into the local English-speaking population where they have settled. This presents a great opportunity for “foreign” mission service right at home, where the Lord has already called some to serve in a full-time capacity. This is the reason CMML and MSC Canada have introduced this new section in the handbook. We want to encourage the Lord’s people to engage in prayer and practical support for those workers entering this new geographic area of service and for those who will hear the Gospel as a result.

The new section, “Cross-Cultural Ministries in the US and Canada,” will include workers who are commended to full-time missionary service among distinct foreign people groups who have immigrated to the United States and Canada as well as those who minister to aboriginal people groups. As missionaries, they live in the same geographic area as these people groups with the sole purpose of reaching them through evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Since the handbook includes missionaries who are serving on foreign shores, CMML and MSC developed specific guidelines for inclusion in this new section and will not attempt to include everyone who works domestically with these distinct people groups. For example, a full-time commended worker with primary responsibility to serve at his home assembly and works only part-time among a distinct people group would not be included.

As you use the new handbook, please remember to pray for those working cross-culturally at home. If you would like to order a copy of the 2018 *Missionary Prayer Handbook* please see the order form on the back cover of this magazine.

As an assembly elder or worker, if you need additional information about this new handbook section please contact Phil Parsons (assembly relations and missionary care) at pccparsons@cmml.us. ■

Tom Turner is CMML's vice-president, publishing.

Bible Explorer

Teaching scripture in Irish schools

BY COLIN SHELDON

Sitting in a staff room in Southwest Dublin, Emmet asked if I remembered Kevin, a former student. “He wants you to go to his school, but it is a long way down the country.” I searched on a map to find the location. Shortly afterward, Kevin called me and said that he remembered me teaching his class 10 years ago back in Dublin, and he still remembers some of the hand signs. I told Kevin I was free on a Friday in the summer term to come his way, but he said he had to talk to the priest first.

A few days later, the priest called to say that he heard about the program I teach in schools, and it is a pity to come so far for just one school since another school in the parish would also welcome me. Later that week the priest told me he had spoken to his friend in another parish, and he also wanted me to come to his area. So not one, but three schools.

For five weeks in the summer term, I left home at 7:30 a.m. on a Friday morning, drove a roundtrip of 250 kilometers (155 miles), taught the Old Testament in three schools in rural Ireland, and was home again in Dublin by 4:30 p.m. At the end of the fifth week, I was told, “You will be back next year to teach the New Testament, won’t you?” The principals, teachers, and children in this new area were as excited as those who are in schools in Southwest Dublin where this program is also taught.

The program

The popular “Walk Thru the Bible” program ignites a passion for God’s Word through innovative live events and inspiring biblical resources. I teach a children’s version, Bible Explorer, in primary schools to children ages 10 to 12, using the same techniques that are used in the adult program with story, hand motions, and interaction. I have taught Bible Explorer for 19 years in the public school system here in Southwest Dublin, in a radius of no more than 10 kilometers (6 miles) from our home. Bible Explorer is not a Bible club, or an after-school activity, but rather teaching God’s Word directly in the classroom. As the children listen, I am touched by the answers they give, showing how much they listen. On most school days from Septem-

ber through June, I am in schools, teaching two or three classes, and sometimes as many as four per day. This current school year is my 20th year teaching this program. The motivation each day is the encouragement of principals telling the children they are being taught the Bible and that I believe and live what I teach. I hear similar words from teachers, sometimes parents, and, on occasions, from local priests. Last school year, I taught 1,602 children, either the Old or New Testament, in 23 schools over 315 hours. So far, over more than 19 years, 16,390 children have been taught the Old Testament, and from this figure 11,643 children have learned both the Old and New Testaments. This is a testament of God’s direction and of your faithfulness in personally praying for these opportunities.

The beginning

And yet, if we turn the clocks back to the mid-1990s, you might think things would turn out differently. My wife, Rosemary, attended a Walk Thru the Bible seminar in Dublin and came home to encourage me to consider a new opportunity of service—to teach this program to children in schools. But she was met by my mute response, even though she knew this program was tailor-made for me. However, in 1998, a friend encouraged me to consider teaching Bible Explorer, and there has been no turning back. What a wonderful God we have; He is patient as we come to terms with His leading for our lives. Rosemary and I often smile as we reflect on the way God led me to teach this program. Now 20 years later, I am still journeying, with more mileage to cover, teaching in approximately 20 schools.

The lessons

Each lesson lasts for one hour, and the Old Testament and the New Testament are covered by five lessons each. After 10 weeks, or 10 hours, the children have an understanding of the main stories and truths in the Bible. A storyline is taught rather than chronologically going through the Bible. In each lesson,



there is a story, some drama to help the children in their understanding, and numerous hand signs to help them remember. After the lesson is completed, there are worksheets available to help cement what the children have learned. The wonderful thing is, some of the teachers today get excited when I come into their class because I taught them when they were children. Children see me in a shopping center and do the hand signs, or adults talk to me, and I realize the impact Bible Explorer has had on many people over the years.

The challenges and blessings

In recent years the rules for getting into schools have changed quickly, and in each school I need to have a background check done. This means I can only take into a school people who have also had background checks done. Two others teach in a couple schools, but I am the only person in Ireland who teaches this program on a regular basis. It is a challenge that so few have grabbed this opportunity that we have at present. This is a seed-sowing ministry, and heaven will reveal some surprises.

Over the years, positive comments have been made; here are a few highlights.

“We have tried over the years to get the same message

across using various books and have failed. You were able to get it across to the children in a fun and exciting way in five weeks.”

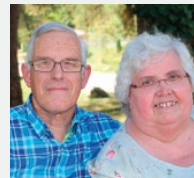
“Mr. Sheldon is the teacher, the teachers and the children are the pupils.”

“Thank you for coming. God sent you to our school. You lads have been listening to the Word of God.”

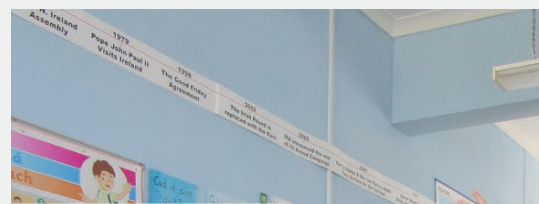
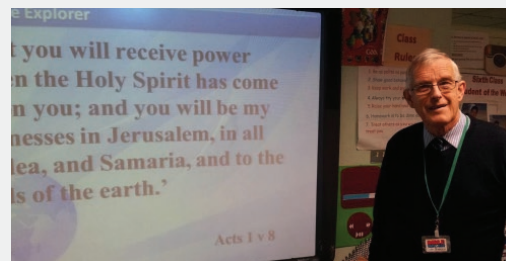
“I was very impressed, and so were the other teachers, with Colin’s energy and love for his subject and dynamic teaching style. The pupils were riveted and learnt such a lot.”

Prayer items

God will bless His Word as it is taught day by day. Please pray that it will have an impact in people’s lives. Pray that I will keep what is taught simple for all to understand and present it in a fresh way each time. Pray also for health and strength to keep the schedule and for safety in travel between schools. ■



Colin and Rosemary Sheldon have served in Ireland since the early 1970s. They are commended by Bethany Chapel in Toronto, Ontario.



Clockwise from top left: Children enjoy taking part in the lesson, such as these children carrying the “grapes of Eshcol”; Colin uses classroom interactive boards as another visual tool; One of the rural schools in which Colin taught; (lower right and middle) Children love doing the hand signs that help them remember the Bible lessons they learned; Colin going into one of the schools to teach Bible Explorer.

MK Corner

MISSIONS Magazine Chats With Missionary Kids

Interview with the Eichenauer siblings—Day 8, Philippines

BY SARAH DUNLAP

When the Eichenauer family visited CMML during their recent furlough, we jumped at the chance to chat with Heidi, Joshua, and Katrina, who have worked alongside their parents and attended school in the Philippines for the past seven years. Because their parents serve at Faith Academy, the kids have also been heavily involved in the functions of the school. While the Eichenauers enjoy and appreciate much about the Filipino culture, some aspects of it still seem odd, like sweet spaghetti, but the adventurous siblings take it with a smile. This year, Heidi, Joshua, and Katrina are remaining in the States to pursue higher education and careers. Please pray for them as they establish new lives.



Katrina (17), Heidi (21), Joshua (19)

Can you describe where you live in the Philippines?

Heidi: We live in Manila, Philippines, which has about 20 million people unofficially. It's about the size of Detroit, but it's got as many people as New York City.

Katrina: We actually live in a subdivision, so it's more spacious and nicer. But, if you go into the city, it's houses, buildings, [and] skyscrapers everywhere.

Do you feel more at home in the Philippines or in the States?

Katrina: More in the States because we didn't move until we were nine, 11, and 13. But I do fit in in the Philippines as well.

Heidi: I think wherever you are, you miss the other place, but I feel the most comfortable in the United States.

Joshua: I would say the same.

Is there anything specific that you love about Filipino culture?

Heidi: Their culture is so friendly. You can go into someone's home, and they're going to treat you like family.

Katrina: And they look up to Americans a lot. It's interesting the attention you get being a white American in the Filipino culture.

Heidi: Also, some of the food. They have really good street chicken called *adobo*. We call it "chop-chop chicken" because they chop up a chicken and that's your meal. You have to pick around the bones, but the flavor is really good.

Heidi: My favorite food to eat in the Philippines is Chinese food, but that's because there's a lot of Chinese influence.

Do you speak any languages other than English?

Heidi: Tagalog!

Katrina: Heidi has friends who are Filipino who she hangs out with a lot, so that's how she gets it. And then Josh just picks it up randomly. I had lessons for four years total, so I've had the most.

Heidi: Most people, if Tagalog is their first language, speak "Taglish," which is predominantly English with Tagalog words thrown in.

Do you celebrate holidays or birthdays differently in the Philippines?

Heidi: Instead of a piñata, they have a clay pot filled with flour and candy. When you break it, the flour goes everywhere!

Katrina: And for most holidays, they use spaghetti as their food. It's a symbol of long life—that's the Chinese influence—but Filipinos love sweet things so their spaghetti has this weird sweet twist to it; it's not your typical Italian marinara. And they chop up hotdogs instead of meatballs. They also use *pancit*, which is really thin noodles with vegetables in it.

Heidi: Any reason is a reason to party in the Philippines. And karaoke at every party!

Katrina: That's everybody's favorite. It's so fun though.

Heidi: It's normally terrible! Something that you have to know about the Philippines: it's a no-shame culture. So, it doesn't matter how bad you sing.

Katrina: Christmas starts in September and goes all the way through December. They call it the "brr months," and on



September 1, you will hear Christmas music playing in the mall, and all the Christmas trees are up. On Christmas morning, they do almost like trick-or-treating but for Christmas; they go around to houses and collect money and gifts and presents from people.

Do you have any favorite hobbies or activities that are specific to the Philippines?

Katrina: In middle school, every year for a week, they'll go to a location [for outdoor education] and at that location, there's three sub-locations. There's a base camp, where you're at the beach. There's a reef site, where you actually go snorkeling and scuba diving. And then the other day you climb a volcano. It's like a 10-mile hike to the top of a volcano, and you walk along the thing. It's really cool.

Heidi: [It's] a Filipino tradition to go "mallng" because the mall is an all-encompassing thing. You have your banking and grocery stores and movie theaters and shopping stores and restaurants all in one location.

What do you and your friends do for fun?

Katrina: In the last few months, my friends and I would go on milk tea runs or Starbucks runs. We would take a trike, which is a motor bike with a sidecar but they're covered. Then we'd take a jeepney, which are jeeps but on the inside they've been redone so that the benches are on the side and they're open. They're huge in the Philippines.

Joshua: [They're] all surplus WWII vehicles that they've revamped.

Katrina: And they make them works of art, so they're all painted bright colors with cartoons on the side.

Can you tell me a little more about your schooling?

Katrina: When we moved [to the Philippines], Heidi was a freshman so she started at Faith. Josh and I remained home-schooled. In 2013, Joshua started as a freshman, and the next year, I came in as a sophomore. Josh and I are actually in the same grade.

Katrina: School starts at 7:10. Our day starts really early because there's so much traffic. There are kids who have to leave their houses at like 4 o'clock in the morning to get there even at 7. We finish classes at 2:30, and then extracurricular activities go from 2:30 to 4:25. We've been involved in like everything at Faith.

Joshua: I've played basketball and volleyball, and then this year I was in the play.

Heidi: Then [Katrina] has done volleyball and the play. And I did volleyball for one semester, but we don't talk about that.

Katrina: And we've all done choir. My dad's the choir teacher.

Heidi: So, we kind of have to.

Any requests that you want people to pray for?

Katrina: College transition! That transition is huge, so prayer would be great.

Heidi: And prayer for our parents because they'll be empty-nesters. And for what I'm going to do [now]. ■

Learn about the Philippines!

- The Philippines is slightly larger than Arizona.
- It is made up of 7,107 islands.
- The Philippines is surrounded by the South China Sea and the mainland of China to the north, the Philippine Sea to the northeast, and the Sulu Sea with Malaysia and Indonesia to the west.
- The Filipino peoples have 181 different languages, but Filipino (Tagalog) and English are the official languages.
- Currently, 14 MKs from the Philippines are listed in the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*.



50th Anniversary

Missionary Kids Educational Assistance Fund



BY PHILIP C. PARSONS

Among the many challenges facing missionary families, the cost of educating their children must be confronted. The Missionary Kids Educational Assistance Fund (MKEAF) was formed by CMML to provide missionary families financial assistance to alleviate part of that burden.

The fund began with a legacy in 1968. The Cameron sisters, who were school teachers, provided the initial funding, and through the years the MKEAF account has been perpetuated by gifts from the Lord's people. It is a revolving account: funds on hand are distributed and then replaced by gifts received from individuals and assemblies. Each year missionaries are asked to report their children's annual education cost, and for the 2016 – 2017 school year they reported a total need of approximately \$178,500. MKEAF was able to provide more than \$160,000 to

assist 45 missionary families, with 95 children (in kindergarten to 12th grade) benefiting from those gifts.

For 50 years MKEAF has been a wonderful provision to missionary families. From around the world, the appreciation from missionaries resonates. One missionary wrote, "We praise God for the hearts of those moved to pray and give and share the burden of educational expenses. It is a real help and blessing and very much appreciated."

The original \$50,000, although expended long ago, still blesses families. Education costs are rising and so must our commitment to provide for missionaries' children through MKEAF. We pray that the Lord will continue to burden hearts to help meet this important need. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) ■

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