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# THINKING IT THROUGH

BY ALAN PARKS

## Living in Thankfulness

It's nearly Thanksgiving, the holiday celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the USA. Those in the States know the holiday's history as a day set aside to give thanks for God's blessings. While it is a wonderful holiday for all to observe, Christians should be the most thankful people on earth! Our souls have been saved eternally; we have a relationship with the God of heaven through His Son and His atoning sacrifice on Calvary; the Holy Spirit indwells us; God's presence is with us every moment of every day; and our eternity is sure and indescribable, with and like Him.

However, are we as thankful as we should be? Possibly not. Are we thankful for the wonders of this life—the senses to enjoy life, minds created to reason with intelligence, food to eat, shelter, friends and family who love us and whom we love? All

### Are we as thankful as we should be?

of these are a part of the "life more abundantly" that He freely offers to us. Do we ever realize that we take these for granted? Are we thankful for the awesome privilege of prayer? We enjoy the ability to come directly into the throne room of eternity and commune one-to-one with our sovereign God. This is nothing that we've earned, of course; it's purely a gift of grace.

Scripture states, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) It humbles me to note that we are to be living in a conscious state of thankfulness. The Lord wants us to have thankful attitudes in everything—in the circumstances that naturally cause us to be grateful and in those which cause us to react otherwise. Many believers live with heartaches, loneliness, disappointments, pain, debilitation, or other difficult circumstances. Humanly, we understand how challenging it is to be thankful in spite of hardships, yet we know that, in Christ, Christians can face trials with joy. In difficult situations, we can illustrate in our own lives, or observe in others, the truth that, at times, that which defies hu-

man nature defines God's nature. Let us remember this stunning verse: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) Our Savior, facing the horrors of abandonment, mockery, scourging, and ultimately crucifixion, bore it with divine joy. The church, His bride, would come from all of His suffering, and He maintained His thankfulness through it all.

In a world filled with fear and anxiety, we read this: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6) For an age characterized by a spirit of ungratefulness, the Psalmist wrote "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." (Psalm 136:1) When we forget "smaller" blessings, Paul writes, "Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20)

I think we all get the message: as believers, we must live in an attitude of thankfulness. Johnson Oatman's hymn states, "Count your blessings, name them one by one; count your many blessings, see what God hath done." An effective way for us to increase thanksgiving while diminishing complaining is to count our blessings and thank God for them. Even small blessings can prompt much thankfulness.

So we approach Thanksgiving, a time when many of us will sit around tables with loved ones and enjoy meals and fellowship. It's such a blessed occasion! As we celebrate the holiday, let us encourage each other to develop our attitudes of thankfulness more and more each day. We really should be the most thankful people on earth, and we know without a doubt we will be the most thankful people throughout eternity! ■

*Alan Parks is a commended worker based in South Carolina.*

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# A Multifaceted Ministry



Remembering Christ's Words, Serving All

BY DOROTHY WOODSIDE

**C**hitokoloki Mission Hospital is well known in Zambia, southern Angola, and southwestern Congo for its medical work. I first came to Chitokoloki in 1991 to offer furlough relief to two full-time nurse-missionaries who worked here at that time. Afterward, I felt the Lord was leading me to stay on, so in 1992, I was commended to serve as a full-time missionary, specifically to help with the medical work.

## EARLY WORK

From 1992 through 1998, I worked in Chitokoloki's hospital and in its three off-site clinics, each within a 15-mile radius of the mission, providing check-ups for children under five and pregnant women. I also ran the leprosy and tuberculosis work. During this time, I held Bible classes with children and with adults.

After I returned from an extended furlough at the end of 1999, I left the medical work and started teaching Bible classes in two villages. This program eventually expanded when I wrote a literacy program in two languages, Lunda and Luvale. At first, I offered two classes, but the number grew to 53 classes with about 1,300 male and female students and 200 local people

whom I taught to lead the lessons. In 2009, the heyday of the literacy work ended after most of the classes completed the first two courses, each of which lasted for a year and a half.

At present, I continue to do both literacy and Bible teaching in addition to medical work. In recent years, my primary Bible studies have been at a village called Mutuwankayi and in my house.



**Above (from top):** A group of women wait for literacy class to begin; In Zambia and nearby countries, Chitokoloki is well-known for its medical care.

## LITERACY ASSISTANCE

“Make disciples of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

When I first became involved in Mutuwankayi 11 years ago, it was a village that struggled with alcoholism, adultery, and smoking *daka* (a type of marijuana). Whenever I passed through the village, many of the people told me that they wanted to learn to read. I arranged a teacher for them, but he did not fulfill his responsibilities. As a result, I became their teacher, and I am still their teacher. I go to Mutuwankayi every Tuesday, driving 40 miles to reach the village. More than 20 people are now believers, and four years ago, they started a small Sunday meeting.

On Monday afternoons, I also teach a combined Bible study and English class to a small group of women. They want to learn English; I want them to learn God’s Word. So we do both. In all of my classes, I seek to teach God’s truths. In this area of Zambia, people have many misconceptions about salvation. I teach to correct those misconceptions, especially those related to new birth and eternal life. I encourage all the believers I teach to walk correctly with God, to seek to use their spiritual gifts, and to learn to discern between good and bad cultural beliefs and then leave behind the bad ones. My goal and prayer is to see each of my students come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.



## BENEVOLENT PROJECTS

“Visit orphans and widows in their trouble.” (James 1:27)

Benevolent work is something that most missionaries do. Like many, my motive is to fulfill the words of God when He instructs His people to give assistance to the poor, widows, and orphans. However, I do carefully choose the people that I help. Helping people with food, clothing, or housing does not come naturally to me; it is an ability that comes only through God’s loving grace.

### Elder care

Almost yearly, someone asks me to build a house or repair a house or *chota* (kitchen) for an elderly person or one of my patients. I try to screen these requests carefully. I believe that the family is responsible first, then the person’s local church or assembly. If, or when, those fail, I usually give my assistance, hiring a few local men to do the physical work. The houses contain one or two rooms, and we make the walls out of sunbaked or burnt bricks and the roofs out of grass. However, once I build a house for an individual, then he or she feels enabled to ask for more things: food, clothing, or money.



One benevolent project continues all year. African Leprosy Aid in England gives me an annual grant that I use to buy maize for the elderly leprosy patients who live in a village called Nyamonga. In June, I spent two weeks buying maize and bringing it back to Chitokoloki for storage. Each month, I take one bag for each patient to Nyamonga. Because we had drought this year, the bags contain only 88 pounds of maize. Sometimes, I am also able to give the patients peanuts or beans to augment their diets.

On Fridays, I buy *seke* (siftings from cassava or maize or both combined) from the elderly men and women who live in the colony at Chitokoloki. In exchange for at least 33 pounds of *seke*, I give them clothing, which they may keep for themselves or sell to others for Zambian currency, the kwacha. Occasionally, I distribute soap to the people, and I provide the “mealie meal,” or maize meal, that is needed to make supper for a number of the patients.

**Left, from top:** Dorothy helps all who want to learn become literate while also teaching them about the Bible; Her students are eager to learn, and the classes have transformed many of their lives. **Above:** Dorothy hires locals to build homes for the elderly in one of her benevolent projects.



## Food distribution

I see myself as a “go-between” as I buy from the locals and pass the food on. Often, when I am on the road, mothers will flag me down to ask for baby bundles or layettes. I exchange one bundle for one chicken, and I usually donate the chickens to the hospital, camps, or conferences. Other food items I buy along the road go to the hospital or, sometimes, to the girls’ dorm. During times of plenty, when I can obtain foods like cabbages, rapeseed, oranges, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes, I donate excess food to Keith and Gayle Bailey’s (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 4) boarding school for girls, BBG.

## Transportation

My Isuzu truck has a long bed and is designed with benches in the back for passengers to sit on, still with room for packages. I offer transportation to all; however, I try to limit the number of passengers at one time to eight. Often, people give me packages to carry to Chitokoloki for patients or school students. Others give me letters or money to distribute. When I am out, I usually return to Chitokoloki with something to deliver, and I am glad people trust me to make these deliveries.

## Youth care

School students, mostly those who are maternal-, paternal-, or double-orphans, ask for sponsorships for either secondary school, training school, or college. On occasion, I sponsor them if they keep their grades up and attend school regularly.

Because eyes have interested me since I worked as a school nurse, I am involved in helping some children who have congenital cataracts or had eye injuries. A number of these children and babies travel to Kitwe to visit the special eye clinic at the hospital there. For each of these children, I pray that they will receive spiritual sight as well as physical sight.

Why do benevolent work? When I attended Biola’s Talbot School of Theology, my mentor, Dr. Norm Wakefield, stressed that as Christians, we are to be servants, to follow Christ’s example. So I seek to serve all: the patients at the hospital, the

girls in the dorms, and patients’ family members. Even when I am tired and do not want to be nice, I think on Jesus’s words, “the poor you have with you always.” (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8) I remember that, when we do something for the “least of these My brethren,” we do it unto Him and that we are to be “cheerful givers.” (Matthew 25:40; 2 Corinthians 9:7) I remind myself that God desires that I would mimic Jesus in my words and actions.

## MEDICAL AID

“And He healed all who were ill.” (Matthew 12:15, NIV)

For the past 9 or 10 years, I have been following patients with chronic diseases, including diabetes, mental disabilities, epilepsy, hypertension, portal hypertension, or other conditions. Before I went on furlough in January 2019, I ran a clinic for chronic patients twice a month. Now, a doctor or one of the clinical officers sees the patients. I see about 170 chronic patients in their villages when I go out on four different runs. With some of the patients, I am able to share the Gospel and talk about the things of God.

Whenever I travel, I try to offer transportation to patients. I take patients home from the hospital if I am going their way, and I bring patients to the hospital if I have room in my vehicle. Sometimes, it is door-to-door service. I think of the verse Matthew 5:41, which says, “Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” I try to serve them with this mindset and usually with a smile. Why? Because perhaps in my kindness, they will see Jesus; perhaps they will give thanks to God for the assistance.

My work is multifaceted, taking on many roles and many directions. Each day is different from the others, yet each week looks somewhat the same. In everything that I do, my goal is to show God’s love to each person with the prayer that even one will come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. ■



Dorothy Woodside is commended from Claremont Bible Chapel in Claremont, California.

**Above, from left:** In another benevolent project, Dorothy and helpers distribute maize to leprosy patients each month; After buying the maize, Dorothy uses one of her reliable trucks to transport and distribute the food to the people in Nyamonga; With Dorothy’s help, children gain corrected vision at the eye clinic in Kitwe.



# AMOR

## Divino

*Sharing Christ with Every Home in Michoacán, Mexico*

BY TED & PRISCILLA CLARK

**T**he Lord has provided beyond our expectations for a gospel project we call AMOR Divino. AMOR, meaning “love” in Spanish, is an acronym for *amando a Michoacán, ofreciendo rescate divino*, or “loving Michoacán, offering divine rescue.” The goal is to offer a Gospel of John and a gospel tract to each of the more than one million homes in Mexico’s large, troubled state Michoacán. So far, we have been amazed to see our great God provide the materials and the helpers to cover about 250,000 homes—that’s more than 20 percent of the state!

Each year for the past three years, we have dedicated a full week to a particular city in Michoacán. With a group of believers helping, we organize into teams and attempt to cover the area, seeking to make new contacts for the Gospel. Our hope is that churches will form in these cities, which lack true gospel witness. We began the project knowing it was too big for us but not too big for God. We continue to trust Him to provide as long as He wants us to continue.

### *The plan*

This year, during the first week of June, approximately 140 people joined us for another weeklong outreach in the area surrounding Ciudad Hidalgo. The city was our project last year, and we had some good responses. We have weekly Bible studies with those who showed interest, so this year, we decided to cover the towns and villages surrounding Ciudad Hidalgo. We realized that, if we did this, we could make our weekly trip to the city dual-purposed: to teach the Bible studies for last year’s contacts and to follow up with any contacts made this year.

Our 140 helpers consisted mostly of national believers, who

enthusiastically share the Gospel with their fellow Mexicans, but a number of Americans, some of whom have returned year after year, also joined us. One faithful family, José Luis and Rosa and their children were saved through AMOR Divino several years ago, and they have joined our yearly outreaches every year since. All the helpers—even those who cannot speak Spanish—were a great blessing!

The Lord provided a great hotel on the outskirts of Ciudad Hidalgo for our headquarters. The hotel is simple yet charming and clean, very much in the “old Mexico” style. The management rented to us a large dining room and kitchen where we were able to meet and make our own meals. Every morning, after a good breakfast at the hotel, everyone loaded up with literature, and each team headed to its assigned area for door-to-door work. After returning for a hearty lunch, our group enjoyed rest time, which we followed with organized prayer. After a sweet treat in the dining room, we all headed out to a designated place to host an evangelistic presentation.

These daily evangelistic programs consisted of special music, illustrated gospel explanations, testimonies, a mime show, and a black-light chalk drawing that Caroline Turner (Delaware) created. We also set up a table where kids could make bracelets based on the *Wordless Book*, and we offered free popcorn, animal-shaped balloons, face painting, and coloring easels for the kids.

Getting the authorities’ permission to use public places for our evangelistic presentations is usually difficult. But, in one town, Huajúbaro, the Lord opened up the main plaza for us one night, and there, we met several families who expressed interest in knowing more. Other evenings, we rented party halls and invited everyone in the neighborhood to attend.



**Opposite page:** One young team member offers a woman a Gospel of John.

**This page (from top, L-R):** The youngest helpers enjoy taking part in the door-to-door work too; At an activity table, kids learn about the *Wordless Book* and make corresponding bracelets; Saved through AMOR Divino, José Luis and Rosa and their children now join the outreach each year; A crowd gathers for the presentation in Huajúbaro; Covering assigned locations, team members give Gospels of John and tracts to the locals; Before heading out, the AMOR Divino team gathers for breakfast and planning.



## The results

The Lord opened doors for us and answered so many prayers! Since this outreach, we have sifted through the contacts we made and have started Bible studies with those who desire to learn more. We teach approximately 17 Bible studies each week in the area. Several more individuals indicated sincere interest but have been unable to meet with us.

Each week, we study the Bible with one man in particular, José Juan, who attended our evangelistic meeting in the plaza in Huajúbaro. When his family received our flyer, he did not plan to go, but due to his young sons' begging, he went. As he watched the mime's depiction of Christ taking our sins, with tears, he thought, "This is true!" Recently, his wife, Marielena, began to sit through the Bible studies too. José Juan seems eager for us to teach them; sometimes, he calls midweek to make sure we will come. Please pray that the Gospel will penetrate the hearts of José Juan and Marielena.

Although we are excited about these new contacts, we are straining to keep up with the two-and-a-half days per week required to teach them. Ciudad Hidalgo is about an hour and a half from where we live, so presently, we leave after church on Sundays and return home on Tuesday evenings. Our hearts' prayer is that the Lord would provide a missionary family (or two) that He has prepared to take over the work in Ciudad Hidalgo and surrounding areas, including Tuxpan and Zitácuaro. We appreciate your prayers for laborers for the needy harvest fields in Michoacán. ■



*Ted and Priscilla Clark are commended from Eastfield Bible Church in Mesquite, Texas.*

# Interview with Ian & Heather Walton



## New Missionaries Share about Daily Life

In 2018, after receiving commendation from Grace Bible Chapel in Timmins, Ontario, Ian and Heather Walton began serving the Lord in Belize. Currently, the Waltons encourage local believers through assembly ministry and Bible studies and engage the community through outreach and youth work. This fall, they desire to expand their ministry as the Lord leads. Please pray for Ian and Heather and their two sons, Jaykob (19) and Caleb (16), as they continue to adjust to their new life in Belize and explore additional ways to serve.

### What foods do you eat?

For the most part, our family eats the same way we would in Canada. We have started eating a whole lot more beans (refried and others) because they are plentiful and inexpensive. I (Heather) love to cook and bake, so I have been able, through a lot of trial and error, to figure out what local flour and margarine work for baking to produce the same consistency we are used to at home. We were able to purchase a propane barbecue, which has been a huge blessing to minimize heating up the house when cooking and baking.

Some of the local foods that are quite common are rice and beans, barbecue chicken, and potato salad. They also eat a lot of tortillas and many different styles of bread, such as johnnycakes, powder buns, and Creole bread.

We live 30 minutes outside of Belize City, so one of our big challenges has been figuring out how to purchase enough fruit and vegetables for the week and not have them spoil due to the heat and humidity.

### How do you get around?

We were able to pack and ship a 20-foot container with a lot of our belongings. We put our vehicle in there as well, so we have our own transportation which is a big blessing. We also have the use of a seven-seater van for the ministry work. We are currently praying about a larger van as the need is great to transport people safely and efficiently.

### What is the weather like?

We have two seasons here in Belize: dry and rainy. The hot and dry season is from December to May, and the rainy season is from June to November (still hot, just with more rain). Last December, we had a few mornings that dipped to 62°F, and we all put on sweaters and long pants for about an hour until the sun came out. Many days, it is around 95°F to 104°F with the humidity.

### Do you feel settled?

We have been blessed to settle in a very safe little community. Our yard is fenced, and we have three assembly families in our neighborhood. We live very close to a friend's farm, and our younger son, Caleb, spends a lot of time out there with their horses. We all feel very comfortable and at home here.

### What do you miss the most?

Some days, we miss different foods that are either expensive here or hard to get. We do miss cool weather on occasion, especially when we are working hard and the heat is draining. Special occasions bring the ache for friends and family, but overall, we are very happy here.

### What does a typical week look like for you?

**Sunday:** Our Breaking of Bread service at our little assembly, Western Paradise Bible Chapel, is from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. Family Bible Hour and Sunday school are from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. Once a month, on Sunday afternoon, we have a women's cooking lesson and fellowship and a men's Bible study in our home and that of our neighbors. On the first Sunday evening of each month, Ian speaks in Belize City at Berea Bible Chapel. On the last Sunday evening of each month, we go to Bethany Bible Chapel in Burrell Boom.

**Monday:** We go to the local seniors' home to have a service in the afternoon.

**Tuesday:** We have prayer meeting and Bible study at Western Paradise Bible Chapel.

**Wednesday:** We have prayer meeting and Bible study at Bethany Bible Chapel in Burrell Boom.

**Thursday:** Heather helps lead a women's breakfast and Bible study.

**Friday:** We help lead Overflow youth group in Belize City. Lord willing, we hope to start a few new ministries this



There is a widespread openness to the Gospel here. People will stop their vehicles in order to receive a tract from you.

fall. Heather would like to start volunteering in the maternity ward at the hospital, and we would like to start visiting the youth hostel and the Belize Youth Challenge.

### What is challenging?

I think the biggest challenge for the whole family has been getting used to working in the heat and humidity. We have learned that it is almost a necessity to have a short rest after lunch in order to keep going through the afternoon and evening. Speaking and preparing numerous messages per week in this heat is difficult. And there are many safety and health concerns, which have required us to learn some new habits.

One of the big challenges for Heather has been cooking. There are many different flours, for example, so it has been challenging learning what works in different ways. Also, learning the different heat of propane stoves and ovens, when familiar with an electric one, has been tough.

### What is exciting?

There is a widespread openness to the Gospel here. People will stop their vehicles in order to receive a tract from you. They will listen very willingly when spoken to from God's Word, which is very encouraging.

### How can we pray for you?

Please pray for all of the various ministries we are involved in and for strength and wisdom and a desire from the people to get to know Christ and grow in their relationship with Him. Our son Jaykob has returned to Canada for college; please pray for help for him and us as we adjust to the separation. Pray for our younger son, Caleb, as he is here without his brother and trying to do home studies for his 11th-grade year. ■



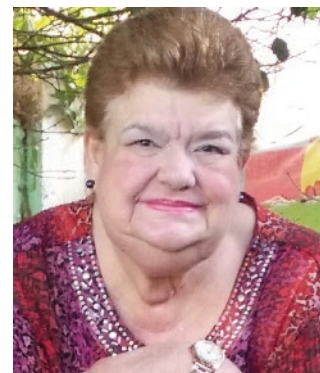
**From top:** Although still adjusting to aspects of life in Belize, the Waltons feel settled in their new home; The Waltons call Western Paradise Bible Chapel their home assembly; Now, the Waltons eat more beans and rice than ever; Despite the intense heat, Belize's beauty is striking.



# Home with the Lord

## Pamela Margaret Zarek

April 2, 1951 – August 1, 2019 • Missionary to Peru



After nearly 30 years of faithful service in Trujillo, Peru, Pamela (Pam) Zarek went home to be with the Lord. Like Enoch, Pam was promoted to heaven and rewarded for her faithful service. Pam was born in Minot, North Dakota, in 1951. From her youth, she was enamored of the Bible stories she heard at home and in Sunday school. To learn more, she attended a summer Bible camp where she put her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the early 1960s, her family moved to California. There, Pam decided to pursue training at Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta, Canada, after high school.

In 1985, a two-month mission trip to Peru ignited Pam's commitment to a life of missions. She prayerfully asked for guidance, direction, and affirmation from Laurel Park Bible Chapel in Portland, Oregon (now Spring Mountain Bible Church in Clackamas, Oregon). In October 1989, the elders commended her to the Lord's work.

Pam's arrival in Peru coincided with the inaugural days of the assembly in Trujillo that CMML missionaries Jorge and Donna Osorio and Bert and Colleen Elliot planted. Immediately, Pam began serving wherever help was needed. The assembly soon recognized her gift for working with youth and women. She helped establish one of the assembly's first youth groups, which has produced many strong spiritual leaders since.

Through years of service, Pam cultivated in others a genuine desire to walk in the Lord's presence. She often expressed her concern for Peruvians' spiritual lives by asking, "Did you read your Bible today?" or "Did you have your personal time with God today?" She put these questions to many, including the women of her Bible studies and assembly ministries, the young women whom she disciplined, and the Awana children.

Pam intentionally engaged those she served, strongly identified with Peruvians, and gave generously to those in need. She urged believers to be sensitive to the Lord's voice because she saw every believer's potential to be a conduit for Christ to answer prayer and bless others. Once, an elderly sister failed to show up for a Bible study. Upon learning that this woman was unable to walk on her own, Pam got into her car, which was no small task since her own health was declining, and went to help. We cannot forget the woman's grateful words: "I was praying for someone to take me to the Bible study!" In tears, Pam reflected on how often we make excuses to avoid what God moves us to do.

In recent years, Pam was known for encouraging leaders of other ministries to be faithful despite inevitable difficulties. Shortly before her death, she confessed during an Emmaus course study, "I could only develop up to question five because my eyes closed and my fingers would not react."

Because Pam remained pain free and had a sober, lucid mind until her last breath, many in the assembly lined up for a final prayer with her at her home, and the elders broke bread with her. For her memorial, Pam asked the elders to speak on her favorite life verse—"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21) It was a privilege to highlight her faithful and fruitful life and to share the Gospel in a way that her life verse inspired. The takeaway was this: a life well lived begins with personal conviction, continues with real commitment, and ends with ultimate trust.

*Pablo and Sarah Cenepo-Torres*



# EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WORKERS CONFERENCE 2019

Refreshment for Missionaries' Hearts and Minds

BY ALLAN & FIONA WILKS



**Top (L-R):** Over 100 people attend the conference to refresh their hearts and minds; During the afternoon free time, Dorle Smith (MPH Day 11) and Sylvie Glock (MPH Day 10) catch up; Michael Potts, Jesse Remans, and Stephanie Gifford lead the group in worship. **Above (top row, L-R):** MKs get to know each other; Conference attendees take a break to hike La Tournette, a nearby mountain; Christina Fleming and Susanna Haley lead nurse so parents can focus on the teaching. **Above (bottom row, L-R):** The 42nd annual ECWC took place in Annecy, France, with scenic views of Lake Annecy; Ken Daughters presents a message to the adults; Believers gather to sing and break bread at the conference.

**D**uring the last week of August, 115 people—85 adults and 30 children—gathered in the beautiful Annecy region of the French Alps for a time of physical and spiritual refreshment at the 42nd annual European Christian Workers Conference (ECWC). Most of the attendees are missionaries, who altogether represented more than 14 European countries. Several attended for the first time, while others were veterans of this annual event.

A committee of missionaries organizes and runs this conference, and it is made more affordable by support from CMML, MSC, Echoes International, and Stewards Ministries. CMML and MSC sent representatives to the conference: from CMML, we attended along with Phil and Mary Parsons, and Russ and Alison Sutherland of MSC also participated.

## Edifying mornings

The format this year was much the same as previous years, with five full days of ministry and relaxation between arrival on Saturday afternoon and departure on Friday morning. Early each morning, before breakfast, men and women enjoyed prayer groups, which the Parsons helped facilitate. These groups were precious times of coming to the throne of grace with praises and petitions. After breakfast, we split up for ministry.

Before each teaching session, Michael Potts (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 10), Jesse Remans (Belgium), and Stephanie Gifford (Belgium), daughter of Peter and Joanna Gifford (MPH Day 10), led the group in singing. Then, Ken Daughters, former president of Emmaus Bible College, ministered to the adults. Throughout the week, he gave excellent teaching on the book of 1 John under the theme “Fellowship with the Father.”

While the adults learned from Ken Daughters, the children split into groups for programs, which volunteers ran. Susanna Haley (Texas), Christina Fleming (Iowa), and Fiona Wilks cared for the youngest children. Stephanie Lambert (Texas), Grace Berry (Texas), and Becca Toal (Ireland) taught the next age group about the life of Jesus through storytelling, acting, and crafts.

The “middlers,” ages 6 to 13, enjoyed a lively program with Judy Gallagher (New Jersey) and Charlotte Mearns (New Jersey) that focused on exciting accounts of God’s witnesses in Acts. Jesse Remans and Anna Remans-Gifford (Belgium), Peter and Joanna Gifford’s daughter and son-in-law, led the teens through the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing the question “What foundation is your life built on?” and giving many challenges for Christ-honoring living.

## Relaxing afternoons

The afternoons provided opportunities to rest, read, enjoy fellowship, hike, swim, exercise with Rita Rabideau (New Jersey), or sightsee with Kathy M. (MPH Day 12). Late in the afternoon, after the free time, attendees reassembled for seminars. Paul Rabideau (New Jersey) presented on personality and conflict, Ken Daughters on unity, and Ken Barrett (Echoes International, Spain) on open-air evangelism. Paul, a licensed counselor, was also available for private counseling during the week.

## Encouraging evenings

As in past years, an important and exciting part of the conference was the ministry reports, which missionaries presented after dinner as well as during the morning sessions. This year’s reports highlighted missionaries who were new to the conference. The audience was thrilled to hear of the many ways in which the Lord is building His church around the world.

On Thursday, the schedule changed slightly. Before lunch, we rearranged the chairs in concentric circles and had a precious time remembering the Lord in the Breaking of Bread. In the evening, the children had the opportunity to present the things they learned during the week, which included explaining the themes studied, reciting verses, and singing songs. Thursday evening also held a special occasion for Donna Turner (MPH Day 11), a missionary in France who returned to Canada in October after 40 years of faithful service. Several collaborators and friends shared warm reminiscences that were followed by refreshments. The occasion showed how greatly those in Grenoble who knew Donna will miss her.

## Renewed servants

Over its 42 years, the ECWC has become an important annual retreat for many European missionaries. One missionary family in attendance, Steve and Jenny Luibrand (MPH Day 14) and their seven children, who serve the Lord in Serbia and drove two full days to attend the conference, said: “It was a really blessed time of fellowship with others and hearing God’s Word preached. The kids each had their group for their age. We had great times at the pool in the afternoons and enjoyed delicious French food. We always enjoy getting to the mountains too—being from Montana, we miss that part of the landscape.”

Please continue to pray for all these frontline gospel warriors as the Lord uses them in His magnificent, worldwide church-building project. ■

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