



Thinking It Through

T.J. MARINELLO

Hallelujah! What a Savior!

A well-known Internet dictionary defines resurrection as “the rising again from the dead, the resumption of life.” At its most basic, this is somewhat true of what happened to the Lord nearly two thousand years ago. Yet, this hardly begins to tell the whole story of what happened that Sunday just three days after the Lord Jesus died on Calvary’s cross. Perhaps few passages are so packed with the meaning of all the Lord accomplished from Friday to Sunday as Colossians 1:18-20.

First, because He died and rose again, the Lord Jesus laid the foundation for the Church He had promised to build (Matthew 16:18), the Church over which Colossians says He is the Head. While He most certainly came to pay for sin once for all (Hebrews 10:12-14), the goal was not merely the redemption of a disconnected collection of His creatures made in His image. His purpose was to gather together these redeemed ones as His Church. Further, through this Head, the whole body is held together, is nourished and unified, and grows according to God’s plan (Colossians 2:19).¹

Secondly, as He rose from the dead, He was the first of a kind. Colossians’ proclamation of our Savior as “firstborn from the dead” is not a statement of chronology, but a statement of unique priority. Others had been brought back to life prior to the Lord’s resurrection. Indeed, these lucky ones fit the comparatively mundane definition above as those who resumed life irrespective of the wonder and purpose of the miracle Scripture recounts (e.g.: 2 Kings 4:36; John 11:43-44; Acts 9:36ff). Yet, one day these resurrected ones again would die and return to the grave. The Lord Jesus in His resurrection represented the first of a kind – the first to defeat the deathly grasp of sin which came about as the result of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:19b; Romans 6:9-10). He arose not merely for “the resumption of life,” but never again to die, never again to need to pay the penalty for our sin. “With Christ’s death and resurrection, what had been expected at the end of all things and renewal of creation in a new age

was already operative in and through this same Christ.”²

Thirdly, this passage records that this One who died and rose again was fully God and fully man. This indeed is a great mystery, but nevertheless the mystery that Colossians 1:18 records. The second person of the Trinity permanently put on flesh and for a time lived among us (John 1:14). The Lord Jesus Christ did not become God; He is God. The eleventh century theologian and Christian leader, Anselm, well explained this necessity concerning the identity of the One who would die in payment for sin when he said, “*For the one who is divine will not do it, because He will not be under obligation to do it; and the one who is human will not do it, because he will not be able to do it. Hence, in order that a God-man will do this, it is necessary that one and the same [individual] be fully divine and fully human, so as to make this satisfaction. For only one who is truly divine can make satisfaction, and only one who is truly human ought to make it.*”³

Fourthly, because of who He is – this One who hung on a cross and became sin for us, this One who rose from the dead – He reconciled us to the Father. If we put our faith in Him, no longer are we separated, alienated, and without hope, because we “who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:12-13)

What then of the resurrection? This was the incontrovertible evidence of the sufficiency of His crosswork, the visible substantiation of the truth of our Lord’s cry, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). Because of His crosswork and resurrection, we who know Him are part of the body over which He is the Head; we have a certain hope of a coming resurrection; we are assured of the propriety and sufficiency of His work; and we are reconciled to the Father. ■

¹ Peter T.O'Brien, Colossians, Philemon, WBC, vol. 44 (Waco: Word, 1982), 148.

² James D. G. Dunn, The Epistles of the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1996), 98.

³ Anselm, Cur Deus Homo [Why God Became Man], 2:7.

Islam's Growth in France

by Maureen Crow

France! What images does this word conjure up in your mind? The Eiffel Tower, fine cuisine and wines, Paris and its marvels like the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe, or maybe even the Côte d'Azur with its golden beaches and sparkling blue sea? Perhaps you think of the magnificent Alp Mountains with its many ski resorts or just the lovely rolling countryside and farms tucked away in tranquil surroundings. Maybe you've heard of large towns such as Bordeaux, Toulouse and Marseille, or even Strasbourg, situated on the German frontier and home to the European Parliament. Although all of these images are true, France has another face to it which most tourists never see and that is the areas heavily populated with immigrants and "HLMs," or low-income housing where Islam and mosques often go hand-in-hand. This is the image that I'd like to depict and explain to you.

MUSLIM IMMIGRATION TO FRANCE

Islam's history in France goes back to the post-World War I period, and more precisely 1922, when the great Mosque of Paris was built to recognize the contribution of Muslim troops, mainly Algerians, to the Battle of Verdun, where many of them were killed. However, it was not until the late 1960s and 1970s that immigration really increased, primarily from Algeria and other former North African colonies, since a supply of workers was needed for France's many building projects.

The first generation of Muslim immigrants, who are today retired from the work force, kept strong ties with their countries where their families lived. In 1974 a new French law allowed many of these immigrants to adopt French nationality and bring over their children and wives to France, further increasing the Muslim population. The "second generation" born in France is recognized as French citizens and has been influenced by French culture, though few are fully integrated in it. Many of these Muslims now live in low-income housing outside the large cities of France, in areas where crime and drugs are often prolific.¹

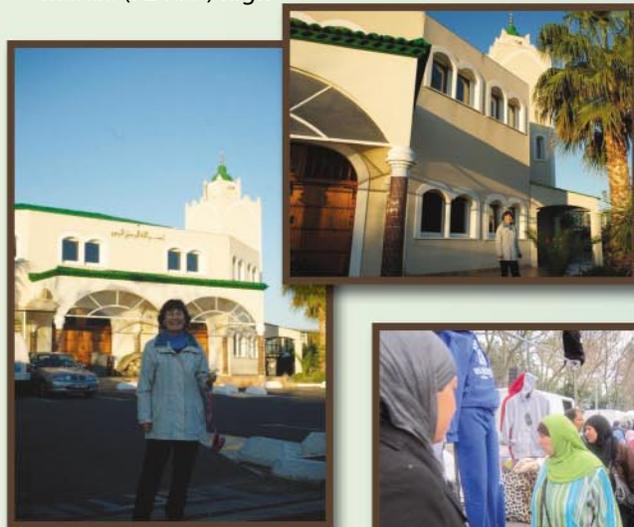
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Although Muslim in name, most of these Muslims practice their faith in the French framework of *laïcité*, that is, the strict separation of church and state and for the younger generation, being a Muslim mainly means keeping Ramadan, the month of fasting, not eating pork and generally not drinking wine. The more "diligent" ones do pray on Fridays at a mosque or in a prayer room, although for many Muslims who work, this is impossible and therefore not practiced. In fact, for many

younger Muslims in France, being a Muslim is more of a cultural and social affair that provides them with a sense of identity, rather than actually practicing a religion. The vast majority of Muslims to whom I've spoken here in France have never read the Koran and their knowledge of Islam is based on what they've heard from their parents or other older Muslims.²

EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ISLAM

It would seem that Islamic leaders in this country, concerned about the lack of commitment of younger Muslims to their faith, are making efforts to remedy the situation by opening Islamic schools in quite a number of cities and towns. Parents are encouraged to send their children to these schools on Saturdays, or at other times when they're not in regular school, so as to be instructed in the "way of Islam" and its teachings. Mosques, too, are springing up across this land. The 2008 census listed 2,125, with new ones being built each year. However, many of these are just prayer rooms where the official Friday prayers are led by imams (prayer leaders). Real mosques with minarets and spacious prayer halls do exist in a number of towns. On June 17, 2011, a spacious new mosque was inaugurated in Roche-sur-Yon, a town in Western France, where, according to the local Islamic leaders, Muslims would be able to come to worship and non-Muslims would be invited to attend to further their understanding of Islam.³ A week later, construction began on another mosque in Vaulx-en-Velin, a suburb of Lyon, whose plans include a minaret 24 meters (72 feet) high.⁴



Above: Maureen outside a mosque in France; **Right:** Young veiled Muslim women at local open-air market.



THE CURRENT MUSLIM POPULATION IN FRANCE

The Islamic population is increasing quite rapidly across this country, probably due to the fact that Muslim families generally have more children than French families. Today between five to 10 percent of France's current population—or three to six million people—are Muslims. Not surprisingly, they are demanding more and more rights to practice their religion, especially their weekly prayers. In fact, this past September both Paris and Marseille, France's two largest cities, granted meeting halls to Muslims so they would no longer have to pray in the streets on Friday, their special prayer day!⁵

MUSLIM "MISSIONARIES"

Today, Muslim "missionaries" are active across the globe including, of course, France. A few years ago, a friend of mine in Strasbourg, a city on the German border, was visited by a smiling gentleman who was anxious to engage him in conversation about Islam. When my friend, "A," inquired as to whom he was, he replied that he was seeking to spread Islam. When A, a converted Muslim, told him he had been delivered from Islam through coming to know Christ, this Arab "missionary" made a quick departure.

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM AND OUR RESPONSE

When I was a child my father, a missionary to Muslims, would tell folks that one out of seven people in the world was a Muslim. As time went on it became one out of six, then one out of five, and now the statistic stands that one out of every four people in the world is a Muslim! Based on the present population growth rate, it is projected that it won't be too long before one out of every three people on the globe will be a Muslim, even if it's just in name. Within about 30 years, based on present population growth, it is estimated that the European continent will be predominately Muslim.⁶

So, how can we respond to such an overwhelming challenge? Are Muslims so closed and hostile to the biblical message that there's no point in trying to share our faith with them? And, are any responding to Christianity? YES, Muslims

across the world are seeking the Truth today as never before and God is revealing Himself to many of them, sometimes in amazing ways! Many Muslims are tuning in to Christian radio and television broadcasts while in many countries, especially closed ones, people are discovering Jesus on the Internet. Satellite Seven, which beams television programs in Arabic daily into North Africa and the Middle East, has a regular listening audience of six million Muslims and an irregular audience of 10 million Muslims. They are receiving thousands of responses to their programs.⁷

“YES, Muslims across the world are seeking the Truth today as never before and God is revealing Himself to many of them, sometimes in amazing ways!”

Another very effective way of reaching Muslims is through friendship – or friendship evangelism as it is sometimes called – since Muslims, especially in Western countries, are generally very happy to make Western friends. Here in France workers with several missions are sharing the "Message" with Muslims and they are seeing results. In conclusion, I will recount two testimonies of Muslims that I know personally who have come to Christ in this land.

Another very effective way of reaching Muslims is through friendship – or friendship evangelism as it is sometimes called – since Muslims, especially in Western countries, are generally very happy to make Western friends. Here in France workers with several missions are sharing the "Message" with Muslims and they are seeing results. In conclusion, I will recount two testimonies of Muslims that I know personally who have come to Christ in this land.

"L's" REVELATION

One day while I was living and working in Strasbourg in northeastern France, an attractive young woman made her appearance at my first English class which I was conducting in a heavily populated Muslim area. (I had prayed that the Lord would send me seeking Muslim women.) Right from the start,



Left: Buying fruit – those in background at "Halal" (Muslim equivalent of Kosher) meat counter; Three smiling Arab children among the millions found in France today.

I felt God had His hand on L's life and was calling her to Himself, though it was not without a struggle that she came! L and I quickly became friends and after several visits I was able to give her a Bible, though due to her husband's opposition, she was forced to read it in secret. I was constantly amazed by the way she devoured God's Word and retained it in her heart. Unbeknown to me, at this time L was also being visited by a French woman, a Jehovah's Witness, who was striving hard to "convert" her to that way of thinking.

One day L found herself alone at home in a state of fierce inner turmoil, seeking answers to her deep questions. She felt impelled to take the Bible I had given her, the Bible she had received from her Jehovah's Witness friend and the Koran that she had read while growing up. She placed the three books on her coffee table and cried out to God to show her which of these three "religions" contained the Truth. Picking up "my Bible" she opened it, seemingly at random, to Isaiah nine and read those wonderful words in verse six: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...He will be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." At that moment the truth of these words struck her with great force for this Son, called the Mighty God, she reasoned, could be none other than Jesus Christ! She believed in her heart and knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God and God Himself. Today I'm still in touch with L who continues to follow the Lord.

"T's" JOURNEY

I first met T about seven months ago in Montpellier (southern France) and we have since become good friends and prayer partners. However, if I had met T seven years ago this would not have been possible because at that point she was still a Muslim. T was born in Iraq into a Kurdish family who were only nominal Muslims. After completing her undergraduate studies in Iraq, T came to France to obtain her PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Bordeaux. Some years

later she married a French man, who although an atheist, was tolerant of her Muslim faith which she, unlike the rest of her family, did practice.

One day in 1993 while living in Bordeaux, she was in the middle of her Muslim prayers when suddenly she felt a great revulsion against Islam and Allah, whom she felt, never answered her prayers. These feelings of revulsion were so strong that she got up from her prayer mat and determined to have nothing more to do with Islam – ever!

However, for many years thereafter a great void filled her life which led to a deep depression that pushed her to the brink of suicide. But God had His hand on her life. After moving to Montpellier she met a fine Christian lady who started to witness to her. Although initially T remained very closed, this woman never stopped praying and witnessing to her as well as showing her God's love in practical ways. Due to this woman's perseverance and kindness, one marvelous day T opened her heart and life to Christ and accepted His pardon for her sins! For the first time she experienced a peace and joy that she had never known before. Today she has a fervent desire to share this message with as many people as possible so they too can come to know her wonderful Savior and Lord. ■



Maureen Crow was first commended to the work of the Lord in France in 1992 by Malvern Bible Chapel in Malvern, PA. She worked with a team reaching immigrants and refugees—most of whom were Muslims—in Strasbourg until last year when she married Colin Crow, a fellow missionary. She is now living in Montpellier with Colin and is delighted to be able to continue an outreach to Muslim people along with working in their local assembly.

¹Islam in France, Wikipedia; ²Islam in France, Wikipedia;

³Daoudal, #66 A weekly Muslim publication; ⁴Lyon Magazine, 2009;

⁵Islam in France, Wikipedia; ⁶Islam in France, Wikipedia;

⁷Satellite Seven's Ten Year Anniversary Publication

Below (from left): Two Muslim men collecting money for the construction of a new mosque; Two young veiled Muslim women doing their shopping; A converted Muslim friend; Arabs shopping in open-air market.



Living As

Light

in a Japanese Community

by Tim & Christiane Marcy

On the day our assembly commended us, someone raised his hand and asked, "What do missionaries do?" One of the elders replied, "They do what they do here, only over there." Although that sounds like an oversimplification, it is ringing true for us. What we're learning during our first term as missionaries is that one of the most fundamental and yet possibly underestimated aspects of cross-cultural ministry is simply the daily life of a missionary in his own home and community.

This article is meant to give you who pray a glimpse into what it's been like for us over the past year to settle into a very foreign community. Ultimately we'd like you to be able to pray more intelligently not only for us, but for any missionary anywhere in similar circumstances.

For our first year and a half here in Japan we lived a rather sheltered life. We rented a cottage on the grounds of a missionary retreat center among all American neighbors. We didn't even have to leave the retreat center grounds to get to school. If we were trying to deal with utility companies or read a difficult document, there was always an English speaker to help.

In addition, the town we lived in is a well-known resort town. Two-thirds of the homes around ours were occupied for only a month or so in summer. When vacationers did come, they were content to stay to themselves. Ironically, while living in the middle of Japan we had little daily contact with the Japanese.

Around the end of 2010 we made preparations for moving into a real Japanese neighborhood. Admittedly, we were both somewhat nervous about the prospect. We were far from done with language studies, and if we moved, we'd be without

the safety net of the language school. But we knew that, as God had led and provided to this point, He would continue to meet our needs as we followed Him.

In our search for a house in a nearby city, the Lord had a perfect match waiting for us in the place we're renting now. Once we moved our things in, we needed to introduce ourselves to our immediate neighbors. Following custom we visited each home in our development. We gave our names, bowed, presented a token gift and asked each neighbor's favor. Because we were new to the community, we were expected to humble ourselves and ask to be allowed in. This gesture didn't cost us much, but has proven extremely valuable as a foundation for building relationships.

We wanted to have contact with the Japanese and be a witness. The Lord answered our prayers in interesting ways. Physically, our home is in the middle of a cluster of several homes. It's like living in a fishbowl. Most of our neighbors can see us when we're in our yard and some can probably even hear us when we're inside our house.

Our development is around 20-years-old. This means people aren't as entrenched in their own customs and circle of friends as those who have lived in old neighborhoods for generations. One of our neighbors even told us that we were fortunate to move to this part of town because people here are more apt to accept and interact with foreigners. In fact, we have had a degree of popularity just by being foreigners. Over the first two or three days we could hear the teenagers from the house across the street saying how cool it is to have foreigners as neighbors. Others seem eager to talk with us about



Mr. S. (rear) and his family had us over for a BBQ this fall. We were later able to pray for their daughter in the hospital.



Banzai! Christiane and our next-door neighbor Mrs. F. (left corner) giving the final cheer of the Tokida Sports festival.



Dinner with neighbors – the S. family.



Tokida fields where we often talk with neighbors on walks.

America or to try out their English. Of course this is superficial, but it provides a means of contact.

Who we really are and why we live in this neighborhood became clearer to those around us one month after we moved in. On March 11, 2011, the 9.1 magnitude earthquake that sent the tsunami over the northeast coast of Japan rocked our house too. We had Japanese friends over at the time, and all ran out into the street. One of our neighbors was also outside. Tim talked with him while we waited for the shaking to subside, but none of us knew that over the next hour thousands of Japanese would die and thousands more would lose all their material belongings.

As soon as the highways opened again, we were out in our driveway packing a borrowed van with relief supplies to take up to the devastated areas. Again, all our neighbors could see us and knew what we were doing without a word being said. After we returned, people started asking questions. Word spread and one family actually brought supplies for us to add to one of our loads.

About a month later, the head of our development asked Tim to give a report of our tsunami relief work at the annual neighborhood business meeting. Although we had been welcomed by the community in an informal way on a previous occasion, at this event we were officially welcomed.

Soon we found ourselves being asked to teach English classes and to join certain private and neighborhood events. Since then Christiane has joined a women's group and teaches English to several of our neighbors. Tim has participated in sports tournaments and will play on the community softball team come spring. We've been invited to one neighbor's home for a meal and have had others over to our house.

It continues to amaze us how just living here and being involved in a community has opened so many doors for ministry. Tim often walks as a break from studying. Recently he was stopped by a man he didn't know, but who knew of Tim. This local farmer asked all kinds of questions about religion. Tim was able to share the gospel with him by the side of a rice paddy.

Another day when Tim was returning from a walk, the same neighbor with whom he had talked during the earth-

quake was standing outside. This seemed strange since it was raining and the man didn't have an umbrella. So Tim walked over and asked what was wrong. He tearfully explained that his wife had had a miscarriage early that morning. Tim hugged him and prayed for him while there on the street. Then the man, Mr. A., asked Tim to come into his home and pray for his wife. Since then we've had them over, shared the gospel with them and have given them a New Testament.

Another neighbor, Mr. S., has two daughters. Christiane is tutoring the younger one for her high school English entrance exam. The older daughter has been in and out of the hospital since June with a rare brain condition. When we learned of this, we offered to go visit her and pray for her. The family agreed, and we visited her twice, praying for her both times. She was released on January 5th, a month earlier than expected. We had the family over for dinner, and they all said again how they thought her recovery and early release were due to our prayers. Please pray for continued understanding of our Great God.

These open doors excite us, but there are also closed doors. Take for instance the story of Mr. Ide, who had the house right in front of ours. When we first moved in someone informed us that Mr. Ide was a "difficult person." To us that meant he needed Jesus all the more! He *was* difficult to deal with, but the first thing Tim did was offer to help him with anything. He was in his 80's.

This past summer, the door bell rang and who was standing outside but Mr. Ide, his arms full of vegetables from his field. After that we'd chat by the fence and it seemed things were warming up between us. But as autumn passed, contact dropped off. Around the middle of December, we noticed his daughter apparently cleaning out Mr. Ide's house. None of the neighbors knew what was happening, so Tim went over while the daughter was at the house and asked her directly. She said her father was in the hospital with cancer and wasn't expected to live long. Tim immediately asked if we could visit him and share about Jesus. At first she said yes, but then hesitated and said she'd ask her brother and get back to us by the following week. (We've learned that in



Tokida – the fields in our town where we love to take walks and meet people.



Meeting with local women – there have been opportunities to discuss salvation, the Church, and Christian values.



Tim played on the Tokida volleyball team in the fall.



Everyone was relaxed and talkative on our neighborhood field day.



Relief van load packed for tsunami relief.

Small Shinto shrines called hokora on the hill behind our house.



our area, at least, it is necessary to go through the family to visit someone in the hospital.)

The following week came and there was no response. Tim left a note for her pleading with her to allow the visit, but still there was no reply. Then, about a week later, the doorbell rang. Mr. Ide's son was there, telling us his father had passed away.

We were stunned. To us this was not only a closed door; this was evidence of the wall of blindness and pride in the hearts of the Japanese. We realized more forcefully than ever that all around us are millions of Japanese in the situation Mr. Ide was in, on their way to eternal death. Our hearts were heavy, but we also remembered that God is sovereign, and we are merely His instruments. He will lead and use us, and if He has determined to do something, nothing will stand in His way.

We live in a country overtly devoted to spiritism and idolatry. Our neighborhood is a good representation of this. There are Shinto shrines and/or Buddhist holy sites on almost every hill or copse of trees. Civic and family events are steeped in religion: at the *Obon* festival, families worship dead ancestors; during New Year's visits to the shrine or temple bells are rung for cleansing of sins and for luck; *Setsubun* is a rite for protection from demons; and various superstitions concerning lucky days and

years are observed. When we were invited along with all the neighbors to Mr. Ide's wake, we couldn't go, because all attendees were expected to light incense to his departed soul. However, most Japanese consider all this to be culture, not religion. So, as we get to know Japan through interaction in our neighborhood, we see how dark it is. But our encouragement continues to be Jesus' words: "You are the light of the world... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

Please pray for us as we live among the people we love and long to see saved. Pray for more open doors for sharing the gospel, and for the wisdom and faith to walk through them. In such a foreign culture, we do face difficulties and need perseverance, but are encouraged because we know that the gospel is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), whether Jewish or Japanese. ■



Tim and Christiane Marcy were commended from Ardsley Bible Chapel, Ardsley, PA, in 2009. In this first term on the field, they

are ministering as the Lord leads while focusing on language and culture learning.

“You are the *light* of the world... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

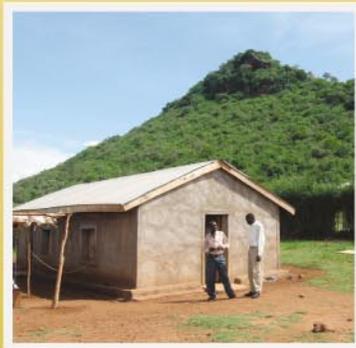
Matthew 5:14-16

What's Missing in Kenya? The True Gospel!



by Jacob & Susan Varghese

The greatest news ever proclaimed (the gospel of Jesus Christ) has made inroads into many parts of Africa for several decades. The assemblies are trying to safeguard the message without polluting it. Kenya is no different from the rest of the world with the so-called "Christianity" bringing in all kinds of false teachings "...turning away so soon from Him..." (Galatians 1:6-7). Therefore the role of local assemblies is significant, but not popular; yet it is an honorable effort for the cause of the gospel. In Nairobi suburbs and upcountry villages, people look at the New Testament pattern of worship with suspicion! Many times we encounter questions, which gives us opportunities to share the true gospel and then continue with the teaching of New Testament principles. Many of our faithful brothers in the assemblies are continuing the work of the Lord this way. For the



last four years we could see the spiritual growth in many young Christians, and we hope that the impact will continue to the next generation if the Lord tarrys. Our prayerful desire is to pass on the torch to the faithful brethren.

Ministry among the school children caught our attention last year, as the Lord gave us opportunities in schools to teach the Bible. We get an hour every week in eight different schools in Witeithie, Ruiru and Parklands with students and teachers. Many were saved during 2010; we thank the Lord for it is His doing. Frequently we get time to focus on the person of Christ and the work of Christ. One young sister (Bible school graduate) from India is here with us for a few months and she is a great help in the ministry among children. Our boys (who used to be "street boys") have changed their lifestyle because of the gospel and learning from the Word, and some of them go with us to the meeting on Sundays. A couple of them were baptized in 2011. They are bombarded with false teachings

among their groups and we often get questions from them. A recent one was regarding "crowd prayer" with everyone mumbling together (common here), thinking that it has to be the repetition of the day of Pentecost! This boy was forced to join such prayer sessions. Another doubt was about the so-called "intercessors" (popular here), who make money through fooling the poor believers by claiming the "intercessory" work. Many people run after such false "prophets" and their ideas for the benefit of health and wealth!

There are a few homes open for teaching the Bible and we prayerfully continue with weekly studies. Many things have to be unlearned to learn the real truth. The religion has made a huge damage in many millions. We pray for the conviction by the Holy Spirit in those hearts and we get encouraged by seeing the growth in some of them. For a lot of people Jesus fits in as a helpline in addition to the other gods and the trend becomes popular with some "preachers" who are interested in counting the numbers! So many people fall for this "accommodative" gospel. We are praying for those who are in such a state of confusion, that there will be real repentance and a true turning to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once every four months (April, August and December) we get opportunities for upcountry mission trips. There are two places where a few young believers from surrounding local assemblies get together for systematic Bible training ("... commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" II Timothy 2:2). The elders are planning one in Nairobi for this year as well, Lord willing. The sessions go on for a couple of weeks with basic Bible doctrines and practical topics. Usually we get visitors from abroad and there are some gifted Bible teachers in our assemblies here. The results are very encouraging. Several doubtful ideas get cleared up by the Word among these brethren and they teach others in their local assemblies. Doctrinal clarity is a big need for the proper growth of the church in Africa. "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (I Timothy 4:16). The follow-up has



Along top (L-R): Conference in a village; A village church in Nyanza, Southwest Kenya; Tribal attire of Maasai, young men from assemblies are working among them; Elders from village churches; Orphans from an orphanage in Nyanza run by brethren. **Page 10 (at left):** Church building near Lake Victoria. **Below:** Children everywhere!...A great mission field.

been a neglected area, but now we are realizing the need of it and trying to act accordingly. Don't we wonder oftentimes about the future of our assemblies? We need to pay attention to I Timothy 3:15 ("...you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth").

Reaching out to the lost souls through gospel tracts – modern day Philip, as someone called it – is one of the easy ways here because of the eagerness of people to read! It becomes a way of opening up a conversation to explain further about the truth. Open-air meetings (known as crusades here) attract large crowds, especially in upcountry areas. Simple gospel preaching has become foreign to Africa, as elsewhere in the world. Our assemblies conduct open-air meetings as part of their combined efforts with visitors. Sharing the good news in market places gives us opportunities to be involved in a few lives helping them to have clarity about their eternal destiny.

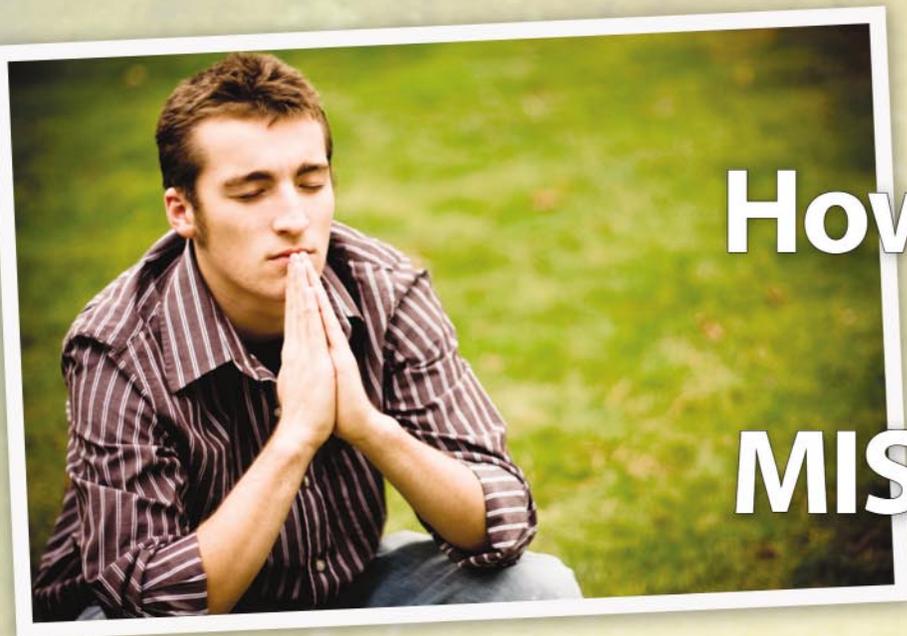
Another great mission field is to work among the prisoners, as many of them are in confusion and discouragement. We have access to the prisons in Kenya through Emmaus Bible Correspondence School. The authorities are very cooperative, as they have witnessed the transformation of many lives through the gospel of Christ. They refer to the prisons as "Correction Centres" and make an effort to change the hearts. Many people come out as good citizens of the country, but beyond that with a much more privileged status of citizens of heaven by accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Emmaus continues with the follow-up with the well-prepared and doctrinally sound lessons. We found that many of the inmates being pardoned by the authorities are Emmaus students – a clear evidence of the true change in heart through the Word of God.

As we look around the world, political instability has become one of the themes of this century and Africa is no different. Post-election violence in early 2008 had taken away so many lives; how sad it was! Again we are going to face an election in Kenya later this year. People look ahead with anxiety, but there is a silver lining in the midst of it, as we see the hand of the Lord uniting people of different tribes and languages for His work. Recently we were observing three brothers of different tribes who are working together for the gospel of Christ, as the psalmist says "behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1). Kenya needs a lot of prayer for peace during the election. We hope and pray that the freedom for the gospel will continue and the Church will stand strong, holding high the biblical principles and having the conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ (Philippians 1:27). As we read in 2 Corinthians 5:15 "... those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." ■



Jacob & Susan Varghese, along with their daughter Leah, have lived in Nairobi, Kenya, since 2007 serving the Lord in different capacities as the Lord leads. They are commended by the saints at North Dallas Bible Chapel, Texas, to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ for His ministry.





How to **PRAY** for Your **MISSIONARIES**

by Karl Peterson

A missionary on furlough from India visits a church. The believers ask, "How can we best help you in your work?" "Pray for me," he or she responds. "What can we really do?" "Pray."

We know this is the right answer but it seems so predictable and intangible. But since missions is God's work, the most effective help a partner can give is to implore the Lord of the harvest for blessing. God is and must be the biggest player in world missions.

But how do you pray for missionaries? We often choose a name, pray for God's blessing on their work, family and health. Then we pick another name and pray the same things all over again. Our missionary prayer meetings become predictable and, at times, dull. Perhaps the following thoughts, taken from a three-part outline from Mr. Tom Wells and filled in with my own observations, will be of help to you and your assembly.

Pray for Missionaries as People

Missionaries are not super human beings. They have the same needs that other people have like food, clothing and shelter. So pray for them in the same way you would pray for anyone else.

Food – A missionary woman, accustomed to purchasing everything at her local grocer back home, now may have to grow what she feeds her family or shop for it at an expansive open market. A family often has to change their diet in a new area because they just can't get what they could back "home."

Housing – In the Third World your missionary might have to become a plumber, carpenter, or electrician just to move in to a reasonable home. And don't be fooled – minimally suitable housing in a Third World city can be very expensive. Just ask your missionary!

Health – Living in a new climate can ruin a person's health. Mozambique has been called the white man's cemetery. Often hospitals are not equipped and medicines are hard to find.

Crime – This is a real issue in poorer nations. Many people (missionaries and nationals alike) at times have to live behind security bars and high walls. This can become very demoralizing. I recall visiting the U.S. and sensing the relief that I no

longer had to look behind my back to see who was ready to steal something from me. On my first day in Mozambique I was robbed by a group of bandits.

Children – In spite of the numerous benefits of being raised overseas, missionary kids often feel like they don't fit in to the local culture or to the American culture when they return on furlough. The sense of isolation from grandparents and cousins is, at times, intense.

Marriage – Mission work and life puts huge strains on a marriage. Many missionary marriages have suffered great damage. Some workers have had to come off the field because of a deteriorating home life. Other marriages improve! Pray that your missionary would learn how to balance work and family responsibilities. Your missionaries are "made of but dust" (Psalm 103:14). Pray for them as such.

Pray for Missionaries as Christians

Next, pray for your missionary as you would pray for any other follower of Christ. Intercede for their walk with the Lord. Some missionaries become bitter, hardened people due to their poor response to the difficulties of living in another culture. Some hide from God on the mission field, assuming that

just because they are doing God's work, all is okay when it's not. Many missionaries give and give and give but have little spiritual input. Living outside your home culture, you face new temptations and may struggle with new sins. At 75 years of age, a missionary to Brazil confessed how difficult living in that country was with all the beautiful and scantily-clad young Brazilian women around. A missionary enters a new living context and discovers how selfish, proud or racist he or she is. Just like you, missionaries fight spiritual warfare, so pray for them (Ephesians 6:18).

Pray for Missionaries as Christian Workers

In addition to being humans and believers, your missionaries have been called to a unique task by the Lord of the Harvest and need special prayer.

Language study – Possibly requiring two to three years of a missionary's time, language acquisition can be demoralizing and lead to discouragement and a sense of failure. Yet it is crucial to speak the language of the people (Acts 2:8).

Their Ministry – Pray for God's blessing on your missionary's work, whether it is evangelizing, teaching, training, local church leadership, church planting, support administration, medical, or relief and development. Some see little fruit after years of ministry. Others serve in places where people flock to church but evidence very little change in their thinking or lifestyle (Ephesians 6:19-20).

Their Host Country – Pray for God's blessing on the people and government of the nation they serve (Jeremiah 29:7).

Harmony between Missionaries and National Believers – This is one of the most fragile difficulties on mission fields around the world and most missionaries face it at some time or another. When money or donations get involved it can exacerbate the problem (Romans 15:5-6).

Harmony with Other Missionaries – Missionaries are often ambitious people who have goals and projects and vision and drive. Put a bunch of them together in the same mission station or church and sparks can fly (Acts 15:36-41).

The Perplexities of Cross-Cultural Ministry – All missionaries make cultural blunders – some small, some serious. But we've all done it. Some missionaries throw themselves into the new culture with delight; others can't understand "why all people can't be like me!" There are cross-cultural expectations on a missionary's family, home and time. All good missionaries wrestle with how to make the gospel "come alive" and be truly understood in the new culture. Missionaries often have to do things they have no experience at all in doing. Western missionaries are often frustrated by having to live in a new coun-

try and culture where everything proceeds inefficiently and at a snail's pace (1 Corinthians 10:32-33).

Choosing the Essential – Some gospel workers walk into or "inherit" very messy situations – churches in trouble, Bible schools in disarray. My senior missionary advisors (Ken Fleming and Paul Logan) left me with invaluable advice: as a new missionary, don't try to correct all problems in your mission field at once; work with patience. A wise missionary will need to pick and choose the correct battles to fight and problems to resolve. This requires sensitivity, wisdom, and your prayers (Romans 15:1).

Accountability – No matter how much a mission or sending church tries, frankly it is impossible to supervise completely the work of their foreign missionary. Assemblies need to commend well-proven servants of God, send them off, and trust them to work well. But without hands-on supervision and accountability, some missionaries (very few in my experience) become lazy. On the other hand, far too many missionaries become workaholics without the accountability of someone to remind them not to neglect their family, health and spiritual well-being (Colossians 4:7-9).

Maintaining Vision – This is an acute problem. Like many other fields, there is so much to do in Mozambique – conferences, seminars, itinerant preaching, youth and evangelistic work, relief and development. The work never ends. Going into a field where there are so many needs and so few workers, the missionary faces the temptation to try to do everything. And this is dangerous. It's easy to be overwhelmed with the huge needs and it's a constant battle to stay focused. Pray your missionary would learn the art of saying "No" to avoid being spread too thinly and risk ineffectiveness and burnout (Colossians 4:2-4).

Prayer is not just the right thing—it's the crucial thing because the work is God's. At times I've been in very perplexing situations and been greatly comforted knowing that I have prayer warriors at home lifting me, my family and my work up to the Lord. Choose a missionary or ministry and become a truly committed prayer partner, remembering Paul's words to the Thessalonians, "brothers, pray for us." ■



Karl Peterson and his wife Glynn were commended to the work of the Lord in Mozambique by the believers in Ardsley, PA and Boulder, CO in 1995. (The Petersons are now serving in Cape Town, South Africa. See "Lines from the Front," page 16.)