

June 2012

CHRISTIAN *Missions* IN MANY LANDS INC.

NIGER:

Lots of Sand, Millions of Souls,
Little Hope

Ministering to the
Youth-Driven Quarters
of Germany

Ghana is Wide-Open
to the Gospel!

Spanglish & the Spirit
of God: A Visit to Mexico



Thinking It Through

GERARD DeMATTEO

The Need for Encouragement!

Has anyone ever spoken to you with words that influenced you to greater godliness? They may not have been spoken loudly or eloquently but they were exactly what you needed, and they were more than advice—they were uplifting! Whether the words were spoken to you by a trusted friend, an elder, or by a sister or brother in Christ, these words altered your perspective and enabled you to trust God in a deeper way.

Within the first two verses of Acts 20, Luke tells of the Apostle Paul encouraging the Ephesian disciples. Paul then plans on returning to the churches he planted to encourage them as well. This was after a riot where Paul was almost killed! What's also interesting about Paul's itinerary is that he doubled his travel time to Jerusalem (his primary destination) in order to revisit Troas, Philippi, Berea and Corinth all for one purpose – ENCOURAGEMENT!¹

Paul knew the value of encouragement. He made it a priority. He understood the multitude of verses in Proverbs which tell of the life-changing power of our spoken words. Take note of some of them: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue,"² "Good words can make an anxious heart glad,"³ "A soothing tongue is a tree of life."⁴ He also knew words can be a **discouragement**. "Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day."⁵ Encouragement was a priority for Paul.

Paul's priority was based on encouragement's power. We can confuse a mere compliment with encouragement. Someone may compliment the sermon I give. Although that might make me feel good about myself those words are usually not life-changing. Encouragement digs deeper than that. It is meaningful, not shallow. Encouragement gives life and has the power to cause us to walk in a godly direction. Dr. Larry Crabb and Dr. Dan Allender state that encouragement is "*carefully selected words that influence a person toward increased godliness.*"⁶ Notice in their definition that encouraging words are "*carefully selected.*" These are words that are chosen because they fit the person and fit the circumstance. Notice

also that they are crafted to "*influence a person.*" They are chosen to move a person in a certain direction and not merely make them feel good. Notice that they are also used to "*increased godliness.*" These words prod a person toward a closer and deeper walk with our great God and Savior and that walk will impact others.

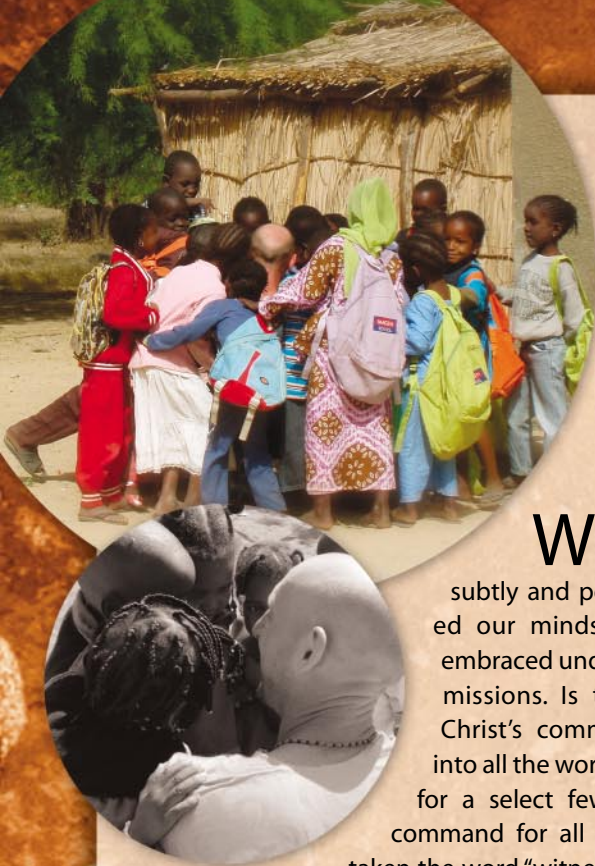
In order for encouragement to have its deepest work it must break through our fears by the Spirit's power. Dr. Larry Crabb tells of an occurrence in high school. He was having a difficult time during his freshman year due to stuttering. Quite discouraged after a very embarrassing incident at an assembly of hundreds of fellow classmates, he decided that public speaking was not for him. A short while after that incident and during a church service he made a second attempt and failed miserably. He rushed out deciding never to speak in public again. As he left an older man intercepted him. Expecting correction, Larry was surprised to the point of tears when he heard words that are forever etched in his memory. That gentleman said, "There's one thing I want you to know, Larry. Whatever you do for the Lord I am behind one thousand percent."⁷ That man's words were an example of what Paul speaks about in Ephesians 4:29, "*Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*" His words were simple, timely, appropriate and powerful. They had the power to dissolve his fears. Those words, and others like them, helped Dr. Crabb become the speaker, writer and counselor he is today.

When was the last time you encouraged another? When was the last time you were encouraged by another? The church of Christ needs to catch the vision! There are many walking wounded that you know who you can impact toward a closer walk with God by giving them encouragement. Ask God to give you a person to encourage and the words to encourage them. Then take the risk. ENCOURAGE! ■

1 Acts 20:1-3; 2 Proverbs 18:21; 3 Proverbs 12:25; 4 Proverbs 15:4;
5 Proverbs 25:20; 6 Encouragement: The Key to Caring, p. 20;
7 Ibid, p. 25.

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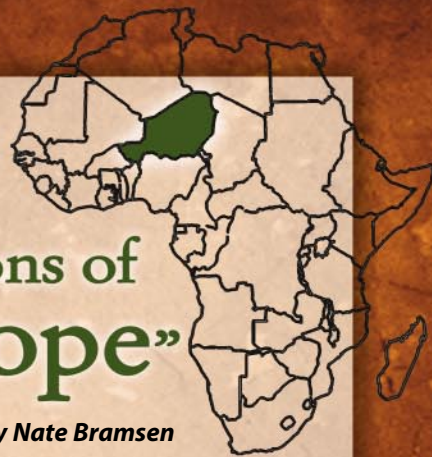
FRONT COVER: West Africa - Nate Bramsen BACK COVER: ©iStockPhoto.com/AdrianHillman



NIGER:

"Lots of Sand, Millions of Souls, Little Hope"

by Nate Bramsen



We have been sold a notion that has subtly and perilously infiltrated our minds and has been embraced under the auspice of missions. Is the message of Christ's command to "Go ye into all the world" a mere calling for a select few, rather than a command for all saints? Have we taken the word "witness" and made it a

verb we practice on occasion, rather than the noun Christ commissioned us to be? *"And you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8) This is not a hat we choose to wear at times or remove when it becomes uncomfortable, but rather, an identity and stewardship with which we have been entrusted. Thus, the question becomes, "Are we faithful stewards of this responsibility?"

Christ's voice continues to beckon and announce the fertility of the harvest, yet the noise and attractions of this present world win our hearts. If the Scriptures are true and Christ indeed meant what He said when declaring, *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"* (Matthew 24:14), should not the greatest expression of a heart longing for Christ's return be one which declares, "Here am I, send me!"?

It is this longing that led our hearts on the following journey.

In a forgotten country embedded in the North African Sahara Desert with lots of sand, millions of souls, and little hope, this story begins. For many, it has never made the radar screen of their life to consider in our world of nifty technological gadgets, \$5 lattes, and unbridled consumerism. There is a land that exists where 20 percent of children will never see their fifth birthday because of malnutrition and malaria, a land where less than one in five can read, where the average GDP per capita is \$351/year (the U.S. is at \$47,184), the hospital is a place to die, not heal, famine is the norm not the exception, and where a 40-year-old is an old man nearing death.

What is the greatest tragedy of this nation? According to the Joshua Project, over 75 percent of this nation has never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many tribes remain completely unreached with the glorious news of the Savior. Most assemblies have more people warming the pews than there are missionaries in the entire nation (every denomination and nationality combined). Not one assembly exists (though there are precious believers)...yet. To compound this heartbreaking neglect of the church, this nation is completely open to the gospel. Government laws do not prohibit missionaries, Christ-followers, or evangelistic endeavors. Still, over 99 percent remain entrapped in a lie waiting for the Way, the Truth and the Life to be announced. Paul's words resound in the ears of those who would hear, *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?"* (Romans 10:14-15a)

Welcome to Niger! (Not Nigeria)

Niger is a land-locked West African nation primarily nestled in the Sahara Desert, except for a southern strip in the Sahel zone. Over three times the size of California, Niger possesses only 11 percent arable soil, making sustenance a struggle. Despite bordering seven nations, Niger lacks the infrastructure to support its rapidly increasing population of 16 million citizens. In fact, Niger is one of the fastest-growing nations in the world (despite the child mortality rates) and has, by far, the highest birth rate on the planet with an average of nearly eight babies per woman (7.6). No nation comes close in this category. Perhaps it would surprise no one to hear that Niger is the youngest nation in the world, with nearly 50 percent of the population under 15 (average age is 15.2 years old). If one has a heart for youth or education, the harvest is ripe in Niger. Nearly the entire nation is a youth group.



Top: "Let the little children come to me..." (Jesus); **Right:** Arid soil and lack of greenery doesn't slow these camels from grabbing fast food.

A Revolution of Prayer

Carrying this knowledge in mind, our journey commenced. Three guys, a New Jersey diner, and a copy of Operation World, we began to pray. "Lord, break our heart for what breaks yours. Regardless the cost, God, be glorified in the nation of Niger, and use us how You wish." Prayer was no mere tool but the very vehicle of seeing God's heartbeat for these precious souls. Slowly, our prayers were answered and the circle expanded.

Three, eight, then 20. Men and women from the age of 6 to 40 (primarily youth) began coming together to pour out their hearts before God that He might fill them with His heart. Teenagers and college students spending their weekend in a room, praying through the night, pleading with God on behalf of souls they had never met, pouring out tears from hearts broken by those trapped in darkness. And the circle continued to grow. Friends started calling in from around the U.S. and around the world. Egypt. Canada. Mexico. All in full confidence that God would speak, act, and call laborers to the land of Niger.

One by one, He has done just that. Some preparing to leave this fall, some clearing their lives of clutter in anticipation of going in days to come, others overhauling their present lifestyle on behalf of supporting what God is launching in this place. One newly-married couple wrote, "...[my wife and I] are busy with French lessons and putting together liquidating timelines and getting things in order. It's exciting, humbling, and a little bit scary all at the same time, kind of like standing at the edge of a cliff or an ocean during a storm." Simple obedience.

More than that, however, we are praying that Niger will become "the South Korea of North Africa." We are praying for God to not merely save Nigerien souls, but to transform a nation, and ultimately, make this a land that sends workers into the northern nations of Africa carrying the gospel. We are praying for dreams, visions, and a mighty working of His Holy Spirit in a land long held

bondage by the Prince of Darkness. Pray with us that Niger might be saved.

You Give Them Something to Eat

On October 20, 2011, an e-mail was received from someone in Maradi, Niger. A local worker informed us that the land was bracing for the worst famine in 38 years. When Niger has a good harvest, the norm is two to three months of famine and many deaths. What was to be expected in this crisis? When the rains finally ceased, the harvest gathered, and the dust settled on Niger's arid soil, the verdict was solemn. Farmers had enough grain for three months with the prospect of eight to nine months of famine. Hard to fathom when we go to grocery stores in North America and have 14 product brands of butter to choose from (yes, I counted). Immediately, we mobilized the freshly-formed prayer network (now in the hundreds) to do the only thing we knew to do: pray.

And God answered with, "You give them something to eat." (Matthew 14:16)

A Prayer Warning

One lesson I learned during my years of working in the Middle East was this: "Always be careful what you pray for because you may be the answer God chooses for your prayers." For four months as a college sophomore, I had the opportunity to work at a children's home started by Mother Teresa. They entrusted me with six newborns to care for. Feed, burp, change diapers, and put these children to bed. After the heart-wrenching separation at the end of the four months, these children remained close in my prayers. My prayer was simple. I prayed God would bring someone in their life to love them and someone in their life who would share the love of Christ with them.

Three years later, after moving back to the region, I was walking the streets of Garbage City (a local slum community) when a child made contact and invited me in to meet the family. Over time, I began tutoring these precious children.

Left: Children in Niger. **Above:** A local believer helping unload food shipment; Children enjoying a meal during food distribution in village outside Maradi.

"And you shall be witnesses to Me in Samaria, and

During the middle of a French lesson, with chickens flying over our heads, two toddlers walked into the room. As I looked into their eyes, something inside me jumped. I knew these girls. Within moments, it was identified these children were Merna and Jacqueline, sisters of the kids I was tutoring and two of my precious children from years before. In a city of 22 million people, God made me the answer to my own prayer and had brought these dear kids back into my life.

Through correspondence with local churches in Niger, we were blessed to find a network of village churches that scrapes together enough funds to usually provide one shipment of food annually to distribute (mostly to children) in villages. The food is used as a vehicle to share the greatest news that the Bread of Life has been broken to give these souls eternal satisfaction and not mere physical sustenance. Within three months, God had provided enough funds through this youth prayer network to supply over a million nutritious meals by working alongside other like-minded servants of Christ who handle shipments and distribution. And the giving continues. We are praying Genesis 42 for this nation, that just as the nations around Egypt heard that "there was bread in Egypt," (Genesis 42:2) we are praying the need drives the unreached peoples of Niger to the source of physical bread that they may find the eternal.

Niger's main subsistence crops are millet, sorghum, and cassava (tapioca), while cowpeas, peanuts, and onions are commercially exported. Despite the agricultural production, Niger cannot keep up with their fast growing population of 3.4 percent. During a January trip to Niger, one elder told me their village was already out of food. They were now scavenging the ground, trying to find anything to eat or sell in the marketplace to have the capacity to buy grain. Already, one month into the famine the price of grain had tripled in price.

Only a few weeks ago, my heart ached as our vehicle passed village after village in Niger that were completely unaware that in the fields of Bethlehem some angels announced good news: "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). The scene drew my thoughts to the words of Robert Moffat (the missionary who inspired David Livingstone to give his life in service to the gospel), "I have seen, at different times, the smoke of a thousand villages — villages whose people are without Christ, without God, and without hope in this world." Is this ok with you, my friend? Do we care enough to act? To change our lifestyle so that others may have access to the

gospel? Are we ok to continue living our lives in abundance when some still live in complete darkness? Is this world more real than eternity? Do we believe Jesus is Truth and souls are eternal?

I ask because there are still over 6,900 unreached people groups representing over 2.8 billion people in the world who have never heard the gospel. (Statistics from the Joshua Project) The church invests only 310 million dollars into reaching the unreached. In comparison, the United States spends \$310 million annually on Halloween costumes...for their pets. Out of the 5.5 million full-time Christian workers worldwide, 20,500 work among the unreached (for you non-mathematicians, that is less than half of one percent). In a world that is dying of starvation, the United States spends more than \$40 billion annually on dieting plans (according to Bloomberg Business Week). Do we care enough to act? The answer will be given with our lives. Not our lips. ■

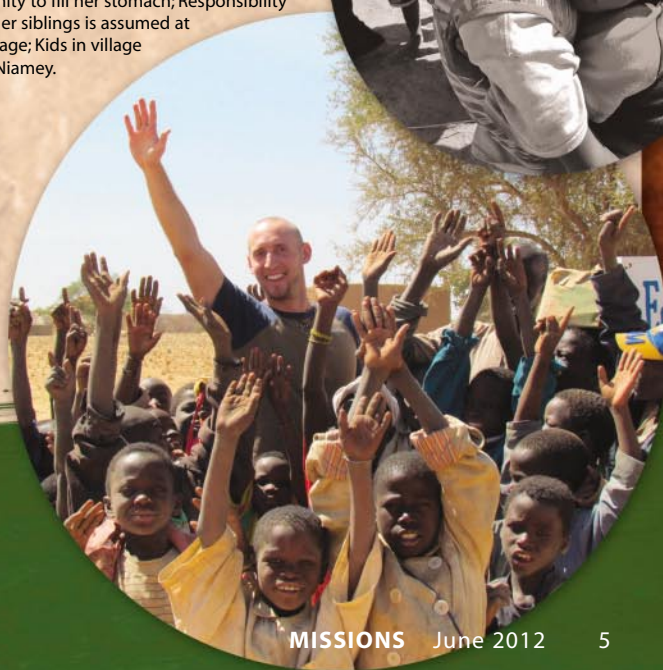


Nate Bramsen was commended to the Lord's work by Overbook Gospel Chapel in Greenville, SC, in 2006.



For more information on the work in Niger, scan this QR code with your smart phone. Or, you can visit www.facebook.com/groups/191896464221377.

Right (from top): A young girl seizing the opportunity to fill her stomach; Responsibility of younger siblings is assumed at a young age; Kids in village outside Niamey.



Jerusalem, and in all Judea and
nd to the end of the earth." —Acts 1:8

GHANA IS WIDE-OPEN TO THE GOSPEL!

by Daniel Webster



Ghana is Ready for Missionaries

Access into Ghana is relatively easy. The nation is most welcoming of those coming to preach the gospel and to offer assistance to the poor and destitute. Since Ghana is an English-speaking country, visitors can communicate with the local people without having to learn a new language. It of course would be helpful to learn the local dialect to be even more effective in gospel work, but communicating in English can still provide excellent opportunities to serve in Ghana. Many Ghanaians identify themselves as "Christian," but many are only nominal Christians and are still in need of a clear understanding of salvation by faith in Christ alone!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Lord's work among the Christians gathered at the Believers Bible Assembly in Ghana includes a weekly radio broadcast, Emmaus Course ministry, Scripture memory challenge, children's gospel outreaches and village evangelism.

Radio Ministry



The assembly in Kumasi has been broadcasting a weekly gospel message each Sunday morning since May 2005. The radio program reaches across seven regions of Ghana and has a potential listening audience of several million souls. In 2010 we began a new teaching series

called "Searching the Scriptures." This is a consecutive study of each chapter in the New Testament, with a strong gospel emphasis in each program. We are currently finishing a study in John's gospel, and then the study will continue into the book of Acts. Each lesson covers one chapter. A Bible question is also addressed that relates to the lesson and the spiritual concerns in Ghana. The program includes an advertisement for our Emmaus Bible Course ministry, and many callers respond with an interest to enroll in our Emmaus studies. There is also a concise three-minute gospel presentation inviting listeners to place their trust in Jesus as their Savior. Some music is added to fit with the program. It is always a great joy to hear of listeners placing their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior as a result of listening to the radio broadcast.

We also make the radio programs available online. The past four years of programs are available on the church Web site at http://www.bibleassemblychurch.com/bac2_010.htm.

Emmaus Course Ministry



For the past few years the church has been utilizing 24 Emmaus courses as well as a strategic study plan to help people learn the

gospel and grow in their knowledge of the Word of God. We have seen a steady increase in the number of students enrolling in this program, with several completing all 24 courses. We have used these courses extensively among our own church family, encouraging all of our young people and adults to work on the courses and try to complete as many as they can. This has produced spiritual results in the maturing of young believers, in the knowledge of the Word, and in their effectiveness of serving and teaching within the assembly. It has also served as a wonderful tool to see young people come to an understanding of the gospel and, in faith, submit their lives to Christ. Shadrach is one of the elders of the assembly and has taken on the responsibility of handling the oversight

of this ministry. With over 200 students on our enrollment list, the workload is quite heavy for Shadrach and myself, but now some others have indicated their desire to help with some of the grading and administration. We hope, in the Lord's will, to someday have an Emmaus office here in Kumasi, with a full-time person to manage the Emmaus ministry and handle the needs of our Emmaus students.

Annual Memory Challenge



Each year the church conducts a Scripture memory challenge for all those who regularly attend the Believers Bible Assembly. Everyone is challenged to memorize

a few chapters from the Bible with awards offered for varying degrees of accomplishment. In 2010 the church was challenged to memorize John 18 through 21, and any and all chapters in the Psalms as bonus work. This was the first year we opened the door for those who were willing to go above and beyond to see what could be accomplished by those keen to learn God's Word. Amazingly, there were two individuals who managed to not only complete the four chapters in John's gospel, but also memorized all the Psalms with the exception of Psalm 119. It took more than six months to complete all this work, but what a great spiritual blessing comes to those who invest so much into learning God's Word. In 2011 the challenge was to memorize Matthew chapter one to chapter six, and thereafter as many chapters in the four gospels as possible. There were a remarkable 577 chapters memorized by all participants, and one boy managed to quote 78 chapters of the 89 chapters in the gospels! Young Isaac Sarfo is only 14 years old but has a remarkable ability and determination to memorize God's Word. Keeping records of the memory work done over the past few years has indicated that some have now memorized more than 200 chapters in the Bible, and we have collectively memorized more than 2,100 chapters.

Children's Gospel Outreaches



reach began through the efforts of Joseph Frimpong

Every Tuesday evening over the past several years the church conducts a gospel outreach to children in the Buokrom neighborhood. This out-

(Missionary Prayer Handbook Day 2) and has continued through the faithful efforts of three young assembly men, who faithfully present the gospel to the children each Tuesday evening. They have been using lessons published through Gospel Folio Press. The children enjoy doing their Bible lessons and singing favorite gospel choruses. The children's club has been a vital part of the assembly outreach, as we have seen many children trust in the Lord, go on to be baptized believers, added to the church fellowship, and participate in the various spiritual activities and programs of the church. Another children's outreach is held each Thursday evening in the town of Adumasa and is led by three other men from our assembly. We believe the work in Adumasa will prove to be the seeds of a future assembly in that area.

Evangelism



It is a great delight to serve the Lord as a missionary in Ghana, because there is no end of opportunities to share the gospel with the people of this spiritually-hungry nation. I am

sometimes given opportunities to preach to hundreds of children in public schools and to share a clear gospel message with them. I also go out each Saturday morning with a few young men from the church to do evangelism in and around the Kumasi area. Over the past few years we have covered a wide area and visited many villages and neighborhoods in our region. We hand out tracts and New Testaments to people and sometimes even give away copies of the whole Bible when we see genuine interest and spiritual hunger. It is not unusual to see people reading the tracts after we have distributed them. Whereas in some places tracts are ignored or thrown away, in Ghana people are eager to receive and read them. We therefore go through large quantities of tracts; it is another effective way to spread the gospel in Ghana. I have had tracts printed locally, which helps us to acquire them in a timely manner, while also being more cost effective.

If the Lord has been speaking to your heart about mission work, why not consider Ghana as a possible location to serve the Lord? The opportunities are endless, the people warm and welcoming, and this mission field is ready for a great harvest. ■



Daniel Webster was commended to the work of the Lord in Kumasi, Ghana in 2004 by Westbank Bible Chapel (Westbank, BC, Canada). He works with the Believers Bible Assembly in radio ministry, Bible teaching, evangelism, Emmaus course ministry and youth work.



SPANGLISH

& the Spirit of God:
A Visit to Mexico

by Keith Keyser

During the mid-1990s, it was my privilege to befriend an earnest young outgoing missionary from British Columbia named Treavor Kamstra (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 18). The Lord saved him from a vain life of pleasure-seeking, and gave him a burden for missionary service. I met him when he came to Greenwood Hills Bible Conference in Fayetteville, PA, to attend the CMML Missionary Orientation Program (MOP). At a later time, he spent some weeks working on staff at Greenwood Hills and so we had the opportunity to develop our friendship.

In 1997 brother Treavor departed for the Baja California peninsula of Mexico to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary, initially settling in the Ensenada area. He lived in a fairly primitive house, which he helped build. It was without its own water supply, and that precious commodity was delivered periodically by truck. Meanwhile, he began the work of learning Spanish – mostly by immersion. In the process of time he met and married a believing Mexican sister named Leoncia (Leo for short.) The Lord blessed them with two daughters: Stephani, 11, and Alyson, 9. They now live in a town called Guadalupe Victoria (about an hour south of Mexicali; two hours south of San Diego, CA).

The Southern Call

Over the past four or five years, Treavor has repeatedly invited me to visit him and his family, but the opportunity did not present itself until February 2012, when I was speaking at Vista Bible Chapel in San Diego, CA (about a two-hour drive from the Kamstra's home). Since I spent

some time in Spain during the mid-90s helping Mark and Angie Hartley and traveling with other missionaries such as Bob and Lois

Sawyer and Bob Billings, I had some fluency in Spanish. Nevertheless, 17 years took their toll and blunted some of my linguistic ability. To call my Spanish rusty would be overly generous. In conversations I manage quite well, but I had not given a full sermon in that language since leaving Spain in 1995. Happily, I found the Mexican saints to be extremely gracious in enduring my linguistic foibles and rounding it off to the nearest correct Spanish term. Between their kindness and the Holy Spirit's power, the Word was conveyed. All praise be to the God who makes man's tongue!

Brother Treavor excels at teaching and encouraging young believers. By his own admission, he does not consider himself to be an evangelist (although he does the work of one as the need demands). Leo, however, is blessed with the ability to boldly and clearly witness to the many folks with whom they come into contact. Treavor preaches among multiple different assemblies in the area but concentrates most of his energies on the assembly at Nuevo Leon. Besides public preaching and teaching in the meetings, he also conducts home Bible studies and regularly has believers over for fellowship in the home. This ministry is greatly aided by Leo's fabulous Mexican culinary skills, which we repeatedly sampled during our stay. A few times a year they also make preaching visits to 17 assemblies between Tijuana and Cabo San Lucas to encourage the saints who are much more isolated; these excursions generally last three weeks.

Harvesting Souls Within the Fields

The local church at Nuevo Leon is almost entirely made up of first-generation Christians. The bulk of them work in agriculture – many of them rising quite early in the morning to put in long, hard hours in the fields. While performing their physical work in the fields, they share the gospel with their co-workers. This has resulted in a number of people coming to faith in Christ. Some of the brothers even take off specific months to travel to other states [in Mexico] for evangelistic purposes.

The believers' long work days did not dampen their enthusiasm to come together in the evening to pray, sing and hear a message from the Word of God. Over six nights,



Leoncia Kamstra teaching children at the VBS.

I preached exegetically through the book of Philippians. The believers listened with rapt attention, not because the speaker was eloquent in their native tongue, but rather because they love the Lord and His Word. It was humbling to hear their many encouraging statements and to be the beneficiaries of many kindnesses throughout our week-long stay. By North American standards, these saints were impecunious, yet we saw in them the truth of James 2:5: *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"*

Passing the Baton

In keeping with the New Testament practice of 2 Timothy 2:2, brother Treavor is committed to passing on the faith to faithful men. Accordingly, he strives to train up men younger in the faith to take on the responsibility of service and leadership in the assembly. This involves intentionally letting brethren who are less experienced and knowledgeable in the Scriptures expound the Word. It also is developed through brother Treavor's home Bible studies with these men. There are certainly men who have grasped the importance of shepherding the people of God and therefore are serving as elders. It is encouraging to see the assembly developing into an independent indigenous work. This fulfills the intention of biblical missions that the missionary works himself out of a job.

Much to my surprise, after my second-to-the-last evening meeting, a man named Jose professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! I was not expecting this for: 1. Although my message had the gospel in it, it was primarily a teaching message for

believers. 2. In western countries, I am not used to people openly responding to the Word of God during a meeting. What a joy it is to know that in the developing world the Holy Spirit is saving many people out of difficult backgrounds blighted by sin. I marveled that in spite of my less than perfect Spanish – which I jokingly dub "Spanglish" – the Lord can still use

His Word to save and edify. Once again He proves the reality of 1 Cor. 1:27: *"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty."*

Good News Amidst the Bad News

The headlines concerning Mexico that we normally hear in the United States are replete with negative stories about the vicious war on drugs and the many casualties that it is producing. In the part of Mexico where the Kamstras live, we did not see any evidence of this ongoing problem. Of course, drugs and alcohol are abused there just like they are in every corner

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 2:2



Treavor Kamstra preaching to the assembly in Nuevo Leon.

of America, but we did not for a moment feel threatened. There is a brother in the meeting who was deeply involved in the drug trade before his conversion. This lifestyle culminated into him being shot seven times by a rival drug gang. In the mercy of God, he survived this attack and was converted shortly thereafter. Drugs are just one of the impediments to people coming to Christ. Like many of our neighbors, most Mexicans are trying to earn a living, give a better life to their children and enjoy various pleasures from time to time. As normal and even laudable as these goals may be, to be without Christ is to be spiritually lost and in danger of eternal condemnation. Thus, the saints regularly give out tracts, gospel calendars and verbally witness to their friends and neighbors telling them the good news concerning the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Like other families, the Kamstras do the ordinary activities of life. One of the most time-consuming in our observation is the education of their two daughters they are homeschooling. Treavor and Leo's hard work is evident, for their daughters are bright, friendly and did much to make our three daughters enjoy our stay. They even took our girls to participate in a local AWANA club. It was wonderful to see the little Mexican children welcoming our children and instinctively caring for them, by helping with the games and snacks, even though our girls

Keith Keyser preaching.





aren't fluent in the local language. Missionary families need prayer just like other Christian families. We should not forget that the missionary is more than a tool for taking the Word to foreign lands. Missionaries are people with children and all of the responsibilities, joys and problems that come with life in a fallen world.

The Communion of Saints

The most striking lesson that we learned from our visit to Mexico was the reality and warmth of the fellowship of the Christians that we met. In our affluent and fast-paced world, members of the same local church sometimes do not see one another from Sunday to Sunday. There is very little desire to come together for extra meetings for the purposes of prayer, Bible study, or mutual edification. If believers do get together, it is often merely a social gathering rather than a time when we talk about the Lord and

encourage one another in our walk with Him. Of course, there are exceptions, but generally speaking, this could describe much of evangelical

church life in North America. In contrast, the dear Mexican saints, who have so little materially and face many physical disadvantages, have discovered the joy of being together and focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

Since being commended by the Grace Gospel Chapel in Gilbertsville, PA in 1999, Keith Keyser has served the Lord in itinerant Bible teaching and writing articles for print and web media. His wife Naomi joins him with their three children as they minister throughout North America, Europe and Asia



Anastasia Keyser playing at the local Awana Club.

First "What's Next?" Event a Success

by Jennifer Rogers

Although it's rarely verbally expressed, it seems clear that many young people want to know what's next?! To equip youth leaders to handle this and other penetrating questions young people ask, CMML hosted "What's Next?" on April 28, 2012. More than 80 junior and senior high students and leaders attended. President Bob Dadd welcomed guests and gave a brief overview of the day's activities.

To kick off the afternoon, Phil Parsons, CMML office administrator and former missionary to the Philippines, gave the group an overview of the ministry. Young people were challenged with the importance of praying for missionaries and learning about their ministries. The Web site (www.cmml.us) and Facebook ([Facebook.com/cmmlus](https://www.facebook.com/cmmlus)) are good examples of how these resources tell others about what is happening in the lives of the missionaries serving around the world.

Attendees divided into age-appropriate groups. Justin Gauvain from Bethany Bible Chapel in Toms River, NJ, told

junior high students how to defend their faith in school. He also shared stories about his short-term missions trips.

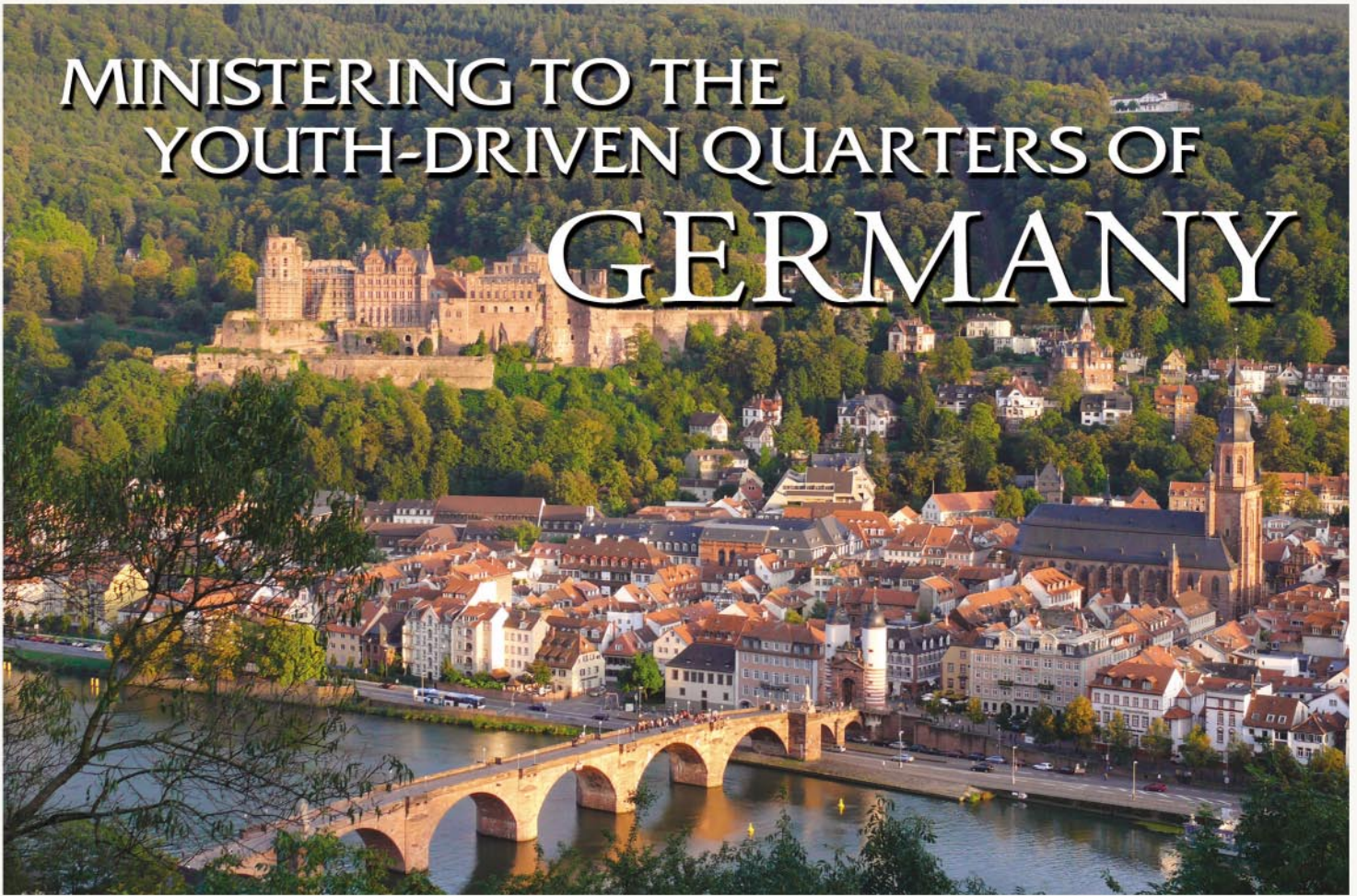
Senior high students listened to Vic Myers from Valley Bible Chapel in Washington Township, NJ. He presented the changes they may face after high school and how to stand firm on the Word of Jesus Christ. Vic challenged them to set godly patterns now, avoiding destructive ways and instructed them to concentrate on those that will make an impact on their lives.

Rounding out "What's Next?" options for young people, Lauren Ashby of Emmaus Bible College presented some of the advantages and opportunities of attending a Christian college.

The spacious grounds were enjoyed for outdoor games and getting to know and meet new friends. One highlight was a lunch barbeque with hamburgers and hotdogs with all the fixings, salads, beverages and selections of cookies and fruit. Nobody went away hungry! ■



MINISTERING TO THE YOUTH-DRIVEN QUARTERS OF GERMANY



by Dorle Smith

Heidelberg, Germany

Heidelberg, Germany, situated in the center of Europe, is not only famous for its beauty, which attracts an estimated 3.5 million visitors a year, but is also famous for its university—one of the oldest in Europe dating back to the 14th Century.

Heidelberg therefore attracts students from all over the world. One fifth of the 34,000 students enrolled in university and various graduate schools are foreigners from 130 nations. Unique to Heidelberg is also its population structure. Of the 145,000 inhabitants, 40 percent are under 30 years of age.

ESTABLISHING A MINISTRY

In 1986 the Lord opened a door for me to move to the small town of Edingen, just about five miles outside of Heidelberg. My first concern was the need to establish a work in my own small community. Like I always did when I moved into a new area, I went around distributing Christian flyers into mailboxes. That was somewhat normal for me, having worked with Operation Mobilization (OM) for over eight years in the past. After two years in this type of ministry, I somehow felt that God had another strategy. He did, but first I had to meet with some of the Christians here. We started a prayer ministry meeting once a week and soon began meeting twice a week. A time

came when the needs forced us to pray daily over the phone. I believe that it was these prayer times that laid the foundation for all the work thereafter: the women's ministries here in Edingen and the evangelistic work in Heidelberg.

I remember our first encounter with two Chinese students. These students told us that they never heard of Jesus Christ while living in China, but here in Germany Christians started to visit them regularly in their student hostel. Excitedly, they showed us the beautiful colorful literature they received free of charge in their own language.

A GROWING LOCAL ASSEMBLY AND A FLOURISHING OUTREACH

There is a small assembly in Heidelberg that has grown over the years. There are currently about 150 adults in fellowship and about 70 children. It is a blessing to be part of this loving body of Christians. Apart from the students, most attending this local assembly are not coming from Heidelberg but from surrounding towns and villages.

Many years ago the assemblies in Germany had a great idea to transform a bus into a mobile evangelistic tool. This type of outreach excited me. We had the privilege to utilize one of



these buses for the first time in 1996. We were blessed by the experience and had a great time, but unfortunately all

this was over after a few days. I so

clearly realized the need for this type of outreach: so many of the young people wanted to talk. They would never come to church, but they listened on the street and they willingly took our literature. There was a need to reach out to them regularly and not just once a year!

After all those years of praying for the youth of Heidelberg, I now felt that God's time had come "to do something." I therefore asked the Lord for very specific guidance and got a very specific answer. He showed me not only what to distribute during an outreach, but how much, when and where. It was exciting. One Friday night I managed to round up some of our young people. We gathered in front of one of the discos and in no time hundreds of our gospel cartoon books were gone, people even coming to us and asking for their copy.

That was just the beginning. For the last 12 years I always managed to find at least one person to come along on Friday nights. I could write endless stories of all the "divine encounters" the Lord gave us.

Tens of thousands of pieces of literature were distributed and we talked to thousands of people, especially the youth pouring out of the Heidelberg main train station from all the surrounding towns and villages. There was one young man so interested that he didn't mind missing his connecting train. After a rather long talk and after he vehemently argued his atheistic position, I handed him our small booklet entitled "The Atheist's Test." He couldn't resist taking it. After another hour of conversation, this man agreed to meet with us again. Some weeks after this first encounter he surrendered his life to the Lord. Today he is active in a church in his hometown.

During the warm months we also walk along the river banks in the center of Heidelberg and distribute literature. We use this as an opportunity to talk to the many young people spending the night there. Most of them are



open and willing to talk. Over the many years of doing this type of work, some of the youth have become acquainted with us and approach us when they have new questions.

In this type of ministry we have spent many hours talking to foreign visitors such as guest-physicians from Egypt and Syria, refugees from Afghanistan and Iran, post-graduates from China and patients and their relatives from the Emirates and Saudi Arabia, all who are often here for months being treated in the world-famous clinics in Heidelberg. They not only are willing and happy to talk, they are very thankful when we offer them literature in their language.

EVANGELIZING THE "SOCIAL HOT SPOT"

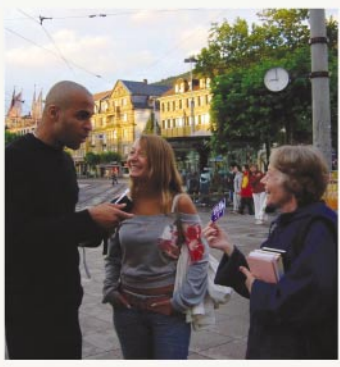
Often during our nightly outreaches we have met youth coming from what is known here as "Social Hot Spot"—a housing area in the woods outside Heidelberg, where over 7,000 people live in high-risers. Most of them are immigrants or of immigration background. Last year some new dedicated students joined our assembly and the Lord burdened their hearts to start a weekly children's work there. To get the word out, we hosted a mega event for three days with the help of one of the new evangelistic buses especially designed for kids, fully loaded with all the imaginable possibilities for fun and play. During that short time at the "Social Hot Spot," I talked to people from Laos, Vietnam, Lebanon, Turkey, Kosovo, Morocco, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan and Albania. We have planned to have the bus for three days again this summer.

Apart from our yearly "bus event," one regular evangelistic activity of our assembly is our monthly bookstand in the main street of Heidelberg. Here we offer Christian literature free of charge and distribute flyers to the people rushing by, doing their Saturday shopping. It is more difficult to talk to people during this time than during our night outreaches, but we feel it is important to show our presence, as the Muslims have their stand and various sects are out as well to capture the attention of the people.

Every piece of Christian literature is like dynamite: you never know when it will explode. I have become accustomed to always carry some literature with me, expecting the Lord to give me "divine appointments" in my everyday life. Often He does and it is exciting.



Top: Outreach bus; Life is More bus, building relationships with kids. **Above (L-R):** Offering Christian literature for free; Heidelberg students' favorite means of transport.



Years ago, at a very low point in my life, I received a letter from a person I did not know. He wrote that he was glad that he found my present address because he wanted to let me know that he had gotten saved through the book I left with him after our talk. He wrote that he now had a lovely Christian family and that they were actively involved in a church in their hometown. The Lord knew this for all of those years but led this brother to write to me at just the right time when I needed this special encouragement from the Lord to press on. ■

“LET US NOT BE WEARY IN WELL DOING: FOR IN DUE SEASON WE SHALL REAP, IF WE FAINT NOT.”

—Galatians 6:9

“WHEN YE SHALL HAVE DONE ALL THOSE THINGS... SAY, WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS; WE HAVE DONE THAT WHICH WAS OUR DUTY TO DO.”

—Luke 17:10



Dorle Smith was commended to the work of the Lord in Germany in 1986 by Hollywood Bible Chapel in Hollywood, Florida.

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