

CHRISTIAN
Missions
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Giant

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Four Italian Assemblies

Reaching the
Muslim World
for Christ



Thinking It Through

MARK KOLCHIN

My Father's House

I have wonderful memories of my childhood. I realize that this may not be true for a lot of people, but it is for me. We were raised with very little of this world's goods. Even though our economic level was on the lower side, it was my "normal" and consequently I never felt deprived, even though others looking in could have easily thought so. We did not have a large home, or the latest gadgets, but my father, a hardworking auto mechanic, adequately provided for the family's needs. Like most children, we viewed our father as larger than life and felt there was never anything beyond his ability to fix, especially cars. The house we lived in was not luxurious, but it was sufficient and the pantry had plenty in store that no one ever starved or suffered privation. I enjoyed life, and as a young boy growing up on the Jersey Shore, what we lacked in riches we made up for in recreation. Boating, fishing, swimming, and sports all occupied the better part of our free time. Looking back, it was a great time. But what made the house I grew up in so special were not the items in it, but the atmosphere that prevailed within its walls. Home was home—a place of acceptance, comfort and security. That little piece of real estate in Toms River, New Jersey, might not have been important to others, but it was to me. More than just bricks and mortar, and far more than what was visible to the eye, it was my "home."

In much the same way, every Christian belongs to another household, the household of faith (Ephesians 2:19). As with our earthly households, there is more to it than meets the eye. It is the place of love, warmth, and acceptance, since every true believer in Christ is adopted into the family of God and accepted into the Beloved (Ephesians 1:5–6). As members of this household, we have been brought into a vast spiritual fortune as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." (Romans 8:17) Like Jacob, one day we came to the surprising realization that we had been led by God's grace to the house of God, whose rooms are filled with promises of His provision and His

declared intention to faithfully see us through (Genesis 28:15). It was then that God became our Father. As our Father, not only does He provide and protect, but He also sees, knows, forgives, and rewards (Matthew 6:4, 8, 14 & 18). To Him we can cry out "Abba, Father," confirming that we belong to Him and are a part of His family (Galatians 4:6). He is indeed larger than life and we can rest assured that there is nothing too hard for Him and nothing that He cannot fix. What a Father we have and what blessings are ours! How true are the Lord's words when He said, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

But just as there are privileges in this household, there are responsibilities as well. Growing up, I had a regular list of chores and was accountable for my actions. In the household of faith, we have work to do and are accountable to our great High Priest, Jesus, who is over the house of God. Accordingly, we are to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... hold fast the confession of our hope... and consider one another to stir up love and good works." (Hebrews 10:21–24) These are the non-optional household "chores," incumbent upon everyone who resides under its roof. Above all, we are responsible to know how to conduct ourselves in the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15). With privilege, comes responsibility.

But it does not end there. The doors of this wonderful household are open to all who would enter. For us, the mandate from the Lord is this: "As the Father has sent Me, so send I you." (John 20:21) Like the lepers in Elisha's day, we have the duty to proclaim the day of good tidings, the Gospel of Christ, to not remain silent, but to go and tell the king's household (2 Kings 7:9). Some take that challenge and go to regions beyond; others discharge that duty close to home. Regardless of the venue, the privilege and responsibility is ours. The question we must ask ourselves is, "Who today can I bring to my Father's house?" ■

"Who today can I bring to my Father's house?"

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Brazil: The Awakened Giant

by Gavin Aitken

“A New Brazil”—this was the title of a recent editorial written by a former president of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in one of the country’s leading newspapers. In fact, reported the article, Brazil is more than an “emerging economy”; it is an “emerging society,” or as a recent book title suggests, “We are a new country.”

When my family and I arrived here 50 years ago, Brazil was often called “The Sleeping Giant” due to its many resources, most of which were still untapped at the time. However, today the country is recognized as “The Awakened Giant.” Brazil has come into its own. The national anthem reminds us of the hope that one day this would happen. *“Brazil, an intense dream of vivid ray, of love and hope descends upon the earth. In thy lovely smiling and clear skies, the image of the Southern Cross shines resplendently. A Giant by Nature, thou art a beautiful, strong and intrepid colossus, and thy future mirrors thy greatness.”*

Politics and Religion

Some years back, a Christian doctor wrote a fascinating book in which he described Brazil as having been discovered by Portuguese explorers only to be found in the marginal notes of world history. While what had made such nations as the United States and Canada great—they were populated by those in search of religious freedom, or better yet, *God*—Brazil

was discovered by those in search of *gold*.

This fact brought a practice of corruption that retarded the country’s awakening and still curtails much of its expansion. Politicians are constantly scrutinized on all levels of government from local to federal. Unfortunately, such corruption can be seen even in the institutional church.

The Brazilian religious scenario has been mostly dominated by Catholicism. However, syncretism is seen on every hand. Most Catholics are also Spiritualists. It is not unusual to find a mixture of images from both beliefs occupying the same space side by side on their respective altars.

Assembly Growth

The Assembly effort has left its mark on the country despite the fact that it never made the headlines of any newspaper, magazine or TV report. Most of the work commenced in the rural areas and spread to the cities as families sought more advanced education for their children. Due to poor farming conditions, people often had to relocate to various areas of the country’s interior. Wherever these families went, they planted a New Testament assembly which caused the work to spread. However, only in recent years have there been modest attempts to plant assemblies along the coast of northeast Brazil.

English-Speaking Ministry

In recent years an English-speaking independent church in Sao Paulo sought me out. They needed someone to shepherd them as they were about to close their doors. This work is located in a strategic area of Sao Paulo, just a block and a half away from Brazil's "Wall Street."



Representing five continents, those in attendance found themselves bunched together by a common bond—English. So, after speaking only Portuguese for so many years, I had to recover my English “from the mothballs.” This ministry gave us a totally new scope in our efforts. We now reach out to business people from multi-national firms, many of whom come for two to three years and are not necessarily interested in studying the Portuguese language. It is a common sight on Sunday mornings to see employees from the American and Canadian consulates; even the Zimbabwean consulate has its representatives. It is an exciting ministry as we see the hunger for God’s Word met and appreciated.

My Story

I was originally commended from the assembly in Niagara Falls, New York, in 1963 while my wife Margaret (now deceased) was commended from the Pembroke assembly in Detroit.

The Niagara-area believers were responsible for sending many families to various mission fields and this molded and fashioned my life. Many of the Lord’s servants visited our home and assembly over those years and, as a result, I “ate, drank and slept” missions my entire childhood and adolescent life.

During the first 30 years of our ministry in Brazil, Margaret, a faithful companion in the work, stood by me all the way. Our

The early missionaries had a vision for good literature, both evangelistic and teaching in its scope. They knew that the vast regions of the country, often accessible by mule, would not permit them to visit the same places with any frequency. Even today you can still find small libraries composed of those writings in the homes of many believers in rural areas. These books helped to solidify the work and gave Christians a solid grounding in the Word. Also as a result, many of the assemblies were founded by Brazilians with the indirect help of missionaries.

The Brazilian assemblies have been blessed with many capable ministers of the Word and many today serve the Lord full-time. The assemblies have also supplied gifted missionaries to several countries around the world which carry out a

wonderful work, mainly in European and African nations. Brazilians are a very loving and hospitable people, and because they are multi-cultural, they fit into many cultures around the world. They are very people-conscious, rather than time-conscious, which makes them great evangelists and personal workers.

At the same time, as many new assemblies are established around the

country, many older assemblies have closed their doors. Such a trend is one that many of you know too well in your own country. Many of these assemblies lost the vision to prepare future leaders in the local church. It was not so much a question of not keeping up with the times (the teaching of God’s Word, the chief backbone of the work, is timeless), but that the aging leaders failed to prepare the next generation. Just recently, what was once the largest assembly in Sao Paulo sold its building because of faulty leadership. The assemblies that are growing saw the folly of this and dedicated themselves to the preparation of future leaders.

These and other situations led us to focus on training upcoming leaders. Approximately 80 young men, each in a different city, were taught how to study the Word, to preach and to tend to the flock. Many of these became elders in their local assemblies and some are in full-time service for the Lord.

Brazil continues to be wide-open to the Gospel, but the greatest need is to prepare others for the task—we don’t know when open doors may close.

son Todd (also now with the Lord) was born shortly before leaving for the field. Our daughter Aimee was born in Brazil and now resides in Wesley Chapel, Florida.

When my assembly in Niagara Falls closed, the Carrollwood assembly of Tampa, Florida, kindly joined in the former recommendation and has since been a constant source of encouragement to us.

Eleny's Ministry

I remarried, this time to a Brazilian named Eleny, a widow who brought four more adolescent boys to our family. Eleny has an extensive ministry in hospital chaplaincy.



The chaplaincy work is now in several hundred hospitals around the country, as well as in surrounding countries and even on other continents. This ministry has ample freedom in these medical centers seven days a week and even around the clock if necessary.



Eleny has a reputation in this area of hospital-patient care that is highly appreciated and sought after by the medical field as they seek for a total-care approach for their patients. There have been

times when we were under attack by the Catholic Church and oftentimes by minority religious groups. However, this has strengthened the work and brought it to the attention of those interested.

Through three levels of courses given each year, first as hospital visitors and finally as full-fledged chaplains, many are instructed and trained to participate in this vital ministry.

Opposite page: Sao Paulo
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Above from top: Eleny offering an elderly man Christian literature; Music is used greatly by God in the hospitals.

Right: Fellowship Church where the Aitkens seek to serve the Lord.

Yet the demand is so great that we can't keep up with the needed supply of more workers.

Eleny has written many books related to her work, and these can be found in many homes across Brazil. Whenever we travel, we find people who have been influenced and helped by her writings. We praise God for this.

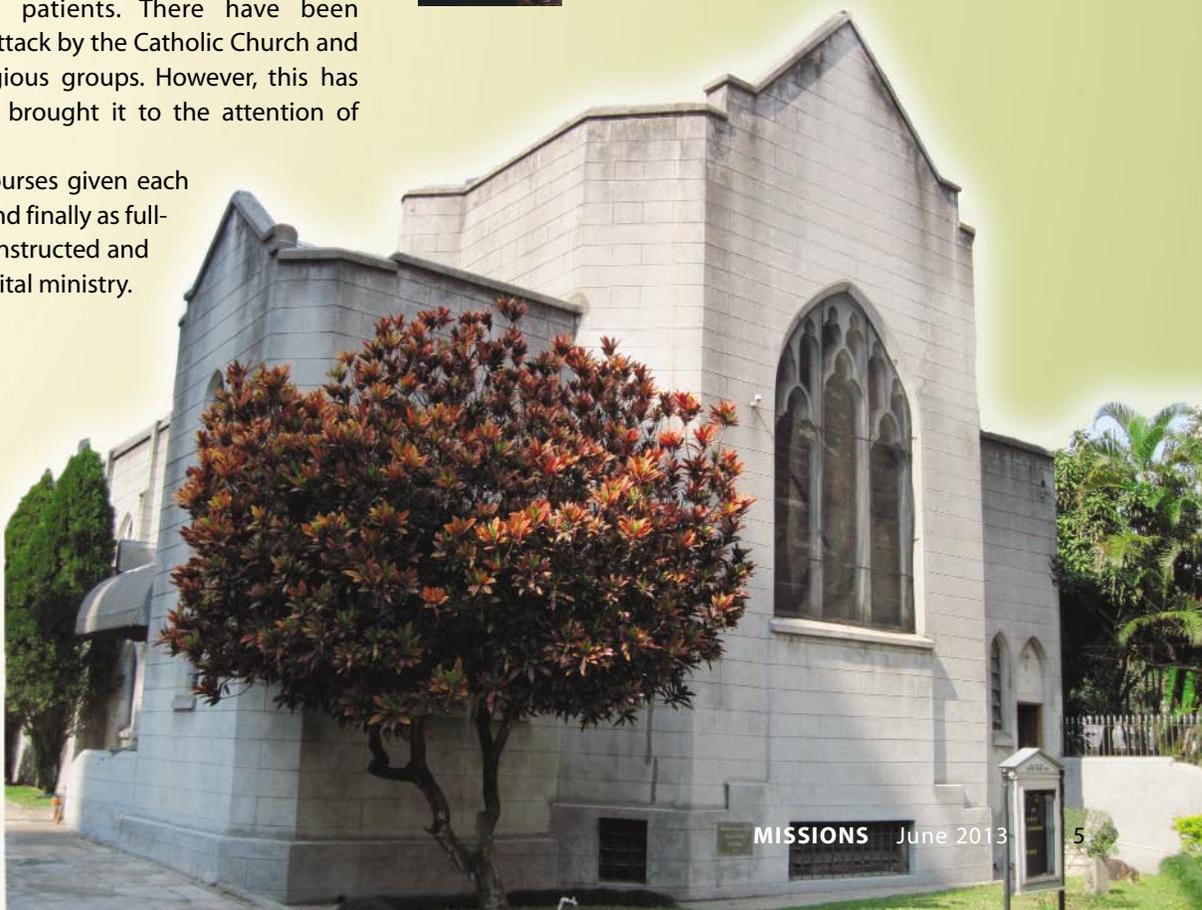
Recently, the Brazilian Bible Society sent Eleny to the city of Santa Maria, in Brazil's most southern state, to help reach out to the families affected by the terrible tragedy that took place in a club filled with university students. Eleny was even allotted time on a TV program to address the families who lost their loved ones. The TV station has played the program over and over again because of its impact.

Pray for Brazil

Brazil continues to be wide-open to the Gospel, but the greatest need is to prepare others for the task—we don't know when open doors may close. The evangelical church has made great inroads into the nation and now comprises a large percentage of the population. Pray for Brazil, "The Awakened Giant." ■



Gavin Aitken is commended to the ministry in Brazil by Carrollwood Bible Chapel in Tampa, Florida.



MADAGASCAR

Country in Crisis

by Colin Crow



In early 2009, Andry Rajoelina, the mayor of Madagascar's capital city, overthrew Marc Ravalomanana, the elected president. Despite many subsequent meetings, at the time of writing, no agreement has been reached on how to resolve the crisis. The population is left to pursue "life as usual" while things become more and more difficult.

Poverty was widespread before the crisis and now it has increased. This situation has generated violence, disorder and theft throughout the country. Sometimes people will even kill for a cow, or for money. While we were in Toliara (formerly known as Tuléar), in the South, a French couple were assassinated—just for their money. State schools have been closed for months because teachers were not paid. At the moment, even people with good qualifications have difficulty finding work, especially if they are opposed to corruption.

Spiritual Darkness

Our Christian brothers tell us that the crisis has led to a "purification" in the Church. About half the people in the country claim to be Christian. The main churches are Roman Catholic and traditional Protestant (predominantly Lutheran) but there are also many Pentecostal, charismatic and Baptist groups—being a "Christian" is not a problem in Madagascar. However, practice is often very formal and many people mix elements of Christian faith and practice with superstition and occult belief. For example, one common belief maintains that ancestors are still present and influence daily life. The people feel obliged to respect and honor them and the custom of "turning the dead" every five, seven or ten years is observed in many areas. The family removes the skeleton from the coffin and wraps it in a new shroud while offering different sacrifices. Sorcery is also widespread; divination in a trance, often enhanced by alcohol, is used to seek healing or guidance. A recent news clip even showed the local Catholic priest joining the people in a session of occult prayer for a family in difficulty. Such is the spiritual darkness of this land!

God is at Work!

At the same time, Malagasy people are very open to spiritual things and therefore are interested and receptive when hearing the Good News of the Gospel. Their enormous economic difficulties and spiritual needs cause them to listen readily when approached by true believers in Christ. The "purification" in the church has led many Christians to meet together across denominational lines to pray for their country and its people.

Collaboration between French assemblies and CEIM (Communauté Évangélique Indépendante de Madagascar), which started in 2005, seeks to help increase the level of Bible training for workers and improve their financial support. Their Bible school in Antananarivo, the capital, has about 15 students each year in their three-year program. A dozen more join the six-month discipleship training school in Toliara. The leaders hope to extend this program to a full year of study. Last year three students completed a Masters in Theology and three more graduated from the Bible school. This increases the number of indigenous teachers available. We encourage our brothers to develop projects which will raise support for their church leaders, and therefore give greater autonomy to the churches and decrease their reliance on foreign support. Progress in this area is complicated by the rapid increase in new churches, which multiplies the need for supported church leaders/evangelists to oversee the work.



The number of churches has doubled to about 70 in the last six years and evangelism continues courageously. Just one weekend of open-air meetings can sometimes produce sufficient contacts or conversions for the nucleus of a new fellowship. The leaders in bush churches often need more help, even



if they are living very simply, because of the extreme poverty of the people in their area. Natural disasters are another factor compounding the difficulties, especially the cyclones which hit the island five or six times a year, destroying crops and causing damage to churches and homes.

Ministry to Children

Children's work is a very effective outreach method. With 40 percent of the population under 15 years of age and with many single mothers, children abound. Helping children also opens the door to their parents' hearts. Legally, children should be in school but there are insufficient schools and teachers. Furthermore, many families rely on older children (10-years-old and up) to supplement their meager income. Some youngsters help make or sell bricks, others sell a few vegetables in the market or collect convertible garbage, while others simply become beggars. In the East, certain ethnic groups consider multiple births a curse and twins are abandoned at birth.

■ Bible Club

At Andromery, near Toliara, the church leader and some enterprising Christian women organize a Saturday children's Bible club. They have a morning of teaching and then a simple meal (rice, a small portion of vegetables and meat with some sauce) which the women cook during the club. For many children this may be the only good meal they have all week. At least 120 children attend the club and half of them also come to church with their parents on Sundays. Surrounding villages also benefit from the well that the church has drilled to obtain fresh water. They are now preparing bricks to build a permanent building after just 18 months or so of witness.

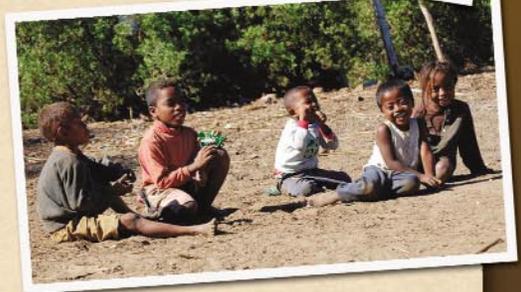
■ Kindergarten and Orphanage

In Ambohimangakely, just outside the capital, an elder and his wife, a schoolteacher, took early retirement. They have now opened a little roadside store by their home and started a Christian kindergarten for the poorest children, since many

poor parents work and are forced to leave their children alone all day. After one year they already have 20 children and plan to add another class next year. The only other kindergarten in the village is a private fee-paying school and the poorest cannot afford it. This couple are members of a church led by Rosa, who, with his wife Pauline, opened an orphanage about seven years ago. It now houses 33 children, including a number of twins who were abandoned at birth. Rosa and Pauline also run a children's club for other children in the village. Half the church is composed of children!

Deliverance from Darkness into Light

Madagascar is in a crisis which the rich and influential seem incapable of solving, but the light of the Gospel shines and the Lord is saving men, women and children, and building His Church. People are being delivered from darkness and superstition, and are finding the way to the Father's house where grace and love transform their lives through Jesus. ■



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Colin and Maureen Crow are commended to the Lord's work by the assemblies in Bridgeville and Malvern, Pennsylvania.



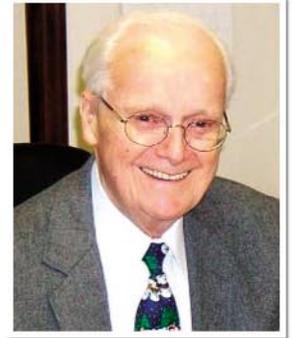
Top (L-R): Big sister feeds her younger siblings; Poor lady at a market with her children; Children's Sunday Bible club. **Left:** Pastor Arribera and his family help with church planting. **Right (from top):** Children playing on Rosa and Pauline's kitchen floor; Children playing.

Home with the Lord

Samuel Edward Robinson

Former CMML President

February 2, 1925 – March 2, 2013



Sam was born in Brooklyn, New York, on February 2, 1925, to Thomas and Elizabeth Robinson. Soon thereafter the family moved to Middlesex, New Jersey, where Sam spent his childhood years with his older siblings—Bill, Grace, Ruth, and Gladys. Sadly, Sam's mother died from tuberculosis when he was only 10 years old.

As believers, Sam's parents made sure he attended Sunday school at the Grove Street assembly in Plainfield, New Jersey (now Cedarcroft). He understood that he was a guilty sinner and needed salvation. He often told the story of waking up one Saturday morning and finding the house empty. He knew his parents and siblings were believers, and that he was not yet ready to meet the Lord. Thinking that the Lord had come and that he was left behind, Sam quickly dressed and was on his way to the house of a nearby family whom he knew were also believers. If they too were gone, then he would know he had missed his chance to trust the Lord as his Savior. As he left the house, with great relief he saw the old family car rumbling down the road towards home. Finally, in his early teen years, he trusted the Lord and never looked back!

After high school Sam entered military service. Although it was wartime, he reinjured his knee during training and received a medical discharge. He moved to the Bronx, where his dad and sister were living, and got a job with the American Bank Note Company—his first and only job that lasted 44 years! By the time he retired, Sam ran the company's treasury department.

Sam fellowshiped at the East 73rd Street assembly in New York. There he met and fell in love with a quiet young lady named Ruth Naysmith. They were married on September 20, 1947, and the Lord blessed them with three daughters, Jane, Karen, and Ruthann. After more than 62 years of marriage, Ruth was called home by the Lord in April 2010.

In 1955 Sam and Ruth assumed responsibility for the 73rd Street assembly building, including the missionary apartment. Sam always had an interest in missionary work, and the many visits from missionaries suit-

ed him perfectly. In his early years, Sam thought the Lord would have him serve in China. That door closed but Sam's desire to see the Gospel spread around the world never dimmed.

Sam was a director of Voices from the Vineyard when, in 1972, four service groups merged to form CMML. He continued to serve with CMML, as vice-president, and then as president from 1980 until 2004, when he passed the baton to Tom Turner. After Sam retired he continued in the office every day, keeping his finger on the pulse of missionary activity throughout the world.

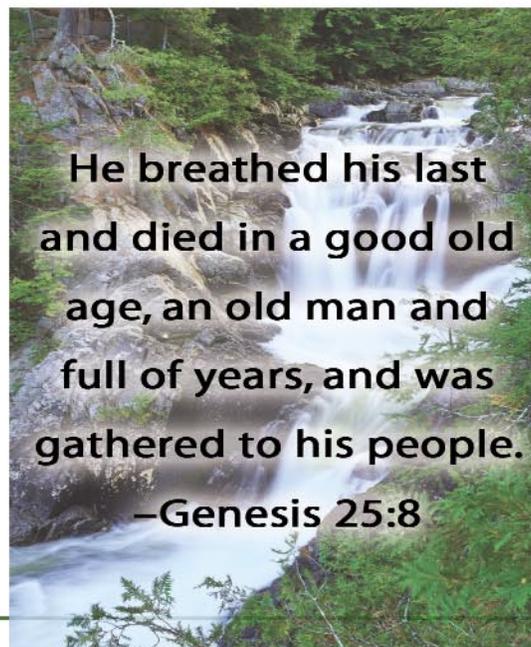
Sam loved people and was at his best when he could sit and chat with his brothers and sisters in Christ. Many have commented on how much they appreciated a timely word, a phone call, a note, or even a warm handshake or hug when they were together. If Sam promised to pray for you, you can be sure that he did!

As CMML president, Sam traveled to many mission fields and was vitally interested in what was being done for the Lord. As he learned more, he was able to pray more intelligently for the Lord's servants. He desired that people at home know more about what was happening overseas through conferences and special meetings. His articles for *Missions* were written from his heart as he sought to encourage the Lord's people to fulfill the Great Commission to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." (Mark 16:15)

On March 2 Sam was promoted to Glory. He is now absent from the body and present with his Lord, whom he served so

faithfully. Genesis 25:8 comes to mind: "He breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people." Sam Robinson was a faithful servant of the Lord, loving husband to Ruth, devoted father to Jane, Karen, and Ruthann, and a doting "Poppy" to Katie and Scott, Jessica, Rebecca, and Rachel. "Mr. CMML" to so many of the Lord's servants, Sam's impact over the years will only be fully known in eternity. We know he has already heard the Lord's "Well done, good and faithful servant."

by Jane Robinson Gilpin





Molise, Italy

The Expanding Work in Four Italian Assemblies

by Daniel Pasquale

One of Italy's smallest regions, with a population of approximately 320,000, Molise has two provincial capital cities: Campobasso and Isernia. A mountainous region, Molise boasts elevations of more than 5,000 feet above sea level in some areas and is the home of well-known ski resorts. A beautiful region, Molise is spiritually dark. The Gospel has never fully penetrated many of these isolated areas although there are interested people throughout. Roman Catholic tradition and superstition still has a stronghold on the minds and lives of most Molisians. Despite this, God has done a work in the major cities and even a few smaller towns. Assembly work goes back to the 1960s.

Termoli: A Witness in a Seaside Town

The second largest city in Molise, Termoli is a seaside resort town on the Adriatic coast with a population of approximately 32,000. We used to come to this area many years ago for vacation. We got to know the assembly in Termoli and the full-time workers who served there in the late '70s and early '80s. Small, but growing, the assembly was started by an Italian national in the late '60s. The believers acquired a small meeting hall near the main train station. As the years passed, many contacts were made and additional small meeting points were started in Isernia and Campobasso.

The work continued to grow and an extension of the little meeting hall was purchased in the late '80s. Baptisms were usually done in the sea with large crowds observing and hearing the Gospel preached. I remember attending one when they invited me to preach in September 1988. We continued our visits on various occasions over the years while living and serving in Nettuno. The project for the new chapel started in the late '90s and construction finally began in 2005. With much sacrifice, it was completed in the spring of 2009. Sadly, due to internal conflicts and difficulties, a number of members left. However, the work continues with several new young people coming to Christ and being baptized. The

youth group continues to grow with Toni, an assembly deacon, who has faithfully led and cared for the youth for many years. In addition, two elders lead the assembly.

Isernia: An Example of Assemblies Helping Each Other

Isernia is the third largest city with a population of approximately 22,000. The work in Isernia began many years ago back in the late '70s with an Italian couple and another who had returned from Switzerland, where they were saved. The group was very small and growth came slowly. The brothers from Termoli visited and cared for the group over the years. The assembly continues to meet in a meeting hall which was rented about four years ago. Several conversions and baptisms greatly encouraged the little meeting. The brothers from the Termoli assembly, along with myself and a number of visiting brothers from other regions, continue to visit and care for the believers.

Campobasso: A Ministry in a Tradition-filled City

A regional capital, Campobasso is the largest city with a population of a little more than 50,000. An assembly was started in the mid-80s with a few believers from the south-eastern region of Foggia who resided in Campobasso. The meeting continued for a number of years with the help of the believers in Termoli and Foggia. However, the assembly closed in the late '80s due to a number of difficulties.

Another attempt was made to start a church in the year 2000 with many of the younger people of the original assembly and some new converts. Independent missionaries started with them but left after a couple of years before the work was fully established. Some of the believers attended other churches in the city. But in 2004 an elderly couple, believers from a small town outside of Campobasso, opened their home for meetings with most of the believers from the previous Campobasso assemblies. The brothers from Termoli once again served these believers twice a month for meet-

ings and Bible studies.

We arrived in Termoli in September 2005 and started to participate with the Termoli assembly in serving the little group. About the same time, a young missionary who spent much of his life in Germany, and whose parents originated from a small town in the province of Campobasso, arrived in the area with his wife and two young daughters. We continued to meet every week, and at the beginning of 2006 we began to break bread together. As the group grew, and the need for a more adequate meeting place was felt, we began to search in the city of Campobasso. We discovered a small but adequate meeting hall in June 2006 where the assembly continues to meet. Shortly after that, another young missionary family arrived to serve the young assembly.

When we moved to Termoli we lived in the home of fellow missionaries, the Rostas, as they had to get medical treatment for their teenage daughter who was very ill at the time. They planned to be away for a year and asked us to live in their home, serve in the Termoli assembly, and gradually work our way into the Campobasso ministry. We did just that for two years, after which the Rosta family decided to not return to Italy and remained in Christian service in Germany. As a result, we dedicated more time to Termoli and the work in Campobasso continued on its own, with the help of the other two missionary families.

Over the years, the work in Campobasso has continued in various outreach activities including tract distribution, children's open-air puppet shows, evangelistic film showings, special occasion and holiday dinners, open air concerts, tract and Bible tables in the piazza and market place, evangelistic Bible studies, and a newly begun youth meeting with a few new believers and interested friends. Unfortunately, there are approximately only 15 to 20 children in the four assemblies, the majority being in Campobasso and Pietracatella. Termoli has the most teenagers and college-age youth.

After we returned from a summer furlough in 2008, we felt led by the Lord to dedicate more time with the Campobasso assembly, as the other two missionaries were active in starting an assembly in Pietracatella. We found an apartment in early 2009 and have lived there since. We seek to see the



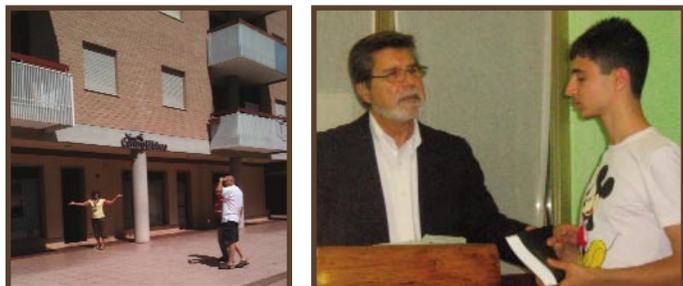
From left: Termoli chapel; Isernia assembly; Campobasso market street; Literature table in Campobasso market.

assembly established. Though our numbers are few, we are encouraged with a few young people attending our meetings; two of the young people have made professions of faith. Two younger families are also taking more leadership.

A challenge here in Campobasso is the deep-rooted Roman Catholic tradition, superstition, and yearly religious festival procession known as the "Misteri" or "Mysteries." It is a procession that is at least three centuries old in Campobasso. Similar processions date back to medieval times as a way of teaching Bible stories to the illiterate population. Over the centuries it has degenerated into representations of tales and miracles cultivated from religious tradition and superstition. It is a tool of Satan to keep people bound by either fear or superficial festivity. A unique feature in Campobasso's celebration is a procession of 14 floats, carried on the shoulders of about 15 to 20 men. Each float has iron structures to support children of various ages hanging 10 to 15 feet above street level and dressed in ornate costumes as a representation of ancient legendary saints, such as San Gennaro, and religious depictions of the "Virgin Mary in the Immaculate Conception" and her assumption into heaven. Two of the floats feature "devils" dressed in black robes and blackened faces with red horns and red tongues. One of the floats depicts a hermit saint of early church history and his fight with temptation. Another illustrates the archangel Michael's victory over the demons and the forces of evil. Many of the bystanders and observers give their young children and babies to these devil actors who then pose for pictures as the procession pauses in the parade. You can watch a video of this procession on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/Wjl2XO3XsVM>

Pietracatella: A New, Encouraging Work

Approximately 20 miles from Campobasso, the work in Pietracatella began at the end of 2008 by two missionary families who worked with the Campobasso assembly. They have several contacts and interested people in this small town of about 1,600 people. A few have been saved and the assembly is encouraged. Their ministry also includes reaching the small surrounding towns in the area, where a few new believers live.



From left: Campobasso assembly hall; Daniel presenting a Bible to a newly baptized youth.

The Assemblies Working Together

In each of the assemblies, as in most church planting efforts and established church work, problems and difficulties are many. Internal conflicts, disagreements and difficulties in setting a clear direction, along with the cultural and religious indifference, and sometimes opposition, have made the assemblies' growth slow and difficult. However, we were encouraged during the last year with a greater desire and willingness from the saints to put aside problems, forgive shortcomings, and strive to work together in fellowship to encourage one another in activities that stimulate and encourage growth. Several important and effective efforts have been made during the past year.

1. Inter-assembly meetings for elders, leaders, and men were started to discuss joint activities, share ministry, and pray for each other and for the local activities and evangelism. We had two meetings last year and plan two or three this year.

2. A joint-assembly weekend retreat began at the Bible camp in the Foggia area. The Campobasso assembly has organized yearly retreats since the inception of the work in Campobasso. This past year was the first time it was a jointly-organized retreat with a committee from the four assemblies. Another retreat is scheduled for September of this year.

3. In August of last year, an assembly picnic was held in a central place, easy to reach for each of the four assemblies. It was a great success as all of our believers and a number of visitors were present for a worship service and meal. This year the picnic is scheduled for June.

4. Of great importance, and much encouragement, were the baptisms during the past few years. Each assembly has had people baptized and more baptisms are planned for this year.

Pray for Molise

The work in Molise is as needy as anywhere in the world, and only the Spirit of God can change the hearts and minds of men. Prayer is needed not only for greater fruit in evangelism, but also for the growth and maturity of the believers and the leaders' wisdom and spiritual discernment. ■



Daniel and Paola Pasquale were commended in 1975 and 1979 by the assembly in Littleton, Colorado.



Home with the Lord

Frances Ruth Logan Iler

Missionary to Zambia and South Africa

January 16, 1925 – March 20, 2012

The first of fraternal twin girls, Frances Ruth Logan was born on January 16, 1925, in Chavuma, Northern Rhodesia, a British colony, which is now the independent country of Zambia. Her parents, Wallace and Ruth Sacher Logan, had gone to the Chavuma area as pioneers to serve the Lord and were married there.

When Frances was six-years-old, she traveled with her parents back to Chavuma after a furlough in the United States. On the trip some life-threatening events caused her to consider her need to be saved. When she asked her father if she was too young to be saved, he replied, "God says in His Word, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" (John 6:37)

Frances cried, "I want to come today!" So she prayed and asked the Lord Jesus to be her Savior. Her twin sister, Esther, followed her example. Frances, along with her twin sister, took her early education at Sakeji School, where their niece still serves the Lord today.

Both Frances and Esther completed nursing and midwifery training at Groote Schuur hospital in Cape Town, South Africa, and returned to Chavuma where the knowledge and skills they acquired were used to further the hospital's ministry. Many Africans came to give birth to their babies and receive medical care for ailments of all kinds, and everyone who came also received the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fluent in the Luvale language from childhood, Frances translated and wrote several of the hymns and songs the Luvale Christians sing. She also wrote poetry, and produced many topical studies which she shared with others. In addition to the studies, Frances always tried to read the Bible through every year. Later when computers came into use, Frances used Bible programs to study even more efficiently.

In 1961 Frances married William "Ben" Iler, a widower who came to Chavuma with his two daughters. She became wife and fitting helper to him for more than 50 years. She also poured her love and care into Ben's two girls, Leslie and Joanne.

In 1971 Ben and Frances went to Verdugo Pines Bible Camp in California. Ben served as the camp's manager until 1976, and then prepared to return to Chavuma. While living at Verdugo,

Frances renewed her interest in painting. She took art classes and produced many paintings and texts over the next 20 years. Because she wanted everything she did to be used for God's glory, her paintings always included a Scripture text or phrase. After they were back at Chavuma for a couple



of years, Ben was stricken with severe hepatitis which almost proved to be fatal. Frances had a distressing trip to get him medical care and when he recovered, the doctors told them that they must leave the tropics. The Lord opened the way for them to move to South Africa, where they started a children's work and other ministries with nationals. There Frances stayed very active, helping Ben with the children's work and doing women's ministries and visitation. Always ready to attempt a new language, Frances added some Nkosa and Afrikaans to her store of languages.

In 1998, Ben and Frances returned to the United States, and first lived with Tim and Joanne Brown in Grass Valley, in northern California, and then at Western Assemblies Home, in southern California. Frances took a personal interest in people. She shared the Gospel wherever she went, wasting no opportunity for giving out a tract or a Gideon New Testament. Always encouraging believers, she shared her treasures gathered from the Scriptures, which were her daily delight until the day the Lord took her home. In the last year of her life, she listened to the Bible on CD whenever she wasn't otherwise occupied. She was in the habit of treating her own ailments, and she looked for the Lord to take her home for some weeks before her death. She went to be with the Lord on March 20, 2012, with just "a little" pain at the end from a gastrointestinal hemorrhage. One of her last earthly delights was hearing the sound of the hummingbird's wings at the feeder outside her window. She now has the joy of hearing the voice of the hummingbird's maker, the Living Word Himself, her chief delight.

by Joanne Iler Brown

Reaching the Muslim World for CHRIST

by David Dunlap

The news media continues to report that Islam is the world's fastest growing religion. Muslims now number approximately 5 million in France and nearly 1.6 million in England. Muslim families in many countries, especially Western Europe, have a high birthrate, giving the appearance that Islam is growing. However, many Muslims are becoming disillusioned with Islam. An increasing number of Muslims are questioning the Quran's validity and Islamic teachers' extremist teachings. Today many average Muslims find that Islam is not the way to God but the way to ignorance, poverty, and war. Many are leaving Islam to embrace other religions, especially Christianity.

Muslims Converting to Christianity

Islam Watch, the largest support organization of ex-Muslims, reported that numerous Muslims have turned to Christ in Morocco, Somalia, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Maldives. Moreover, nearly one million Egyptians have come to Christ during the past decade. In an article by Salem Voice, the General Secretary of the Bible Society of Egypt is quoted saying, "Egyptians are increasingly hungry for God's Word." The article reports that "the Egyptian Bible Society used to sell about 3,000 copies of the Jesus film a year in the early 1990s. As per the figures taken from the Millennium campaign in 2000, they sold 600,000 copies, plus 750,000 copies of the individual cassette tapes (in Arabic) and about a half million copies of the Arabic New Testament."¹

Conversions in the Arab World

Middle East expert Joel C. Rosenberg has lived and worked in the Middle East for 20 years, first as a journalist and later as a communications strategist for the Israeli Prime Minister. Recently, he interviewed Arab, Iranian, and evangelical leaders in the Middle East. Their testimonies describe a dramatic resurgence of Christianity in a region that is extremely hostile to it. Rosenberg writes, "More Muslims have come to faith in Jesus Christ over the last thirty years—and specifically over the last seven to 10 years—than at any other time in human history."² A spiritual revolution is underway throughout North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia despite intense persecution, assassinations, and widespread church bombings.

Why Are Muslims Coming to Christ?

Dr. J. D. Woodberry, Professor of Islamic Studies at Fuller Seminary, has studied missionary outreach into the Muslim world for 30 years. Dr. Woodberry cites three reasons why Muslims are becoming more open to the Gospel.

1 The foremost reason converts listed for their decision to follow Christ was the lifestyle of Christians living among them. An Egyptian convert contrasted the love shown by Christians with "the unloving treatment of Muslim students and faculty he encountered at a university in Medina." Others were impressed that "Christians treat women as equals" and enjoy loving marriages.

2 Muslim converts identified "the power of God in answered prayers and healing." For instance, a Muslim family asked Christian neighbors to pray for a sick daughter; and then the girl recovered. Converts also mentioned unhappiness with Islam itself, especially the Quran's emphasis on God's punishment and the uncertainty of salvation. By contrast, Woodberry notes, the biblical teaching that God loved us so much that "He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" is deeply attractive. Converts are also drawn to "the love expressed through the life and teachings of Christ."

3 The most important point is this: "When Christ's love transforms committed Christians into a loving community, many Muslims listed a desire to join such a fellowship." Woodberry's research shows that when the church is being the church, testifying of the love of Christ and His transforming power, then Muslims are drawn to salvation in Christ.³

Conclusion

God is moving in a remarkable way among Muslims. The opportunities to reach the millions of Muslims in our own neighborhoods have never been greater. The immigration of Muslims to the United States presents a unique opportunity. May the Lord use our gospel efforts to reach Muslims for Christ here and throughout the world. ■



David Dunlap is in full-time Christian service and resides with his wife Faith and their three children in Land O'Lakes, Florida. David publishes a newsletter, Bible & Life, which is available at BibleandLife.org.

1. <http://www.Islam-Watch.org/LeavingIslam/Muslims2Christianity.htm>

2. Joel C. Rosenberg, <http://JoshuaFund.Blogspot.com/2008/03/big-untold-story-in-middle-east-2008.html>

3. J. Dudley Woodberry, "Why Muslims Follow Jesus," *Christianity Today*, 24 October 2007, pp. 80-85

Spring Conference Report

by Annie O'Connor

Young People Encouraged to “Reach Higher”



In our day-to-day walk we can easily become focused on the sometimes overwhelming daily tasks and struggles—career ambitions, family difficulties, relationship problems, hardships in ministry, and so on. During CMML’s third annual Reaching Higher conference, Warren Henderson encouraged the 50 young people in attendance—ages 20 to 35—to reach higher for the things of the Lord and, through His strength, to overcome opposition to our faith and serve the Lord despite hardship. Using the lives of Ezra and Nehemiah, Warren expounded on a couple major points: the necessity of hardship in the work of the Lord, and how to overcome the devices used by the opposition to prevent us from serving the Lord.

In addition to Warren’s four ministry meetings and a dynamic question and answer time, three small “break out” sessions focused on narrower topics. Missionaries to Poland, Pat and Cindy Hughes (*Missionary Prayer Handbook*, Day 14), described their work and the different joys and struggles they face while teaching English, witnessing to the heavily Catholic population, and ministering to new and growing believers. Peter Cequeira, missionary to Portugal (*MPH*, Day 14), shared the various breakthroughs and hardships he faces while leading a Christian school that serves disadvantaged immigrant children. Warren Henderson led the final session, focusing on how a Christian manages anger in a godly manner.

Many in attendance stated what a blessing the conference was to them. One attendee said, “This is the best weekend I’ve had in a long time.” Another enthusiastically said, “This weekend has been a major learning experience and a complete blessing.” We were thrilled to host this encouraging conference. You can listen to Warren Henderson’s ministry messages on our website, CMML.us, and view photos at [Facebook.com/CMML](https://www.facebook.com/CMML). Lord willing, next year’s Reaching Higher conference will be held Presidents’ Day weekend, February 14–16, 2014.

Teens Learn “What’s Next”



CMML’s second annual “What’s Next?” conference for junior and senior high teens, held on Saturday, April 27, attracted 40 young people and 25 youth leaders and helpers. It was a great time of learning and fellowship and a barbecue lunch and games were enjoyed.

Craig Fritchey, CMML’s Conference Coordinator, spoke to the junior high group focusing on their personal walk with the Lord and how to be a good testimony in high school. With the senior high group, Nate Louro, of New Bedford, Massachusetts, discussed the importance of keeping the Lord the focus of your life and how to properly discern God’s will for you. Marco Arjona from Emmaus Bible College gave a brief presentation to the senior high group and encouraged them to study the Bible and know it well.

We thank everyone who came and look forward to hosting this event again next year, Lord willing. You can view photos on CMML’s website and Facebook page. ■