



# Thinking It Through

WILLIAM YUILLE

## Always On Time 2 Peter 3:8-11

**G**enerations of Christians from the first century onwards have lived in the expectation that the Lord was coming soon. But here we are in the year 2012 and He hasn't come yet. Why not? Peter speaks to this in 2 Peter 3.

### God doesn't estimate time the way we do

"Do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (v.8) Some Christians, all the way back to the church fathers, have interpreted this as a sort of formula and have applied it to human history over a period of one week or 7,000 years. According to Archbishop Ussher's calculations, Adam was created around 4,000 BC, so there were four days before the coming of Christ; another two days take us to 2,000 AD, at which time the seventh day, the millennial age, should arrive. Now that we are in the year 2012, that theory doesn't look too likely. In any case, if Peter had heard such an interpretation of this verse, he probably would have been flabbergasted. This is not a formula, it is simply a statement to the effect that God doesn't calculate time the way we do. He is outside of time altogether so that what might seem to us like a long time doesn't appear that way to Him.

### God is longsuffering

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (v. 9) In his first letter, Peter uses this word "longsuffering" in connection with the flood: "the Divine longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared..."<sup>1</sup> It took a long time, 120 years in fact, because God was longsuffering. The psalmist says, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy."<sup>2</sup>

### God will act on schedule

"But the day of the Lord will come..." (v. 10) God is not indifferent to time. On the contrary, He always does things on

schedule. Consider, for example, how that was true with the Lord Jesus:

- **He was born at the right time:** "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son..."<sup>3</sup>

- **He began His ministry at the right time:** For 30 years He was hidden in quiet obscurity, of which we know virtually nothing. But, "after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled...'"<sup>4</sup>

- **He went up to the feast at the right time:** His brothers urged Him to go up to the feast of Tabernacles but He said, "My time has not yet come..."<sup>5</sup> Later, about the middle of the feast, He did go up to Jerusalem.

- **He died at the right time:** Repeatedly we hear Him say that His hour had not yet come. But at last He made His way up to Jerusalem and declared, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified."<sup>6</sup> John adds, "Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father."<sup>7</sup> And Paul writes that "in due time [at the right time, ESV] Christ died for the ungodly."<sup>8</sup>

- **He's coming back at the right time:** The writer to the Hebrews applies the words of Habakkuk to the return of the Lord Jesus, "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry."<sup>9</sup>

- **He will judge at the right time:** "He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained..."<sup>10</sup>

We may wonder why it is taking so long for Him to appear, but it is sure to happen. The exact moment of His intervention in human affairs is uncertain, but God's program will be executed right on schedule. Therefore, Peter adds, "What manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness..." (v.11) ■

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 3:20; <sup>2</sup> Psalm 103:8; <sup>3</sup> Galatians 4:4; <sup>4</sup> Mark 1:14-15; <sup>5</sup> John 7:6;

<sup>6</sup> John 12:23; <sup>7</sup> John 13:1; <sup>8</sup> Romans 5:8; <sup>9</sup> Hebrews 10:37; <sup>10</sup> Acts 17:31

# CHINA:

## an insider's view

by Brother Daniel

Greetings in the name of our soon-coming Lord Jesus. My name is Daniel, from a local assembly in Beijing, China. It will be my honor and privilege to have this opportunity to tell you how I came to know Jesus and accepted Him as my personal Savior and Lord and to tell you about the Lord's work in today's China. My personal experience is also a witness of how the Lord's work has advanced in China during the past 23 years.



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### My Personal Testimony

I heard the gospel for the first time in 1989. During that summer, an important occurrence happened in Beijing—the Square. The dreams of the Chinese people failed, and I started to search for the truth that we were worthy to follow. One of my school fellows told me that his family believed in the Lord Jesus, and it was this family who brought me to Jesus Christ. That was the first time I read the Holy Bible, and I was very interested in the words and the sentences, because I had never read words with such authority before. It struck my heart. I knew what is from above is the final truth that I should follow, and that complete righteousness and freedom is only in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In my first year as a Christian, I thought that the church building was the place where I should worship God. Therefore I went to the only place where the Chinese public can identify with Christianity—the Three-Self Patriotic Church. I attended the meetings there for almost one year, but I felt something strange and different from the Bible teachings, because I was also listening to the short-wave broadcasts from Hong Kong gospel radio. This gave me much help to study God's Word.

One year later, a senior sister in the Three-Self Church brought me to a house church, which was brother Allen Yuan's assembly. Brother Yuan was one of the spiritual leaders in China's house church movement. He had been imprisoned for 22 years just because of his belief in Christ and insisting on the whole Bible principles. I was fed spiritually since I began

attending this assembly and grew up attending it until 2005 when brother Yuan was called to his heavenly home.

Because I had personal experience in the official Three-Self Church and also in a house church, I can tell you the real facts about these two different church systems in China.

### A Brief Background of China's Church During the Communist Era.

Since 1949, when the Communist Party came into power, China had the so-called "liberation." All the Christian churches including every denomination – the Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian and also some independent churches were united as one system, named the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. It then became the only government-approved church in China. In 1980, the China Christian Council was started. This is the name the official church uses when it engages in foreign communications. The official church is headed by the government's Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB), which controls all religious activities, because the communist's idea is that all organizations, religious or secular, must be led by the Communist Party and patriotic to them. Under this political movement of Three-Self, the church became an instrument of the government, led by the Communist Party and the RAB.

The official church observed and followed the instructions from the Communist government. The Bible could only be preached inside church buildings. Even today, Christians in



China cannot have street meetings or preach on the radio or television. It is forbidden to evangelize and baptize people under 18, the military members and the party members. The offerings and donations must be turned over to the higher authority—the RAB. The budget for the church expenses and clergy salary must be reported to that bureau.

But we Christians believe that Christ is the head of the church, yesterday, today and forever. We believe the church is the virgin and the bride that cannot be aligned with the world. We also insist every word and every principle of the Bible should be preached and practiced. Therefore many, many Christians in China refuse to join the Three-Self Church, which was started and led by the Communist Party. Therefore many started underground churches including brother Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee and Allen Yuan. This was the beginning of China's house church movement.

Even today the house church has no legal status. The Chinese government requires all Christian groups to register under the system of the Three-Self Patriotic Church, which means that all Christians must accept the leadership of the Communist Party. No one can register as an independent Christian assembly or group. At present, the house church in China remains illegal.

## Facts of the Official Three-Self Church

In today's China there are two kinds of churches: one is the official Three-Self Church (TSPM); the other is the house church, also called the underground church.

Here are some statistics to help you more clearly understand differences between these two church systems: The official church has all the church buildings, some old cathedrals, which are the historical legacy of the Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church and Lutheran Church. They say they are a post-denominational church and are united in one organization – “the Three Self Movement.” It has its own complete administrative system and is under the control of the Communist Religious Affairs Bureau. It has over 20 million members, 3,700 registered pastors and 18 seminaries.

The following is in the rules and principles of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, the largest seminary in China run by the Three-Self Church state: “Our seminary's main aim is to train the students to support the leadership of the Communist Party, love socialism and adhere to the Three-Self orientation of the China Christian Church.”

The regulations of the Beijing Christian Council insist that the Three-Self Rule unite all the believers to love the nation, and the Christian religion lead Beijing believers to construct and to play an active role to adapt to the Socialism society.

The Amity Printing Co. is the one and only Bible printing house in China, owned and run by the official church. It is said

its main purpose is to print Bibles for China's Christians. But according to its own Web page, until the year 2008, it had printed 72 million Bibles but less than 20 percent of these products were for the China mainland official church. Over 80 percent of the Bibles were exported overseas to 60 countries. Over 55,000 churches in the Western world use a Bible printed by China's Amity Printing Co. China has provided one-fourth of the total number of the Bibles used all over the world. In the year 2008 the sales income was 180 million dollars when they became the biggest Bible printing house in the world. All of this information is from the China Patriotic Official Church's documents and papers.

In China you can only buy the Bible in the official church. No other book stores are permitted to sell Bibles. We know that in China's rural areas there are not enough Bibles. We give thanks that many beloved brothers and sisters who understand the real facts deliver Bibles through Hong Kong to China and also support the distribution of other spiritual books in China.

## Today's House Church

I would like to share some information about the house church in China. The house assemblies are independent and locally self-supported. They do not have many church buildings and they gather in the member's own houses for the meetings and the Sunday worship. But there is spiritual care and communication between these local assemblies. They have no government-approved pastors and seminaries. A professional conservative estimate would indicate that there are at least 80 million Christians in house churches.

We have four meetings a week at assembly gatherings in suburban Beijing: Sunday is the Breaking of Bread and Worship, Tuesday is prayer meeting, Friday is Bible study and Saturday is the gospel meeting.

Nobody knows the accurate numbers for the house church in China. But I can give you these two facts: in the community where I live, there are about 1,000 families and two house churches, each with 40 to 50 members. In the Inner Mongolia rural area, one particular village has 1,200 people and 50 percent are Christian.

## House Church Principles

The house church has no united organization and also no unification of the Creed, Dogma or Articles of Faith. But most of the house churches have the same doctrine, such as: the primary authority of the Bible; the entire Bible is infallible and inerrant; the primacy of the Headship of Christ; there are no other heads in the church; salvation is only through Jesus Christ; there is no other way for man to come to God the Father but by Jesus Christ.

These churches are independent and self-administered,





made up of born again Christians coming together to worship and share the grace from God.

In Beijing, many house churches have good spiritual communications. We have regular meetings and the elders come from 100 assemblies to meet together, share information and discuss the spiritual needs of their own assemblies. We call this a “co-workers meeting.” We are all independent, but have the same doctrine, the same teaching and the same way to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in house assemblies. We believe “we are laborers together with God,” and recognize each other as co-workers in the one and only God.

Every summer and winter we have baptisms. In 2000, we baptized 365 new converts. We then baptized over 500 in 2001, 700 in 2002 and over 1,000 in 2003. After 2004 we didn’t count the total number baptized because the police discovered us, and forbade so many Christians to gather together for “illegal religion activities.” We believe God knows the accurate number of true born again Christians, for that is much more important than people’s statistics and numbers. Hundreds are still baptized in our assemblies each year. Some leaders of house churches believe that one day the political atmosphere of China will change and we will see thousands stand up for the Cross all over Beijing, on every street and every block.

We in the house churches have no conditions to run the seminaries. Actually, we don’t need any diplomas or recognized titles for people. We just want what God approves. The house churches have only local church training; that is, assembly elders teach young workers with God’s words and tell them how to live a Christian life each day. In every meeting all members practice to pray for others, to share and preach the gospel, give testimonies, evangelize and serve the Lord in their daily life.

We also prepare the training courses in the small Bible

schools – with only 20 in attendance, with a six-month or one-year course for countryside workers. We use only the Bible as the teaching material. Sometimes we use the books by William MacDonald, H.A. Ironside and C.H. Mackintosh as recommended reading for spiritual help.

In conclusion, we know the differences between the official church and the house church here in China. We don’t agree with the principles of the official church, but even in them we believe still that there are true born again Christians that are the true members of Christ always. We stop to pray for all the members in the official church and give thanks to God for He has prepared the salvation for all souls, no matter what their situation is in Communist party-controlled churches.

We insist that we serve the Lord with the principles and rules that God has revealed in the New Testament, rather than the traditions from men. We don’t compromise or change even a letter in His never-to-be-changed Word. Even though there may be many limitations and persecutions, the Word of God is not controlled by men but is advancing and saving many souls in China just as in the days of the apostles. And for this we thank and praise God and value your prayers for China’s more than 1,300 million persons, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ paid full payment and redemption cost!

Many friends ask what they could do to help the churches in China. The answer is pray...for the millions of Chinese that are still lost sheep. As little as five percent of the Chinese population are Christian. Pray for new believers. They need grace and growth to be built up and edified in the body of Christ, and to be able to stand firm against persecutions. We also have great need for the pure gospel and sound doctrine in rural areas, because the heresies and cults attack God’s people and the wrong teachings mislead God’s people. “Brethren, pray for us.” ■



**Editor’s Note:** In his own words, Brother Daniel presented this story via a recording hand-carried out of China for the CMML Conference titled “**CHINA: An Insider’s View.**” The conference also included live presentations from John Short (Christian Book Room, Hong Kong) and Fred Ruff (former missionary to China). Both visit China frequently.

**Visit [www.cmml.us/china](http://www.cmml.us/china) to listen to these presentations.**

# El Salvador: Small Country – Many Opportunities

by Kevin Flett

EL SALVADOR is by far the smallest and the most densely populated Central American country in the Western hemisphere, with an estimated population of 6.2 million and only 8,100 square miles (763 people per square mile). An estimated three million live in the capital city of San Salvador. Spanish is the official language and Roman Catholicism is the official religion. Catholicism has been on the decline as the “evangelical movement” has increased. Unfortunately this movement is nothing more than another religion that deceives people, leaving them in spiritual poverty and blinded by the God of this world.

We are so thankful that we have been sent to preach that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He was crucified and rose from the dead. There is no greater message than: “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.” In 2011, one of the biggest problems El Salvador faced was crime, with 4,354 murders reported throughout the country (an average of 12 murders per day). In the capital of El Salvador alone there were

another 2,007 people missing and it is presumed that 90 percent of those missing have been murdered. We are reminded every day of the words of King David “there is but one step between me and death.”

In July, 1998, soon after Patty and I and our three young boys moved to El Salvador, we were impressed with the need amongst the assemblies there. We are thankful to God and those that labored here beginning in 1969 with Jack and Ellen Saword (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 16), for the 15 assemblies established. Today there are 19 assemblies in El Salvador. For the past 13 years Patty and I have been helping out in different assemblies with teaching, Sunday school and gospel meetings, as well as numerous other needs that arise amongst God’s people. These needs include medical, educational and financial help as well as opening our home for those in need. We are so thankful to be able to serve the needs of others.

I’d like to tell you about three areas of El Salvador that we have been involved in.

## Los Jíotes

**Los Jíotes**, in the eastern part of the country a few miles from the Honduran border, is a small village of about 800 homes located two miles down a dirt road alongside the Gulf of Fonseca. It was just three years ago that running water was made available, and today many still do not have running water as they cannot afford the \$2.29 monthly minimum. The village’s main source of income is salt production and fishing. The salt is produced in two different ways: solar and cooked. For the solar, the sea water is put into shallow black plastic channels and the sun evaporates the water in a 24-hour period, leaving behind the salt. For the cooked salt, the seawater is put into huge vats placed on a pit and heated with firewood. Small fishing boats go out every night to catch whatever they can. There is nothing that swims, runs or flies that they don’t eat.

The assembly was established in the early 1970’s when Jack Saword and others first

brought the gospel message to this darkened village. The gospel was well-received and several professed faith in Christ. Property was bought and a building was constructed. The hall has been remodeled at least three times and each time they have added onto it. Today there are about 60 believers that meet in His name alone. There are a good number of young people who are exercised to work with children. Quite often there are over 100 children in the Sunday school. On Sundays another group of young people, accompanied by one of the overseers, travels to the nearby small assembly of El Gavilancito to have a Sunday school and help in the Sunday evening gospel service. Every time we drive down the dusty road leading into Los Jíotes, I am impressed with what God has done in that small out-of-the-way village. There is still plenty to do: the gospel needs to continually be preached and the believers taught and encouraged.





# Mizata

**Mizata** is at the other end of the country along the Pacific coast. El Salvador has only one coastline; it is the only Central American country with no access to the Atlantic Ocean. The main source of income in this small community is crops. During the rainy season the hillsides are covered in corn. Then, towards the end of the rains they plant beans next to the corn and the beans use the cornstalks as a pole. All planting and harvesting is done by hand and a laborer can expect anywhere from five to seven dollars a day salary.

Mizata is another of the assemblies that was established in the early 1970's. At that time a wooden structure was built with eventual plans to construct something more permanent. The old hall was finally torn down in 2004 when a new concrete building was on the same lot. The assembly is not large and has maintained a good testimony over the years. When we first started to visit

in 2003 there were 16 in assembly fellowship and about 15 children in the Sunday school. Carlos and Ines, commended workers from Sonsonate, have been working in Mizata for a couple of years now and have seen the Lord's blessing. As of today there are over 25 in fellowship and an average of 80 children in the Sunday school.

It is encouraging to see the interest in the children as they come week after week learning their Bible verses, but this has caused a good problem. They need more space. At the end of December the brethren started digging the foundation by hand for what one day will be three Sunday school rooms. It would be nice if the Sunday school rooms were completed by the time the rains start at the end of May but there are lots of variables: the time the Christians have to work on the project as well as the finances. Your prayers are valued.



**Page 6 (from top):** Village of Los Jiotes; Boiling sea water for salt; Evaporating seawater; Fishing boats waiting for the tide to come in. **Page 7 (from top):** Ministry meeting in Los Jiotes Gospel Hall; Carlos Aguilar teaching Sunday school in Mizata; Open air meeting in Mizata; Young people studying the Bible in Santa Tecla.

# Santa Tecla

**Santa Tecla** is only a few miles from San Salvador in the department of La Libertad. La Libertad is one of the five departments where 75 percent of the murders registered in El Salvador are committed. There is not a day that goes by that you don't hear of some kind of violent act in Santa Tecla. And yet, in the middle of this city of approximately 200,000, God in His grace and mercy has put a lampstand to bring light to a dark city. It was January of 2005 when a small group of those that had been saved by God's grace alone, baptized and taught the value of gathering to His name, sat around a table with a loaf and cup in memory of the One who said, "this do in remembrance of me." In 2003, an old run-down house with a big backyard was purchased in the center of town. With much hard work the old house was remodeled and made suitable for a gathering place. The plan was, and still is, to one day tear down the old adobe construction and build a new structure that would be better suited for the Christians in Santa Tecla.

Patty and I have been visiting the Santa Tecla assembly, on a regular basis, for a couple of years now. We are thankful for what God has done there over the past years. Our focus has been on preaching the gospel,

teaching and helping with the Sunday school. It has been a very hard city to work in. It would appear that life in the city is very busy and people don't think they need God or His salvation: *"the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."* (2 Corinthians 4:4) And yet every Sunday night there are several unsaved present when the gospel is preached. The Sunday school has an average of 50 children, 15 or more are in their teens. This past February two teenage boys, fruits of the Sunday school, expressed their desire to obey their Lord in baptism. Three others have expressed their desire to be received into assembly fellowship, one of them being our youngest son Derek.

Please pray for the work of the Lord here in El Salvador. There are 16 other assemblies that are involved in similar activities. Most of the assemblies have a gospel outreach in neighboring towns. The Salvadoran people are, for the most part, very polite and will take a gospel paper or even listen to what we have to say. We realize that all we can do is bring them the Good News and God has promised to do the rest. Salvation is of the Lord! ■



Kevin and Patricia Flett were commended to the work of the Lord in El Salvador in 1998 by Shoultes Gospel Hall in Marysville, Washington.



# BELGIUM:

## God's Plans Are Better Than Ours!

by Hank Gelling

Brussels is the capital of Europe, a real honor for Belgium. If only the rest of Belgium could get their act together now. For some 500 days since the last election, Belgium has not been able to get a government in place. The news warns us every day about the crisis in the Euro zone. Greece and many other countries have been living above their means and now the bill is being presented. The cry is "somebody has to do something." We know Who will answer that call, perhaps sooner than we can imagine. In the midst of that we have a wonderful message of love, hope and security.

As a result of immigration there are many evangelical churches in Brussels. Very few of these are Belgian churches. Most of them are in languages not native to Belgium. In all of Belgium the evangelicals are less than one percent of the population. In Brussels that is much higher.

### Our Work

We came to evangelize Flanders and our part of the vineyard became the province of Limburg. In 1975 there were five evangelical churches in all of Limburg. Now we are up to almost 40 churches. Twelve of these are assemblies. When we arrived we had been believers since 1970. In Clinton we had done all kinds of evangelism. We started with a boys' and girls' club, started a coffee house for youth and had a drive-in church on our farm. We went to the beaches with a double-decker bus, did youth work, etc. All the while we had 30,000 chickens to look after and a milk transport. It seemed the natural thing to do! Richard Haverkamp (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 10) believed we could use those gifts in Flanders. We learned as we went along. It was good that we had co-workers with more experience seeing believers come together in assemblies. We did every aspect of the work from setting up the chairs and cleaning up afterwards to training

young men to become elders. It has been a privilege to be used of the Lord along the way.

Presently we are mentoring, coaching, teaching, preaching and doing evangelism and pre-marital counseling. We do a lot together and Beryl has her part in it. She still sings in the praise group "Wake Up for Jesus" and is wondering how long she should carry on with this. We are in the midst of a plan to have an evangelism event in all the provinces of Flanders. Evangelism has taken a nosedive through the years because of the apathy of the Flemish people. Sad to say, this has affected us as well! We need an infusion of obedience to evangelize again, not looking at the results, but going. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. It is sad to see many not knowing anything about God!

### Family

We came to Belgium and were planning to return to Canada after three years. It is encouraging to see how God's plans are better than ours. We never thought our children would get married because the Lord would be coming back before there would be time for that. God has everything under control, even the moment our Lord will return!

We now have five grandchildren since Liam was born on August 19, 2011. We did not expect this to happen at all. Our oldest son John and his wife Yoko went through an almost meltdown in their marriage in 2008. We were staring a divorce in the face. How gracious is our Lord! He brought them through it in a wonderful way and they are closer now than ever. The Lord means more to them now and they had a strong desire to see if He would bless them with another child. Their daughter Hailey is 12 years old and now she has a little brother, Liam. John sings in the gospel group "Solid" and they are both involved in Sunday school. John chairs the meetings in rotation with a good number of other brothers.





Julie lived with us until two years ago. Not having her own home gave her a lot of time to be involved in the assembly along with her part-time job as a secretary in an architect's office. Since moving out on her own she has also changed her work. She is now the executive secretary at the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Leuven. She enjoys this change, but it is a very demanding position. After consulting the elders in Houthalen, she decided to take a sabbatical year. It was encouraging for her to see others take on the tasks she was doing. Last Sunday a young sister led the children's singing and it was good to see her enjoy it.

Joy is our youngest daughter; she and Johan have three children. Nevan is 13, he knows the Lord and it is good to see him grow. I tried mentoring him, but that did not really work so well. He now has a young man, Daniel, meeting with him and that seems to click. Lani is 11; she is very interested in attending the assembly and reading with her mom but has not really made a commitment to the Lord. She is having a struggle with finding herself and we trust the Lord will also lead her in that. Dillon is four, he enjoys kindergarten, playing with his "guys" and they all enjoy Liam! Joy and Johan do a lot of mentoring, helping young couples and being there for young people. Daniel, one of the young guys, was far from the Lord and through Johan and Joy befriending him he is now on fire for the Lord. He has been evangelizing on the streets in Gent and I have gone with him a number of times. There seems to be openness for conversations.

## Co-workers

For years Richard Haverkamp kept repeating, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." There were times that we and the Haverkamps were the only ones working here. In our last article in *MISSIONS* in 2005, our first prayer point was to ask the Lord for new workers. Since then He has been pleased to add six young couples to the work!

Koen and Ester work in Antwerp; they have three daughters. Amongst all he does he is the editor of our magazine "Nieuwsbrief" (translated: newsletter). Raymond and Belinda have two children. He is Dutch and she is German. They work in West Flanders and he has mainly a teaching ministry. Kristof and Barbara work in East Flanders and have three children. They recently started a children's work in Gent.

Filip and Clare also work in East Flanders and have three daughters. He has a ministry coordinating the activities the assemblies do together. Pieter and Paula (Pete and Joanna Gifford's oldest daughter) work in Limburg. They have two boys and do a lot of youth work. Levi and Hanna have joined us most recently. They are also in Limburg and are finding their way into the work. We are actively coaching them to get a good start. These families do a lot more than what we mentioned but this gives you a little oversight to pray for them. We also work with five other couples and Anne Dryburgh from Scotland. Anne is listed in the *Echoes of Service Daily Prayer Guide* in the UK.

Carlo left the church as a young man and went into the world, but Johan and Joy kept in touch until the Lord brought him back into regular contact with them. He came to salvation and now wants to pass it on. We did some mentoring with him and he was commended from Houthalen. Carlos left to serve the Lord in "Other Areas" where there are few missionaries and a great need. We are so thankful how the Lord continues to lead.

## Future

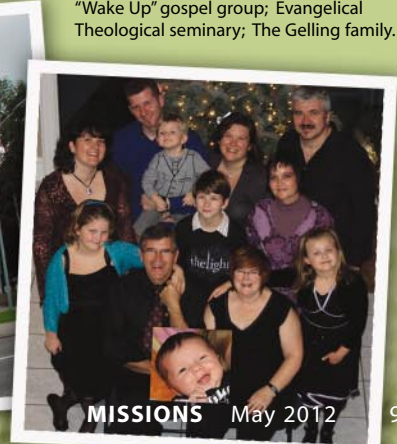
We are approaching 70. Beryl is not there yet, but I am getting close. It does not seem real to be writing this! We have to let others take over. Richard and Marina Haverkamp are back in Canada. Don Tinder is back in California and Eddie has been promoted to glory. We are thankful for all the elders, deacons and workers in all the assemblies. As the assemblies mature, and as younger leaders take over, we need to be before the Lord to ask that we might all stay close to His Word. We are thankful that all the assemblies have plurality in elders and that full-time workers are not the only leaders. Every Sunday all the assemblies celebrate the Lord's Table. In ours we have one meeting with the Lord's table first and a message right after. This is not the ideal service to invite unbelievers, so we are looking at ways we can solve this.

Lord willing, we plan to stay in Belgium for some time to come and as we look to the future are thankful that the Lord has everything under control. ■



*Hank and Beryl Gelling were commended to the work of the Lord in 1975 by the assembly in Clinton, Ontario, Canada.*

**From Left:** Bible study in Houthalen; (next two photos) Baptism in Houthalen—not their building; Beryl singing in "Wake Up" gospel group; Evangelical Theological seminary; The Gelling family.





# REACHING HIGHER 2012

## Misconceptions of Modern Missions

by R. Scott Thomson

On February 24 and 25, 55 young adults, ages 20 to 35, arrived at CMML in Wall Township, NJ, eager for a weekend of serious Bible study, fellowship with other believers and a desire to grapple with their response to the Great Commission.

Over the weekend brother Mike Attwood of Springfield, MO, passionately challenged each of the participants from God's Word and from his own personal experiences. As a full-time worker and former overseas missionary, Mike is very passionate about the call of the Great Commission.

When Mike shared his testimony Friday night, he recounted how the Lord led him and his wife from the United Kingdom to the mission field and then to the United States. He built a strong, personal connection with each person in the room because he was open and honest about the triumphs and challenges of missionary work. It was not the glamorous, romanticized view of missionary work that is often heard.

Saturday started early with well-attended prayer meetings. It was so encouraging to hear the passionate prayers of the young adults—clearly evident that they did not view "Reaching Higher" as "just another conference," but an opportunity to seek the Lord's will and deepen their faith in Christ.

Saturday, brother Mike spoke three times from God's Word regarding modern missions. He stated, "Everything we do should be saturated in prayer" and "the word 'commit' is a verb—if you are doing nothing then you are not committed."

Another highlight was the personal testimony shared by a young Chinese brother who came to the United States for college and found the Lord Jesus Christ. Before leaving his homeland his father told him that his purpose in sending him to the U.S. was *not* to seek after fame and fortune, but to find the truth. Praise God that this young man did find the truth.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner were prepared and served by local believers who volunteered their time. The food was plentiful and tasted great; however, the best part was the cheerful attitude of those who worked so hard. Their love for the Lord and their fellow saints was clearly evident.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship as many new friendships were established and old friendships were reconfirmed. ■



## Even Kids Can Help Missionaries!

"Hi- my name is Judah. I am giving you this box of socks and underwear (for the missionary children) for my birthday. I am five! My friends all brought socks and underwear to my party. Some even brought hats and mitts! My mommy and daddy bought me nice presents. I think the children will like the socks and underwear. My favorite underwear is the CARS ones. My favorite socks are the blue and yellow fuzzy ones. I have a brother and his name is Wesley. I have a lot of stuffed animals. Bye!" Love, Judah Morris

A young boy named Judah Morris recently celebrated his birthday with family and friends. Judah thought it would be a good idea to ask those attending to bring an item for the CMML Clothing Center instead of gifts for himself. Judah was able to donate many items such as underwear and socks which will be greatly appreciated by the missionaries!



(L-R) Pile of socks and undergarments Judah received at his party; Wesley and Judah at store picking out items for missionary kids.