



# Thinking It Through

ROBERT DADD

## Why Did God Allow This To Happen?

**A**fter more than a year of planning, Tom Wilson, Allan Wilks and I traveled to the continent of Africa to see the work of God in Zambia, Burundi and Tanzania. It was a thrilling visit. We saw that God is so evidently working in bringing precious souls to know the Savior and in the building of local churches. The faithful work of earlier generations sowing the seed of God's Word is resulting in a rich harvest for God's glory. While there are struggles and Satan is always working to thwart the work of the Spirit of God, we were blessed beyond our expectations.

As we waited in the Johannesburg airport for our flight home we received word that, just a few hours before, Jay and Katrina Erickson (missionaries serving at the Chitokoloki Mission Station since February) had been killed as the small plane he was piloting crashed into the Zambezi River. We were stunned, numb and overwhelmed with grief. We did not know what to think.

Only two weeks earlier we hugged as we said goodbye to Jay after he flew us to Sakeji School. We had traveled with him for almost two weeks as he piloted us from one location to another in Zambia. We also met his wife Katrina and their two beautiful daughters, Marina and Coral, at Chitokoloki. We grew to appreciate Jay and loved them all. Now we heard that two young lives dedicated to the service of the Lord were ended and two little children were left as orphans!

God had chosen to punctuate our trip with great sorrow!

How do we, as those who trust God, deal with such a tragedy? Are we immune from asking the question, "Why did God allow this to happen?" No we aren't. We are human. Many thoughts rush through our minds at these times of deep sorrow. As we come into His presence we find that our God is well able to handle our questions. We find great comfort in His Word and we are able to do what God's people have always done in times of great distress: "But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God" 1 Samuel 30:6.

Such events remind us that God's ways are not our ways.

God is sovereign. He does not answer to anyone. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts," we are told in Isaiah 55:9.

We do know that God loves us, "As for God His way is perfect" Psalm 18:30. He often does not share the detailed answer to all our questions but He does assure us that His "thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace...to give you a future and a hope" Jeremiah 29:11. In such a time of great sorrow and loss all we can do is bow our hearts before Him and trust Him.

God assures us that "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" Psalm 147:3. Our hearts and prayers constantly go out for Jay and Katrina's parents and their two young daughters. One day, the time will come to explain to them about their parents, their work in the far-off country of Zambia and the events surrounding their sudden call home to the presence of the Lord Whom they loved and served. May the Lord grant the family grace each day.

We are comforted to know that God numbers our days. Although Jay and Katrina were young, their service was complete. The God who knows the end from the beginning had appointed those specific days to them. This helps to free us from our human tendency to think of what might have been and to look for secondary causes. The lesson for us is to serve the Lord with our "whole heart" redeeming each day until we too are called home.

Our trip to Africa must be viewed in the light of how it ended. God powerfully reminded us that His work is always carried forward in the principle of sacrifice. It was fundamental to those going out over 120 years ago and it is still the principle at work today. The Leader and Completer of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, is our supreme example. He gave His all. Each of us is called to a life of self-sacrifice. While we all acknowledge this truth, it is time to pay special attention when God chooses to remind us in such a costly way. ■

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COVER PHOTO: Women in Zambia - Allan Wilks BACK COVER IMAGE: ©iStockPhoto.com/Trub

# REPORT FROM

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by Robert Dadd and Allan Wilks

**M**ay 2012, we (Robert Dadd, Allan Wilks and Tom Wilson) spent four weeks in Africa visiting assembly mission work in Zambia, Burundi and Tanzania. It was a thrilling time that exceeded our expectations. The listings in the Missionary Prayer Handbook suddenly came alive as we experienced, first-hand, the reality of what life was like on the mission field. We were overwhelmed! The sights, sounds and even the smells, combined with travel via mission plane and car, along roads that we felt surely were impassable, are forever etched in our memories. But most of all, we were blessed by meeting the wonderful people the Lord is using in His work...both our missionaries and the local believers.

It is impossible in a short article to provide an exhaustive chronological report of our trip and to mention all those who so graciously gave of their time to provide hospitality and care. We sincerely trust that none will be offended if they do not find their name listed here! Additional information and pictures from the trip are available on the CMML Web site at [www.cmml.us/Africa2012](http://www.cmml.us/Africa2012)

In this article we have written about four major impressions from our travels.

- First, God is working in these countries in a very visible, mighty way, far beyond what we see here in North America.
- Second, the practical needs of people are being effectively met as the gospel is preached. We saw words and deeds matched together.
- Third, the need for workers is great. There are wide open doors of opportunity.
- Finally, we in the home countries need to be stirred once again to partner with those on the front lines. We must move our support into the 21st century!

On our journey home, while waiting for our flight in the Johannesburg airport, we received word of the tragic death of Jay and Katrina Erickson when their small plane crashed into the Zambezi River. Much of our travel in Zambia had been in the capable hands of Jay as he flew us to various mission stations. We grew to love Jay as we spent much of our first two weeks with him.

He loved the Lord and was excited to be serving in Africa with his family. When we visited Chitokoloki where he was based, we met his wife and two beautiful children. We grieve deeply over their loss. The Lord allowed our trip to end with this powerful note of sadness. In a real sense we will always view our trip through the lens of the loss of these two young servants. The editorial "Thinking It Through" on page 2 provides some thoughts the Lord brought to mind as we reflected on this most unexpected end to the trip.

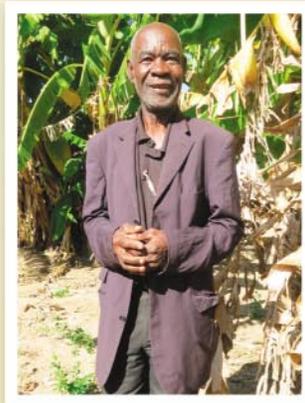
**Right (clockwise from top):** First flight with Jay Erickson from Lusaka to Chitokoloki; After mid-week meeting at rural assembly; Mid-week meeting – with Samuel Kapanji at Lilanda Gospel Hall in Lusaka.



**Above (L-R):** Bob, Allan & Tom at flight house in Lusaka, Zambia; Woman rescued from witchcraft accusation at Loloma; Bruce Poidevin near runway in Kalene; Mufulira conference food preparation; Roadside market on highway to Kigoma; Sailing Harry Johnson's boat on Lake Tanganyika.

## GOD IS WORKING!

Meet Gilbert Simwanza. In his younger days he was a driver for the President of Zambia. Now he is an older man who lives and breathes the gospel. His one desire is to tell others about Christ and to plant assemblies until the Lord takes him home. His only means of transportation is his rickety bicycle. Like the apostle Paul, he travels to a village, stays for a time as he preaches the gospel, teaches the Word of God and then leaves behind a small group of believers who know how to meet together to remember the Lord. Gilbert then moves on to the next village, driven by his desire to see people come to know his Lord and Savior.



We met Gilbert when visiting Patrick and Sherry Coleman (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 4) in Luanshya. Pat drove us out to view a piece of property that a local chief had given to the Mukolwe Chapel for a new building. Gilbert had been used by the Lord to help plant this assembly and the elders were anxious to have us walk the new property that the Lord had provided for them!

This remarkable man is just one of many evidences we saw of the mighty work that God is doing in Zambia. The first brethren missionaries arrived there in the early part of the 1900's and today there are over 1,100 assemblies, scattered throughout an area about the size of Texas.

Some of these are in the big cities, like Lusaka and Kitwe, while others are associated with large mission stations deep in the bush, like Chitokoloki and Kalene. Most are small rural

groups of Zambians meeting regularly to break bread and study the Bible, with no expatriate missionary present. The extent of this work today is a testimony to the selfless labor offered by hundreds of men and women whom God has called to Zambia to declare His glory over the last century.

While we were staying in Chingola in an area called the Zambian Copper Belt, we were driven by Kelvin Samwata, a commended national Zambian worker, to a relatively remote town called Mufulira near the Congolese border, where 300 saints from 23 assemblies had gathered for a day of ministry. The hunger for God's Word was evident as people sat on rough, narrow, backless benches...for nearly five hours!

There is a wide-open door to teach the Bible in public schools. We spent part of an afternoon with Donald and Elva Brooks in Kabompo (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 4). We attended Donald's high school class on the New Testament and were challenged by the questions they were answering! They must pass a difficult Bible exam to graduate.

The work in Burundi is younger but is just as vigorous as in Zambia. It owes much of its strength to the faithful work of three generations of the Johnson family. Carl and Eleanor Johnson arrived in the capital, Bujumbura, in 1950 from the Belgian Congo. Their grandson Jesse Johnson (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 1) carries on the work with his wife Joy on the very ground where Carl labored in the capital city of Bujumbura. Ken and Melli Johnson (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 1) also serve in Bujumbura.

The tragic tribal warfare in Burundi from 1993 to 2005 claimed up to a million lives in this small country. We thank the Lord that the assembly work has emerged stronger than it was before the war. Since the home-call of Carl Johnson in February, 2001, 60 assemblies have been established.

Bujumbura is located at the northern end of the gorgeous

**Below (1-3):** Typical roadside market outside Lusaka, Zambia; Emergency surgery at Chit hospital; Translation work on Luvale Bible in Chavuma with Bob Young, Paul Poidevin and Alice White.



Lake Tanganyika. On the eastern shore of the lake, about 150 miles south of Bujumbura (only about one third the length of the lake), lies the town of Kigoma, in Tanzania. There Jesse's parents, Harry and Ruth Johnson (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 3), and his brother and his wife, Luke and Gina Johnson (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 3), are also involved in many local assemblies. The work there is younger than in Zambia and Burundi, and the spiritual ground is harder, but there is still plenty of evidence that the Lord is working mightily in Tanzania.

Wherever we travelled we saw the Lord's hand. Certainly there are needs: there is great poverty amongst the Christians, relative to Western standards; there are sometimes disagreements and divisions in assemblies; false doctrine sometimes creeps in; there is a very large need for better teaching. But in spite of these things, God is clearly doing a work in these countries through His faithful servants. Let us pray that the doors for the gospel remain open.

## WORDS & DEEDS TOGETHER

While we were in Burundi we visited a remarkable work about 12 miles north of Bujumbura in the little farming area known as Gihanga. On a property that Carl Johnson had purchased many years earlier, there is now a school for blind children. These young ones are normally outcasts from their society, yet here they live in a secure, loving environment where they learn of God's love, they study just like sighted children, but using Braille (the Braille Bible is huge!), and they learn skills like basket weaving. We were moved to tears as they sang several lovely hymns for us.

It was so encouraging to see how those running the school were meeting great physical needs at the same time as they ministered spiritually to the children. This is always a difficult

balance to get right, but throughout our travels we saw examples of Christians dedicated to meeting the deep spiritual needs of the population while also addressing physical needs.

The Chitokoloki Mission Station has a hospital, a school (though this is largely run by the government now), a place for lepers to live, training programs, goods-exchange facilities, a literacy program run by Dorothy Woodside (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 6), that reaches into the surrounding villages, and many other pursuits. All of these activities minister to practical needs and yet are bathed in prayer and the gospel is faithfully presented.

At Loloma we were hosted by Tim and Joy Beer (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 4). We had an opportunity to tour the medical facilities and visit with the assembly elders



while sitting outside on logs in the evening. We also visited a prospering nursery school work. At Chavuma, Bob Young (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 6) and Alice White (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 6) gave us a tour of the work there which included medical facilities, housing for native widows who faced death because they were wrongly accused of being witches, a book room, a new AIDS facility and the list goes on of words and deeds working together.

For two of us, this trip to Africa was our first opportunity to visit the mission stations and schools (Sakeji, Amano, Discovery School, etc.) we had heard about for so many years. All of them are large facilities. Those who founded these works

**Below (4-5):** Tom, Allan & Bob with Chavuma Missionaries – (L-R) Margaret Young, Alice White, Ayumi Yamamori, Bob & Beth Young, Martha Logan; Making bread each day at Chit hospital.  
**Above:** Sitting with the elders of the assembly at Loloma.



many years ago had a “big vision” as to what God would do. There are many challenges to maintain these complex facilities. Not the least is that many people with a variety of skills are needed and substantial funding is required. However, it is through these facilities that many of the practical needs of the local population are being met.

From the very earliest days those who had established these works had seen the necessity to preach God’s Word *and* demonstrate His love. The debate that we sometimes hear in mission circles today about “Word versus Deed” did not exist for the early pioneers nor does it exist for those who carry on the work today. Let us pray for the Lord’s wisdom so that these works continue to honor the Lord and His Word.

## THE HARVEST IS GREAT BUT THE WORKERS ARE FEW

As we traveled we were often reminded of these words of the Lord Jesus. Workers are needed everywhere. The Lord stirred the hearts of earlier generations to go with the gospel. Will He not stir the hearts of our generation? All the workers we spoke to encouraged us to pray for workers and tell those back home of the needs. Many spoke of the need for those to step forward to fill their shoes as they are growing older.

We saw how much might be accomplished with more laborers. This observation is made even clearer when we realize that the work in the three countries we visited is quite mature, compared to many other parts of the world. Perhaps the Lord will call you to His service in mission if you make yourself available?

One encouraging sign is that the Lord is raising up local brethren to full-time work. Kelvin Samwata in Chingola, Zambia works closely there with the expatriate missionary

community in supporting various ministries. He and Philip Cole, from England, are building a wonderful orphanage, and this has grown out of work Kelvin and his wife, Joyce, have done for many years with “street people.”

Felix Muchimba runs a Bible school ([glozambia.com](http://glozambia.com)) near Ndola for Zambian children who have just graduated from high school, and who desire deeper training in God’s Word, perhaps leading to full-time ministry.

The Bible School for elder training in Bujumbura teaches groups of elders for a month at a time. The teachers are a combination of expatriate mission workers and local workers. This school is currently run three times a year and is meeting a tremendous need. Well-taught leaders are needed in every assembly. We saw an opportunity to help this school with improvement in the sleeping quarters for the men. Many of them leave their villages for a month to study together.

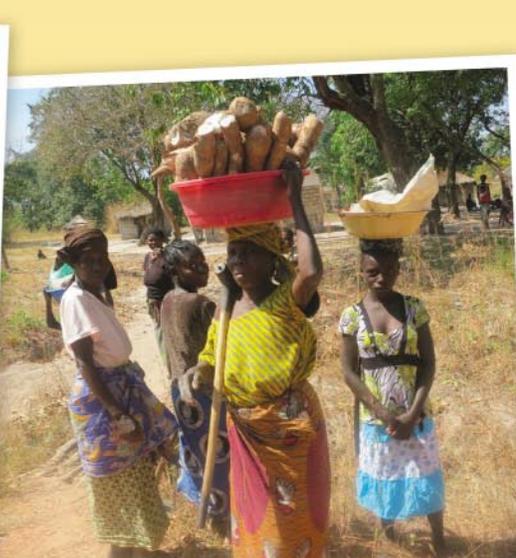
For us it was clear that the work of the expatriate mission workers in these countries is far from finished. This opinion was confirmed by those we spoke with, both national workers and those serving on the field today. Priority needs to be given to equipping national works and praying that the Lord of the harvest will send forth both national and expatriate workers to these fields that are white to harvest.

## PARTNERING IN THE 21st CENTURY

Wherever we went we received a warm welcome, both from missionaries and from local believers. In the case of our missionaries, we often sensed that part of this warmth was a hunger for fellowship, and so we came away with a much deeper understanding of the importance of communication with our missionaries.

We were saddened...and personally challenged...to dis-

**Below (1-3):** Mealtime at Sakeji School; Women do the work in Zambia; Acapella choir at the Mufulira Conference.



cover how little our missionaries hear from home, other than from their own families. These men and women are serving on the front lines of the spiritual battle. This trip gave us a vivid picture of the vital role that falls on each of us back home. We are called of the Lord to be the supply lines for that battle, in prayer and financial resources.

Our support for those on the front lines needs to move into the 21st century.

E-mail is now available everywhere. We need to send frequent, short encouraging e-mails to them. Don't be hindered because you feel that you may not have any deep spiritual message to send. That's not necessary. Just make a connection. One missionary said "she would be glad to hear about the flowers growing in the garden!" They would like a connection with home to know we have not forgotten them. With technology today it is also easy and inexpensive to make a quick phone call or sign on to SKYPE to say hello. We know of one assembly that uses SKYPE in their meeting room so their whole assembly can meet periodically with their commended workers.

Travel is faster and less costly than it was just 20 years ago. We were rebuked when we visited a mission station and were reminded that the last visit from someone from CMML had been 1976...36 years ago! It is now much easier to visit with missionaries in Africa or any other place in the world. Some of the missionaries we visited testified that they longed for but had never received a visit from the elders of their commending assembly. Oh, how valuable that would be!

Time and again we saw important projects that an assembly in North America or group of individuals could easily get behind, and realized what an encouragement they could be to the local believers while at the same time having a great

impact in the spread of the gospel. All that is needed are willing hearts that want to reach out. Then bathe that desire with prayer and see where the Lord directs you to be involved.



## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED!

A few months ago we were reminded by a veteran missionary from Asia to "Find a missionary in the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*, send them an e-mail, become interested in their work, pray for them and support them." Then he added..."JUST DO IT!"

May we ask if you will "Just Do It?" Will you get involved in support of the Lord's servants who are faithfully laboring on foreign shores? Support can take many different forms...not only giving of what the Lord has blessed each of us with financially, but with words of encouragement by e-mail or phone, stirring interest in missions in your home assembly, and maybe even a personal visit to the field or entertaining missionaries when they are home on furlough.

Our 28 days in Africa have encouraged us, shaken us, brought us to tears, challenged us and strengthened our resolve to come alongside our missionaries. We respectfully ask that you also consider how the Lord would have you come alongside these dear servants. This is the Lord's work, not ours, but He allows us to have an important part...if we are willing! ■

**Below (4-6):** Choir at blind school in Gihanga; Discovery School at Kigobe; Harry Johnson's boat.





# “55 Plus” Mission Opportunities

by Ken Fleming

Short-term opportunities are available to people of all ages. The more you see the need, the more compelling the question: “How could I help?” Too few missionaries receive visits from home assemblies – let alone extended stays to help with the work. While it may be easier for mature believers to write a check to support missions, it could be a real blessing to the missionary – and to you, to give your time, ability, and experience where it is needed most. Some thoughts from veteran missionary and teacher Ken Fleming:

The “26 Below” conferences for college, career and senior high-aged young people sponsored by CMML have attracted good participation – and led to increased interest in world missions. Hearing of this, an interested person asked a CMML director, “What are you going to do for the ‘55 plus’ group?” When the question found its way into my lap I turned first to the CMML Web site where 75 short-term opportunities are listed in 19 categories, including contact information for interested Christians. The most requested categories are for education (20), construction (9), evangelism (9), maintenance (5) and children’s work (5). Other categories include renovation, food service, teaching English, camp work, medical clinics and literature work. Visit the Web sites for CMML [www.cmml.us/involved/opportunities](http://www.cmml.us/involved/opportunities) and MSC <https://secure.msccanada.org/opportunities.php> to see how you can help.

## Great Opportunities for Service

Those with construction skills and helpers who have a responsive heart and a strong body will find two other Web sites that list mission construction opportunities for teams: Team Workers Canada [www.teamworkers.org](http://www.teamworkers.org) and Team Workers USA [www.teamworkersabroad.org](http://www.teamworkersabroad.org). Capable people lead both and will provide all necessary information about upcoming construction projects. They are arranged by date with information about leadership, travel, accommodation costs, needed tools and materials, health matters, etc. For those who want to serve in this way, your preparations will be made easy.

## You Can Help

“55 plus” workers may be early retirees who have a good number of productive years ahead or people who can take time off from their employment for a few weeks or longer to help meet mission needs. Those with a recognized Bible teaching gift, combined with a language such as Spanish, French, Hindi, Swahili or Mandarin, may consider longer-term involvement. In some places you may be able to teach by translation or even use English. It may be a formal Bible school or a special series for an assembly. There are a number of countries where God could use you, perhaps for several years, or a shorter period every year. School teachers are always in demand in Missionary Kid (MK) schools. Foster grand-parenting, or even house-sitting may also be a possibility!

“55 plus” couples may both find outlets for their skills. For example, one may teach school and the other use trade skills. Teaching English as a second language (either formally or informally) is a worldwide need, and can be linked with evangelism. Some have volunteered on Zambian Mission Stations for a year or more. Physicians, dentists, chiropractors, and other medical specialists may use their expertise in meeting health needs. If administration is your strength, a school such as Faith Academy in the Philippines would welcome you for a school year. With a heart for the glory of God and the means to get there, the openings for service are huge!

## Real Examples of Short-Term Assistance

A retired Chicago scientist was invited by his former business contacts to teach English to doctoral students in a restricted-access country. He and his wife responded for a few weeks at a time, not only teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), but also entertaining students in their apartment. The result—five of them put their faith in Christ and after the couple left, those five reached others. Our son Pete was a specialist in refrigeration equipment. Some years ago he went to Ecuador where he built and installed a much-needed room-sized freezer for a mission project. My brother-in-law is a doctor and made several trips to Peru with a small team of doctors holding eye clinics for people with certain eye issues. I have taken the opportunity in a short-term capacity to teach Bible courses in an assembly-related college in Myanmar.

## What Will Be Your Response?

If you feel the Lord may be leading you to invest some of your available time to serve Him, why not e-mail Brian Kramer, CMML’s short-term service coordinator, at [bjkramer@cmml.us](mailto:bjkramer@cmml.us) and explore some opportunities that might fit your skills?

You’ll find that assisting other missions and missionaries is a worthwhile effort with eternal rewards. ■

*Ken Fleming served as a missionary in South Africa for 25 years and as Chair of the Missions Department of Emmaus Bible College for 25 years until his retirement. He is also one of the instructors at the Missionary Orientation Program.*

# One of the Best Nights of My Life

By Deb Myers

I recently experienced one of the best nights of my entire life, and I almost missed out on it because of how I perceived my age, my capabilities and my schedule.

Like most teenagers, I spent those teenage years responsible for very little more than myself. At this stage in life, I feel like my life is constantly in motion—fast-forward motion! I am a married mom of four children (ranging from college-age through grade four), have a part-time job as a waitress and live next-door to our church which I clean each week. I am also involved at my children's schools, sports and chapel activities, all while barely managing to keep the house in order! So naturally, when my good friend and former "Awana/youth group kid" Erin Hayes (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 23), asked me to come to Ecuador for a week, I immediately said, "I can't! I'm too busy."

I tend to think of mission trips as something only for the young. Now don't get me wrong, I am not "old" by any respect, but I think that trips to other countries to work alongside missionaries are often thought of as something geared toward young people under the age of 30. Over the next week, the Lord worked on my heart and changed it. I started thinking, "Why not?" and slowly all of the excuses I had for not going (the expenses, the time, wondering who will watch my kids, wondering if it will be dangerous, I don't speak Spanish) started to dissipate and were replaced with answers. The Lord will provide the funds and I can afford it; I find plenty of ways to waste time and would say yes to a week of vacation; I have plenty of friends who are willing to watch my kids, including my mom, who was willing to travel from Chicago in order to stay at my house and help out; etc. Also, if Erin is there on her own, how could I say it's too dangerous? Lastly, I admitted I

can communicate in other ways and don't have to speak the language! So, I called Erin and surprised her by saying, "I've changed my mind...I'm going!" Over the next few months, my flight was booked and plans went smoothly

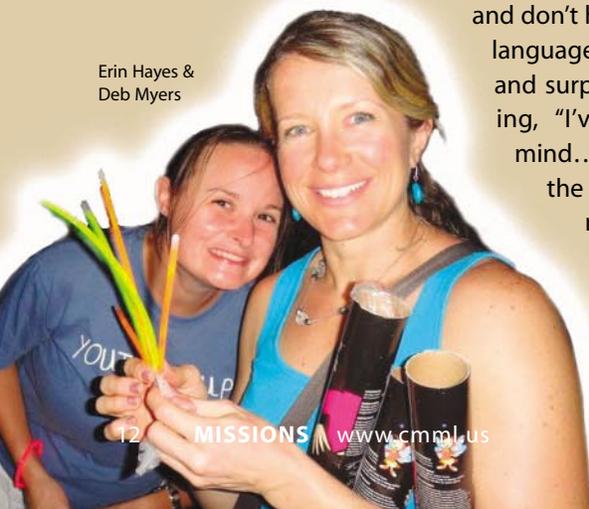
as I prepared to step on Ecuadorian soil. Everything was covered at my home and besides not feeling very healthy for the first few days that I was there, I had an unbelievable week.

As with some of the other teams who come to work for a week in Ecuador, Erin planned for our team members to spend their last night in Ecuador with different families in Bastion, the community in which Erin and the other Guayaquil missionaries minister. I, along with Erin, spent that night in an area that I would not have traveled to on my own. I had the opportunity to stay at the home of a woman who was saved in Erin's church a few years ago. Her name is Noemi and she is married, with two young children. Her home was a simple structure of rough cinder blocks with a corrugated metal roof. The windows were open with decorative metal rods and no glass. Her outside shower consisted of a bucket and a hose. I was shocked when I realized that Noemi was a very happy woman who was very content with and proud of the home that she lived in with her young family. Who was I to say that it wasn't perfectly comfortable? I spent a sleepless night listening to the roosters crowing and the neighborhood dogs barking incessantly, but the entire time I lay there awake, I felt overwhelmed. I was overwhelmed as I fully grasped that Noemi's happiness didn't come from an abundance of wealth and fine living. Noemi's contentment was in Christ, and that realization powerfully humbled and encouraged me.

So, what about missions trips for those of us who are closer to 55 than we are to 20? From my perspective, I know of at least three reasons why serving alongside our current missionaries is a really good idea.

1. Our life experiences have taught us that, while adventure is always exciting to consider, responsibility, dependability and hard work are always welcome commodities in any ministry opportunity. I am involved in a lot of camp work and away-from-home ministry and I know how great it is to serve with a team of mature and spiritually-motivated people. It is such a privilege to minister alongside people who see needs and immediately meet them, who know how life works and who know how to really make the work go more smoothly. We "older" people have benefited so often from people coming alongside us, that we then in turn see the importance of coming alongside those servants who are working hard in ministry. So, instead of seeing my age as a disadvantage for our trip, I came to see it as a real advantage for the ministry we were to be a part of. While we cherish and appreciate the teenagers who serve with us every year at camp and other ministries, we rely on and plan on those older folks at the same ministries who have served faithfully for years and whose maturity and work effort really are the bedrock of the ministries. Therefore, I see my age

Erin Hayes & Deb Myers



“Noemi’s contentment was in Christ, and that realization powerfully humbled and encouraged me.”

and life experience as an advantage for the missionaries.

2. Our financial situation as “older folks” often makes the cost of the trip less daunting than it might be for the younger folks. Our team and I had an interesting experience when it came to the finances for our trip. While each one of us was fully prepared to assume the full expense of our trip, the Lord provided the entire amount for each of us to go to Ecuador, as well as funds for us to provide the camp. While this probably would still have happened if we were all 16 years old, our initial discussions and planning required little time for the issue of finances, probably because some of us were a bit older and somewhat more established financially.

3. Our life experiences have taught us that ministry is more than energy and excitement. While I feel every bit as energetic and excited as I did as a teenager, I am also fully content when the reality of ministry turns out to be something like cooking, washing dishes and repairing or cleaning the facilities. Some of us have come to terms with supporting from behind and ministering behind the scenes. Most of us on the team did not have a good grasp of Spanish, but our presence there at the camp allowed the missionaries and local workers to more easily minister because we were able to do some of the other work that needed to be done. Our service helped their service to be more effective and a bit easier...and those of us who have been around ministry here in the States for many years can really appreciate what it is like to have dependable help for everyday tasks.

So, fellow “established adults,” do I think that it is a good idea for you to join a short-term mission’s effort? I really do. I, like any young helper, learned so many valuable lessons. I learned that the Lord could be trusted to not only supply financially, but He could be trusted to supply someone to watch my children and take care of many of my daily tasks. I also learned that He could be trusted to make me a necessary part of the effort. My personality, experience and heart turned out to actually be valuable to the work. What a Savior! And I also learned that while I may be a bit more established in life than teenage workers, I still have much to learn from other believers. I learned from a 23-year-old faithful wife and loving mother of two that contentment and joy do not come from wealth or material possessions, but come only as one faithfully carries out his or her duties in life as service to God. My generous host thanked God for what she had, was generous with what she had, and had the satisfaction of hearing her 6-year-old pray before a meal, thanking God for their great wealth and satisfaction that came from Him.

Is it a good idea to go? Well, had I not gone, I would have missed out on “one of the best nights of my life.” ■



Deb and the team spent the week working at Campamento El Faro (Lighthouse of Hope camp). Deb is pictured above with some of the kids from the camp.



Noemi and her daughter.

Kids at Campamento El Faro enjoying a Bible story.



*Deb Myers and her husband Vic fellowship at Valley Bible Chapel in Washington Township, NJ. Vic is an Elder and both Deb and Vic are involved in camp ministry and many areas of ministry at the chapel.*