

Missions

Report:
**Rebuilding in the
Philippines**

Introduction to CMMML's
Conference Ministry

The Long Dirt Road to
Las Jaguitas, Ecuador

SLOVENIA
The Lord's Work in an
Overlooked Country



Thinking It Through

ALLAN WILKS

Patience

There is a beautiful moment in the parable of the prodigal son. The lad who had so disappointed his father reaches the nadir of his spiritual journey and, coming to his senses, heads home, fearing his reception all the way. The scene then shifts to the homestead, and we read these remarkable words: "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20)

There is much to learn here about compassion and mercy and forgiveness, but we mustn't overlook the first part of that verse, where we learn two things. First, the father saw someone a long way off. There is a hint here that this was not a chance observation. Events happening at a large distance from a possible observer tend not to be noticed for the simple reason that they occupy such a small part of the field of vision. In general, one has to be looking specifically in the direction of the event to observe that it is happening.

So the fact that the father saw someone a long way off suggests, perhaps, that he was actually looking for his son. And of course, not knowing when he would ever come home, this would suggest in turn that he had been looking for the son's return for quite a while.

Second, we read that the father saw him and felt compassion. That he felt compassion indicates that he knew who it was off in the distance. That little speck on the horizon, tiny as it was, was enough for the father's heart to leap in recognition; even after such a long and sad separation, the father knew in an instant that it was his lost son.

As the father runs toward his son it must become increasingly apparent to him from his son's physical appearance how deeply he has sunk in life. It's possible that Jesus left out this descriptive detail intentionally to emphasize that the father saw his son, not his son's appearance.

And so the father in this parable seems to have longed for and looked for his son's return and then appears to have recognized him right away when he did return, looking past his filth to see the one he had always loved.

How this speaks to us of our heavenly Father! He loves His children and holds on to them forever. When their faith grows weak and they wander from the fold, He patiently waits for them, watching day by day, eager to see them repent and turn back to Him. And when that day comes there is compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

Patience is spoken of in Galatians 5 as fruit of the Spirit. Most of us do not naturally exhibit this characteristic. We are inclined to strain toward the advent of some anticipated good or toward the end of some difficult trial, frustrated at the inexorably constant rate at which time passes and at our inability to see beyond the present.

It is particularly difficult for a parent to be patient with a wayward child, as in our parable. Many fine Christian parents have had this experience of seeing a child wander from the faith and have spent years and even decades praying for and waiting to see God fulfill for their child His promise in Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion."

To rest in God's faithfulness goes against our very nature. We pray for what we know must surely be God's will and then become anxious when we don't see it happen, taking on once again the burden of worry after having given it to God in faith.

This parable can be such an encouragement for those in this situation. We have a perfect example in the patience of the prodigal son's father, waiting and watching for him day after day, scanning the horizon for the smallest of signs that he was returning, and then fully accepting him into his loving arms when he appeared.

But this lesson is not just for the longing parent; it is for each of us as we examine our own walk with God. Am I dwelling in His household? Or am I off wandering somewhere else? If so, I can be assured that He is scanning the horizon right now for my return, waiting patiently for my unworthy self to fall back into His arms. Knowing this, how can I stay away a moment longer? ■

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FRONT COVER: Maribor, Slovenia ©iStockPhoto.com/csakisti BACK COVER: Ridgewood, NJ—Photo by Cheryl Biswurm

Slovenia

The Lord's Work in an Overlooked Country



BY BERND & KARIN FLOCK

“On the sunny side of the Alps” runs Slovenia’s tourist slogan. Often confused with Slovakia (formerly part of Czechoslovakia—northeast of Austria) Slovenia is an almost forgotten country in southern Europe. This small country, with a population of approximately 2 million, is at the crossroads of Europe where the Germanic, Romance and Slavonic worlds meet. Until 1991, when it became an independent country, it was a part of General Tito’s communist Yugoslavia. The spiritual influence of the Roman Catholic Church’s traditions are still felt today in spite of its post-war history of communism. Materialism is the new ruler. On joining the European Union in 2004, Slovenia was considered the most economically successful of the 10 new members and held the EU presidency in 2008. In 2010 with the introduction of the Euro they became a part of the EU monetary system. Evangelical Christians form a tiny minority—about 600 people in 20 or so small churches, representing 0.03 percent of the population.

Slovenia’s Church history

In the late 16th century the Protestant Reformation saw the translation of the whole Bible into Slovene (the Dalmatin Bible, 1584) and the printing of about 50 Protestant books. But this was followed by the Counter-Reformation which had a devastating effect on believers all over Europe. The foremost figure in the Slovene Reformation was Primož Trubar (1508–1586), who translated the New Testament and Psalms into Slovene.

The 500th anniversary of his birth in 2008 was officially named “Trubar year,” and it was marked by many events. Before Slovenia switched to the Euro, their currency pictured Primož Trubar on one of their bills.

The first Baptist church in Slovenia was established in 1923. Groups of migrant workers, mostly miners, who had come to faith in Germany and/or America were at the core of this church. The Pentecostal church started in Prekmurje, where it led to a revival movement among Slovene Lutherans. The 1980s, while Slovenia was still under communist rule, saw a period of liberalization and westernization, when other churches were formed, along with other religions being introduced.

Since independence in 1991, Slovenia has been open to Christian workers, as well as those from various religious and philosophical backgrounds. Thus, for example, there is a Slovene Bible Society, Gideons, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Every Home for Christ, student work associated with IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students), and Campus Crusade. However, often still confused with Slovakia, Slovenia remains an enigma. Slovenia has enjoyed many religious advantages due to being pro-West during the Cold War; therefore, it is not seen as a needy country compared to the rest of the Balkans. National workers are few and most missionaries are concentrated around the capitol, Laibach (Ljubljana).

A Bulgarian diplomat working in Slovenia did a survey and found that of the 192 towns/municipalities in Slovenia, 168



have no evangelical church. There are approximately 19 Pentecostal churches, 10 Baptist and 10 other. He estimated about 1,000 believers, but 500 to 600 is likely more realistic.

We personally observe that Communism has left deep scars in the lives of people who grew up under its rule, and young families are still under its effects. Godlessness has taken its toll. Essential freedoms were denied which, in turn, made life burdensome for most people except those in corrupt leadership. Add to that the scars of two world wars from which Europe, despite reports to the contrary, has still not recovered. Life principles which are basic to us in the freedom of the West, most importantly the knowledge of God, need to be taught clearly and lovingly so that our brothers and sisters in the East will be equipped to live their lives well and to reach their neighbors and families with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brethren fellowships

There are only two assemblies in Slovenia: one in the village of Šmartno ob Paki (population c. 3,000) and the other in Maribor. A university town with approximate 25,000 students, Maribor is the second largest city in Slovenia, with a population close to 100,000.

Šmartno

In 1988 a Christian doctor, Jovan Stupar, and his wife Marta started a small Bible study group in their home in Šmartno. This study developed into a church fellowship, formally established in 1990. It currently has about 15 members and others who attend with varying regularity. The unusual feature was that Jovan (the local general practitioner) is the only brother, and the sisters include his patients who at some point needed more than purely medical help. For many years Jovan also worked with drug addicts in a Health Service clinic. Jovan had a serious accident a few years ago and is no longer capable to lead. The assembly has no men in leadership, so they rely on preachers and teachers who visit every Sunday from other churches. Three or four men from the Maribor assembly make the hour-long trip to preach there regularly. The ladies from the Šmartno assembly recently came to a special meeting in Maribor to recognize new elders, and they said that they see these brothers as their elders as well. What a joy to see this unity! Sadly, the church in Šmartno has no young people and no children.

Maribor

The assembly in Maribor was started about 1950 by a Macedonian brother. During the 1980s, the Stupars from the Šmartno assembly traveled on Sunday afternoons to Maribor to help maintain the fellowship. In 1993 we moved to the Austrian/Slovenian border. We wondered if the Lord would use us in Maribor, which was just a half an hour away from us. The next year, Uwe Müller, a German missionary in Zagreb, Croatia, held evangelistic meetings there and we were asked to help. It was something of a Macedonian call for us. Teams of young people from the Salzburg area came to distribute invitations to the week of meetings. Our home was the base and once we had more than 30 young people and parents arrive to help. This was when our home got the reputation of having “elastic” walls! When we first went to the assembly in Maribor there were seven people there, and the average age was over 65. Most of them are now with the Lord. Dr. Jovan Stupar led the two assemblies in Slovenia and asked us to take over leading the fellowship in



From top: Saints in Šmartno; Dejan and Sandi, with their wives, being recognized as elders; The Maribor men's meeting; The Maribor women's meeting.

Maribor, which we did for about eight years. In 2001 we pulled out of ministry because a German missionary couple and their young children came to learn the language and lead the church. But they had to leave suddenly in 2005. We thought the work would collapse, but two young Slovene men stepped into the gap and led the church. We were asked to help in the fellowship again as teachers and mentors.

The assembly in Maribor has now grown to about 30 people, with the average age dropping to about 35, with a good age range of young and old with couples and families. What a joy it is to see the church grow! In October 2013 we recognized the first elders—two young Slovenes, Sandi and Dejan. Once a month Karin teaches a women’s group and Bernd teaches a men’s group. Since our church in Graz meets in the evening on the first Sunday of the month, Bernd is often in Maribor in the morning to preach, and he usually accompanies Karin when she meets with the women; it’s a good opportunity to spend time with one or two of the men. The weekly activities comprise of Sunday school for children, Bible study groups, and a kids’ club. The fellowship has several professional musicians, and over the years they have organized Christmas concerts which attracted about 100 people at a local music school. As opportunities arise, they join with other small churches to organize lectures and seminars.

A new work

The historical town of Ptuj has a new pioneer work being spearheaded by German missionaries who attend the fellowship in Maribor. A young family, Ute and Christian Bender and their three young children have made contact with people in Ptuj. They have a weekly mothers and babies/toddlers group in their home. Judith Klein, a single sister who has ministered in Maribor for years, also works with them. She is the Slovene representative for SEND International.

Sandi, an elder in the Maribor church, and his wife Aleska have started to take weekend courses at a seminary Bible school in Croatia, about an hour drive away from them. This is the first move in support of their interest to serve the Lord full-time. Their biggest hurdle is finances. Slovenia is in a similar financial situation as Portugal and Greece and some of the newer EU countries in Eastern Europe. The Slovene assemblies can’t afford to support them more than about 10 to 20 percent of what they need. They are looking at a German service committee whose goal is to see national workers established in the Balkan countries. They would support them with 30 percent of what they need. Aleska and Sandi need the Lord’s provision and His wisdom as they consider their future and take steps towards full-time work. If you would like to support the work in Slovenia, please contact us.

Pray for Slovenia

Pray for the conversion of men in Šmartno, particularly for the husbands of believing wives. Also pray for a family to share in ministry. In Maribor, pray for the conversion of relatives and friends, for wisdom in evangelism and for a new location. And finally, pray for the pioneer outreach in Ptuj. ■



Bernd and Karin Flock are commended from three assemblies in Ontario. They minister in Austria and have a heart for the Lord’s work in Slovenia, where they also minister.



From top: Summer camp held with the Baptist group; Sunday school; Sandi and Aleska.

SUPER TYPHOON HAIYAN

The Aftermath and Rebuilding of Guiuan, Philippines



BY PHILIP PARSONS

Gentle tropical breezes quickly turned into one of the world's most powerful typhoons ever to make landfall. Typhoons are common in the Philippines but what occurred November 8, 2013, was anything but common. During a 16-hour period, the Category 5 "super typhoon" claimed the lives of more than 6,200 Filipinos while many that survived saw homes washed away due to the wave surges pushed ashore by sustained winds estimated by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center to exceed 195 mph. The storm first made landfall in Guiuan and swept through the islands in the central Philippines.

Months later, the sounds of chainsaws, the pounding of sledge hammers and the drone of generators at night are bold reminders of the immense devastation resulting from Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda).

Recently, David Harvey (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 10), and Phil Parsons of CMML visited with Australian-commended missionaries Paul and Gerrah Kulikovskiy and their son Ivan who live in Guiuan on the island of Samar. The Kulikovskiy's have served in Guiuan for 18 years. What follows is an account of their personal journey both during and after the storm.

November 8, 2013

2:00 a.m. – 5:00 a.m.

Although well informed that a powerful typhoon was churning in the warm Pacific Ocean, most weather advisories result in nothing more than heavy rain and blustery winds typical during the Philippines' rainy season. However, in the early hours of November 8, as the ferocity of the storm grew, Paul and family gathered to pray. Paul recounts:

I heard the carport roof at the front give several thumps. I knelt in the lounge and prayed for the storm to stop. For a few minutes I prayed like I had never prayed before. Then that roof gave way. The wind roared. The whole house began to shake and tremble and windows exploded. There was just this continual, thunderous noise as the wind intensified even more. Gerrah, who had grabbed our important documents folder from the bedroom several minutes earlier, yelled that there was a serious leak in the office where my computer was. This got me off my knees. We moved her computer and mine near to the main toilet; then Gerrah suggested we move to the "dungeon," our toilet and laundry at the back.

Electricity was knocked out. Fear gripped them. Gerrah, who is not a swimmer, began to panic as water flooded their home. Within minutes, the intense wind gusts blew a large portion of the roof off their house allowing the heavy rain to add to the rising water.



Top (L-R): Children near Guiuan; Guiuan Christian Fellowship building and grounds after the typhoon. **Above (L-R):** Aerial view of Guiuan; Craig Sutherland and Paul Kulikovskiy distributing filters that help provide safe drinking water; Paul and Gerrah Kulikovskiy.

Daybreak

Hours later, as the storm moved eastward, a quick survey revealed just how destructive this storm was. Paul shared:

Our first concern was to find somewhere to shelter and then quantify our food supplies and get water organized. As I went to the front of the house and looked along the road and chatted with people, I saw that many were worse off than we were. Our rainwater tank survived giving us 2,000 liters of rainwater to use.

Telephone landlines, cell towers and the Internet were no longer available. Landslides and uprooted coconut trees made roads impassable.

Some local believers took refuge in the assembly building during the storm, and when Paul asked about the damage, the response was simply “nothing!” Paul first understood this to mean that the building was spared and there was no damage, but the reality was that *nothing* was left! Paul describes the scene:

The church roof was completely removed. Two walls collapsed hurting two people who had sheltered there. The main wall that took the brunt of the wind snapped the 14 inch concrete posts at the base and broke the overhead beam. The toilet block was flattened by a coconut tree. The two flats recently built were destroyed, one by an uprooted coconut tree while the other was literally blown away along with two occupants, Elmar and his mother, who were lifted and carried by the wind, being dumped several meters away.

Miraculously, within the Guiuan assembly community, all survived the storm as did their immediate family members. However, more than 90 Guiuan residents, some of whom were well-known to Paul and Gerrah, lost their lives. Sadly, the sister of a missionary co-worker lost her four young children in Tacloban through the surge of water.

A few days later

Gerrah was evacuated from Guiuan to Manila and she was able to send word out and communicate with her daughters (studying in Australia) that the family survived the typhoon. The return to Guiuan with relief funds and other supplies was delayed due to continuing rains and an airport limited in operations. Adding to the distresses, while Gerrah was praying with friends in a local Manila restaurant, a thief took her cell phone from the table.

Since the storm

The sounds of rebuilding resonate throughout the community. New electric poles have been installed and, except for occasional brownouts, the electricity is actually delivering 220 volts, a first for Guiuan. Missionary Craig Sutherland (MPH Day 10) and a small team from Palawan visited Guiuan and helped build scaffolding for rebuilding the church building and distributed hundreds of portable water filtration appliances to any who lacked access to safe, clean water.

Filipinos are also responding to their brothers and sisters in need. Paul shared that “A Filipino brother from Zambales Province, Joel Alviar, who visited us a couple weeks ago with four other men, returned with extra assistance and aid for livelihood projects.”

For six days in March, missionary Sonia Beraña (see page 23), accompanied by a small team of Filipinos, visited Lawaan, Samar, and brought relief to the believers affected by the storm. Funding provided the means for 10 families to rebuild their homes while six families were helped to restore their businesses. Funds were also given to rebuild the church.



Top: One of many resettlement compounds around Guiuan that provide temporary shelter for displaced families. **Middle (L-R):** The chapel building with the roof blown away and resulting damage; The chapel bathroom after falling coconut trees and high winds destroyed the concrete structure. **Bottom (L-R):** A new vehicle purchased with relief funds is widely used in the ministry in Guiuan; Roof trusses, which were once twisted, have been straightened and are ready for a new roof.

Prayers for Guiuan and the ongoing ministry

Catastrophic events have a way of stirring people's hearts. For years, the assembly in Guiuan has thrived in ministry among children and young adults. A blessing resulting from the typhoon has been the increase of moms and dads coming to the assembly. More interest in the Bible has led to additional Bible studies throughout the week. David Harvey had the great privilege of conducting a small study for young adults who are interested in baptism.

As the rainy season comes to an end, sustained rebuilding will soon become a reality. Truckloads of wood have been ordered, new galvanized iron roofing has been purchased and delivered while teams of volunteers expect to come in the months ahead and assist Paul and 10 chapel families that lost their dwellings.

To help manage and organize the purchase of supplies and the distribution of financial aid to the most needy, a group of five from the assembly fellowship meets regularly to pray and make important decisions on the use of funds. The assembly missionary service organizations throughout the world have



forwarded funds to the Philippines via Christian Missions in the Philippine Islands (CMPI). These precious gifts have provided hope to many who suffered loss caused by the typhoon.

Please continue to pray for those who have lost loved ones, and others whose homes and possessions were washed away, that this tragic event will cause them to seek the Lord. Also remember the believers who will go in the months ahead to help with the rebuilding while presenting the Gospel to those they come in contact with. ■



Philip Parsons is CMML's assembly relations and missionary care director.

Above: Children from Guiuan Christian Fellowship.

MAY WE INTRODUCE

Jeremiah Moffitt • Missionary to Colombia



God first started working in me toward missions when I was 20 years old, a year after I came to know Him. I was finishing my year with "Good News on the Move," and we were all very concerned about what we should do next. I had seen in the last year that the only purpose worth having is to glorify God in everything we do. Being surrounded by men who were constantly seeking to speak of the Lord to any who might hear made me zealous to also share the Gospel. One night, as I prayed with one of the other guys, I felt led to ask the Lord to make me a missionary and ensure my parents would be okay with it.

I have very good parents who have been an example of following after the Lord. From before I can remember, we had family devotions almost every night. In addition to my parents' love and discipline, I was loved and cared for by a local church and even studied the Bible at a Christian school. Although I professed salvation several times, my life was not changed. Even at those times of profession and desire to be saved, my

trust was on myself. I focused on my actions as what counted and felt I was doing everything right in order for God to save me. But after my first year at a Christian university, I started to grow very discontented. I had enjoyed the year with the guys on my dorm floor and wasn't too concerned about the sins that were present in my life. Having several idle weeks at home, my sin began to be more evident. I began to see that it controlled me and that I was in slavery. I remember hating my sin and wishing it would just go away, but I was continuously in its clutches and felt no way out. I began to think that if I went to the camp I worked at the year before that I could get rid of my sin. As I traveled to camp with my cousin, we stopped at my grandfather's house and I was greatly dismayed to see that even there sin was my master. What had been all my hope and trust was ruined, and in despair I felt I had nowhere to turn. It was in this moment that Christ's action on the cross was finally understood, and I was able to put my trust in Him. ■



You may have noticed that CMML has been expanding its conference ministry. We have grown from three conferences per year to 10 scheduled events across the United States in 2014. The goals of our expanded conference ministry are to revitalize missionary interest and involvement and to renew and strengthen relationships between New Testament assemblies and CMML. In the past, conferences have been used by the Lord to call individuals to the mission field and to stimulate prayer. It is our prayer that this will continue.

CMML began to host regional conferences throughout the United States in 2012. When choosing locations for a regional conference, we consider areas where there is a sufficient number of assemblies so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to attend. We have hosted regional events in Florida, Georgia, Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and, Lord willing, this fall, Southern California.

These regional conferences have focused on a specific country or area of the world. They feature missionary speakers from these areas who are actively engaged in the Lord's work. Some conferences have focused on large areas such as Europe, Africa and the Middle East while others have taken an in-depth look at specific countries like China, India and the Philippines. We are excited to announce that our fall conference series will focus on the country of Peru and feature missionaries Tom Clark and Micah Tuttle.

During a regional conference, missionary speakers share up-to-date information on the spiritual needs, trends and challenges in their area of service. CMML prepares a video that gives further insight into the culture of the country or area and includes interviews with missionaries serving in the highlighted area who are unable to attend the conference. Panel discussions are held to provide further insight into the work. Youth-focused components are often attached to our regional conferences in the form of "Dinner with a Missionary" events or youth nights with missionary speakers. To encourage family attendance, CMML works with local believers to prepare a children's program centered on the conference theme. Many missionaries were called to the field as children, and therefore we believe children's programs are an essential part of CMML conferences.

We also partner with larger established conferences to provide missions-specific ministry. Some partnership conferences have included the South Florida Missionary Class Conference

(Hollywood, Florida), the Christian Missionary Service Bay Area Missions Conference (San Jose, California) and Discipleship Weekend (Shawnee, Kansas).

Youth conferences are also a vital part of CMML's conference vision. Our annual 26 Below Winter Retreat at Camp-of-the-Woods in Speculator, New York, provides high school, college and career-age youth an opportunity to come away from their routines for a weekend and be challenged in their Christian walk. This past January, 140 people attended 26 Below—our largest group yet.

The Reaching Higher conference for young adults ages 20 to 35 provides an opportunity for 50 individuals from around the country to spend a weekend at the CMML Guest Home in Wall Township, New Jersey, while receiving in-depth ministry from gifted speakers.

"What's Next?," a one-day conference also held at the CMML Guest Home, is tailored for middle and high school students in the New Jersey area and challenges them to consider the Lord's plan for their future.

All of these youth events have a missions component, and we trust the Lord will use them to call the next generation to the mission field.

Please pray for the CMML conference ministry as we seek to establish conferences in a God-honoring way. If you would like more information about hosting a CMML conference in 2015 or 2016, please contact Craig Fritchey at ccfritchey@cmml.us. ■

Craig Fritchey is CMML's conference coordinator.

Upcoming CMML Conferences

October 11, 2014

Regional Conference: Peru
Claremont, CA

November 7, 2014

Youth Night
Maplewood, NJ

November 8, 2014

44th Annual Fall Conference: Peru
Lincroft, NJ

January 16–18, 2015

26 Below Winter Retreat
Speculator, NY

February 13–15, 2015

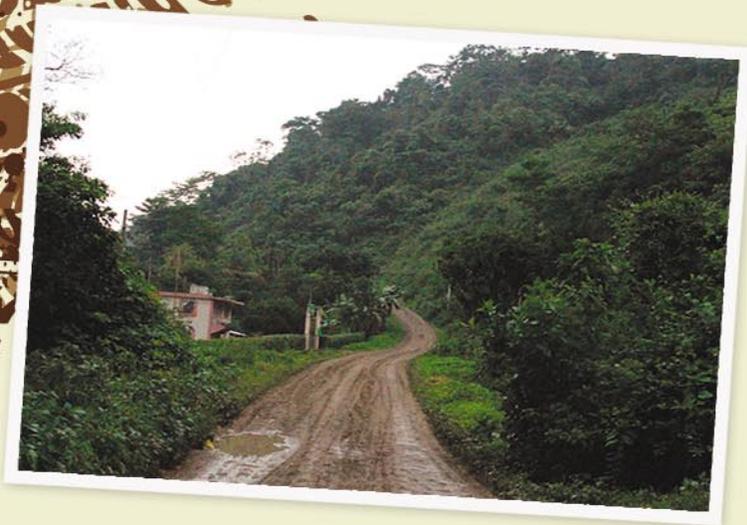
Reaching Higher
Wall Township, NJ

February 20–21, 2015

South Florida Missionary Class Conf.
Hollywood, FL

The Long Dirt Road to Las Jaguitas

Camp Sessions in Rural Ecuador



BY SHARON CARPENTER

Las Jaguitas comes from a word meaning “a place with a lot of water.” I would also define Las Jaguitas as a place with a lot of heart and love. This past February, a team of six people from Valley Bible Chapel (New Jersey) traveled to Guayaquil, Ecuador, to team up with a group there to minister to people in the Las Jaguitas area. The team from Ecuador included Erin Hayes and Becky Martin (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 25), Raul, a teacher at Hope of Bastion School, and Kenia and Olmedo, a married couple who live in Las Jaguitas. Olmedo shared with us his father’s vision of bringing the Gospel to people in this region and that they are excited to be a part of this ministry.

The journey to Las Jaguitas

It was about a two-hour ride from Guayaquil to Las Jaguitas. The first thing that struck me when we arrived was the lush, green, mountainous beauty of the area. God’s fingerprint in creation can definitely be seen on the canvas of Las Jaguitas.

We traveled the dirt roads with Erin driving her SUV and Wilfrido (her friend from Guayaquil) driving his pickup truck. They navigated through very difficult terrain. People in this area travel mainly by horse, motorcycle, or on foot. Since it was rainy season in Las Jaguitas, the dirt roads became muddy roads. And muddy roads they were!

Upon our arrival in Las Jaguitas, we began planning for the day camps that week. We would run a morning and afternoon day camp in three different areas of Las Jaguitas: Nueva Esperanza, Las Casitas, and Membrillal. Each session included songs, a Bible story, a Bible drama, games, crafts, and a Bible

verse. The team had a great time getting to know each other, although it was quite challenging because of the language barrier; half the team spoke mainly English and the other half spoke Spanish. However, we saw the amazing ways that God worked through these barriers to unite us as a team. While in Las Jaguitas, we stayed in two bamboo houses; one that Olmedo built by hand and the other belonging to his mother, Sarita.

Day camp sessions

Day 1: Nueva Esperanza

The first morning, we woke up to the sound of rain pouring down on the tin roof of the house. The sound was so loud and constant that it sounded like a large fan. We were concerned how the rain would affect camp that day. We prayed together for God to hold up the rains for us. We saw a huge answer to prayer when, just as we were about to leave for camp, the rain stopped and held off for the entire program. God is good!

We then began our journey to the first school. The kids were so excited to be there, as evidenced by the huge smiles on their faces. Everyone was so appreciative of how far we traveled to be with them.

God worked in tremendous ways in this community. Overall, about 45 children heard the gospel message and 10 children and five adults trusted in Christ that day. Praise God for their salvation! To our amazement, many of the kids and adults in this community never heard of God before. What a privilege to be the first ones telling them about Him and the message of salvation!



Day 2: Las Casitas

Our wakeup call this morning wasn't rain, but the sound of roosters crowing. We called them "God's alarm clocks." It certainly was an adjustment coming from the suburbs of New Jersey to roosters, chickens, horses, donkeys, and dogs roaming freely around outside.

It started raining during breakfast, but God was gracious to us again as He stopped the rain in time for us to leave for camp. All the team members and four local teenage boys, who greatly helped us out during the week, piled into the vehicles. Erin's SUV got stuck in the mud a few times, but the team was able to get it out.

We drove a few miles until the mud was so deep that the vehicles could no longer make it through. We then switched our mode of transportation to two horses and a donkey to help carry our supplies the rest of the way, which was an additional three-mile hike through the mountains. It was a tough hike because of the mud, heat, and steep hills, but everyone had a smile on their faces.

The team's theme verse for the week was 2 Timothy 2:10, "Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." We reminded each other of this Scripture passage when we faced any type of obstacle during the week. It was certainly our privilege to "endure" for the sake of Jesus.

This was by far the hottest day of the camp sessions, but this didn't stop the kids from coming. We had about 35 children attend this day, and three that we know of trusted Christ. The teacher and kids were so thankful that we traveled far to have camp with them. We presented each school with a soccer ball. It was touching to see how truly thankful the teacher and students were to receive it. As we hiked back, it was so encouraging to think about what an amazing day it had been.

Day 3: Membrillal

This was our final destination. We journeyed through the mud again, going as far as the vehicles could, and continuing the rest of the way to Membrillal on foot for about two miles. We had approximately 30 kids attend camp. This was another area where most of the kids had never heard about God or the



Opposite page (top): The road through Las Jaguitas. **Above (clockwise from top left):** Olmedo's mother's home and Olmedo and Kenia's home behind it; Mountains in Las Jaguitas area; The team (L-R)—Cheryl, Teresa, Joe, Sharon, Alice, Stephen, Erin, Raul, Becky, Olmedo, Kenia. **Below (L-R):** The U.S. team with Wilfrido in his pickup; Pushing Erin's SUV out of the mud; Raul teaching a Bible lesson; Stephen and kids playing games; Erin and Alice with kids; Two children from Membrillal with their goodie bags; The four teenage boys who helped during the week (L-R)—Jose, Miguel, Luis, and Joel.

message of salvation. Although we did not hear of anyone who had trusted Christ that day, we trust that seeds were planted and that God will work in the children's hearts.

At each camp session, goodie bags were distributed, each containing a few fun treats and a Spanish version of *Our Daily Bread*. Each one of the kids thoroughly enjoyed the bags and were very grateful for them.

Living off the land

One of Erin's goals for the team was to be able to share some "living off the land" skills. One of the most unique skills we learned was bathing from a natural water spout, which was a three-minute walk down a mountain. At the end of the day it felt very refreshing after being in the Ecuadorian heat!



We had the opportunity to grind fresh coffee beans grown in the region. The smell and the taste of the coffee were unbelievable! We also enjoyed fresh oranges and Kenia taught us how to make authentic Ecuadorian food including rice and empanadas.

Pray for continued work in Las Jaguitas

Continue to pray for the work that Kenia and Olmedo are doing in this area. The camps and the relationships made just scratched the surface in the Las Jaguitas area. Pray for Kenia and Olmedo as they continue to plant seeds, develop relationships with the people in these regions, and continue the camp sessions. Pray that many would come to know Christ as Savior. ■

Sharon Carpenter is in fellowship at Valley Bible Chapel, Washington Township, New Jersey.

Photos by Teresa Brown, Joe Milcetic and Cheryl Biswurm.



The three day camp groups.

From top:
Nueva Esperanza;
Las Casitas;
Membrillal.

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Winter Olympics Outreach Report

This February, a team from the U.S. joined a few CMML Special Areas missionaries to do evangelistic work at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. This unique opportunity proved to be a blessing and a profitable time ministering for the Lord to people from around the world. Here is what a couple team members had to say:

B.R., Special Areas missionary:

The Sochi Winter Olympics were special. We thank God for prayers during the Olympics and encourage prayer now for the sown seed.

A highlight for each of us was meeting people who spoke our language. Sometimes that would happen at an Olympic sporting event or while distributing God's word. The *Five Secrets of the Heart* pin and brochure were wonderful tools for witnessing, but Bibles and other Christian books were harder to pass out and sometimes were even refused. Hearts can be changed by the Lord. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17)

When we met a person who believed in Jesus Christ, we rejoiced in our common Savior. Being with the believers in their meeting encouraged us all. We gave leftover literature to three evangelical churches in the area, and they will use them to share the Gospel and Word of God.

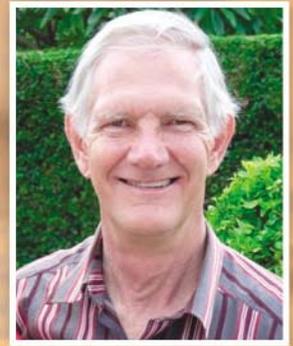


Andrew Price, U.S. team member:

The Lord allowed me to serve Him in Russia. While the trip had its ups and downs, God showed that He alone was in control and our leader. Being in Russia, whether in St. Petersburg, Moscow, or Sochi, the thing I loved most was giving the Gospel to those I can now call friends. I have contacted more than 30 Russian young people who consider me a friend as well. Some of them live in remote parts of the country of Russia, places I never imagined the Lord would have me touch, or connect with. Whether in the city, or in the country, the Lord has given me new friends who would allow me to stay in their homes and talk about God. He is supreme and I glory in Him for this. ■

Above (clockwise): U.S. team with Jessica Wise (far left), sister of Olympian David Wise; Olympic rings; U.S. team with Russian believers.

Home with the Lord



Ray Barham

Missionary to South Africa • 1943–2014

Ray Barham went to be with the Lord on February 16, 2014, after a lifetime of service on four continents. In recent years he suffered increasingly from Parkinson's disease and, although he saw some temporary improvement from a stem cell treatment, his condition worsened again in 2013 and was complicated by other medical issues.

Ray's life could be summarized in terms of geography:

- In 1943, he was born in Belgian Congo (now the DR Congo) where his parents were missionaries. He was raised in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia).
- In 1961, he commenced studies in mining engineering at Imperial College in London, and during his time there he spent two summers in Ontario.
- In 1966, after graduation, he was employed in mining in Mufulira, Zambia.
- In 1967, he went to serve in India with Operation Mobilization.
- In 1969, he returned to Canada and worked as a financial analyst. It was there that he met Teresa (Terry) Elliott and was married in 1972.
- In 1975, he returned to Zambia and to Mufulira as he and Terry were commended for Christian work.
- In 1984, the family returned to Canada where Ray continued with his writing in Bemba.
- In 1987, the Lord directed them to a new sphere of service in Pakistan.
- In 1991, he returned to Canada.
- In 1995, he went back to Zambia again, this time to Mansa.
- In 2012, the Parkinson's disease had become more debilitating and he and Terry moved to Johannesburg, South Africa.

That charts his travels through the years but doesn't really tell his story.

His life can best be evaluated by considering how he served the Lord and what he has left behind. Kelvin Samwata, a friend of Ray who leads the Brethren Missionary Trust of Zambia, writes, "Ray was a pillar in Brethren circles, a respected Christian leader and brother. His teachings and scriptural insight inspired many." He was a careful student of the Word of God with an extensive oral ministry in English, Bemba and Urdu. In addition, he believed in the value of literature and

spent much of his time in writing and translation. He learned Bemba as a boy and probably knew it better than the average native speaker, with a thorough understanding of the spoken language and of the grammar behind it. His Bemba writings include a commentary on the book of Romans, various Emmaus Bible courses, and other booklets.

The production of good Christian literature was a priority but so also was its distribution. This led him to set up a Christian book van ministry with Kosam Musangu in Mufilira. In Pakistan a focus was setting up a Christian book van ministry with Samuel Jalal in Karachi. This work is carried on to this day by Samuel's family, with continued support from the Barhams. On returning to Zambia in 1995, he devoted much of his time to the Bemba Emmaus Bible Correspondence School and more recently in South Africa he continued in Emmaus work, assisting Marlon and Judy Govender. His wife Terry shared in his vision and plans to continue in the Emmaus ministry in Johannesburg and in the support of the ongoing ministries in Zambia and Pakistan.

What he has left behind is further illustrated in his five children who are spread out across the world and serve the Lord in different ways. John and his wife Maria and three sons live in Melbourne, Australia, where he works in software development. They are active in their local church. Shirley Anne taught English in Japan for some years and now teaches in Indonesia where she was recently married to Marco Runtupalit. They are involved in various ministries, including the nearby Christian orphanage. Ted and his wife Nicola live in Oxford, England, where he seeks to encourage Christians in Britain to reach out to Muslim people around them. Nigel spent two years as assistant to George Verwer, the founder of Operation Mobilization. He and his wife Jessie live in Toronto where he founded and leads Movein, a ministry which encourages Christians to move into neighborhoods populated by people from different ethnic groups. Chrissie taught in Indonesia for several years and is now married to Brian Cheney, living in Toronto and active in Movein. They plan to move to Indonesia next year with their baby son to live in a slum in Jakarta to be a light to those living around them.

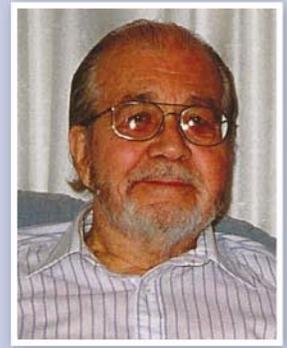
"Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7) ■

BY WILLIAM YUILLE

Home with the Lord

Joe Black

Missionary to France • 1919–2014



Joseph Perrin Black, former missionary to France, died peacefully of natural causes on January 9, 2014, in Conway, South Carolina. He is survived by Lois Black, his wife of 66 years, as well as four children, seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Joe was born in Boyne City, Michigan, in 1919 to Robert William and Julia Cough Black. The family moved to Flint, Michigan, in the 1920s. Joe accepted Jesus Christ as his personal savior in 1929, a born-again birthday he celebrated the rest of his life.

As a young man, Joe was active in Sunday school and other youth work at Pasadena Avenue Gospel Chapel in Flint, Michigan, including some radio broadcasting from the Christian radio station WMPC in Lapeer, Michigan. Joe's lifelong dream was to be a missionary in Europe. In high school, he took French language courses and began corresponding regularly in French with the Hoy family, missionaries to France in the 1930s. That correspondence sparked his own desire to someday be a missionary in France.

Following graduation from high school, Joe worked as an electrician at the Chevrolet division of General Motors Corporation for 15 years, during which he also served in the U.S. Army in New Guinea, the Philippines, and Okinawa during World War II. In 1947, Joe married Lois Jane Hamilton.

While working full-time at Chevrolet and raising a family, Joe entered the University of Michigan in 1948 to study business administration and education. Upon graduation with high honors in 1952, he joined IBM Corporation in Flint, Michigan, where he became one of the company's top salesmen and sold some of IBM's first computers.

Joe's opportunity to move to France came in 1959 when he transferred to the IBM division that supplied computers to the U.S. military. In 1961, he and Lois moved the family to Orleans, France, where Joe traveled throughout Europe on behalf of IBM. He and Lois continued youth activities with American mil-

itary youth in Orleans, renting an old chateau large enough to accommodate 40 people for weekend retreats and overnight conferences, many in cooperation with Youth for Christ. Over the next 15 years, the family lived in France, Washington, D.C., Germany, and Belgium, until Joe's retirement from IBM in 1975.

Upon his retirement from IBM, Joe and Lois became full-time Christian workers, commended by Cherrydale Assembly, Arlington, Virginia, and Civic Heights Gospel Chapel, Flint, Michigan.

They were sent by International Teams to visit missionaries in Europe on the various fields and settled in Grenoble, France, for two years. Many will remember that Joe was the driving force behind organizing the Christian Workers Conference in Europe more than 30 years ago, an annual conference that continues to this day. On a visit to the island of Corsica, God showed them a real missionary need in that area, and they moved to Calvi in 1977. For the next 13 years, their primary activities were Bible expositions in public libraries and town halls, literature distribution, church planting and home Bible studies.

Joe and Lois returned to the U.S in 1990, living for a time in Rhode Island before moving to Surfside Beach, South Carolina, where they were active in Bethany Bible Chapel, Conway, South Carolina. Joe continued some of his Bible exposition ministry until he finally gave his large collection of rare Bibles and other books to Emmaus Bible College and others.

Joe's last years were difficult for him physically, and he was bedridden under Lois' loving care. He died surrounded by his wife and children and was buried in a simple, graveside service at Ocean Woods Cemetery in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, with family and friends in attendance. There, Joe's body awaits Christ's trumpet call and an eternal home in heaven by God's grace. Lois will soon move to Pennsylvania to live in a retirement community near two of her children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. ■

BY ROBERT BLACK

