

# Missions



## GIFTS OF LOVE

Impacting Communities in Ecuador

Medical Mission to **KENYA**

A New Work in Nagaland, **INDIA**

Wise Men Win Souls in **MEXICO**



# Thinking It Through

DAVID CROUDACE

## Commitment or Compromise

Hebrews 11:35–12:1

I write this with joy and yet sadness as I think about a close friend of mine who was stoned to death because of his unwavering commitment to Christ. Joy, because John Ngwele stood up for his Lord even though he paid the ultimate price for doing so. Sadness, because many believers today seem to be compromising with this world by preaching and doing what is “politically correct” instead of what is biblically correct.

We live in a day when we can no longer drift along as Christians. We must begin to stand up for what we believe and for the One in whom we have trusted for eternal salvation. The evil one is involved in a great onslaught against Christ, the Bible and all His true followers. He knows his time is short! What can we do? We can either drift along like jellyfish and be swallowed up by the world, or we can stand up for Christ and be willing to pay whatever price may be required.

The saints mentioned in Hebrews 11:35b–40 refused to compromise, which resulted in excruciating death for many, and for others tremendous suffering and loss. When their homes and even their clothes were gone, they were content to live in caves and wear animal skins rather than compromise their faith in the yet-to-appear Savior. They happily paid the price of such commitment. Indeed “the world was not worthy” of such men and women, but heaven received them as heroes of the faith.<sup>1</sup> Since these witnesses surround us today, how are we facing the world with its increasing pressures upon us?<sup>2</sup> Are we “accepting deliverance” from persecution by quietly acquiescing to the demands of modern society, or are we standing up for Christ, willing to lose our jobs, friends, promotion, and popularity, willing to be considered the off-scouring of the earth?<sup>3</sup>

We recently heard a news story about a professor who told his class to write the name Jesus on a large piece of paper. They did so. “Now put it on the ground and step on it,” he said. All obeyed except one student who picked it up and placed it on his desk.

We said to each other, “He must have been a believer!” Not so! He was a Mormon! We asked, “Were there no born-again

Christians in that class?”

The press asked the same question and tracked down a few who claimed to be believers, and asked them what they did when told to step on the name of Jesus. “We just did what we were told,” was their answer.

“Why would you do that if you are true believers?”

Their answer? “We did not want to fail his class!”

Some years ago a brother who taught school in New York told me that one of his young scholars was tragically killed. “I felt compelled to spend time in the classroom comforting the boy’s friends by telling them about the Savior.”<sup>4</sup> Was he not afraid that he would lose his job? Yes, but he was far more concerned that his beloved students would *lose their souls* forever in hell.

Joseph refused to compromise and spent years in an Egyptian dungeon forgotten by everyone. But in Genesis 39 it says four times that “God was with him.”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise by worshipping the image of a world monarch and ended up in a fiery furnace, but one “like unto the Son of God” was seen present with them in the furnace and they emerged unscathed.<sup>5</sup>

Many in China refusing to compromise have been thrown into prison, beaten, persecuted, and even killed, but the Church in China has thrived despite such hostility.

Two young believers in Zambia were employed in different banks. One was asked by his manager to falsify some figures to avoid large taxes. He refused. The other was asked to spend time in a beer hall cultivating friendships with possible clients. He acquiesced. The first lost his job but kept his testimony. The second kept his job but lost his testimony.

When told that imprisonment and suffering awaited him, Paul said, “None of these things move me, *neither count I my life dear unto myself* so that I might finish my course with joy and... testify to the Gospel of the grace of God.”<sup>6</sup> Only such commitment to Christ will carry the Gospel forward in today’s Christ-rejecting world. ■

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:38; <sup>2</sup> Hebrews 12:1; <sup>3</sup> Hebrews 11:35; <sup>4</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14; <sup>5</sup> Daniel 3:25; <sup>6</sup> Acts 20:24



## GIFTS OF

# Love

## A Mission to Impact Rural Communities in Ecuador

BY ERIN HAYES

**A**re you on a mission? As Christians, we are all on a mission. Our mission was given to us more than 2,000 years ago by the One we follow: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19) Some of us are on this mission in the country where we were born, and some of us can take this mission to other countries, cultures and languages. You’re reading *Missions* magazine and I want to tell you a story about a Christian mission in the land of Ecuador.

A great blessing that comes with full-time ministry is the opportunity to envision new ministries and then put those visions into action. Maybe even better than the ability to put my own dreams into reality is the opportunity to help others do that very same thing. Last year, in the March 2013 edition of *Missions*, I wrote about our exciting experience with Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child: “A shoebox without shoes starts a walk of faith.” By God’s grace, the walk of faith continues as my Ecuadorian friends and I partner in ministry and dream about how to use our God-given talents, abilities and circumstances for His glory. This month’s story follows Kenia and Olmedo.

### Music and basketball to share the Gospel

When Kenia told me that her husband wanted to leave the city and to move out to the family farm, I was pretty dis-

appointed. Even though she’s 10 years younger than I, Kenia has been a faithful friend and ministry partner during the past four years. I, selfishly, did not want her to move two hours away to the countryside! Kenia had been student teaching music alongside me while studying violin during the 2012 school year. She finished school in January 2013 and moved with her husband to the tiny farming community of Las Jaguitas. Kenia then began to strategize. “I know how to teach music. I have access to a room and chairs. I’m going to start a music class for the kids in the community.” She wasted no time sending out invitations to all the children in Las Jaguitas and neighboring areas. She borrowed chairs from the local church and cleaned out and beautified an unused cement room. Every Wednesday 20 kids showed up to sing songs about Jesus, learn how to read music and play recorders. Kenia began to visit these children’s families, and doors were opened to the Gospel. Kenia’s husband Olmedo caught the same vision and began to disciple boys in the same way he was discipled—through basketball. Music classes and basketball discipleship gave birth to the ministry that was named Regalos de Amor (Gifts of Love). Kenia was on a mission. Inspired by Operation Christmas Child, her next idea was to give Christmas gifts and Bibles to families out on the farms.



turns talking about Jesus and explaining about the New Testament. One mother's eyes lit up and she told Kenia, "It's just like the other book you gave us!" (A Samaritan's Purse publication, *The Greatest Gift*) "The kids were always reading it, and when they went to school, it was my turn to read." What joy it is to share God's Word! We returned back to Kenia and Olmedo's house with full hearts, full bellies, and a trunk full of guava fruit.

## A community ready for harvest

Las Jaguitas has a rich Christian heritage. Many missionaries, local and foreign, have invested in this community and their testimonies live on. It's a privilege to share a cup of homegrown coffee with Olmedo's mom and listen to her tell how her family came to know the Lord. One of her own visions is to have enough room to accommodate missionaries as they share the Gospel out in the farming communities, and her house is currently under construction for this very reason! Be warned, if you ever stay at her house you will wake up at the break of dawn to crowing roosters and hymns on the Christian radio station.

## A warm welcome

Gifts of Love had a "delicious" start. On December 22, 2013, our team of four, Kenia, Olmedo, Becky Martin (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 25) and I, packed my car and drove to community number one, El Aji (The Hot Pepper). The first family we visited welcomed us with juicy mangos, guavas freshly chopped off the tree, and cheesy corn bread baked in an outside earthen oven. All this was served with homegrown, homemade coffee. We played with the kids, chatted with the parents and gave them our first gift basket. The three boys received sports equipment and the family basket was filled with soaps, kitchen towels, school supplies and a New Testament. We bookmarked the Christmas story in Luke and encouraged the family to read the Bible together. We shared about Jesus, the greatest gift in this holiday season, and the family listened intently. We spent two wonderful hours at this first house but we knew that we couldn't do the same for all 11 houses. Guided by starlight, feeling like either the wise men or the shepherds, we found and visited two more houses in El Aji. We took

## A sobering visit

I woke up the next morning to roosters crowing, light streaming through the bamboo walls and Becky shaking my toe. We enjoyed a delicious breakfast of cheese empanadas and café con leche before praying together and hitting the road. Our first house was Jackson's, a smiley mischievous 11-year-old who sang and participated with gusto in Kenia's music classes. When we pulled up to his house, around 8 a.m., we called out to the woman in the window, "Does Jackson live here?" The mom started crying, "My son, my son! My son passed away! Se falleció mi hijo!"

Jackson? As we walked up to the house, with our gift basket and big colorful present with the words "To Jackson" scrawled on the top, we saw him. He was lying on a mat on the floor, eyes closed, his little body covered in a white sheet and a cloth over his mouth. Four candles were lit around his body. We learned that he had developed a tumor and had recently visited the hospital. We assume that the family's poverty led to a lack of medical care and at 2:00 a.m. on December 23, Jackson died. It was a tremendous shock to us and a sobering way to start our day. Kenia, Olmedo, Becky and I were able to pray with family members and share from the Bible the hope of eternal life for all who trust in Jesus. We know that Jackson heard about Jesus in Kenia's music classes, and we hope that he trusted in Him and is enjoying the presence of God at this very moment. Before leaving, Kenia pulled out a picture of the music students and left it with Jackson's mom. This is the only picture she has of her son.

Personally, it was hard to recover from this shock and we were unsure of how to continue. We prayed together, thanking God for his goodness and for the opportunity to be with the family to try to offer some comfort.



**Above (L-R):** Kenia presenting the Gospel to a woman after giving her a gift basket; Kenia teaching music to children; Becky, Kenia and Erin with gift baskets.

## A reflective walk

Our next visits were in a small town called Nueva Esperanza (New Hope). We visited with three families, giving gifts, playing games and sharing the Gospel. Each family received a New Testament and a tract, and we encouraged everyone to read the Christmas story. We left Nueva Esperanza with ripe avocados and Karina, a nine-year-old girl to help guide us to our next destination.

"Is Dos Rios (Two Rivers) within walking distance?" we asked. Everything is within walking distance! Thankfully, we were in a car with four wheel drive that made the trek into the greenery and mud a lot easier. We stopped on the way to pick mangos before arriving at the first river. We left the car, laid some bamboo strips over the water, and hiked up a hill to Karina's cousin's house. Even though no one was home, we all enjoyed a beautiful hike through God's creation. Then it was time to go home. We arrived back at Kenia and Olmedo's house tired, hungry and sad; thoughts of Jackson and his family clouded the joy of the day.

## Plans for follow-up ministry

We finished the Christmas distribution a week later as we made plans for the next mission which is "in the works": a day camp! We'd like to follow up with these families and offer one-day Bible camps for the kids. We've begun to spread the word

and the communities are very receptive. Olmedo told me, "Erin, the government is building these new roads, so we have to use them to share the Gospel!" My home church, Valley Bible Chapel in New Jersey, plans to send a group to help run the day camp activities. Our Ecuadorian team, Kenia, Olmedo, Raul (Ecuadorian friend and fellow teacher), Becky, and I, will plan the logistics and Bible teaching. We're excited to work together

"Go and make disciples"



er as a team, sharing a common mission to "Go and make disciples." Please pray with us that God will use these efforts to bring people to Himself and advance the Gospel throughout the countryside of Ecuador. ■

*Erin Hayes was commended in 2008 by Valley Bible Chapel in Washington Township, New Jersey.*

*Photos by Kenia Carbo and Erin Hayes.*



**Top:** Little boy at a basketball ministry.

**Left (clockwise from top left):** Typical home; Olmedo ministering to kids through basketball; Kenia talking to a local family; Olmedo sharing a gospel book; Kenia and her class.



# Medical Mission to Kenya

## A CMML Director Participates in a Short-term Trip

BY DR. STEVEN PRICE

Although it was our second trip in two years, we still had the echoing question of whether we had made a mistake. We were about to board our 10 p.m. flight out of Chicago, connect in London, and layover in Nairobi that night. It was merely three months prior when we watched in horror the footage of terrorists gunning down bystanders in a Nairobi shopping mall. We would spend the night in that city awaiting our short flight to Kisumu the following day. Our thoughts raced and minds worried of the unknown and unexpected until we simply trusted His Word: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5)

## Return to old friends

On our arrival in Kisumu, our medical team of four physicians, three nurses and two support staff were delighted to meet our host, Ishmael O'Chieng Okuku, who arranged our two-hour journey by motor vehicle to our final destination of Kagon, Kenya. The final approach to this village located on the edge of Lake Victoria was over relatively rough terrain on a road forged on a dry, creviced riverbed.

Our ill stomachs evaporated into joyous hearts when we saw the chapel compound, the school, the huts, and most of the people we had left behind the year before. Our spirits burst exuberantly to see Ishmael's now-expecting wife Moline and their three growing sons. We ecstatically recognized innumerable old faces, new friends, and a new addition to the medical

clinic. We also sighed in the loss of faces—people who had either returned to the world or forsook the faith.

## Meet the physical needs

Each day was tightly packed with the medical clinic occupying the primary working hours of the day. Two of our nurses, Jennifer Flokstra (100 Mile House, British Columbia) and Kirsten Robertson (St. Louis, Missouri) strategically managed our intake and triage department which was quite sweltering when the temperature reached its peak by noonday. Our coordinator, Steve Allan (Freeburg, Missouri) would then direct the patients to either our ophthalmologist Dr. Mike Gaynier



Team members with Kenyan friends.

(Cincinnati, Ohio) or one of the generalists: Dr. Creston Tate (York, Pennsylvania), Dr. Esther Stultz (York, Pennsylvania), or myself. Dr. Tate brought his son, Jesse, who proved to be an invaluable asset and a quick learner in assisting our only eye specialist. Patients were then directed to our pharmacy managed by another RN, Anne-Marie Gaynier (Overland Park, Kansas), who dispensed and instructed on the medicines we had prescribed.

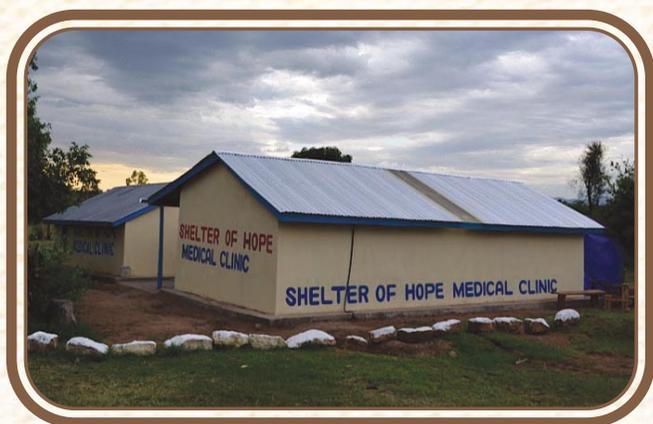
## Show compassion— the greatest medicine

The patients were greeted each morning with a gospel invitation as they gathered to take their place in line. The clinic ended by the dinner hour, and the evenings were bustling with gospel preaching for the 150 to 175 people who gathered at the chapel. All together, we saw about 330 patients over the clinic's four and a half days. Our African hosts, led by Ishmael, had the event well organized and managed, giving careful attention to even the most obscure detail. They provided such things as tents for our waiting patients, "security" to contain the crowds, and cooks not only for us, but for the scores of Africans who traveled many nights to get there. They were eager to be seen by a "Masogo" (white) physician. In fact, at times it appeared that maximum benefit was achieved not by the provided medications but that a white person would touch our fellow man in need. It unmistakably reminded me of when the leper begged the Lord to heal him. The first treatment He performed was touching His hand to a man who had not felt the touch of human skin for some time (Luke 5:12-15).

One patient in particular remains engraved in my memory. He was seen every day for an infection and presumably attended the gospel meetings at night. By the end of the week he confessed Christ and desired to be baptized. Indeed, the follow-



**Left to right from top:** Evening activities; Physicians' office outside waiting area; Dr. Tate's office; Kristen Robertson (nurse) and Moline Okuku (hostess); Dinner preparations.



Intake, pharmacy and clinic offices.



Medical compound.

ing Sunday, 16 saints obeyed the Lord in water baptism. With tears in our eyes, our grateful hearts were filled with the tears of our souls as we saw the hand of God move over this region.

## Feed the spiritually hungry

However, there was another need that the Lord had us attend to. The assembly there, Grace Bible Chapel, was born only four years ago. The overwhelming need was for essential, foundational teaching. We were privileged to minister God's Word in a seminar format on the New Testament pattern of gathering. We then had separate sessions for the ladies, men, young people and children. The seminars began Friday afternoon and stretched through Sunday afternoon. The audience seemed spiritually hungry and eager to learn. There was a unique and rare openness that the African men shared concerning their struggles. Times like these created a climate of mutual love and sincerity between brothers. Our ladies were bombarded with questions concerning women's roles and ministry. In the end, the saints would have liked to feast from God's Word for another month, but we could only afford a few

days. Our hearts burned to fill such a need. We are sure the Lord will meet this need, if not through us, then through others He raises up.

## Serve as the Lord leads

The believers struggle to survive from one rainy season to another. Disease separates many. We found the simple need of feeding the spiritually hungry to be a tremendous motivator for compassion. We imagined this is similar to how the Lord felt that day when He saw the 5,000 people "as if sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) It was this that moved us to return for this second visit. The Lord had given us certain skill sets. Perhaps it would be in His mind to use these skills He has placed in our hands and apply them in a fashion and location of His choosing. We might not be able to spend years on the mission field, but we could give the time we were afforded. It may be that the Lord would so move you too! ■

*Steven Price is a CMML director and an emergency room physician in Overland Park, Kansas.*



**Clockwise from top left:** Outdoor waiting area; Outpatient screening/chart; Children's meeting; School buildings; Playing basketball with children; Discipleship seminar.



“Where will you spend eternity when you die?” That question penetrated Carlos’s heart. He was without peace of mind for the entire week until he could follow up on the question. When the Bible was opened and the answers were found, he put up very little resistance before trusting Christ as his Lord and Savior. In fact, just a year after being saved, he was learning how to effectively share his faith with others. How did this work of God’s mercy happen? Let’s take a closer look as we glorify God for His work in this young man’s life.

# Wise Men Win Souls

## A Young Man Saved and Reaching Out in Mexico

BY BRYAN THOMAS

### Carlos hears the Gospel

Alison, our oldest daughter, is a language major in a local university. She often looks for opportunities to share about the Lord and had one such opportunity with a few classmates. Although people’s interest showed itself to be nearly nonexistent, one young man, Carlos, had great interest. While speaking with another girl from her class, she didn’t realize how intently Carlos was also listening. When the young lady showed no interest, Alison turned to Carlos and asked him where he’d go when he dies. He quickly answered that he didn’t know, but he was sure that he wasn’t going to heaven. After that statement, before heading back to class, they spent about 15 minutes talking about eternity and man’s condition before God.

The following Sunday was the weekly evangelism class that is part of the ongoing training at the church. During a workshop we talked about the need to discern whether or not the Holy Spirit is working in someone’s heart, how to see

it and move forward with the Scripture. Alison shared about the opportunity and asked how to know if the Holy Spirit was working in Carlos or not. We talked about the way he had opened up in the cafeteria and decided she should try talking to him again as soon as possible. The first question she brought up the next afternoon at the bus stop was whether he had thought about what they discussed, intentionally leaving it ambiguous, hoping he would truly indicate how much he had been mulling over his eternal future. He answered, “I couldn’t stop thinking about what you asked me.” As they talked about the biblical truths regarding eternity, his bus came. He preferred to let the bus go rather than end the conversation! At that point she realized that she needed to open the Bible with him and go through the Scriptures and God’s plan of salvation.

Since Alison knew that she needed to let a man share with Carlos in order to avoid wrong impressions, the three of us

met just a few days later and went through certain aspects of the Gospel. He didn't seem ready to receive Christ quite yet, so I left him with several verses to look over. Unfortunately, I began having some health problems and had to take a very sudden break from the field. Still, the Lord brought Carlos to Himself through another young man. After the three had gotten together to study the Gospel of John, Carlos decided he needed Christ. God is good! Ramon, Alison's friend from a sister church, continued the study as a one-on-one follow-up with Carlos. His commitment to the Lord as a young Christian has been an example to other believers.

### Carlos shares with others

When I was able to return and teach the evangelism class, one of the participants noted how much Carlos was sharing with his university classmates and asked me if Carlos could join the class, even though it was mid-semester. I happily went against the norm and invited him to join us. As we reviewed verses to be memorized from the gospel outline in class, Carlos realized that God used those same verses to reach him and save him!

The evangelism class consists of various aspects of equipping and encouraging the students in their efforts of sharing and even winning others for Christ. They are expected to memorize an outline of verses which is a tool for sharing the Gospel. We read *One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven*, share observations about the book, and inform the group about experiences with witnessing throughout the week. We then discuss progress and how to possibly proceed. It is amazing to not only see Carlos's zeal in sharing but also his commitment to being more prepared for winning souls!

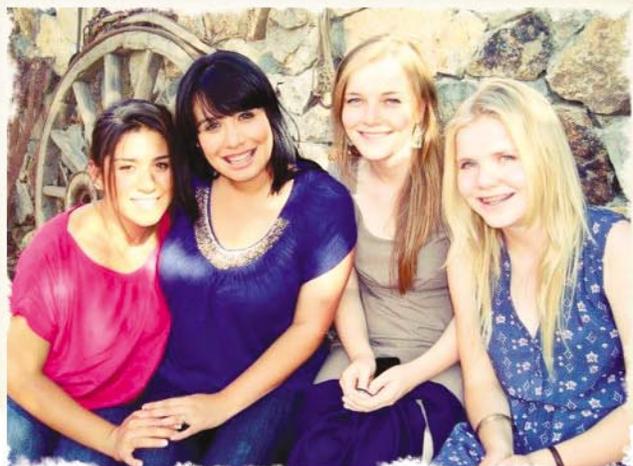
Carlos no longer attends the same university as Alison. He now majors in engineering at the same university where our son Peter studies and still shares about the Lord at every opportunity he gets. Even when he is asked to share on a particular topic in one of his classes, he looks for an opening to present the Gospel to the whole class. He has even had good dialogue with some of his professors. Although his parents do not know the Lord, they acknowledge the changes Jesus has brought in Carlos's life. He recently asked me to disciple him and I look forward to encouraging him and training him in whatever way I can. God has shown me that I will probably be the one challenged by his life.

One of the principles that drove the evangelism class was that wise men win souls (Proverbs 11:30). We feel God is showing us the need to be effective at every stage of the evangelistic process. That includes being used of God to bring souls to Him for His glory. Are we soul winning as we should? ■



*Bryan and Joy Thomas, commended by the assembly in Cupertino, California, have served the Lord in Mexico since 1996 and in Ensenada for 11 years along with their four children: Peter, Alison, Faith and Alan. They focus primarily on training leaders and teaching in the local church with the goal of seeing more churches planted.*

**Opposite page:** Carlos celebrating New Year's Day with two other young men involved in evangelism. **Below (from top):** Carlos being baptized by two of our church elders; Alison and Faith with two young ladies in the evangelism class.



# 26 Below Report

## It's Not About Me! Living a God-centered Life

BY ANNIE O'CONNOR

A yearly tradition, teenagers and twentysomethings from around the Northeast piled into cars and vans with Bibles and snow gear and headed to Camp-of-the-Woods in Speculator, New York, for CMML's 26 Below Winter Retreat, January 17 to 19. Our biggest year yet, 140 young people attended with an average age of 20. Though most participants hailed from New York and New Jersey, several came from Canada and as far as North Carolina.

Former missionary to Honduras, Brady Collier shared from God's Word, focusing on the theme "It's Not About Me! Living a God-centered Life." He shared Jesus's words from John 14:31 "As the Father gave me commandment, so I do..." and John 17:4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." Brady encouraged us to have the same attitude of putting God first in every aspect of our lives—school, work, community, relationships, and family—no matter the cost.

In addition to Brady's four ministry sessions, participants chose from one of the following three breakout sessions: "Long-term missions" with CMML's Craig Fritchey and Brady Collier; "Short-term missions" with CMML's Annie O'Connor and Teresa Brown from Fifth Avenue Chapel in Belmar, New Jersey, who shared about her recent missions trip to Peru (*Missions* September/October 2013, pages 8–9); and "Evangelism" with The Ezekiel Project School of Evangelism's Tim Skiles. These sessions provided young people the opportunity to focus on practical topics that interest them in an interactive setting.

During the free times, people enjoyed winter activities such as skiing, snowboarding, hockey, and ice skating, or participated in one of many indoor activities from the ever-popular "psycho dodge ball" to more reserved games in the lodge.

CMML hosts 26 Below each year to encourage young people in their faith and to provide a place of godly fellowship. If you're in high school, college, or are "career" age, please come join us next year—January 16 to 18, 2015. ■



Annie O'Connor is the editor of *Missions* magazine.

# MAY WE INTRODUCE

## Pamela Catalan—Missionary to Spain



I was born into a Christian home in Mexico and grew up attending church. I heard about Jesus dying on the cross to pay for my sins but did not fully understand what that meant. It was at a church conference when I was 10 years old when I accepted Christ as my Savior. I had some trials during my teenage years but instead of seeking Him, I decided to walk away. When I was 16 years old He showed me that I could not go on without Him and brought me back to Himself. That was when I started to seriously follow the Lord.

In 2000 God provided the means for me to go to Emmaus Bible College, and it was during my time there that I became interested in missions and started to pray about the possibility of serving Him overseas. He also put on my heart the desire to reach out to Muslims, but I did not know where to go. The years following graduation, I went on a few trips to different countries to look for opportunities to serve, but the Lord did not open those doors. He wanted me to wait and stop trying to do things on my own strength. I spent those

years of waiting back in Mexico, serving in my home church and working as an English and Spanish teacher at a language school.

In 2011 Ben and Elena Kerns (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 17) invited me to come to Spain to “check it out.” It did not take long to realize that I wanted to go back and serve the Lord there. I have been back in Zaragoza, Spain, since October 2012. It has been a time of transition and trying new things. The Lord has not only given me a loving church to fellowship with but also different opportunities to serve Him in the youth group and discipling teenage girls. Zaragoza has a growing Muslim population (about 30,000) and I am grateful for the opportunity to reach out to them as well. I have been teaching Spanish to a group of Moroccan women and I am thankful for the relationships that have come out of this class. I am glad the Lord has brought me to Spain, and I look forward to what He will bring in the near future! ■

# M.O.P.

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