



Thinking It Through

NATE BRAMSEN

Two Charcoal Fires

Peter finds himself in an all so familiar place as Jesus gently calls his name from the shore. Immediately, his thoughts drift back to that day, some three years ago, when Christ wooed him from his nets to follow Him. Ah, that voice. The same voice which in love commanded a little girl to wake from death's grip, in zeal cleansed the temple, in passion announced the kingdom, and in agony cried out, *"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me"* (Matthew 27:46). Yet now, Jesus extends an invitation to breakfast. Fish and bread. But Peter notices something else: A charcoal fire. (John 21:9)

Jesus is up to something more. Don't miss this. Only two times in Scripture is this phrase "a charcoal fire" used, both found in the book of John. Here, and a couple chapters back, in John 18:18, *"Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself."* The last time Peter stood around a charcoal fire was on that fateful night of Christ's betrayal, and it was around that very charcoal fire Peter denied even knowing the Man in the judgment seat. Upon glimpsing this seaside scene, no doubt a trigger of emotional pain shot through Peter's veins. But Jesus was not seeking retribution. Rather, this was about restoration.

Jesus recreated the setting of this night in Peter's past, not to bring up his faults, but to enable him to move past his failure by recognizing his responsibility. Where only shortly before Peter denied Christ three times around a charcoal fire, here Peter emphatically declares his undying love for Christ. Three times (John 21:15-19). Where previously Peter refused to bear the consequences of being associated with Jesus of Nazareth, he now embraces the call to follow this King of Heaven. To the point of giving his life. Peter's fall was painful, but not final. Jesus had told Peter earlier, *"but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers"* (Luke 22:32). Darby translates it, *"when once thou hast been restored..."* Our very restoration

is not for self-advancement, but for the building up of His church.

When Jesus called Peter and his friends from their life of fishing (Matthew 4:18-22), Matthew noted that James and John were "mending their nets." They recognized a broken net catches few fish. Likewise, a discouraged saint catches few men. The word used for "mending" is the same word translated "restore" in Galatians 6:1. *"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."* Just as catching fish requires a mended net, fishing for men requires restored vessels. Webster's Dictionary defines "restore" as "to bring back to a previous condition."

In Christ's church, there is a great need for restoration. Not a mere passing over of sins committed, but a demonstration of Christ's love which seeks to restore and renew lives which once were discarded as useless for the Kingdom. Are we looking to gently encourage and shepherd our brothers and sisters past their past, or are we condemning them based on their history? Nets are mended for the purpose of fishing once more. In God's economy, a broken net is a call for the church to *"...forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him"* (2 Corinthians 2:7-8). Furthermore, Paul goes on to plead that we would not be *"outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his strategies"* (2 Corinthians 2:11). To withhold comfort and refuse restoration to a sincere, repenting sinner is to directly play into Satan's hand.

Never forget that, as a believer, on the best day, our status is a sinner saved by God's grace through faith in Christ. For those trapped in a funnel of despair, know that Jesus calls you to His charcoal fire. Not to condemn, but to affirm His love and offer restoration. May our lives, as His lights in this world, reflect His attitude of restoration. As we seek to mend broken nets, let us lay aside bitterness, resentment and pride, and under a unified and unhindered banner, proclaim this Jesus to the nations. ■

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COVER PHOTO: Myanmar – ©iStockPhoto.com/hadynyah

God at Work in the "Golden Land" – Myanmar

by Charles Fizer

After some 29 years, I was privileged to visit Myanmar for the second time in August 2011. The first visit was to see the Emmaus Correspondence Ministry. The second was to help with the teaching in a Bible College.

THE COUNTRY

Located in Southeast Asia, Myanmar is surrounded by China, Laos, Thailand and India. Called "The Golden Land," one can see gold in many places. A striking example is the Shwedagon (pronounced dagone) Buddhist Temple in Yangon. Some 2,500 years old, this temple is reputed to have eight hairs from the original Buddha in its precincts. Overlaid with gold, someone has said it has more gold than all the vaults of England! It was at this temple that Adoniram Judson, well-known Baptist missionary, set up a little hut, served tea to pilgrims, and shared with them the good news of the gospel.



Rich in natural resources, the country exports many things including timber and, of course, beautiful jade.

Judson arrived in 1813; he translated the entire Bible from

the original languages into Burmese. This was a momentous accomplishment. It is still the main translation used among Christians. He even produced the first English/Burmese dictionary. It is still in use today.

Over 80 percent of the people practice "Theravada Buddhism." Theravada means, "The Way of the Elders." Followers cling to the beliefs and practices of the original Buddha. The goal is to reach *nirvana*. This is achieved by becoming a perfect saint and no longer being reborn. We know this as "reincarnation."

About seven percent of the people profess Christianity. There are Muslim, Hindus and Animists as well. The number of true disciples of Christ is small compared to the population. It is clear the country is still in great need of the gospel of Christ.

It was interesting to be reminded that every religion in the world has its "conservatives" and "liberals." Many Buddhist monks can be seen walking the streets of Yangon every day. Some of them go barefoot and they are called "conservatives." Others wear thongs and they are called "liberals!" Apparently, wearing thongs is "worldly!"

Top: Young Buddhist monk
©iStockPhoto.com/hadynyah.

Middle: Adoniram Judson set up hut outside this temple and shared the gospel with pilgrims.

Right: Over 80% of the people worship this lifeless idol of Buddha; Nationals burning incense at a temple; Judson completed the English/Burmese Dictionary before he died.



SOUTHEAST ASIA BIBLE COLLEGE

The purpose of my trip was to teach the Scriptures to young people. Southeast Asia Bible College (SEABC) was established by Kap Cin Thang in 2002. Kap is from the Chin people of Northwest Myanmar. He taught school in his home village for several years. After studying two years in the United States, he returned to his country to serve among his people in the late 1990s. After his return he started this valuable ministry for young people.

Located in Yangon, SEABC has a four-year program. This year there are 67 students from 20 different groups. (Myanmar has eight major national ethnic races but over 100 different groups within these.) I have read that the Burmese government recognizes 135 groups. SEABC is staffed with several qualified teachers of the Word. And, on occasion, brethren from abroad visit and teach at the school.

I was invited to teach at SEABC for two weeks. My class was made up of 31 students. Probably two-thirds of them were young females. Asians like word pictures, illustrations and practical application. So we studied the *Letter of James*, which is rich in all of these. We completed a verse-by-verse study of the first three chapters in 21 hours in the classroom. What a wonderful experience! One of the most encouraging sights is young people sitting with open Bibles, listening intently and anxious to learn what God has to say to them in His Word!

Most of the students at SEABC come from very poor

circumstances. A good number are from small villages throughout the country. Their families live off of a small parcel of land. Finding jobs in these areas is almost impossible. Some families sell rice to get money. There are times when some students are not able to return to SEABC after their break because they do not have the money for bus fares.

I could hardly believe one story that Kap shared with me after I asked how far some of the students live from the school. Several of the students live in southern Chin State which is located near the border to India. When the time comes to return to SEABC, these students leave home about 4:00 a.m. and walk for three days before reaching the first bus station! Then it takes another three days on different buses to finally arrive in Yangon. I was challenged by the determination and courage of these young people who possess such a desire to study the Scriptures! They are willing to endure these kinds of hardships in order to learn more of God's Word.



EMMAUS WORK

Although no longer a part of the Emmaus Correspondence Ministry, I was able to spend a small period of time at the Emmaus office in Yangon. Ronnie Tin Maung Tun has been the Regional Director for many years and handles courses in the Burmese language.

Presently there are 16 courses available. Two of them are locally written. One of these is entitled "A Pathway to a Good Place." This course was written specifically with Buddhist followers in mind.

It was interesting to learn that a very small number of Buddhists will ever turn to Christ. Apparently, after six years, even Adoniram Judson had seen only one Burmese convert. He later moved and began a work among the Karin people. Most believers today have been saved out of a nominal Christian background. Sadly, many churches today in Myanmar teach a salvation by works.

Most of the Emmaus students served from this office are from the northern Kachin State. And, most interesting, the most popular course is "Christ Loved the Church" written by the late William MacDonald!

Kap Cin Thang has been responsible for the courses in the Tedim Chin language for two or three years. Two brothers have translated the current six courses. Kap edited them and had them printed. Among these courses are "What the Bible Teaches" and "Christ Loved the Church." Three others have been translated but not yet printed.



From Top: Some SEABC students; Emmaus office in Yangon; Sang Kung serves Burmese Emmaus students.

ASSEMBLY WORK

Local groups of believers who are seeking to follow New Testament Church Principles date back many years. In H.A. Ironside's book "A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement" published in 1941, he makes reference to a work of the Spirit of God in Rangoon (Yangon) many years before that. He wrote:

*"On missionary fields in South America, notably British Guiana, and in far-away Rangoon, India, similar movements began either at or a little later than this time, and eventually letters were exchanged which showed a remarkable unanimity of views among very widely-separated groups. This does not alter the fact that we must go to southern Ireland for the first public testimony to the conviction which many had timidly expressed."*¹

Ironside's point was that there was an exercise in Myanmar as far back as the 1800s. Today, the largest concentrations of local gatherings are in Chin State.

The assembly work is a great testimony to the fact that New Testament Church Principles do work in any country and in any culture. Most, if not all, of the assemblies were started by local believers. In some cases, they had studied "Christ Loved the Church" and decided that they wanted to meet according to the biblical principles outlined in this Emmaus course.

I was privileged to be with the saints at Canaan Bible Chapel in Yangon for three consecutive Sundays. The saints meet on the fifth floor of a building in downtown Yangon and the room was full of believers each Lord's Day. It was a tremendous blessing to hear the saints speak of the Lord Jesus and sing songs with melodies that bring tears to one's eyes.

The last Sunday with the believers was a deeply moving

one for me. After the breaking of bread service, various young people sang solos or duets. One little boy of 12-years stood up to sing. I was told that his mother had died several years ago. And he did menial (in some people's eyes) work of cleaning toilets, picking up garbage, etc. The little boy is very poor and has no human prospect of having much. But he loved the Lord Jesus. He stood up, took a guitar and sang a hymn that seemed to move everyone. I didn't know what he was singing, but sensed the sincerity of his heart. Kap said he was singing a hymn about the glory of God.

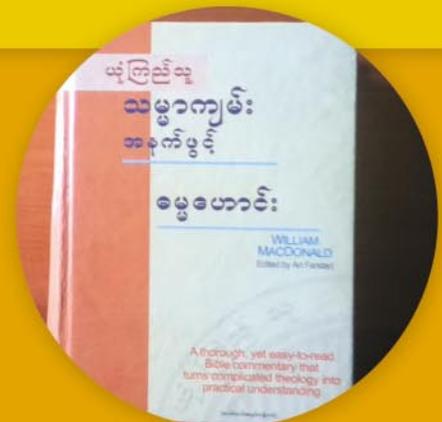
I brought back with me an album of memories. A memory of keen young people studying the Word of God, another memory of believers gathered around a table to worship the Lord Jesus for His work on the Cross, and yet another of seeing God's Word being studied with correspondence courses and learning of many local assemblies of believers throughout this needy country. To fellowship with believers from other areas of the world reminds us again of the oneness of the body of Christ. While there still remain incredible spiritual needs in Myanmar (60 million people), the gospel has penetrated that dark land. Those sitting in darkness have seen a great light. The Lord Jesus is known and loved by many.

The country of Myanmar, the assemblies and the work of SEABC deserve the prayers of the saints in this country. If you have an interest in SEABC you can e-mail Kap Thang: seabcthang@gmail.com.

Pray for the Emmaus work. Here, as in many parts of the world, God is using these courses. The Emmaus courses have been an important element in the assembly movement. If you would like to know more about the international distribution of Emmaus courses you can e-mail Jim Fleming: jfleming@ecsministries.org. ■



L-R: Believers at Canaan Gospel Chapel; Believer's Bible Commentary in Burmese.



Charles Fizer and his wife Darlene served the Lord in South Korea and Japan for 12 years. Charles resigned from the Emmaus Correspondence School in 2001 and is involved in an itinerant ministry among assemblies in North America. Charles and Darlene are commended by Welton Chapel and Otsego Bible Chapel in West Virginia.

¹ The Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement, Revised Edition 1985, H.A. Ironside, page 8. His reference to "this time" is referring to 1825.

by Shawn Markle

Over the past three years we have worked along with other co-workers to try and dispel many false teachings. There are many in and around the area of Chitokoloki, Zambia who know nothing about salvation by faith alone. Many believe that a “Christian” can lose his salvation, or that a person needs to confess their sin to the “church” to be saved. Many also believe that a person has to be baptized to go to heaven. These teachings put folks into bondage, and we have been working to show them from the Scriptures that these teachings are not based on the Bible.

John 8:32 tells us, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” And in verse 36, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” The power to live a Christian life comes from the One who has made us free, not from our own strength.



Sampasa headman with some of the children from the village

“Freedom” in Zambia

Free from the Bondage of Sin

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God” Romans 6:22

Very soon after we arrived in Chitokoloki in 2009, a brother in the assembly arranged for us to go and preach the gospel in the nearby village of Chiya, which is a small, family based village. The headman of the village, a very elderly man, was enthusiastic about someone coming to preach the gospel in his village.

To this day, we continue going to Chiya on Sundays to preach the gospel. One Sunday, after about six months, the headman leaned forward in his chair after the preaching of the gospel and spoke to Shawn: “This tree we sit under is now your tree; you can preach the gospel here whenever you want. You are now my son; you are no longer Mr. and Mrs. Shawn, but Mr. and Mrs. Chiya.” When we asked what Chiya meant, he said, “Chiya means hunter, one who brings food to his village. You have brought the food of God’s Word to our village and fed us.” Mr Chiya went to be with the Lord in July of 2010, but we continue to go and preach the gospel.

Just recently, we had the thrill of hearing that the wife of the new headman (Mr. Chikopu) had trusted Christ as her Savior. We went and visited her and her husband, to talk about what God had done in her life. During the visit she said she had trusted Christ many years ago, but after hearing the gospel preached in her village she realized she was away from the Lord and needed to follow Him.

We sat and talked with her about eternal security and obeying the Lord by being baptized. We were able to show them

from the Scripture that baptism was not needed to be in heaven but was a declaration to all around that you belong to Christ.

Since starting to preach the gospel in Chiya, we have also begun to preach in the villages of Chambula and Sampasa. Thankfully, all are open to hearing the good news of God’s saving grace. Since the constitution of Zambia declares it to be a Christian country, there are many who feel they are Christian because they were born in Zambia. We have been so happy to be able to share what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 9:13 “...for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul penned the words, “We wrestle not with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers.” We see that in a real way today. Satan is using anything and everything in his power to blind the minds of men and women and to keep them in bondage.

Freedom to Share the Gospel in the Local Language

“Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified” 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

These village visits have put our language skills to the test. This area is Lunda and Luvala, and many in the villages do not speak English. As a result we continue to learn Lunda, and have spoken at a few gospel meetings in the villages in Lunda. It is a thrill when older ones in the village start finishing my sentences for me. I realize that they not only understand what I am saying, but are also following my thinking. The construction of



**"We ask God to work in the lives of men and women,
we ask Him to open their eyes to the truth..."**

sentences in Lunda is so different than the construction in English. Often, we will say one very long Lunda word as a whole sentence. Despite the challenge of learning the language, we have also felt a great sense of God's help as we can understand more of what is being said without the help of a translator.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" John 8:32.

Since September of 2010, we have had Bible studies at the high school dormitory. There are 22 young men that live too far from the school to walk every day, and as a result, live in the dormitory throughout the school year. During 2011, they asked such questions as, "Why did Jesus say, 'My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?' from the cross?" and "What happens to us after we die?"

These young men are searching for the truth. Many times they have said to us, "But that's not what my church is teaching." We try to faithfully show them from the Word of God that God's free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ does not depend on works or keeping the law. It depends on Christ and Christ alone.

One of these young men was depending on his keeping the Sabbath to get to heaven. As the Bible study was on Saturday morning, he was often getting ready for church while the Bible study was in progress. One Saturday, he sat down with the rest of the boys and just listened to the Bible study. From that point on he stayed for the Bible study and began asking some very pointed questions. He started reading his Bible more and began to realize that keeping the Sabbath would never get him into heaven. We aren't sure if he ever trusted Christ before he moved back to his village at the end of grade 12, however, his

lifestyle changed and he told us that he knew that Christ and Christ alone could get him into heaven – glorious freedom!

"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" Romans 5:18.

On Thursday afternoons we have a Bible study geared for young people. About 30-35 young people attend from grades 9-11. Some have no idea what's in the Bible and some know quite a lot. Regardless of their background, all learn the weekly verse and many take up the challenge of learning 10 verses for extra points. One boy, whom we thought had very poor English, arrived one Thursday and said he was ready to say all the verses. He rhymed them off with absolutely no mistakes!

About four times a year during the Bible study, we ask one very simple question: "Today we say we are Christians and then we sin. Before we are able to confess our sin to the 'church,' we die. Are we going to heaven or hell?" Invariably there are 10 or more who proclaim: "Hell." We are thrilled to show them from John 10 that when God gives eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ, it is eternal! No one can snatch us from His hand, and no one can snatch us from the Father's hand.

To see the look on their faces when the truth of eternal life and eternal security sinks into their soul is amazing.

Freedom from the Bondage of Religion

Back in the beginning of 2010, a young man came to us and wanted to have a private Bible study. We came to learn that he was afraid that his church would find out he was studying the



Sampasa village gospel outreach



Tuesday ladies' outreach at Leper Colony



"Bound by sin" - Sampasa outreach



Preaching at a well opening

"...And yet, when He does work and move and bring freedom to the lives of those in sin's bondage, we are amazed. But we shouldn't be!"

Bible with someone not from his denomination. Over the course of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, he would ask questions and we would try to answer them faithfully from the Word of God. One day he asked: "Which church do you go to?" He had asked the question in the past and I had refused to answer because a church cannot save. This time his disposition was different. I told him where we went on Sunday and he said he wanted to leave his church and go to ours because, "your church teaches what is in the Bible, mine does not."

We ask God to work in the lives of men and women; we ask Him to open their eyes to the truth. We know that God is faithful when he said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to

the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised..." Luke 4:18. And yet, when He does work and move and bring freedom to the lives of those in sin's bondage, we are amazed. But we shouldn't be!

God has a greater interest in the lives of men and women than we ever could. Satan tries to enslave with rules and works and false teachings, but God reaches out with love and freedom. ■



Shawn and Rhonda Markle were commended to the work of the Lord in Chitokoloki, Zambia in 2009 by Langstaff Gospel Hall in Ontario, Canada. They have two girls, Alexandra, 8 and Mackenzie, 6.

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Meeting Practical & Spiritual Needs in

AUSTRIA

by Emil & Doreen Kvick

It is now close to 30 years since we arrived in Vienna, Austria. We were young, single, and naïve. We were full of anticipation of what God was going to do. It was not to the Viennese that we had traveled so far to reach, but a people living on the other side of what was called the “Iron Curtain.” [“Iron Curtain” is a term used to describe the boundary that separated the Warsaw Pact countries from the NATO countries from about 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1991. The Iron Curtain was both a physical and an ideological division that represented the way Europe was viewed after World War II].¹ We both had a longing to make a difference in the eastern bloc countries. Vienna was situated on the very eastern edge of Western Europe only minutes away from the very much feared Iron Curtain. We spent our first years traveling throughout the East. We joined with other groups to help set up training, in-country Bible classes, and provided the believers with much needed Bibles, evangelistic books, medicine and practical helps.

We often talked about what it would be like if the Iron Curtain would fall. We dreamed and prayed for change and the change came sooner than we expected. In 1989 and 1990 we watched how the people of our favorite country—Romania—overthrew their dictator Ceausescu. All of a sudden the Romanian believers were free. At last the church has been liberated from a tyranny none of us would want to suffer under.

Romania was only the beginning. Many of the other communist countries followed suit. Before we were ready for it, the whole of Eastern Europe experienced an unprecedented freedom. Freedom to own a Bible, meet to worship and share their faith. There was so much freedom that people did not know how to handle it. Vienna was no longer on the edge of Europe as we once thought but rather the center, very strategically situated to a larger Europe—a Europe that God is changing one life at a time.

All the major cities in Europe are changing. The birth rate is decreasing but the population continues to grow through immigration. It has been estimated that over 80 percent of immigration is Islamic. Islam is a fast growing religion in Europe as a whole. Several districts in Vienna have over a 30 percent Islamic population. Several churches in England have been closed and reopened as mosques. The once strong Catholic Church is slowly dying. The increasing scandals in



Elementary concert at school

the Catholic Church have caused many to withdraw their membership, as they are no longer interested in the church. They are looking for something more. New age philosophy, the occult and Eastern religions are increasing in popularity. There is a generation that is growing up with no place for God and little to no understanding about who Jesus really is. Our desire is to present Jesus through the study of the Scripture and in action.

Vienna, like many major cities in Europe has the nations in their backyards. The cities are transient, attracting international business people, international students, refugees, as well as those who are promised a better life and caught in human trafficking. Whether our paths cross for a few hours or for several years, as ambassadors of Christ we long to see every one reconciled to God.

Emil uses his skills to not only meet the practical needs of ministries; he is able to use these opportunities to minister and disciple others. Emil is not only teaching them life skills but is helping them to develop their spiritual life. As many of the new believers carry much baggage with them, a retreat is offered to them so that they can receive teaching about the cross. Many have come out of animism, folk Islam and various occult practices and it is vital that they have a clear understanding of all that Christ did on the cross. Many come to realize that they cannot just add Jesus to their “gods,” but that He needs to be Lord of all. This helps them with a strong foundation so that they can continue to grow and not be held back by their past.

A structured discipleship training program and home Bible studies continue to help them grow in the knowledge of the Word, prayer and ministry to others.

Many arrive for two to six years but often return to their home countries. They are often referred to as “returnees.” Our desire is to reach and equip them so that when they return home they are able to reach others in their own community. The international community is often faced with challenges with relationships, cross-cultural marriages and growing families. It is crucial that they are taught about biblical relationships, marriage and raising children.

Doreen has the joy to minister at the International Christian School of Vienna. What a blessing to be able to invest into the lives of the young people—leaders of the younger generation and future leaders of the world. This school year we have 240 students representing 50 nations—our biggest group ever! Join us in giving thanks to God for allowing us to minister to so many students. This is the 26th year of offering an education for life. Our theme this year as a staff is giving our students “A Legacy of Hope” based on our hope found in the Good News of Jesus Christ. During our recent “Spiritual Emphasis Week” we saw several students come to know the Lord. It is a blessing to be able to share the Word, praying and helping them through struggles they face. There are many opportunities to share with the students over a casual coffee or join with them on ministry trips to Bosnia and Romania. There are many needs at the school next year. If you are interested in being a part of this

ministry, in either the areas of administration or faculty and have credentials, please e-mail Doreen at: dkvick@icsv.at.

The refugee population has been around since the early days. Then, the majority were eastern Europeans who managed to sneak their way into Austria. Now, they are mostly Iranian and African refugees. The process of applying for political or religious asylum can take many years. This is a key transition time for many. Many are open to the gospel. A young man arrived at church one day not even sure why he was there. He was from Iran and was a Muslim. He could not shake the desire to see what was going on and listened to the message preached. An opportunity was given for those who wanted to be prayed for. He went forward and met Emil. The spiritual battle was very real for this young man and, counting the cost, he accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. His journey was not an easy one. He was disowned by his father and was told he would no longer be sent money for his studies. He would no longer be able to return to his home country. Overnight he became a religious refugee. Thus, he became a part of our family until he got married.

Human trafficking has become a growing concern in Europe. Prostitution is legal in Austria. Prostitutes are considered self-employed and are required to pay taxes. There are still a large number of illegal prostitutes. It has been estimated that approximately 80 percent of the prostitutes are migrant. There is a growing Nigerian group of prostitutes that are victims of human trafficking. The networking of various organizations to deal with this issue is taking place. Point of Hope International is a ministry that is still in the praying stages, but its vision is to help those caught in trafficking and want to get out. Please pray that His will would be done and doors would be open in Vienna for sharing our vision with officials and law enforcement dealing with human trafficking.

We continue to be connected in Fumbisi, Ghana. Several years ago Doreen joined with a Ghanaian woman Sala and her father to help begin the Fumbisi Christian Center. The vision is to serve the children through feeding and educating them. When we first arrived to hold a children’s day camp, hundreds of children came out to hear about Jesus. With only three of us to assist, we divided the kids up and each took 150, praying that the seeds sown would produce more fruit. The kindergarten was started for the poor children that were not able to go to school. The leading tribal elders attended a ceremony and dedication of the land. They thanked us for coming, because “this is what the village needs.” A cross was erected on the land as a constant reminder to all who pass by to fetch their daily water that Jesus is Lord. At present the center ministers to 40-50 poor children each day. They are taught about the Bible and are fed. The future plans are to build a brick kindergarten (at present they are using tents) and vocational training. Please pray that the Lord would lead and guide as well as open up new doors of opportunity.



Clockwise:
Children at school;
Opening school
day International
Christian School of
Vienna; Chapel
time at school.

The nations are among us. The methods and means of sharing the good news may change, but the gospel message is still the same. Whether along the side of a road to one individual or to a large group, we have been given the clear commandment to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" Matthew 28:19-20. ■



Emil and Doreen Kvick have been commended to the Lord's work since 1987 by the believers at Marineview Chapel, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. They have four children.

¹ <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-was-the-iron-curtain.htm>

Right: Discipleship training program.
Below from left: Working with volunteers on construction project; Emil baptizing a new believer; Emil teaching in home Bible study.



SHOULD THE **Cross** MATTER TO ME?

by **Tom Turner**

This question was the ministry theme for CMML's 26 Below Conference, January 6-8, 2012 at Camp-of-the-Woods. Brady Collier (outbound missionary to Honduras) challenged the group of 109 college, career and high school young people to think through the real meaning of the cross and how it should impact their own lives.

"Does the Cross Matter to You?" was Brady's challenge! [Will you] be the one that God reaches down from heaven and says "I want your life"? If you are going to be Christ's disciple you need to let Him be in the driver's seat! Then like a rifle shot to the hearts of the listeners came the most important question for the weekend, "Who will you become for God"?

"I want every person here to do business with God this weekend," Brady said. "If the Cross really matters to you find Christian people more mature than you are to help build you up. Spend time with Christ in His Word so you don't return to the 'old' normal. And if you are doing something that doesn't please the Lord, get rid of it! Because, when you follow Christ you'll experience an incredible journey!"

Four powerful sessions from the Word of God brought some serious questions that required real soul searching on the part of those who listened. Six discussion groups were formed on the first night. After each message the

young people and their group leader focused on the personal applications from God's Word and how it should impact their lives. Then times of prayer together brought these truths home to their heart.

As I thought about the tremendous potential in this group and watched them praying with each other, I wondered who God might call to the mission field. Please pray that many young people from this conference will be faithful to His Word, faithful in their daily walk and faithful in their service for Him. Also, will you pray for Brady Collier, his wife and four children (10, 8, 6 and 8 months) who left on January 16th to serve the Lord full-time in Honduras?

If you would like to listen to Brady's messages visit the CMML Web site at: www.cmml.us/26below. ■



Our Mid-Life Journey to the Mission Field

by **Todd & Miriam Eichenauer**

Oftentimes we make the assumption that the Lord only calls young people or retired folks to serve Him overseas. How can a typical family, especially one with teenagers, pick up and go to the mission field? How does one leave a house and vehicles, an established career and ministries within the local assembly? What if the children are not excited about the opportunity? I'd like to share our story with the prayer that other middle-aged families may be encouraged to pursue overseas missions in the future.

In July 2009, Dave Harvey, missionary to the Philippines for over 40 years (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 9), preached at our assembly in Cleveland, Ohio. The Lord spoke through Dave to my heart. As the Lord continued to lead, my wife Miriam and I prayed with the elders to determine if this interest could be a calling into missions. By December, the call was confirmed, and we made a two-year commitment to serve the Lord at Faith Academy, a school for missionary children, located in Manila, Philippines. I gave notice to the principal and superintendent of the public school system where I had been teaching music for 12 years, and they offered me a two-year leave of absence. This was just one of the many confirmations we received that the Lord was leading us.

When we answered the call to go to the Philippines, we didn't know how the Lord was going to work out the details. It was an amazing faith experience to see the Lord orchestrate things in ways we couldn't have imagined ahead of time. A family we knew needed a place to live for two years and was willing to care for our home in our absence. A missionary family on home assignment needed a vehicle. Their prayers were answered by the availability of our cars.

In the year leading up to our departure, we had many conversations with missionaries already in the Philippines, hoping to prepare ourselves for the change in culture. But nothing could prepare us better than a trip to "scout out the land." Miriam and I flew to Manila for a two-week working vacation in the spring of 2010. Dave and Ruth Harvey introduced us to many of the local assemblies they helped plant. We also made contact with two Faith Academy missionary families who were heading back to the States on furlough the following year and needed someone to sublet their home and care for their vehicle in their absence. I spent several days at Faith Academy and met many of the students and staff with whom I would be

working. We fell in love with the friendly people of the Philippines, both at Faith Academy and in the assemblies.

On July 8, 2010, Miriam and I and three of our five children—Heidi (13), Joshua (11), and Katrina (9)—flew to Manila to begin our journey of serving the Lord overseas. Saying good-bye was one of the most difficult things about entering the mission field. We left a very close extended family and church family. Miriam had never lived anywhere but our home town except for the four years she attended Emmaus Bible College. We stepped out of leadership from our church, our community, our home school group, at the public school where I taught, as well as two Christian camp ministries in other states. We also left behind our two older children, one a recent college graduate and the other in the midst of his college studies. There were many tearful farewells.

Dealing with separation is much easier now than for missionaries in past generations. With the use of the Internet, we can send e-mails and text messages, make phone calls via MagicJack, and even video call with Skype. Initially, our children were not on board with our move to the Philippines. While they realized that obedience to God's call is essential to loving Him and experiencing His blessing, they didn't want to leave their friends and cousins. We allowed them to express their feelings and spent a lot of time in prayer. There were rough days during our first year as our family adjusted to a new culture, climate, and way of life, but the Lord was working in our children's hearts. Now there will be many tearful farewells when we say good-bye and return to the States!

The adjustment to a foreign language has been less difficult for our family than for many missionaries. I work at an international school with students and staff from 23 different countries and have many nationalities represented in my choirs, but everyone speaks English, the language of instruction. Because of this, we have only learned a few words in Tagalog, the local Filipino language. The language barrier has been most obvious in our Filipino assembly. While we sing many songs in English, the breaking of bread service and sermons are in Tagalog. This has been a challenge for our family, especially for our children. It has been very encouraging to watch them establish relationships at the chapel and get involved where they can. Most of the believers speak some English, but it is not their heart language. Still, in spite of our ignorance, it



Hosting the ladies' fellowship Christmas party



Concert Choir field trip to our assembly



Todd directing the Middle School Choir at Faith Academy



Joshua playing with child from Shepherds Home

appears that our presence speaks louder than our "lack of" words. We have been welcomed by the Filipinos from the day we got off the plane and given many opportunities to serve through hospitality, preaching and music.

God has provided abundantly during our time on the mission field. When we left the States, we knew a lot of people who said they would be praying for us. We have come to realize the power of prayer. We have experienced an emergency appendectomy, have been stranded on a Boy Scout camp out where the Filipino military had to rescue my son and me from flash flood waters and had times when we felt spiritually oppressed. With a phone call back home, the prayer warriors interceded on our behalf and the Lord took care of all our needs! He has done some wonderful work in our family and through us, and it is all because of people praying!

He has also amazed us with His financial provision. We have received gifts from our home assembly, friends, and family, but the majority of gifts have come from people we have never met. These include widows, retirees, families, estates, as well as assemblies from all over the country including Alaska and the Bahamas. Even a Christian children's camp sent us an offering they collected to support the Lord's work overseas! Tears well up in my eyes as I reflect on how our heavenly Father has shown us that not only does He call His children into His service, but He is a gracious and loving Master. We can truly say that He has abundantly supplied all of our needs according to His glorious riches! (Philippians 4:19)

This experience has broadened our family's worldview such that we will never see it the same again. We have only caught a glimpse of God's love for the world and of the endless ways in which He is reaching out in that love to the lost through local assemblies and missionaries all over the globe. We have witnessed poverty that clashes with our American mindset of the fairness of life. We have seen the hardest working people rewarded a weekly wage that would not cover a businessman's lunch, but by God's grace, they are able to feed a family of seven. I have directed children "from (nearly) every tribe, tongue and nation" as they sing praises to the Lord. We have witnessed the loneliness of separation from family and friends but the joy of

making new friends and a greater understanding of what Jesus said in Matthew 19:29, "Anyone who has left father or mother or children for My name's sake shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life." Our world has grown smaller, but our faith has grown larger.

When we approached our elders requesting them to pray about the possibility of God calling us to the mission field, they responded with great encouragement and blessed us in their commitment to seeking His will for our assembly and our family. They commended us for two years and have been faithful in their encouragement during our time in the field. Our elders have asked us to spend a year back home where I will return to my teaching position. They are committed to joining us in prayer as we seek the Lord's direction for the next "calling" He may have for us. There are so many needs around the world. We in America have been blessed with an abundance of spiritual wealth, and we need to share it with a world that is lost and seeking the Truth. It has been a great blessing to be in the will of the Lord here in the Philippines. We know that as we commit ourselves to His service, He will use us where He deems right. We look forward to taking His hand as He leads on. ■



Todd and Miriam Eichenauer and their family were commended to the work of the Lord in the Philippines in 2010 by Westlake Bible Fellowship, in Westlake, OH.



caring for those who care in *France*

by Judy Wastle

Come apart before you come apart!

"Come apart by yourselves to a quiet place and rest a while." (Mark 6:31)

dreams and wishes



When we married in 1979, we talked about being missionaries one day or running a Bed & Breakfast or motel. We never thought that 25 years later, God would bring those two ideas together. Nor did we think that we would end up in France. My French teacher failed me in ninth grade and told me never to come back again! Nor did we expect to be ministering in an isolated medieval hamlet.

unlikely surroundings



Entrepierres (meaning "between the rocks") is an ancient collection of stone buildings dating back to the 15th century. It nestles between two mountains in the foothills of the Alps. The ministry is situated one hour south of the Alps and just over an hour north of the Mediterranean Sea. It is here, in this calm, beautiful valley, that Christian workers come and rest, get help and are refreshed, all under the direction and ownership of a non-profit organization called Pierres Vivantes ("Living Stones"). What better place to have a center for the care of missionaries and national Christian leaders serving within the French-speaking world. Entrepierres is a place where they can get away, rest, unwind and benefit from our debriefing and short-term counseling service.



Why do missionaries need debriefing and a listening ear? Many become exhausted from serving in stressful contexts. Those living in certain parts of Africa must deal with regular power cuts, corrupt officials, dif-

ficult working relationships and far too many commitments. Our counseling service can help them consider effective ways of setting appropriate boundaries and making wise choices to avoid overextending themselves.

We have seen workers arrive at Entrepierres feeling discouraged, stressed and wanting to give up but after their stay, leave with a smile on their face and a renewed sense of hope and trust in God, despite their difficult circumstances.

The work at Entrepierres is directed by Jonathan & Rachel Ward, (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 12) who took over the ministry in 2000. Jonathan's parents, Dudley & Jill Ward (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 12), had been led by God in the late 1960s to start the ministry, bringing new life to the hamlet that lay in ruins.

caring for those who care



At the care center, Dave and I welcome the Christian workers who come alone or with their families, just like our dream many years before. We have five "gites" (guest homes) in which our visitors stay. Each one is fully equipped and self-contained. Guests need bring only their personal items, bedding and food.

As we work on renovating and improving each home, we think of the many workers that come, of their needs and struggles. How can we touch each life by making each guest home a special place? "What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? [...] Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them..." (Matthew 7:9-12).

We strive to make each place a "home" where those that are tired and weary, burnt out and hurting, can feel loved and cared for. We want it to be a place where our guests can find soft pillows, comfortable beds and clean accommodations decorated with loving touches. We have witnessed the living conditions of some Christian workers: old, cramped apartments in noisy buildings and dirty cities. Here they can enjoy



the quiet, the sunshine and the pure mountain air. Christian workers give so much—it is a privilege and a joy to be able to bless them with a place they can truly enjoy, whether for a weekend or for three weeks.

a team with different gifts



We have several part-time French associates: Claire-Lise helps Jonathan with the many requests for debriefing and short-term counseling; Daniel, a licensed psychiatrist, also helps to share the load, along with his wife Laurence, a medical doctor. We also have Antoine, a chiropractor, and Bernard and Sylvie, who help with some the practical work, along with Philippe, who helps with cutting the grass and pruning the trees.

a crazy adventure



How did we get to be here? We must have been crazy, coming to France with next to no French skills. What a huge change, going from a city the size of Toronto, where we owned our own renovation and decorating business, to living in a small hamlet with six neighbors. We left behind our two grown children and all our belongings, and arrived with four suitcases.

So how did it happen? In 2002 we opened our home to Jonathan and Rachel Ward and their three children, who were on furlough. They stayed with us for three months. This was a blessing from God as our daughter had just left for Bible School and we entered the empty nesting stage. With the arrival of the Ward family, we had three lovely blonde children running around our home. We can see how God brought our paths together. In 2003, we offered to come and visit them in France to help with renovating and decorating for a month. Once here, we felt that God was leading us to join with them in the work. So we returned to France in August 2004, but what a shock! We hardly understood a word anyone said and everything was so different from living in Canada. We were suddenly in a culture where people greet each other by kissing, eat raw meat, and enjoy frog's legs and snails.

growing and learning



Over the years we have learned a lot and have grown a lot. We are so glad to be able to use the gifts that God has given us. Many of those that come here have needs and hurts, frustrations and problems in their ministries and families. This place offers them a safe place to rest and to heal, and we consider it a privilege to pray for each guest while they are here.

It has become a challenge to balance our workload, however. Our plates are more than full taking care of all the buildings, and we need help. The center has a library that we have recently renovated. We are working on finishing a second counseling room and we have a large building that is also being renovated. In addition, we have the grounds to maintain.

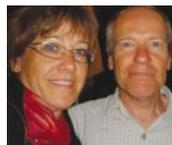
Recently, the ministry was offered the use of a new property: a large, four-bedroom home with a swimming pool. Next summer our guests will benefit from its refreshing water during the hot summer months. This large home can accommodate small groups and teams that need a place to meet for a few days. The new owners visited missionary friends that were staying here, saw the work, and caught the vision. They saw that the neighboring house was for sale and offered to buy it so that we could expand our ministry. What a blessing!

catching the vision



Other people have also blessed us by coming to help in a short-term capacity for several weeks or up to a few months. A friend in our assembly in Toronto has committed to crocheting an afghan for each guest home, matching the colors of each.

Our most pressing need? Please pray that another couple will catch the vision and come and join us full-time to share the load. ■



Dave and Judy Wastle were commended from Don Valley Bible Chapel in 2004 to serve in Provence, France at Entrepierres.

From top of page 14 (in paragraph order): Coquelicot – one of the units; Oustalet – used to be the presbytere where the priest would live; The village in the late 1960's; The Village today; Tournesol (meaning sunflower) - one of the units; Tournesol kitchen; Our current team of full and part-time workers (missing Rachel Ward); Dave and Judy Wastle; Grange et Farigoule – the new property donated for our use; Porche route – view of our roadway through the village.