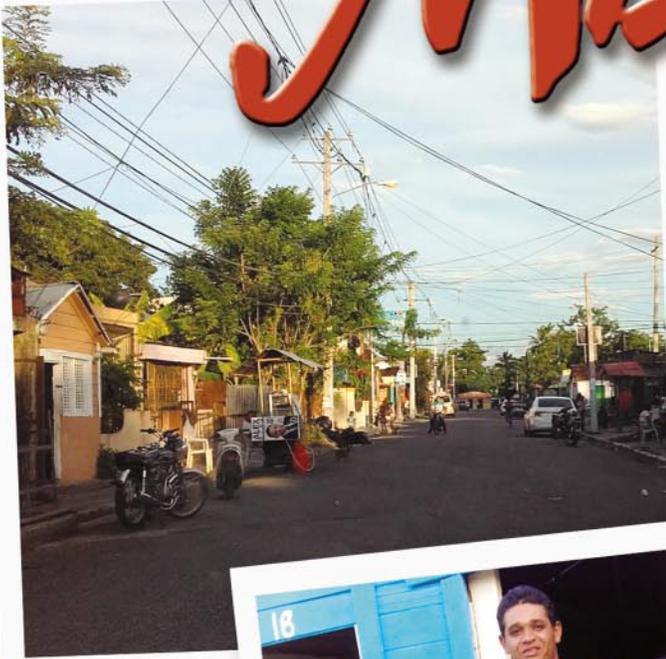


Missions



YOUR
Visit to the
Dominican
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Camp Ministry
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**Top 7 Training
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Thinking It Through

TOM TURNER

I Just Can't Stop Staring at You!

Anxious to get back to his wife and children after spending 12 nights overseas on business, my son-in-law took the overnight flight home arriving at 5:30 a.m. His two children missed him so much that they got up early to greet him. They wanted to be sure to see their dad before going to school. During breakfast he noticed his seven-year-old daughter watching him intently. Finally she said, "Daddy, I just can't stop staring at you!" That would make any dad's heart fill with joy.

With a lump in my throat, I found myself reflecting on the depth of my granddaughter's comments and thinking about the deep love she had for her daddy. She just wanted to be with him. She missed him so much while he was away, and using Skype to stay in touch was not the same as having him right there with her.

I then began to think about our relationship with our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. How much do we miss Him? Do we enjoy being in His presence? Are we anxious for His soon return? "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5) He reminded us that "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20) We are always on His mind as He makes intercession on our behalf to the Father.

What a unique and wonderful position we enjoy as believers. We have access into the very presence of a holy God, all because of what our Savior did for us on the cross at Calvary. But sometimes we have to be reminded, don't we? Too often we forget to say "thank you." Perhaps that is why the Lord Jesus made provision for us to do just that as we "stare" at Him while gathered around the emblems of remembrance in worship each week. Many times I like to think of Him sitting on

the opposite side of the table observing us as we worship.

Oh, how He must enjoy hearing our voices joined in hymns of praise as brothers lead the assembly in worship when we together remember His suffering, death, burial, and bodily resurrection from the grave. He is our hope, our love, our Redeemer, our Savior, our Lord. He is the One preparing our place in heaven. Remember when He said, "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me." (John 17:24) Imagine, He is speaking to His Father about us.

Jesus said, "This do... in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." (I Corinthians 11:25–26) He invites us to be His guest, and that is why we gather around the Lord's Table to give Him our heartfelt praise and adoration. Our salvation came at a tremendous cost to the Son of God. A brother once reminded me about the frequency of the Lord's Supper when he said "one more and one less time" until He takes us home or comes again.

As my son-in-law missed his children and they missed their daddy so much, I feel certain that the Lord Jesus misses us

when we are absent from the Lord's Table. He wants us there to say "thank you," for it is only "until He comes." He knows that one day this remembrance meeting will be over,

and we will be with Him in heaven for all eternity.

In the meantime, as my granddaughter reminded her daddy that she couldn't stop staring at him, perhaps we can be reminded as we gather with all the saints this Lord's Day to say, "Heavenly Father, I just can't stop 'staring' at Your Son who gave His life for me!" ■

Gathered in Thy name, Lord Jesus, losing sight of all but Thee,
Oh, what joy Thy presence gives us, calling up our hearts to Thee!
How He set His love upon Thee—called Thee His beloved Son;
Yet for us He did not spare Thee, by Thy death our life was won.
Oh the joy, the wondrous singing, when we see Thee as Thou art!
Thy blest name, Lord Jesus, bringing sweetest music to God's heart.¹

¹ Wellesley, C. A. "Gathered in Thy Name, Lord Jesus."

Tom Turner is CMML's Vice President, Publishing

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COVER PHOTO: Andre Walker—Photos from San Francisco de Macoris, Dominican Republic



Your Visit to the Dominican Republic

A Narrative View of San Francisco de Macoris

BY ANDRE AND YANERYS WALKER

Imagine... You've just landed at Santo Domingo's main airport on the south shore of the Dominican Republic. Your 20-minute, \$30 taxi ride to the bus station contrasts the typically serene Caribbean Sea on the left with sparsely placed run-down shops and businesses on the right. As you approach the city center, you ask about all those tiny sheds that don't seem to fit the surroundings along the river you're crossing. "Are people living in those things?" There's so much activity—in vehicles and on foot—as far as you can see! The bus station looks bigger and better than most in the United States. The capital, Santo Domingo, has a population of about three million. That's almost 29 percent of the entire country's popula-

tion. Before you know it, you're out of the city and speeding along the 80-mile expressway that connects Santo Domingo to Santiago, the "second capital" as it's called.

Get to know the family

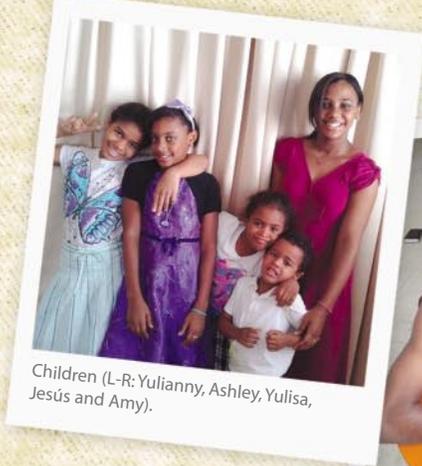
Two hours later you reach San Francisco de Macoris (SFM), a relatively small city of 250,000, where you meet Andre. Your short ride to the house leaves you almost as stunned as Andre's driving and the questions he asks on the way. Three thug-looking types on the corner don't seem to notice your bags being unloaded and whisked through a metal door into a tiny common area separating the three-story house-turned-apartment-building from a smaller modest house beside it. Yanerys meets you upstairs, leading you through the kitchen into a dining room and den area. You're introduced



A street in San Francisco de Macoris.



1st floor: meeting place;
2nd floor: Walker's home;
3rd floor: apartment for two students.



Children (L-R: Yulianny, Ashley, Yulisa, Jesús and Amy).



Jorge playing the guitar.

one-by-one from all directions to Arsenio and Matilde (Yanerys's parents), Amy and Ashley (Andre and Yanerys's daughters), and then Jorge (Yanerys's cousin). Arsenio rattles off something with laughter and exaggerated body language that clearly means, "stop talking, let's pray and eat!" Supper consists of coconut-flavored rice, the tastiest roasted chicken you ever experienced and a red pinto bean sauce. Via translation you hear:

Andre: "Prayer starts in 25 minutes."

Arsenio: "Won't we hear a message from our brother? We invited some people."

Andre: "That wasn't the plan."

Arsenio: "Then change the plan."

Yanerys: "He just got here."

Andre: "He thinks you came here to preach."

You: "I'm not a preacher, but I don't mind sharing."

Matilde: "The man is tired. He had a long trip."

Arsenio: "What does *he* say?"

Andre reluctantly translates your last statement adding, "But we're not going to omit prayer." Arsenio, in his rejoicing, spills his drink right into his plate. "No problem," he says unfazed, "it's all going to the same place."

Meet the assembly

Soon all head downstairs to the tiny meeting place—the living room of Arsenio and Matilde. Victor arrives on foot with



Victor and Julia and children (L-R: Yulisa, Victor, Jesús, Yulianna, Julia).



Sisters (L-R: Matilde, Yanerys, Luz, Nina, Julia).

Julia (both recently baptized) and their three children. He left his motorbike home to avoid loading all five of them on it at once. Earlier in the day he would have been transporting bread and other products to various distribution points, and Julia would have swept the curbs that are so quickly refilled everyday. Andre brings Luz, the elderly widow who, thank God, is able to walk after major hip surgery near the end of last year. Two or three others enter and sit near the back.

Things get started at 7 p.m. with Jorge on the guitar (A first year engineering student and the only teenager present). Victor leads a simple melody. Five-year-old Jesús is crouched behind, looking curiously up at you. Tonight there are 10 adults. On a Sunday there might be 15 and sometimes up to 20. You recognize the next melody, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and begin singing just over a whisper so as not to distract. Amy and Ashley giggle but Yanerys sets them straight. A passage is read and requests are made. Among the prayer requests are for the upcoming meeting of the assemblies here next month, the evangelism on 17th street, Ernán who is working tonight, and a lot for a future building. After prayer time your short translated meditation is well received, and everyone greets you warmly.

Learn about the work

Upstairs again, sitting on the porch, over toast and natural ginger tea you ask about the work in general and about goals and objectives. "Three years ago I might have had a better answer," Andre says. "Back then I'd mention focusing on biblical discipleship and expositional verse-by-verse teaching to form leaders. But for now I give a bird's-eye book-by-book message to familiarize them with the Bible. With the same goal, we're also going through the *Storyteller's Bible Study* as a large discipleship class."

As you begin to ask another question Andre interrupts, "Uh, you guys sound great, but can you play a little softer please? It's almost 9:30." Amy, the pianist, is playing the guitar while second cousin Jorge is playing the piano and singing as if in a performance. Ashley would play the flute but she got tired of Amy's



Amy playing the piano.

pointers and resorted to watching *Backyardigans*. You continue, "Does your father-in-law teach?"

"He teaches one Sunday message every month, and Jorge teaches another."

"How do you all get along?"

"You're asking about my father-in-law, right? Actually, he's an answer to my prayers. I've always asked God to surround me with men who would challenge me. Men who wouldn't be afraid to look me in the eyes and say, 'you're wrong!'—especially if they can show me in the Word."

Experience a typical day

The night is exceptionally calm except for the sound of a distant conversation. Soon all you hear is the fan gently blowing in wave patterns across your mosquito net. When you awaken the room is bright and you wonder how you could have slept with so many sounds and so much activity around you. There's a smell of smoke similar to a campfire. Loud motorbikes pass at regular intervals. On the way up for breakfast you see smoldering embers in a tire rim welded to three building rods like a tripod. "That's where that



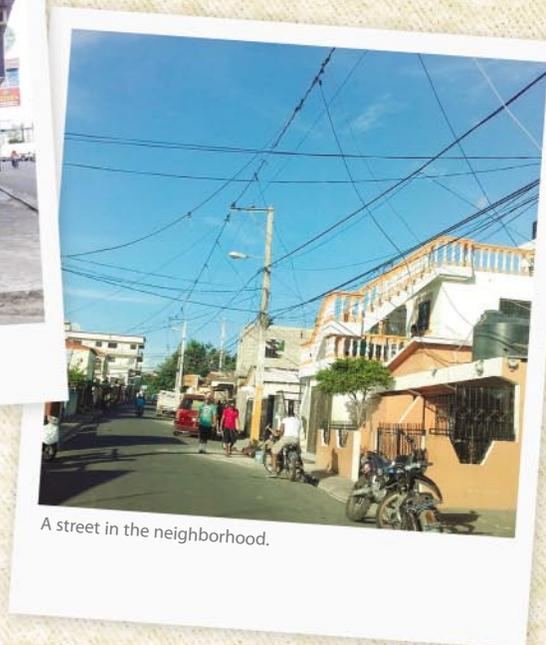
The corner of the Walker's block with motorbikes passing.

smell came from." Arsenio and Matilde have already begun cooling two cauldrons of their special mix in tubs of water. The cooled milky mixture will be sweetened and flavored, usually vanilla or passion fruit, and later frozen in bags and sold for 5 or 10 pesos each (10 or 20 cents). He'd rather be in full-time ministry if that were possible. But he's happy to find some time to serve.

Breakfast consists of ripe plantains, onions sautéed in vinegar and slices of mild white cheese almost melted over it all. The girls are working on their homeschooling with very little parent intervention—much like their Bible reading, free time and extracurricular activities (music class for Amy and gymnastics for Ashley). Yanerys, who is everywhere simultaneously with a mop, feels they have too much free time and would rather have them in a regular school.



A "Mercadito" or little market.



A street in the neighborhood.

Visit the neighborhood

"Let me show you the neighborhood," offers Andre. There are people in or in front of almost every tiny house you walk past washing, cleaning, sweeping, selling, buying, and so on. "Any of them will speak with you, but most don't really understand the Gospel," says Andre. "Catholicism here says, 'Look faithfully to Mary and the traditions. In this way you show loyalty to your mother, and then Jesus will help you through life.'"

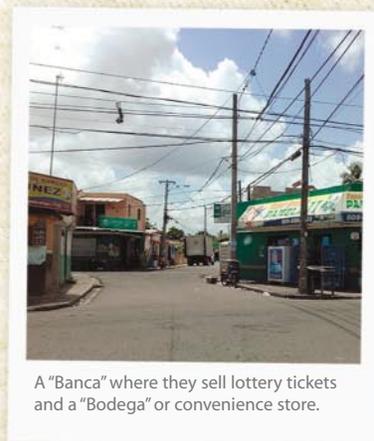
"So what do you do? What's your plan?"

"Well, I try to understand, live and share God's Word in a way that draws others to follow."

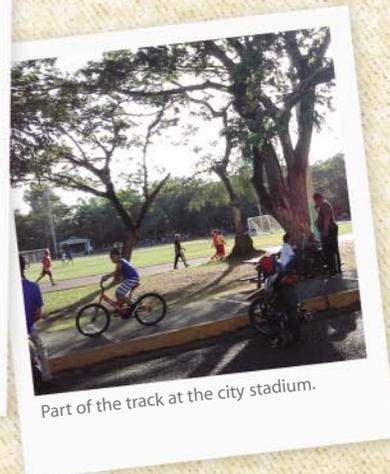
"How do you know, how does anyone know for that matter, if you're making progress?"

"Honestly, I haven't figured that out yet. So for now I just occasionally write letters mentioning the people we're impacting in one way or another."

The neighborhood looks and feels like a ghetto, with about four or five times the people. "Do they have televisions? Why is everybody outside?"



A "Banca" where they sell lottery tickets and a "Bodega" or convenience store.



Part of the track at the city stadium.

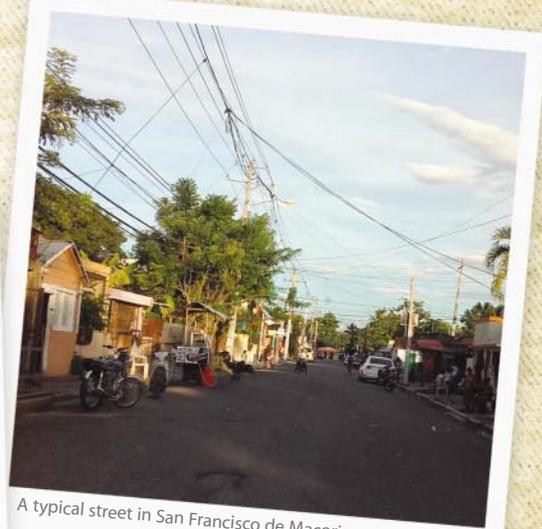
“Actually, most Dominicans like being around each other—and more so if they’re poor. They’d rather talk to you in person. That’s actually what discouraged me about continuing on the radio.” You reach an area of exceptional activity where two streets intersect and one dead ends into a dingy shack of a convenience store that’s getting way too much business. Andre explains, “This is a known drug point. After a few street meetings here we’ve gotten a lot of open doors.” Three little girls approach and ask if there’s a meeting. “Not today, but we’ll be back.”

Observe kids’ club

Later that afternoon you’re at Victor and Julia’s tiny piece-meal house in front of 40 children, five to 13 years old, seated on wooden benches. Yanerys, with occasional help from Amy and Ashley, leads them in songs and games, then teaches a Bible lesson and verse. Jorge takes the older boys out front to play jumping and running games, occasionally repeating the



Friends gathered on the street.



A typical street in San Francisco de Macoris.

verse. You ask Victor how he got involved. “Ernán had talked to me about the Lord a while ago. When he shared with me again a couple years ago I decided to give my life to Christ.”

“So Ernán won you to the Lord?”

“Yep, Ernán. You see him, but you don’t realize how much contact he has with so many people.” The kids are dismissed with a treat.

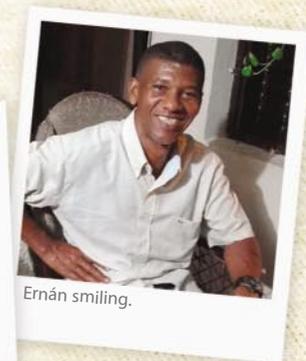
Say “see you again”

As your weeklong visit continues, you experience two other Bible classes in other locations, the last 15 minutes of one of Ashley’s daily four-hour gym classes, a Sunday morning service with 19 adults (11 in communion and two first or second-time visitors), and a Saturday night trip to help out in an evangelistic service in La Yagüiza. When the moment comes for your departure, you unexpectedly receive five hand drawn “hasta luego” cards from the five children of the small congregation. The one from Yulianni has sad children waving at an airplane but promises we’ll see you again. ■

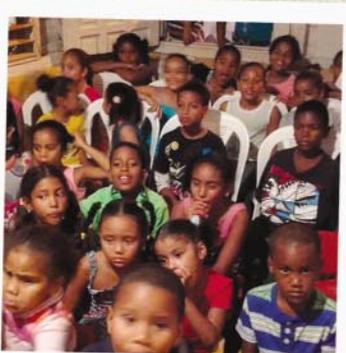
Andre and Yanerys Walker were commended in 2004 by Asamblea Evangelica in Miami, Florida.



Andre teaching the children.



Ernán smiling.



Bible class students.

May We Introduce

Teresa Brown
Missionary to Colombia



I was born into a Christian family and have been part of the assemblies since birth. It is likely that I knew Jesus died for my sins before I could tie my shoes. However, knowing and understanding are two different things. I asked God to forgive me of my sins and come into my heart many times during the first six years of my life. Of all of those times that I prayed “the prayer,” one time stands out above the others to me. I think at that time I fully understood the true meaning of the Gospel and my need for a Savior.

It is truly a blessing to have been saved at a young age and to have grown up in a family and in a church that taught me the things of God. Regrettably, I did not always take advantage of this. As I made my way through middle and high school, there were many times in my life when I was distant from God. I wouldn’t say I was rebellious. I still went to church on Sundays. I was still different than most of the kids in school; I wouldn’t curse, drink, do drugs, watch inappropriate movies, and so on. I would even share the Gospel with friends if asked about my beliefs. On the outside I looked like a great Christian, but I rarely sought God’s will or guidance in my life. My personal quiet time with God was lacking, to say the least.

Much of this changed when I moved away from home for college when I was about 20 years old. I realized that if I did not start to take my faith seriously and truly seek God’s will for my life, I would probably end up being part of the 70 to 75 percent of Christian youth who fall away from the faith and leave the Church. I started fellowshipping at another assembly near my school, and I got involved in a home Bible study there and began to really dig into God’s Word and seek His truths, not only there but on my own as well.

Through most of my college career, while studying math, I thought I would go on to graduate school to become an engineer or get a master’s degree in applied mathematics. But when I decided to let God guide me, I watched my own plans crumble. Through a series of circumstances God led me to teach math at a small Christian school in New Jersey. It was not the place I would have picked on my own, yet I loved it. God broke through my stubbornness and showed me that He knows best.

Upon graduating college, before finding my teaching job, I went on a short missions trip to Peru. Because I took Spanish lessons from second grade through college, I chose to go to a Spanish-speaking country. It was on that first trip to Peru that I fell in love with South America. Since then, I took advantage of every opportunity I had to return to the continent. I was able to observe or take part in various ministries including Christian school education, community outreach, teaching English as a second language and working with orphans in the countries of Colombia, Peru and Ecuador over the course of three short-term trips.

While the past two years of teaching in my home state of New Jersey have been wonderful, God has opened the doors for me to teach mathematics at El Camino Academy (ECA) in Bogotá, Colombia. ECA was formed to serve international evangelical missionary families and it continues to meet their unique needs, though the student body is now made up of about 80 percent national Colombians. While at ECA I hope to not only help prepare students academically but also spiritually for a lifetime of service for Christ. I am excited to have the opportunity to do what I love, in a place I love, for the God I love! ■

“Come Apart to a Desert Place
and Rest Awhile”

Camp Ministry in **PERU**



BY BECKY HULSHIZER

What a great thing it is to “get away from it all” for a few days to rest, relax and grow in the Word. And what better place to do that than at camp. Many lives have been impacted for eternity through camp ministries around the world. Since arriving in Peru in 1998 I have been privileged to be involved in different ministries with children and women. There are a number of kids’ Bible clubs throughout the year as well as ministry among women. But our favorite time of year is summer, because that means it’s time for camp!

The ministry’s start

We are so thankful to the Lord for the camp that He provided for the assemblies here in Peru and for His servants who were instrumental in starting the camp work decades ago. In 1982 Eric and Donna McKinley (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 27) began the process of purchasing the property that would become Campamento Betel. The first camp, a girls’ camp, took place in 1983, organized by one of the local assemblies in Ica. Since then, much hard work and many prayers have gone into the building of the camp over the years. The McKinleys lived and worked at the camp for many years. Tom and Carol Clark (MPH Day 26) also worked at the camp in the early years, helping to get camps started. In more recent years, Daniel and Mirtha McKinley (MPH Day 30) have been involved in the camp work, putting many hours into the administration and reconstruction of Campamento Betel after the 2007 earthquake. The camp is owned and maintained by an association of Peruvian believers. Individual camps are organized and run by the local assemblies. Thank the Lord for His faithful servants who have made Campamento Betel what it is today.

Impacting thousands

It has been a privilege and a growing experience to serve at camp in various capacities over the years. Often, when some-



one goes to the mission field, they have a plan in mind of how they will serve the Lord. Many times the Lord has other plans. It’s exciting to see the Lord open new and often unexpected opportunities to serve Him as we grow in Him and seek His will for our lives. Growing up, I had many opportunities to attend camps and serve as a counselor but I never imagined one day I would help organize camps and retreats in another country.

Since its inception, Campamento Betel has hosted many different types of camps and retreats. Thousands of children, young people and adults have enjoyed relaxation and fellowship and have been impacted for eternity by the sowing of the seed of the Word in their hearts. Organized by groups from local assemblies, the kids’ camps, coed youth camps, family retreats and ladies’ retreats have continued for many years.

Teen girls’ camp

In 2006 we were burdened to begin a camp exclusively for teen girls. Since so many young people go into the world and are no longer interested in attending kids’ clubs, our desire was to find a way to maintain contact with these girls and give them biblical answers for the issues they face daily. Camp also



Top left: Ladies' retreat; **Top right:** Camp sunset;
Right middle: Girls' camp; **Bottom (L-R):** Girls' camp;
Ladies' retreat; Teen girls' camp; Youth camp.



people's meetings throughout the year at local assemblies. This provides the opportunity to maintain contact with them during the year. Peruvians are also famous for their "Reencuentros." They enjoy having a reunion with the campers a couple months after camp. It's a great time to reconnect with the kids and for everyone to be reminded of the teaching they received.



Prayer for the future

We are so thankful for the many years Campamento Betel has been used to spread the Gospel and teach the Word, and we desire to see it used even more fully in the years to come. There is a need for a couple or family that would be dedicated to live and work year-round at

provides opportunities for more serious conversations with the girls. By the last day many open up and ask serious questions. One girl who has attended camp for a number of years recently commented, "Since I was little I always came to have fun and not to learn about the Word of God. But at one of the teen girls' camps I realized what Christ had done for me. I decided I no longer wanted to continue in sin and I wanted to be born again in Christ."

Another young woman, who is now a camp counselor, also commented that camp had impacted her life: "I came to know the Lord during a youth camp, meditating on how meaningless my life was. I was distressed and alone until I met Christ. Through the example and love of one of the Christians, I could see that God wanted to change my life and save me from condemnation." How thankful we are for testimonies like this! It is very encouraging to see young ladies going on for the Lord, and some are now involved in serving Him through the camp ministries.

Follow-up throughout the year

Many of the children and young people who attend camps during the summer months attend kids' Bible clubs or young

Campamento Betel. Please pray that the brethren from the local assemblies would be stirred up to organize and run more retreats throughout the year. At a recent ladies' retreat the women were asked what suggestions they have for the future. The answers were unanimous: that the retreats would last longer and that there would be more of them. There is a desire to have more family camps, a couples' retreat, men's retreats and a retreat for training Bible club teachers. May the Lord raise up saints to be involved in these ministries. The women also shared that they are thankful for a place to get away from the world and its distractions, to concentrate on the Word of God; a place where they are strengthened in their walks with the Lord and have sweet fellowship with other believers.

May the Lord continue to work in the lives of believers and unbelievers through the ministry at Campamento Betel! ■



Becky Hulshizer was commended in 1998 by North Ridge Bible Chapel, Sellersville, Pennsylvania.



Top 7 Training Experiences Before Going to the Mission Field

BY JOEL HERNANDEZ

I recently read an article titled “5 Questions I’d Ask a Missionary before I Supported Them.”¹ The author’s top question: Has the person been trained for cross-cultural ministry?

As I read it my thoughts wandered, recalling Christ’s admonition about the cost of following Him (Luke 14). Who begins a building project before first sitting down to figure an estimate? What commander rushes his troops to the frontlines before calculating the odds?

Ministering cross-culturally has unique challenges. These challenges are formidable and the attrition rate is high. Failure can have devastating consequences. For these and many other reasons, before you rush to the mission field, consider how to prepare for such an important task.

Here are my top seven recommended approaches to consider in preparation for missionary service.

#7 DIY

The do-it-yourself route to prepare for missions is the most challenging. But, when constraints such as distance, time or money make it impossible to find a better solution, you may have no option than to prepare on your own. The challenge is that this approach requires more initiative and drive than most of us have.

Start with reading good missions books. Biographies of great missionaries will inspire you and teach you how to believe in God for the impossible, the missionary call, the power of God to work through frail vessels, and so much more. Don't just enjoy the books, study them. David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, Hudson Taylor, Mary Slessor, Anthony Norris Groves, Amy Carmichael and Jim Elliot have much to teach you. Read *Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* to understand the kind of people God uses, the strategies they employed, and the blunders no missionary should ever repeat. Read *On Being a Missionary* to get a sense of the cost and how to prepare. Get ahold of *Operation World* and CMML's *Missionary Prayer Handbook*, and pray asking God to send more laborers.

Books are good, but more is needed. Learn from missionaries! Show hospitality to those who visit. Invite a missionary for coffee and ask about their work. Ask for their newsletters. Devour CMML's *Missions* magazine. Read it from cover to cover, pausing to pray for every request mentioned in each article.

Don't just learn from afar. Go there. Visit missionaries in their field. Go as a learner and as a servant. Take a month to a year abroad and study the culture, learn the language, understand the people, and serve them. In the process God will do a surprising work in your heart: He will sensitize you to the needs abroad and lead you to better understand His will for your life.

#6 One-course preparation

Believe it or not, there are people whose life mission turned around after taking a single course. That's it! From knowing nothing about missions to serving abroad—all because of one course. When asked what single course one should take to prepare for missionary service, I recommend *Perspectives*.

Perspectives was developed by missionary statesman Ralph

Winter, who did much to advance our evangelical understanding of missionary history and the missionary task. The course is the equivalent to a one-semester college-level course designed to look at missions from biblical, historical, cultural and strategic perspectives. The course is based on the 800-page book *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, which is a compilation of excellent articles from some of the best missions thinkers and practitioners in the last 300 years. Like a good survey course, *Perspectives* provides a good foundation for knowing why we understand missions the way we do, and why we must be involved.

The *Perspectives* course is taught all around the world. You may be surprised to find it in your area! For locations, visit Perspectives.org. Reader beware: you may not agree with every concept in *Perspectives*, so learn like a good Berean. I personally found the concept of God's dual missions challenging. Whereas *Perspectives* elevates social action (which they call Kingdom Mission) to be on par with evangelism, discipleship and church planting (which they call Church Mission), Jesus and Paul emphasize the priority of proclaiming the Gospel. Still, the course is stimulating many to engage in missions, and for that I am grateful.

#5 Week-long intensive training

I strongly recommend the Missionary Orientation Program (CMML.us/mop). This week-long intensive program, jointly sponsored by CMML and MSC Canada, meets yearly at Greenwood Hills Conference Center in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania. It is designed to prepare missionary prospects or new missionaries to thrive in their initial adaptation. For 25 years MOP has trained more than 500 people, many of whom have joined the missionary ranks.

CMML and MSC Canada highly recommend MOP to anyone considering or planning to become a missionary. The seminars are taught by a team of veteran missionaries and explore more than 20 topics that are critical to effective missionary ministry. Among them are:

- Gaining a biblical perspective of missions
- How to share the Gospel

- What is the “missionary call”
- How one is sent
- How to relate to other cultures
- Learning the language
- Successful interpersonal relationships
- Safety and security

There are other great week-long intensive programs, too many to list. Some, like New Tribes Mission’s Wayumi (USA.NTM.org/mission-trips/wayumi/course), specialize in training for work among tribal people groups. New Tribes is not likely to send you to a tribe without additional training, but this one-week intensive course helps you get a good overview of their longer training program.

Other training opportunities focus on specific aspects of missionary service. For example, The Ezekiel Project (TEPSE.org) offers basic training seminars in evangelism—a skill every missionary should have!

#4 On-the-ground training programs

A good way to grow your missionary skills is to get on-field training. “Short-term missions,” mission opportunities that last less than two years, are a growing phenomenon worldwide. Who usually signs up? Mostly young people, eager to experience missions and devote their energies to something meaningful, though not necessarily long-term. Retired believers also join; they see missions as an opportunity to use a lifetime of skills for the Lord’s work. A word of caution: not all short-term missions opportunities are equal. The best are connected to a worthy long-term project and are led by knowledge-

able, committed people on the field.

Programs such as eTeams (eTeams.ca) provide good training and experience in cross-cultural evangelism for people of all ages, usually during trips that last about two weeks. New Tribes Mission offers 15-week church planting internships. Operation Mobilization (OM.org), active in countries around the world, engages short-term missionaries in a variety of projects: poverty relief, planting churches, helping those affected by human trafficking, and more. A growing number of other organizations also provide thoughtful on-the-ground training.

#3 Specialized training

Some mission fields have such unique challenges that it would be impossible to be a missionary without specialized training. For example, you can’t fly a plane without pilot training. Plain and simple. Should you wish to serve with Mission Aviation Fellowship, for instance, you need a commercial pilot license with instrument rating, a minimum of 1,000 hours total flight time, and more. If teaching English abroad is your passion, then it would be prudent to get TESOL training. If you serve with Wycliffe as a translator, courses on phonetics, linguistics, morphology, syntax, and more are in your future.

If the Lord is guiding you into a mission field with unique challenges, prepare mentally to spend the needed time for specialized training.

#2 Missionary apprenticeship

Once upon a time, apprenticeships were the only way to learn. A youth would shadow a master craftsman for years until he himself mastered the craft. However, few people today have had such experience, so what it entails and how it works remains a mystery.

Yet if anyone has a worthwhile set of skills to pass along, it’s a missionary. Veteran missionaries have struggled to decipher and adapt to a foreign culture. They have toiled long to master the language and honed strategies to minister in their context.



A good missionary loves the people the Lord sent him or her to serve and has a passion to see the Lord's name magnified among the nations. Yet all across the globe the missionary force is aging. Many missionaries are thinking hard about and praying for ministry succession. Whether or not you are God's answer to their prayers, you can learn much from them through an apprentice relationship.

Take the initiative. Find a person, or a ministry, or a geographic/cultural/linguistic context that interests you, and write to the missionary there. Ask him or her to mentor you for an agreed amount of time. Don't worry about developing a detailed program of what this will look like. Just shadow the missionary as the disciples followed Christ. Learn by observing, asking questions, imitating, and receiving feedback on your own work.

#1 Academic study in missions

I serve as the chair of the Intercultural Studies department at Emmaus Bible College (Emmaus.edu/ics), which, along with a solid Bible foundation, equips students with various missions-related skills. These include: missions (ICS four-year major), nursing abroad (cross-cultural nursing four-year major), teaching English learners in public schools (ESL four-year major), teaching English abroad (TESOL one-year program), planting churches (church planting two-year minor), and other skills you can use abroad (ICS one-year certificate or ICS two-year minor).

Through its 75-year history, Emmaus has prepared more than 380 career missionaries and countless short-term missionaries. Many of these have had a tremendous impact for Christ, whether preaching the Gospel, planting churches, translating the Bible, founding schools and orphanages, and much more.

Having served as missionaries in Mexico, my wife and I can attest firsthand to the effect Emmaus had on fueling our passion, forming our approach, and preparing us to deal with countless issues, many of which we eventually faced. The Bible courses we studied were invaluable tools as we in turn taught others.

Academic training can be costly and takes time. Many mis-

“...whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Luke 14:33

sionaries return home to study the Bible and missions. There are many fine schools that offer college-level missions training, including Trinity International University in Deerfield, Columbia Bible College, Biola, Moody, and others.

Conclusion

Perhaps it's our American culture that pushes us to produce results—now! Perhaps it's a great sense of urgency that overtakes anyone who seriously considers the predicament of the lost. Perhaps it's because once you understand what God wants for your life, why wait? Truth is, most prospective missionaries are itching to get out there, and fast! But before you go you must prepare. Read the Scriptures, and you will discover that God is not in a hurry to place His servants on the frontlines. He took 40 years to prepare Moses and 30 years for the Messiah. For yourself, for your family, church, coworkers and supporters—prepare before you go. ■

Joel Hernandez serves on the CMML board and is the director of Emmaus Bible College's Intercultural Studies department. He and his wife, Amy, are in fellowship at Asbury Community Chapel in Asbury, Iowa, where Joel is an elder.

¹ EveryLastOne.net/2016/01/01/5-questions-id-ask-a-missionary-before-i-supported-them



A Creative Way to Help Missions

BY DEBBIE DOBSON

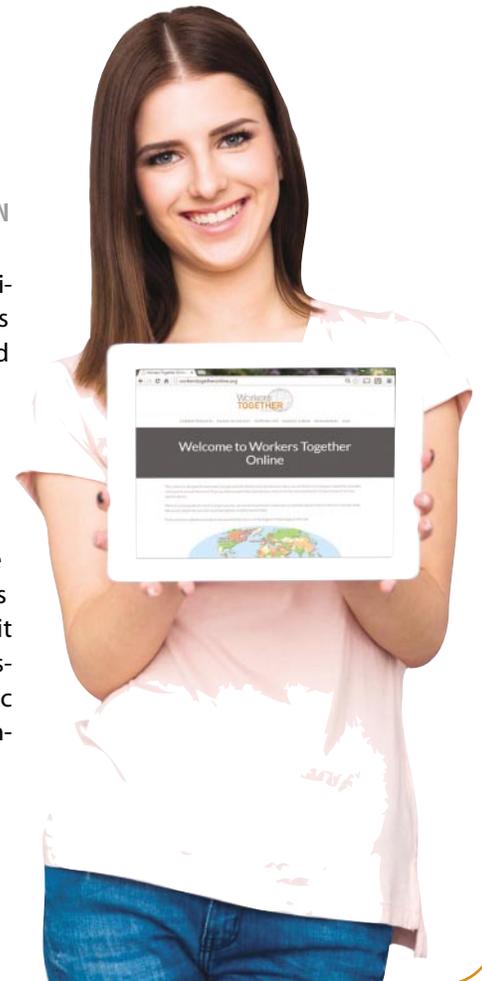
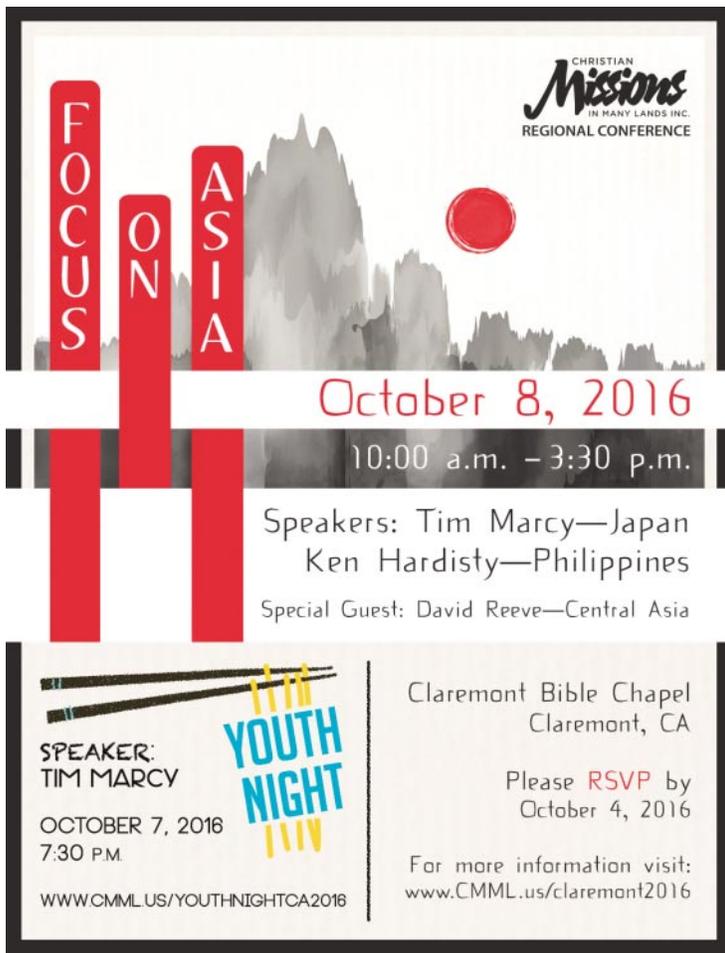
Workers Together Online is a website designed to help ladies' groups, assemblies and individuals assist missionaries. Although WTO is not an extension of the former Workers Together that was in Wheaton, Illinois, it is based on the concept that Margaret Van Ryan and Margaret Harper began in 1949 with the help of Shirley Thomson and Rene Johnson.

Workers Together closed their doors in 2003. Many missed this dedicated group and the connection it gave North American women's groups with missionaries on the field. Ten years later, with the encouragement and guidance of local elders and some former WT board members, Workers Together Online made its debut.

While it is not possible for all of us to go overseas, we can all be involved in some way to meet the needs of those who are in foreign lands. We are all called to be servants working together in God's harvest field. So, grab a cup of coffee and visit WorkersTogetherOnline.org. There you will find a list of projects needed by assembly missionaries around the world. Once you find a project that interests you, read the specific details and be connected to the "Projects Contact." There are also tabs listing items missionaries are collecting as well as tips for shipping items overseas.

This effort is not complete without the participation of those serving the Lord in foreign fields. So, if you are a missionary, please visit the website and tell us how we can come alongside to help you. ■

Debbie Dobson coordinates Workers Together Online with Laura Musclow.

FOCUS ON ASIA

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