

# HeartCry

MAGAZINE

## “What Accord Has Christ *with* Islam?”

A Biblical Evaluation of the Insider Movement







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**IN THIS ISSUE»**

What Accord Has Christ With Islam? ..... 3  
An article which demonstrates the shortcomings of the Insider Movement in light of Scripture.  
A View from the Field ..... 12  
Updates from Coordinators and Missionaries throughout the world.

Africa ..... 12  
Asia ..... 16  
Europe ..... 20  
Middle East ..... 24  
Russia ..... 28  
South America ..... 32

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HEARTCRY MISSIONARY SOCIETY | PO BOX 3506 RADFORD, VA 24143-3506  
(540) 707-1005 | WWW.HEARTCRYMISSIONARY.COM



# “What Accord Has Christ *with* Islam?”

A Biblical Evaluation of the Insider Movement

BY MATT GLASS

Darkness is falling on my *kampung* as I carry my six-month-old baby down the narrow path to my house. We're coming home after studying the Bible with a family who lives nearby. From four different mosques, I can hear the Magrib prayers echoing throughout the valley. Just before the last turn to our house, I'm stopped by an elderly woman, "*Jangan! Jangan! Harus tutup kalau bawa bayi keluar sekarang!*" (Don't! Don't! You must cover your baby if you carry him outside right now!). She is afraid for the safety of my son. In her mind, the brief interval at dusk between the call to prayer which ends the day and the call to prayer after dark which begins the new day is a restless time in the spirit-world. It is particularly precarious for infants naively taken outside the shelter of their homes by unwitting parents. It exposes them to evil spirits who could potentially harm them and terrorize them throughout the night. Trying to ease her look of fright, I smile and say, "It's alright *Ibu*. God will protect him from the evil spirits."

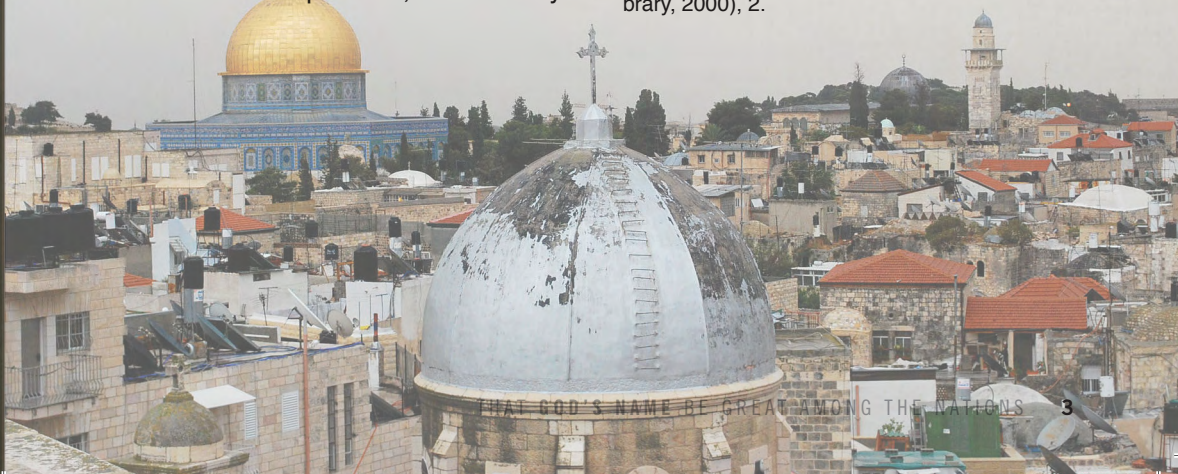
**"SHE IS A FOLK MUSLIM AND SEEKS NOT ONLY TO PLEASE ALLAH, BUT ALSO TO PACIFY CAPRICIOUS EVIL SPIRITS LURKING IN THE TWILIGHT."**

**T**his Muslim woman's worldview is as much colored by superstitions and folklore as it is Islam's holy book – the *Qur'an*. She, along with hundreds of millions of other Muslims in Indonesia, combine formal Islamic faith with ancient Hindu and animistic beliefs and practices. In fact, for most like her, the ancient superstitions play a more dominant role in day-to-day life. She is a folk Muslim and seeks not only to please Allah, but also to pacify capricious evil spirits lurking in the twilight. Syncretism of this sort, far from being esoteric and impractical, has a very

pragmatic purpose – if all the known powers are pacified, then there's no reason why she and her family can't be blessed with healthy, prosperous lives.

When the Islamic world is surveyed, it's clear that folk Muslims are not in the minority. Some have identified as much as 75 percent of all Muslims as folk Muslims.<sup>1</sup> Blending Islamic faith with folk beliefs, in other words, is not a new phenomenon, as it has been happening from Marrakech to

<sup>1</sup> Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 2.





Manila for centuries. It is no surprise, then, that many Muslims would also be willing to syncretize Islamic faith with many of the Bible's truths about Jesus (Isa). It is also not surprising that their motives wouldn't be any different than when they combine Islam and animism – to pacify known powers for the sake of obtaining physical blessing. Many of them, recognizing that God answers Christians' prayers, pray using Jesus' name. His name has become a "power word" through which they seek Allah's help.

None of this is surprising, nor is it foreign to the pages of Scripture. In Acts 19, for example, we read about the sons of Sceva attempting to use Jesus' name for their own purposes. Theirs was also no doubt a folk faith. However, what is surprising is that missionaries are not only failing to confront the type of syncretism mentioned above; but are also promoting, justifying, and attempting to build a biblical-theological basis for it. It has, in short, become a legitimate methodology to reach Muslims with the gospel in the eyes of many missionaries. This methodology is often labeled "the insider movement" (IM), which is perhaps a bit misleading. Calling it a movement implies it's homogenous with agreed-upon beliefs and practices. Most missionaries, even those in support of IM, would tell you this is far from the truth. However, there are some general characteristics that those who are considered IM share, most basic of which is identity. *They maintain that someone can be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and still remain within Islam.* In short, they can be Muslim followers of Jesus.

There are many reasons why missionaries and IM "believers" are insisting that Muslim-background believers can stay within their socio-religious community (Islam) and be faithful followers of Christ. However, if the conclusion itself doesn't bear the weight and scrutiny of the Scriptures, then no justifying reason can be legitimated. It is the current author's conviction that IM has not only been weighed, measured, and found wanting by the Scriptures as a methodology,<sup>2</sup> but in fact also consti-

tutes a tacit denial of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, to profess to be a Muslim is a *de facto* denial of Jesus Christ. The self-ascription, "Muslim follower of Jesus," is an inherently contradictory oxymoron at best, and damning at worst. This I hope to demonstrate by looking at a few key passages in the New Testament.

## UNEQUALLY YOKED

In 2 Corinthians, Paul was writing to a group of believers who were continuing to have some degree of association with their former pagan religion. Although Paul had already given them commands and prohibitions regarding interaction with their past religion (see 1 Corinthians 8-10), apparently they didn't listen too closely to what he had written. So, he writes them again about the same subject, wanting them to see what was ultimately at stake. Relevant to the discussion about IM are the words:

- ◉ *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.'"*  
◉ (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

In these verses, Paul abruptly comes to

.....  
*the Insider Movement Paradigm from Four Perspectives: Theology of Religions, Revelation, Soteriology and Ecclesiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2011).

2 Doug Coleman, *A Theological Analysis of*

the heart of his message to the Corinthians about associating with paganism – if they fail to “go out and be separate,” then they fail to obtain God’s accompanying promises: “I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me.” In other words, their eternal salvation was ultimately at stake.

The main command in these verses is found in the first sentence: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.” But what does that mean? Does it mean they should extract themselves from the unbelieving world around them in order to live in “Christian ghettos,” safe from all those nasty pagans? There were several Christian villages, for example, created by the Dutch in West Java in order to help converts escape Islam. In some places they built massive Western church buildings where their liturgy could be faithfully carried out each week. Over the last 100 years or so, these communities have become ingrown and fractured. They’ve had little (if any) effect on the millions of Muslims around them, and now Islamicists are encroaching on their backyard. In order to get to one near my house, you have to drive by the local *Front Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defenders’ Front) office. Now, there may be a time and season for extraction similar to what produced these villages, especially if persecution is severe (one HeartCry evangelist in Indonesia was forced to flee to a different province for seven years). But extractionism and ghettoism is not what Paul has in mind. He would be sending a very mixed message indeed, if this is what he meant (read 1 Corinthians 5:10)!

With the words “unequally yoked,” Paul is alluding to a prohibition found in Deuteronomy 22:10 that forbids a farmer from using an ox and a donkey together when plowing. Like other prohibitions in Deuteronomy, this unnatural combination would “violate the purity of the species.”<sup>3</sup> In this specific context, then, Paul is concerned about the purity of the Corinthian believers if they

were to be “yoked” together with unbelievers. So, he makes “a prohibition against forming close attachments with non-Christians...In expanded form, the principle might be expressed thus: ‘Do not form any relationship, whether temporary or permanent, with unbelievers that would lead to a compromise of Christian standards or jeopardize consistency of Christian witness.’”<sup>4</sup> The purity he has in mind, as we shall see below, is more than moral purity. Paul is not solely concerned with the Corinthians’ ethical holiness, even though it is no doubt a part of the holistic picture he paints in these verses. His concern is much broader and deeper. He wants the Corinthians to be consecrated morally and religiously in light of who they are in Christ.

In order to more thoroughly explain his prohibition and the reason for giving it, Paul goes on to ask five rhetorical questions, all of which give insight into the purity he has in mind. The first question is *moral* – “For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness?” The obvious answer is that no one who lives a life practicing righteousness can walk hand in hand with someone practicing lawlessness. The second question is *spiritual* – “Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” The answer is that no one who knows the light of God’s truth can have genuine fellowship with someone living in darkness. The fourth question (more on the third below) is about those who have *faith* – “Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?” Again, the obvious answer is one of contrast. Through faith, believers partake of Christ, something they do not share with those who do not believe. The fifth question, finally, is about *religion and worship* – “What agreement has the temple of God with idols?” The answer is that those who are the temple of God (the church) do not worship the same reality nor in the same way as those in a false, idolatrous religion.

The third question was kept for last because it is foundational to all

3 J. A. Thompson, *Tyndale Commentary*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman, vol. 5, *Deuteronomy*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1974), 257.

4 Murray J. Harris, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, *2 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 6:14.



the others. It should be understood to be about two kings who represent two vastly different *kingdoms* – “What accord has Christ with Belial?” (*Belial* is the Hebrew word for the devil). These two kings have nothing in common. Their goals, their desires, their character, their loves, their hates, and the nature of their kingdoms stand in vivid contrast. No two kings or kingdoms could be more juxtaposed. Morally, they are different – one is righteous, the other lawless; spiritually, they are different – one is light, the other is darkness; their citizens are different – believers in Jesus Christ belong to one’s kingdom, unbelievers to the other’s; and the religion and worship they engender are different – one leads men to worship the living God, the other prostrates men before idols and incense and false gods.

These five rhetorical questions are used to show the Corinthian believers that they can have no spiritual relationships with unbelievers. In short, as Christ’s followers who are in union with Him, they belong to a vastly different spiritual community; thus, any sort of partnership, fellowship, accord, portion, or agreement with a false religion and its adherents is impossible. “Go out from their midst and be separate,” then, is not a call to geographic extraction, but to maintaining a *distinct identity* as Christ’s followers in the midst of an ungodly world, especially one which wears the gaudy veneer of false religion.

Now the question must be asked: Can words intended for a Corinthian church living among pagans be faithfully applied to Christ’s followers in Islamic contexts? Does it do justice to Paul’s original intent to take commands for those in a polytheistic culture and apply them to those living in a monotheistic culture? Some people don’t think so. They argue for a substantive difference in Muslims’ religion and morality compared to pagans. The difference is so great, you cannot possibly place them in the same category, nor can you apply prohibitions regarding one to the other. So they say. But to think in this manner not only demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to properly appropri-

ate the core truths Paul is emphasizing, but also portrays a naiveté concerning Islam’s true nature. Although Islam’s belief content differs greatly from Corinthian paganism, any view of Islam informed by the Bible must come to the conclusion that the sources of both are one and the same.

## THE FATHER OF LIES

John 8 is perhaps the most heated exchange between Jesus and the Jews. In it, Jesus declares many truths about Himself and the work He came to accomplish. In response, the Jews became increasingly hostile and attempted to kill Him (v. 40). Jesus then tells them, “You are doing the works your father did” (v. 41). Then, to remove any ambiguity He states,

◉ *“If God were your Father, you would love me...You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (vv. 42a, 44)*

Remember, Jesus is not speaking to pagans when he makes these statements, but to Jews. He’s speaking to people who have inherited a religious system based upon *true* divine revelation. They were “the Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises” (Romans 9:4). But in spite of having a true religion, which gave every advantage, they still could not accept what Jesus told them about his person and work. Why? They were children of the devil, the father of lies. It was the lies of the evil one which kept them from seeing the truth in Jesus’ words. When He stated three times in chapter 8 that He was Israel’s covenant God (*ego eimi*, or “I am,” in vv. 24, 28, 58; see Exodus 3:14), He was not understood the first two times and almost stoned for blasphemy the third time. When He spoke of His cru-



cifixion (v. 28) and setting them free from slavery to sin (v. 36), their inability to comprehend led Jesus to declare about them, “Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God” (v. 47). In short, Jesus’ *person* and *work* were incomprehensible to them, bearing witness that their true source did not spring forth from the true divine revelation found in the Hebrew Scriptures, but from the devil himself. This is a harsh reality, but it demonstrates that the dividing line between all that’s true and all that’s a lie centers upon Jesus’ person and work. All spiritual and religious truth finds its pulse in what’s true about Him; anything else comes from the polluted well of Satan’s lies.

How, then, would Islam measure up to Christ’s words in John 8? Is it even possible to state with confidence, or is it arrogant to even try? In my experience, many Western missionaries have sang songs of Jubilee over how much the *Qur’an* says about Jesus. Some even speak of how God is using it in redemptive ways to reach Muslims.<sup>5</sup> It is true, Jesus (Isa) is mentioned many times in the *Qur’an*. He’s considered to be the greatest of all prophets (excepting Muhammad), sinless, born of a virgin, worker of miracles. But after the caravan has passed, and all the dust settles, the *Qur’an* denies that which is of primary importance – the person and work of the biblical Jesus. In Islam’s holy book, Isa is no more than “another Jesus” Paul chided the Corinthians about (2 Cor. 11:4). He was a great man, but only a man. To suggest he was God is to commit *shirk*, the worst possible sin in Islam. Here are the words of the *Qur’an*:

◦ *“They do blaspheme who say: Allah is Christ the son of Mary.” But said Christ, ‘O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.’ Whoever joins other gods with Allah – Allah will forbid him the Garden, and the Fire will be his abode. There will for the wrongdoers be no one to help.*

5 Dean S. Gilliland, “Modeling the Incarnation for Muslim People: A Response To Sam Schlorff,” *Missiology* 28, (2000, July 1): 335.

◦ *They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God...Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger...” (Al Ma’idah: Surah 5:72-73, 75)*

Isa, this messenger, lived a perfect life, yes; but to suggest that Allah’s holy prophet became a curse by dying on a tree is foolishness! Allah would never allow his prophet to die in such a disgraceful way. Here is the testimony of the *Qur’an* concerning Jesus’ death:

◦ *“That they said (in boast), ‘We killed Christ Jesus the Son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah’ – But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not.” (Al Nisa: Surah 4:157)*

To state with any degree of confidence that the true source of the *Qur’an*, and consequently Islam, is the devil would be interpreted as narrow-minded “naïve realism”<sup>6</sup> to many people (missionaries included). But Jesus’ followers have always been able to speak with confidence where we know that God has spoken (2 Peter 1:19). *There should be no doubt that Islam as a religious system is rooted in the lies of the devil.* There are many different types of Muslims in the world with many different beliefs; no one questions that reality. But there are specific beliefs all Muslims share everywhere – whether they’re Sunni, Shiite, or Sufi; or were educated in a Wahhabi or Deobandi madrasah or in an Indonesian *pesantren*. They all deny what

6 Bradford Greer, review of *A Theological Analysis of the Insider Movement From Four Perspectives: Theology of Religions, Revelation, Soteriology And Ecclesiology*, by Doug Coleman, in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 28:4 (Winter 2011), 205. Naïve realism is the epistemology which states that people can make true propositions based on the raw data available to them through sensory experience.



the Bible teaches about the person and work of Jesus Christ. This, in the eyes of Muslims worldwide, is part and parcel of what it means to identify oneself as a Muslim. For centuries Islam has maintained certain "identity codes" that are rooted in the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*, and woven into the very fabric of these is a denial of the most important biblical truths about Jesus. From its inception, Islam was intent on rejecting core Christological truths and recapitulating Jesus (Isa) as only a prophet. This is perhaps why He is mentioned so much in the *Qur'an* – Muslims were trying to reinterpret Him and make Him fit into their own story.

So, we return to our question earlier: can Paul's injunctions and prohibitions to the Corinthian church be applied to Jesus' followers in Islamic contexts? I am persuaded that no other answer could possibly be given in light of what was just discussed other than

an emphatic, "Yes!" What, then, are the implications for those from a Muslim background who would follow Jesus? God commanded the Corinthians through Paul's letter, "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them." In order to faithfully follow Jesus Christ, those from a Muslim background must obey this command by maintaining a distinct moral, spiritual, and religious identity from the Muslims around them. Failure to do so will mean failure to obtain God's covenant promises. Failure to do so will mean that they identify themselves with a false religion that is in darkness; that they align themselves with unbelievers who deny the person and work of Jesus Christ; that they make themselves one with a religion that is a part of a kingdom in opposition to Christ. In identifying with Islam, they juxtapose themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, tacitly denying Him.

## MAKING SENSE OF JESUS' WORDS

I am convinced that Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians must be understood in this manner if one is to be faithful to Jesus in a Muslim context. This is also the only way to make any sense of Jesus' own words in the Gospels. Jesus spoke about the difficulty His followers would face for openly identifying with Him, especially in places that are hostile to the gospel. In order to communicate the cost of discipleship, He said many hard things that caused the weak and those seeking physical blessing to turn back (John 6). One such Scripture passage, laden with the gritty realities of following Jesus, is Matthew 10:32-39.

In this passage, Jesus is giving instructions to his twelve disciples before sending them out two by two. Although spoken to the twelve, Christ's followers throughout history have always seen in these words an ongoing depiction of how they should live in spite of the sociological consequences for following him. Jesus' words point beyond the twelve to encompass all disciples – "So everyone" (v. 32), "whoever" (vv. 33, 37, 38, 39). These words, then, are

intended to convey Christ's demands for all of His followers regardless of context. For both the disciple in the ancient Near East living among Jews and pagans and the disciple in Indonesia living among Muslims, Christ's words sketch a picture of obedience and its potential dire results.

In Matthew 10:32-33, Jesus said, "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (vv. 32-33). Jesus could not be any clearer. A necessary requirement for all His disciples is that they acknowledge Him before others. Ned B. Stonehouse writes, "Jesus makes the entire position of men in the world to come, whether for weal or woe, to depend upon their relationship to and attitude toward Him in this present world."<sup>7</sup> They must confess Him; they must identify with Him. If they fail to do so, He will likewise deny them on Judgment Day. This means they must "not fear those who kill the body but cannot

<sup>7</sup> Ned B. Stonehouse, *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels: Some Basic Questions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), 190.



kill the soul. Rather [they must] fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (v. 28).

What people say with their lips is very important. This couldn't be more emphatically stated than when Jesus said, "for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:37). In the context, Jesus was saying that people's words – what they say – give evidence for what's in their hearts. Anyone who continually confesses Jesus before others gives evidence of the true disposition and loyalty of their heart. The opposite is true, as well. Anyone who consistently denies Jesus gives evidence their heart has never been changed by His grace.

As I have attempted to prove above, those who claim to be "Muslim followers of Isa" consistently deny Jesus Christ every time they take for themselves the self-ascription, "Muslim." More often than not, they simply claim to be Muslims without adding any modifying phrase. Some are able conscientiously to do so because they claim the word "Muslim" means, "One who submits to God." Their reasoning: "Who wouldn't want to say they're someone who submits to God!" They insist this is what they're communicating when they confess it before others. This, to me, is very ironic, especially given their reasons for not wanting to identify as a Christian. Many refuse this title because they say it's misunderstood by Muslims, who believe a Christian is someone that "eats pork, drinks alcohol, and practices free sex." They refuse to use "Christian" based upon the perception of a Muslim hearer. What seems to get lost in this line of reasoning is the perception of a Muslim hearer when they hear someone confess to be a Muslim!

This incoherent thinking demonstrates the lies they've bought and the way they numb their own consciences. If the self-ascription "Muslim" only communicated its etymological meaning, then their reasoning would be valid. However, "Muslim" communicates much more than the bare meaning, "One who submits to God." *It communicates that someone is a part of the religion of Islam.* It communicates that

someone believes the words of the *Shahada*, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet." Embedded in this identity and confession is a belief in God's radical oneness and, implicitly, a denial of what the New Testament teaches about Jesus Christ. Embedded in this confession is also the belief that the *Qur'an* is the true and final revelation from God which abrogates any given previously – for "Muhammad is his prophet." Any Muslim who takes the *Qur'an* seriously understands Muslim identity in this way.

In Matthew 10:34-36, Jesus goes on to state, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household." These were the social consequences for openly identifying with Jesus Christ in first-century Palestine. Jesus' followers' love for Him produced hatred and animosity in their family members. D. A. Carson writes, "As many Jews in Jesus' day thought the coming of Messiah would bring them political peace and material prosperity, so today many in the church think that Jesus' presence will bring them a kind of tranquility. But Jesus insisted that His mission entailed strife and division (v. 34). Prince of Peace though He is, the world will so violently reject Him and His reign that men and women will divide over Him."<sup>8</sup> These divisions, according to Jesus, will take place in the relationships that are most near and dear. But, as Jesus demands, His followers' love for even their own families must pale in comparison to their love for Him. They, as well, must be more terrified about God not accepting them than not being accepted by family and community. If a person's love and fear of family and community is greater than his love and fear of Christ, then that person is not worthy of Him and cannot be His disciple (see Luke 14:26).

8 D. A. Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebeline, vol. 1, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 10:34-36.



Why would a man be set against his father, and a daughter against her mother? Why would a person's enemies be those of his own household? It happens because Christ's true followers' identity is found in Him and not in the religion of their family and community; their true identity is found in One despised and rejected by their family. They are not floating down the river of their culture, but have banked on Christ. This was certainly true of one co-worker in Indonesia who was almost murdered by her family. While praying, soon after she came to faith, she began to feel convicted about keeping her faith in Christ a secret from her family. *She felt that it was her responsibility to tell her parents what God had done in her heart.* Before telling them, she went and spoke with another believer and said, "I can't live like this much longer. I need to be free. I want my parents to know, and I don't want to hide it anymore." After she told her parents of her new faith, they starting planning to poison her.

Anyone considering following Je-

sus should consider the consequences of following Him, especially those living in community-oriented Muslim cultures. Jesus tells us to count the cost (Luke 14:27-28). Family and community are what often keep many people from leaving Islam and following Christ. The Insider Movement has attempted to remove this obstacle altogether. One primary reason they insist that potential Christ-followers call themselves Muslim is so they can stay within their *oikos* (Greek for biological family). But, as Jesus clarified, a true disciple will be hated by an *oikos* who hates Him. In removing this obstacle, IM has removed the necessary crucible every would-be follower of Jesus must pass through in order to follow Him in lands where *Allahu Akbar!* is heard five times daily from mosque loudspeakers. IM would have people believe they've made it easier for Muslims to follow Jesus. But in severing the cost of discipleship from the discipleship process, they have cut people off from the Jesus who is both Lord and Christ.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

I'm sure that some people will interpret this article as insensitive to the difficulty people face coming to Christ in Muslim societies. Perhaps they think these are easy things to say as a Westerner who has had to face minimal persecution and ostracism in following Christ. What I've sought to convey, though, is not my own thoughts, opinions, or experiences. I hope I've conveyed something of what was spoken 2,000 years ago by two Jews – One who was crucified, and the other beheaded for his faith in the One crucified. For too long, missiology as an academic discipline has relied upon the experience and credentials of the missiologist as a source of authority. Maybe this demonstrates how it has evolved into a sociological and anthropological discipline, disconnected from the Holy Scriptures as its authority. I believe this is something that needs to change. Someone's experience and academic training should not govern their ability

or inability to be received if they speak meaningfully and biblically about a situation in a mission context. Experience and academic training ought to bring insight; but at the end of the day, it is God's Word that stands unrivaled. The primary job, then, of the mission practitioner is to apply God's Word cross-culturally in all its variegated beauty. This is what I have attempted to do in this article.

In my own experience, I have tried to be patient and sensitive with those who profess to be Muslim followers of Jesus. I have made an effort to correct them with gentleness, pointing to what the Bible teaches about the most basic realities of discipleship. But I've seen that IM teaching has entered their hearts, and they cannot let go. IM offers them an easy road – they get to have their cake and eat it too. They get to float down the stream of society unopposed, all the while thinking Jesus is their savior. Occasionally, they pass by other indigenous believers who have swum against the current with all their might in order to arrive safely on the river's banks. When



they do meet these believers who have suffered, they seem to feel uneasy of their talk of sacrifice, being persecuted, and leaving everything to follow Christ. Conversely, these believers who have suffered cannot understand how others could believe following Christ would cost so little. I often hear them say, "*Pak Matt, mungkin ada udang di balik batu*" ("Mr. Matt, maybe there's a shrimp behind the rock" – an Indonesian idiom about hidden motives).

Hidden motives or not, what's clear is that they have aligned themselves with a religion in darkness. This was obvious and painful to me recently when I went to a wedding. The bride was the daughter of a father and mother who both claim to be Muslim followers of Jesus. They claim to love Jesus and know Him in a saving relationship. But the entire ceremony, led by local *ustads* and an *imam*, was centered upon the *Qur'an* – they chanted from the Muslim holy book, sang songs inspired by it, and exalted the prophet Muhammad. I wondered how this husband and wife could conscientiously take such a central role in that ceremony if they genuinely loved Christ. I couldn't help but feel that Jesus, as He did on a cliff outside Nazareth so many years ago, had eluded their grasp.

I also cannot help contrasting that wedding with another I was able to attend a few years ago. It was the first wedding among Christ's followers in Bangladesh's Meitei people. These believers had faced a lot of persecution in the previous years because of their faith, and also as a result of boldly proclaiming the gospel throughout their villages. Everyone, though, was excited – almost giddy – that at last two of their own were getting married. They finally wanted the opportunity to show their family and friends that their faith in Christ could be expressed in the cultural forms of their people. So, they played music, wore clothes, and structured the ceremony in a way that was very similar to the Hindu weddings in their culture. But one thing was very different. Everything they did was centered upon Christ. He had become their life, their identity. The bride and groom's families refused to come to the wedding, and I could see the pain in their faces. But they were comforted, encouraged,

and strengthened by the other believers around them. Those believers had become their new family, and together, they had shown what a true indigenous expression of the Christian faith could look like.

Some people may also feel that I've made the issues surrounding IM too simplistic. Maybe they feel I haven't offered a nuanced view of the *Qur'an* and the possibility of finding truth within its pages. Maybe they feel I've taken Jesus' words too literally and haven't made allowance for the necessary interval of time babes in Christ need in order to grow in boldness and their understanding of the Scriptures. Perhaps these things are true. I feel, though, that too often Christians don't take the Bible seriously enough. Too often we say, "Yes, that's true, but...." Could it be that the great bane of evangelicalism is not that we don't understand how to apply the Bible in various different cultures and contexts, but that we've nuanced into obscurantism the claims and demands of the One who has been given all power and authority?

For other people, perhaps I've made the issues surrounding IM a bit too complex. They may ask why there is even a need to put forward an argument that someone cannot be a Muslim and a follower of Jesus. After all, isn't the answer obvious? In short, "No," the answer is not obvious to all people. IM and its teachings are growing and have taken root in most Muslim countries throughout the world. This has been happening quietly for the past thirty years or so, behind the backs of many North American churches. It is only recently that many of the issues have come to the surface; but like the proverbial iceberg, I'm afraid only a fraction has been seen. Christ's followers who believe God's word must take a stand against IM's false teaching and offer thoughtful and biblical responses. This I have sought to do in a small way in this article. May God help us to be more faithful to Him and His mission.



# A VIEW FROM THE FIELD

God is working

## AFRICA

### COORDINATOR'S REPORT

BY MARC GLASS

REGIONAL REPORTS

As I recall the Lord's goodness to our partners in Africa over the last few months, I must joyfully conclude that God is at work, building His Kingdom and strengthening Christ's Church. Reading through the missionaries' reports month after month always reveals encouraging examples of Gospel ministers whose ministry is best equated with the strenuous, methodical work of a plow horse. It is a slow and steady breaking up of hardened soil for the sole purpose of planting seeds for a glorious Gospel harvest.

### SOUTH AFRICA

Dave Webster reports that Living Hope Baptist Church in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa is continuing to seek to exercise those basic, yet profound essentials of a local church: *"continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42). Though LHBC



is a newly formed church plant, they have approximately 30 to 35 persons attending on Sunday mornings. Dave is preaching through Romans and seeking to set a strong Gospel foundation for this church to stand on. During the week, the church meets on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and they recently finished a study through 1 Timothy. Then, starting in May, Dave began teaching through Genesis, hoping to make it to chapter 12 before shifting gears to something else. Pray for this young church.

Furthermore, through Kabwata Baptist in Zambia, HeartCry may begin supporting another recent church plant in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Please pray for this.

### ZAMBIA

Our brothers at Kabwata remain busy in the calling that the Lord has placed on them.

Pastor Conrad's preaching schedule outside of Zambia has taken him from Romania to Brazil and several places in between. As a leader of not only his local church, but also the entire Zambian Reformed Baptist movement, Pastor Conrad remains in need of prayer and much grace to meet the constant demands on his schedule. Thankfully, the Lord has raised up extremely capable men around him to share the pastoral load with him.

Kabwata Baptist continues to pray about sending Victor Kenyense to Ethiopia at some point in the near future. Perhaps by the time you receive and read this magazine, more will be put in place regarding plans for this endeavor. The Zambians have always said that





"UNLESS THE  
LORD BUILDS  
THE HOUSE,  
THEY LABOR  
IN VAIN WHO  
BUILD IT."  
PSALM 127:1

in order for the Muslim north of Africa to be reached, it is imperative that the Christian south move north to reach them. The prospect of KBC planting a church in Addis Ababa will be a step towards fulfilling this long-term vision.

At the end of August, the Zambian Reformed Baptists will once again host their annual Reformed Baptist Conference at Lusaka Baptist Church. Profes-

sor and author D. A. Carson and pastor Thabiti Anyabwile will be the keynote speakers for this year's events. Voddie Baucham will be joining these men to preach the opening message. Pray for these men and those in attendance as they study around the theme: *"The Christian Life: Finding Assurance and Fighting Temptation."*

## MISSIONARY REPORT

### MALAMULO CHINDONGO

*Since the death of Pastor Percy Chisenga last year, Malamulo is HeartCry's only partner in Malawi. Mala has been laboring in Blantyre since 2008, when he and American missionary Frank Maxson first established Antioch Baptist Church. Mala is now laboring as the preaching pastor of ABC. The following update is Mala's report from the days leading up to his marriage on June 15, 2013. Please pray for Mala and his new wife Rachel.*



### Greetings!

**T**hank you so much for your many prayers for Rachel and me. Truly the Lord is answering the prayers of the saints; He is forever faithful indeed. Just to let you know, we are so grateful that you do take time to pray for us. It is no small thing for us to know that you come before God, and our names are on your lips. Thank you!

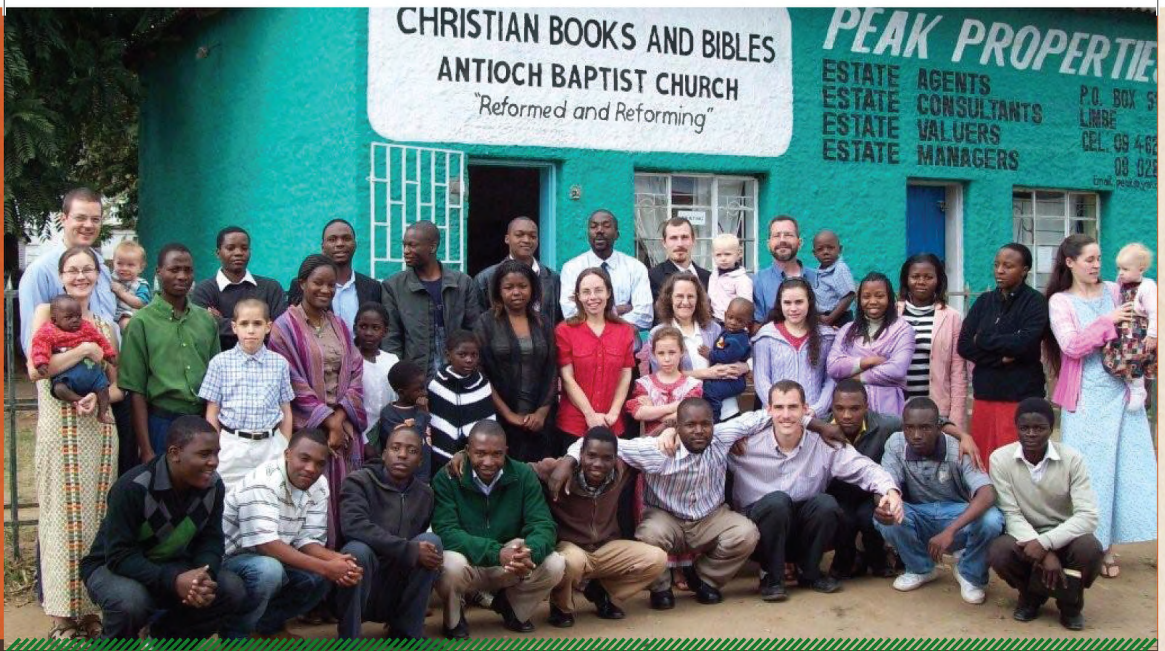
A few days ago, I made the 37-hour trip from Malawi to South Africa for my wedding on June 15. This trip is always one of the hardest things to do: the buses are packed, the music is loud, the music videos and movies on the bus are as wicked as they come,

there are corrupt customs officials and security guards, and so on. The corruption you see dealing with border crossings is beyond words. One is left grieved to see such things happen as if it were the order of the day. The next time you decide to make such a trip, contact me first!

I arrived safely, in spite of what I had to endure for those two days. I thank God for His goodness and mercy in keeping me through it all. He kept me throughout the trip and protected me from the evils that come with a journey like this one.

Normally, South Africa is freezing this time of year. It isn't currently, however, and we are praying it will remain this way until June 15.





## Preparations

Preparations are under way, and our joy is uncontainable. I cannot begin to describe it! Rachel and I are rejoicing each day, as we both are experiencing an unusual measure of joy during this time. The Lord is gracious, and we are thankful. In the midst of this, we are having to deal with cultural/tradi-

tional ways of doing weddings, some of which are not biblical and are just unnecessary expenses. Please do pray that we stand and be good witnesses to our families in areas we feel we strongly differ and cannot compromise. We have our challenges, but God is still sovereign!

## Antioch Family in Blantyre

I have been sharing with the brothers and sisters here in South Africa that I left Malawi encouraged with what the Lord is doing there. I believe the Lord has been blessing our people in specific ways. We are not left without challenges on this end of heaven, but it is the way we deal with those challenges that counts. Our beloved brother Dan Kalima went through a major operation on his spine, and we all prayed with trembling. Dan is a young man in our church who is still in college. He remained strong, prayerful, and joyful in the midst of the operation. His healing has been quick and unusual. We praise God for His goodness upon our Brother Dan! Our Brother Eric had his one-year-old son admitted to the hospital for two nights, and when the church met and prayed, the child was discharged the following morning. I can continue on and on, sharing of the Lord's goodness and enduring mercies upon Antioch: allowing trials and sufferings in the lives of our people, but giving them grace to suffer well.

## Pulpit Ministry

I was glad to come to South Africa for my wedding, having finished my preaching series in the book of Hebrews. The many testimonies I have heard during this period I've been preaching through Hebrews has brought more encouragement and confidence in the faithful preaching of God's Word from our pulpit. Pray for Pastor Frank Maxson, who is left to do the bulk of the work of preaching while I am away. He has started preaching through 1 Peter.

While in South Africa, I will not be engaging in preaching for friends in their churches, as I'm trying to concentrate on my wedding preparations. I am taking one opportunity to preach at the historical Lynnwood Baptist Church after the wedding. This is one of the few reformed churches in South Africa, and the church has faithfully preached the gospel for more than forty years. Our brother, Pastor Ronald Kalifungwa, who is marrying us, pastored this same



church for eight years before moving to Lusaka Baptist Church. Not only is it a humbling experience to minister among these brethren, but also a great joy and opportunity to labour with and amongst such brothers and sisters. Remember me in prayer to proclaim His goodness and mercy in the midst of a life-changing period.

### Conversions at Antioch

We are rejoicing with our two sisters in the church who are professing and testifying of Christ's saving power in their lives. For quite a while, we have been sharing the gospel with these two young ladies. A few years ago, they came to Antioch professing to know the Lord, and we were convinced after a while that they did not know Him. We kept on sharing with them the good news of Jesus Christ. These two ladies are professing faith now and also manifesting fruit and marks of saving faith. Please pray that this is genuine and that the Lord will give us, as elders, wisdom to nurture these souls for the glory of Christ.

### Rachel and My Marriage

Up to this point, we can only testify of the Lord's grace in keeping us faithful, as we both believe we are relating well. Pray for grace that we don't spoil things in the remaining eleven days. We are also grateful that the Lord has given us grace to communicate well in this period where there's a lot of pressure on both of us.

Pray for us, that things will continue this way, that we will continue in purity and healthy communication. We also continue to get to know each other better as we deal with the many details in preparation for the wedding.

### Pre-Marital Counseling

We would not mind being the most counseled couple (if that were possible)! Even though there is much to be done with little time, due to doing a lot of things on our own, we continue to meet with Pastor Tim Cantrell; and we are continuing to read Dr. Wayne Mack's book, *Strengthening Your Marriage*. Rachel and I are also almost

done reading through the Gospel of Matthew. Pray for me to be more prepared to play my new role as a husband and for Rachel as a wife.

We have seen the body of Christ both in Malawi and South Africa come alongside us in many ways, encouraging us. In the midst of our tight schedule, we are meeting with different couples who have been talking to us about different things and cultural issues we need to be aware of as a married couple. We will also sit down with Pastor Kalifungwa for two counseling sessions before the big day.

### How You Can Pray

Pray for Pastor Frank Maxson, who is left alone to shepherd a growing and vibrant congregation while I am away. This comes with great challenges. Brother Maxson and I both believe that we need a true revival of the heart. This is the need of the hour for us: that we will truly love our Lord and Savior, that His love for us will be the fuel for our devotion, that we would respond well to His unconditional love, and that we will spend ourselves for the glory of His name. Psalm 2 has warmed my heart while here. Truly, we must desire the winning of the nations to Christ, that His fame will spread throughout the earth.

Please pray also for me. My courtship to Rachel has been closely watched by my own people in the church and by the wider community, both in Blantyre, Malawi and in South Africa. So will be my marriage. Please pray that the Lord will prepare me for my role as a husband. Pray for Rachel and her new role as a wife and, more so, as a pastor's wife. We are both entering something completely new, and we need His great help. Pray for Rachel, as she will be adjusting to a completely new life, and pray for new and healthy relationships with other ladies in the church in Malawi.



# Growing opportunities

## ASIA

### COORDINATOR'S REPORT

BY AARON PIKKARAINEN

One of the great aims of the Christian life is to please God. "We make it our aim to please him," the apostle Paul told the Corinthian church (2 Corinthians 5:9). To Timothy, he paralleled a minister of Christ to a "soldier" whose "aim is to please the one who enlisted him" (2 Timothy 2:4). In the same way, I hope you are striving by faith to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him" (Colossians 1:10). Likewise, I hope and pray that the work we are doing in Asia is pleasing to the Lord and that this brief report will encourage you about what is happening in Asia.

#### Training Conferences

Over the past several months, we have had a series of training conferences for our missionaries in South Asia. These began in September 2012, occurred again in February 2013, and happened a third time in May and June. One of HeartCry's primary goals is to provide the training that indigenous missionaries need to establish biblical churches in their countries. Second Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable

for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Our desire is to help our missionaries become "complete, equipped for every good work." We want them to be mature and equipped to pastor their churches and minister the Gospel biblically and effectively. Therefore, we teach them from the Scriptures on several key topics critical for someone in the ministry.

These conferences have focused on four areas: the preacher's life, the preacher's doctrine, the preacher's preaching, and the preacher's church. In the first area, we have covered the topics of practical holiness and communion with God in prayer. So far, in the second area, we have taught almost exclusively on the doctrine of salvation, being that it is so important of a doctrine and is often poorly understood. With regard to preaching, missionaries have been trained in the calling, gift, and power of preaching; and with regard to the church, we have covered the basic definition of the church and the leaders of the church—their identity, qualifications, and responsibilities.

## Conferences





We hope to continue this much-needed training as the Lord enables, so that each of our missionaries would be “as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

### Ministry Opportunities

The second development I would like to report on is the recent growth of our ministry in South India. It used to be that we only worked with two missionaries in South India: Sundar R. and Vijay S. However, after a trip in February, God opened the door for a much more significant work in this region. We are now supporting an additional twenty-one missionaries in South India, and possibly more in the months to come.

Sixteen of the twenty-one missionaries are working with Vijay S. and the church-planting ministry that he leads. Among these ministers, ten of them are working in a very remote part of South

India where a tribal language known as “Kuvi” is spoken. This language is yet to have a full translation of the Bible. Please pray for these men and the other missionaries as they take the Gospel to the unreached peoples of India.

The other five missionaries came from a new group that HeartCry began working with in February. The leader of this group, Samuel B., studied at London Theological Seminary, and he now pastors a church and leads a ministry that provides theological training for a small group of pastors. Samuel has a powerful testimony that was included in the previous edition of HeartCry’s magazine.

I praise God for the open doors of fruitful ministry that He has provided, and I pray that our work in Asia would be pleasing to Him. By His grace, let us press on in faith and godliness as we labor for Him who loved us “while we were still sinners” and “gave [His Son] up for us all” (Romans 5:8, 8:32).

## MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM SAMUEL B.

*Pastor Samuel is one of HeartCry’s newest partners in Asia (see HeartCry magazine, vol. 74 for his testimony). Samuel is a pastor and missionary leader in South India and is married, with two children. Together with his father, Samuel oversees a missionary organization that is currently supporting and training twelve pastors who labor in the villages surrounding his church.*

*“For you will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”  
- Psalm 16:10*

It is with immense joy that we write to you about all the innumerable blessings the Lord has showered upon us. Once again, we express our deepest thanks to you for extending HeartCry’s partnership with us. We praise God, for in His providence, He made our paths cross for His glory. We look forward to working along with the brothers from HeartCry to train missionaries and to learn many more invaluable lessons in the ministry of our

Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

On March 31, 2013, which was Easter Sunday, we praised God, as I was able to baptize Brother Ramesh before the service commenced. What immense joy it brings you when a sinner repents of his sins and comes to Christ for cleansing and then is baptized! The congregation witnessed his baptism.

Brother Ramesh is a school teacher and is married and has a son. He has been attending our local reformed Baptist church for two years. How we thank the Lord for the penetrating power of the Word of God, which caused a jolt that was needed in his life. Please



pray for Brother Ramesh, that he may be a mighty witness for our Lord in the days to come.

We praise God that the number of people attending our local church has been increased. Fifty to sixty people

have been coming to the church. As much as it is encouraging to see the numbers growing, it is also our humble prayer that the Lord may in His grace confront every single individual with the Gospel and convert them.

### The Sunday School Ministry

The Sunday School ministry is also being blessed. We get forty to fifty children for the Sunday School. Three teachers, including my wife, sweat it out to help them with their homework from school during the weekdays and share with them the Good News on every Lord's Day. As a result of this, a couple of Muslim girls are attending our church service. Please pray that the Lord may speak to them and that they may come to Christ in the days to come.

### The Bible Training Institute

We praise God that He has enabled us to start a part-time pastoral training course that will run for two years from the month of January 2013. Every month, students gather for two days, and we teach them systematic theology, church history, and Old and New Testament theology. Pastor Sunath (my father), Bro. Kiran, Bro. Tom, and I share the teaching responsibilities, as all of us are pastors and are like-minded brethren in doctrine. This course is designed to aid the village pastors to understand the doctrines of grace and the practical implications for their life and the church's life. Sermon preparation and church government will be dealt with as a part of the systematic theology course.

There are sixteen students, including eight village pastors, that have enrolled in this program. Our only aim through our two-year part-time course

is to support the planting of biblical churches in every nook and corner of our region. Please pray for the BTI, that it may be a blessing to all those who attend and may be extended to the fullest for His glory.

### The Village Ministry

HeartCry has started supporting five individuals, including me. Bro. Yesu Das, Bro. Israel, Bro. Yehoshua, Bro. G. Samuel, and I are all extremely grateful to the support that is being extended to us. We are going to have our next public Gospel meeting where Bro. G. Samuel is laboring. Please pray that the Lord might save some.

On March 30, 2013, we praised God that six women and two men were baptized from the congregation where our Bro. Akkaiah ministers. The neighborhood where this village church

## Bible Training Institute





is situated was once steeped in spiritual apathy and is now a witness to our Saviour. Please pray for the newly con-

verted believers of this local church and also for Pastor Akkaiah.

## Our Evangelistic Outreach

As part of our evangelistic outreach, we went to conduct a Gospel meeting in a remote village (which was more than one hundred kilometers away from our home) on March 25, 2013. This is where our brother Yesu Das is working. We praised God for the ministry of the Holy Spirit that night, for many listened to the Gospel very intently. Now it is our prayer that many may come to the Lord to receive Him as their Saviour. Please pray for Bro. Yesu Das, who is a pastor and has also enrolled in our training program.

## Medical Aid

On March 1, 2013, we were able to go to a place to encourage the church with the Word of God and to help them with a free diagnosis and free distribution of medicine. My father's sister, Dr. A., is helping us with the medical ministry.

There is a lot of sickness in India because people are poor and the government's medical services are substandard most of the time. Who can cure all the sicknesses? Only God is powerful enough to cure them. Please pray for the number of people that suffer from various diseases. Most of them are body pains, gastric problems, anemia, chest pain, bad eyesight, etc. We offered them a free diagnosis and free distribution of the medicine. Pray for the sick people and, more so, for their conversions. We are also about to conduct a medical camp in another village during this summer.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

- 1 Our church sanctuary is a bit too small and unable to hold more than sixty people. Please pray.
- 2 Please pray for the ministry in N\_\_\_\_\_, the next town, where we started a church plant in November 2012. Every Sunday, we are conducting an evening service and so far we are getting ten to fifteen people. Please pray that the Lord may convert them.
- 3 Please pray for the Bible Training Institute, for the teachers, and for the students.
- 4 Please pray for those who attended two graduate youth camps we conducted in May 2013, one in V\_\_\_\_\_ and the other in N\_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Please pray for me; for my father, Pastor Sunath; and for Brother Johnson, our elder.

Family-wise, my son Shane and my daughter Shireen are growing fast and are very skillful at distracting me from the work! My wife Vijaya is doing well.

*Medical aid*



# Maintaining steadfastness

# EUROPE

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

BY DON CURRIN

In the face of economic and political uncertainty, our HeartCry missionary family in Eastern and Western Europe continue to maintain steadfastness in their spread of the Gospel. The measure of a missionary's success is not the number of converts that he has on the field, but his perseverance in internalizing and proclaiming the atoning work of Jesus. As always, the trials that accompany providence ultimately serve to increase the effectiveness of the Gospel.

Recent updates from our missionaries in Eastern Europe afford a window into their current outreach. Multiple ministries are being used to build bridges to the spiritually impoverished in their communities. Such ministries include medical missions, dental care, eye examinations, open-air preaching, food distribution, home Bible studies, and outreach programs in the public schools. These acts of kindness are never an end in themselves, but serve as opportunities to live out and proclaim the Gospel of grace.

When reading the missionaries' reports from Eastern Europe, you find that our brothers and sisters are not busy serving to the neglect of their own growth in biblical truth. They are mis-

sionary theologians who receive great motivation from their understanding of doctrine. It seems that everything in their lives and ministries is colored by their love for the Gospel and knowledge of a sovereign God who does all things well.

Meanwhile, our men in Western Europe are remaining faithful in the work. In cultures that are inundated with atheism and apostasy, they find that their only recourse in turning the minds of sinful men to God is the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. As noble as the attempts of scholarly men are in refuting the errors of the day with apologetics, our brothers have come to realize that unbelief is a moral, not an intellectual problem. Therefore, they preach the Gospel as the power of God to salvation to those who will believe.

Please continue to remember in prayer our men and women in Europe. Some go through times of discouragement because of unexpected providential events, while others endure hardships for the sake of righteousness. On the behalf of our servants of Christ in Europe, thank you for your investment in their families and endeavors.





# EASTERN EUROPE REPORT

BY SORIN PRODAN

## ROMANIA

**T**he ministry team in Brasov was blessed to celebrate a recent baptism and will be preparing for a second baptism by August. Last Sunday, we had no room in our meeting place, and we are very thankful for what God has done, particularly in bringing unconverted people to attend each service. The good dynamic in evangelism makes the church active; however, we wish we would see people more drawn to the prayer meeting. Some of the students at the nearby university seem to be touched by the Gospel, but they must face great opposition in their families and their dorm. Our ministry with the poor is also bringing fruit: three people have been converted in the recent days.

**The ministry team in Pucioasa** will soon celebrate its fifteenth year of existence. What a great testimony! The Lord has saved many during these fifteen years. This celebration will also mark the dedication of their new building (150-200 seats). Brother Nicu shared with us recently about a woman whose husband was a policeman, but is now in prison for corruption. She is desperate, but her desperation has driven her to seek God in their church.

**The ministry team in Fieni** is doing a good job in their town. Brother Florin shared with a man named Victor who has admitted to being a sinner, but has still not repented. He warned him that he should not ignore or delay in responding to God's call to repentance. Brother Florin has also reported that his ministry of preaching at the nearby wood factory is going well. Brother Marian continues to work with the children and share the Gospel on the streets. One day, he shared with a woman whose daughter had gone to a monastery only to realize how far the monks were living from the Word. Both the mother and the daughter are now attending the church in Fieni.

**The ministry team from Draganesti** was visited by a group from the



U.S. that helped them with evangelism. As a result, two families joined the mission from Stoenesti. The church building was also recently enlarged, and now they have a good facility for doing ministry there. Brother Danut continues to develop the Bible-reading program in Draganesti, Coteana, and other places. Some people have started coming to church from these groups, and one man was saved last month. Danut is also visiting the families of the many children he meets on the streets. His goal is to take the Gospel to their parents.

**The ministry team in Ramnicu Sarat and Buzau**, where Brother Jipa and Dr. Cosmin are laboring, is in constant need of more workers. Recently, a large group of students from the Baptist seminary came to help Jipa with evangelism. Hopefully, some of them will join the church-planting vision in Buzau. Dr. Cosmin is about to finish a new building for his medical clinic and will also start planting a new church.

**The ministry team in Bucharest** reported an advance in their new church plant. They are about to obtain the legal status of a church before the gov-

ernment. Along with relational evangelism, their church is also promoting the Gospel online. There are about seventy people in their database who are taking courses. They recently held an outreach in a park, and over sixty people came. The Gospel was preached, and some people were touched. Among

## Campus Ministry

Brother Alex has been sharing the Gospel with numerous students on the campuses in Brasov, Ploiesti, and Pitesti. He takes other young Christians with him in order to disciple them. One day, while traveling to Pitesti with Brother Alin, they picked up a man in their car and began to witness to him. After a while, it became clear that the man had severe spiritual problems. Pray for this man.

Sisters Loredona and Ruxi continue to disciple the new students that are willing to study the Word. Some of them are from their campus, while others are from the weekly outreach on another campus. They were delighted when a Japanese student recently joined their group. Ruxi also shared with us about a new convert who is demonstrating month after month that the Lord is making definite changes in her life. Finally, Loredona and Ruxi recently traveled to Moldova to participate in a conference with students from the Balti area. It was a beneficial time of teaching, sharing,

them was a Muslim who is part of the Ph.D. Program in Bucharest. Brother Gae continues his ministry of teaching Sunday school teachers, preaching in churches, and writing books. He recently sent us fifteen copies of *The Christian and the Beatitudes*, a book that he has just published.



and mutual encouragement.

Bebe had a student meeting before Easter in which he preached the Gospel to about fifty students. Macrina, one student that seemed converted, is now in a great battle. Her family turned her against her Christian friends by labeling them a sect. Bebe's grandmother is now 102. Bebe visits her, and he gets the opportunity to share with her about Christ each time.

## MOLDOVA

**T**he ministry team from Cahul has a great dynamic in their ministry. The one-to-one discipleship program brings more and more people in contact with believers. About seventy men met for a special meeting on the topic of pornography. Another meeting on the impact of media and the Internet brought about thirty teens and over one hundred parents together. Brother Anatol now directs a school with about forty-five local students that are being trained for ministry. Brother Gelu has begun an ethics class in the public schools of Cahul. He also taught a class in a conference on "Searching the Scripture" to thirty-seven students. Olga, his wife, is now discipling a new convert, Mihaela.

Brother Nicu, the missionary that does missions through sports, had two recent events. The one in Cahul brought 159 athletes and their parents together to hear the Gospel. The second event gave him the opportunity to testify of Christ to sportsmen from twenty-four countries.

**The ministry team from Anenii Noi** is advancing in outreach through social work, Awana Club, women's ministry, and counseling. Igor reports that two new couples joined the church. A team from OM recently joined them to do evangelism at their two church plants in Speia and Garbovet. Brother Pavel has begun to teach Christian ethics in a public school near the city, and Sister Natasha has had a great impact in serving people with terminal diseases.





## UKRAINE

**B**rother John Gireada said that after weeks of fasting and prayer with the church from Tereblecea, the Lord has brought about significant changes. Even the secretary of the city hall has become a Christian! On his way back from the Donetsk area, Brother Ilye Hluscceac witnessed to over two hundred persons. In the twenty-six visits he had with various families, he talked to two Jewish businessmen about the Messiah and one woman who came to Christ. Brother Sandu is struggling with discouragement as he tries to plant a church in the

very difficult village of Pasat. He has worked to establish a chapel there, but the local authorities have refused to let it happen. Though people are reluctant to obey the Gospel, Sandu and his collaborators want to keep sharing Christ. Please pray that the Lord would grant favor and blessing with regard to the church. Sandu has another good work in Gruscenka. He has also begun to teach some ethics classes in the local public school. Brother Vitali has also been approved to teach school classes on ethics. It seems that more and more missionaries have an open door through these ethics classes in secular schools.

## The Gypsy Team

Brother Moses Marin has recently baptized five new converts. He also used the opportunity of the "International Day of Roma (Gypsy) People" to give away over one hundred New Testaments and three hundred invitations to attend their church.

The Lord gave Brother Sorin Iordan the opportunity to witness to nearly three hundred people at various events. Two souls were saved in Rosiorii de Vede, and a new family in Alexandria has experienced God's grace. The father of the family, Mr. Lupancu, was in a coma for days after a simple appendix surgery, but God has used it to change him and his family. They made their living by stealing, but now God has spoken to them clearly. God is also doing many things in the new church plant in the village of Troianu. There was a woman beside the church who was always opposing the ministry, mocking the believers, and causing problems. When she suddenly died, at thirty-eight years old, the entire village believed that God had removed her from the land of the living. There is now great attendance, and the fear of God has surrounded the town.

Brother Tony in Gypsy city of Strehaia has much work to do. Hundreds of Gypsy families have been deported

by the French government and are now back in Strehaia with no jobs. Tony visits all these people, trying to encourage them and call them to repentance. Brother Nae Marian reports about the solid work in Glina and Frumusani, where a man named John recently came to Christ. A brother from Glina, whose name is Stelica, passed through a terrible trial after hitting a child with his car. He was not guilty, but the Lord allowed it in order to bring him and others closer to Him.

Brother Toma Marian shared with us about the good children's ministry in Tamasi and about the good testimony of the believers from Orac. They all travel by bicycle to attend the church in Tamasi. He also spoke about the joy of seeing his daughter saved recently.

This last month, Vale Marian visited forty families to share the Gospel. He is under continual threat, because there are two opposing clans in the town in which he ministers, and his church is located right in the midst of them. He has been threatened by both groups many times. Please pray for his safety.

Please keep praying for the ministry in Eastern Europe. We have freedom to witness, and we see God bringing more and more people to Him. We must not waste time. Who knows what will come in the near future?



# Trophies of grace

# MIDDLE EAST

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

BY MARC GLASS

**A**s I look back over the last few years of working closely with church planters and evangelists in the Middle East, my mind is continually directed to God's promises in Scripture which He will bring to pass concerning His people. Some of the things that I have seen and heard will forever be etched in my mind: meeting with small house fellowships where conversion to Christ is illegal ... seeing thriving groups of persecuted Christians ... eating with Christians that look impoverished by Western standards, yet gladly serve you their best. In all of these situations, these Christians' hearts and lives contain a wealth of joy that is painfully absent in the materialism of the West. They are trophies of grace and demonstrations of God's enduring help to all who hope in Him and call upon His name.

### EGYPT

**I**n the month of June, I have been privileged to be able to spend time with such believers. By the time you read this, Pastor Charles Leiter and I will have spent almost two weeks in Egypt teaching and training four groups of pastors, ranging from the very north of the country down to an agricultural region along the Nile in Upper Egypt. Brother Charles will have taught on justification and regeneration, and I will have taught through the book of 2 Timothy. Though HeartCry does not formally support all of these men, it is my hope that the Lord would continue opening doors in Egypt to impact the church for the sake of the Gospel.

The last time I visited Egypt and

spent time with Samuel, our Egyptian partner, I was able to witness a glimpse of what the Lord was doing in his fellowship. Fourteen or fifteen of us squeezed into a borrowed van and headed for the nearest body of water. That evening, as the sun was setting over the sea, seven Christians from various backgrounds were baptized, professing Christ as their Lord and Savior. Pastor Walid from Lebanon assisted Samuel with the baptisms and ended up accidentally baptizing himself! Remember to pray for Walid's health and his future involvement with the churches in Egypt. He senses that the Lord may have him work there on a more consistent basis.

### ARABIA

**F**urthermore, through our partnership with Dr. Andrew in an undisclosed country in the Middle East, we are going to send an Egyptian church planter to another undisclosed location in the Arabian Peninsula. This needs a great deal of prayer, simply due to the security concerns.

Regarding Dr. Andrew, the work in

his country is going exceptionally well. The Lord is continuing to use him and his partners for the strengthening of the Arab church. Dr. Andrew is working with another HeartCry partner, Mahrus B. in the southern region of a large city. At the end of May, they were able to baptize eleven new Christians, six of which are from a Muslim background.





These six former Muslims all came to faith during the month of February, a time period in which Dr. Andrew said that in all his years of ministry, he has never seen the Lord ripen this much Gospel fruit. At the end of June, I will have briefly seen Dr. Andrew and his new wife in their country and enjoyed the privilege of fellowshiping and praying with them.

## TURKEY

Lastly, our brothers in Turkey are doing well, in spite of the protests and political unrest in the country. They are in great need of our prayers. Our relationship will be changing somewhat with the churches in Turkey over the next few months; but we hope to continue supporting Gospel, theological, and translation projects for the group of churches that we've been working with for the last few years. They are an exceptional group of believers and will continue to be in need of the prayers of God's people. I recently received a list of twenty-four

solid theological resources that have been translated into Turkish with the help of HeartCry funds. These resources will continue to be a great aid in the building up of the Turkish church in its knowledge of the Scriptures. Pray for Fikret, as well, as he deals with charges from the Turkish government of "criticizing the state." He spoke out on an online newspaper against a judge that had passed an unjust verdict against a handicapped young man. The state has charged him and sentenced him to three years of prison. The sentence is now in the process of being appealed, and it will be tried again with certain "new laws" in mind. The content of these new laws is unknown to Fikret at this point, and he is unsure of whether or not these changes will help his case. Furthermore, Fikret also just found out that the charges should have never come about in the first place. They have been pushed through, though, by an anti-Christian governmental region of Turkey whose underlying motive has been to suppress Fikret's public Gospel efforts. Please earnestly pray.





# MISSIONARY REPORT

BY ANTONY S.

## The Adventure Begins

I left early one morning, hoping to get a good start, but managing to miss my bus anyway. If I've learned one thing during my two decades of missionary work, it is that God's plans are always better than mine. I knew He had something very special in store for me.

My plan was to travel to Jordan to share the Gospel with the many Muslims who had been pouring over the border from Syria as refugees from the deadly violence that has been ongoing there since March of 2011. In sharing Christianity with Muslims, it is crucial to build bridges by establishing cordial relationships. The longer you engage Muslim men and women in conversa-

tion, the stronger the bridge, creating an open door with which to talk with them, with the goal of handing them spiritual literature they can read at their own convenience.

On this day, I took a taxi to Jordan's capital of Amman, where I visited the Jordanian Bible Society. Part of the purpose for my visit was to order study Bibles for Iraqi pastors, so they could be better equipped to share their faith with their fellow citizens. Another objective for my visit was to send money to a missionary friend in Lebanon so that he could purchase Arabic Bibles for distribution among Muslims. From Jordan, it was a simple task to send money to Lebanon.

## Refugee Predicament

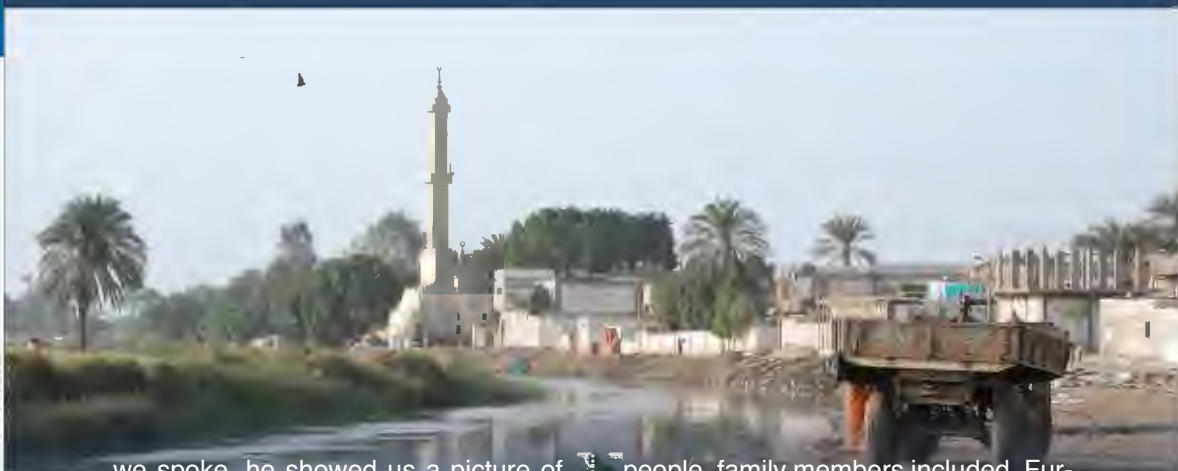
I traveled north from Amman by bus to a town on the Iraqi border. Next to the town there is a refugee camp that was established by the Jordanian government. There are currently more than 235,000 registered refugees with the United Nations and another 100,000 who are not registered. The camp I visited, called Zaatar, is a huge tent city that is home to about 80,000 refugees. The influx of refugees has created a humanitarian nightmare for Jordan, which is not a wealthy nation. Medical clinics are strained, food and medicinal supplies are sparse, essentials are hard to come by, and Jordanian schools are struggling to meet the needs of the flood of children who are swelling their overcrowded classrooms.

The Christian presence in Jordan is small (somewhere between three and six percent of the population), but these faithful believers are trying their best to help meet the overwhelming needs confronting their nation. There is a small church in the city of Mafraq that provides mattresses, blankets, food, and other necessities. These faithful believers are frequent visitors to the refugee camp, ministering to needy families and sharing their faith in Christ.

## Young Father with a Need

As my friend and I returned to the church, we met a man standing on the street corner and struck up a conversation with him. He told us that he was a Muslim from Homs, Syria, the place where the Syrian uprising began. As





we spoke, he showed us a picture of his newborn baby. I prayed for the little one and gave the man an Arabic New Testament. We then began walking together, and he told us that he was in need of milk and diapers. We told him we would ask the church for help, then went our separate ways. We ran into the man a little later, and he mentioned again how much he needed the items. My friend and I decided to buy them for him, for which he was very grateful.

The Syrian man invited us to his home, a modest one-bedroom apartment he shared with his wife and baby. He offered us coffee, which we accepted, and as we drank together, we were able to explain the Gospel message to him and his wife and encourage him to read the New Testament we had given him.

As he began to feel comfortable with us, he shared his story. He was just 22 years old and had fled the government of President Bashar al-Assad. According to the young man, the Syrian army is composed of mercenary soldiers from different countries. The man had witnessed the death of many

people, family members included. Furthermore, his ten-year-old brother is behind bars in a Syrian jail. Like many refugees in Jordan, the young man is not permitted to work and must live on charity. He and his wife, though, are grateful to be alive.

Sadly, there are many like him; nearly every refugee family suffers from disease, injury, and sickness, and each has horror stories concerning the death of friends and family members.

The believers of Mafraq are doing what they can and deeply covet your prayers. Also, please pray for the Syrian refugees, that they will open their hearts and minds to the saving Gospel of Christ.

## Help Us Fight the Battle

The Middle East has always been a turbulent arena and will continue to be so until the Lord Jesus returns to bring peace. Until then, Christians must be a testimony in both word and deed; we must always be prepared to make good on the many opportunities we receive to share the Gospel with our Jewish and Muslim friends.







# The Ends of the Earth

# RUSSIA

## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

BY HOLDEN BARRY

*"And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other."*

- Isaiah 45:21b-22

Russia is certainly at the "ends of the earth"; and the passage above is at the very heart of our praying and preaching in that dark place. The missionaries in Siberia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan proclaim one God who is Yahweh, one Savior who is Christ. There truly is no other. Oh, that the nations would turn to Him and be saved!

In Russia, it is estimated that six out of every ten pregnancies end in abortion; 80% of marriages end in divorce; suicide rates are among the highest in the world; drug use is epidemic; and only 1.2% of the population is evangelical. Although these statistics are quite disheartening, my hope is that you would be stirred up all the more to pray for the people of Russia. The following is intended not just to inform but to encourage and aid you in praying for specific needs in order to make a specific impact for the glory of God!

### Russian Translation Work

Over the past few months, HeartCry's work in Belarus has advanced mainly in the area of translation. The men of Gospel Reformation, led by HeartCry missionary Slava, have been diligent in their efforts to complete a monumental task: translating the 784-page *Systematic Theology* by Louis Berkhof into Russian. They

finished the translation on May 13. As historic as this accomplishment is for the Russian-speaking world, much work must still be done to make the book available. They now have to go back through to edit and prepare the book for printing. Also regarding translation work, Gospel Reformation has fully completed *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson. HeartCry just sent the remainder of the funds necessary to get the initial 1,000 copies printed. This will no doubt be a great help to many Russians in their study of Scripture. In addition, Gospel Reformation is currently translating *The Holy Spirit* by Sinclair Ferguson. They are about halfway through this 290-page book, which is a part of "The Contours of Christian Theology" series, an eight-volume set that Gospel Reformation plans to translate fully in the near future.

We are thankful to hear from our partners that Paul Washer's workbooks (translated into Russian late last year) are proving to be fruitful in Belarus and Russia. Slava writes: "People are still requesting more of Paul Washer's books, *The One True God* and *The Truth About Man*, and they are making an impact. Personally, we continue to study *The Truth About Man* in home groups in our church. The response to the material has been very good. The people are challenged in their thinking, but are happy for their minds to be stretched a bit."

### Training Conference

Lord willing, at the end of June, Nikos Cox and I will travel to Belarus.



## *Irkutsk men's conference*

I will be coordinating a training conference there for 25-30 pastors, and Nikos will be recording all the teaching and gathering media data. We have secured two teachers for the conference: Pastor Jeff Stivason of Pittsburgh, PA and Hector Morrison, president of Highland Theological College in Scotland. The main teaching topic will be the Doctrine of the Trinity. Please pray for this time, as it will be a great opportunity for many Russian pastors to grow in their understanding of this crucial doctrine. Also, it will be a good opportunity for me to meet with several new missionary prospects.

### **Travel to Siberia - An Urgent Need**

At some point in the near future, I plan to travel to Srednekolymsk, a town in Northeast Siberia and inside the Arctic Circle. Summer is the optimal time of year to travel there, as the sun does not set, and the temperature does get above freezing. I will be visiting a church whose pastor, Dan Vanschaemelhout, recently died of poor health. His death did not come as a surprise, as his health had been steadily declining for the past year. In spite of this, Dan chose to stay in order to spend his final days preaching Christ in a remote place

where no one else would. I will be reporting more on all of this upon my return, so for now, I will mention only a few things.

Dan was an American missionary sent out from a church in Colorado to Russia in 1993. He began ministering among the Yakut people in Srednekolymsk in 2002. He planted a church there, which he continued to pastor until his death last month (May 2013). He was also regularly spreading the gospel in nine of the surrounding villages. As a result of his evangelistic efforts, there are now groups of believers in some of these villages, none of which have a pastor, including now the church that Dan has left behind in his death. There is literally no one capable of leading these believers within hundreds, if not thousands of miles. The purpose of my visit there will be to encourage the churches to continue looking to Christ, teach and preach the Word to them and to see exactly how Heart-Cry can come alongside and help them – both in acquiring new leadership and growing and functioning as a church presently. Please pray that the Lord would equip us for service, and pray for these dear saints in Srednekolymsk, that the Lord would greatly provide for their needs.



# MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM GENNADY MIKHAILOV



*Gennady Mikhailov is a church planter and pastor in the Irkutsk region of Siberia. Together with the fellowship of pastors there, Gennady is diligent in evangelism and church planting among the many surrounding villages and cities. In addition to this, he is the pastor of a dear church in the city of Irkutsk. HeartCry began supporting Gennady in April of 2012.*

**P**ease and grace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to our God, for His mercy is not fading away; He continues to show us His love and care. I continue to serve in the church, preaching the Word and turning the eyes and hearts of the people toward our Savior. The Lord blesses me, giving me strength and wisdom. Thank you for your prayers!

There were a number of remarkable events in my ministry this month that are worth mentioning. The first is that God allowed me and Brother Sergey Mochalov to visit the believers in Buryatia again. This time we had to go through quite a trial. We were invited to one girl's birthday party, and we were looking forward to it as a wonderful time of Christian fellowship, as well as evangelism; but when the girl's grandmother arrived, there was a great disturbance. This older woman, whom we had never met before, immediately approached us and was furious, though we hadn't said anything at this point. She literally threw herself against us,

cursing us and our service to God. She then demanded that we leave the house immediately. There was not a hint of respect or tact, even though she had just met us for the first time. With that, she kept repeating that she was a true believer because she goes to the Orthodox church and was baptized there and because she wears a crucifix around her neck. I have seen a lot of people who are angry at God and His followers, but she surpassed all of them. She had no hesitation in accusatory language addressed against us and was not hindered by the presence of her relatives, who looked dumbfounded. She made such a scene that we decided it would be best for us to leave. We went back after the party and talked with the family. In our discussion, we found out that she is a sorceress; yet this somehow doesn't exclude her from being in the Orthodox church. We were still able to witness to some of the family members who are lost, and they listened intently. We hope to go back soon.



Also, I was able to visit the young church in Ust-Uda. There God has shown His caring hand once more. Usually, I visit them at the end of the month, but this time I went in the middle of the month; and it was not a coincidence, as it turned out. On the way, we usually pick up a lady from a village that is fifty kilometers away from Ust-Uda. She is a member of the church there. So we stopped by to pick her up and drove the rest of the way to Ust-Uda. As soon as we got there, this sister had a stroke, and her whole left side became paralyzed! We called for the ambulance, and she was placed on a stretcher and taken to the nearby hospital. By God's grace, she had taken her passport, medical card, and some money with her to the church (as if she knew that she would end up in the hospital). God is truly merciful. She has two drunkard sons who drink vodka and give her much grief. Consequently, they are away from home a lot. If we hadn't taken her with us specifically on that day, and had we not been going to that town, which is a lot closer to the hospital, God only knows how it could have ended. It is easy to imagine what condition an elderly person would be in who is left alone in the house in a remote village, while her body is half-paralyzed. It is amazing how God arranged all of this. To Him be the glory! She is still in the hospital. The treatment that she needs requires financial resources, but the local church there consists primarily of retirees and is not

very rich; so our church's treasury has extended help. We ask you to pray for this woman.

This past month, we had a conference for all of our like-minded churches in the Irkutsk region. There were about fifty brothers and sisters in attendance, representing seven different churches. Not everyone from each church was able to come due to work and distance. We were feeding on spiritual bread for two days and had a wonderful time of fellowship and intercessory prayer.

There is one other event from last month that I should mention. God gave us an opportunity to conduct an evangelistic meeting in an orphanage for mentally delayed children and those who are suffering from cerebral palsy. It was a great opportunity for us to talk about God and salvation with many children, as well as the teachers! The meeting went very well, for they had a genuine interest toward us. We also gave each of them a CD with testimonies of people whose lives have been changed by God. We were able to meet with the leadership of that orphanage, and we hope that God will give us another opportunity there soon. Please pray that the Orthodox will not interfere and ruin this for us as they have in the past.

So our ministry continues only by the grace of God. Here in Siberia, we are in great need of your prayers. We send our heart-felt greetings to Heart-Cry and all the supporters. May God bless you all!





# Advancing the Gospel

## SOUTH AMERICA

### COORDINATOR'S REPORT

BY LUKE NASH

The Lord continues to providentially uphold the work in South America as the Gospel continues to advance. In February, all of the HeartCry missionaries in South America were able to attend our conference in Lima on the theme of "The Biblical Pattern of Shepherding Souls." The conference dealt principally with the centrality of Christ in ministry and the pattern that we see in His life and in the life of the apostle Paul, revealing how to care for souls. After talking with many of the missionaries at this conference, it was clear that the Lord used the teachings of Anthony Mathenia and John Snyder to remind the men of the severity of their calling and of their responsibility to care for the flock that the Lord has entrusted to them. Many of the missionaries have asked for copies of the teachings to be able to distribute them to other pastors in their regions. Pray that the Lord would use these needed messages to remind men of the importance of always preaching Christ and exalting Him as the all-sufficient substance and example in ministry.

#### LIMA

The work in Lima, though recently passing through some difficult circumstances, continues to move forward. HeartCry is currently working alongside nine missionaries in Lima who are each laboring as church planters and pastors. Also, it seems the Lord might be opening a door for the missionaries in Lima to receive further training in doctrine and ministry through a veteran missionary in Peru. This brother has many years serving in Peru. He is well aware of many of the doctrinal

needs in the country and understands the importance right theology and biblical practice. Lord willing, this will help the missionaries in Lima as they study different theological doctrines through a series of courses. Pray that the Lord would use these courses to equip the men, in order that they might honor Him in their labors as pastors.

#### SAN RAFAEL, TARAPOTO

In the jungles surrounding Tarapoto, the Lord seems to be raising up more and more believers who are hungry for the Word. Arturo Marin, a HeartCry missionary who is also one of the leaders of an association of churches in the region, has been involved with training some of the other pastors in the association and also in other churches nearby. By the time this report is read, we will have already had a conference in the jungles of San Martin, close to San Rafael, where Arturo Marin is pastoring. This conference was organized by Arturo in order to help the pastors in the association of churches, and the theme will be "The Cross of Christ" as it applies to the family and to the role of the pastor. Pray that these teachings by Paul Washer and Javier Carhuapoma (HeartCry missionary in the northern region of Peru) will be used of the Lord to bring life to the congregations as men and women hear of the glorious reality of all that Christ has done for us on the cross.

#### CUZCO

Wehrner Pancorbo, is the only HeartCry missionary working in Cuzco. In February he began a church

plant alongside three American missionaries, and since then, these men have been evangelizing in the town centers and also meeting with people who have questions about the gospel they are preaching. Nearly the entire population of Cuzco practices some form of Roman Catholicism, though

much of the religion of the city is mixed with ancient Inca beliefs. Pray that the Lord would give Wehrner and the other men strength to continue in the work of evangelism and preaching in the midst of such deception; pray that He would bring many people to salvation through their efforts.

## NORTHERN PERU

Although many of the believers of this region find themselves in difficult economic situations, the churches are continuing to prosper spiritually and grow in the grace of God. In a very isolated town a few hours outside the city of Sullana, Gilberto Nole has witnessed the mercy of the Lord, who is faithfully adding more believers to their number. In a town where there is neither running water nor electricity, God is demonstrating that all that is needed to win souls is the Gospel of His Son. Wilmer Navarro and his family will be experiencing a change, as they are moving to a small town called Pampa Flores, where he is hoping to plant a church, while also laboring with a pas-

tor in a nearby town. Pray that the Lord would continue to use, strengthen, and encourage these saints.

## ROSARIO, ARGENTINA

Nicolás Serrano, the only HeartCry missionary working in Argentina, continues to see the Lord's blessing on his efforts as the pastor of a church plant in Rosario. Along with his co-pastor, Esteban, Nicolás has seen what appear to be many genuine conversions over the past year. Rosario is an increasingly secular city, and can only be made alive by the quickening power of the Spirit. Pray that the Lord would continue to cause eternal fruit to come forth through the preaching and counseling at this church in Rosario.

# MISSIONARY REPORT

FROM NICOLAS SERRANO

*Nicolás is one of the two founding pastors of Iglesia Biblica de la Gracia (Grace Bible Church) in Rosario, Argentina. This church was started in 2010. Nicolás spent the better part of 2011 studying at a ministerial acad-*

*emy in Lima, Peru and is currently the only HeartCry missionary in Latin America outside of Peru.*

I would like to share with you a testimony of the conversion of a man







named Luciano, who I was able to meet over a year ago. From the moment we met Luciano, he kept himself very distant from the Gospel. He had been raised in an “evangelical” family, and ever since he was a child, he had learned to live a religious life. As we later found out, however, it was a life full of sin. He was very kind toward us, but he was constantly questioning aspects of the message of the Gospel, such as the justice of God and the condemnation of sinners or the need for repentance.

He and his wife began to come to our congregation, but it lasted a short while. After a few weeks, Luciano insisted to his wife that they attend a different congregation, because he did not feel comfortable in our church. So they visited a different place, where the Gospel was not preached, where they often spoke about financial prosperity. The people there did not appear to be believers, and the Bible was not taught. Nevertheless, Luciano preferred to stay at that congregation, because, in his own words, he “felt comfortable there, and no one bothered [his] conscience.”

This whole situation resulted in problems in his marriage. He began to resist the Gospel more and more, even to the point of mocking the message of Christ. All of his religiosity

was left uncovered and the sins of his heart began to manifest themselves with great force. He abandoned all appearance of being a Christian, and he gave himself over to sin. It was during this time that Luciano decided to leave his home, leaving behind his wife and children. Once he had abandoned his family, he began to flee more and more from God, and he gave himself over more and more to sin. He mocked the faith of his wife; he mocked God; and according to his own words, he hated to hear the preaching of the Gospel, he hated the church, and he hated everything associated with the Christianity that had stripped him of his comfort (which is what he thought at the time) and had destroyed his family.

He eventually returned home, but his scoffing of his wife’s faith did not stop. He continually mocked her to her face as she read the Bible and told her that she was going to hell. He told his wife to no longer mention anything that had to do with God, and he became very angry if she was listening to a sermon. He was determined to be an enemy of God, but God had other plans!

A few weeks after he had returned to his home, he began to experience something that was completely unfamiliar to him: he began to have conviction of his sin. But he didn’t even know what it was or what was happening to him! He began to feel miserable, sad, and without any desire to do anything. A great despair began to invade his thoughts, and for the first time, he saw himself as a person who was worthy



of hell. It was during these days that he began to call upon the name of the Lord. He also called us, wanting us to come and preach the Gospel to him one more time. He did not understand what was happening to him, but he no longer wanted to live as he was; so he simply prayed, "God, I am worthy of hell. I no longer want to live like this."

One night, as he was experiencing such anguish that he could not sleep, he got up and went to the kitchen to find the Bible. After having mocked God for months, he was now running to a Bible for comfort! In His providence, the Lord led him to open the Bible to Romans. After reading the first few chapters, his soul was crushed. He wept as he saw for the first time his sin and the righteous condemnation that he deserved. He was miserable and without hope. In this condition, he tried to go back to bed, but he was unable to sleep. Being unable to stop weeping, he cried out to God to have mercy on him, and he returned

to kitchen and continued reading in Romans. And that is when the comfort came! As he continued reading, the love of God was shown to him. He could see that the God whose "wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness" (Romans 1:18) was the same God who had shown that He loved him by sending His Son to die for his sins (Romans 5:8). The love of God had reached him! Yes, "He had done this while I was still a sinner. When I wanted nothing to do with Him, He loved me! He had sent His Son to save me!" These are his own words. Jesus had died for him. That was sufficient. He no longer feared; he was no longer sad; instead, he only had a desire to live for his King Jesus, who had loved him even to death.

Jesus arrived in his life, and everything changed. Luciano was recently baptized, making his faith public in Jesus, a faith that still remains, and one that will remain, by grace, until the end of his days.





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Go or Send

"The world lives in a time of crisis. Christians alone are in a position to rescue the perishing. We dare not settle down to try to live as if things were normal."  
- A. W. Tozer

"If by excessive labor, we die before reaching the average age of man, worn out in the Master's service, then glory be to God, we shall have so much less of earth and so much more of Heaven!"  
- C. H. Spurgeon

