

HeartCry

MAGAZINE



RUN *to* **THE**

BATTLE

GREETINGS

A new year is upon us, and we are full of great expectations. The reason for our hope is simple and singular – the God who is seated upon the throne of the universe has decreed that “every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues” will worship Him (Revelation 7:9). In spite of our often-lamented weaknesses, His Name *will* be great among the nations from the rising of the sun until its setting (Malachi 1:11), and the earth *shall* be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14). It is because of Him that we are able to begin this new year with the confidence of William Carey, who declared:

“Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

In the midst of this present darkness, we must never lose sight of what God has declared in the Word and what He is doing throughout the world. We must never judge by mere appearance, for God’s work is usually hidden from the eyes of even the most discerning. His kingdom is like a mustard seed – the smallest of the seeds that are upon the soil – which “when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest un-

der its shade” (Mark 4:31-32).

To hope in this promise is not blind optimism but true faith. To be driven by this promise is not unwarranted religious zeal; it is the only appropriate response. If God has ensured the Church’s victory and the fulfillment of the Great Commission, how can we be passive or half-hearted? Should we not rather run to the battle with all our heart and with great expectation?

This is not the time for wavering. Although the final victory is ours, great battles remain to be fought. Every day the lines are drawn and our brothers and sisters around the world are giving their lives to push the enemy back and reclaim what rightfully belongs to our Lord. Will we willfully ignore the clamor of battle? Will we pretend that it is not our affair? Or will we run to the battle? The great missionary C.T. Studd once declared:

“Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.”

May God grant that such a spirit of determination would take hold of us all, that we might use our gifts to the fullest for the sake of the Kingdom and for those who perish beyond its walls!

Your brother,
Paul David Washer

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RUN *to* **THE** **BATTLE**

by Paul Washer

Regardless of what we may believe, the Christian life is a threefold battle. First, we battle against the flesh and its sinful desires that wage war against our new nature and against the Spirit who seeks to lead us to greater holiness (1 Peter 2:11). In this battle, we are called to put to death the deeds of the flesh (Romans 8:13) and to eagerly pursue personal holiness, without which no man will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). We are called to die daily (Luke 9:23), to beat our bodies into submission (1 Corinthians 9:27), and even to radically amputate those things in our lives that are a cause for stumbling (Matthew 5:29-30). We are called to saturate our lives in the Word of God, to renew our minds so that we might be able to discern those things which please the Lord and reject those things which the Lord abhors (Romans 12:2). We are called to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in newness of life, ever sensitive to His will and leading (Romans 6:4). Finally, we are called to do this in a world that hates God, is hardened to His truth, and opposes all virtue and godliness. What a terrible conflict is this battle of ours! We would surely be consumed if it were not for the God who produces in us the desire to live righteously and gives us the effective grace to do

so. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to His power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20).

Secondly, we battle against something even more terrible than our own depraved flesh – we battle against rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). We are called to wrestle against them face to face and to resist them even to the point of death, so that our testimony may resound to the glory of God. We are called to fight an enemy whose strength so exceeds our own that we must put aside our confidence in our strength and be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might; we are called to put on the full armor of God and stand fast regardless of each day's evil

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(Ephesians 6:10-11). It is true that Satan prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8); and it is true that he has requested to sift us like wheat (Luke 22:31); nevertheless, we shall stand, for our Master is able to make us stand and to present us before Himself on that Day with great joy (Jude 24).

Thirdly, we battle for something much more precious than our own lives, much greater than our own goals, and much more important than our own welfare – we battle for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom on earth. We struggle and pray and watch with one great hope – that His Name be sancti-

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fied, that His Kingdom come, that His Will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). We give our strength and our years that the earth might be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14). We long for the day when we will see a great multitude that no man can count from every tribe, language, and nation standing before the throne of God and crying out with a loud voice:

"Salvation to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Each one of us has been commissioned to see to it that Christ's banner is raised on every distant hill in every faraway land. If we are not called to go, we are called to stand behind those who do, with equal sacrifice. The Great Commission is not some little thing the Church does; it is *the* thing we are commanded to do! Do we realize that we will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for our participation in taking the Gospel to the nations? Do our lives reflect that we truly understand that apart from the Gospel no man will be saved?

The following words in quotation were spoken by an atheist who mocked those Christians who declared Christ to be the only way and yet were not moved to make Christ known among the nations. His words are those that moved the great English missionary C.T. Studd to go to China, India, and Africa and later to draw attention to them:

"If Christ was God and died for me, there is nothing that would be too much to do for Him." Read these words carefully. Weigh your own life and desires against them. "If I believed with conviction what millions say they believed, that the knowledge and practice of religion was everything to me, I would throw from me like a weight every worldly pleasure; I would esteem every worldly consideration as insanity and every worldly thought as vanity. My faith would be my first thought in the morning and my last image before I fell asleep; I would work only for the cause, think only in eternity, and esteem every soul won for heaven as the greatest value, even if it meant a life of suffering. No earthly consequence would detain me or quiet my lips; the joys of the world or its sorrows would not even occupy a single

THEIR ONLY CRIME IS THEIR BELIEF IN CHRIST AND THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO LAY DOWN THEIR BIBLES AND CEASE FROM PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THEIR LORD AND SAVIOR.

moment of my thoughts. I would focus only on eternity and the immortal souls that are around me and destined for eternal misery. I would go to the world and preach in season and out of season, and my text would be: 'What does it benefit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?'"

As we look toward this new year, we should be looking toward the world and the battle that rages there. These are the greatest times in the history of Christianity. God has opened doors throughout the world so that we may now preach the Gospel in places that only a few years ago were totally beyond our reach. The doors are open, but will we pass through? Will we take advantage of this most strategic moment in history? These are not times for men of narrow minds, small hearts, and tight spirits. These are times for not only standing firm, but also marching forward. We must put the world behind us, pass through the doors that have been opened to us, put our hand to the plow, and never look back again.

The world is such a large place, and there are so many people that have yet to be reached with the Gospel. There is so much to be done and so much that can be accomplished. Will the Church take advantage of her opportunity to see God's glory among the nations? Will you hear the call to lay aside your life and become part of something much larger than yourself? What will you do? Can you think of any greater thing to which you could possibly give your life than the preaching of the Gospel to those

who have yet to hear? This is not the time to think about careers, but about the Kingdom. Why would we want fame when God promises us glory (Romans 8:18)? Why would we be seeking the wealth of the world when the treasures of heaven are at our grasp (Matthew 6:19-21)? Why would we run for a crown that will perish with time when we are called to win a crown that is imperishable (1 Corinthians 9:25)? My dear friend, let us run to the battle so that we might stand with Him on that Great Day of Victory!

For the last two thousand years, the battle for the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ has been a costly one. It is estimated that since the first century over fifty million Christians have been martyred for their faith in the Lord, and this number is only increasing. Even now, as you read this article, men and women of God are dying, and more are being locked away in prisons and jails with little hope of finding freedom again in this life. Their only crime is their belief in Christ and their unwillingness to lay down their Bibles and cease from preaching the Gospel of their Lord and Savior.

How should we respond to the knowledge of such terrible casualties? There is only one answer: we should run headlong into the battle and give our very lives for the only cause that will stand – the coming of the Kingdom of our Lord and God. As your brother in Christ, I plead with you to become a true soldier in the battle to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every man. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

A VIEW FROM THE FIELD

REGIONAL REPORTS

AFRICA

UGANDA | A NEW FRONTIER

BY FORREST HITE

In October, HeartCry began to support Pastor Bill Issa, who is planting a church in Kampala, Uganda. We are excited for the opportunity to begin supporting this biblical work in such a needy country and to partner with Bill as he seeks to make God's Name great in Uganda.

HeartCry missionaries Sam Oluoch, Paul Onyango, and Naphtali Ogallo in Kenya will be providing oversight for the work in Kampala. They plan to make several trips a year to visit Bill and see the work up close. These trips will enable these seasoned pastors to know how best to counsel and pray for Bill as he

seeks to spread the Gospel throughout Uganda.

Pastor Bill has a long-term vision for the work in Uganda that is modeled after HeartCry partner Kabwata Baptist Church's vision for Zambia – namely, to train up men who will plant biblical churches throughout the nation's capital (Kampala), then to target the other major cities, before finally filling the gaps in between. The end goal is that the entire nation might be covered with Christ-centered, Gospel-proclaiming churches. It is encouraging to see the beginnings of the same vision in Uganda that the Lord has used to accomplish so much in Zambia.

UGANDA AT A GLANCE

The Republic of Uganda is a former British colony that gained its independence in 1962. It shares national borders with Kenya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania. Uganda's borders also pass through three of the African Great Lakes, including Lake Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world. These lakes help give Uganda a temperate climate and fertile soil, which in turn has led to the country's moniker, the "Pearl of Africa."

Indicative of its previous ties to the United Kingdom, English became the national language of Uganda at its independence, while Swahili became the second national language in 2005. These are not the only spoken languages, however: over forty different languages are used regularly in the nation of more than 36 mil-

lion people. The most widely spoken local language is Luganda, which is used primarily in Kampala (the capital and largest city) and its surrounding areas.

Uganda's best export is coffee; fish (from Uganda's abundant lakes), tobacco, oil, and tea are some other important contributors to the country's economy. These resources, however, have proven to be insufficient in Uganda's fight against poverty – more than a third of the nation's population currently lives on less than \$1.25 (USD) per day.

Despite restrictions during previous governmental regimes, Uganda now enjoys freedom of religion. About 84% of its people adhere to some form of Christianity. Half of these nominal Christians align themselves with the Roman Catholic Church, making Uganda one of

the most Roman Catholic English-speaking nations in Africa. Anglicans make up another large portion of the population (about 35%), while other Protestants comprise a much smaller percentage. In all, about a third of Ugandans would claim to hold to an Evangelical belief system. Islam is the only other religion with a substantial following in Uganda, with Muslims accounting for 12% of the population. Though its followers are significantly smaller in number in comparison to the aforementioned religions, the Bahá'í Faith also does have a foothold in Uganda, as Kampala is home to one of the world's seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship.

In spite of these heavy religious ties of the Ugandan people – very few claim to be irreligious – the superficiality of the majority of this religion is readily noticeable in its inability to alter the negative socio-political environment of the nation. The Ugandan government is considered to be one of the more corrupt governments in the world; child labor and trafficking is common; and the continued struggle against HIV/AIDS is a constant battle. Only the true Gospel will be able to penetrate Uganda's deepest issues and transform the lives of her people.

Sources: Wikipedia and Operation World

MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT

BILL ISSA - PASTOR IN UGANDA

TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

My mother divorced my father when I was only four years old. Because of my tender age, my mother decided to take me with her to her hometown of Kigoma, Tanzania. Once there, my mother started doing some business between Kigoma and Baraka, a small town across the border in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). During one of her trips there, she met a Muslim Congolese man. They became friends and eventually were married.

Soon after, my mother and I moved from Kigoma to the DRC in order to live with my stepfather. My mother and stepfather had other children, and we all grew up being trained in the Islamic faith. In 1983, we moved again to a town called Goma, DRC.

My mother had decided to hide the truth about my biological father from me. I could by no means tell that my stepfather was not my biological father, for he treated me very well, just as he treated his other children. The problem between my parents and me occurred only when I received Christ to be my Lord and Savior.



Bill and his wife Gloria with their five children.

In November of 1986, there was a preacher from South Africa who came to Goma for a large, three-day Gospel crusade. My friends and I decided to attend the crusade, but not in order to hear to the Gospel; rather, we were hoping to seduce girls who were at the crusade. But whenever the word of God was being preached, I could feel myself drawn to the stories of the Bible; therefore, I attempted to both listen to the preaching and fulfill my original goal. However, the words of the preacher pierced my heart. I could hear him speak against the exact things that my friends and I had gone there to do. I could hear him talk about the wickedness of the very thoughts and plans that I had in my heart. As he was preaching, I wondered, "Who told this

man all these things about me?" I was confused, but I pushed these thoughts out of my mind.

On the second day, it was the same story, except this time I started to feel a certain fear within me. Whenever I wanted to pay more attention to the preaching, my friends would come and make fun of me. But at that moment, I was no longer concerned about girls. My heart was now full of many unanswered questions. At the end of the day, we returned to our respective homes, but I could hear a voice saying to me, "I am calling you. Why don't you want to respond? I am the One who died for you. The time has come for you to glorify Me in your life." This voice only served to increase the fear inside of me. But I was afraid to share this experience with anyone, so I kept it to myself.

On the third and final day, we returned with the same purpose in mind. By then, all of my friends had gotten girlfriends, and they were making fun of me because no girl had fallen in love with me. They didn't realize that, instead, my heart was falling in love with my Creator. On that day, I listened to the preaching more attentively than before. The preacher was explaining several Scriptures, among them John 3:16, John 10:9-16, and Romans 3:23.

At that point I could hear two voices preaching to me at the same time: one voice from without and another voice from within. The preacher continued, "Come and make your final decision today. Your time is now! Don't wait for tomorrow, for you may never reach tomorrow!" At that moment, I found myself in tears, and my body was shaking with fear. By the end of the sermon, I was more than ready to go and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of my life. After prayer, I was led into a room, where I found myself repenting of all my sins that I could remember. I did so with many tears.

Afterwards, my friends could not believe what had happened to me. They tried to persuade me to abandon my new faith in Christ; but their efforts were in vain.

After what happened to me at the Gospel crusade, one of my friends, who was also a Muslim, went and reported

me to my parents. They then confronted me one night and asked me whether what was being said about me was true. I feared to give them any answer at first.

My parents gave me one week to make up my mind and repent of my newfound faith. After that one week, I was asked whether I had renounced my "evil" plans of trying to quit Islam for Christianity; but this time I was courageous enough to announce that I had discovered the truth in Christianity – I could therefore never abandon it! This was the beginning of my persecution.

At that point, my parents denied me as their child and ordered me to leave their home, believing that suf-



Reconciliation Baptist Church in Kampala, Uganda.

fering would force me to renounce my faith. Close friends and extended family also rejected me. I encountered much hardship during this time, but eventually I found a safe haven at the home of a Christian friend I met after my conversion. After seeing that I was refusing to abandon my new Christian faith, my own family started looking for opportunities to take my life. They would rather have me dead than allow me to continue putting their family to shame.

They used many methods in their attempts to kill me, but the Lord was merciful and protected me. A few years later, my mother divorced my stepfather and returned to Tanzania. I remained with my Christian friends in the DRC.

In 1995, I received a letter from my mother, who was then living in Dar es Salaam. In the letter, my mother informed me that she had been converted to Christianity in Tanzania and that she wanted me to go there so that we might reconcile. At first, I feared to go,

thinking that this was a trick to catch and kill me. But some brethren advised me to go and see what was happening with my mother. When I reached Dar es Salaam, I found that she had indeed been born again! I was delighted with the change.

My mother apologized to me for all the wrong she had done me when I had first been saved. She also revealed to me the secret that the Muslim man was only my stepfather and that my biological father was actually a Ugandan man from Kasese.

At this revelation, I decided to move to Uganda as soon as I was able in order to search for my biological father. I was initially very upset and angry with my mother for having hidden such important information from me for so long. When I left Tanzania in 1996, I was still resentful toward her, and I did not tell her of my plans. However, I eventually realized my need to forgive her, and I wrote her a letter of apology for harboring bitterness against her and keeping my intentions from her.

I finally found my father in 1998. Because of our reunion, I decided then to remain in Uganda and have been here ever since.

CALL TO MINISTRY

Soon after the Lord saved me in 1986, I became a member of a Free Methodist church in Goma, where I first became interested in ministry. I felt the urge to leave everything else and live to serve Christ alone in my life. For some time, the extent of my ministry was singing in the choir and, eventually, preaching in the streets.

Then in 1997, after I had moved to Kampala, Uganda, a friend of mine invited me to a Pentecostal church, where I soon became a member. After a short time, I began serving there as an evangelist, and later I became an associate pastor until 2008.

It was during this time that I met and spent time with Priscilla, a former Roman Catholic who had been disowned by her family because of her abandonment of Catholicism and her faith in Christ alone as Savior and King. I was impressed with the charac-

ter of this young lady compared with some of the others in the church. In 1998, I sought her hand in marriage, and she accepted.

In 2008, our family relocated to another part of Kampala, and we joined the church, Shalom Christian Outreach. After three months, the pastor of this church recognized my gift in preaching and decided to make me his associate pastor. In 2009, our church organized an ordination ceremony, and three people (including myself) were officially set apart as pastors in the presence of many.

Providentially, when I first learned how to study the Scriptures on my



own, the doctrines of grace became very evident to me on the pages of the Word of God. Many years later, when I started preaching, I found myself proclaiming these doctrines; but I was unaware that they were called “doctrines of grace,” for I had had no theological training up to that point. However, my senior pastor, a former trained theologian, recognized these doctrines.

After some time, the pastor started fighting me openly, saying that my teachings were in contrast with his and that they were going to break “his” church. He continued to demean my teaching until he finally decided to officially kick me out of the church, accusing me of being a heretic.

I was spiritually tormented by this act; but the Lord used even this to prompt me to go into full-time ministry and to plant a church that would proclaim the Bible and the Bible alone. I started meeting with my family members in our house for Bible study. That

was the beginning of Reconciliation Baptist Church.

In order to prepare myself better for ministry, I joined a Bible college in 2010 and began studying for my B.A. in Bible and Theology. It was during my theological studies that I came to understand better the doctrinal differences between my former pastor and me.

I am grateful to the Lord that He

has set us apart for missions work in Uganda and that He has provided partnership with HeartCry and with Grace Baptist Church of Kisumu, Kenya. I consider Kampala to be a strategic location for true Gospel missions, as it is the capital and largest city in Uganda and has been exposed mostly to the improper doctrines of Roman Catholicism and the “prosperity gospel” and to the Muslim faith.

ZAMBIA ADDED CHALLENGES IN THE FACE OF GROWING ISLAMIC ZEAL

BY MARSHAL KASONGO

Brother Marshal is a church planter sent from Grace Reformed Baptist Church in Ndola to plant Mapalo Reformed Baptist Church in Chipulukusu, a neighborhood in the eastern area of Ndola. The work commenced in 2011 and is the first Bemba-speaking Reformed Baptist church plant in Zambia.

Islam is quickly gaining ground in our country of Zambia. Although we previously enjoyed many years with minimal Islamic activity, we are now confronted with serious Islamic growth that is gaining momentum and strength almost daily. There are now mosques all over Zambia. In our town of Ndola alone, there are at least eight mosques and several Islamic schools that have been established. What is even more disturbing is that even our local people now prefer to take their children to these Islamic schools, where Arabic is a required subject. The Muslim community is growing in number, due primarily to the wealth of the Islamic movement and their free handouts of food and clothing.

During my scheduled evangelistic outreaches, I have encountered Muslims who are now becoming very prominent in our community. They have reliably informed me that Muslim teachers from America, Uganda, and Nigeria are being invited to come and conduct question-and-answer cru-

sades. They give out flyers, enticing all to attend, including pastors and politicians.

What concerns me the most is the extremely limited knowledge of the Word of God that exists among the professing Christians in our area. Many of the churches around us are caught up in the prosperity gospel and deliverance services. They give their time to these things, rather than listening to expository preaching and learning sound doctrine. Thus, they do not have the necessary biblical knowledge to resist the clever strategies of the Islamic teachers. A nearby school is now targeting the young people in order to promote an understanding of Islam among them and change their perception of its doctrine and history. This is a very serious matter for us and a great wake-up call for all the churches.

I have gathered this information from four Muslim men with whom the Lord providentially allowed me to share the Gospel. I praise God that one of them has responded and has now attended three worship services at our church. He has confessed that he has begun to understand the relationship between Adam and Christ. He also says that he understands the significance of Moses (Mussa) as a mediator and how he points to Christ as “the” Mediator. He was especially moved by the account of Moses lifting up the brass serpent in Numbers 21. He said that it was proof to him that everything in the Scriptures was written about Christ. Please pray for this man.



VIDEO INTERVIEW:
bit.ly/hc-mkasongo

ASIA

MISSIONARY

GAIUS - NEW MISSIONARY IN CHINA

Brother Gaius (identity protected) is married and has one child. He grew up in a Christian family and was converted as a youth while attending a summer camp. He is now working with HeartCry to establish a church in a large urban area of China.

TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

I was born into a Christian home. Under the supervision and guidance of my parents, I began participating in church meetings, Sunday School, Bible courses, and spiritual renewal conferences and camps. These various activities all gave me a foundation of biblical knowledge and a pattern for church life. However, I was not yet a Christian. Although I led a religious life, I did not live the life of faith. Although I had the knowledge of the faith, I did not have the essence of the faith. I was relying on tradition and church connections instead of the person of Christ.

However, at a summer camp in 1999, I was born again. At that time, God worked through the mouth of one of His servants to open my spiritual eyes and cause me to understand my sin. The preacher said:

"Hurry and repent! Do not think that because you were born into a Christian home you are saved."

I suddenly realized that my sins were many and great. Although formerly I had verbally confessed sin before God and "repented," my heart had never been truly moved or changed. However, this time was different. I felt great grief in my heart. I felt filthy and saw my former sins before me. For example – when I destroyed the neighbors' farm crops

with other young boys, when I stole a neighbor's mandarin oranges, and more. I knelt before God and prayed that He would pardon and have mercy. I asked Him to be gracious and to pity me.

From that time on, I have been truly changed. During Sunday School, I was no longer malicious or unkind to others, but I desired God's Word and listened diligently to the teaching of His truth. In school, I no longer associated with hateful classmates, but I studied conscientiously to do my best. At home, I learned to obey my parents. My life began to show changes as I slowly learned to pursue holiness and growth. I began to draw near to God and study His Word, and I started to live it out in my life. My heart's desire to study theology also was established at that time.

CALL TO MINISTRY

While in high school, I developed a desire in my heart to be a preacher, so I began pressing to develop myself in this direction. However, it was not until I was in a college campus ministry that I clearly understood God's call upon my life.

In college, I participated in a student fellowship and was involved in ministry. I served in the role of preaching and teaching. During that time, God caused my gifts to be exercised in some measure and slowly to be revealed. My own desire was also strengthened. Just before graduation, a leader of our church suddenly asked me if I was willing to serve in the ministry after graduation. At that time, I was very willing; but I waited before the Lord in prayer and sought counsel from the older brethren in the church. Their counsel was con-

sistent: all encouraged me to move forward with it.

I was then very assured that God had called me to minister. After passing the church's approval, I launched

onto this path and have continued in it up until today. There have been times of weakness and setbacks, but the grace of God has continually compelled me to persevere.

THE TESTIMONY OF GAIUS'S WIFE

I was born into a Christian home and am a fourth-generation Christian. My parents are godly people, and when I was young, they continually aspired to preach the Gospel to me. Therefore, from the time I had the ability to understand, I knew I was a sinner and needed Jesus' redemption. Thus, my experience of receiving grace unto salvation is similar to that of the biblical Timothy. From an early age I confessed myself to be a sinner, knew that God was righteous and holy, understood that He would judge sinners, and trusted in Christ as my personal Savior. As I grew, I sought to

live my life according to the teachings of my parents.

In college, my faith was greatly impacted by coming into contact with historic Christian and Reformed theology. This gave me a deep, systematic understanding of my faith and further strengthened my trust in God and commitment to Jesus. Also, it clarified my role as a sister in both my family and the church. I am very thankful to God that He caused me to be born into a godly Christian home, that He allowed me to sit under sound teaching, and that He gave me a firmer foundation in my Christian life.

AN UPDATE FROM SOUTH INDIA THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

BY SUNDER R.

After graduating from Grace Bible College, Sunder primarily worked as a church planter in Gujarat, India. After planting a church, he moved back to his native state in South India in 2004. Since moving, God has graciously used him to plant another church.

Greetings to you all. We are grateful for your prayers, and we appreciate you all for holding the rope so that we might go to the front lines to labor for the Kingdom of God. I would like to share with you some of what God is doing through us.

SUSTAINED THROUGH SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

We want to be careful about the reports we share and avoid self-exaltation. It is not that we are satisfied with all our accomplishments; most of these good results come in the midst

of tears, discouragements, sleepless nights, fears, and threats from those who oppose the Gospel (Hindutva militants – RSS, VH, Bajrang Dal, etc.). They have often tried their best to discourage me and drive me out of this place where I am planting a church. They do not want to see any Christian work or church established in this area. Because of this, my wife and I have gone through many sleepless nights and much mental stress and loneliness. Often, we are perplexed and despairing. But as the Apostle Paul writes of his experience in II Corinthians 1:3-4, we also thank God:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions so that we may be able to comfort those who are in all affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

In verse 9, Paul goes on to say that such trials are designed “to make us rely not on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.” And in verse 10, he writes: “On Him we set our hope.” That is how God is helping, comforting, and sustaining us in His mission work.

DIFFICULTIES FROM ALL SIDES

It is difficult to do pioneer evangelism and plant a new church where there is no other church or any Christian witness. As Paul stated, we are not building on another’s foundation (Romans 15:20).

It has only been a few years since my wife and I moved here from Gujarat state (where we had planted a

church). But we praise God that by His mercy He has enabled us (earth-en jars) to plant a new church in this large and densely populated area. According to a recent survey, our city population is approximately twelve million (larger than both Bangalore and Chennai).

Please pray. We now have another challenge to the Gospel in our city and state. It is the rapid growth of the prosperity gospel movement, the mega-church culture with easy-believism, and the manipulation of souls. For this reason, we desperately desire to make greater effort in providing sound literature, training classes, and conferences for teaching sound doctrine to pastors.

BAPTISM – AN ANSWER TO PRAYER

It is an answer to our prayers that God has converted our brother Prasad, who was from an Anglican Church background. I had visited his home for a long time, but he was always closed to the true Gospel and believed that regeneration was a

strange doctrine. He never allowed anyone to talk to him in his home about the Gospel; but by God’s grace, I prayed and waited upon God to do a work of salvation in his life. Finally, God gave new life to him! He submitted to Christ and believed upon His work on the cross. He is now a new person in Christ. Recently, I baptized him, and he is faithfully coming to church. Please pray for this brother.

POINTS FOR PRAYER

Recently, one of our church members was attending a training seminar for her job, and she attempted to share the Gospel with the lady who was the owner of the training center. This lady, who is a Hindu, had never heard about Christ. Later, my wife and I went and shared the Gospel again with her and gave her some literature. However, when her husband saw the book, he tore it into pieces and shouted at her. After some time, she became sick, and now she is also suffering from severe depression. She is almost nine months pregnant.

Having reached this point of near despair, she called us and asked us to pray for her and to teach her about God. Last week, we visited her two times and prayed for her. We could not teach much to her due to her poor

health, but we trust God to work in her life. For the first time, she came to church last Sunday. Please pray for her and her husband. Her name is Padma.

We also met two more ladies who are attending the same training center, and we shared the Gospel with them. They are interested to know more about Christ, but they have opposition from their family. Another lady came secretly to church last Sunday without her family’s knowledge. Pray for these three ladies. They are from high-caste families that think that Christianity is only for low-caste people.

Thank you once again for standing with us in this ministry. I appreciate your precious prayers for us.

Your brother and sister in His mission,
Sunder and Glory

MISSIONARY REPORT

JOURNEY TO SULAWESI

BY MATT G.

Indonesia, being comprised of many different islands and ethnic groups, is a very diverse country. As a result, each region has several different cultures and religions. For example, my own ministry location is predominantly Muslim, the island of Bali is Hindu, and Northern Sumatra is Christian. Recently, my HeartCry coworkers and I took a trip to a Christian area in Sulawesi, one of the five main islands in Indonesia (there are thousands of other smaller ones). We traveled to the mountains of West Sulawesi to minister to a group of Christians from a small ethnic group called the Bambam people. A little more than a hundred years ago, this ethnic group was entirely animistic – head-hunters who engaged in constant warfare with other tribes around them. One of their primary rituals each year happened at harvest time and involved sending out a war party whose sole purpose was to bring back a human head. The head was then enshrined at the edge of a rice field in order to appease a particular deity, thus supposedly securing a plentiful harvest for that year.

The Christian faith came to these people at the beginning of the 1900's through Dutch Reformed missionaries. As a result, their faith is now very similar to some of the Reformed faith

found in present-day Netherlands. They still use a liturgy in their church meetings, and the pastors wear the distinctive garments of the clergy. They also routinely use the Heidelberg Catechism to instruct the people in their church. Although there are many among them who still maintain the animistic religion of their ancestors, Dutch Christianity has by and large become a visible part of their culture, most evident in the church buildings scattered throughout the region. We met many genuine believers among them, but also a great many of them are nominal Christians who simply accept the Christian faith as the tradition of their people. They are, to translate the Indonesian term, only “identity card Christians.”

From our place of ministry, HeartCry missionaries Salim Hartono and his wife Riri, Ucu Sindang, and I flew to Makassar – the largest city in South Sulawesi. From there, we rented a car and drove thirteen hours into the mountains of West Sulawesi. The first part of the journey was along a coastal plain, and we passed through many towns and villages of the infamous Bugis people (known in history for their piracy of both Dutch and British vessels, and the origin of the English term “bogeyman”). After the



The pastors who attended the conference in West Sulawesi.



Eye examinations for the children and elderly. Dental examinations and teaching on basic health care were also given.

long journey – which included a delay of having to push our car out of the mud – we finally were brought near to our destination, some time after darkness had fallen. We were then greeted by people from the village who had walked about forty-five minutes to help us carry luggage. We unloaded the vehicle and walked with them in the darkness back to their village. Over the next three days, Ucu and Riri did several social activities for children at a local school as well as for older people from the surrounding villages. They performed eye and dental examinations and taught basic healthcare and hygiene. There were many people who were able to obtain much-needed eye glasses – either for reading or for basic vision. It was often humorous when people with good vision, wanting glasses like so many others, did well on their eye examination. Ucu would say, “Okay sir, it looks like your vision is fine; you don’t need any glasses”; to which the disappointed person would reply, “Oh, please check them again!”

During those three days, while Ucu and Riri were involved with social activities, Salim and I met with eight to ten pastors from the region. During that time, Salim taught on the topic of the family, especially about being a godly husband and father. This type of teaching, as is the case in many parts of the world, is too often neglected among ministers in Indonesia. As a result, their families are often in disarray, and their wives are neglected in the name of ministry. It was clear that Salim’s teaching was stepping on some toes, because after the first day, two of the pastors did not return. Due to some comments that one had made, it was clear that he really didn’t have a desire to be a more godly husband. Although that was a little disap-

pointing, we were very encouraged by the others who remained with us those three days. I had intended to teach all three days on the doctrine of God, but after arriving and hearing the pastors speak, it was clear that there was no small debate among them about the relationship between saving faith and good works. So, after exhorting them about faithfulness in ministry, I spent the rest of the first day trying to resolve the debate by teaching about the new birth and its fruits in the life of a believer. In the last two days, we had a great deal of healthy discussion over the teaching on the doctrine of God.

Our primary purpose for traveling to West Sulawesi was to better equip the local believers to continue the work of the ministry themselves. For most Gospel ministers in the West, good theological resources play a vital role in their development as servants of Christ. Therefore, we also wanted to get some good literature into the hands of these men, along with helping them to build a theological library that could be used by all the pastors in the region. They were each given a copy of Paul Washer’s workbook on the doctrine of God (*Satu Tuhan yang Benar*) as well as Charles Leiter’s book on the doctrines



The theological library given to the pastors and believers of West Sulawesi.

of justification and regeneration (*Pembenaran dan Lahir Baru*). An Indonesian Christian publisher also donated ten copies of three different books. Along with these books for each of the pastors, we also brought a small library consisting of about 35-40 books for all of them to use, from Louis Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology* to Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and many other helpful books that are available in Indonesian.

Please pray for the church among the Bambam people. Pray that God might continue His work and that the church might grow to maturity.

EURASIA MISSIONARY

ARSENIY R. - MISSIONARY IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA

BY HOLDEN BARRY

We have recently added another missionary in Russia! Arseniy R. and his young family live in St. Petersburg – the famous Russian city of about ten million-people. He graduated from the Samara Center for Biblical Training (SCBT) in 2010; soon after, he returned to St. Petersburg – where he was raised – and began leading a Bible study and longing for the Lord to raise up a solid church.

After some time, the Lord grew their number, and they sent a request to Samara for help in establishing them as a church. This is when Samara sent Alexey P. (also supported by HeartCry) to help with the new church plant. By God's grace, the church has deepened and grown.

Arseniy has been fulfilling the role of a co-pastor from the beginning while at the same time working in construction to support his family. Eventually, the church came to a point where Arseniy was needed full-time, but they were not yet at a place where they could fully support him. For this reason, at the request of Alexey and with the oversight of SCBT, HeartCry has begun to support Arseniy. We rejoice at the work being done in St. Petersburg and praise the Lord for His kindness toward the church there. Pray that they might continue to thrive and remain humble before the Lord.

ARSENIY'S TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

By the mercy of God, I was born into a Christian family in Saint Petersburg, Russia. Since my childhood, I have had the privilege of hearing the Gospel and being part of a local church. From an early age, I sang in a children's choir, went to Sunday

school, and attended services with my parents, where I observed their lives and the lives of other believers.

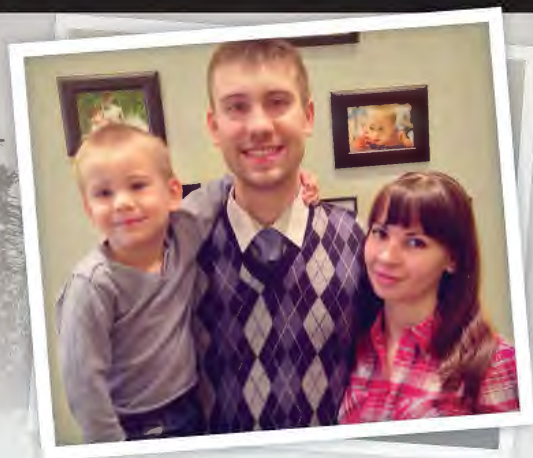
In 2003, while I was at a summer youth camp, I repented and made a conscious decision to follow the Lord. I was fifteen years old. Looking back, I am sure that it was that very day when the Lord changed my heart and saved me. That fall, I was baptized, and I started actively serving in the church.

However, the true realization of my need for spiritual growth came to me later, when I started "Level 1" training at the Samara Center for Biblical Training.

Through systematic teaching of the Scriptures, the instructors showed that the truths of God's Word should stand as the foundation for any and all ministry efforts and desires. With the help of these ministers, the Lord caused me to realize that my life should be Christ-centered and completely based on His Word! The impact that the training in Samara had on me can to some degree be likened to my repentance at the age of fifteen, for on both occasions, the Lord changed my life significantly.

The Lord once again greatly impacted my life when He allowed me to spend nine weeks in the hospital with a life-threatening illness. Parts of my lungs died and left scar tissue as a result of the illness. Despite the pain that I continue to have in my lungs, I can say that this illness is a true blessing for my family and me! God was and is refining and admonishing me in the midst of these sufferings and causing





me to reconsider my entire life.

By God's grace, I am still alive (though to be with Him as soon as possible is the dream of every Christian), and now I know clearly that I want to commit my whole life in ser-

vice to Him and the building of His Church. I do not know how much time the Lord has prepared for me to be on this planet, but my wife and I want to spend whatever time we have in worship and service to Him. And when our time to leave this earth does come, we long to hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Come and share your Master's happiness!"

The Lord, by His grace, has started a new church in Saint Petersburg. He has given me a great opportunity to take part in building it upon His principles, so that His Word might ultimately have great influence both in the lives of the believers and unbelievers whom He entrusts to us and in the other churches in Saint Petersburg.

THE CHURCH MAKES ME HAPPY

BY MAXIM MANAKOV

Maxim Manakov is an evangelist/ church planter working in the Irkutsk region of Siberia. He is a part of the fellowship of pastors led by Sergey M. He is married to Vera, and they have one son.

The grace of God has sustained us another month. God faithfully cares for us and has generously blessed us. For the most part, the blessing has come through the joy of service.

CHEREMKHOVO

The church in Cheremkhovo makes me happy. The people are showing genuine joy, enthusiasm, and attentiveness to the Word, along with sincere confession of sins. On

the first Sunday of the month, I took with me a few of the people from the church in Angarsk to Cheremkhovo. We had a lovely and joyful time of fellowship with the church.

On the second Sunday, there was a holiday – the anniversary of the church's inception. We came from Irkutsk and shared in their joy. There were many people this time, and we did not have enough seats. We were glad to see some there who had previously left the church plant. Others came from another church and stated openly that they believed our church was teaching the truth and that they want to begin attending regularly.

The Lord appears to be working in the life of a man named Victor. He had heard of God before from his wife



when she used to go to church. They have been regularly visiting the church the past few weeks, and it seems that the Lord is bringing Victor to repentance. Please pray for him.

Last Sunday, I preached about certain aspects of sin, and many repented and spoke about the usefulness of the issues that were raised. The Lord also allowed me to minister to the people in the town of

Romanenkino and again to remind them of God and their great need for Him. A couple by the name of Victor and Luda came from Romanenkino to Irkutsk in order to take their children back home from the hospital. I drove them to the hospital and back to the station and sought to encourage them to look to Christ. We continue to pray for their repentance.

TULUN

I was also in Tulun for four days. There I labored both spiritually and physically. We had worship services, and I preached the Word of God. I also worked to renovate the old building and clear a place to make room for a bathroom and a kitchen. I also replaced the wiring in the house. I praise the Lord that I have this opportunity to thank you for the financial help that you gave us for this project. There is such a great need and opportunity to help the living condi-

tions of the people in Tulun – both physically and spiritually. The Lord prompted me so much that my wife and I have decided to move our family to Tulun.

Praise the Lord that He keeps my family and me in His care. Through various difficulties the Lord teaches us patience, endurance, and practical trust in Him.

Please pray for us. Thank you for your participation in our life and ministry. Grace to you!

EUROPE

GERMANY

EVANGELISM, CONVERSIONS, AND A GROWING CHURCH PLANT

BY PETER SCHILD

Brother Peter is working to plant biblical churches in Germany. Peter is a member of the Evangelical Reformed Baptist Church in Wetzlar. He and his wife Priscilla have one child, Josiah, and are now expecting their second.

Peter and Nathanael have faithfully served the church in Wetzlar for nearly two years while preparing to plant a church in nearby Frankfurt. While Peter and his family have now relocated to Frankfurt, Nathanael has recently been called as pastor of the church in Wetzlar. These two brothers work side-by-side in both Frankfurt and Wetzlar, preaching, teaching, and evangelizing in the streets of both cities.

Dear praying saints, I hope this letter finds you growing in the knowledge of our precious Savior, who is worthy of all praise. Once again, the Lord has been faithful to answer your intercessory prayers. I am truly grateful that you spend time placing us and the work in Germany before the Lord. With thanksgiving, I want to tell you of His gracious works among us this past month.

CHURCH MINISTRY IN WETZLAR

Many people were present for our church's fifth anniversary, and together we praised the Lord for what He has done. We are very grateful to see that the Lord is working in Wetzlar.

Our church is visited by many guests (sometimes more than members), which has created a serious need for us to look for another building. Please pray that God might help us find a more suitable place to worship. Please pray also for all the visitors, especially for all those who have come to faith in the past months and now long to be baptized.

Please pray in particular for a group of Iranian men whom we reached through our street evangelism. They were Muslims, but after we studied the Scriptures together for many days, they turned from their sin and are looking to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. One of them translates our evening services into Farsi every Saturday. In addition to these men, we have other people who long to be baptized and become a part of our church. We hope to baptize these new believers this year as we teach each of them through our baptism class. Please pray for us, as we need a lot of wisdom to care for all these people and to disciple and teach each of them.

EVANGELISM IN WETZLAR

We are glad to see more people coming to our church through evangelism on the street. The Lord is continuing to grant us many opportunities to share the good news openly and to hand out a lot of tracts. Almost all of the people we encounter have never heard the Gospel before. Some of them listen very carefully and want to learn more, while others mock and curse us. It is noticeable that of those who do listen, most of them are not German. We are

able to reach people from all kinds of other nations, but Germans are often-times very hostile toward the Gospel. Please pray that the Lord would have mercy upon the Germans and that He would save many of those who are now His enemies.

CHURCH-PLANTING EFFORTS IN FRANKFURT

We meet every Saturday to study the Bible, pray, and enjoy fellowship. Right now, we are studying the Gospel of Mark. More and more people are coming to the meetings, and sometimes it is difficult for everyone to fit. Please pray especially for a group of very lovely and faithful people, all of whom are lawyers in Frankfurt, who are very hungry for the Word of God. We are very grateful to see how the Lord is working powerfully in their lives through the preached Word.

Please pray also for our ongoing street evangelism in Frankfurt. It is indeed a tremendous privilege and a great joy to proclaim Christ to all kinds of people. Again, sometimes people curse and mock us, but the more we share the Gospel, the more joy we receive. Please pray for us as we strive to make Christ known in Frankfurt. As we sow the seed of God's Word, may He bring the harvest for His Name's sake.

Please pray that we adorn the holy Gospel with a Christ-like character and with faithfulness, zeal, humility, and holiness. Thank you so much for remembering us before the throne of grace. We are truly grateful for all your support. May the Lord bless you for all your lovingkindness; it is greatly appreciated! In Christ, who is worth it all!

FINLAND THE CHURCH IS GROWING IN LOVE

BY KYLE MCCARTAN

Kyle McCartan is a HeartCry missionary from Northern Ireland. He is an evangelist and church planter who is living and ministering in the rural farming community of Northern Ostrobothnia on the east coast of Finland. Kyle's ministry includes evangelism, discipling, preaching, and teaching the Word of God in an area dominated by nominal Christianity. He also serves as the pastor of Agape International

Church. He and his wife Sara, a Finnish national, have five sons: Emil, Viggo, Ezra, Amos, and Theodor.

Our little fellowship is growing slowly, but surely moving forward. Our people are steadily growing in knowledge and in faith. I love our church. We have been given such a tremendous compassion and concern for one another, and it has that wonderful feeling of “family” to it. We are truly blessed! Everyone is involved and everyone is sharing in the responsibilities of the fellowship. This involvement is not limited to the Sunday service or the mid-week gathering; everyone’s lives are overlapping and intertwining. It is lovely to see! The love of Christ is strong among these people, and it shows in their affection which they so richly lavish upon one another.

I have been asked to “baby-sit” a church in Tampere until April/May. Therefore, I am currently alternating between one week at our church and the next at the Tampere church. Tampere is a large city, with a population of approximately 250,000 people. It is 285 kilometers (that’s 177 miles for you Americans) south of us. It has a large university, which attracts students

from all over the world. Tampere is also famous for having the largest (and most unbiblical) “word-of-faith church” in Finland. Their influence touches almost all of the other fellowships in the region.

I have only been visiting the church at Tampere since the end of August, but there are already over a dozen new folks that have started coming to the Sunday service. They are all students from as far away as Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, and other distant places.

The Sunday service begins at 11:00 AM and ends around 1:00 PM, yet everyone stays behind and eats together. People do not even begin to leave until 3:00 PM, and many stay until 5:00 PM. You know that the Lord is moving in folks’ hearts when a twenty-something-year-old man from Cameroon bakes a blueberry pie in order to bring it to church on Sunday so that we might fellowship after the service! Despite the difficult travel and the long days, I really enjoy my visits to Tampere, and I know that the folks there are equally delighted to see me as I am to see them. At the moment, I am preaching through I Timothy with them.

Thank you for your interest and for your prayers!

ROMANIA

MERCY TRIUMPHS IN OPPOSITION

BY FLORIN STAN

Florin Stan helps to coordinate the work in Romania. Presently, he develops mission projects in five areas where HeartCry is planting churches. He also leads a church-planting team in Fieni, Romania. Florin and his wife Mariana have one daughter, Damaris. In the face of opposition from the Orthodox Church in Fieni, Florin Stan shares the following story of how God turned disappointment into joy.

Before our annual Vacation Bible school, we made a phone call to the city authorities to ensure that everything was still approved for our use of the city auditorium. To our

surprise, the authorities were very distant and told us that the approval to use the auditorium was no longer valid because there was pressure from the Orthodox priests to deny us the facility. Since we had already distributed invitations for the VBS, we went to the auditorium to wait for the children and to find a solution. Since there was a park in the neighborhood, we decided to hold the VBS there. Several children showed up, along with a young woman with two children. We talked with her, and the light of the Gospel began to shine in her heart. I explained to her what God was doing in her, and she said she would bring her children to the

VBS in Fieni. She came, and the Lord continued to work in her heart. Finally, she came to church on Sunday and burst into tears on several occasions. She said that she had realized how wrong she was and that she regretted the way in which she

had lived her life. At the same time, she said she could not believe how simple the Gospel truly was. Now she is intensely reading the Bible and has quit her vices. Her salvation is a great encouragement for the ministry in Pietrosita.

FOR HIS SAKE ALONE

BY DANUT OPRIS

Brother Danut Opris is responsible for the administration of the church in Draganesti-Olt. He and Florina Cazan have also started a new work in the village of Coteana. The location is a hard field because of the witchcraft and strong Orthodox opposition. This past month he sent this testimony from a recent experience in the home of an unsaved family.



Home visits are part of my ministry. I visit the church members to counsel them, to rebuke or correct them, and to encourage or help them. Recently, our church helped a non-Christian family with financial support. Their daughter needed mouth surgery. After we helped them, the girl's mother stopped coming to church. The believers did not appreciate her negative response and were grumbling

that the family had turned their back on us after we helped them. I told my brothers that this family might not come to church in the future, but we must not be upset if someone forgets the good that was done to him or her. We helped this girl for the Lord's sake and not for her parents' sake. We obeyed the Lord and must not be sorry for that. I am glad that God's name was honored and the operation was successful.

A DIVINE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

BY MARIAN BICAJAN

Marian Bicajan is an evangelist that presently lives and labors in the city of Fieni. His ministry includes street evangelism, church planting, and working with children. He is currently serving with Florin Stan in a church plant in Fieni. He and his wife Simona have one son, Teodor Razvan. In the following report, Marian relates a recent encounter that he had while doing open-air evangelism on the streets.

I want to share with you about an encounter and conversation I had with a young man as he was attempting to hitchhike. When I approached him, he told me that he did not want to talk to me because he was a Satanist. I started praying for guidance in approaching him because I knew he was in great need of hearing the Gospel. I felt so sorry for him, but I had no idea how to start a discussion with him. Eventually, I decided to simply tell him directly,

"You cannot even imagine how sorry I am for you; you must suffer much in your life because of your rejection of God." He said I was right and continued to watch for a ride. I told him that I also suffered when I was his age, but I had found comfort and a purpose for my life in the Lord Jesus. I told him to stop hitchhiking, because no one would stop until I told him the Gospel. He did not stop looking for a ride, but he began to listen to me with an increasing interest. I strongly believed that he needed to hear the Gospel message. I told him many times that Jesus could save him from his miserable way of living if he put his trust

in Him. The young man seemed to despise everyone, and he had an empty look in his face. But in spite of his outward appearance, I could see that God was touching his heart; he was becoming more and more sensitive to the Word of God. After twenty minutes of discussion, a car stopped, and the driver asked him if he needed a ride. To my surprise, the young man turned down the ride because he wanted to talk to me a few more minutes. We were friends when we parted, and I was blessed to witness how the Lord can open even the most hardened heart in just a few minutes.

PERSEVERANCE REWARDED

BY SORIN IORDAN

Sorin Iordan is the pastor of a Gypsy church in the southern part of Romania called Rosiori de Vede. The church is located in the middle of the Gypsy community and has had a good ministry among the Gypsies living there. Sorin has also started new missions in Olteni and Troianu. He is married and has seven children. In the following, he gives an account of the Lord honoring faithfulness in spite of an alcoholic's refusal to trust Christ.

In Olteni, the Lord worked in a family that I have been visiting for about one year. The man, who is forty-nine, and his wife, forty-five, have two children. There have always been problems in this family, because the husband is an alcoholic and often argues with his family. But he was always kind to me and welcomed me into his home. He always listened carefully to the Gospel message and even asked me questions about salvation. He came to church with his family several times, but each time he would go back to the bar and get drunk. His wife told me that this was normal for him. She said that he was generally a good man. But because



*Sorin Iordan performing
a recent baptism*

of the alcohol, he often became violent and would beat her; he would even beat his children if they tried to protect their mother. They were almost divorced several times. Three weeks ago, the wife received the Lord as her Savior. We are glad that the Lord blessed their family with salvation, and we have hope that He will save her husband too. The man used to drink alcohol every day, but he has not been drinking for two weeks. We pray that he will also turn to God.

MIDDLE EAST

OPPORTUNITIES TO PORTRAY CHRIST

BY ABU MUNAHID

An update from Abu Munahid, pastor of Salam Church in an undisclosed country in the Middle East.

INTRODUCING

A NEW FAMILY TO CHRIST

This month I visited a new family and introduced Jesus' message to them. The entire family – the father and mother, together with their two adult children and their spouses – also prayed with me. The mother said that she could not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, and the deity of Jesus did not make sense to her. But the Lord is good; He allowed me to talk to them about these things.

The mother is more open now, but she still has many questions. She comes every Tuesday to the women's ministry, and she brings her neighbor too. Last Sunday she came to church with her husband, who has not gone to church in forty years. After the meeting, the man said that he had not heard words like this in all his life.

GOSPEL INSTRUCTION

TO AN ALGERIAN WOMAN

Through one of the brothers in our church, I met a woman visiting from Algeria. The Lord opened a door for me to have the following conversation with her when she asked:

"How can Jesus, the son of Mary, be God?"

I replied, "Do you believe the Gospels?"

"Yes."

"Do you want me to answer you from the Gospels or from my mind?"

"From the Gospels."

"Then my wife and I will both talk to you from the Gospels."



The Lord allowed us to talk with her for two hours, answering her questions and correcting her wrong concepts. As we were leaving, she said, "I have never heard these things before. All I heard from my family was, 'Don't eat or talk with the infidels.' But during my visit to this country, I have witnessed how the Christian people treat me." Please join with us in praying for this woman.

A REFUGEE NAMED DEBO

I was informed about a poor refugee named Debo who was interested in Christianity. The Latin Orthodox Church was giving him money to help him with his rent and other expenses. He visited our church in the city, and some brothers followed up with him. He started attending, and later he was baptized in our church.

After he was baptized, the Latin church stopped giving him money and said to him in a mocking tone, "Congratulations." He replied, "My Lord is great. I will not turn back from my faith. God will take care of me." Through Debo, I have been encouraged to live in greater faith. I thank God for him. Please pray for him.

COMFORTING THOSE LIVING IN FEAR

In our country today, Christians [including nominal Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians] are living in fear of “IS” (the Islamic State). People are preparing their weapons. They are threatened that they must either become a Muslim or else pay “the tribute.”

These fears even grip the members of my own church. Some of them have stopped coming to church, so I have been visiting them to talk with them and comfort them. I have been seeking to give them the words of the Bible for situations like these. Please pray for our country and the difficulties and fears facing the church.

Also pray for the expatriates and refugees who are in our church: Khader, Fadi, and Mahar.

“WE WILL NEVER DENY JESUS”

PERSECUTED FOR CHRIST IN IRAQ

BY DR. ANDREW

Dr. Andrew is a gifted apologist to Muslims and began his evangelistic work among nomadic Arabs several years ago in the Middle East. After finishing his university studies, Dr. Andrew set up a veterinary clinic in a small village to treat sheep and camels. Dr. Andrew is now leading a team of evangelists who are working among difficult-to-reach Muslims.

“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” – II Timothy 3:12

We often read these verses in the Bible, and the first thing we think about is the church in the first and the second centuries, when people were persecuted for their faith, and when living for Jesus meant putting everything on the line. Sadly, few in the West realize the fact that these verses are the everyday life for many Christians in the Middle East.

Recently, during one of our visits to the Christian Iraqi refugees who left Mosul because of the killing machine of the Islamic State (IS; formally known as ISIS), we met Mark (pseudonym). He told us his story and how he was able to flee from his city before IS invaded it. Mark is in his sixties, a father and grandfather, who owned a restaurant in Mosul for more than twenty years. Before IS invaded the city, a group of Muslims who sup-



ported IS came to Mark, inviting him to convert to Islam. But Mark refused and said that he believed in the one true God of the Bible.

Later that week, the same group approached him, telling him that they would come to kill him the moment IS took over Mosul, unless he converted to Islam. Mark again refused and said that he would never deny Christ, whatever might happen. Mark insisted on staying, refusing to leave the place he had lovingly built over his lifetime.

The threats quickly turned into reality, however, when IS bombed the family’s restaurant. But still they would not surrender. Mark was determined to restore and repair the shop. The family worked hard to return everything back to normal, and after finishing the restaurant, they resumed working in it.

IS returned with a more serious threat the next time, demanding that the family evacuate the area or convert to Islam. The family was forced to either leave behind all that they had built or stay and convert to Islam. Neither choice was desirable. In the end, Mark and his family chose not to deny Christ, electing instead to leave all behind. They could not take anything with them except their clothes, because IS began shooting at them and at other Christian families in the city. After much struggle and a long journey, they arrived in another country which borders Iraq. They left their painful past behind to begin an unknown future. To make matters worse, Mark and his family are not allowed to work in their new country because of their status as refugees.

We shared with this family from Hebrews 11, which speaks about

faith and the reward of faith. We thought that we were there to encourage them, but this brother encouraged us when he said, “I am ready to sacrifice my children and die with my family to stay with Jesus; we will never deny Jesus.” Stories like this give a different meaning to the phrase, “live for Christ.” People like Mark and his family redefine the meaning of commitment to our Christian faith. But Mark and his family are not the only ones who suffer for their faith – there are many across the globe who live for Christ faithfully, even with all the persecution and fear.

“Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.”
– Hebrews 13:3

PRAYER NEEDED

SECRET POLICE AND ISLAMIC REBELS

Though he grew up in a Coptic community in Egypt, Boutros was converted and is now serving the Lord in a Muslim country in the Middle East that has no Evangelical witness. For a number of years, he had felt a strong burden to move to this country in order to strengthen and establish indigenous churches. Boutros is a gifted preacher and has a heart to see the church equipped with the truth of God's Word. The following entries, written by his sending church, help to show the kind of danger in which Boutros might find himself on a daily basis. We hope they will be to you a reminder to pray for him and for the brethren across the globe who are in similar situations.

October 31st

“After this week's underground church meeting, Boutros was called to go to the secret police office. The current situation in this country has been getting bad and unstable, especially after all the victories that the radical Muslim rebels have achieved on the ground. There is even a possibility that they will overthrow the

government. At a time like this, a meeting with the secret police can be very dangerous. We don't know if the police have called Boutros because of his work among the underground church or for some other reason.”

November 2nd, Morning

“The Islamic rebels are gathering themselves around the city where Boutros lives. They tried to enter the city this morning, but the army was able to hold them off. Prayers are needed; it would be very dangerous if they were able to enter the city.”

November 2nd, Evening

“Boutros is doing well – he is at his home at the moment. In the meeting, the secret police did not ask him anything about the underground church, but they did ask him about his reason for coming to this country. He told us that the situation in the city is critical. The Muslim rebels are surrounding the city, and the soldiers are littering the streets. Please pray!”

LATIN AMERICA

PERU

THE LOSS OF A SERVANT: GILBERTO NOLE'S PASSING


BY LUKE NASH

Gilberto Nole was a faithful servant of God and a diligent preacher of the Gospel. For the last ten years of his life, he worked with HeartCry to care for the churches in northern Peru. He was a man of whom the world was not worthy. He will be greatly missed.

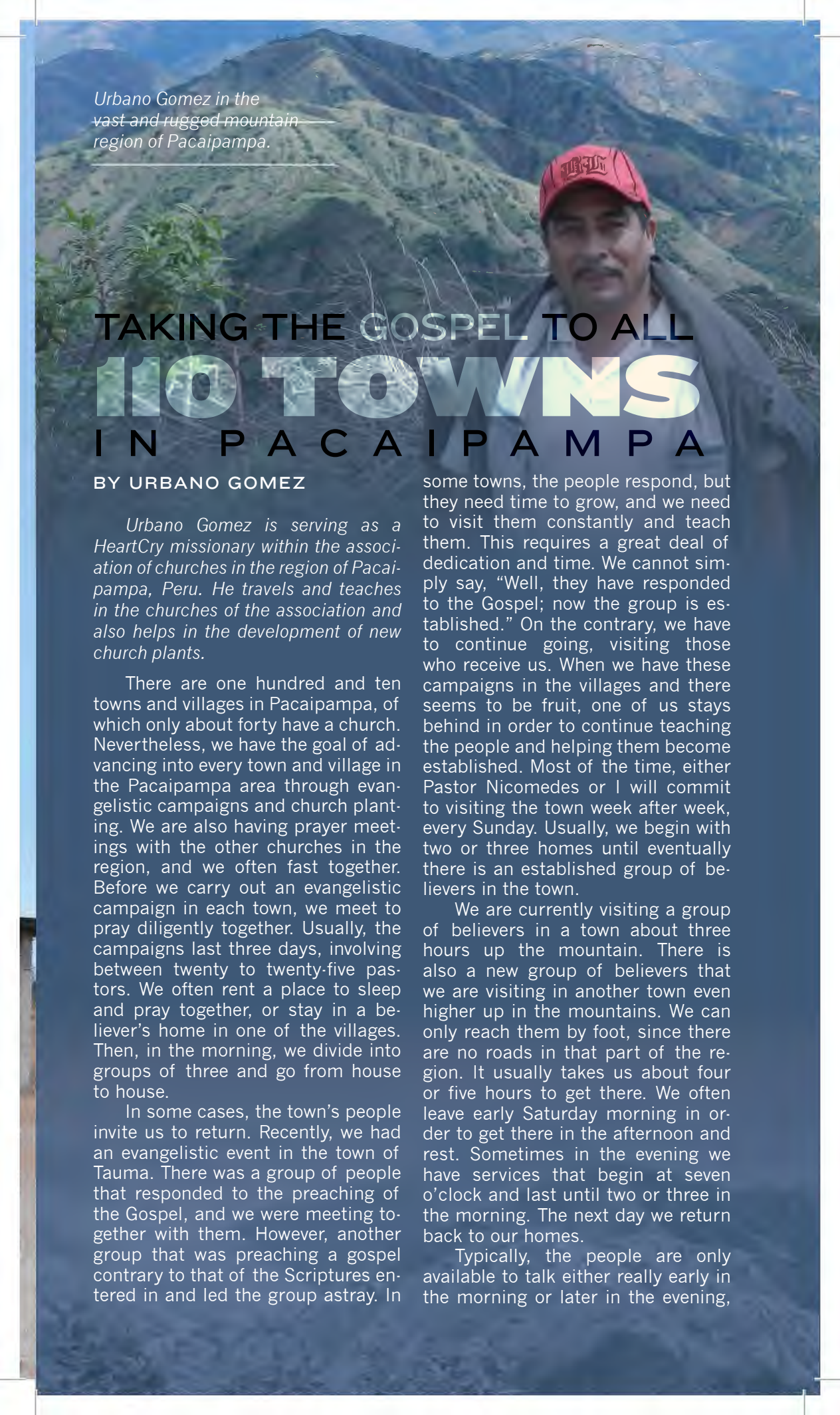
After more than forty years of tireless service in northern Peru as a pastor, church planter, husband, and father, Gilberto Nole passed away. The impact he left on that region will by God's grace continue to echo on, with more than forty churches in the surrounding region owing their beginning to Gilberto's ministry. He truly was a man whose eyes were filled with eternity, and his heart was driven by a burden to see the multitudes bow the knee to Christ and find salvation in Him. His passing leaves large shoes to fill, and the loss will be felt by all.

Please pray that the Lord might raise up many more faithful men to take Gilberto's place in moving the Kingdom forward in the northern Andes Mountains. Also, pray for his wife and family as they grieve Gilberto's passing, though not as those who do not have hope (I Thessalonians 4:13). The following was written by HeartCry missionary Jose Luis Siancas:

"God has carried Gilberto to a much better place, as a good and faithful servant. At his funeral, I was given the opportunity to preach the Gospel that has made us slaves, given us hope, and led us to serve God out of an abundance of love. Pastor Gilberto was and is an example of loving service to Christ. I thank God for this brother and for using him in such a great way for the edification of the Church and for His Glory."

A photograph showing four men standing in a row on a dirt path in front of a simple, single-story brick building with a dark doorway. The man on the far left is wearing a black polo shirt and grey trousers. The second man from the left is wearing a purple button-down shirt and grey trousers. The third man is wearing a white button-down shirt, dark trousers, and a dark baseball cap. The man on the far right is wearing a dark polo shirt and blue jeans. The background shows some trees and a clear sky.

HeartCry missionaries (left to right) Javier Carhuapoma, Carlos Garcia, Gilberto Nole, and Jose Luis Siancas outside of Gilberto's church in northern Peru.



Urbano Gomez in the vast and rugged mountain region of Pacaipampa.

TAKING THE GOSPEL TO ALL 110 TOWNS IN PACAIPAMPA

BY URBANO GOMEZ

Urbano Gomez is serving as a HeartCry missionary within the association of churches in the region of Pacaipampa, Peru. He travels and teaches in the churches of the association and also helps in the development of new church plants.

There are one hundred and ten towns and villages in Pacaipampa, of which only about forty have a church. Nevertheless, we have the goal of advancing into every town and village in the Pacaipampa area through evangelistic campaigns and church planting. We are also having prayer meetings with the other churches in the region, and we often fast together. Before we carry out an evangelistic campaign in each town, we meet to pray diligently together. Usually, the campaigns last three days, involving between twenty to twenty-five pastors. We often rent a place to sleep and pray together, or stay in a believer's home in one of the villages. Then, in the morning, we divide into groups of three and go from house to house.

In some cases, the town's people invite us to return. Recently, we had an evangelistic event in the town of Tauma. There was a group of people that responded to the preaching of the Gospel, and we were meeting together with them. However, another group that was preaching a gospel contrary to that of the Scriptures entered in and led the group astray. In

some towns, the people respond, but they need time to grow, and we need to visit them constantly and teach them. This requires a great deal of dedication and time. We cannot simply say, "Well, they have responded to the Gospel; now the group is established." On the contrary, we have to continue going, visiting those who receive us. When we have these campaigns in the villages and there seems to be fruit, one of us stays behind in order to continue teaching the people and helping them become established. Most of the time, either Pastor Nicomedes or I will commit to visiting the town week after week, every Sunday. Usually, we begin with two or three homes until eventually there is an established group of believers in the town.

We are currently visiting a group of believers in a town about three hours up the mountain. There is also a new group of believers that we are visiting in another town even higher up in the mountains. We can only reach them by foot, since there are no roads in that part of the region. It usually takes us about four or five hours to get there. We often leave early Saturday morning in order to get there in the afternoon and rest. Sometimes in the evening we have services that begin at seven o'clock and last until two or three in the morning. The next day we return back to our homes.

Typically, the people are only available to talk either really early in the morning or later in the evening,

because during the day they devote themselves to their labors. The majority of the people work in agriculture. Therefore, when we evangelize in the daytime, we find only women in the homes. In such cases, we go with our wives to visit them. Since our wives cannot walk to many of those villages – because they are so far away – we usually wait until the evening so that we can invite the men

once they have returned from their labors. We tell them that we are going to have a night service in the church, and we encourage them to come. We pass out tracts to them, and many of them come to the service. If they do not come, then the next day, we go house to house throughout the village to speak with them about their need to believe the Gospel.

REACHING HUANCABAMBA

AND THE HIGH REGIONS

BY NICOMEDES SAAVEDRA

Nicomedes Saavedra is the pastor of a church in Pacaipampa, in the northern region of Peru. While he is devoted to the church in Pacaipampa, the Lord has also used him and the congregation to start several other church plants in villages throughout the region.

I have been encouraging the believers from our church in San Lorenzo to go out with me to the white fields ready for harvest that are all around us, to the highest regions of the mountains, where people live who have never heard the Gospel: to the high regions of Huancabamba.

This place is often called, “The Devil’s Cradle,” because the people there practice witchcraft and sorcery.

When we go to these places we pass out tracts from one house to the next. While almost all of the people reject us, refuse to listen, and mock us, there are a few people who listen attentively. This is our goal for 2015, to reach these places to a greater extent.

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to be praying for these high places in the region of Pacaipampa, that the Lord would open doors for His Word to go forth in order that there might be a work of the Lord there. ■

PASTORAL LIBRARIES FOR PACAIPAMPA

BY LUKE NASH



Once a year, hundreds of believers from the mountains of Pacaipampa in northern Peru meet together for several days of teaching, worship, and prayer. In this particular region of the country, there are approximately forty-five churches, and very few of the pastors have any type of formal training or any literature outside of the Bible. In an effort to help facilitate the preparation of the pastors in Pacaipampa, HeartCry prepared and delivered sixty pastoral libraries, each of which consisted of a Study Bible, a concordance, a Bible dictionary, and John MacArthur’s



book *Pastoral Ministry*. These pastoral libraries were distributed among all of the pastors in the region and also to a few other leaders that are helping with teaching and preaching. HeartCry missionaries Javier Carhuapoma and Jose Luis Siancas instructed the men on how to make good use of these study materials. In the following note, Urbano Gomez (see article on page 27) explains the need for such resources, as well as how they are put to use:

“Each month, all of the pastors from our region meet together to study biblical doctrine, especially the doctrine of salvation and other essential doctrines. Our desire is for these brothers who are leading churches to understand the Scriptures and to teach sound doctrine. We are very grateful for the books that HeartCry has sent to Pacaipampa for the pastors. All of the pastors will be using them as the resources for our monthly pastors’ studies. We all need to grow in sound doctrine, and the books and study tools are going

to help us greatly. Our hope is that the brothers who are leading churches in our region will attain a greater understanding of the Scriptures through these resources. Some of us were able to study in the seminary that Angel Colmenares provided for pastors in the mountains, but now there are many more pastors. The younger pastors did not have the privilege of studying in the seminary and still need basic preparation.

“Most of the pastors in the region do not have any books except their Bibles. In some cases, however, the local church will provide a special offering to purchase a Study Bible for their pastor, or sometimes a group of pastors will collaborate to purchase a Study Bible for a young pastor. The brothers really want to study and be further equipped for ministry, but without even a Study Bible, this is difficult. So, for many pastors, the pastoral libraries that they received through HeartCry are going to help them greatly.” ■

A NEW LIBRARY FOR THE CHURCH IN NUEVA ESPERANZA

BY IVAN TASSARA

As the Lord continues to add to the number of believers in Nueva Esperanza, where HeartCry missionary Ivan Tassara is pastoring, the need for sound biblical resources has also increased. In an effort to help Ivan with his own

studies, with the discipleship of men for the ministry, and with the general growth of the brothers and sisters of the congregation, HeartCry has provided a basic church library. The themes of the literature range from pastoral ministry and systematic theology to instruction

on marriage and personal study of the Word. The following is a brief description from Ivan of the way the materials will be used for the edification of the local church.

We will be making use of the books in several different ways within the church. First, the books that are more devotional, such as those by John Piper, will be passed around each week to different families. For example, this month we are studying the book *Desiring God*; during each week, the family that has the book for that week will study one chapter and prepare to share with the church

on Sunday based on what the chapter discussed.

The books dealing with systematic theology will be used in the discipleship of two brothers that are helping me with the teaching and preaching. We are devoting one day a week to meet together to study the material, which is being used to strengthen our biblical convictions. We have also been helped by these resources in dealing with very practical issues in the congregation. They help us remain disciplined in our studies. Finally, the rest of the materials are being used for the church at large, based on the needs of each member, and for discipleship class. ■

PASTORAL LIBRARIES IN PERU'S JUNGLES

BY LUKE NASH

The effort to provide a basic pastoral library for pastors and teachers in the jungles of Peru continues. Several weeks ago, a group of about forty men from many different parts of the northeastern jungles met in the village of Chazuta for a week of pastoral training. The men that were present represent twelve different native languages and people groups. They come together every few months to Chazuta to receive biblical teaching that is provided by "Reaching and Teaching Ministries." Over the past year, HeartCry has been given the privilege of coming alongside this ministry by provid-



ing needed literature, such as Study Bibles, concordances, and Bible dictionaries. By God's grace, we hope to continue helping these faithful ministers of the Gospel with even more resources as they seek to proclaim the Word of God in this needy jungle region of Peru.



Pastors and teachers from about forty-five churches received pastoral libraries

FROM THE EDGE OF SUICIDE TO THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

BY JAVIER CARHUAPOMA

Javier Carhuapoma is the pastor of the Baptist Church of Maranatha in Paita, Peru. His ministry and influence is felt throughout many churches in the northern region of Peru. He is one of our most trusted laborers in Latin America, and we count it a privilege to work with Him.

We give thanks to God for His grace and mercy as we look back on this past month, which was filled with His blessing. Toward the end of the month, we had an evangelistic retreat to which we invited many people from the surrounding community. There were approximately seventy people who came. At the end of the retreat, a woman named Maritza asked to speak with my wife and me. She shared with us the following:

"I was born into a home in which I knew only my mother. When I was eight, my mother told me that we were going to travel to the town where my father lived so that I could meet him. When we were before the man that my mother said was my father, he told me that he was not my father. He said that my skin was too dark to be his daughter, since he was very light-skinned. Because of this experience, ever since I was eight years old, I have always felt rejected.

"Later, my mother and a different man took me to the city of Paita, and there I became a victim of sexual abuse. Shortly after that, my mother met yet another man and then suddenly disappeared with him. At nine years of age, I had been abandoned by my mother. Even while I was still a young girl, I tried to commit suicide; but a family had compassion on me and began to take care of me.

"When I was fifteen, I ran off with the first man that showed interest in me. I now have six kids, and though I know I have a responsibility as a mother, I have tried to take my own life several more times.

"When I first began to go to your church, the Word made me reflect seriously on my life, and it made me want to come to this retreat. I have found that the Gospel is the greatest thing that one could ever have, and I want to repent now and follow Jesus. I need God. He is my hope."

She fell to the floor weeping, as she cried out, "I need the Lord! He is my Savior!" We praise God for His work with this lady and her family. She has since been attending our church services with her six kids and the father of her children. Please pray for the salvation of her children and their father. ■

REPORT FROM THE JUNGLE

BY ARTURO MARIN

Arturo Marin and his family live in the northern jungles of Peru in the department of San Martin. He pastors the Baptist Church of San Rafael and also helps train other pastors in the region.

Greetings and many blessings in your homes and ministries. This month was difficult for my family due to my travels and my wife's illness, but spiritually, it was a great blessing for us. Early in the month,

I spoke with a sister from our church named Maria. Her house was recently robbed, and she came face-to-face with the thieves. Thanks to the Lord's protection, they did not harm her. She is a very generous sister and a big help to the brothers and sisters in the church. Her husband abandoned her when she became a Christian, and now, she is a single mother of four children.

I also spoke with Julio, a brother who lives in a town called Wimbayo. He is beginning a church plant in his town, and he often calls on me when he needs counsel. I will be giving him different materials and resources to help him in his ministry. After visiting with him, I went to La Libertad, where brother Amado is pastoring a church

plant. They recently discovered that his wife has cancer, and they were understandably discouraged by this frightening news. I visited them in hopes of being an encouragement. They seemed to be helped by our time together, and they are trusting in the Lord as they confront this awful disease.

I was also able to visit with a married couple on the verge of separation. They are members of an unbiblical church in our town which runs purely on emotion and has no power to confront the problems that this couple is facing in their marriage. I spoke with them about the need for repentance for the forgiveness of sins and told them that only then would they be able to consider the

ARGENTINA

REJOICING WITH NEW BELIEVERS AND A CRY FOR REVIVAL

BY ESTEBAN TOLOZA

In July 2014, HeartCry began supporting missionary Esteban Toloza. Several years ago, together with HeartCry missionary Nicolás Serrano, Esteban helped plant Family of Grace Church in Rosario, Argentina, where they now co-pastor the growing congregation. In addition to this, the Lord has opened the door for Nicolás and Esteban to train and assist pastors of new church plants throughout Argentina.

This month, we celebrated the baptism of four new believers. It was a day filled with great joy, and it was also an opportunity to evangelize family members and relatives that had been invited by those who were to be baptized. Each person who was baptized boldly shared his or her testimony of faith in Christ. It was edifying to talk with some of their family members and hear from them the testimony that those who were being

baptized "are no longer the same as before." The wife of one of the men who was baptized, a man who had been a professing Christian for many years but had never experienced true conversion, told us, "He always went to church, but there was never anything different in him; he was always the same person. But for some time now, he is not the same any longer; he is not the same person that I once knew." The only possible explanation for this is the power of the Gospel!

In an earlier report, I mentioned a young lady who appeared to have been converted. Thanks to the Lord, what appeared to be small signs of new life have become even more apparent, and it seems that she really is a tree planted by streams of living water, which yields its fruit in its season. Each day, the hand of the Almighty upon her is more and more evident. She has never before been in an Evangelical context, and she came to our church from a family background in which there was

other problems that have infiltrated their marriage. Though they insist that they are Christians, the fruit in their lives suggests that they have not yet come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

One night, a young lady named Leny came unexpectedly to our house. She was very desperate. Some time ago, I had shared the Word with her, but she had had no interest in the things of God because she was walking in the vanities of youth. Recently, however, someone told her that they had performed witchcraft on her and that, as a result, she was sick. I told her that her sickness was not her problem, but that her problem was sin. I again shared with her from the Word, and we agreed to

continue meeting together. The next day she returned. As I was sharing with her about the Gospel, she repented of her sins. The pains and afflictions she was fighting have begun to disappear. Before, she had gone to the local witch doctor to be healed of her sickness and had paid 800 soles (about \$270 USD). It did not help her, and she continued in pain. The witch doctor told her not to eat certain foods, but I told her that such food could not harm her. Leny and her husband are now attending our church, but her husband is not yet a Christian. Please pray for them.

Beloved brothers and sisters, many, many thanks for your prayers. May the Lord richly bless you all! ■

great hostility toward Christianity.

Shortly after her profession of faith, she encountered great difficulties with the members of her family who are given over to the occult. They felt deeply disappointed when a member of their own family declared herself to be a follower of Jesus. There was such a commotion within her family as a result of her conversion that her parents and one of her sisters came one Sunday morning to speak with Nicolás and me. They wanted us to explain to them what had happened to their daughter. They did not understand why she did not live the same life that she lived before. She no longer went out to “have fun,” but instead spent her time reading the Bible, praying, and seeking to know more about Jesus. Thanks to the Lord, even though they were very angry, we were given the ability to speak with kindness and wisdom, and the Lord brought the conversation to a good end. They even allowed us to explain the Gospel to them, and they listened quietly! Truly, the Lord still shuts the mouths of the lions!

This young lady’s boyfriend is now coming to the church. It appears that he also has been saved by the Lord!

When he arrived, it seemed like he did not understand anything that we were saying to him, and he did not understand what had happened to his girlfriend. Aside from two or three youth group meetings in an extremely charismatic context, he had never been inside a church, and even these experiences had left him without even the slightest interest in the things of God. However, through personal conversation with one of the brothers in our church, who spoke to him clearly about the Gospel, he was confronted with the reality of his own soul, and he clung to the arms of Christ.

Something that surprised us was that after having made a profession of faith, both he and the young lady were convinced that they should put their relationship to the side and seek to grow as a man and woman of God. After that, if it was the will of God, they would begin to consider marriage. It truly was pleasantly surprising to hear of their decision, as we had not even talked to them about their relationship yet, and we had not counseled them in any way to come to that decision. How can we explain this, except as the result of the power of God? All praise and glory to Him!

A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

BY JESSICA SHAPIRO

The following is an email sent by Jessica Shapiro to HeartCry administrator Kevin Hite after her recent trip to Romania. Jessica is a student at Reformation Bible College in Sanford, Florida, an extension of Ligonier Ministries. She journeyed to Romania during her 2014 summer break, hoping to witness the Lord's work among believers there. It appears she was not disappointed, as the Lord enabled her to spend time with several HeartCry-supported evangelists and church planters. What a great encouragement to receive such a positive "third-person" account of the lives and ministries of our Romanian partners!

Yes, I made it back safely Saturday night. My time spent in Romania was a grace from God. I am so glad that I went, and I find myself sad to be home; but I am returning with a clearer perspective on ministry and missions, which I pray will continue to develop as I meditate more on my trip. I hope that this personal account of my encounters and thoughts in Romania will be an encouragement to you.

I went on this trip hoping that I would gain experience on the mission field while also receiving insight and wisdom from people with whom I might serve. I definitely got all of that and much more. My school is such an incredible blessing, and I find my desire to serve God on the mission field fed by the wonderful teaching that I receive here. Yet, at the same time, I know that I live in a bubble here in Florida and am surrounded by comforts that can easily distract me. For this reason, my time among the passionate saints in Romania was a time of both refreshment and encouragement to follow the call I feel towards missions with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I was challenged daily to love God more, to serve Him in love, to seek Him in love, and to do all this because He first loved us.



I was incredibly blessed my first week there to serve with Dana and speak with Ruxi about ministry, counseling, missions, and life. Sitting in a room with Ruxi and Dana, asking them questions about their greatest challenges in ministry and life, and gleaned advice in missions was extremely beneficial to me. While speaking with them, I was overwhelmed by their humility, gentleness, care, and wisdom. They are women that I aspire to be like, and I was humbled to be in their presence and to receive insight from them on missions and godliness.

As I traveled around from Bucharest to Fieni to Brasov to Pucioasa to Sinaia, I was privileged to meet many pastors and families of HeartCry church plants. When meeting these people, no matter where I was in the country, I was impressed by a few common characteristics: an active zeal for sharing the Gospel with the lost; a deep, compassionate concern for the people within their church; and a sacrificial servant's heart towards me and all who proved to have a need of some kind. In Fieni, I was struck by the beauty of the excitement of the pastors gathered around one table as they prepared to spread the Gospel in

that town. That experience of three days in street evangelism brought upon me a sobering realization that I was in the presence of giants. I was humbled to be eating, speaking, and praying at the same table as these men who have sought to serve their God so fervently; and

this realization continued throughout my time in Romania.

In Brasov, I met many wonderful people and friends and was blessed by conversations about God's grace and life lessons learned, all of which stirred my heart to praise the Lord. Meeting and learning from people like Sorin and Trisha Prodan, Adi Augustin, Ion Tomeci, and Alex Palade as we went street evangelizing in the

park and hearing of the Lord's work in their lives felt like an honor I did not deserve. I was encouraged by them to live a life of excellence for God, to seek Him wholly, and to be active for His Kingdom.

From there I went to Pucioasa, a small town in the hills, where Pastor Nicu Vulpe and his family serve the body of Christ. My experience in this town with these people deeply impacted me and my impression of the ministry in Romania. Pastor Nicu stretched and pushed my ability to share the Gospel through my testimony by giving me opportunity after opportunity to share with people, both one-on-one and in groups, about what the Lord has done and is doing in my life. I was continually impressed by the amount of ministry that is done through that church, particularly through Nicu and the leaders there. Nicu's watchful care of his flock was striking, and it was a great encouragement to me. I was extremely blessed by how he and all the leaders I met in Romania sought to stretch me and use me in their ministries while I was there. It was amazing to me that they would seek to challenge and give wisdom to me, a girl from another country who they did not know, so that I might develop and grow in my faith. It was truly an honor to serve in each church.

I was grateful that my last Sunday was spent with the people in Pucioasa, because I had grown so close to them. As we shared in the Lord's Supper, I was holding back tears at the uncertainty of ever seeing these people again; nevertheless, I was overwhelmed with the beautiful reminder that even if I never see them again on earth, one day we will feast at the Lord's table together as His Bride. I pray that I will never forget Nicu's simple advice to me to desire to be used of the Lord and to go forth in humility. Those words impacted me because they were a personal testimony of his ministry, and I was able to see how God honors those who desire to humbly serve Him.

From Pucioasa I traveled to Sinaia, where I met pastor Moise Marin and helped at a Gypsy camp. I learned so much from his care for the youth and his love for the Gypsies, who are outcasts in Romanian society. His

display of the love and care of Christ for the "outcast" was an honor to witness, and his immediate acceptance of me was a true blessing. Although, once again, I often felt as though I was in the presence of spiritual giants and was humbled by the opportunity to learn from them, there was also a strange paradox of realizing just how ordinary they were. I was blessed to see these people, not only in ministry, but also with their families and friends. Seeing how God is pleased to use such normal people for such a glorious task made my trip all the more humbling, hopeful, and awe-inspiring. I was impacted and encouraged to see God using "ordinary giants" to further His Kingdom in Romania.

I think the one word that would summarize my trip best is "overwhelming." I was overwhelmed by the blessings of God in allowing this trip to happen and in answering so many years of prayer. I was overwhelmed by the blessing of meeting saints from another country with whom I will worship in eternity. I was overwhelmed by their zeal for sharing the Gospel and their continual labors in ministry. I was overwhelmed by their acceptance of me and their love for one another. Most of all, I was overwhelmed by the honor and privilege it was to meet and serve alongside these worthy contenders for the Truth. Sometimes during my trip I felt somewhat foolish for having desired this opportunity, not because I wished I had not gone, but because I was amazed and humbled at the blessing that had been bestowed upon me.

I am so grateful for the assistance you and Sorin provided in helping me organize my time in Romania. I am blessed to have seen and participated in the work being done there, and I have returned with a deeper and clearer understanding of what "missions" truly is because of the example given in the lives of those serving in Romania. I pray I will serve God as faithfully as they in my studies here in Florida and on the mission field when He provides a time for me to go. I am having a hard time expressing how grateful I am for the time I was able to spend with these saints, but I trust you believe me when I say it was a great honor.

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"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



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