

# HeartCry

MAGAZINE



## STAYING THE COURSE

BY PAUL DAVID WASHER

## GREETINGS

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the HeartCry Magazine. The last three months seem to have passed in the blink of an eye. It is a great reminder of the brevity of this life and the need to be faithful stewards of the time that has been given to us.

When we are children, it seems that every day lasts an eternity and time moves far too slowly. But as the years go by, everything seems to speed up exponentially. Birthdays and holidays seem to pass by as quickly as the vertical planks in a picket fence do when we watch them from a speeding car. Before we know it, the year is over. Before we know it, life is over.

For those who do not know the Lord, this reality seems unbearable. No sooner is a man sown than he is reaped. His life is like a vapor, and all his works crumble to ruin. Yet for those of us who know the Lord and are known by Him, the brevity of life serves as both a warning and a hope. It warns us to be careful how we walk, not as unwise men but as wise; to make the most of our time; and to not be foolish, but to understand what the

will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:15-17). It also instills in us hope. We will not always have to live in a world of sin or struggle with the sinful flesh which still remains a part of who we are. We will not always have to live spatially or physically separated from the full revelation and communion of Christ. We will one day, very soon, say good-bye to this world and be ushered into the next. Our labor and toil on earth will not be overly long, but our reward comes quickly and will not tarry.

In light of both this warning and this hope, let us deny the devil, the world, and the flesh; let us love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; let us run the race as those who long for the prize; and let us labor as those who long for eternal reward.

*"Behold, the Lord God will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him."*

— Isaiah 40:10

Paul David Washer

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"THE HEARTCRY MISSIONARY SOCIETY EXISTS TO GLORIFY GOD THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BIBLICAL CHURCHES BY EQUIPPING AND MOBILIZING INDIGENOUS CHURCHES AND MISSIONARIES IN THE LEAST EVANGELIZED AREAS OF THE WORLD."

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# STAYING THE COURSE

BY PAUL DAVID WASHER

**W**alking though the last twenty-five years of the HeartCry Missionary Society has been a privilege beyond anything I could have ever imagined for my life, and yet, it has not been an easy road. There have been trials and tribulations that I would have never chosen for myself and that I would not want to repeat. Each year leaves my hair more gray, my face more lined with the scars of sleepless nights, and my body more bent. Tiredness and fatigue are now constant enemies that force me to temper my desire to do more.

There is also the traveling. I simply do not like to travel. I miss my wife and children. In fact, I start missing them days before I even leave, and I count the days to when I will return from the moment I walk out the door. My wife Charo can sense that a trip is close at hand merely by the changes in my attitude – I go from glum to glummer to glummost! Sometimes, I even try to figure out ways to calculate the days of my trip so that they will seem to be less than what they really are. Often, when I am driving away from my home, I fear that I will never see my family again. After all, the rest of the staff and I often travel to some very unstable places.

Finally, there is the constant stream of problems common to any ministry. Everything from little problems like the internet being down or the copier not working, to big problems such as a missionary's life being in danger or a church being on the verge of division because of some false teaching. I would like to say that such things always drive me to prayer, but sometimes they simply make me want to run away to some remote place never to be seen again. I remember traveling years ago through the central Andes in Peru with an old veteran mis-

sionary by the name of Homer Crain. He pointed to a remote mountain and said in his gruff voice, "I would like to be a missionary up there." I replied, "But Homer, there are no people up there." His response was classic: "Boy, that is exactly why I would like to be a missionary up there!"

Yes, it is true. Although I would not trade my life for anything less than the will of God, I sometimes want to run out the door and leave everything behind for an easier road. However, even in my weakest moments, there are always several things that turn me back; several things that cause me to see through the deception of an easier life; several things that cause me to continue laboring in the field of harvest until Christ returns or He calls me home. In this brief article, I will mention a few of these things with the hope that they might also help you to keep running the endurance race of the Christian life and to keep your hand to the plow in the labor that the Lord has given you.

**The first and foremost reason for staying the course in the Christian life and ministry is the worthiness of God and the Lamb.** As the myriads around the throne of heaven declare:

*"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."*

– Revelation 4:11

*"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."*

– Revelation 5:12

We must continue on because He is worthy, infinitely worthy of every

beat of our heart, every breath from our lungs, and every fiber of our being. Yes, He is worthy of even the greatest suffering, deprivation, and death.

There are two quotes that are often repeated here at HeartCry. In fact, they serve as something of a rallying point and war cry when we are discouraged. The first is derived from Malachi 1:11; the second is from the Moravian missionary movement:

*"Shall not God's Name be great among the nations from the rising of the sun even to its setting?"*

*"Shall not the Lamb receive the full reward for His suffering?"*

The answer, of course, to both of these questions is "Yes!" God and the Lamb are worthy of all that we are and all that we possess. One thousand lives would not be too much to spend upon the glory and honor of God.

**A second motivation for continuing on in the Christian life and ministry is God's kindness toward us.** When we compare what we deserve to what we have received, we have no choice but to continue on. What do we deserve? We deserve hell! Yes, even now, after all these years, after all our best works, we still deserve only hell. Our best deeds cannot merit the pardon of lesser deeds, nor can they achieve any right standing before God. When we look in the mirror, we always see a person who has been given the very opposite of what he or she truly deserves.

I do not think that we realize just how gracious God has been, not only to believers, but also to all who have ever walked on this earth. The question is not, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" The question is, "Why does anything good ever happen at all?" We are a fallen and rebellious race. There should be no light or beauty or laughter in our world. There should be no green fields, lush forests, or pristine waters. Our world and our individual lives should look like something from a post-apocalyptic film, shrouded in misery and hopelessness. The fact that there is any cause for joy at all speaks of the immeasurable grace and mercy of God!

This grace is even further magnified when we consider the cross of Calvary, where Christ died for the sins of the world. We deserved nothing but eternal condemnation, and Christ deserved nothing but eternal glory. Yet He emptied Himself of divine privilege, took up our sin, and suffered all the condemnation that we deserve. How then can we be anything but content and grateful? How then can we do anything but worship and serve Him? As beneficiaries of His great sacrifice, we can never walk away from Him or turn from our service with a clear conscience. The Apostle Paul said it well:

*"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."*

— II Corinthians 5:14-15

**A third reason or motivation for persevering until the end and completing our ministries is the need of a lost and dying world.** There are billions who languish without the privilege of hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few. Therefore, having put our hand to the plow, how can we take it back? Our Lord Jesus looked upon the multitudes, who were like lost sheep without a shepherd, and had compassion upon them. Shall we not enter into the compassion and work of our Master? Can we be content unless every soul has heard and we have exhausted every ounce of strength to bring them to Christ?

**A fourth and final motivation for staying the course in the work of missions is the pledge we have made to uphold the men and women who are laboring on the field.** Comparing our suffering to theirs is like comparing the mere passing of a small cloud over the face of the sun to a total eclipse. Yet every day they faithfully labor in the foreign field under the most excruciating circumstances. Some live in remote jungles and must bear with the heat, the insects, and the frequent illnesses that are com-

mon to such a climate. Some live in chaotic cities filled with crime, poverty, and unrelenting noise. Some live in lands where Christianity is a crime or where warfare is on their very doorstep. Some are simply swallowed up in the loneliness of living among the unreached without Christian companionship or encouragement. They are called to carry a heavier load than most of us, without the resources and comforts that we take for granted. How then can we complain about

the narrowness of our road or what it has cost us to walk it? How can we run away? How can we do anything but stay the course and work for their good and care?

There are countless reasons to press on to know the Lord, to walk in His statutes, and to labor for His people. In fact, if we were to list even the tenth part of them, I do not suppose that even the world itself could contain the books that would be written! ■

# A VIEW FROM THE FIELD

REGIONAL REPORTS

## AFRICA

### MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT

#### BRIAN MUTALE ZAMBIA



*Brian is a church planter in Monze, Zambia, a small town 180 kilometers south of the capital city of Lusaka. He planted Monze Reformed Baptist Church in 2009, under the leadership of Kabwata Baptist Church. Brian is also a graduate of Kabwata Baptist Church's pastoral internship program. Paxina is his wife and fellow worker.*

#### BRIAN'S TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

**M**y full name is Brian Elias Mutale, and I come from a family of eight children, of which I am the first-born. I grew up in a Roman Catholic home, and from my early childhood I was committed to going to church. I used to go to church very early in the morning; even when the church building was not open I would be at the church

gate. I still remember how the elderly people of the parish would say of my commitment, “*Uyu umwana alitamwa Lesa*,” which means, “This child loves God.”

I remained committed to the church until I reached the age of twenty. But as I studied and practiced all the Catholic rituals, I began to discover that they were empty and could not improve my sinful state. I began to read my Bible on my own, and the more I read it, the more I was convicted of my sins.

In the year 2000, I stopped going to church for two months because I felt that I was not getting anything from it. Providentially, in my second month of being churchless, I began to watch a gospel program that came on ZNBC TV every Saturday. It was called, “Zambia Shall Be Saved.” I



do not remember the date that I was saved, but I know that it was a Saturday when Dr. Nevus Mumba preached on the necessity of coming to Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. As I watched, I said in my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, "Here I am, one of the sinners." I then left the living room where I was watching the program and went to my bedroom. There I knelt down and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive me of my sins.

For seven years afterwards, I struggled with the assurance of my salvation. This was because, after I was saved, a childhood friend invited me to his Pentecostal Church, and I became a member. Their altar calls were quite popular; whenever the preacher preached, people were called to the front, led in the "sinner's prayer," and declared to be saved. Because of this, I kept asking myself the question: "Am I really a Christian?"

This question was only answered when I went to Bible School. It was not

until we were studying pneumatology [the doctrine of the Holy Spirit] that I understood what had happened to me when I was listening to Dr. Nevus Mumba. I became fully convinced that I did not need anyone to lay hands on me, nor did I need to say a "sinner's prayer" in order to be saved, but that I needed only to put my faith in Christ Jesus alone. He is the One who saves us, no matter where we are, whether at church or at home.

On the day that I understood this, I confessed to my lecturer, Pastor Jonathan Mwalimu, and the rest of the class saying, "Now I know that indeed I am a Christian." From that time, I began to follow around Pastor Mwalimu, asking him many questions about the Reformed Faith.

I have seen the grace of God upon my life in the last years of my walk with Him. He has been gracious to me in granting me the ability to keep on growing in the knowledge and grace of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

## PAXINA'S TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

**M**y name is Paxina Mutale, and I come from a family of nine children, of which I am the seventh child. I grew up in a Roman Catholic home and even went to Catholic schools. I believed that a Christian was someone who went to church on Sunday and went through all the Catholic rituals. I did not know that Christianity was really about having a personal relationship with Christ.

In January of 2006, I moved to Lusaka from the Copperbelt to stay with my elder brother and his wife, who worshiped at Kabwata Baptist Church. I began attending the church and its youth program. In time, my mind started to open up to reading the Bible, and I began to understand the true nature of Christianity.

The Sunday of November 5th was different from all the others. Pastor Conrad Mbewe was preaching a series of messages from the book of

Hebrews. It was as if he knew me and knew how my life had been. The words that struck my heart the most were, "A life without Christ is meaningless and empty." During the service, these words kept ringing in my mind, and even when I went home, it was still the same. In the early hours of the next day, I fell on my knees crying; I acknowledged that I was a sinner who needed Christ in my life. That very day I went to church to explain to Miss Chitambala, the pastor's assistant with whom I had been having Bible studies, what the Lord was doing. We prayed together, and she really encouraged me. She is still a great spiritual encouragement in my life.

In that same year in December, I attended my first youth camp. The theme for the camp was, "Assurance of Salvation." This really helped me to understand and know that I was really a Christian and that Christ had saved me.

## BRIAN'S CALL TO MINISTRY

**F**rom the time that I became a Christian, I always desired to serve the Lord full-time. This became a reality when the Lord opened the door and provided for me to study at the Centre for Christian Missions in Kitwe. Before going for my theological studies, I worked for five years with a ministry called, "Gates of Glory Ministries." The more I participated in their conferences, the more the desire to go into full-time ministry grew in my heart. This desire was also confirmed by a number of people who identified my spiritual gifts of teaching and preaching and by the fact that God was opening doors for me to preach

at youth groups, schools, and the church were I was attending.

It was under Gates of Glory Ministries that I had the opportunity to come to Monze in 2004. From that year until 2009, I came annually to Monze in order to work with another ministry. It was during this time that I started to desire to labor among the Tonga people of Zambia.

By the time I entered into the intern program at Kabwata Baptist Church in 2009, it was clear that the Lord wanted me to serve at Monze Reformed Baptist Church. So, when the leadership at Kabwata said that the church needed a missionary, I expressed interest in the same.

## RECENT UPDATE FROM BRIAN

**F**irst and foremost, my wife and I want to thank you for the support that you continually offer on our behalf, both as a family and as a church. We are grateful to the Lord for the many times that you have remembered us in prayer and for the sacrificial support that you have given to us.

As many commemorated World AIDS Day on December 1, Monze was not excluded. As a church, we took advantage of this event by distributing evangelistic material. During the inter-denominational candlelight service, we handed out leaflets entitled, "AIDS! A Call to Repentance," written by Pastor Conrad Mbewe. The response was overwhelming, and we eventually ran out of the 150 leaflets that we had brought.

Also in December, I was given an opportunity to preach again to the men and women in uniform at the Monze Central Police Station. Every Tuesday at the main police station they have a half-hour morning devotion. Twenty police officers attended.

We ended 2014, with a Christmas evangelistic service, which was well attended. We were blessed to have some of our brethren from Kafue Reformed Baptist Church in attendance, along with Pastor Kennedy Sunkutu,

[a former HeartCry missionary].

Though the new year began with the loss of my grandmother in January, we remain grateful to the Lord for all that He has done so far through us for His own glory. My family has now grown to four people, as my young brother Gift Mutale has come to live with us.

During the months of January and February, we did not have any special evangelistic meetings, but simply continued with our usual church services. We also continued to acquire and transport building materials to the church plot. Lord willing, if all goes according to plan, we will start building there this year so that we may eventually begin to meet there. Please pray with us to this end.

On March 7, we held a men's Bible study on, "A Christian and Politics," which was ably handled by our brother Mr. Kuelly Tembo at his home. While we men met together, the ladies also gathered together for a prayer meeting.

Please brothers, continue to pray for my family and me, that we may continue to grow in the likeness of Christ and set a godly example for the rest of the congregation. Pray also for our congregation as a whole, that we may grow both spiritually and numerically unto the glory of God and the spread of His Gospel. ■

# ASIA

## MISSIONARY REPORTS

### EARTHQUAKE IN NEPAL

BY SARVAJIT G.

*Sarvajit graduated from a seminary in North India in 2010 and returned to Nepal in order to work alongside his father. He has a great desire to evangelize the Nepalese and to help believers grow in their understanding of the Scriptures. Pray for him as he serves the church in Nepal.*

**G**reetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. On Saturday morning, April 25, 2015, an earthquake hit Nepal in Barpak Village in the Gorkha District. We were at the end of our worship service when suddenly the quake hit and the houses began to shake. The first major quake registered a 7.9 magnitude, but smaller earthquakes followed afterwards. This violent earthquake damaged Lamjung, Gorkha, Rasuwa, Dolakha, Sunsari, Sinduplanchok, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Kabreplanchok, and many more districts.

The earthquake has devastated Nepal and brought much pain and suffering to the Nepalese people. On April 27, the Central Committee of the Reformed Churches of Nepal held an emergency meeting and came to

the conclusion that we must help the needy. We, the elders, prayed together and asked God's grace and mercy for the victims, and we decided to visit the Lamjung District. Although we wanted to help anyone and to witness to all, our main purpose was to help those of the household of faith.

On April 28, Brother Ghan S. and I departed at 10:30 A.M. on our motor bikes, but were delayed by heavy rains in Butwal until 2:30 P.M. The drive was long, but we finally reached our destination in Besishar, Lamjung, at 10:00 P.M. From Naryanghat to Muglim the roads were jammed, and we were tired and exhausted by the end of the long journey.

At 8:30 A.M. the next day, Brother Pradeep, Brother Dil, and I continued on our journey to Kolki in east Lamjung. It was a horrible journey on our motor bikes. We struggled all the way and did not reach Kolki until 3:00 P.M.

After our arrival, we discovered that twelve houses had totally collapsed, sixty-nine houses were notably damaged, two people were injured, and one person was dead. We had heard that there were a few believers in that area, but we were unable to find any Christians living there. We had an opportunity to share the Gospel with some of the people. We prayed that God might change their hearts and that they might come to Christ.







We were unable to travel back to Besishar on that day so we stayed the night. At midnight, heavy rain fell, and we could not sleep, because the roof was leaking. The next day, on April 30, we learned that eleven Christian houses and one church meeting place had collapsed in Illam Pokhari. We tried to visit Illam Pokhari from Kolki, but were unable, as the roads were impassible due to the heavy rains.

We started our journey to Besishar at 10:00 A.M. on the next day and reached our destination at 3:00 P.M. It was an unbelievable adventure, and we experienced many unforgettable moments. We thank God for His grace and mercy in our journey. We discovered twenty-four houses belonging to Christians in Kolki and Illam Pokhari that needed assistance in replacing the roofs with tin.

Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support for the victims. We still hope to provide extra rice, salt, oil, and other supplies to the Christian people who are in great need in other villages.

Brother Ghan is going back to Butwal to do more work. The Reformed Churches of Nepal and Heart-Cry, along with other Christians, are also going to contribute to this work. I am staying here to determine how we can help and how best to use the money in a proper way for the needy ones. I am going to visit a place with Brother Pradeep where it is reported that Christians are experiencing great difficulties. I want to discover how we can help these people. From Monday through Thursday, we are planning to distribute the supplies we have received.

The roads are not good. They are severely damaged, and the villages are difficult to reach, especially with the needed materials. Please pray that God will open the roads so that we can help these people as we have planned. Let our God be glorified in all this work, and let His Kingdom advance through the word of the Gospel and our deeds. We appreciate your prayers, encouragement, and the support you have given. ■

**Update:** Sarvajit and Ghan returned during May and June and distributed rice, supplies, and blankets to numerous families. In addition, sheets of tin were donated for shelters and roofs for the houses that were either damaged or destroyed. Sarvajit and Ghan also visited schools and distributed clothes and school supplies to hundreds of impoverished children.

In addition to providing food and shelter, Sarvajit and Ghan also had several opportunities to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were privileged to pray with the destitute and frightened people, that God would continue to supply them with provision and comfort.

For a complete update and photos, please visit:

[bit.ly/hc83-01](http://bit.ly/hc83-01) & [bit.ly/hc83-02](http://bit.ly/hc83-02)



# SOUTH INDIA UPDATE

BY SUNDER R.

*After graduating from Grace Bible College, Brother 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 and allowed him to plant another church.*



Greetings to you all. I wanted to send a brief update about the work of God here in South India.

## MY FAMILY

Thank you for praying for us. Please pray for my wife Glory, as she has been suffering with a headache for a long time. She is taking medication, but sometimes she has a very hard time and is not able to take care of the home and children. I need her so much to stand with me in the Lord's work. Please uphold her in your prayers.

My son Ebenezer Charis just turned fourteen last month. Pray with us for him that he will know Christ and be saved. This is a very important time for him. My son and I, along with my daughter Jemima Charity, are reading through the Gospels. At the moment, we are in John's Gospel. May God grant us His grace so that we might be godly parents and guide them to God.

## CHURCH PLANTING

We continue to meet in our church building on Sundays. Approximately eighty people regularly gather for worship and fellowship, and once a month we take part in the Lord's Supper. Most of the attendees and members are new converts, and only some of them are from traditional Christian backgrounds. We feel that the Lord is continuing to use these men and women for the purpose of making disciples. I have been seeking the Lord, that He might raise up leaders out of these groups and that they might grow to maturity. Recently, the church has finished studying through I Thessalonians, and now we are going through the book of Hebrews.

## TRAINING PASTORS

Along with the church-planting work, we are also engaged in training men and women who are already in the ministry but have never had the privilege of formal education. Every two months, about thirteen pastors gather for study and fellowship. Right now we are studying, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion* by Paul Washer. This study is helping us to understand the nature of true conversion. This is such a neglected teaching in our times, in our country, and in our churches. We greatly need this instruction.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

We have around fifteen to twenty children gathering every Sunday from 9:30 to 10:45 A.M. We have two sisters leading the children's ministry. After the class, the children join with us in the main church service and recite their Bible memory verses. In the month of January, we conducted a Bible exam and presented gifts to the children for their encouragement. Our prayer and burden through this small effort is that these little children will be led to Christ the Savior.

## PRAY FOR THE YOUNG MEN

In my last report, I shared about three young men who were recently baptized: Rajan, Ramesh, and Chandra. They are continuing to come to our church fellowship, and I believe that they are growing in the Lord.

Thank you for your valuable prayers and for being a blessing to us in so many ways. ■



# CHINA UPDATE

BY GAIUS

*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 to establish a healthy church in a large urban area of China.*

**D**ear Brothers, peace in the Lord! I thank God for leading us through another month. May God remember all you have given to help us in His Name! Please keep praying for the salvation of my young son. Please also pray that my wife and I might fulfill our responsibility to raise him according to the Bible.

This month, I studied the book of Ruth. I saw a Gentile girl, who was renewed through grace. She became a member of God's covenant and a vital and important person in God's plan of salvation. Again, I saw the greatness of God's grace in that He could change someone who in the eyes of the world had no hope. Also, my wife and I finished reading Tim Keller's book *The Meaning of Marriage*. It made us understand that our marriage still has many mistakes that need repentance and change.

I also preached three times this month from the book of Mark. We especially focused on what greatness and lowliness looks like in God's Kingdom. This encouraged us a lot! Those who want to be great in God's kingdom must be a servant to all and minister to all, for it is through serving others and laying down our lives that we truly become great. This completely overturns the world's view of greatness. Also, we saw that those who would enter God's kingdom must be like a child. This made me see that only those who understand their inability, insufficiency, and incapability are renewed by grace.

At the beginning of this month, I went to the Reformed Evangelical Seminary to teach for five days on Old Testament Biblical Theology. The class has helped me a great deal in

that it forced me to organize many great truths and to recall what I had previously learned. I also attended the China Reformed Baptist Pastor's Conference. There were over thirty pastors in attendance. The conference was an encouragement to me because I was able to see how the churches in other areas are growing. Also, I was able to share both the praises and problems from my ministry with others, and we encouraged and prayed with one another. Shoulder to shoulder, we supported each other on this road of service.

On Sunday afternoons at church, we are still meeting together to study Paul Washer's book, *The Gospel's Power and Message*. On Thursday evening, I am leading a study on how to look at life from the context of the Scriptures (based on a class I taught in the seminary). The purpose of this study is to share the Gospel with the unbelieving visitors and also to help the believers to better understand the Bible. Having to go through and simplify the things that I taught in seminary has helped me personally and enabled the brothers and sisters to understand and participate in the discussions.

Two new families began attending our church this month. Both are newlywed couples. They grew up in Christian families, but have not participated in church life in a long time. They heard about our church from other people and came. I am reminded again that we must grow not only in number but also in a deeper knowledge of the Gospel and our ability to proclaim it! It does not matter what kind of people come; the Gospel is still the most important thing for them to know and understand. It is the most foundational message. This reminder has also encouraged me concerning how important a healthy church is to a specific area or location. The great need of unbelievers and believers alike is a healthy church. ■



# EURASIA

## MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT

### GENNADY MIKHAILOV – SIBERIA, RUSSIA

*Gennady Mikhailov is a church planter and pastor in the Irkutsk region of Siberia. Together with the fellowship of pastors there, Gennady is also working in evangelism and church planting among the many surrounding villages and cities. HeartCry began supporting Gennady in April of 2012.*

#### TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

I was born into a family of unbelievers, where Russian Orthodox traditions and holidays were observed, but God was never worshiped in a way that the Scriptures dictate.

God began speaking to me in 1986. I had taken a new job in a place where there was one believer who was an employee. Through him, God gave me the opportunity to become more familiar with the teaching of the Bible. I began to read the New Testament along with some spiritual literature, and I asked a lot of questions to believers with whom I came into contact. I was interested in talking about God and everything related to Him. Occasionally, I would also visit a Baptist church in Irkutsk.

Despite my new-found interest in knowing about God, I did not truly know Him. I continued to lead a godless way of life. I was a guitar player in a rock band and enjoyed immensely the life-style that came with it. I sinned and drew pleasure from it, even though I had a clear understanding that such a life was displeasing to God and that I should not live in such a way. At that time, I came very close to divorcing my wife, despite the fact that we already had two children. I was extremely argumentative and prideful. My proud heart was hindering my life and



created many problems. This made things quite miserable.

Finally, one night, by God's grace, He intervened in a special way. I remember that night very distinctly. I returned home from a rock band rehearsal. I was drunk and had a big argument with my wife. I locked myself away from her in the kitchen and had my dinner alone. On the wall in front of me was a small calendar with Bible verses and short commentaries for each day – it was a gift from believers. I would forget to keep the days current for weeks at a time, and I noticed then that the calendar was out of date. I got up from the table to remove some of the old pages, but a verse from Isaiah 48 caught my eye. It was verse 18:

*"Oh, that you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."*

God spoke to me through this verse. I read the text over and over again, and it resonated in my mind. It wasn't an audible voice, but rather, somewhere inside. I understood then that it was God calling me, and for the first time in my life I knelt down and asked God to change my

life and my heart. He broke me of my desire for sin and brought me to repentance before Him.

I woke up the next morning with a headache because of the alcohol, but I distinctly remembered the night before and my prayer. Moreover, I immediately noticed that there was a change inside me. The voice of my conscience became much louder. I could no longer tolerate the very things I could do and say the day before. I somehow instantly stopped cursing. I reconciled with my wife and began eagerly waiting for Sunday to come so that I could go to meet with the other believers. My life began to change radically. I left the band and abandoned the music career. I am now a completely different man!

## CALL TO MINISTRY

I was baptized by faith in 1990 and became a member of a church in Irkutsk. God continued to work in me, and I was ordained to be a deacon in that church in 1998. By that time, I was already preaching from the pulpit occasionally and participating in missionary trips and evangelism throughout Siberia and the Irkutsk region.

In 2000, I graduated from Bible school, and our church started a new church plant in a different part of the city. I was involved from the very beginning of this church and was appointed as pastor in 2004. Looking back on my past life, I am grateful to God for the way that He has led me. I am thankful for all the joys and griefs, successes and failures. Today I am filled with a desire to serve our Lord and to serve Him from the heart. ■

## GROWING IN NUMBER LITTLE BY LITTLE

BY GENNADY MIKHAILOV

*Please join us in praying for Gennady and the church in Irkutsk. HeartCry not only supports Gennady, but also has committed to provide the funds necessary for the missionary trips mentioned in Gennady's report below.*

*Pray that the Lord might greatly bless the outreach and church-planting efforts of our dear brother.*



**P**ease and grace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank the Lord for His mercy to us who are sinners saved by His grace. I am also thankful to HeartCry for your care and prayers for us.

## THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Our local church continues growing in the faith and calling sinners to repentance. I continue in expository preaching of the Word of God in our church. A few days ago, I began preaching through First Peter. I hope that God will bless my work to His

glory. We are praying and growing in number little by little.

We are thankful to our Lord for a dear lady who has begun regularly attending our church. We also rejoice when we see God's work in people, and we understand that it is the Lord – and not us – who saves. Furthermore, we are confident that those whom the Lord calls will also come to His Church and follow Him. We preach the Gospel of Christ to all and invite everyone to come to God, but only those who are truly called by God will come. It is the same with the dear lady that I just mentioned. When she first came to

our church, frankly, we thought it would be the only time she would come; but she came back again and again. And more than that, she gave up some of her sins, because, as she confessed, God had convicted her; she understood her sinfulness! Her name is Anna. Please pray that the Lord might continue to work in her life in a mighty way.

## MISSIONARY JOURNEY TO THE NORTH

Since last year, when Sergey Mochalov and I went to Yakutia, we have not stopped praying for God to provide a way for us to visit them again. Lord willing, our plan is to visit the church in **Yakutsk**, where Brother Andrey is ministering as the pastor, and to visit the dear believers in **Srednekolymsk** who are without a pastor. Yulia, a sister from **Srednekolymsk**, called us recently and said that, since our previous visit, some new local people have started to come to the fellowship. Some of them appear to have been converted and are ready for baptism! For this reason, we pray that the Lord will allow us to visit them again this summer.



Distance from Irkutsk : Yakutsk - 1985 miles  
Plastun - 2419 miles  
Srednekolymsk - 2777 mi.

## MISSIONARY JOURNEY TO THE EAST

We also hope to visit another church in the city of **Plastun**. It is in the far east of our country, next to the Pacific Ocean. A brother who is a minister in the church there heard our sermons online and has invited us to come and share the Word of God with them in order to help them better understand the truth of Scripture. May the Lord allow and help us to make this journey! ■

## MISSIONARY SLAVA V. - BELARUS



*Slava is a pastor of a Baptist church and the director of Gospel and Reformation, a ministry that translates and publishes sound theological resources into*

*Russian. HeartCry began supporting Slava in November 2011. Belarus is a "restricted" nation concerning the Gospel and church planting. As a result, the church in Belarus faces many obstacles.*

### TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

I was born in the Soviet Union in 1977. My family was atheistic, just as nearly every other family in the U.S.S.R. during that time. God, especially Jesus Christ, was never a subject of our family conversations. In school, we were taught that all religion was worthless.





The religious life of my country, Belarus, began to change in 1989, when the church was granted freedom to evangelize in the streets. My father was invited to an evangelistic meeting in a Baptist church in 1990 and began to attend regularly. Church-going was something very unusual for us. It seemed unbelievable that our dad would get up early on Sunday morning and head off to attend church.

After some time, he invited me to go with him, and I had no reason to refuse. I was curious. I was struck by everything that I saw in what they called the “prayer house” – a small wooden cottage with one square room and benches without backs. I had never seen people praying before, and it was hard for me to believe that they were serious when they closed

their eyes and bowed their heads. During the singing, an elderly lady shared her hymn book with me so that I could read along. The preaching was a mixture of things that were absolutely unintelligible to me and things that were very clear and interesting. I liked it. I began to attend the church regularly for several Sundays; but eventually, I stopped going.

After a time, I was invited to the midweek youth meeting. I made friends and decided to stay. One day – I believe it was Easter – I was listening to a sermon and suddenly realized that I had been thinking differently for some time. I had no doubt that God was real. I was sure that Jesus was not a myth, but a real historical person. Moreover, I believed that Jesus was God and held a claim to my life. I began to ask myself, “Can I live as before? Can I live without God and without Christ?” I realized that my life belonged to Christ. On that Easter day in 1992, I became a believer. On June 13 of the same year, I was baptized.

The beginning of my spiritual life was quite intense in many respects: Christian fellowship, the study of Scripture and Christian literature, and a focus on regular prayer and Bible reading. Since then, these spiritual changes have continued in my life.

## CALL TO MINISTRY

I was converted in 1992, and from the start I was involved in Christian ministry.

When I was in my last year of high school, I organized a Bible study in the school. For the whole year, we studied the Gospel of Mark in a group of six to eight people. As a result of this Bible study, my future wife Anya came to faith.

When I entered the university, I continued with a student outreach. My methodology did not change. We studied different parts of the New Testament for two years, and one of my classmates was converted. From the very beginning of my spiritual

life, my heart’s desire has been to bring the Gospel to those around me.

While I was in the university, I became involved in both oral and written translation work from English into Russian. In the late 1990’s, we still had relative religious freedom, and almost every month we had a Western speaker in our church. I was fluent in English, and I was happy to interpret for foreign preachers; but I also translated books. In 1995, with the help of my wife, I translated my first two books – *Seeking God’s Will* by Sinclair Ferguson and *The Basics of Christian Faith* by Roger Weil. At that time, Bill Patton, the founder of

the ministry "Grace to Russia," came to Minsk from California and invited me to participate in literature ministry. Grace to Russia translated, published, and distributed literature free of charge among Russian-speaking pastors. My wife and I worked with Bill from 1996 until 2002. In these seven great years, we produced about fifty books, including the six volume set of the *Treasury of David* by C.H. Spurgeon and seven volumes of J.C. Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*.

In 1994, I preached my first sermon. In 1998, I became the second pastor in our church and started to preach regularly – every Sunday morning – and to lead a mid-week Bible study group. By God's grace, I have continued in this capacity to this day.

In the university, I studied physics, yet all along I tried to educate myself in theology. I graduated in 1999, and in 2000, Grace to Russia kindly and generously offered me the possibility of receiving formal theological training at Reformed Theological Seminary in the United States. I accepted the offer eagerly, and in 2004, I received my master's degree in theology.

In 2003, I began a new partnership with a British Christian pub-

lisher, Evangelical Press, which led to the establishment of the Gospel and Reformation publishing house in Minsk. Our work is very similar to what we did with Grace to Russia. We continue to translate and publish Reformed titles, but now we put a price on them. It was great to distribute free books in the 1990's, when pastors had very little money, but the time came when it was more appropriate to sell the books. Having experience with both free distribution and sales, I can testify that when a person pays for a book (even a minimum price), he values it more than when he gets it completely free.

Looking back over the past twenty years, I can see the hand of the Lord in everything in my life. There is nothing accidental. The various parts of my life and ministry have come together under God's hand. As a teenager, I played chess professionally, and I am fond of using a chess metaphor with respect to the divine providence in my life. The Lord is like a Grandmaster, who moves pieces of my life with precision, purpose, and power. If I were to choose myself what should happen in my life, I would not come even close to the wisdom of my Lord and Savior in arranging everything according to his design.

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## THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

**T**here is a dream which drives much of what I do: I want to be instrumental in starting a Bible-based seminary in my country. The nearest Bible-based seminaries are in Russia (Samara) and Ukraine (Kiev), both of which are hundreds of miles away from the churches in Belarus and our ministers who need training. A young man from our own church is currently studying in the seminary in Kiev and must travel 800 miles (round-trip) every month.

It is for this reason that I am doing doctoral studies at the Highland Theological College in Scotland. I am not just seeking to fulfill my own am-

bitions, but to be qualified to begin the seminary. I am grateful to Heart-Cry for providing the support to cover my study fees.

Our publishing work/ministry is another part in fulfilling this dream. A seminary needs good theological books, and this is what we are aiming to produce. Many good titles have been translated and published in partnership with Grace to Russia and Evangelical Press. Even more books are waiting to be introduced to Russian readers. ■

# WESTERNEUROPE

## MISSIONARY REPORT

### REACHING OUT TO THE NATIONS IN SWEDEN

DANIEL NORÉN

*Daniel is a native Swede living and ministering in Bergsjön, which is a suburb of Gothenburg. This is an immigrant area with 144 nationalities and many unreached people groups. Daniel is passionate to reach out both to immigrants and to his fellow Swedes. He is serving as an elder in the church plant, Gothenburg International Baptist Church. His ministry includes preaching and teaching the Word of God, evangelism, counseling, and discipleship. Daniel also helps with overseeing HeartCry's work in Sweden. He serves as a board member of Reformedia, and works closely with Daniel Lundgren and Ola Nilsson in their translation and publishing work. He and his wife Hannah have three children: Lydia, Markus, and Elizabeth.*

**T**his past month has been very busy, as far as the church and ministry are concerned. I have continued with the series that I am preaching through the book of Isaiah. This has been such a blessing for myself and for others. I have thus far preached through Isaiah 9:7 and cannot wait to continue with the series.

For about six months, I met with two men and two teenagers to study through the book, *What Is the Gospel?* by Greg Gilbert. When we recently finished the book, we decided to go out to evangelize together. For most of them, this was their first time doing evangelism. It was especially encouraging to see one of the teenagers go from not being able to articulate the Gospel to being engaged in long conversations about the Gospel with Muslims. Afterwards he said, "I



really need to study the Bible more in order to be able to better share the Gospel and answer the questions and arguments from the Muslims."

Yesterday, I had the joy of baptizing the other teenager (photo above) who participated in the study. When we began to go through the book, he professed that he was a Christian, but he could not articulate the Gospel. As we went through each chapter, he came under conviction of his sins and realized that he had never been a genuine Christian. It has been my joy to see the change in his life over the last six months and to see how he can now articulate the true biblical Gospel with confidence! I am planning to continue meeting with him and the others to further their discipleship.

Our publishing ministry, Reformedia, is going well. *The Family Worship Book* by Don Whitney is being



sent out to be proofread this week, and we are hoping to have it printed within the next few month. We had a board meeting with Reformedia this past week, in which we discussed some of the books to be translated in the future.

We are also planning to have a conference in the fall on the two books, *What Is the Gospel?* by Greg Gilbert and *What Is a Healthy Church?* by Mark Dever, both of which we are giving out for free to Swedish pastors and leaders. We have currently given out about one-third of the two thou-

sand books to church leaders. The theme of this conference will focus on “What is the Gospel?” There are so many pastors that I meet here in Sweden who cannot articulate the Gospel, so this is a very urgent need. It looks like the author, Greg Gilbert, will be able to come. We are also aiming to have Paul Washer’s book, *The Gospel’s Power and Message*, printed in time for the conference. Please pray for all of these plans and for the Gospel to continue to spread in our country. ■



# ITALY

## MISSIONARY

### EMANUEL IVAN – ITALY

*Emanuel was born and raised in Romania and was converted out of an Orthodox background through the influence of his believing grandparents and aunts. After his conversion, he quickly sensed a calling from the Lord for missions and had a strong burden to preach the Gospel to those around him. He later went to Italy for work, which the Lord providentially used to lead him to become the pastor of a church plant in Florence [Italian: Firenze], Italy, where he is now serving.*

### TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

I was born into an Orthodox family in Romania, and I have five siblings. My father’s grandparents were

Brethren, and they used to take me to church with them when I was a child. After the Revolution in 1989, a missionary named Timotei came to our town and planted a Baptist church. The church first gathered in



HeartCry Director for Eastern Europe Sorin Prodan (right) with Emanuel Ivan during a recent visit to Italy.

my aunt's house, and my grandparents and Christian aunts invited me to the meetings. By that time, I was older and better able to understand things. That was my first encounter with a Baptist church, and what appealed to me most were the songs that were sung there.

One day, Pastor Timotei asked me when I was going to turn to God. I had been attending the church for a while, so my answer was, "Anytime!" I expected him to be happy to hear this answer, but he was disappointed and left me alone to think more about my response. The Holy Spirit pierced my heart and helped me understand that the right answer ought to be, "Right now!" When I understood the response that God was requiring of me, I knelt down and received the Lord into my heart. I was baptized in the fall of 1992, and I am happy that the Lord gave me His grace that I did not deserve.

Shortly after my conversion, my cousin and I desired to go to Sudan as missionaries. However, instead of Sudan, the Lord sent us to a small village in a rural part of Sibiu, Romania, called Marsa. My cousin and I spent two weeks there, sharing the Gospel with the people. I was only sixteen years old.

After graduating from high school, I wanted to go to the Baptist Theological Institute, but the pastor did not give me the recommendation that I needed. He did not believe that I was mature enough for ministry. Because of this, I went to a different college; but I had to quit after one year, because my family could not support me financially. My mother died when she was thirty-five years old, and my father was a widower with six children to raise by himself. Because I could not continue my education, I went to work in Italy and began attending a Baptist church in Rome. At first, I was only involved in the ministry of the choir, but I often was asked to lead the prayer time during the worship service.

About nine years ago, Brother Radu Gheorghe was sent as a missionary by Holy Trinity Baptist Church in Bucharest, Romania, to plant a Romanian church in the outskirts of Rome, where many Romanians were living. He shared his vision with me and my wife, and we formed a group of young people that had the same desire to plant this new church. The church was planted, and I was one of the founding members, so I was part of the committee from the very beginning.

## CALL TO MINISTRY

**M**y calling to the ministry began with my first thought of going as a missionary to Sudan. It was clear that this sense of calling was from the Lord because over the years I began to have a greater and greater urgency to serve the Lord by sharing the Gospel with the people around me. Together with the church in Rome, we used to go every Sunday morning to a subway station to share the Gospel with the Romanians that gathered there. The Lord worked in a wonderful way through that church plant, and the church grew to a hundred members quite soon.

The pastor of the church in Firenze (where I now serve) had to go back to Romania and asked Brother Radu

to take over the ministry in Firenze. The church plant in Rome decided that each Sunday one of the members of the committee would visit Firenze to minister to the church, and this is how I got to know the Romanian Christians in Firenze. The Lord gave me a love for my brothers there, and I saw their needs and the great potential they had for ministry.

Meanwhile, Pastor Radu invited a different brother to come as a pastor to Firenze. He accepted and pastored this church for one year, but the church could not support him financially. When the wife of this pastor became sick, they moved back to Romania. But, before doing so, he asked Pastor Radu to recommend a

man that he could put in charge of the church in Firenze. Pastor Radu recommended me, so I started going to Firenze twice a month as a missionary. My wife and I asked the Lord for His guidance, and He spoke through the first four chapters of the book of Ezekiel. It was then, after eight months, that I understood that God's will for us was to move to Firenze to better serve the church.

At the beginning, the church had about twenty-five members; but the Lord blessed us in a wonderful way, and eighteen persons turned to God in the first year. God has continued to bless us, and now the church has approximately sixty members. Also, eight brothers from our church decided to plant a new church in Scandicci, not far from Firenze.

Our church is devoted to seeing spiritual growth among the believers and also to seeing people equipped for ministry. I taught a homiletics course with some of the young people in our church, and about eight of them are now attending a two-year Bible college here in Italy. Our purpose is to keep growing and to be a blessing to those around us. We want to help others and to expect nothing in return. We believe we can do this with the strength that God supplies.

The church is involved in mission-

ary activities both in our town and in the surrounding area of Dicomano and Viareggio. Marian Iordan (a missionary in our church) and I have often gone to Viareggio (about 100 km away from Firenze), where there is a community of Romani (Gypsy) people. The Lord has laid it on my heart to do evangelism not only among the Romani, but also among Italians. In other words, I want to plant an international church – with the worship service in Italian – based on the biblical principles and values that I have learned in Romania and Italy. I realize that the Lord has called us to Italy to be a testimony for this people. Italy has about sixty million inhabitants, and the Italian Baptist Union consists of only about ten thousand believers. We must do something about that! It is a great blessing that in Firenze we can talk to Muslims, Buddhists, and others without fear of getting arrested.

I know that this vision that the Lord has given me of an international church plant is not going to be easy. But our young people can be of great help, as they speak Italian very well. We also want to continue the ministry among Romanians and the Romani people. The ministry among the Romani people is more difficult because they are often forced to move from one place to the next. ■

## A RECENT BLOG POST

BY DON CURRIN

*Emanuel Ivan and his wife Camy serve in the old city of Florence (Firenze), Italy, where he pastors a church made up of Romanian and Gypsy believers. Brother Ivan is a good example of integrity, as he consistently demonstrates a godly character that combines gentleness, humility, and faithfulness to God. In a recent update, our brother asked us to pray for some upcoming outreach opportunities in his area:*

“ We have started a mission outreach in the large city of Prato, which has a population of 200,000 people. My intention has been to speak openly with the people. It is not easy, and I confess that I need more power and more prayers to hold me up and

keep me striving forward. At first, I thought that it might be an easy task, but I have not found that to be true. Regardless, we will trust in God and in His help. Pray for this and other events that we are organizing for evangelism.” ■



# EASTERN EUROPE

## MISSIONARY REPORTS

### THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS

BY SORIN PRODAN

*Sorin serves as the HeartCry Director in Eastern Europe. He directs ministries in Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine. His responsibilities include overseeing and training our missionaries in evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Sorin is also planting a church in the Romanian city of Brasov.*

It has now been more than fifteen years since HeartCry began to support church planters in Eastern Europe with sound Biblical teaching and a healthy vision of investing in indigenous missionaries. We can only deeply thank the Lord and the HeartCry partners that were used by God to support all the missionaries and their families through the years, so that they might labor on the mission field. During these years, things have changed dramatically in Europe; as the European Union extended its borders to the East, new doors for the Gospel opened before us.

HeartCry's key focus in Eastern Europe has been to plant solid biblical churches that would impact their communities as well as their entire nation – whether Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Hungary, etc. Over fifty church plants have been estab-

lished in these countries as a result of this vision. We focused on some of the most needy areas, but at the same time, we did not neglect some of the major cities that would ultimately have greater influence at a regional and global level. The uniqueness of this vision was the establishment of mission teams that worked together in planting churches rather than sending individuals to labor in isolation. This strategy has proven to be so effective that the entire ministry in Eastern Europe has been organized according to this pattern.

A second focal point, beyond the support and the care for our missionary families, is biblical training. Ever since the mid-1990's, HeartCry has annually held two major training conferences, along with other local conferences. The goal of these conferences is to equip the HeartCry missionary families, their disciples, and their churches with sound biblical doctrine. By God's grace, some of the best teachers and theologians have been sent from the United States to Romania to train our men in theology and in practice – how to live a holy life and walk with the Lord. The conferences are also designed in



Guest speaker Charles Leiter  
preaching at a recent conference.



close connection with the Training Program by Extension that has been functioning for nearly a decade. Annually, this program provides at least five fundamental works of theology, Christian history, counseling, biography, and other subjects with the purpose of creating a network of training and mutual encouragement for the missionaries and other students, that they might better know the Lord and serve His Kingdom.

Also of great importance is the HeartCry ministry among the Gypsy people in Romania. It includes not only the planting of churches, but also the creation of schools for the education of Gypsy children, so that they might be able to read the Scriptures.

The HeartCry campus ministry in some of the major universities in Romania must also be mentioned. Reaching out to university students is a needy and difficult ministry, but the work has born much fruit. We praise God for all the years that HeartCry has supported this ministry.

Much of HeartCry's support to Eastern Europe has also been directed to the distribution of ministry resources – such as Bibles, books, and tracts – that are of great need in the evangelistic outreach of hundreds of communities. Additionally, some construction projects were assisted by HeartCry, as new churches were planted and the need for new and adequate places of worship increased. A significant number of missionaries

were also helped in acquiring reliable vehicles or other means of transportation. Finally, HeartCry did not forget the missionaries when they were sick and unable to minister on the field for periods of time, but continued to faithfully support their families and even provide for their medical services. Much could be added to all these investments that HeartCry has made in Eastern Europe, but space and time do not allow.

I wish I could give you the number of all those who were saved over this period of fifteen years, but that is something that we will all hear and celebrate in heaven. I can only tell you that we have seen the hand of God using HeartCry in a unique way to bless Eastern Europe with many good and healthy churches that were established and hundreds of other churches that were influenced to have a better view of sound doctrine and a passionate life for God.

On behalf of all the HeartCry missionaries and their families from Eastern Europe, I want to thank you and honor you for playing a significant role in everything through your financial support and prayers. We are deeply thankful for you and your families that have sacrificed with joy for the cause of the Gospel. We pray for you, and we look forward to meeting you on that Day when we will all celebrate the fruit of Christ's suffering and rejoice over the reward of all those who were faithful in serving the Savior. ■

# SPRING UPDATE FROM PROVIDENCE CHURCH

BY SORIN PRODAN

*Sorin Prodan, pastor of Providence Church of Brasov, Romania, gives us an update of the growing church.*

**O**ur ministry in Brasov is growing continually. There is a sense of God's presence and a spirit of fervent prayer in our people. We completed our forty days of fasting and prayer on the last day of February. Each person confessed how the Lord touched his or her life in specific ways or areas. Our focus was on seeking the Lord and preparing for a great harvest. Prayer has become a sweet time. I am happy to see more than seventy percent of the people attending our prayer services.

The preaching on Sunday morning has been powerful. I began preaching through the Gospel of Luke, which has been the backbone of the teaching in our church, and occasionally, two of the other brothers will preach on some specific needs. We are also training new preachers,

who give short messages and exhortations during the prayer time or on Sunday morning. On Sunday night, we continue to study the parables of the Kingdom from Matthew 13.

Our church is in great need of a new location. Our current rented building has been crowded for the past few months whenever we meet. Because of this, we began looking for a place and eventually found one of the best properties in the whole city. It is located right by City Hall! The owner has completed the project with all the necessary approvals, which took him several years. We have met with some construction companies and have received some estimates regarding the costs. Now, we are praying for guidance in the decisions that we must make about the property. While we feel excited about what the Lord wants in this most strategic point in the city, we feel unworthy of such blessing. Please pray for us! ■



## WITNESSING OPPORTUNITY IN BUCHAREST

BY COSTEL GHEOANCA

*Constantin Gheoanca, known as Costel by his friends and fellow workers, is a church planter in Romania's capital city, Bucharest. He recently founded Adonai Church of Bucharest and is serving as its pastor. He is married and has two children. Costel speaks English very well and is an excellent translator. He has a great gift of sharing the Gospel with the people of Bucharest. In the following, Costel shares about a recent witnessing opportunity with a Roman Catholic woman.*

**I** could see that she was very religious. She even had an icon of the Virgin Mary on her laptop background. For a year, I had wanted to talk to her about Christ, but we always ended up talking about matters concerning the block of apartments where we live. Finally, God orchestrated a meeting.

This month, our apartment block had new elections for officers, but I decided not to run for another term as vice-president of the apartment facility. Because of this, I had a reason to meet with this lady, who is the apartment president, in order to thank her for her collaboration throughout the year. After a brief conversation, I kind-



ly asked her if I might tell her something about salvation. She smiled and agreed.

I shared the Gospel with her for over an hour. She was amazed to hear that Christ did everything on Calvary. She believes in human effort for salvation, because that is what she is told in the Roman Catholic church. I explained to her about justification, regeneration, repentance, sanctification, and other truths from the Scriptures. I could see in her eyes that this was something totally new to her. It almost sounded too

good to be true. However, when I told her that salvation was personal, she abruptly ended our discussion. She strongly believes that a devout person who is living can do something to save those who are already dead, even those who are in hell. Because of this, she did not like the idea that one can do nothing to obtain salvation after death. Despite this, I felt that we had a good discussion and that something of what I have told her will stay with her. Please join with me in praying for her. ■



## REPORT FROM STOIENESTI

BY GEORGE SERBAN

*George serves as a missionary in Stoienesti, Romania, where he evangelizes and works with youth. He started the church in Stoienesti in 2007 and has developed other missions in the area. George's outreach has included developing a social project in Stoienesti for feeding, clothing, and providing medicine for the poor. He and his wife Dana have two daughters.*

**W**e thank God for the help that He gave us this month. As workers, we sometimes feel lonely and discouraged; but we know that God is with us in every moment of our lives, because He promised that He would never leave us. When we realize this, we receive the strength to get over any obstacles we encounter. Our eyes must be directed toward Christ, and whatever we do, we must do it for His glory. When our gaze is turned toward us, we lose sight of the purpose for which we exist. We live to bring glory to God, and we must have this in mind in everything we do.

This month we had two conferences that have greatly helped our mission team. The first conference was on the process of church planting, and the second conference focused on the teamwork that is needed. This kind of equipping is necessary for all the members of our mission team, because we want to do God's work with efficiency and ensure that every missionary on

our team is in the right place.

We also organized an event with my wife and the women of the village this month. We invited a lady speaker from Alba Iulia. It was a great joy for all the women who participated; they were able to hear encouraging words, especially regarding God's desire for their salvation.

I also continued this month with the "Gospel in Every Home" project. The goal is to visit every house in Stoienesti and to proclaim the Gospel to every person. We thank God for the strength that He gives us to carry out this ministry. We estimate that it will take a full year to reach the entire city as well as the neighboring village. No matter how long it takes, the people will have the opportunity to hear God's Word.

In one of our recent Sunday morning meetings, a man came to the church for the first time. After the sermon, I spoke with him, and he expressed his desire to follow Jesus. During the week, I visited him at his home to talk again. He told me that he had spoken to his children and had given his life to Jesus. He said that he wanted to follow Him. Pray for this man, that he might better understand God's Word and that fruit would be brought forth in his life.

Also pray for two of the young people who attend our Saturday meeting; they have expressed a desire to be baptized this year. ■

# MIDDLE EAST

## MISSIONARY

### SHARIF A. – UNDISCLOSED COUNTRY

*Sharif (identity protected) carries a dual burden in the calling that the Lord has placed upon him: he wants to see churches planted in his Muslim-majority community, and he wants to see Christian families strengthened to live in light of the biblical design. To this end, Sharif makes countless visits to people's homes to teach them the Scriptures. He leads home-based Bible studies with Muslims who are open to the Gospel. His hope is that churches might spring forth from these efforts. He also counsels husbands and wives and leads Bible studies with groups of married couples.*

#### TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

I was a nominal Christian, like most of the Christians I have ever known. I was devoted to the teachings of my Greek Orthodox Church, and I sometimes read the Bible. I always thought that my relationship with God was good because of my personal righteousness – the good deeds I did and all the help I offered others as a layman in the Orthodox Church. I even reached a level where I was about to become a priest.

In 1995, I was invited to attend a series of meetings at a Baptist church in my community. The speaker preached from the book of Jer-

emiah about the Great Potter. In that meeting, the Lord touched my life with the weighty truth that He is the Great Potter. As a result, I submitted my life to Him, and my life began to change. A brother in this church also began discipling me, and I started to realize the joy of the Lord. I began to see a difference in my life and a new willingness to be like Christ and glorify His name.

In 1996, I was baptized and began studying the Bible at a deeper level by attending Bible study groups in the houses of Christians. Most importantly, I started studying the Bible by myself at home and was faithful in attending our church.

#### CALL TO MINISTRY

In 1997, the Lord called me to preach His message to unbelievers. At first, I made weekly visits to do evangelism in a place near the sea. Then I began doing ministry among prisoners. To equip myself, I started studying the Bible through theological training courses and conferences. At the moment, I am attempting to focus on planting new home churches with unbelievers in order to bring them to faith and to grow them in the Word. The bottom line is this: my vision for ministry is church planting through establishing home churches that are then able to preach the Gospel to others. ■

# SHARIF'S MINISTRY AMONG MUSLIM REFUGEES

*The following is a recent update from Sharif. His ministry to Muslim refugees has lately been stirring up trouble with the secret police. The week of this report, he was called in for questioning five separate times. Please pray for his preservation and encouragement.*

**T**his month our team has been conducting home visits to encourage various refugee families from Iraq. We share with them from the Bible and encourage them to attend the church meetings. Many of them contact me almost daily to visit them because of their state of anxiety, despair, and fear of the future. They have passed through very difficult situations in their country and have left everything behind. I have been working to form a team of volunteers to help us manage all the relief supplies: food, clothing, blankets, and diapers.

A great blessing this month has been the formation of two new Bible study groups among the Iraqi refugees. One is with Pastor Abu Munahid and his wife, and the second is with me and my wife. We visit the refugees weekly to encourage them and care for them in all respects, and they have sensed the love of Christ in us practically. We also pray for them and their needs. They are regularly attending the meetings at our church. We are us-

ing the church bus to take them from their homes to the church, since they live far away.

I have been blessed this month to help with the pulpit ministry of the church, where I have prepared several sermons about the family, God's plan for marriage, and the qualities of a virtuous woman. My desire is to encourage the members of the church to put God first in their lives and to teach them how to manage their families biblically. We have also been encouraging members to join in the weekly prayer meeting at the church. We want to stir the church's members to pray with one heart for the ministry in the church, its needs, and its demands.

We also visited many new families among the Syrian refugees this month to deliver the message of Christ's love for them. We listened to their tragic stories; encouraged and prayed for them; and provided them with food boxes, clothing, and blankets. One of my most encouraging visits this month was with a Muslim man, Abu Uday, and with his family. I had already visited them once before, and when I called to schedule a second visit, he was very excited. We talked and prayed for them. Abu Uday told me that he had felt joy and peace since we had visited them the first time. Please pray for them and other families like them. ■







## MISSIONARY REPORT

# A DEEP NEED FOR THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE EAST

BY DR. ANDREW

*The following is a brief update from Dr. Andrew, who is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity with a concentration in Islamic Studies. After he finishes, he and his wife plan to return to his home country to work with the teams at Salam Church and Philadelphia Church and to help in planting other indigenous churches across the Middle East.*

I left the U.S. on May 11th to travel to the Middle East. After visiting some believers in two other countries, I arrived in my home country. It was encouraging to visit with so many believers and evangelists in those countries and hear their stories and spiritual needs. Theological training is still the biggest need in this part of the world. People are hungry for the Word, but the laborers are few!

As I was waiting at an airport in the Arab Peninsula, I met with an Omani sheikh who teaches Comparative Religion at an Omani university. This sheikh told me that he is working on a book to reveal and explain the hidden prophecies of Muhammad in the Bible and to show that Christians changed the Bible to hide these prophecies. The sheikh and I talked for about forty minutes, and we went through some biblical passages that he believed to be prophecies about Muhammad. After I explained the real meaning of these passages, the sheikh said, "It seems that I need to study these passages more before I write the book." Praise God that He has given His Word to explain His truth to this sheikh and to all people!

On May 18th, I arrived at a city where our ministry was organizing a four-day conference on the doctrine of the Trinity. We had men and women from several countries in the region attending the conference. Since the space at the conference was limited, we invited people who we knew had a heart for evangelism and a desire to learn. The main speaker of the conference compared and contrasted God's unity in Islam and Christianity. This brother has a Ph.D. in Theology with a thesis in the Trinity, as well as two postdoctoral studies on the same subject.

The teaching was excellent, and people were really challenged with the new information they learned. Some of the specific teachings were on the meaning of the word "Trinity," how and when it was first used, the difference between Trinity and the Islamic Tawhid, proving the Trinity biblically, and the difference between the attributes of God in Christianity and Islam and how this understanding affects our view of God. We also discussed some of the heresies that attack the Christian faith based on this doctrine.

In this conference, I saw the deep need of the church in the Middle East to understand the basic doctrines of our faith. Some of the leaders who were attending had some surprisingly basic questions to ask about core doctrines. I pray that this conference will be the first of many training conferences that equip and train Arab leaders and teachers to carry the solid biblical knowledge back to their churches. ■



# LATINAMERICA

## MISSIONARY REPORT

### HISTORY OF GOSPEL MISSIONS IN PACAIPAMPA

BY URBANO GOMEZ

#### THE BEGINNING YEARS

**T**he Gospel first entered Pacaipampa about forty years ago. Pastor Angel Colmenares, who has now gone to be with the Lord, was the first Christian to reach the region with the Gospel. Despite the fact that the people were very harsh toward him, he continued to preach door to door. If they shut one door on him, he would go to the next one. When the Gospel arrived there, the people became afraid, and they began to respond with anger against the believers. They said terrible things about the brothers and sisters and especially about Pastor Angel. Almost everyone in the towns believed him to be a demon. It was difficult, and the brothers and sisters who first preached the Gospel there suffered greatly. In many cases, the people threw boiling water at them, and they often threw urine on them. Sometimes they would throw dye on them to ruin their clothes. They would even let their dogs loose on the Christians who tried to come to their door. The opposition was strong.

The culture of Pacaipampa at the time was very idolatrous, and towns were constantly having festivals to celebrate their idols. During those festivals, the people always killed one another; two or three people were usually killed each day. The more people who were killed, the better the celebration was considered. There were many deaths, but these

were the customs in which the people had been raised. The Roman Catholic priest would also come to the town for these festivals to celebrate mass, and afterwards, even he would get drunk with the people.

I remember such events, though I was a young boy at the time. I remember one time when Pastor Angel and the other Christians came to my parents' house, and my mother said, "Child, hide yourself! Hide yourself! The devils have arrived!" I was little, and I did not understand. I thought, "How can these men be devils?" So I hid under the bed peeking out from underneath, wondering what a devil would look like. When I saw that they were just people, I thought, "How strange! These are only men; how can they be devils?" But that was the idea the people had in those days. So the Christians at our door spoke with my mother and father, and the rest of us were hidden in the house. I remember that they passed out some tracts to my parents, and my mom came back into the house and threw the tracts into the fire.

Everyone in that region was Roman Catholic (and many still are)





Left: The late Pastor Angel Colmenares.



Below: The rugged terrain of Pacaipampa poses many obstacles for Gospel missions.



because that is how they were raised. They followed their customs, clinging tightly to their idols. Little by little, those ideas and traditions began to be rejected by some of the people in Pacaipampa, because the Lord was opening doors through these men that went into the region with the Gospel. They persevered with diligence. As people repented and believed in Jesus, they too started helping in the work that the brothers and sisters who had gone before began. The believers that the Lord was raising up in Pacaipampa began to serve with tremendous effort, and the Gospel was expanding and expanding, despite all of the difficulties that the Christians were facing. More and more doors were opened, and the Lord had mercy on many people. Within about twenty-five years, over forty churches were planted throughout the different towns of Pacaipampa. They were just little groups back then, with only a few Christians in each one, but today those churches are much larger and are growing in strength.

Thus it was during those years that the Gospel was first introduced

in our region, in the midst of difficult circumstances; and yet, it advanced! The Christians suffered, but their lives did not matter to them, and they were willing to suffer for the Gospel. Today, the people are generally less aggressive, and they usually listen to us when we speak to them about Christ, but that is not how it was before. In those days, they wanted nothing to do with the Gospel and had no interest in listening to what the Christians had to say.

## FILLING THE SHOES OF THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

**B**y the time we (the second generation of Christians) began to preach the Gospel, things had changed in the more central parts of the region, but we still faced similar challenges in the more remote parts. In one of the villages in which I was preaching, I was going house to house with a group of young believers to share the Gospel.



As we approached the door of one of the houses, the family inside had prepared boiling water to throw on us. Such are the types of challenges we have faced. These types of situations have caused us to trust only in the Lord. On some occasions, the brothers would say, "Come on, Pastor, let's get out of here." But I could not just leave those villages. Those people were blind. They were without hope and without God in this world, and we had to take the message of salvation to them, no matter what it might cost us.

As anyone who has traveled to Pacaipampa knows, the terrain is rough. One must go up and down large mountains and across great rivers in order to carry the Gospel to those regions. Thankfully, in the past six or seven years more roads have been added to some towns; but where there are no roads, we have to travel on horseback or walk on foot, crossing rivers, mountains, and hills. Sometimes it takes eight to twelve hours in order to reach the far stretches of the region.

The long distances become even more difficult in the rainy season, when we have to cross rivers that are overflowing, which create dangerous situations. In March, Nicomedes Saavedra and I were walking to a town about ten hours away by foot, where there is a church of about twenty-five believers. We were traveling there in order to have an evening service with them and to spend time studying the Scriptures with a small group of leaders from the church. Along the way, we had to cross a river. At first, it looked like the river's current was not very strong. In order to avoid walking two hours more to the next bridge, Nicomedes said, "Let's cross here, so we can get there sooner." So, since we were not aware how difficult it would be, we began to cross. It almost cost us our lives. When we started crossing the river, we realized that we had made a mistake. The current was very strong, and there were many loose rocks in the riverbed. The moment we tried

**"Those people were blind. They were without hope and without God in this world, and we had to take the message of salvation to them, no matter what it might cost us."**

to plant a foot on the bottom of the river, it would slip right out from under us. Just down the river from us, there was a strong set of rapids and a whirlpool. If we had lost our footing and were taken by the river, that would have been the end for us. In that moment, I simply entrusted my life to the Lord and said, "Lord, if it's my time to go, receive me." At that point, I was in the middle of the river, and I said to Nicomedes, "Keep going, brother," because there was no longer any way to go back. We had already come halfway. To go back would have been just as dangerous as continuing to the other side. Little by little, we advanced toward the other shore. I do not know how we made it. I truly thought that that was the end for me. I am thankful to God, and I realize that such a trial was nothing compared to all that our Savior Jesus Christ endured on our behalf.

There are even more challenges in the journeys when the people in the towns we travel through have been drinking. Many times we have had to avoid them, going around the villages, because they already know we are evangelists. Sometimes they meet us in our path and try to force us to drink with them.

On one occasion, I was passing through a village with another brother, and we found ourselves confronted by four men, all of whom had been drinking. The men said, "These are evangelists! Get them! If they don't drink with us, we'll kill them!" As you can imagine, it was a little difficult for us in that moment. But I trusted in the power of God. In my



mind I was telling myself, "Let them do to me what the Lord desires." The brother that was traveling with me was a new believer, and he said, "We have to drink. There's no other solution." I told the younger believer, "Brother, we cannot do that, because we serve a God who knows all things; He will do what He desires." Right then, another man came up on horseback, I do not know from where he came, but he was also drunk. He began arguing with the men that were threatening us. He said, "Hey, these men don't drink; why are you bothering them? I drink; come over here, and if you want to fight, fight with me! They don't drink or fight. Leave them alone, and let them go on their way." The four men went over to him, and it was then that we understood that through that man the Lord had saved us from harm. We left that village safely.

On another occasion, I was on my way to visit a church in a town called Los Lucumos. They had called me on the phone and told me they wanted to see me, so I went there with another brother. On the way to Los Lucumos, there were a couple men who intended to attack us with machetes as we passed them on the road. (It is common for people in the mountains where we live to carry long machetes with them.) I have a little motorcycle that I use when the town to which I am going has a road. On this particular trip, I was driving the motorcycle, and the other brother was riding on the back. As we approached the drunken men, they started yelling, "Hey! Give me a ride! Get rid of that guy on the back, and give me a ride!" As I drove past, the men swung the knife at the brother on the back of the motorcycle. The machete came down on his shoulder and cut his poncho, but his flesh was not injured. Understandably, this incident left that brother rather shaken.

Despite the dangers that we face, I know that these people need the Lord. They are dwelling in darkness, and if we do not carry the message

to them, they are going to go to hell. It might be true that I never lived in as much open rebellion as many of the people here, but there was still a day when I was living without hope, dwelling in darkness; and if it had not been for those brothers and sisters who risked their lives to reach my town, who would have come to us with the Gospel? That is the reason that we are doing what we are doing: that the Name of Christ might be known and that He might be glorified in these people. We are motivated every day by a desire for the people of Pacaipampa to have hope in the Good News. If we do not go, the Word of God will not get to those people. We are grateful to God that He has sent us forward in our region to carry forth the Gospel.

## CURRENT MINISTRY AND FUTURE LABORERS

**T**here are places high in the mountains where there is still much witchcraft practiced. One of the towns in the higher zones of Pacaipampa is called the Devil's Cradle, because it is filled with wicked practices. The people there need the Lord. High in the mountains, in the town of Plenas Huaritas, we have held evangelistic campaigns. It is much more difficult than other towns because of the rains and the cold climate. The people are also very aggressive. On many occasions, they have attempted to harm individuals who enter their town. Because of this danger, we do not go into that place alone. When we visit the town to preach the Gospel we go in groups of ten or fifteen and stay close together. We are not really able to go from house to house there, but rather we stay in one larger group and evangelize in the streets. That way, when someone who would otherwise do us harm sees us together,





*Nicomedes Saavedra (left) and Urbano Gomez (right) with a shipment of pastoral libraries for pastors in Pacaipampa*



they no longer are daring enough to approach us. But if we were alone, these people would likely attempt to harm us. Even still, these very people need the Lord, and they need the Good News! This region is filled with witchcraft, and the beautiful creation that the Lord has placed in that area, like the lake and the mountains, the devil has used to turn the idolatrous people against their Creator.

There is one town in particular that we are trying to reach that is about ten or twelve hours away on foot. In that town, there is not a single believer, and almost nobody from outside the village goes there, because it is so far away. Pastor Nicomedes and I are wanting to go at least three or four times this year, since nobody else is going there. We have traveled there once before to preach the Gospel, and though there did not seem to be any conversions, the people were willing to listen, and they even want us to return and teach them more.

We also have a church plant in a town called Palo Blanco, which is only a two-hour walk from Plenas Huaritas. We are now helping a group of about thirty-five believers there,

and they are growing little by little. In addition to the witchcraft that is so common there, the people themselves are very wicked. The majority of the people are always carrying firearms, and when they are drunk, they begin firing them. It is dangerous there. This is another region in which we are focusing our efforts in order to proclaim the Word of God, and we need the believers who read this to be praying for us. Pray especially for one of the pastors of a church close to these towns. Since he is a little closer to those places, we are coordinating with him to help him reach the people. We send him New Testaments and many other resources that might be helpful to him as he tries to reach those people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Lord is raising up many more pastors in Pacaipampa, and our prayer is that we can begin providing these younger men with some form of seminary, possibly through our brother Javier Carhuapoma, who has already helped us in many ways. He is always ready to come and teach us when we are in need of instruction. The financial situation for the pastors in Pacaipampa is not ideal, and



they are unable to travel to a seminary to study or come to Lima for the HeartCry courses throughout the year. While there are some years when the agriculture is very fruitful and the men have a little more money, most of the time they are not financially able to travel to cities such as Piura in order to devote time to study. However, if we were able to offer a seminary in the mountains for them, it would make studying a possibility by eliminating the need for long-distance travel.

The regions to which we travel are difficult to reach, and we are getting old. Soon, we will not be able to travel to those places, and the younger men will need to take over that work.

The only option we have is to make disciples and raise up pastors. There is a large group of young men that we are now training to be pastors. They have the energy and strength required to meet the needs of the region. The reality here is much different from a city like Lima. In Lima, a man only needs to get on a bus and go wherever he wants, but here it is not like that. Here, if you want to travel to a town, you carry your backpack and everything else you need, and you get there by walking high into the mountains. The work here requires a lot of physical strength. For this reason, we are praying that the Lord will raise up more laborers. ■

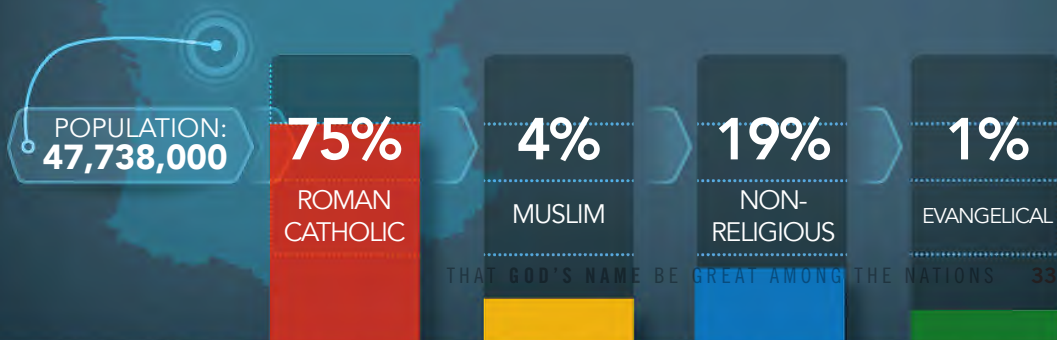
## SPAIN: NEW HORIZON



Located on the Iberian Peninsula, the Kingdom of Spain is bordered by Portugal and the Atlantic Ocean to the west; France, Andorra, and the Bay of Biscay to the north; and the Mediterranean Sea to the east and south. In addition to the mainland, Spanish territory encompasses several islands in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea as well as two small exclaves in northern Africa. Spain made the final step into democratic governance in the form of a parliamentary government under a constitutional monarchy with the writing and approval of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. With seventeen autonomous states and two autonomous cities, Spain is one of the most decentralized nations in Europe. It has the fifth-largest economy in the continent and ranks in the top ten for quality of life worldwide.

Prior to the constitution, under Francisco Franco's dictatorship, Evangelicals faced varying degrees of discrimination and persecution for not complying with Roman Catholicism. Since the 1978 constitution, Catholicism is no longer the state religion, and the country has enjoyed religious freedom. However, Spain is quickly swinging from a Catholic nation to a widely secular society, where morality and values are dwindling with a younger generation that generally rejects the idea of absolute truth. Today, only fourteen percent (14%) of the younger generation describe themselves as religious. Of the 8,112 municipalities in Spain, only 650 have an Evangelical church.

Sources: Wikipedia and Operation World





Ruben Videira with his family

# MEET RUBEN VIDEIRA

## SERVING IN SPAIN

*In September of 2014, Ruben and his family were sent out by Grace Ministries International to begin training pastors in Ruben's home country through the Berea Bible Seminary in Leon, Spain. The seminary focuses on training pastors, elders, and other men in leadership in expository preaching through seminars and conferences. Through Grace Ministries International, HeartCry is helping Ruben and his family with a portion of their monthly support.*

### TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

**E**ven though I was brought up in a Christian home, I led a sinful life until the day of my salvation when I was twenty-three years old. Before that, my life was characterized by sin. In fact, it was the only goal I pursued. I was not a moral person. I gorged myself with any pleasure that the world could offer me, only to find myself even more unsatisfied. Honestly, I hated God and wanted nothing to do with Him.

In the midst of this sinful life, my heart, stubborn and blind, never

saw its need for repentance until the night of October 21, 2003, when God brought me to the end of myself. I had chosen to walk down the path of sin. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love, made me alive together with Christ. In His providence, He led me to the circumstances that would eventually bring me to salvation. When I abandoned my family and quit my job, when I ended up submerged in despair, desperate and lifeless, He found me. In the most hidden place, in the darkest hour, He shone forth His light and saved me. When I hated Him most, He loved me.



At that point in my life, I was living together with a woman who was an unbeliever. One night, somebody asked me a simple question: "How can you believe that you are a Christian and yet live such a sinful life?" It was then that the Spirit opened the eyes of my heart, and I understood that my upbringing could not save me. I saw and understood the weight of my sin, and I could do nothing else but come to Christ. Immediately after my conversion, I ended that sinful relationship, moved out, and went back home to ask for forgiveness from the people against whom I had sinned.

Since the time that the Lord saved me, my life has changed radically. God gave me an unquenchable thirst and hunger for His Word and a deep love for His Church. Now, I diligently desire to walk in obedience to Him. I realize that this is only possible by His enabling as I strive to know and submit to His Word. I have grown to love God and to realize the vastness of my sin, but I have also found that my sin never surpasses the everlasting grace of God. In the words of John Newton, "I am a great sinner, but Christ is a great Saviour."

## CALL TO MINISTRY

Since the day that God saved me, I have had an insatiable desire for His Word. No matter how much I was getting, it was never enough! I could think of only one thing – to dig deeper and deeper into His Word. This led me to apply to a small Bible school in South Carolina – the Evangelical Institute of Greenville. As soon as I was accepted, I was granted a full work scholarship. It was at that Bible school that my desire for ministry began to increase as God used the school to reveal Himself to me through the truths of Scripture. It was a small glimpse of heaven. There I learned the main lesson that has shaped my Christian life: the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ. This unique truth is life-

changing and must be lived out and preached. Jesus Christ is worthy of such commitment. After those years, I could not think of anything else but to show Christ to His Church.

In South Carolina, I realized that the more I studied the Scripture, the more I learned of its divine Author. Hence, my desire to study the Word of God grew more and more. Nevertheless, God had different plans. In July of 2007, I returned to Spain to minister full-time at my home church. The elders confirmed God's call on my life for ministry, which led me to prepare even more diligently. I saw how I was just an unworthy servant who was able to serve only by the wonderful grace of the Father.

Eventually, I decided that I wanted to study at The Master's Seminary. Humanly speaking, it would be impossible for me to attend, but God miraculously opened the door and made a way. He faithfully provided everything I needed as I studied for both of my degrees. In addition to studying, I was also able to serve at the Spanish ministry of Grace Community Church, where the opportunities to teach grew exponentially. The elders of this church also confirmed my call to ministry, and now they have sent me back to Spain to serve there by training pastors and preachers. The Lord has graciously opened the door for us to serve Him and His Church in my home country.

If I could summarize my call to ministry, it is simply an unquenchable desire to serve God's Church through the preaching of His Word and discipleship. God created a great desire in me to study and preach His Word. I cannot ignore it. It is like a burning fire, and I cannot see myself doing anything else with the life that God has given me. This desire is what helped me to understand my call to ministry. A desire that was then confirmed by God's providence in allowing me to be trained at Master's Seminary and then to return to Spain. My life's goal is to bring glory and honor to His name, only by His grace. ■



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# Go or Send

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

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



FOR MORE INFO, GO TO [WWW.HEARTCRYMISSIONARY.COM](http://WWW.HEARTCRYMISSIONARY.COM)