

HeartCry

MAGAZINE

**COUNTING
THE COST:
WOMEN IN
MISSIONS**

GREETINGS

Welcome to the Summer Edition of the HeartCry Magazine. As always, it seems like time is flying by us at an ever-increasing pace, and each period between editions seems to grow more and more brief. Our days are truly like a vapor, and as the flower of the field so we flourish, but then the wind passes over us, and we are no more (Psalms 103:15-16). Such a reality would lead us to great despair if it were not for the fact that the love of the Lord is everlasting to those who fear Him (Psalms 103:17) and that He has marked our steps (Proverbs 16:9) and ordained the works that we should do (Ephesians 2:10).

This edition of the magazine highlights the women who serve on the foreign field with HeartCry, either as missionaries or wives and mothers. As you read through their testimonies we hope and pray that you will glean the following:

First, that you will grow to comprehend in a greater way the value of our sisters in Christ on the foreign field. Even the most cursory examination of the history of missions will demonstrate the inestimable investment that has been made by those women who have counted the cost and left all to serve Christ.

Secondly, that you will be inspired to pray for these dear women on the field, whether they work alone or stand beside their husbands. The struggles they encounter are beyond the natural; therefore, they need a power beyond the natural not only to be sustained but also to advance the Kingdom of Christ.

Thirdly, that you will be inspired by these women to live a life of greater devotion and service to the Lord and His Great Commission. One does not have to be a missionary in order to be inspired by them.

Fourthly, that you will give yourself more fully to the advance of Christ's Kingdom throughout the world. As we often say here at HeartCry, every Christian is required to demonstrate equal devotion to the Great Commission. Whether we are called to go or stay—to go down into the well or to hold the rope for those who go down—there are to be scars on our hands. There are different callings, but there ought to be the same devotion.

Fifthly, that you will understand and be genuinely moved by the fact that possibly the most unreached people group in the world is women! In many cultures around the world, women are left illiterate and without much contact with the gospel. This is a great tragedy!

Sixthly and finally, that you will grow in your understanding of the great need that exists for our sisters in Christ around the world to be exposed to profound biblical teaching. Every doctrine that is necessary for a man to live as Christ in this fallen world is equally necessary for a woman to do so! It is very infrequent that women are given the same theological and doctrinal diet as men; for this reason, many are suffering from theological malnutrition, even when the men of the same culture are provided a healthy diet.

In the pages that follow, you will first find an excerpt from the puritan George Swinnock on the sufferings of Christ Jesus. Beyond that, you may read testimony after testimony—of hardship, faithfulness, ministry, gratitude, and conversion—from women around the globe who are laboring for the Lord on the mission field. May you be blessed as you read them!

Your brother,
Paul David Washer

"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."

CONSIDER THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

BY GEORGE SWINNOCK

(WORKS, VOL. I, P. 193-197)

Consider the doleful tragedy which the Son acted from first to last; meditate on His incarnation. For the Son of God to become the Son of man; for Him that lived from all eternity to be born in time; for Him that thundereth in the clouds to cry in the cradle; for Him that created all things to become a creature—is a greater suffering than if all the men and angels in this and the other world were crowded into an atom, or turned into nothing. This was the first and greatest step of His humiliation. Consider the manner of His birth: He was born, not of some great princes, but of mean and indigent parents; not in a royal palace, but in a place where beggars and beasts are entertained—a stable; He was no sooner born but sought after to be butchered. He fled for His life in His very swaddling-cloths, and was an early martyr indeed. When He grew up, though He was of ability to have swayed the sceptre of all the empires in the world, to have instructed the greatest potentates and counsellors in the mysteries of wisdom and knowledge; though to Him Adam and Solomon, yea, and angels themselves, were fools, yet He lived privately with His supposed father many years, and suffered His deity to be hid, as light in a dark lantern, near thirty years, save that once it darted a little out, when at twelve

years of age He disputed and confuted the great Rabbis of the Jews (Luke 2:46).

When He entered upon His public ministry, He is no sooner ascended the stage, but all the devils in hell appear against Him, and He is forced to fight hand to hand with them for forty days together; and when they left Him they did not take their leave, but ‘departed only for a season’ (Luke 4:13). His whole life was a living death. How poor was He, when He was fain to work a miracle to pay His tax! ‘The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests; but the Son of man had not where to lay His head,’ though He were ‘heir of all things’ (Matthew 8:20). What did He suffer in His name when the worst words in the mouths of the Jews were thought not bad enough for Him! He is called the carpenter’s son, a glutton, a drunkard, a blasphemer, a friend of publicans and sinners, a Samaritan, a devil; nay, the prince of devils. What hunger and thirst and weariness did He undergo! He that feeds others with His own flesh had many a hungry belly. He that gave others that water, of which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more, had His own veins sucking and paining Him for thirst. He that is Himself the only ark for the weary dove to fly to for rest, did Himself take many a wearisome step, and travel many a tiresome journey. Well might the prophet call him ‘a man of sorrows,

and acquainted with griefs,' though He had suffered no more than what is already written; but all this was but the beginning of His sorrows. The dregs of the cup were at the bottom. Doubtless many an aching heart had He, as a woman with child, beforehand, when He thought of the bitter pangs, sharp throes, and hard labour which He was to suffer at the close of his life. O friend, remember this Son of David and all His troubles. But to come to His end, which is specially represented in this ordinance, I will take Him in the garden, where He felt more than I can write or think. Consider His body there; it was all over in a gore blood. Ah, what suffered He, when He did sweat clods of blood! To sweat blood is against nature, much more in a cold season, most of all when He was full of fear and terror; then the blood retreats to the heart to guard it, and to be guarded by it.

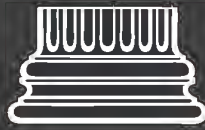
But behold, reader, thy Saviour for thy sake, and under the weight of thy sins, did sweat blood in a cold night, when He was exceedingly afraid. Ah! who would not love such a Saviour, and who would not loathe sin? But the sufferings of His body were nothing to the sufferings of His soul; these were the soul of His sufferings. Observe His expression, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful;' 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.' Unto death, not only extensively, seventeen or eighteen hours, till death ended His life; but chiefly intensively, such sorrow as the pangs of death bring—surely far greater. Again, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Wise and valiant men do not complain of nothing. Ah, how bitter was that cup which valour and resolution itself seemed unwilling to drink! The two most tormenting passions, which are fear and grief, did now seize upon Him in the highest degree: 'He began to be sorrowful and very heavy,' saith Matthew (Matthew 26:37). 'He began to be sore amazed and very heavy,' saith Mark (Mark 14:33).

Reader, follow Him further; one disciple selleth Him at the price of a slave; another disciple forsweareth Him; all of them forsake Him, and fly; the greedy wolves lay hold on this innocent lamb; the bloody Jews apprehend Him, bind His hands like a thief, and hale Him away to the high priest; then they hire persons to belie truth itself: but when their testimony was insufficient, upon His own most holy confession, a sentence of condemnation is passed upon Him. Consider now how the servants smite His blessed cheeks with their fists, and spit on that beautiful face with their mouths, which angels counted their honour to behold; the masters flout Him with their scornful carriage, and mock Him with their petulant language: He must be the sink into which they fling all their filth. Afterwards they carry Him to Pilate; he sendeth Him to Herod; Herod, with some scorns and scoffs, sendeth Him back. Thus is He, like a football, spurned up and down between those inhuman wretches: Pilate tears His flesh with wounds and nails, and presenteth Him to the people with a crown of thorns on His head, to move pity; the people, thirsting after His blood, can by no words be persuaded, by no means be prevailed with, to let this innocent dove escape. Though He be put in competition with a murderer, yet the murderer is preferred before Him; and as the worst of the two, He is at last condemned as a seditious person, and a traitor against Caesar's crown and dignity, to be crucified [outside] the gate, lest the city should be polluted with His blood. Now, reader, come along, like the beloved disciple, and behold thy Saviour bearing His own cross, and going to the place of execution to die the death of a slave, for no freeman was ever crucified; therefore Julian, in derision, called Him, 'the staked God.' He is no sooner come to the dismal place of dead men's skulls, but they tear off His clothes, and some think skin and all, glued to His

back with their bloody scourgings. Now they stretch His body, as cloth with tenters, and rack it so that His bones start out of His skin— ‘I may tell all my bones’ (Psalm 22:17)—in nailing His two hands to the two horns, and his feet, those parts so full of nerves and sinews, and so the most sensible of any parts of the body, to the stump of the cross, and hang Him up between two thieves, as the most notorious malefactor of the three; ‘He was numbered among the transgressors.’ His bloody, watching, fasting, scorched, racked body, is oppressed with exquisite pain, and His anguish so vehement that He crieth out, ‘I thirst’; to quench [His thirst] they give Him vinegar and gall, and spice it with a scoff to make it relish the better; ‘Let us see whether Elias will come and save Him.’

But oh, who can imagine what He suffered in His soul, when He hung under the weight of men’s revenge, devils’ rage, the law’s curse, and the Lord’s wrath! Men ‘revile Him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself: He saved others, himself he cannot save”’ ‘To Him that was afflicted, pity should have been shewn; but they added affliction to the afflicted, and forsook the fear of the Almighty’ (Job 6:14). All the devils in hell were now putting forth their utmost power and policy, for ‘this was their hour, and the power of darkness,’ to increase His sufferings, that, if possible, they might provoke Him to sin, thereby to have separated His human nature from His divine, that it might have perished eternally, and all mankind with it; but the sting of His death is yet behind. The head of that arrow which pierced His heart indeed was the frown of His Father. That His kinsmen, the Jews, whom He came to sanctify and redeem, for He was ‘the glory of His people Israel,’ should deliver Him up to be crucified, was not a small aggravation

of His misery; that His apostles, that had been eyewitnesses of His miracles, and ear-witnesses of His oracles (to whom He had spoken so pathetically, ‘Will ye also forsake Me?’ and who had told Him so resolutely, ‘We will go with thee into prison, and to death’ [Luke 22:23; Matthew 26:35]) should now in His greatest extremity turn their backs upon Him, added some more gall to His bitter cup: that His mother should stand by the cross weeping, and have her soul pierced through with the sword of His sufferings, was far from being an allay to His sorrows; but that His Father, of whom He had often boasted, ‘It is my Father that honoureth me’; ‘My Father loveth me’; ‘I and my Father are one,’ should now in His low estate, in His day of adversity, in His critical hour, not only not help Him, and leave Him alone, as a harmless dove amongst so many ravenous vultures, to contest with all the fury of earth and hell; but also pour out the vials of His own wrath upon Him, and (though the union was not dissolved, yet) suffer the beams, the influences to be restrained, that He might fully bear the curse of the law, and feel the weight of sin; this was the hottest fire in which the paschal lamb was roasted; this caused that heartbreaking, soul-cutting, heaven-piercing expression, ‘My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?’ Oh how, how justly might He have cried out with Job, ‘Have pity upon me, my friend, have pity upon me, for the hand’—not only of my enemies and my friends, of multitudes of men, and of legions of devils, but the hand—‘of God hath touched me.’ How truly might the husband have taken up His spouse’s lamentation: ‘Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by! Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger’ (Lamentations 1:12). Ah, who can write or read such a tragedy with dry eyes?



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WORKBOOKS BY PAUL DAVID WASHER

Knowing the Living God - AVAILABLE NOW

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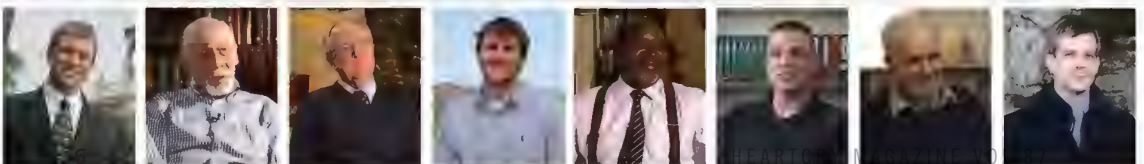
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BLESSED THROUGH TRIALS

LISA KOPLIN: PERU

Lisa is the wife of Eddy Solano Koplin, an administrator in Lima, Peru.

“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!” (1 Corinthians 1:31)

As I sit down to put into words what I had initially purposed in my heart to share, I have sensed that the Lord would have me to add something more. It is my desire to encourage you in the midst of your trials to seek to glorify God in all of your circumstances.

You may have heard the question before, “What is the chief end of man?” and its answer, “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” Logically, one then asks him or herself, “If my chief end is to glorify God, then how do I go about doing so?” Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John that His Father is glorified when His disciples bear much fruit.” Many of you have probably read about the fruit of the Spirit or even learned catchy little songs to memorize what they are; but how do we go about producing this fruit that will ultimately glorify God?

Although there are various ways the Lord works in and through us to produce fruit in our lives that bring

glory to His name, there is one particular method that He uses that we do not particularly like to meditate on: trials. Both the Apostle Paul and James tell us that our tribulations produce within us patience—precisely one of the fruits for which we have been searching. I especially like that Paul goes on to say in Romans 5 that patience in turn produces experience, and experience hope.

In our time serving the Lord in Lima, Peru, we have passed through some very trying times; we have suffered and been stretched; but we have learned to understand that these circumstances are allowed or even facilitated by God at times in order to mold us into His image. As difficult as some of the trials have been, I can truly thank God for the transforming work He is doing in both myself and my husband as we learn to wait patiently on Him, have faith in His timing, and grow in His grace and in experience.

As of late, in my devotional time, the Lord has been revealing to me that I should not only welcome trials for the good that they produce in me; but also, to go one step further, I should glorify God in the midst of them. He has gone so far to chal-

lunge me to see His hand, and not mine, in the outcome of every trial and give Him the glory due His name. I have been humbly reminded that if I am to glory in anything, it shall be the Lord! Be encouraged this day—the trials you are passing through are for your good; and what

is more, they are to glorify your Father in heaven. Praise Him as He refines you, and give glory to Him as He leads you through your current tribulation, knowing that this glorifying fruit being produced within you is for the fulfillment of that chief end.

EMMY*: FRANCE

Emmy is the wife of Domingos, a church planter in France.*

We are Brazilian missionaries in Paris. In this “first world” missionary field, we had grown accustomed to the subtle and wily attacks from the unrighteous. But on a Friday, in November of 2015, terror exposed to the world how truly dark the ‘city of lights’ actually is.

During the pregnancy of my second child, I suffered some quite serious ventricular tachycardia (rapid resting heart rate), to the point where the doctors had to deliver her a month and a half before her due date. Since she was born, almost two years had gone by and I had never again suffered from this. Until the 13th of November, when I woke up feeling a lot of arrhythmias. As the day advanced, the tachycardia got worse, and by nighttime my husband and I decided it would be best for me to go to the hospital. He would stay at home with the kids.

I got ready, and just as I reached the front door, I received a call from my aunt in Brazil asking me if I was alright. At first I thought that she somehow knew about my heart issues that day, but I learned soon enough what she was talking about: the gruesome attacks that had taken place in Paris that night.

**For security reasons, marked names are pseudonyms, and so throughout.*

It is hard to describe all that happened after that—the suffering and pain, the mourning, the prayers and tears. Authorities advised all to stay at home, and hospitals were overcrowded. There was no point in going, but at the same time my heart rhythm got worse, and we were very concerned.

I do not want this to sound like a novel, so I will go ahead and tell you that, by the grace of God, everything went well. I ended up having a minor heart surgery during the week that followed the attacks, and I have had no issues since. However, I would like to share with you what we learned while going through this, and how God has been working in our family and in this city.

On one hand, we Christians should expect such difficult times to come. Our Lord made it very clear that moments and events like these would happen. On the other hand, facing such explicit evil—and the pain that results from it—is overwhelming.

It is even more heartbreaking to see a suffering people with no one to whom they can run for comfort. Empty wishes of “light,” “good energy,” and “positivity” opened our eyes even wider to the desperate need of the gospel in this nation. In one of the most relativistic societies I have ever met, suddenly everyone is “praying for Paris”—praying to a God they ordinarily judge as non-existent, a God they do not know.

During this difficult time for France as a whole, we personally endured difficult days ourselves, but with one vital difference: we had true, substantive comfort. Instead of “positivity,” we experienced the sweet and powerful Holy Spirit. Instead of despair, we were very certain of the reasons of our hope; and though we were perplexed, we knew we were never abandoned. This was true only by God’s amazing grace—all glory to the Lord!

What was very clear to us is that we must share this with the French people to the best of our abilities. It was undoubtedly a weekend full of attacks from the enemy of our souls, but by God’s grace the outcome of all of this in our lives was closer proximity to God, a stronger will to do His work, and grateful hearts. As my husband put it in an article he wrote following the attacks:

“He reigns; He comforts; He judges righteously; He converts evil into good; He turns darkness into light. His character precedes His actions, and He does not hide in the face of seemingly unjust suffering. Rather, He ‘justifies himself in a suffering world’ (John Stott) in an explicit and clear manner: exposing His only Son, the Righteous, on the wood on top of a mountain.”

GABRIELA ISSE: PERU

Gabriela is the wife of Walter Isse, a teacher in Lima, Peru. They have two sons: Walter Hernan (5) and Franco Alejandro (3).

I am thankful for the opportunity to be able to share what the Lord is doing among us in Peru. It has been three years since we started with HeartCry, which has been a great blessing for my home, the brethren, and the community. We serve in La Iglesia Bíblica Gracia Eterna in Lima. June marked our six-year wedding anniversary; it has been a time of adaptation and death to the flesh for the both of us—for which I give glory to God.

This time has been beautiful in that we have seen various brothers and sisters arrive who are young in the faith and thirsty for God. A small

group of women have begun to pray together regularly, and little by little we are seeing the results of our cries. In our church, the majority coming are new brothers and sisters in the faith who have some knowledge of God. Our work consists of studying with them both the meaning of the gospel and the evidences of conversion. I will share with you the case of a young lady who arrived and began to take courses on the Doctrines of Grace, believing that that was what she lacked for her life in Christ to have the greatest strength. She is a dear sister: very servant-like for the work of the Lord. However, she went through a desert time, and through the study of the Scriptures about what it means to be a disciple of Christ she was able to discover that in her life, Christ is sufficient; He is

the foundation of everything, and faith in Him is the means of salvation. I see her persevering, and it gives me such joy. Like her, there are several young ladies who are coming with the desire to know our Lord. I ask for your prayers for me to be able to lead them closer to Christ.

Also, I would like to share what the Lord has been working in our lives as a family. It's been one year since we had noticed in our son, Franco, certain characteristics that were different from a typical two-year-old child. We decided to investigate; it turned out that, of the twenty-four characteristics a child with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) has, he had sixteen of them. It was a very hard time.... We cried and put him before our God. In spite of the signs, we could not yet confirm that he was autistic before working with him and taking him to get an actual diagnosis.

We took him to several neurologists, who had differing opinions. We then decided to wait and work with him at home. I saw an improvement, but there were still days full of frustration and much uncertainty. But in spite of all of this, God remained so faithful!

A year passed, and according to the advice of good friends and brothers and sisters, we took our son to a Peruvian State hospital that specialized in children. There they confirmed that Franco had autism.

Brothers and sisters, I tell you that that day was hard; great pain came to my heart. However, leaving the hospital with my baby in my arms, with tears in my eyes, I saw the sun shine in a beautiful way; it shined and did not burn—to see a clear sky in Lima in the month of May is rare. Thus, I could see again the goodness of my God. The only thing I could say was: “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I’ [Psalm 61:2]—let me see my Lord Jesus; He is all that we need! Father, give us wisdom; today we need it in a special way, for our life will be different.” Brethren, the Lord united us more; He gave humility and grace from our brothers and sisters—who are willing to learn what we are going to learn.

There is no doubt that God uses adverse situations in our lives in order for Him to shine His attributes, that we might be able to recognize who He is!

God has been so good in allowing us to experience anew the love of our families, brethren, and neighbors. Beyond comprehension, new doors have been opened. It has given us the opportunity to increase our mission field—in buses that transport





us to the rehabilitation center for our son. It has given a new momentum to our service as missionaries. I give glory to God for that! We have come to know God in another way.

Another reason to give thanks to God is that more than a year ago I had studied Titus 2:1-5 and was able to learn the design of God for my life and see my tremendous need for a mentor. After much prayer, God has since given me three sisters who have been a great blessing for my life. Each one of them has been raised up to pray one for another. They are each in different stages of life, and it is a delight to be able to share with them. I have learned in this time that God has blessed me with three sisters to be able to pray together, learn together, and apply what is learned in each of our lives. We meet every fifteen days to seek the will of the Lord, and it has created a bond of friendship in the Lord, full of encouragement and open hearts and the desire to give Him glory with our lives. I also give thanks because a sister arrived a few months ago who has experience in being a missionary and a pastor's wife for years. She is very sweet and loving; she and her husband's lives are examples for me and my husband.

To conclude, I again thank our great and loving God for granting me this space and time to share what He has been privately teaching me. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7). My husband and I have been taught in many ways recently. We have seen with much heaviness and pain that we have deceived ourselves several times thinking and making decisions for our family in a "rational" way. We were not conscious, until now, that we passed over the counsel of God and of others. We have learned that even in the smallest things, we should put before Him our paths before taking action. For that God says to us: "Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts. For he who finds Me, finds life and obtains favor from the LORD. But he who sins against Me injures himself; all those who hate Me love death." (Proverbs 8:34-36). Glory to God for His Word!

May the Lord greatly bless you, give you wisdom, and grow you in the knowledge of Him every day until He returns!

In Christ Jesus,
Gabriela Gallardo de Isse

GOD'S WORK AND FAITHFULNESS IN THE MIDST OF CHURCH PLANTING AND MINISTRY

HANNAH NORÉN: SWEDEN

Hannah is the wife of Daniel Norén, a church planter in Gothenburg, Sweden.

My husband and I work in an immigrant neighborhood in Sweden, and I often meet Syrian refugees together with my children as I take them out to play. (We speak Arabic, which has made a lot of these conversations possible on a deeper level). Here are a few encounters for which I deeply thank the Lord.

A lady was playing nearby with her twins, a boy and a girl. I noticed that the children were quite shy and somber, and I started talking with the mother. She and her family are Orthodox Christians, and she started relating her story: how their home in Northern Syria was bombed, and she and her husband slept out in the field with their twin babies, next to their destroyed house for more than a year, with no electricity, running water, or shelter. After another bomb

exploded quite close to them, they started the journey by foot to walk to Turkey and slowly, slowly made their way to our country.

My own children were a bit hesitant at first to play with these kids, as they were not able to understand each other.

During our family worship and throughout the day, we explained to our kids that these twins had lost everything: all their toys were broken and left behind;



their room and their bed would never be seen again; they were forced to leave their home. What they really needed now was for us as believers to embrace them with God's powerful love.

A few days later we met again, and my daughter ran right over to those kids and hugged them and held their hands and pulled them along to start playing. I have gotten to share with the mom many times, as our children played, about the gospel and what it means to be a Christian.

In those times when our children are able to join us in ministry, it can be so moving to see them understand how God poured out His love on us, not that we might just keep it to ourselves, but that we would give and share that love with others.

Another beautiful aspect of our work is being able to embrace and try to bring along immigrant wives and children to church. Turkish and Iraqi families that have occasionally come would typically send their children out to the nursery during the church service. I am often out tending to our baby, and I always take the opportunity to teach these kids. Recently, as I opened the Swedish Children's Bible and taught a chapter, I thought they would surely be out of patience to hear more. However, the oldest Turkish girl, who had not heard most of these basic Bible stories before, entreated me to con-



tinue, chapter after chapter. Their hunger to hear more of Christ and His work on the cross is like balm to my soul, as children's care and work can often be busy work.

Another immigrant lady has come regularly to church and Bible study, and a visitor asked her when she became a Christian. (She was raised in a "Christian family"). She replied that it was since she moved here, through the teaching at the church plant, that she really was able to understand the meaning of the gospel and Christ's work on the cross. Being able to walk day by day with these ladies and see their growth over a period of time is fantastic! We have loaned several books to her about true Christianity and the gospel. She has read through them with much interest. Praise the Lord that He is working in hearts and lives!

I have also been trying to go through a book called, *The Church Planting Wife*, with some of the other immigrant wives in our church plant (whose husbands have an active role in the church). This book

helps to make sense of some of the struggles many wives may confront as they stand by their husbands in church planting. As I read through some excerpts from the book, I continually heard my friends saying, “How does this lady know this about us? Did she write this book directly for us?” These women have started to see that God has put them right where they are, as wives to men involved in church planting.

Their attitudes and support to their husbands are crucial, even as their men might be taking long hours to prepare sermons, fielding phone calls from church members, and so on. When we can see our

role in the bigger picture, we can go from sulking (that our husband isn’t available, or that we are always cleaning up after guests, etc.) to rejoicing in the work we can do together for God’s glory!

This reality also helps with processing the challenges of being far from family and relatives, shouldering heavy responsibilities, giving ourselves away to others, or even possibly enduring criticism or defeat for the sake of Christ. We women have a desperate dependence upon God first and foremost, and we are appreciating more and more that ministry in all its types is a privilege and not a burden.

CHARLENE MANEVILLE: SOUTH AFRICA

Charlene is the wife of Mario Maneville, pastor of Reformed Faith Mission Community Church in Bellville, Cape Town, South Africa.

I am excited to see how God is using our small congregation to His glory. I have learned through my journey in these past few years that God is sovereignly in control even when I do not trust or cannot see His plans.

I have been going through a difficult time since we moved from Kimberly, in the Northern Cape region, to Cape Town to heed the call of the Lord three years ago. I threw heavy tantrums at first since I was born and bred in Kimberly and felt comfortable there with long-time friends, family, and fellow believers.

After one year in Cape Town with mostly ‘negative’ encounters—not coping with different climate (wet and cold), severe sinusitis, allergies to flea bites (fleas not found in Kimberly), and difficulties from my new jobs—I was doubting whether this was where God really wanted us. However, we joined the church where we are currently serving, and God has been faithful in so many ways. I must confess that I doubted a lot, even whether my husband would receive support from HeartCry—but I

now stand amazed at how God just put all the puzzle pieces together perfectly.

It was only after God showed me my selfishness in making it all about me that I started to see how I could serve my Father. I am now involved with women's ministry and Sunday school in our church.

I am witnessing my husband's transformation as he lives his dream:

to work full-time for the Lord. I am encouraged as I see the growth in our congregation.

I want to thank HeartCry for their support in allowing God to use them. May God continue to bless your ministry!

Yours in Christ,
Charlene Maneville

LIGIA, ANI, AND LIVIA WITH THEIR HUSBANDS



ANI TOMECI: ROMANIA

Ani is the wife of Ion Tomeci, an evangelist in Timisoara, Romania. They are members of Providenta Church.

God is so good, and He works in a wonderful way!

We have been holding a Bible study group every Friday night in a home. This environment encouraged the growth of those that were new in Christ, and it was a good opportunity for them to invest in each others' lives. Our hope has been that every girl would come

to know Christ better and learn to be a good testimony to those around them. We must pray and use the relationships with the people around us! After we finished our first Bible study, I started to meet and disciple with three of them.

Here are a few brief accounts of how the Lord has been working in the lives of some of the women here.

OTILIA

Ever since she was little, Otilia has always had a desire to seek God. Her mother (who speaks Hungarian)

used to visit the Hungarian Evangelical Church sometimes. Otilia wanted to go there to see how it was, but she does not understand the language. So, her mother heard about our church and told Otilia about it. Her father is an “Orthodox atheist” (what she calls him). One Sunday, Otilia wanted to come to Providenta Church, but her father did not agree with this, so she told him she was visiting her grandmother. Her mother Ana took Otilia to church and then to her grandmother’s. She has been attending regularly ever since!

Otilia is an introvert and was a very isolated person when I first met her; however, after I started spending time with her, this changed. Her mother has told me: “Sister Ani, I have been with Otilia to so many psychologists and psychiatrists, but I never saw any change in her life; but since she has been meeting with you, she is another person! She has completely changed. She does not stay alone in her room anymore, and she tells me all the time that she has come to the study or to meet with you!” God and His Word changed her! Praise Him! I have worked with her—she is one of the three I have been discipling—and have seen great progress and growth in her. Ana and Otilia were both baptized in September!

MADALINA

Madalina’s conversion to God got her in trouble with her family. Her parents are very dominant. They even took her to a priest to be “set free” from our influence. They even came to a prayer meeting at the church to tell us to leave Madalina alone. We tried to explain to them the relationship that we have with her, but they were very angry and did not want to listen to us. They tried to force Madalina to stop coming to our meetings, but she keeps saying: “It is more important for me to obey God than to obey other peo-

ple.” Please pray for Madalina! She is a precious girl to us, and we are happy about her sacrifice to follow Christ. I meet with her almost every week for Bible study.

DIANA

Diana is a married lady, and her heart is crying out to the Lord. She used to attend a Jehovah’s Witness church in Italy for eight years. Her husband Alin did not like the group, so he would not let her be baptized there. When they came back to Romania from Italy, they moved to Sfântu Gheorghe because of Alin’s job. Diana comes to Brasov for classes at the university once a week, which is how I met her. She has shown a great desire to be close to the Lord, and she also wants her husband to love the Lord. She is very dedicated and determined to follow Him. She was baptized on September 6th, 2015.

My husband and I meet with her and her husband regularly. Diana has been a great Christian example for Alin. He is a meek man, and this is an encouragement to her. He started coming to the church with her, and now they are both attending faithfully. He reads the Bible and speaks a lot about the way in which he understands what he reads. Pray for Alin—he is not far from the Kingdom of God!

TATIANA

Last year I met and started collaborating with Sister Tatiana Deleu from Negresti Baptist Church in order to start a women’s ministry for Uncesti, a village of two hundred people. Due to the poverty level in Uncesti, people cannot find jobs easily; therefore, almost everyone there works in agriculture. The harsh living conditions and the lack of money have driven many men to become alcoholics, to abuse their wives and children, to steal, and ul-



ANI AND TATIANAS BIBLE STUDY GROUP

timately to end up in jail. The wives of these men are left at home with their children, needing to work in the fields alone. Together with my husband, we visited Sister Tatiana, who had started a work of ministry with children of Uncesti. I encouraged her to start meeting with the women as well and to have a Bible study with the mothers of the children who were coming to her house. We prepared a meeting with a few women and showed them the Bible study.

Eventually, these women started to come to the meetings regularly and began to go to church on Sundays. Some even brought their husbands with them! I keep in touch with Sister Tatiana about every two weeks, and I pray and encourage her in the ministry, and occasionally I am able to visit her and attend her Bible study group.

LIGIA AND LIVIA

Every week, I meet with two young wives: Ligia and Livia. We consider together how we can be wives after God's own heart. We are currently studying the book *What Is It Like to Be Married to Me?* by Linda Dillow. Ligia's father died when she was little, and her mother brought up all ten of her children alone. It obviously was not easy, but she worked

hard to keep her children near God. Ligia has some health problems, and she cannot have children yet. She is a fighter, but very sensitive at the same time. She loves God, and she needs to be encouraged! Livia also grew up without a father and was raised with her five siblings by her mother. My husband and I also meet with these two young ladies and their husbands for a study for families.

PRISCILLA NAMAKULA: UGANDA

Priscilla is the wife of Bill Issa, a church planter in Kampala, Uganda. They have six children: Glory (17), Jonathan (15), Daniel (13), Victor (7), Joshua (4), and Esther (1).

There is a young man in our church named Alex whose conversion touched my heart. He is an orphan who became a street kid at a tender age. Later, he was taken from the streets by the biggest Charismatic/Word-of-Faith church here in Kampala, and he became a member of their dance group. By his own testimony, he remained of the world until one day he came across an audio sermon by Brother Paul Washer on the internet. After some time, his pastor called him into his office, and there he wanted to take advantage of him, but thankfully someone came and interrupted him. Alex became afraid of this situation, and he began to look for a church that preached the Word like Paul Washer.

In his search, he happened upon Conrad Mbewe and wondered if he could be helped from Zambia. He could not believe his ears when Pastor Mbewe told him that his church had a church plant in Kampala! Pastor Mbewe connected him with Pastor Bill Issa (my husband), and immediately Alex called Bill. After a few days, they met and talked at our home. After their meeting, Alex decided to leave the rich, 20,000-member mega-church to join our poor, twelve-member church, which meets in our garage. This shocked me! I could not believe it and thought that Alex would one day leave us as well. But to my surprise, he became more and more serious about his salvation, and after a while Bill baptized him. Now Alex has brought into our church some of his peers from the mega-church he used to attend. The Lord is amazing!

God has been using circumstances to work in my heart for some

time. I met my husband in a charismatic church where we were both members. Bill was an evangelist in that church, but his doctrines were different from our pastor's. Later, we moved to another area and joined different charismatic church, where Bill was appointed Assistant Pastor. He served there, but his teachings were again in contrast to those of the pastor. One day, Bill was forced to leave the church.

Bill was discouraged, but he was still spending time in prayer and sharing the gospel with his students at the high school where he was teaching. He ended up having a large following, and we could no longer fit them all in our small sitting room.

This is when the Lord joined us with our friend and brother in Christ, Michael Miller, a reformed Baptist pastor from Sand Springs, Oklahoma. The Lord started using Michael to help Bill see the truth, and he decided to abandon the charismatic faith and reform the small church which had formed. When we began to implement various reforms in the church (i.e. from unbiblical songs to hymns, from allowing women to be pastors to not allowing it, from speaking in tongues to not doing so), nearly all of the forty or so church members decided to leave. All of them went to other churches, save only our family and one other girl.

This was not easy for me to endure; it was a serious trial, because I was also not ready to accept the reforms that Bill was making. I liked being charismatic. I hated hymns because I found them old and boring, and having to stop speaking in tongues disturbed me greatly. Bill patiently continued to explain different doctrines of the Bible to me until, slowly but surely, some things started making sense to me. By the grace of the Lord, I came to realize that we had been lost, and I started to enjoy the things I used to hate. Today I can testify that the Lord has drawn near

to me in a special way since we became reformed Baptists. I give all the glory to the Lord for saving my life.

I have had many special seasons in my life in which I can see God's goodness magnified. First, I am grateful for the extraordinary provision the Lord extended to me and my family through support from HeartCry. We had been serving God, but not effectively, because of many hardships. Bill had to toil much in order both to serve Christ in ministry (which he liked so much) and to get bread on the table for us. I don't know how I can thank God and all the donors of HeartCry enough that the Lord is using for this cause. Second, I thank the Lord for Brother Asuman's wedding. I used to be the only woman in our church; Bill and

I were the only couple in the church for a long time. Now, however, there are two women in the church (the others are men and girls). Third, I also thank the Lord for our young baby girl. Esther, who was born with a low blood-sugar level and had to be transferred to the nursery section for a week after delivery, has been restored back to health by the Lord.

Our church has been going out together to try to reach people in our community with the gospel. Once every month we have what we call a "Fellowship Sunday," where church members but remain at our home instead of leaving after the worship service, and we spend the day and share meals together. This has tightened the bond of unity and oneness among us.



LEFT TO RIGHT: NAPHTALLY, LIZ, HELIDA, AND TIM

HELIDA OGALLO: KENYA

Helida is the wife of Naphtally Ogallo, a church planter in Eldoret, Kenya. They have two grown children: Tim (24) and Liz (20).

became a Christian in 1973 as a teenager. I trained as a Registered Nurse/Midwife and practiced for eight years. I met my husband Naphtally Ogallo, and we got married on March 31, 1985. We marked our thirty-first wedding anniversary this year, for which we are greatly thankful to God for His sus-

taining power.

My husband became a full-time pastor at Trinity Baptist Church Nairobi in 1986. In 2006, my health became poor, so my husband brought me to Eldoret for medical attention, which I received. The doctors advised us to relocate to Eldoret for easier medical follow-up. This was a very difficult decision in our life due to the nature of our work in Nairobi. My husband had been involved in the Nairobi church plant from its inception to its establishment; therefore, it

was very painful to leave. Equally, the Nairobi church did not find it easy to release us, but eventually we did come to Eldoret in August of 2006.

Once in Eldoret, we soon realized that there was not any church which stood for and taught the Doctrines of Grace, so we immediately knew that there was work cut out for us. We began one-on-one evangelism, and soon my husband began Bible studies in our house. A number of people professed conversion, and so there was need to start regular church meetings in our living room.

During the Post-Election Violence of 2007-08, our work was disrupted. Our home became a place of refuge for over twenty people from our congregation. We saw the hand of the Lord using us to feed that multitude for one week. What followed was a mass exodus of people from Eldoret,

which was the epicenter of the violence. Most of our congregation relocated to their rural homes. This had a great negative impact on our church plant. We never lost hope, but continued looking to the Lord prayerfully.

The work picked up again, and by 2008 there was need to get a bigger space for meeting. Soon the Lord helped us to set up a tent in front of our house, where we met until the end of January 2016. We have now relocated the tent to our church site. Since moving to there, we have seen many new faces come, and a few of them have remained faithful.

My service in the church includes Sunday school and women's ministry, and now I am in the process of mentoring others to take over the work. I also accompany my husband to student campus ministry.

GERTRUDE BANDA: ZAMBIA

Gertrude is the wife of German Banda, a church planter in the poor district of John Laing in Lusaka, Zambia.

My heart is really encouraged that there are people around the world who are praying for me, my family, and our church. Church-planting is not easy work. We as a family are really thankful for what HeartCry has been doing to support us financially and in prayer.

I am grateful that our first-born son, Redson, came to know the Lord last year through the preaching of his father, German. Not only that, but I am also grateful for five others in our congregation who came to know the Lord and were baptized in November. Please pray for the spiritual growth of our son and these other five new believers.

I had a terrible time last year when I suffered from malaria. I was admitted in the hospital for a couple of weeks, but thankfully God healed

me. I also had a severe backache which took a number of months to heal. Please pray for me and my family as we face different kinds of illnesses, trials, and hardships.

The ladies' ministry has been a very difficult ministry in our congregation—mainly because very few are able to read their vernacular [native language] Bibles. This slows their spiritual growth. Also, many of their husbands are not Christians, so they do not have family devotions. We have about fourteen ladies in our ministry, and only three are able to read. Please pray that the Lord will help us provide literacy classes to teach these ladies how to read and write.

For the last two years, I have been reaching out to Mrs. Monica Phiri [real name withheld] with the gospel. She is a widow in her thirties who had refused to come to church ever since she was a child. I have been so happy to see her coming to church in the past months, though I do not know if she has been converted yet.

Two other ladies, Mrs. Zulu and Mrs. Banda, have left our church. We made some efforts as ladies to follow up with them; but we found out that, because of their poverty, they were attracted to the Pentecostal and charismatic churches—they are looking for money to feed their children. The possibility of losing ladies who are not yet saved is very high because

of their poverty and the attractiveness of the false prosperity gospel. But I know that God has His people among us who will not be moved by anything. They will stand firm and persevere to the last day, despite being poor. We are grateful to the Lord that some of the ladies have been saved and are trying to live by faith. Please remember us in your prayers!

LABORING AMONG THE YOUTH

LIDIA PURCACI: MOLDOVA

Lidia is the wife of Pavel Purcaci, an evangelist in Anenii Noi, Moldova.

I was born into a Christian family with eleven children. I was the eighth child in our family. My parents loved and served the Lord with all their heart, and this was passed to us, the children. In my teenage years, I became a Christian and disciple of Christ.

When I was twenty years old, I got married to a man involved in our local church ministry. I was still a student at that time and did not have much opportunity to serve more in our church, though I was singing in the praise-and-worship band. After I finished in university, our first son was born. I had always wanted to impact teenagers in our church, so when our boy was about two years old, I started a ministry for teenagers with which my husband also helped.

God worked in my life and in the life of a girl we did not know before through a situation in our family. God blessed us with our second child, a sweet little girl. Around the time she was born, our son Alberto got sick

with pneumonia. I was in the hospital after giving birth to our daughter, and my husband was at the hospital with our son. He was not improving, so my husband took him to a different hospital in the capital city. As men were not allowed to stay with children in that hospital, my sister offered to help—and spent about two weeks with our son in the hospital. In the same room were some teenage girls; one of them, Maria, was in a critical condition, having spent her last three years in the hospital with a blood infection doctors were unable to cure. The teenage girls played with Alberto, and Maria, who was sixteen, loved him very





LIDIA TALKING TO THE YOUTH

much. She was alone in the hospital, as her parents were not taking care of her.

After Alberto recovered and came home, Maria began calling my sister frequently asking about our son. This is how Maria and my sister got closer to one another, and now Maria lives with my sister's family. She accepted Christ as her Savior! Her health condition has improved: she no longer has to stay at the hospital and is feeling much better now.

During that period of time, it was very hard for our family, and we could not understand why our son got sick exactly when I was unable to take care of him. I could not understand why he was not getting better in our town's hospital and why we had to take him to another one. But after all that happened, I know that God worked this so that the lonely girl in the hospital could be saved and could have a real family. God worked out His plans through the hardships we had to pass through as a family.

Alberto is four now, and Andreea is two; and most of the time I stay home taking care of them. But I am still involved, together with my husband, in the youth ministry in our church. I help organize different events, games, and discussions. Recently, I started working more personally with girls, inviting them to our place to do crafts and talk about issues in their lives. I realized that many young people need love and attention and an understanding heart more than they need to be re-

buked constantly for their behavior. I also work with some girls coming from non-Christian families, and one of them told me recently that coming to the youth meeting is now a priority in her life.

There is girl in our church whose parents are Christian, but they sadly have little time for their children. Because of this, she grew up having bad behavior and spending time with the wrong people. She comes to church on Sunday, as she is forced by her father; but if it were up to her, she would not come. When I invited her to come to the youth meeting, she told me that other young people reject her and that she is not loved by anyone. I assured her that I loved her, and I invited her to visit me at home. We spent valuable time together, and she opened her heart to me. I listened without judging her. Before leaving, she told me that she had had such a nice time with me and would like to come again. She has even started coming to the youth meeting! I pray that God gives me more love for her and the right words for her and the other girls I teach.

Even though I have to do much of the ministry while taking care of my kids, I still love being involved in teenagers' lives, making an impact that will last forever. I am thankful to the Lord for His grace to serve Him in this way. I am also thankful for being able to support my husband in his ministry and to work together for the Lord.

MACOLET ODUOR: KENYA

Macolet (Melly) is the wife of Sam Oluoch, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Kisumu, Kenya. They have two daughters: Lois (23) and Nila (20).

My line of training is secretarial—bookkeeping and accounts. I have been in ministry working alongside my husband for over twenty years.

One of the things dear to me is spending time and studying the Bible with the young people, even though there may be no immediate conversions. Scripture encourages me that it is the Holy Spirit's work to convict sinners of their sin. Additionally, I teach Sunday school and lead monthly women's fellowship, and I accompany my husband to Maseno University for college ministry every Friday—I help out with securing the meeting venue and organizing refreshments thereafter. I also help with administrative work and cooking during classes at Kisumu Reformed School of Theology (KReST), a college that is run by the association Reformation Carried Forward by Kenyans (RECFOK)—a group of four reformed churches. Students attend classes four times a year; we have sixteen students at the moment.

One of our church's visions is to plant more Reformed churches in other towns, and one of the towns that has been marked is Nakuru, which is the fourth-largest town in Kenya. Recently, I was invited by the women students at Egerton University (in Nakuru) who are under Reformed teachings by Brother Oduru to give a talk on "Purity and Christ-Centered Living in a Woman's Daily Activities." It was good to see this group of young women eager to live for Christ and willing to serve among their peers.

We have been through many trials: financially, spiritually, and even physically. The first church my husband pastored was a non-denomina-

tional church, so there was no governing order in how the church was to be run. When Sam became a pastor there, he had to work out some sort of structure and restore order. He introduced systematic preaching, and some of the leaders were not happy with that. He also did not include women in the preaching roster. This became a problem, and sharp disagreements arose. It was hard to see our close friends and the whole church (except for a few people) reject us and talk ill of us. We had to take a stand; we had to either choose Christ or please men. We are glad we made a stand and chose Christ. During this whole time, the Lord was ever so near to us. He assured us of His care and protection all that time.

Sam tendered his resignation, and we left that church. Since Sam had taken early retirement from his previous employment and I also left work as we entered into full-time ministry, we did not know where we were going, what we were going to do, or how we were going to feed our children or take them to school. This was a difficult time, but the Lord saw us through by providing good Christian friends who stood with us—and subsequently, HeartCry!

The result of standing firm for Christ has led to the establishment of Grace Baptist Church (GBC)Kisumu, GBC Oyugis, and now the new church plant in Millimani. We are so thankful to God. Praise be to His name!

We are thankful to the Lord for all His blessings. In the church, we have had numerous baptisms—including those of both of our daughters—and these have been very special. Sam and I look forward to celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary in November, God willing.

Wishing you God's blessings,
Melly



NATALIA DUNAS: MOLDOVA

Natalia is the wife of Nicolae Dunas, an evangelist in Cahul, Moldova.

My spiritual life began at age thirteen when curiosity drove me to see what Christians do in church. I heard the call of God in a Baptist church in Brinza. I then started to go to every Bible study meeting for teenagers they held, which helped me grow spiritually, and I understood more and more about God. At age seventeen, I was baptized.

Right after that, I went to Cluj-Napoca, Romania, to study economics. It was a very difficult four years there, but the Lord was my strength. While there, I got involved in a Bible study group where I was taught to serve people, especially widows—visiting them and bringing them food. Through different situations and tests, God grew me spiritually even more, and He helped me to make wise decisions in different challenges.

In October of 2002, I married Nicolae. Both he and I, seeing the needs of Cahul, stayed here to serve children and young people through sport and the gospel. There were many girls, so I got involved in order to help them through Bible study.

I am a leader in the worship ministry in the church. Here I have opportunity not only to young girls how to sing, but also to help them to deal with life issues. Maria, who grew up without a mother or father, was one of the girls I encouraged to be a good Christian and a good woman. I challenged her to be faithful to the Lord and to the man who would be her husband. God blessed her, and she recently got married to a young Christian man.

I have also been a part of women's ministry. Most of the women have children, so while it is hard for them to make time for it, we have encouraged them to come to our Saturday morning Bible study. I challenged them to leave their children with their husbands and set aside two hours every week for fellowship. Some of the husbands said that they could not stay with their children during that time. However, since I invited the women to come, this challenged the fathers to take responsibility for those two hours. Maricica has three children, and coming to women's fellowship was a big challenge for her. I called and encouraged her, and after the first meeting, she understood how important it was for her to come to the Bible study and fellowship.

This year we decided that every three months all the women from our church, young and old, would meet. Every woman from the church invited a friend, and at the end we had the message of redemption which the Father has given us

through His Son. The women were so content that at the end they wanted to stay longer. I am so glad to see young and old women together and am grateful for the opportunity to serve them.

OLGA CIORNA: MOLDOVA

Olga is the wife of Gelu Ciorna, a pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church in Cahul, Moldova. They have four children: Robert, Filip, George, and Victoria.

I am blessed to support my husband in the youth ministry. Our target is high school and college students. Besides my family duties, I believe my first priority is to pray for the people we serve. Raising my children takes a lot of time—Robert, the oldest, is in school; Filip goes to pre-school; and the two youngest are home with me.

I meet weekly with a fifteen-year-old girl for discipleship to study the Bible together in my home. I have known her since she was a young child, as she was one of the girls in my kids' group at church. It was there that she received Christ, and now I help show her how to grow in faith and apply her beliefs in daily life. It is a special time because I can help her in different aspects of her life. Her biggest struggle is fear, and this is where we have been focusing our prayer and working to overcome. It is amazing how God works, touching different aspects of her life. I am glad that she humbly accepts teaching for godly change.

Then there is Victor, a student who first came to our ministry four years ago. He had come to our summer camp, where he heard the gospel, and God started to work in his life. My husband and I have been praying for him, and it seems that now God has touched his heart deeply. We are glad to see the spe-

cial work God is doing in his life. We invited him into our home and had a blessed time of fellowship. Now, after years when we have been discouraged because we have invested so much in this ministry with the youth with little effect, we are so thankful to God that He brings fruit in His time. One of the biggest changes in Victor's life is that he started to read the Bible and he is keen to share what God is speaking to him. It was amazing to hear at our last visit with him in our home that now his struggle is how to share the gospel with his family!

Since I cannot spend as much time at the church as my husband does, I help him by keeping in touch with girls from our youth group. Some of the girls no longer live nearby, as they are now in different towns for studies. At college they are facing different challenges, and social networking is a perfect way for me to keep in touch with them. I continue to pray with Tania and Maricica, two girls who are now strong in their faith.

Speaking about my family, I can say that God has allowed in our life both struggles and blessings. We have faced many difficulties with our third child, George, who was born premature (at five months). Even though there have been emotional and physical burdens, God has blessed us richly. I can recognize that God has changed me—the way I see Him—through this more than anything else in all my life. Maybe I can better understand what Job said in his prayer: "I have heard of You

by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5). I saw what God can do; I saw His mighty power. The lesson I learned was to submit to Him and trust Him in all His words. I can say that I appreciate and love His Word more than I did before. George had many problems when he was in the incubator. For three months, I could not cuddle him because he had a heart problem and he could not breathe. At that time, I was asking God when I would be able to cuddle with my baby and enjoy spending time with him. His answer to me was that in the same way He is waiting to enjoy us. Many times we sin, and He can't enjoy us, and we are hurting Him—but He waits for us. I promised to my God that I would fight sin and fight to bring Him joy. It was hard, but I

am grateful for His work in me. Now we are grateful to see how George is recovering and growing.

Also, we are thankful to God for our fourth child—our little girl He gave us. I can see that God used her to heal me. I could not imagine how it would be possible to have another baby. We did not plan for it, but I see how His power is enough for me in all my weaknesses.

We try to share truth with our children in many ways. I enjoy seeing how God is working in their hearts. A few times the teacher from Robert's school has told us that the Christian education he is receiving is obvious because of his behavior. We are praying and expecting God to do great things through our children and through all of those He has given us to care and pray for.

STELLA MAKUMBA: ZAMBIA

Stella is the wife of Marshal Kasongo, a church planter in Chipulukusu in Ndola, Zambia.

I was raised in a Pentecostal church, so my past understanding of conversion was based on speaking in tongues. At that time, when anyone showed this ability, I was certain that that person was saved; but these were false assumptions about what it means to be conformed to Christ. I lived like that, believing it was normal for people to possess that "gift." Now, ever since I became reformed in my theology, my understanding has changed for the better. I began to think more clearly about the regenerate and the unregenerate. I began to see that the real gate of salvation comes by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8)—people being changed by the Word of God, not by what they feel. It took a long time for me to see true conversion, but once this understanding comes, it is a lifelong transformation and worthy of praise.

I have since seen true manifestations of conversion and gifting. One example is Mrs. Mercy Kalunba. She had no love for the church but was coming anyway as an obligation. Now she comes with the sense of belonging to Christ and being under His lordship! Also, I have witnessed the Lord touching one of my husband's sisters, Mrs. Sophia Chanda. She was previously attending a local traditional church in our area, but now she has been saved, and her family is responding to the gospel eagerly. In her early days at our church, she confessed to me that she had never heard the Word of God as she does now, even though she spent many years in church. She is wonderfully converted and is now a member of our church.

"I WILL GIVE THANKS TO YOU, O LORD, MY GOD"

GLADYS QUISPE JIMENES: PERU

Gladys is the wife of Arturo Marin, who pastors a Baptist church in San Martin, Peru.

I was born in the city of Lima, Peru, and I was converted to Christ when I was a young girl. I met Arturo in the Baptist Church of Chorrillos. Being two very incompatible people, it is quite impressive how the Lord joined us together in marriage and then called us to missionary work. It was also impressive how the Lord providentially prepared us for the work of missions during the time that Arturo was put in the Lurigancho prison (due to his documents being stolen and used by terrorists and drug dealers to falsify their own identities), the most dangerous prison in Peru.

The Lord used Brother Paul Washer for our call to missionary work, when he preached at Christ Is the Way Church in Lima. That night, Arturo spoke with Paul about his desire to be a missionary, and they prayed together.

When we first moved to the jungle, we saw such a great need for the preaching of the gospel. The people are engulfed in religious traditions and idolatrous festivals. The only churches in the villages were preaching a false gospel, and the pastors of those churches had all fallen into sin, such as adultery and stealing funds from the church. When the people saw us, they said,

"These two won't be any different from all the others!"

We began in a small village called La Libertad and then moved to San Rafael. It hurts my heart to think of all the time we worked without seeing any genuine conversions. We learned a lot about how to share the gospel during that time. After Arturo went to a HeartCry conference in Lima in 2007 with the theme of "The True Gospel," we realized that much of how we were doing evangelism was not right.

The culture of these villages is highly religious. Pagan festivals dominate the towns, bringing with them a lot of immorality. In general, people are reluctant to hear the preaching of the gospel. However, in the church there are many who have been genuinely converted and are bearing fruit.

One of the biggest challenges that my husband and I have faced is his family. He was born and raised in the jungle, and his family members who live around us hate him, saying that he has forsaken the religion of his ancestors. However, thanks be to God, Arturo's father has been converted, and his mother is also attending our church services, along with his sister and her daughters. Another group of his family members asked him to come and preach the Word to them. On May 24th of this year, ten members of his extended family came to our church

service! After years of preaching the gospel, the Lord is using the things they have heard to affect their hearts, which are so dominated by idolatry.

Personally, I can say that God is using my own sicknesses to mold my character and to teach me more about Himself. I have recently had three different operations, and there are still three others that I need to have. In each of the operations that I have already had, I can see the Lord's faithfulness, love, and grace; and I can also see His provision through HeartCry and other brothers and sisters. As a native of Lima (which is in a desert), the climate of the jungle is very hard for me. My body feels this, but with joy I bear it, because I feel privileged to serve the Lord through all the difficulties of life in the jungle. In Romans 8:28 it says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

One of my operations in the jungle went very poorly and nearly killed me, but even then I saw the hand of the Lord. When I was sent to Lima, I met Dr. Max Castillo, a brother in Christ and a servant. He looked for help for my situation and found another doctor named Valeria. Now, because of that encounter, a group of doctors comes

regularly to the jungles to do medical and evangelistic campaigns in the towns of Panamá, San Rafael, and La Libertad. It is incredible how the Lord uses sickness to bring us blessings! The most important thing in all of this is that we have come to know God more through it, and we are able to serve him better as a family. The trials that we have gone through have drawn us together as a family in a very special and unique way.

I am thankful to the Lord for my marriage. It is a gift from God! My two precious sons (Paul and David) are also gifts from God. For many years we did not have a house of our own, and we were living in the church building. But through a government program in Peru, we were able to build a house for our family. It is not a luxurious house, but it is sufficient for us as a family. I am excited about and grateful for all that the Lord has done for us as a family.

Thank you for your prayers, and thank you for your work on our behalf. On behalf of my family, I send our most sincere gratitude to all those who faithfully support us. May the Lord bless you greatly!

Your sister in Christ,
Gladys Rosa Quispe Jimenez

LENA RUSNAC: UKRAINE

Lena is the wife of Vitalii Rusnac, a church planter in Cernauti, Ukraine.

I am very thankful to God because, by His mercy, He has blessed me with the greatest blessing of all: the call to live together with Him—looking only to Him and serving only Him. By His grace, I was born into a Christian family. I attended Sunday school from when I was little, and I had the

opportunity to hear about Christ often. As I went to school, I decided to study the piano; and then I continued to pursue music training, specializing in directing a choir. Consequently, I became quite involved in our church, serving with the music ministry.

After getting married in 2005, I continued to serve with music, together with my husband. I praise God for the opportunity to serve Him



CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY

together with my husband. I pray for my husband, and I stand beside him every time it is necessary.

When we started to serve in Pa-trauti, I was involved in children's and youth ministries. God gave me the grace to see teenagers and youth, such as Mariana Crasnean, being transformed by the Word. I continue to encourage this young woman to serve the Lord. She is now being trained to become an effective Sunday school teacher. She is in charge of a considerable part of the children's ministry. Seeing all this, I can only praise God for continually transforming people into His likeness! The youth that I have been working with have become servants of the Lord themselves, and they try to spread the gospel to other young people.

There is another experience that I have been going through—a rather painful one, but one that has drawn me closer to God. In 2013, we were expecting our fourth child; everything seemed to be going well, but when the baby was twenty weeks old, he died. Then, after two weeks, I gave birth to my stillborn child. The doctors could not give us an explanation.

**In the beginning,
it was extremely difficult.
But God healed my heart;
and even though we had
no clear answers,
we knew that God
was with us.**

Even now, we continue to trust Him and His wisdom. Our three children are a joy and a comfort for us. I give thanks to God for them every day, and I pray for their protection. They all go to school, and they study music as well. I am very glad that they like to praise the Lord.

My ministry continues to focus on music and working with children. God has worked and continues to do so. The youth with whom I have been working have become servants of the Lord themselves, and they try to spread the gospel to other persons of their age.

THE WONDER OF SALVATION

While these ladies are not “new” believers, we should never lose the wonder that even those who have been in the faith the longest have been wonderfully made new in Christ Jesus. The following are the accounts of some missionaries’ wives’ conversions to Christ.

HANH*: VIETNAM

Hanh is the wife of Danh, a pastor in Vietnam.*

I was born into a family that followed natural worship. There were numerous gods in which my grandparents and my parents believed. Whenever we had problems—for example, when one member in my family had a disease—my parents would offer sacrifices and beg those gods to save the life of the family member. Seeing my parents practice these things, I imitated them and believed these gods could save me too—even though I did not understand who they were.

Thanks be to God, He saved me by His grace from being a sinner who lived under the devil’s power to being His child and having a bright life. God caused me to meet a man who grew up in a Christian family. He and his family began to testify to me of the gospel of God and Jesus Christ. Afterwards, I confessed my sins to God and asked Him to save my soul. At that time, I became a Christian and have lived as one ever since. That man who witnessed to me is now my husband.

To follow Jesus Christ is not an easy way. Many things have surfaced with my family since I became a Christian. My parents strongly opposed my conversion. They said all of my relatives would be persecuted because of me; therefore,

they threatened me and told me to give up that “American religion.” At the same time, my husband would usually have to attend the People’s Committee and go to the police station to make reports, updating them of our recent activities. Sometimes I would think that I could not put up with these things anymore.

But thanks be to God, these are stories of the old days. God has taken all of our burdens away! My parents’ family has actually begun to appreciate me following Christ—they respect what my husband and I are doing. By God’s grace, I testified of the gospel to my brothers and sisters. Two of them confessed their sins to God and have become Christians! I am so grateful to God! He has also made the authorities more understanding, and they let us do our ministry more freely. I am now an assistant who helps my husband in the church. My husband and I are always trying to do our best to become good servants of God, good examples to the church, and godly parents to our children. As His grace on my family is so great, it is my honor to serve Him.

BAO*: CHINA

Bao is the wife of Jian, a church planter in China.*

I was brought to Christianity through the influence of my mother. This was how the Lord chose to save me, and it was completely the grace of God for me to become His child. My mother heard the gospel through her sister, before I was born. During that time, she had anemia and was seriously ill. In the beginning, she believed in the Lord because she wanted to be healed of her own sickness. After a few years (when I was still young), she had a serious relapse. But before she went to the hospital, she prayed and was miraculously healed. Since then, there have been no more relapses.

Forty days after I was born, I had a red spot on my neck. In the beginning, my parents were not concerned. Before long, however, my whole body was covered with red spots, which then developed into blisters. After the boils erupted, the fluid caused unbearable irritations and pain. I suffered this sickness for twelve years without cure, even though we sought medical help everywhere—including countless hospital visits. We spent a lot of money, and I took many different medicines, but with no result. I was miserable and hopeless. My mother even prayed that the Lord would take my life if need be, as she could not bear to watch my suffering.

During these twelve years, I followed my mother to all the preaching services and prayer meetings in the church. Even though I never had a good night sleep due to the irritation and pain, I awoke every morning at four or five o'clock to follow my mom to all the morning prayer meetings in the church. My mother also took me to all kinds of healing services, but I was never cured.

As I grew, my impatience with the Lord also grew, and my heart kept

asking why the Lord did not heal me and take my pain away. Although I had complaints in my heart, I still followed my mom to all the church services. My mom and I were sure God was able to heal me.

I slowly grew in the knowledge of the Lord, knowing that Jesus is the only true God, who died for my sins on the cross and was raised on the third day. I knew trusting the Lord Jesus Christ was the way to heaven. I believed He was the omnipotent God who could heal my sickness. To be completely honest, I do not know when exactly I repented of my sins and began to develop a meaningful relationship with Him. However, I never doubted my faith ever, and I am convinced that I am a child of God.

When I was twelve, my mom was desperately praying for my sickness, and a name of a village kept appearing in her mind, although she had never heard of it before. Wanting to understand, she fasted for thirty days (taking only one meal a day). One day she heard of the place (called “Gaowan”) from a food seller who was from that village. He told my mom that, indeed, there was a doctor there who was well-known to cure skin disease. My mom immediately took me there, and the doctor prescribed me some medicine for me and told me that I would need to take it for about forty-five days. In addition, he told me that there was no guarantee that I would be cured. However, my mom was confident that it was the Lord who brought us there and that I would be healed. We returned home; and, after the first time I took the medicine, my itch stopped. After taking the medicine a second time, all the red spots were gone. Miraculously, I was completely cured after another six days! I believed firmly that it was the Lord who cured my sickness. Since then—more than twenty years ago—I have had no relapse.

I am very thankful to the Lord for healing me, especially because the healing took place when I was old enough to remember the grace

of the Lord and not before. I will not forget the grace of the Lord; I have given my life to Him to serve and follow Him.

DANA SERBAN: ROMANIA

Dana is the wife of George Serban, a church planter in Stoenesti, Romania.

I was born and raised in a family of nominal Orthodox Christians. However, I had no idea who God was, and I had hardly even heard about God. This was because my father was an alcoholic and violent and did not want us to have anything to do with church. So, I never went to church. When I was eleven, my mother decided to divorce my father. There were six of us children, and because we were under the age of eighteen, we were left in our mother's care. We started to attend an Evangelical church in our neighborhood; it was there that my mother became a follower of Jesus Christ.

I wanted to follow Jesus also, so I prayed to receive Him in my heart; however, I was not truly converted until I was eighteen years old. I understood then that I could not live a double life and serve two masters. I gave my life to Christ to follow Him with all my heart; my happiness would be in God and fulfilling His

will in choosing my way in life—even who my husband would be. It was not an easy road. I had disappointments, struggles, failures, and weaknesses; but Jesus Christ was always there beside me—helping me to go further and to grow spiritually and to know Him increasingly more.

I am extremely happy and I thank God that He had mercy on me and was patient with me in making me His child.

I understand that it is a tremendous privilege to be God's child and that it is not because of me, but because of His endless grace and goodness.

My desire is to grow more spiritually, to be more like Him, and to serve my husband and children, so that my children might grow up with the fear of God and that I would be a good example to them.

NICOLA RAMIREZ: JAPAN

Nicola is originally from England and is the wife of Luis Ramirez, a Peruvian church planter in Tokyo, Japan.

The Lord saved me when I was studying at university. There I had made Christian friends for the first time, and they took me to church, where I heard the gospel. I had considered myself a Christian beforehand, as I occasionally read my Bible, but

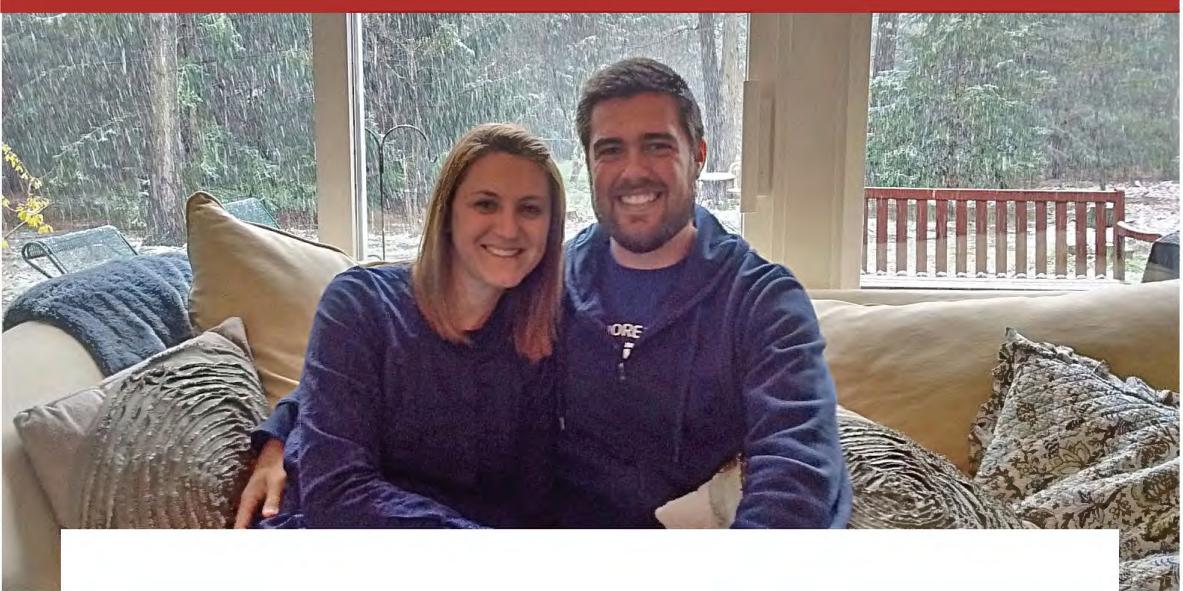
when I heard about my sinful condition and how I stood before God, I finally understood my need to repent and ask His forgiveness.

I spent a couple of years serving at my church, but my knowledge of God was paper thin. I knew that I needed to get to know God through His Word and rehash my worldview, so that it was based on the Bible. The idea of meeting and spending time with Christians who are a tiny minor-

ity in their culture had always held a fascination for me; so upon finishing my degree and before continuing on in to my Masters' in International Affairs, I decided to spend three months in Japan studying the Bible at a mission school.

It was during this difficult but fruitful time that I came to a two-fold conclusion: (1) that I needed to seek a life of holiness for the Lord in obeying His commandments; and (2) that I had to this point set up my life on my own plans, seeking to influence the world through international diplomacy without ever considering what God's will was. After many tears

and many prayers of repentance, I began to understand more fully the power of the gospel message and God's will for His children to preach and teach it. God had brought me to a country where so few know that there is only one God and many have never even heard the name of Jesus. Here, together with my new husband, who had come to Japan as a missionary, I could be God's ambassador, sharing a message of salvation that brings eternal life and reconciliation through God's Son.



ELIANE RAMOS: BRAZIL

Eliane is the wife of Igor Dias Ramos, an evangelist and teacher in São José dos Campos, Brazil.

I lived twenty-one years of my life lost in the darkness of Catholicism, but I got to the point where I could no longer live like that. I lived a sad life and looked for satisfaction in friendships, college, and boyfriends until one day I came to the altar of a cathedral. Looking up, I fixed my eyes on the image of what I had been told was Jesus, and I said: "I know that you exist!

Do something for me! Change my life; I can't live like this anymore! I feel alone and sad, and I know that there is a God, but I don't know Him! Please, help me!"

At the time, I worked as a teacher in a daycare where the owner was a spiritist. I felt so bad at this job that I asked the Lord to provide a different one. I had hardly any money to go to college, but somehow I was able to enroll to follow a career in Business Administration. However, upon enrolling, I began to make bad choices in friendships, and I started

to do many things that I never imagined I would do, because I had been raised to know better.

Years passed by, and I realized things were continually getting worse. Terror came to me as I understood that I was on my way to hell and that I was not the “good girl” my mother had raised—until the day my sister-in-law (the wife of my older brother) invited me to a Pentecostal church (which are very common in Brazil). She invited me because she saw the fears I had. As soon as I entered, the “pastor” that was ministering said that Jesus loved me and had a marvelous plan for my life; I began to cry and supposed I was converted. But it was only morality and legalism that entered my life. While in that church, I sadly did not receive biblical teaching, and I believed one could lose his salvation. I was a slave to my morality and did not rest in the blessed work of Jesus Christ for me!

After three years, I met Igor (my future husband), a member of this congregation. He was a soccer player and therefore traveled often, and I almost never saw him in church services. Later, he went to live in Spain, and when he returned on vacation in 2006, we became friends. We began to talk about missions (the little I knew about the topic), and it ended up that we fell in love and got married only four months later! After eight months of being married, we went to live in Spain, because that was where my husband’s soccer club was located.

In 2009, the Lord reached me through a sermon on the internet! We were living in very turbulent times, and I did not even feel like living anymore. It was then that I cried out to the Lord, and I realized that I was not saved and that I could not be good, for there was nothing good in me. I prayed for long hours and felt like God did not hear me. I got on the internet, and typed in the word “preaching” on YouTube, and a sermon of Brother Paul Washer’s about Matthew 7:13-29 appeared. It was marvelous! For the first time, I un-

derstood the gospel, salvation, and grace—and how I had been deceived by false teachers. Truly, the Lord showed me then and there what His gospel is—the best news of my life, that on the cross Jesus Christ paid for all my sins and rebellions against a holy, merciful, and just God! God caused me to be born again; therefore, He gave me each day a greater desire to read the Scriptures and understand them. Later, after much praying, the Lord confirmed the call for us to be missionaries.

We decided to study at a seminary in Peru in 2010. In Peru, I began to read books about biblical femininity. God had begun to answer my doubts in relation to my role as a woman, wife, sister, and daughter of God through the radio program of Nancy Leigh DeMoss. Since then, I continue reading her books, which have been a great blessing in my life.

In the midst of the struggles and tests, God sustained us under His wings. Now we are in Brazil in order for my husband to finish his theological studies and to continue serving the church. I will share with you all one of the verses that encourages me most; it is in the letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians: “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (1:6).

My life is being transformed by the Word of God, through discipleship with my husband, through the church services, and through the ministry of Revive Our Hearts. Revive Our Hearts has helped me to understand the call that I have as a woman, as a daughter of God, as a wife, as a friend, and as a wife to a servant of God. It is supporting me in my devotional life. Ever since I began to scrutinize my heart more, I have felt the great need to know and love God more in a very intentional way! It is marvelous to be able to hear every day about sisters who intentionally love God and to seek Him! That encourages me to combat my sins and seek the will of the

Lord. It touches me that I am not alone in this fight.

The Lord has brought different sisters near me whose need is the same—sisters who disciple one another, counsel, share their devotional lives, love, and mainly help one another to understand the gospel better and to see their blind spots which deceive them. This deception many times goes together with not understanding the biblical design of God for the woman—her true femininity. All of that is dealt with through the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus! It has been two years since I have returned to Brazil, but I have not found many women who practice what Titus 2:3-5 teaches us: “Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

I am very content with my life here with my husband. Since we arrived, we have been getting to know many churches through mission trips, and always the pastors’ wives come close to me and ask me what they could study with the women of their church. I automatically tell them that there are some books of Nancy’s in Portuguese and that the book *True Woman 101* was to be released about her true divine feminine design. Something tremendous is happening. In at least four different states, more than a hundred women are studying it; and the number of emails asking me how to receive more teaching is growing every day! Matthew 9:37-38 had impacted me to write the sister Laura

Gonzalez, Director of Revive Our Hearts in Spanish, to ask them to translate the teachings. Also, the doors are opening to publish more of Nancy’s books, like *Seeking Him* (there is much interest from an editor). I am also dreaming of doing a radio program. My pastor is willing to help, and there are brethren who have volunteered to help with the construction of the web page, and others can help with conferences. There are more than five churches involved; I have study groups three times a week in my house with sisters from four churches! I am only obeying the call to proclaim the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and serve my beloved sisters.

In regards to my family relationships, ever since I understood my role as a wife, everything has changed. There is a revival in my home! There is tremendous satisfaction in serving God, my husband, my house, and then the church. Everything is in order now! Every day we fight in order to comprehend the beauty of

Christ and His love for His church, His rebellious bride! My greatest desires are those that God has for me—a simple life, full of joy to glorify Him! We do not have children yet, but we are in line for adopting. This preparation is helping us more to understand His love. We also work with children in extreme poverty; I am teaching them their alphabet twice a week.

**I have given little
in comparison to all
I have received from
Christ; to Him be
all the glory!**



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

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



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