

HeartCry

MAGAZINE

AMMAI

MOTHER & MISSIONARY

LEARNING FROM THE STORY OF AMY CARMICHAEL

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

UPDATES FROM

INDIA, ARMENIA, ROMANIA, GERMANY, UGANDA, AND ZAMBIA

"LIFE AS A VAPOR"

BY PAUL WASHER

A NOTE OF THANKS

I wanted to write a quick note of thanks to all of you who read the *HeartCry Magazine*. It has been my privilege to edit the magazine for several years now, and my role with it has expanded in the last year or so. It's amazing to me personally to know there are so many of you reading the articles and (I trust) being moved both to prayer and to greater faith. It's also a real motivation for me to be diligent in this work so that we can communicate the wondrous works that God is doing around the world. Our hope is that each issue will serve as 1) a catalyst for prayer, benefiting the indigenous churches and peoples through the petitions of the saints; 2) a channel of encouragement, leading the readers to a higher view of God and a greater love for Him and trust in Him; and 3) a means of increase of the glory of God through the proclamation of His works and of His enduring goodness.

So, again, thank you. We are always excited to share stories of God's unrivaled grace with all who are willing to hear!

In His love,
Forrest Hite (General Editor)

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GREETINGS

At HeartCry, we must constantly look two ways. We must look to the fields that are white unto harvest, and we must look to the churches and individual believers who make this ministry possible. To those in the fields we must proclaim the works of God, especially the work of redemption that He has accomplished through the death and resurrection of His Son. To those churches and believers back home, we must proclaim the great works that God continues to perform through His missionaries and those who support them financially and with prayer.

For the HeartCry staff, every magazine is something of a bitter-sweet affair. We rejoice in the articles and missionary reports that we publish, but we are always saddened by the fact that there is far more to tell than what these pages can contain. The nature of God cannot be fathomed, and that which can be understood cannot be fully expressed. The same may be said of God's works. As Eliphaz declared to Job, "He does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number" (Job 5:9).

We know that God's works are not confined to HeartCry. He is working through countless churches, ministries, and individual believers throughout the world. If the works of God through one small ministry like HeartCry cannot be counted, how great are all the works of God combined! Such a thought should fill us with joy and cause us to cry out with the psalmist, "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:3).

We are compelled to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations. Yet this passion is matched by our

desire to make known to you the greatness of God's works among the nations. Our goal is threefold.

First, we hope that you might be strengthened in your faith and in your resolve to make the Lord God your refuge (Psalm 73:28). In light of His works, do you have any reason to doubt Him? Is there anything impossible or too difficult for Him? Jeremiah cried out, "Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You."

Second, we hope that you might continually offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise to Him who does such marvelous works of grace among the peoples. If God had allowed every sinner to perish in his sin, He would still be worthy of praise. But He has given His Son to save "a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Revelation 7:9). How can we respond except with thanksgiving and praise! As the psalmist declared, "Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness" (Psalm 150:2).

Finally, we hope that you might tell of His wonderful works to others. The psalmist declared, "We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4). Standing before the Sanhedrin, Peter and John declared, "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). May this ever be our attitude.

Your brother,
Paul Washer



TRUE MOTHER

AMMAI

MOTHER AND MISSIONARY

BY JEFF S.

We had begun our travels early in the morning across the Indian highways. From Madurai, the journey was not particularly long, and the scenery was pleasant to the senses. Our journey was marked with rice fields, small villages, and greenery as far as the eye could see. The mountains stood in the distance, towering above the plains. It seemed as if we were chasing them, yet never drawing close enough to satisfy my curiosity. Taking a right turn down a narrowing road, we were soon “off the beaten path.” We were getting close to our destination.

I was excited. This was a place that I have longed to visit for some

“Those who knew her well called her ‘Ammai,’ which means ‘true mother.’ History knows her as Amy Carmichael.”

time. I had seen pictures of it, and I had read books about it, but now I was finally here: Dohnavur. But the place itself is not what drew my interest; rather, it was the person who once labored here. This was the place that the Lord had planted

one of His choicest of servants: a young lady born in Northern Ireland in 1867, who would ultimately leave the comforts of all she knew to suffer dearly, to live truly, and to lay down her life wholly for a Savior whose love constrained her to follow in His footsteps. Those who knew her well called her “Ammai,” which means “true mother.” History knows her as Amy Carmichael.

Amy gave herself to the people of India for fifty-five years without any furlough. She initially started her work among young girls, rescuing them from the legalized prostitution ring in Hindu temples, many times at the risk of her own life. By 1913, she was caring for about 130 girls; within a decade she had opened up a home for boys as well. The Lord used her to establish a school for these children and a hospital for the townspeople. She authored many books that served to encourage and challenge the church in missions.

Modern missionaries would do great benefit to their own souls and the souls of those around them if they would take heed and listen to her voice. She may have been small in stature and gentle in character, but she was immovable in her convictions. She was determined—unwilling to be sidetracked by anything and always pressing forward toward the prize. After her original plan to serve in Japan proved impossible due to health issues, those closest to Amy tried to convince her to come home. Even then, however, she would not be deterred. She wrote to her guardian (who had made such a suggestion), “Talk of coming home! Did ever a soldier, worth calling one, run away at the first shot! Praise Him—the pain is

**“She may have been
small in stature
and gentle in
character, but she
was immovable in
her convictions.”**

gone now, and I am strong for the battle again” (p.14).*

Amy also refused to deal with souls indirectly. In her day, many were adopting new missionary methods and trends in order to reach people. She viewed these practices as unbiblical and deceitful. Missionaries were promising the people something other than the gospel (such as sewing lessons, for example) in order to attract unbelievers. When the people would come for that which was offered, the missionaries would then speak of the gospel in small, subtle amounts in an attempt to teach them truth. Amy rejected such methods. She wrote, “I would rather have two who came in earnest than one hundred who came to play. We have no time to play with souls like this. It is not by ceremonial tea making and flower arranging, not by woodwork-ing and sewing learning, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord” (p.12).

This missionary strategy of introducing the Indian to a good secular education, with a hope of introducing a Christian worldview through it, was foolishness to her. Such methods could never penetrate the soul. It was only through the clear preaching of the gospel

* All referenced quotes from *Amy Carmichael: Beauty for Ashes* by Iain H. Murray

that the hearts of the Indians would change (p.32). She therefore refused to compromise the message or to deal with the souls of the people through secondary means.

However, that does not mean that she did not value education—she did, so long as it was held in its proper place. She would not attempt to use education merely to influence children toward the gospel; instead, she considered the gospel and the Scriptures to be the very foundation of all education. She believed that the purpose of the school was not primarily to train the mind but to form the character (p.54). Education was not merely a means to improve a person's social standing or a way to provide material prosperity; it was to be given so that the student could serve Christ and other people more effectively (p.55). She therefore took education very seriously.

Amy would compromise neither the gospel's message nor its method. She rejected the use of pictures in her presentation of the gospel. To show pictures of Christ was unthinkable to her. She observed that the missionaries and churches that did such things no longer believed in the power of the Word, that those who employed such tactics had to do so because they no longer had any power (p.12).

She also refused to deal with those who supported her back home in any dishonest way. She would not



fill her reports with fluff or false numbers, instead writing bluntly about the conditions she was experiencing on the field—the failures, the darkness, the foul practices of the Hindu temples, and the struggles and hardships on the field. She never wrote overly optimistic reports. In

fact, some even accused her reports to be falsified because they were so dark, while others urged her to write more encouraging reports (pp.33-34). However, because of their honesty, her reports were circulated throughout England. Upon hearing that her updates were becoming popular back home, she was shocked. She wrote, “Popular? Is that what these books written out of the heart of battle are? Popular? Lord, burn the paper to ashes if that be true” (p.35). She had not been writing in order to gain popularity or to garner the attention of men, but to call forth from the hearts of men earnest prayer.


When the work grew and some became more aware of the growing needs, many desired to come and be a part of it; still, Amy never sacrificed her principles. She would turn down teachers who desired to help if they were not rooted and grounded in the Scriptures. She said, “If our children were to grow up truthful, they must be taught by those who had a regard for truth; and not just a casual regard. On this point we are adamant” (p.53). One of the

great heartbreaks in her life was when Stephen Neill, a brilliant man from Cambridge who was proficient in Greek and Latin, came to India to serve the school. He amazingly learned the Tamil language in just six months! However, Amy soon discovered that he had accepted a new view of the Scriptures that had been sweeping through England at the time—he did not believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Thus, with great sadness, she sent him back home (pp.83-87). This man was qualified to teach in the most prestigious universities; however, because of his view of the Scriptures, he was not qualified to teach the poor children of this Indian village.

Some may read of her unwillingness to compromise in such areas and think of her as a cruel, hardened, legalistic, unloving tyrant; but that is far from the truth! She was beloved by all who knew her. She was the mother of all the children for whom she cared. She would lav-

ish the children with hugs and kisses. In fact, it was said that not one child went to sleep at night without a kiss from Amy (p.54). Love is the highest of jewels, and it was the starting point and the end goal of all she did. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5). Amy understood this and desired to teach it to all of the children. Every Monday morning, she read 1 Corinthians 13 to them, hoping that the repetition would fix these truths into the hearts and minds of each child (p.56). Her love showed. It was an example for the children to follow, for she served day and night, sometimes skipping meals due to lack of time.

Real love is sacrificial, and it is costly. The same was true for Amy’s love. It cost her dearly. It was a burden that she carried. She felt overwhelmed at times—overwhelmed by the work ahead, overwhelmed by the



School in Dohnavur

needs of the people, overwhelmed by the darkness that still covered the land, and overwhelmed by the insufficiency of her own efforts. She felt that her efforts were like “a snowflake falling on a great pyramid, melting and vanishing as it touched the hot stone.” Thus, she would have to remind herself: “Not to yield is all that matters. Failure or success as the world understands these words, it is of no eternal account. To be able to stand steady in defeat is in itself a victory” (p.78). Yes, she shed many tears, for true love in the midst of a fallen and sinful world demands that. Yet, she would measure failure and success not by visible fruit but by faithfulness. Even when her evangelistic efforts seemed to yield no response from the people—unless it were a request to be left alone—she would remind herself of the Scriptures, often quoting Isaiah 49:24-25: “‘Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?’ Surely, thus says the LORD, ‘Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, and the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; for I will contend with the one who contends with you, and I will save your sons’” (p.28). This would help her to move forward and not give up.

And it paid off. The uncompromised arrow of the Word of God, shot by the gentle hands of love and empowered by the Holy Spirit, did find its mark. In fact, one of the great joys of Amy’s life came in 1912 through the preaching of R.T. Archibald. Looking back at this time, she recorded, “A true conviction of sin, true repentance, honest confession, and a changed life that lasted. Not one child then converted

went back. Some are mothers of families now, and some are our fellow workers here.” In 1913, thirty souls were baptized (p.75). So often, even today, many boast in numbers that turn out to be temporary; few boast in such perseverance. That is not to say that Amy did not witness professed conversions that did not last—she did. Nevertheless, she refused to allow such things to hinder her love. She once said:

“Better to be disappointed a thousand times—yes, and be deceived—then once miss a chance to help a soul. The love of God suffices for any disappointment, for any defeat. And in that love is the energy of faith in the very sap of hope.” (p.79)

We would do a great benefit to our own souls if we would give heed to her voice. Thomas Walker, Amy’s mentor and friend, a missionary who was already serving in India when she first arrived, would often tell her, “Let us build for the years we shall not see” (p.23). As I stood on the campus where she labored, it was obvious that she took that advice. Although she is no longer there, her handiwork is still evident. I could see it, not just in the beautiful buildings or the Japanese-style architecture that she so appreciated, but especially in the prayers, inscriptions, Scripture verses, and tools that are still prominent throughout the campus. It seemed as if everywhere I looked, I was reminded of man’s weakness and need as well as the Lord’s sufficiency. Etched in stone above the entrance gate leading to her house were the Tamil words “grace” and “salvation.” In the prayer room in her house, reminders carved in wood hung on the walls—

“They saw no man save Jesus only” (Matt. 17:8); “They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13); and “A very present help” (Ps. 46:1)—reminding all who entered this room of the priority and

the importance of communion with the Savior.

A hymn was inscribed in the bell tower of the house of prayer, with each of the walls containing one stanza of this prayer:

*Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Fill me with life anew
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Until my heart is pure
Until with Thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Till I am wholly Thine.
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire Divine.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God;
So shall I never die
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.*

The sanctuary at that same house of prayer was elegant and impressive in design. I have seen nothing like it in all my travels throughout India. The timber frame trusses were crafted with a wood shipped down from the mountains of a neighboring State. Whether it was the flowers carved into these trusses or the specific design of the arches, each element (I was told) had a Scriptural reference that would be used to teach the children. The building was not designed merely to move the eye; it was designed to be used as a teaching tool to move the heart.

The prayer bench[†] under the shade of a tree at the entrance to “God’s garden,” the fishbowl[†] on the bookshelf in Amy’s house—everything was used as a tool for instruction or as a reminder of gospel truth.

On her porch, she had a wooden bandy (carriage) wheel[†] with Tamil words carved all over it. She would use this wheel as an illustration of how all things at Dohnavur must function in unity. At the center of the

wheel was a brass hub from which every wooden spoke sprouted, running to the outside of the wheel, where the various Tamil words were engraved. She would use this as a symbol to teach that Christ was the center of all things (the brass hub), each spoke (connected to the hub) representing the various ministries and people at Dohnavur. The outside of the wheel had visual reminders of Christ-like character needed for unity, along with the various campus needs. One thing that stood out to me was the word “laundry” (one of but a few English words). Even laundry was viewed as a ministry that needed to be rooted and grounded in Christ if the minister were to move forward in faithfulness. United in Christ, united to one another in love, and each working in unity for the advancement of His kingdom—it was a beautiful reminder instilled in the hearts of the children.

[†] Pictured on page 10



Amy once said, “Faithfulness in little things is a very great thing” (p.58). This was not just a statement she made; it was evident that this was the way she ordered her life. May we all learn from those who, like Amy, have been faithful in the little things and have run and finished the race well!

Before her death, Amy made it clear that she wanted no memorial

stone or recognition once she went home to be with her Lord. To this day, the only thing that marks her grave is a stone birdbath, inscribed with the date of her earthly departure, along with just one word—perhaps the best possible epitaph for this one who served, cared for, taught, and loved so many.

Ammal. ■







I CALLED HER “MAMA”

AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF AMY CARMICHAEL'S STUDENTS

BY JEFF S.

Nesarathina, now eighty-five years old, was one of the first graduates from the school Amy founded in Dohnavur. She was also among the first batch of students sent out to attend secular studies after graduation. Though she thought she would never come back to Dohnavur, she began serving on the campus after graduation. She was the first lady who was given charge of the campus after the departure of the foreign missionaries. She is currently still in charge of the missionary children school in Dohnavur. Others described her to me as a keen soul winner, a good counselor, a top leader, and a great friend. She is now battling breast cancer. Please pray for her.

It was a great honor to sit with her and briefly interview her within her own home (which I am told was the very first house built on the campus). The conversation went as follows:

J: How long have you been here?

N: Ever since I was a two-week old baby.

J: What year was that?

N: 1932. Now I'm 85. I knew Amy Carmichael. I called her "mama," because I thought she was my biological mother. I loved her very dearly. It was only after the age of 12, that I found out she was a missionary. But I didn't bother about it, for she was still my mother.

J: What was your fondest memory of her?

N: When I was three years old I remember climbing the steps and somebody would pick me up and put me on the bed. She would hug me and I would hug her.

When I was growing older, she asked me one day to look at the fishbowl. She asked me, "How do you look at the fishbowl?" I said, "Of course, through the glass." Then, Ammai said, "Ah, that is how your heart must be: sincere, open, transparent; no threat of insincerity and no threat of pretending. Don't tell lies. You must be open. People must see you throughout. You must be transparent. The Lord wants you to be, and people will see that Jesus Christ is in you when you are honest." Honesty was rare, and it was her desire and teaching. You know, in India now people come from different Hindu families and they don't make much of honesty. They can tell lies whenever they want. Ammai had to fight that.

We had many, many missionaries around in that generation. One day when I went to Ammai and was talking to her, her brother came. He was very distressed. One of the boys that he was looking after was very difficult and hateful. He didn't even see me or notice me, because he was so worked up. He was telling Ammai, "I can't manage this boy. I don't know what to do with this boy." Then Ammai gave him a verse, "Despair of no man" [Nesarathina motions with her hand to indicate that this was a verse written above a

doorway or on a wall]. I learned the meaning of the verse from Ammai then. Then she calmed him, soothed him, prayed with him, and then sent him off. That boy [the one who was difficult] became a pastor in North India. I have forgotten his name, but one day I told him this story, and he was very surprised.

J: How did you end up working here in Dohnavur?

N: When I finished my education in English here according to the Cambridge system, we didn't know how to understand the people who would talk Tamil outside of Dohnavur. We were only talking English. So the missionaries felt that it was time to go out to Indian boarding school, get the government exam, government qualification, and that we should work and be a witness to the Lord where we serve. Nine of us were chosen. I was the first. So we had to see Ammai every day, and finally one day Ammai called me and said, "Darling, do you really want to go out?" I said, "Yes, Ammai." "I have told you all that you need to learn, and you don't need to learn even more." I said, "Ammai, I want to go out." The two missionaries sitting there said, "Ammai, trust her to the Lord and the Lord will bring her back." I thought to myself, "No, I'm not going to come back immediately. I want to see the world." But the Lord, after my graduation, said, "Go home, and tell your friends the great things the Lord has done." So, I came here in 1960 as a staff worker. And there is no regret.

[One of the current staff members, who was present during the interview, adds that she was Nesarathina's first student. Without missing a beat, Nesarathina points at her with her tender hands and says, "Uncontrollable!" The room fills with laughter.]

Then all of the naughty girls were given to me. Twenty girls. Imagine! Any time, they would make a game. When I would sleep with my mouth open, they would

come and pour water in it. Then they would run off, because I was going to catch them.

I used to take the girls to swimming from 11-12pm. I would be in the well too. When 12 (o'clock) came and the time was up, they would not come up. Then they would push me in the well, and say, "Oh, we must go in and rescue her," and jump back in. It would take half an hour to get out of the well.

Smiles and laughter dominated our brief conversation. As we closed, Nesarathina put her hands together, bowed her head, and prayed. It was obvious that the past was now fresh on her heart as she approached the throne with heartfelt thanksgiving; thanking the Lord for the fellowship and for Ammai's love for the Savior and for the children. She thanked the Lord for His grace in the rescuing of sinners from darkness, while petitioning Him to continue His work of salvation in the hearts of the children who are currently at the orphanage. She prayed for continued sanctification for the workers, so that the believers there would continue to glorify Him. She then prayed for us, that as we travel He would meet all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. She closed by wrapping all of India in her arms and bringing the nation before the Father, desiring to see a great movement of the Lord. She prayed for revival.

Life. That is the word that I would use to describe this brief interview. Though she was weak in body, Nesarathina was fully alive in spirit. It was obvious—our Lord's fingerprints could be seen in her and in this place. Life was present in the stories of the past, in the gentleness of her voice, in the wisdom with which she spoke, and in the care of those with her. Life was present (instilled, as it were) in the very fabric of the work. Life was present in her closing prayer as she spoke with reverence, hope, and sincerity. She was Ammai's fishbowl: honest and transparent. Though Amy was no longer physically present, it was obvious—listening to Nesarathina's stories, seeing the joy written on her face, watching her interact with others, and hearing of the hope that lies ahead—that the Lord was still present through this simple, faithful, and loving servant called Ammai. ■

REASON FOR GRATITUDE

INDIA

PASTOR YESUDAS FULLY SUPPORTED BY LOCAL CHURCH

BY SAMUEL B.

Nearly six years ago, Yesudas started coming to attend the monthly Bible classes that we conduct for village pastors. He found these classes to be spiritually profitable. At the time, he did not ask for any financial support; he was coming to learn systematic theology, biblical theology, sermon preparation (preaching), and ecclesiology. HeartCry approached me to see if there were any eligible candidates that needed support, so I introduced Yesudas to HeartCry to be supported financially. After five years of continuous support, we are pleased to inform you that Yesudas will now be supported fully by his own church. His church has grown and now has around one hundred people attending; thus, they are able and glad to take over their pastor's support.

Yesudas has been ministering in his village for the last twelve

years. Before he came to minister in this church, he went to Telugu Baptist Theological Seminary. Although he learned many theological truths there, it was only after he got in touch with us that he came to realize the importance of the local church and the necessity of preparation before preaching the Word. Various HeartCry conferences helped him to understand what it means to pastor a church. Our emphasis on the gospel and the local church completely changed his thought process. He now realizes that preaching has to be orderly, expository, and Christ-Centered.

Although the church is now very happy to support him financially, it is still in the process of becoming a healthy church. Not all who attend the church are converted, so please pray for genuine conversions. Also pray that the church may grow according to the Word of God and that

they may have an increasing desire to do everything according to the Word. Please pray that the church may grow in other areas as well, like church membership and discipline. In addition, apart from a few men, most of the people that come to the church are women. Part of the challenge in his ministry is that most of the men in his village think that “religion is a woman’s thing” (a common misconception in Indian villages). They are very happy to let their wives go to church, but they themselves do not see the need to be born again and become Christians. Please pray that the women who are converted will have a positive influence on their husbands and that they may win them to Christ through their Christ-like behavior (1 Peter 3:1). There are

a few men in the church, and Yesudas is hoping to train them. Pray the Lord will raise up elders and deacons among them.

Please pray that this church may be faithful in sharing the gospel and the hope they have in Christ Jesus. Yesudas is hoping to continue his fellowship with us by continuing to attend the Bible classes every month. He desires to continue to learn and grow as a shepherd and also to see his church grow both spiritually and numerically. We have promised Yesudas that we would give him all the resources (new books) we have to help him grow in the future. Yesudas and his wife have a daughter who was married last year. Please continue to pray for his family. ■





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ARMENIAN

BOOK DISTRIBUTION

BY FORREST HITE

In partnership with Lahairoi Publishing House, HeartCry recently had the privilege of funding the translation and publication of the workbook *Knowing the Living God* by Paul Washer into the Armenian language. The books were then distributed to pastors, missionaries, and other Christian leaders throughout Armenia. It is only through the generous support of men and women across the globe that we are able to facilitate projects such as this. We are so grateful to God, both for the role He has allowed us to play in the furtherance of His gospel and for the people whose prayerful and financial support He uses to aid us each and every day.

Once a part of the former Soviet Union, Armenia is a nation located in the Caucasus Mountains of West Asia. Though Armenia's population is only about three million, the number of Armenian-speaking people worldwide is more than double this number. This includes significant Armenian communities in Iran, Turkey, Russia, France, and the United States—about 170,000 people

living in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles, California, speak Armenian as their first language. While we do not currently support any missionaries in Armenia, we are excited to be able to reach them by this means that the Lord has provided.

Having seen the fruit the Lord has already produced through this book, HeartCry has agreed to fund the translation and publication of *Discovering the Glorious Gospel* (a workbook in the same series) as well as *The Gospel's Power and Message*, both by Paul Washer. We are additionally looking into potential opportunities to translate other works and authors into Armenian. Please pray for this—that the Lord would grant help in the translation process, that He would grant wisdom in the selection of which resources to translate, and that He would use these resources to spread His fame and to be of great benefit to His Church. As you will read be-





low, Armenia serves as a strategic location for reaching the Middle East, so we are hopeful that the truths communicated in sound resources such as this literature ultimately leads to the furtherance of the gospel throughout Armenia and the surrounding region.

In these next couple pages are some testimonies from some of the men who received a copy of *Knowing the Living God*. We were greatly encouraged by their words and wanted to share this blessing with you, so that you may also be encouraged and be spurred to pray for them as they continue the work which the Lord has entrusted to them. ■

“Dear brothers, thank you for this great gift! The Armenian translation is wonderful; from the very first pages of this teaching, we felt the fear of the Lord. This book has really helped us to encounter God through His Word and has helped to develop our minds and strengthen our commitment to Him. We would love to have many more books and video teachings translated into Armenian. Thank you for your ministry and for providing this book to your brothers and sisters in Armenia.” – A.P.



“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to have *Knowing the Living God* in our native language. The content of this book brings nourishment to us, as it presents the pure and holy Word of God. Here we are at work among our Iranian and Kurdish brothers. This book has helped us to deepen our knowledge, to establish basic biblical teachings in a deeper and more helpful way in ministry, and to bring more order in our theology. Thank God for you, and thank you for helping us to draw closer to the triune God!” – E.I.

“Dear brothers in Christ, may our Lord bless you and strengthen you even more for this wonderful initiative. Finally, we have a book by Paul Washer in the Armenian language in our hands! Thank you, dear brothers, and may God bless you abundantly! Armenia is a nation which is commissioned to preach Christ the Lord and Savior to our neighboring Muslim nations. Books and sermons by Paul Washer will strongly establish us in biblical teachings, which will have positive influence on having productive mission work among Muslims. May God bless you and your ministry work abundantly!” – A.M.

“Dear brothers in Christ, thank our Lord for your efforts to get *Knowing the Living God* to your brothers and sisters. This is a powerful weapon for us Christians. It is impossible not to be filled with the fear of the Lord and a desire to know Him more after reading this book! When I received this work and read the names of all forty-eight chapters, I had a desire to read all of them in a day! I used this book like a hungry man; it has truly been spiritual nourishment for me. This is a book I will pass on to my children and use to train them.” – H.H.

“When I studied *Knowing the Living God*, the Bible became a greater authority for me. It is very important for us to have such study materials at hand, as we work with professed Christians who know so little about the living and true God. Through their cultures, they have dealt with different gods, and sometimes they think that we are talking about something of that kind. Through such books, we can better present who is the true and righteous God! Thank you! Especially for us missionaries, it is very important to receive spiritual nourishment through books like this.” – M.A.

“Over the last couple of years, I have grown tired of the ‘prosperity gospel’ messages. My spirit longed for something else. I wanted to know God not as so many people testified about Him or presented Him, but as the Holy Scriptures teach. Praise God for the Armenian translation of *Knowing the Living God* by Paul Washer! This book was like a school for me, explaining and revealing the living God on the basis of His Word. Thank God and my dear brothers and sisters for making this available for us!” – G.T.



BUCHAREST, ROMANIA



MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT: RUXI VANDICI

Ruxi serves as a college campus missionary in Bucharest, Romania. She is part of a team that evangelizes and disciples students from various universities in Bucharest. Her ministry involves leading evangelistic camps and conducting weekly Bible studies with Christians and seekers. Although she continues to battle poor health, the Lord sustains her in her discipleship ministry.


TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

My name is Ruxandra Vandici. I would like to share with you about my life—how I grew up, how I was saved, and how God called me to minister among the college students of Bucharest, Romania.

I was born in a Christian home. From the time that I was very little, my parents took my sisters and me to church. I grew up reading the Bible and praying, and my parents taught me about God and the gospel. From a very young age, I believed that Jesus was the Son of God and that He was the Savior of the world. Nevertheless, I had a difficult time believing that He would

forgive me of my sins, and I was very terrified of hell. During my childhood and teenage years, I always felt that the church community was my family; and God placed a love for His Word in my heart even as a young girl. I still remember many evangelistic crusades and Bible conferences that I attended with a deep hunger for the Word of God. I do not know the exact moment when I was saved, but as the years passed, the Lord brought my faith from my head down to my heart, and He brought me closer and closer to Himself.

The Lord also gave me a desire to tell others about the gospel. In high school and in college I was



always talking to my colleagues about God and the Bible. A very special moment happened when my friend Adina, who was very religious but was not interested in the true gospel, professed faith in Jesus. That was the first time that I experienced the extraordinary joy of seeing someone come to Christ! It was so encouraging for me that God would use my words to work in someone else's heart! Afterwards, I remember that Adina and I would stay for hours and hours in a coffee shop, just talking about God and the Bible. She was so hungry for the Word of God that she would read the Bible for hours and could not stop even to study for exams! It was such a tremendous joy for me to see the Lord's power and grace to bring people to Himself!

During my college years, I became involved in a Christian student ministry (OSCEB – Bucharest Evangelical Christian Student Organization); and I experienced how good it is to study the Bible, pray, and have fellowship with a group of friends. The strong emphasis in the student group was evangelism and discipleship. During that time, I understood the Great Commission and how important it is not only to tell the gospel but also to help the young believer grow in faith.

God used many people in my life to grow me spiritually. I am especially grateful to Him for the pastors who came with HeartCry to teach in Bible conferences. I saw in them such a passion for the glory of God, such a great desire to live entirely for Him and to serve others. I realized that these people knew God deeply, and the Lord used their example to stir my

heart to seek Him, to desire to see Christ's glory more clearly, and to live only for Him!

Before graduating, I was asked to join the staff of OSCEB; after praying and talking to other people it seemed that this was the Lord's will. I joined the student ministry over seven years ago, and I am very grateful for these years. The Lord used them to reveal Himself more to me and to show me His great grace and power in saving people and growing them spiritually. When I think about God's miracles of salvation, I especially think of two medical students, Alexandra and Bogdan. When I first met them, they were not interested in spiritual things. Slowly, Alexandra became interested; but Bogdan was reluctant and would not even come to a church service. I started studying the Bible with Alexandra, and not long after that Bogdan joined us. We would stay for hours and hours and talk about the Bible. After several months, the Lord saved both of them! I was so overwhelmed with joy to see their love for Christ, their deep desire to follow Him, and their witness to their families. This is what Bogdan wrote to a friend soon after they were saved:

"We've surrendered! We've asked and accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior. It began with a prayer, but this wasn't a usual prayer. It was filled with tears and feelings of guilt. It was a calling for help. For the first time, I truly saw myself as a sinner. I also realized that my sins were the cause for which Jesus died. I felt unworthy of His great Love. Therefore, I've asked Jesus to take over my life and to

make me the man that He wants me to be.

"I cannot say that something happened on the spot. In fact, nothing perceptible happened then. But step by step, a wonderful work is being done in me. I have answers to questions that I thought were very hard (maybe impossible) to answer. The Word of God has a totally new meaning. It is like reading a different book! I feel the need to worship God and to communicate with Him! I used to feel very uncomfortable in the church. I now really feel the need to be there to praise the Lord, to worship, and to sing songs for Him who saved me. Another amazing thing is that both Alexandra and I experience this new life together. It was not by our will for things to happen this way, but by God's.

"Why all of these things happened now and not earlier, I

cannot say. I can only say that He comes to those who truly seek him. Like Jesus said, 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you.' So when I came powerless and humble and fully aware of my true nature before Him, He answered and opened the door! I guess it took a while for those seeds planted in us to start growing. But I couldn't say, 'I do,' until I was sure it was coming from the depth of my soul.

"Praise the Lord for the wonderful witnesses that He sent! You are indeed His witnesses and God has blessed us so much through you! We also thank you for all your prayers. Now they have been answered! But we are infants, so please, keep praying for us!"

"To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21).

RECENT UPDATE

The highlight of this past month was the conversion of a roommate of a girl I have been discipling for the last two years. As John says in his third epistle: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (verse 4). It has been amazing to see not only their own growth in grace, but also their wonderful witness to their colleagues and friends. One of the things we try to teach our students is how to share the gospel with their colleagues. This girl started witnessing to her roommate about

two years ago. The Lord started to work in this girl's heart last summer. She began to fervently read the Bible every evening, asking about everything she did not understand. She also attended some evangelistic meetings. In the fall, she started attending an Evangelical church. Throughout this time, she had such a hunger to read the Word, and no matter how tired she was in the evening, she kept reading. She would wrestle with the Word, often not understanding it and continuing to ask lots of questions. Then, about a month ago, a sudden change

occurred in her life. She shared with much joy that she had surrendered to Christ and that she desired to be baptized! This is a very big step in our Greek Orthodox culture, where adult baptism basically amounts to joining a cult! In only several weeks her life has completely transformed. She used to be very resentful against her parents, talking to them only twice a year, but now she is seeking to restore her relationship with them! When she understood that God forbids fornication, she felt deep sorrow for having sinned in this way. Then she erased all her pictures with immodest dress. Meanwhile, their other non-Christian roommate was watching her; she was so amazed by this incredible change and overflowing joy that she also started reading the Bible, hoping she would experience the same change in her life! I just love when non-Christians realize that there is a connection between our lives and the Bible we read! I praise the Lord for the miracle of the new birth in this girl, and I rejoice greatly to see another soul saved by Christ!

This past month I met several times with a non-Christian young woman with whom I have been sharing. The Lord gave me a wonderful opportunity to explain the gospel to her once again. She seems to seek the Lord, but she does not understand that salvation is only through Christ. She still believes she somehow needs to prepare herself by growing in spiritual things in order to be able to have this faith. I have been trying to explain to her what simple trust in Christ and His sacrifice in our place means. She always listens very carefully, and I am encouraged by any sign of seeking after God, like praying and reading the Bible. This friend has a baby, and she was very interested to hear an older believer's perspective on raising children wisely; so I visited her with an older lady who shared about parenting. I was surprised to see how well my non-Christian friend received the advice from Proverbs, especially about the need of child discipline, when even many Christians lately refuse to discipline their children! They will continue to meet to talk



Evangelistic Ski Camp

about parenting; I pray that the Lord would use all this to work in her heart and bring her to Himself!

As I have shared before, we recently have been facing terrible heresies which are slowly creeping in. Many of the young people, especially those who are not well grounded in the Scriptures, are very vulnerable to this avalanche of false teachings. The "Oneness" heresy denies the Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Recently I talked to a girl who listened to their arguments and became confused over the doctrine of the Trinity, particu-

larly whether the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person. I read with her through John 14, John 16, and other passages. The Bible warned us this would happen, but it is still shocking for me. May the Lord help us watch over ourselves and give us pastors and teachers who will faithfully and lovingly watch over their flock (Acts 20:28-30).

We thank the Lord for about twenty-five unbelievers who came to our evangelistic ski camp in the winter! Please pray for the Lord's gracious work in their hearts to lead them to repentance and faith in Jesus. ■

FRANKFURT, GERMANY

MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT: PETER SCHILD

Peter has planted a church in the city of Frankfurt, Germany. Throughout the week, he is teaching, preaching, counseling, and evangelizing in the streets. Peter is married to Priscilla; they have three children.

TESTIMONY OF CONVERSION

His testimony was written to give glory to Christ alone. It is not about me but about the sovereign grace of the Lord. He shares His glory with no one else (Isaiah 42:8), so we do not proclaim ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord (2 Corinthians 4:5).

According to God's providence, I was born in Germany in 1985 (Acts 17:26). I experienced a godless and thus sorrowful childhood (Psalm

32:10). I grew up in an atmosphere of complete neglect, in a house where all rooms, including my own, were trashed with piles of rubbish. My mother left me when I was about nine years old and fled from Germany. My father was rarely ever at home, as he worked as a truck driver; so it was not until several days later that I was found all alone. I was sent to various psychologists, but none of them could help me. I had already seen and experienced

too much—there was nobody who could heal my deep wounds.

My life did not get better—quite the contrary! My stepmother was a strong alcoholic, and my life reached newer lows. Having no rules and no purpose in my life, I also started drinking and doing other things in an attempt to daze myself from reality. Rage was burning like a fire inside of me, and those around me had to suffer from it. I became a criminal—while still a child I carried weapons. I stole things, rioted, and got involved in fights. At school, I humiliated and threatened my fellow students on a daily basis. I hated my life and the people around me; and I hated God. I thought that if He existed, He must also hate me and must have cursed me.

At the age of 16, I lost all desire to carry on with life. I decided to commit suicide; but my destructive plans never came to fruition. One night, I visited a Filipino friend whose parents were Christians. At his house, I found a tract about Jesus Christ and His work of salvation on the cross. I did not know the gospel, and my friend did not consider the message of Christ important enough to believe it with all of his heart or to share it with others. Except for the fact that God was directing things according to His providence, I cannot explain why I took the tract with me and read it when I got back home.

In His incomprehensible love and grace, it pleased the Lord to do a great work in me, an enemy of God worthy of damnation,



Don Currin and Peter Schild near Heidelberg Castle (distant left).

by opening my eyes to Him who can save the greatest of sinners. Through the Word of God, the Spirit of God noticeably convicted me of my great sin, and I saw how much I needed Jesus Christ and His work of redemption on the cross. His call in that night was so real and irresistible that I had no other choice—and no other desire—than to fall to my knees and ask Him to forgive and save me. He gave me a new birth, granted me repentance and faith, and declared me righteous—not on account of my works, for I had nothing to show, but solely on account of Christ's blood and righteousness. It was He who in grace drew me to Himself even though I did not seek Him.

That night, He took away all my rage and set me free from all my chains. He filled me with a peace that passes my understanding and changed my heart so that I now hate sin and love Christ. I could not keep this incomprehensible grace that I experienced to myself. Instead of beating people, I now passed out tracts and told people about Christ. I bought myself a Bible and often read it all day long.

Through studying God's Word, my desire to be baptized and become part of a church became increasingly greater, so that I asked the Lord daily to lead me to Christian brothers and sisters. I knew no Christians who would have invited me to visit their church.

After some months of solitude, my longing for baptism became especially great. I stopped

in front of a big church. Thanks to God's providence, my heart was beating wildly; it seemed to me that the Lord forbade me to enter that church. At that time, I did not understand why, but I wanted to be obedient. Today I know that this church, like most churches in Germany, is liberal and does not preach the crucified Christ. I thank the Lord for protecting me!

The following day, I went down a road I had never traveled before, though it was very close to where I lived. I noticed a very small Baptist church that offered Bible studies. I visited the church and asked to be baptized. The church members were noticeably surprised. They had never had a boy from the street come to them with such a request.

An elder in the church took me aside and explained to me the way of God more accurately; after some time, I was finally baptized. My elder gave me a large collection of books by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, which he greatly valued. Since then, Spurgeon also became a dear friend and companion to me. My elder let me read Psalms in the church service and showed me how to teach young people.

I lost many friends and was mocked and laughed at for Christ's sake, but others came to faith in Christ and visited the church, where (in all of my weakness) I tried to present the gospel. However, my dear and humble elder passed away not long after I arrived at the church.

CALL TO MINISTRY

As I was approaching age 17, the church asked me to preach, but I was too young and too inexperienced. I could witness to people on the street about Christ, but not to people who had been following Christ fifty years longer than I had! The mere thought of it seemed arrogant to me. But the church would not stop asking me, so I eventually started preaching when I was 18 years old. Whenever I preached, I experienced the clear help of God. It was during this time that I perceived that Christ was calling me to dedicate my life to preaching the gospel and to teaching.

At the age of 20, I served in this church and in its mother church as a full-time preacher for one year. The church then sent me out to study theology at the theological seminary of the German Baptists.

I completed my five years of study in June 2012. During my time at seminary, God continued to build in me the desire to plant

biblical churches and to fight for a biblical reformation in Germany. Together with my wife Priscilla and my co-worker Nathanael Ar-misen, I want to carry the gospel to Frankfurt and other cities in Germany by planting biblical churches. We want to see Christ glorified and worshiped in every place (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Frankfurt is the traffic hub of Europe—the city with the highest percentage of foreigners, the most commuters, the highest number of immigrants, the greatest traffic density, the highest crime rates, and the most drug crimes. In short, Frankfurt is an ideal city for introducing lost people to Christ the Saviour (Matthew 9:12; 18:11).

Sadly, Germany suffers greatly under the heavy influence of liberal theology, which has caused most churches to move from sound doctrine and practice. Please pray to the Lord that he might grant the "Land of the Reformation" a new reformation. We are thankful for all your prayers.

RECENT UPDATE

Peter and Tobias, his co-elder at Evangelical Reformed Baptist Church in Frankfurt, have written this wonderfully helpful prayer letter in which they share a brief history of the church, along with current details of church life and some amazing things that God has done there. If you are excited about young churches growing and maturing around the world, then please read the following to see how you can better pray for God's people and for the advancement of the church in Germany.

Dear Praying Friends,

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

We are most grateful for your partnership in the gospel through your prayers for us as a church. Here is an update on what the Lord has been doing among us in the last few months and what lies ahead, for which we would value your prayers.

The Frankfurt Evangelical Reformed Baptist Church was constituted in November 2016. Peter Schild and Tobias Riemenschneider were appointed as pastors and, a few months later, Horst Taxis was appointed as deacon. Since our constitution, there have been eighteen additions to the founding members; particularly encouraging is the fact that seven of these were also baptized.

Sunday morning services see us working through the first of John's epistles. In days when there is so much pressure on God's people to compromise and change, this book is invaluable. Pastor Peter preaches on Revelation on Sunday evenings, while Pastor Tobias has just begun taking the church through the prophecy of

Haggai. Our Wednesday evening prayer meetings have been based on studies in Paul's second letter to Timothy.

Praise God that He is growing His church here in Frankfurt! Praise Him for blessing us with such a great growth in so little time!

We give thanks to God for the birth of a first child, Elizabeth Salome, to Pastor Tobias and his wife Nicole. A few months earlier, Joel Jairus, the third son of Pastor Peter and his wife Priscilla, was born. There are currently five sisters in the church who are expecting, and another child was born in January. Also, we had three weddings of couples within the church last year.

We are thankful to have had Dr. James White come and deliver a lecture on “The Bondage of the Will” in September. Approximately 120 people were present to hear his engaging and accurate presentation on this very relevant subject.

Please pray for the ongoing ministry of the Word on Sundays and Wednesdays and for help and strength to be granted to the pastors. Please also pray for suitable men to be raised up to take of-

fices in the church and reduce the heavy workload that the pastors and deacon currently experience. God willing, we are going to appoint another deacon very soon; we request your prayers in this regard.

Please pray for grace and strength for our deacon Horst and his family who are providing foster care for two children with significant needs.

We continue to evangelize on the streets of Frankfurt, handing out tracts and having conversations. Alas, we do not see any fruit from this work so far. Please pray that God will accompany the distribution of His Word with saving power.

Thanks be to God, we baptized two sisters in March. One of the sisters is from China and has

to travel back there. Please pray for her and the brothers and sisters in China, where persecution is getting worse.

We are still without our own church building. This is a particular problem on Sunday mornings, where recent numbers have been too large to practically fit into the current venue. Please pray that the Lord will lead us to a suitable location.

We again thank you for your prayerful interest in the Lord's work here in Frankfurt and covet your ongoing prayers. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above. ■*



Peter and Priscilla Schild



KAMPALA, UGANDA

RBC IS CONSTITUTED!

BY SAM OLUOCH

In Bill Issa's December update, he shared the news of a monumental event in the life of Reconciliation Baptist Church in Kampala, Uganda: "We thank the Lord Jesus Christ for bringing us this far as a church! On November 26, our church was constituted with the required number of members who met the biblical qualifications of church membership. The first leadership team (two elders and three deacons) was set apart by the laying on of hands."

For some readers, such an event may require some explanation. In some missions movements today, if a group is gathering regularly for Bible study, it is claimed that a "church" has been planted. As you will see in this article, the Reformed Baptists in Africa with whom HeartCry partners are much more careful about saying that a biblical church has been started.

For the past three years, Grace Baptist Church in Kisumu, Kenya, has functioned as Bill Issa's "sending church." The elders and members of Grace Baptist have provided support, oversight, and accountability for Reconciliation Baptist until they had adequate membership and leadership to be set apart as an autonomous church body. We asked HeartCry missionary Sam Oluoch, pastor of Grace Baptist, to explain the process of moving from a "church plant" to an autonomous church body, along with the history of their work with Bill Issa.

FROM INFANCY TO AUTONOMY

In the missions policy of Grace Baptist Church – Kisumu (GBC), we have followed the pattern of the Antioch church in Acts 13. For one to be sent out as a missionary/church planter, he must be an elder or fit to qualify as an elder either from amongst our own membership or as a servant of God providentially brought to us. It is with this in mind that all our missionaries have to be vetted and approved by the church elders and presented to the church for approval.

Once approved by the church, it is the task of GBC members to support the missionary. We therefore must find a way of providing for the missionary from amongst ourselves. If financial support is not possible (usually this is a challenge), it is the duty of the church leaders to find willing partners who can stand with us financially

to support our missionary as we give oversight and accountability.

We expect the missionary to engage in his work wholeheartedly, evangelizing and pastoring the group the Lord raises for him. As this goes on, we believe that some will be saved and that the number gathering should rise from year to year. This may happen quickly, or it may take quite a long time, depending on how God blesses His work. Normally, we look to see ten or more converts before we start thinking of constituting a church.

Before then, the church-plant work does not have its own elders and deacons, and much of these services are provided by the sending church. At the point of constituting, we know that mature men have been raised to be counted as elders and deacons, and there is therefore leadership in place to take the baton from the sending



Reconciliation Baptist Church constitution service

church leadership. As for Bill Issa, he has started on solid ground: Brother David is ready to serve as a co-elder, and three men are already qualified as deacons. This is a rare gift!

In a case like this, once leadership is in place, our role as

the sending church is greatly reduced; we expect Reconciliation Baptist Church (RBC) to start running their own affairs independent of us. For the first year (2018), we will continue visiting them, but just to fellowship and give counsel when necessary.

HISTORY WITH BILL

In August 2013, I was in Lusaka, Zambia, to attend the annual family conference at Kabwata Baptist Church (KBC). Bill Issa had been directed to this same conference by a friend in the USA, hoping he would receive greater exposure to reformed teaching. Although we had never met, we shared a room in Lusaka at the church guest house. This was intentionally arranged by the conference organizers so that Bill could bombard me with Bible questions with which he was struggling. We gelled very well throughout the conference period and afterwards.

When Bill went back to Uganda, he requested oversight from

the elders of KBC as he worked to start a church in Kampala. Kabwata's elders felt it was better if oversight came from the neighboring country of Kenya rather than faraway Zambia, so they directed him to us. Though we did not know Bill well, we accepted the risk and offered to work with him very closely. Bill became a member of our church and, after one year, was commissioned in 2014 to be our missionary to Kampala. He labored well with us and HeartCry, our financial partner in this work. The Lord blessed his work, and the church was constituted in November 2017. They are now free to run their own affairs, and we stand ready to help if needed.

A CAREFUL CONSTITUTION PROCESS

There were several steps involved in the actual constitution process.

In August 2017, Pastor Paul Odera (another Kenyan HeartCry missionary) and Deacon Osborn visited Kampala to teach on the characteristics of a biblical church, the qualifications of church membership, the ordinances of the church (Lord's table and baptism), and the fellowship and financial support of

the church. Bill also helped with these teachings.

In September 2017, my co-elder Ken and I were scheduled to visit RBC and teach on the subject of elders and deacons—the need for them, the importance of a plurality, and their qualification and duties. Then the plan was to interview those who had applied for church membership. This visit did not take place according to schedule, due to the volatile po-

litical situation in Kenya. Instead, this was covered the day before constituting.

On Saturday, November 25, 2017, we held the teachings on elders and deacons from morning to evening, also reviewing the teaching from August. Then, with Bill, we interviewed those who had applied for membership. The twelve qualifying members voted to recognize David as elder, and for Bill to transition from being GBC-Kisumu's missionary-pastor to RBC's pastor. Then they also confirmed the three deacons.

On Sunday, November 26, 2017, we held a special morning service with over thirty guests. The church was officially constituted as the twelve qualifying members covenanted together. Pastor Bill and elder David were set apart, prayed for, and given a charge. I then preached from Colossians 1:28-29, exhorting the leaders and the church to uphold Christ and Christ alone. This was followed by a sumptuous meal and the cutting of a celebratory cake. Wow! What a blessed day it was!

THE TRAGIC DEATH OF A ZAMBIAN BROTHER

BY SEAN R.

As I sat in Pastor Conrad Mbewe's office talking with Kabwata Baptist's pastoral interns, I never imagined that one of them would be gone four months later. I certainly could not imagine that he would be murdered. Violent crime was very rare during my years in Zambia.

I always look forward to meeting the interns—hearing their stories and wondering what God has planned for their futures. But the life of one of those interns I met in the summer, Andrew Mulendema, was taken on December 29, and he entered into the joyous rest of his Master.

Andrew was trying to help a friend sell a minivan through a business contact. They found a buyer in southern Zambia, where Andrew and his contact took the van to meet the interested party. The “buyer” lured them into the bush, shot and killed both men, and stole the van. At this time, I

do not know if the murderer has been caught.

Andrew leaves behind a wife, who is pregnant, and three sons. He was a member of Chilanga Baptist Church and completed the pastoral internship at KBC with a desire to serve the Lord in ministry. *Please pray* for his family and church as they grieve their loss—for grace, nearness, and hope.

Andrew's death is, of course, a reminder to us all of life's brevity and the need to serve our Lord while we have life, breath, and strength. But, as Brother Paul recently pointed out in a staff meeting, Andrew's murder also reminds us that we are in a real spiritual war. Yes, our God is sovereign; but we have a real enemy who seeks to destroy soldiers of the King by any means available. Let us be alert, stand firm, and pray without ceasing for the spread of the gospel. Let us love, serve, and pray for our indigenous missionaries while we are able. ■

LIFE AS A VAPOR

by Paul Washer

It has been a little over one year since my heart attack (March 21, 2017). Without warning, I fell to the kitchen floor unconscious. I remember nothing that happened thereafter until five days later, when I found myself in a hospital room. I asked what happened, and someone said, “You died three times.” My heart had stopped and had been resuscitated on three separate occasions.

I would like to be able to say that, in that moment, I said something spiritual; instead, I responded, “I am just like Buck!” Everyone just stared blankly, until I explained myself: “I am just like Buck. You know, the weasel on Ice Age who said, ‘I died, but then I lived!’” Then everyone laughed.

During my hospital stay, the pain in my ribs was intense due to the cardiac resuscitation. To add to that, the damaged neuroreceptors in my brain (from a lack of oxygen) made me feel like my skin was on fire. The smallest movements resulted in intense pain. Due to a loss of my short-term memory, I nearly drove my wife crazy by asking the same questions over and over. She started occasionally calling me “Dory” and “Rain Man.”

As the days passed, I had plenty of time for reflection: “If I had died (or ‘stayed dead’) what

would have been my regrets? What would I have changed? What should I change now that God has extended my life?”

The first thing is **love**. I regretted that I had not loved more. I am not writing about mere sentimentality or a misguided love that hinders one from speaking the truth. I am referring to a Christ-like servant-love for my family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and the unbelieving world—even my enemies. In this one thing, all the commandments of God are fulfilled; however, it is an impossible task apart from a mind renewed in the Word and filled with the Holy Spirit. Isn’t it strange? I did not regret that I preached too little on the streets or that I spent too little time in my study. I regretted that I had played too few board games with my nine-year-old daughter (she loves board games).

The second thing is **intercessory prayer**. I have heard many an old preacher say that no minister on his deathbed regrets that he prayed too much—only that he prayed too little. Studying has never been a difficult task for me. The day after my return from the hospital, I studied and wrote for several hours; indeed, I have spent most of this last year alone in my study. In fact, it requires more discipline for me personally to deny

myself the joy of studying than it does to force myself to study. God's excellencies provoke the regenerated heart to draw near to Him and think much of Him. In contrast, intercessory prayer is work for me. More pointedly, it is war—war with my flesh, with the clock, with the devil. How my flesh hates intercessory prayer, fastings, and night watches! How many times my flesh has won out over my better understanding, drawing me back to bed or to the table or even to my study! Yes, my flesh will choose even Bible study over intercessory prayer! But it is in the prayer closet and in the night watches that darkness is beaten back, that Christ gains ground in the heart, that souls are redeemed, and that battles are won. The prayers of God's saints ascend from the earth like a faint and feeble cry. But when the incense of heaven is added to them, they return to earth with the power of thunder, lightning, and earthquakes (Revelation 8:3-5). Why then do I not rush to the closet, to the night vigil, to the times of separation? May God help me and you spend our days on the earth in believing, persevering, and prevailing intercessory prayer!

The third and last thing I will mention is **focus**. I started my ministry in the city, mountains, and jungles of my beloved Peru—traveling from town to town, preaching on the street, and training pastors and evangelists who never had the opportunity to study in a Bible institute. These were men far more worthy than myself, who toiled

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and suffered, and accomplished so much with so little; men who labored in poverty, suffering, and anonymity. These men are the reason that HeartCry exists. They have always owned my heart above all other matters of ministry, and it is to them that I have purposed to return. How many times in a conference setting in North America have I sat on the platform with a multitude of teachers far more instructed than I will ever be? How many times have I asked myself, "Why am I here surrounded by so many outstanding teachers instead of in some remote jungle or mountain range where there are so few, if any? Please pray for me and the HeartCry staff that we might "burn" and "burn out" for the unreached and for those who labor with so little.

I still plan to preach in some conferences and churches in the United States, but (Lord willing) I will give the greater part of the rest of my life to directing HeartCry, preaching where Christ is not named, and training and writing material for the pastors and evangelists in those places. ■

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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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