

SPRING 2022

HeartCry

MAGAZINE

MISSIONARY
UPDATES
FROM:

UKRAINE
FRANCE
KENYA
JAPAN
PERU
ITALY



LESSONS FROM
ABRAHAM:
A MISSIONARY'S PERSPECTIVE



Welcome to the Spring Edition of the *HeartCry Magazine*. In these pages, you will find a missiological article written by one of HeartCry's missionaries in Germany; two articles on the challenging topic of persecution; a brief glimpse into the crisis in Ukraine from our local missionaries' perspectives; multiple updates on mission works across the globe, from baptisms to gospel encounters to refugee ministry; and brand-new material from our Missions Director, Paul Washer, in the form of an excerpt from his forthcoming workbook, *Christ's Design for the Church*.

We trust that God will use these few pages to encourage you to press on in your walk with Him and to seek to serve Him better. We hope that after you set this magazine down you find yourself better equipped to pray for the nations and for the global church than when you first pick it up. We are ever grateful for the time you spend reading these pages and humbled to know that God has raised up men and women throughout the world to pray for us. Thank you for your faithfulness, and may the Lord bless you richly!

In His Love,

Forrest Hite
General Editor

*"They who had no news of Him **shall see**, and they who have not heard **shall understand**." - Romans 15:21*



4

LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM: A MISSIONARY'S PERSPECTIVE
BY NATHANAEL ARMISEN



18

CHRIST'S UNCHALLENGED CHURCH IN CHALLENGING TIMES BY DAVID PELOSI



32

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM BY PAUL WASHER



30

JACINTO CRIED OUT TO CHRIST
BY CARLOS GARCIA



10

PREPARED FOR PERSECUTION
BY JOSEPH K.



16

PRAY FOR UKRAINE
BY DON CURRIN

A WINTER BAPTISM!
BY LUIS R.

25

21

ITALY TRIP REPORT
BY HUNTER GATELY

PRAYING FOR THE PERSECUTED
BY J.S.

13

27

REFUGEE MINISTRY RESUMES
BY NAPHTALY OGALLO



HEIDELBERG, GERMANY. MISSIONARY NATHANAEAL ARMISEN'S HOME OF WETZLAR IS LESS THAN TWO HOURS AWAY FROM THIS HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT CITY.

The background of the entire page is a scenic photograph of a European town, likely in Germany, featuring a river, historic buildings, and a hill with a church in the distance. The image is slightly faded to allow the text to stand out.

LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM

■ A Missionary's Perspective

BY NATHANAEL ARMISEN | GERMANY

Abraham is one of the most famous figures in the Bible. Multiple times, reference is made to his life and faith in both the Old and the New Testaments. In the election of Abraham as the covenant head and his family being the recipients of God's special revelation and partakers of the covenants, we see a sudden shift in God's dealing with mankind. Abraham's call is, first of all, a dramatic narrowing of God's special love and self-revelation. The promise of God to send a serpent crusher and curse defeater (Gen. 3:15, the so-called *proto gospel*) is given to an old man with no heir. One could conclude that Abraham's life is the very opposite of a missionary one; it is almost a minimizing or disappearance of the kingdom of God in this world.



NEVERTHELESS, THE APOSTLE PAUL sees in God's relationship with Abraham a clear signal and proof of a world mission that begins very small and yet most powerfully. It is the Abraham-like faith that saves both Jews and Gentiles. Faith like his makes believers Abraham's spiritual offspring, the real heirs and partakers of the promises of grace. The purpose of this article is not an exhaustive exposition of the life of Abraham or the many spiritual treasures we can excavate from this precious narrative. The focus of this article is very pointed—view of how the life of Abraham can (and does) teach us something about the mission work of the New Testament church and the workers it sends out.

CHRISTUS ALLEIN.
NATHANAEL ARMISEN
PREACHES AT ERBC, WHERE
HE PASTORS, IN FRONT
OF AN EVER-PRESENT
REMINDER: "CHRIST ALONE."

1 THE SACRIFICE OF THE MISSIONARY | GEN 12-13

PROBABLY THE MOST OBVIOUS and plain parallel between Abraham and a missionary (as we usually see one) is the fact that Abraham is indeed sent out into a new place, even a foreign country. He leaves his hometown, his relatives, and therewith all the natural securities a man had in his society in those days. The missionary is "sent out" (from the Latin word *mittere*: "to send") by someone. However, the emphasis should not be on the geographical distance or the

place where he settles, but on the One who is doing the sending. It is the almighty and sovereign God who chooses, uses, and directs men to go and to follow His guidance with their whole life.

In being sent, Abraham sacrifices something bigger than inherited land and familial safety. He sacrifices self-will and the free power of decision over characteristic questions in life (such as, "where will I live, where will I work, and what will I do?").

Along the way, Abraham is willing to depart from fruitful lands, beloved company, and evil temptations in order to

follow God and serve Him well. Likewise, the missionary of the gospel has to sacrifice self-determination in order to follow the One who sent him.

2

THE FIGHT OF THE MISSIONARY | GEN 14a

GOSPEL WORK IS AT TIMES compared to a spiritual battle (*e.g.* Eph. 6:11-18; I Tim. 1:18; II Tim. 2:3-4). It is a battle for souls. When Abraham hears about the northern kings and their great invasion, he chases after them with an almost ridiculously small number of servants. But he gloriously prevails against the evil confederation of kings and liberates his nephew and the other men and women who were dragged away as prey and expecting a future of slavery.

The king of Sodom, one of the cities that had been conquered and robbed, offers material provisions as a reward to Abraham, but he refuses to take anything from him. Abraham's fight is not for riches, nor for fame. He cares for the souls of those who lived around him and the souls of his own family members, like Lot.

The work of a missionary can shift easily into a fight for public relevance, for clever methods, or for presenting one's own potential and activity. It can then become a struggle for increased missional opportunities, for financial support, and even for motivation—all

for souls and the incomparable delight of seeing Christ glorified in the salvation of men.

3

THE PERSONAL NEED OF THE MISSIONARY | GEN 14b

AFTER THE GREAT AND TRIUMPHANT victory over the evil invaders and the astonishing rescue of many people, a most mysterious meeting takes place. The king of Salem, Melchizedek, comes forth to greet Abraham with bread and wine and to bless him in the name of God Most High. The Psalms and the book of Hebrews give us wonderful hints and truths about Melchizedek regarding his name, office, and figure; but beyond all of this, from the missionary perspective, we find one of the simplest yet most helpful lessons in this pleasant encounter in Genesis 14. Abraham, the great man of faith, the pioneer and groundbreaker, the chosen patriarch is being fed and blessed by another man of God.

One of the most severe ailments of missionaries is not malaria or cholera, but the disease of spiritual self-sufficiency. When we grow accustomed to experiencing all the blessings, all the spiritual nourishment, all the refreshing and comforting truths coming through *your* mouth and hands, we can quickly lose the ability to benefit from the service, wisdom, and grace of others. The

“One of the **most severe ailments** of missionaries is not malaria or cholera, but the disease of spiritual self-sufficiency.”

while the focus on the souls of men is lost! A missionary needs to chase after souls in order to witness the glorious liberation of the gospel in Christ. This needs to be the greatest motivation: love

humility of Abraham is fascinating in this instance, especially right after his amazing victory. He gladly receives the ministry of the royal priest. Granted, every missionary should be able to rec-

ognize how he is being blessed and fed through the Scriptures by Christ, whom the old king of Salem foreshadowed. Christ does, however, nourish us also in His church and through gifts and graces—including through the preaching and counsel of other people. It is most healthy to realize and confess personal needs as a missionary and to enjoy and benefit humbly from men that God has, in His mercy, sent to quicken our mind and soul. The most powerful missionary is not the one who is spiritually self-sufficient, but the one who is humble enough to wholeheartedly and gratefully delight in the labor of co-workers whom Christ uses for his personal needs, feeding, correcting, and blessing.

4

THE IMPETUS OF THE MISSIONARY | GEN 15

ONE OF THE MOST ILLUSTRATIVE and yet profound narratives in the life of Abraham is the establishment of the covenant, where God, in the form of an oven and a torch, marches through hewn animal carcasses, threatening curse and penalty for the breaking of the covenant. In this bloody, dark, and most serious occasion shines the glorious truth of free grace through penal substitution. God alone walks down the threatening path; He alone guarantees and stands as surety for the fulfillment of the covenant. Abraham *“believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness”* (v.6) At Calvary, we see the full dimension of this case: God is slain, cut off from the living, for the sake of covenant-breaking people.

Therefore, now *“having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom 5:1).

This old gospel is still bloody and dark to the great majority of mankind. The message of Christ dying on the cross as a substitute on our behalf,

“Where the covenant of grace—Christ bearing the curse for our redemption—is not the main impetus of a mission work, *there is no mission work.*”

suffering the righteous and holy judgment of God—it all seems so alien, so strange and foreign. No wonder! It is not a tale of this world, not an invention of human beings, not an entertaining fantasy, but the only way that holy God can have peace and fellowship with sinful man! That is why this dark occasion brings forth the greatest light and liberating power for the believing soul. It takes us from the Cross to the resurrected Christ and in Him and through Him into intimate fellowship with Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Where the covenant of grace—Christ bearing the curse for our redemption—is not the main impetus of a mission work, there is no mission work. This is the core of the Bible, the center of salvation history, the substance of the gospel news. Whoever is sent out from God as a missionary must recognize this truth to spur him on to go out and preach. It is the promise shown in this covenant that Abraham believed and what makes him the father of believers. Abraham’s sending is based on the promise of grace by God, assured by a covenant.

THE NARRATIVE OF ABRAHAM is one of the most detailed biographical portions of the Bible (next to the lives of David and Jesus). This allows us to read not only of the great advancements and successes but also of the sins and the weaknesses of this called and chosen, but sinful, man. After years of not seeing a descendant, Abraham and his wife Sarah become impatient and start to “help God out” by rational and natural means, in an attempt to receive the promised blessings. Sarah gives Abraham her slave Hagar, who soon becomes pregnant; however, they soon find that their decisions bring about not blessing, but chaos, frustration, anger, and pride. Finally, a pregnant Hagar flees from the place where God could be known, where the light of the gospel shone most clearly.

The sins of a missionary are never really private; they affect his home, his work, and his ministry and can sadly drive out those for whom they were

responsible. Abraham’s idleness in encouraging his wife in the faith and his carelessness in engaging in her unbelieving plans bring danger to his marriage, his first child, their slave, and their whole mission.

Missionaries, like all other believers, are sinners; they live daily through the mercy of God covering their sin by the blood of Christ and restoring their faith through the work of the Spirit. Yet the sins and weaknesses of a worker of the gospel jeopardize more than his personal faith and life. They risk the reputation of the gospel and weaken the trust of believers. Through wrongly communicated hopes, unspiritual means, or false expectations, they may hinder and even discourage or scare off those who have been close, who have been near, who have been greatly influenced, and who have been involved. In the story of Abraham, the angel of the Lord goes after Hagar and overrules the sins of the patriarch. He also saves Sarah twice out of the harem of another man. Who could bear just one day working for souls without trusting that God has



EVANGELISCH-REFORMIERTE BAPTISTENGEMEINDE. EVANGELICAL-REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH IN WETZLAR HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH A DIVERSE CONGREGATION OF LOCAL GERMANS AS WELL AS IMMIGRANTS FROM AFRICA, ASIA, AND BEYOND.

the power to overrule our faults? No, the eternal life of men does not rest on our perfection. Thanks be to God—it rests on the faultless perfection of Christ. Yet the danger of a missionary falling into sin and destroying the witness, the work, and the growth in the faith of believers is severe and should drive us to pray more for grace, while we confess our weaknesses and dependence upon God.

6 THE POWER OF THE MISSIONARY | GEN 18

THIS BRINGS US TO THE LAST STEP as we consider Abraham's walk from a missionary perspective. What is his power and strength to continue believing, to keep going, to keep pressing on, even after times of sin, frustration, loss, and affliction? Abraham's power is his personal fellowship with God. Chapter 18 describes how Abraham receives the preincarnate Christ (in the form of a man with two angels) into his home. They share and affirm anew the promises of God for the life of Abraham and his wife Sarah. Later that day he stands before the face of the Lord, passionately and compassionately interceding for the cities in the valley. It is his personal fellowship with God which gives Abraham the strength and power to live a life of faith under the guidance of God. Likewise, every missionary wears out much more quickly than he anticipates if the Word of God is not brought home and personally affirmed by the inner working of the Spirit. Times of devotion and spiritual fellowship with God are vital and indispensable. Grace needs to fill our life and our home in order to benefit the work, as Paul confirms: *"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them,*

though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (I Cor. 15:10).

In the same way, intimate prayer lets us stand before the face of God. Missionary work can be exhausting, burdensome, and terrifying. In making your requests, supplications, sorrows, and thanksgiving known to God, you can, as Peter so wonderfully encourages us, cast *"all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you"* (I Pet. 5:7).

It is true; Abraham's life reads quite spectacularly, maybe in contrast to a regular missionary these days. In the end, however, he is such a great example and model of faith, for we see in his life the essential and simple things of faith worked out in real life. Quite often it is not navigating the spectacular challenges, but constantly applying and living out the simple truths and virtues of faith and faithfulness that is harder to achieve.

AS WE HAVE SEEN, Abraham is the missionary's helpful companion in the ministry. On his path, we should learn not the optimistic, adventure-laden attitude of the colonial missionary era or the relativistic attitude of the postmodern seeking for new methods and new tracks for outreach; instead, we see the realistic and biblical, yet simple, emphasis of living out a life of faith and working through grace for the glory of God. In this way, not just the book of Acts or the Pauline letters—the whole Bible (not least through the story of Abraham) teaches in a quite illustrative way, with all its high and low points, what it means to serve God in missions.



Nathanael is a church planter who serves in Wetzlar, Germany, where he pastors Evangelical-Reformed Baptist Church. He is married to Dominique, and they have two daughters. Learn more about Nathanael and his ministry at: heartcrymissionary.com/nathanael-armisen

PREPARED FOR PERSECUTION

By JOSEPH K. | INDIA



One of my pastor friends recently called me and said he had been beaten up while he was visiting a family that attends his church. He had taken his wife and other church members with him, and sadly, they too were physically assaulted. He was then forced to sign a document which said that he had been doing forceful conversions, which he signed so that he could leave the place. Once he was able to leave, he called many pastors and sought help to take legal action against the people who had attacked him.

During our conversation over the phone, he sounded very perplexed. He asked me question after question. Why had this happened to them? Why had they been falsely accused? Why had he

been beaten? Why had his wife been beaten? What had they done to deserve the treatment they received? As I listened to his questions, what struck me was that he was clueless about what the Bible says about persecution.

I visited the church and listened to him preach. I found that he never dealt with foundational topics like suffering, persecution, or the cost of discipleship. Instead, he preached mainly about blessing, anointing, and receiving various gifts of the Spirit. The result of this imbalanced teaching and preaching was that he and his members were gripped by fear. They thought it was totally unexpected and strange that a few of them had been beaten.

It is understandable that people do not like to talk about suffering and that

Jesus' call to costly discipleship—which includes even physical persecution—is not very attractive. But that does not mean that we should avoid these topics. Instead, it would be wise for us to prepare one another by reflecting on what Scripture teaches about persecution. As we read through the New Testament, we find that the apostolic authors prepared Christians for persecution by talking about it with clarity. For example, in I Peter 4:12, the Apostle Peter wrote, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” Far from being shocking, fiery trials are to be expected as we follow in Christ's footsteps.

So then, how should we prepare ourselves and our churches to face persecution? Below are a few truths that we should remember while we face persecution and threats in ministry.

1

JESUS' SUFFERING AND DEATH WAS PLANNED AND EXECUTED BY GOD

The suffering of the Son of God had been planned before the foundation of this world, and it rightly came to pass the way God ordained it. Even though it seems as though Jesus' suffering and death on the cross were planned and executed by religious leaders of his time, we must not forget that, ultimately, God is the one who orchestrated everything—was in complete control over the suffering and death of His Son. The suffering of the Son of God had been planned before the foundation of this world, and it rightly came to pass the way God intended. We read in the gospels that Jesus says, “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This

charge I have received from my Father” (Jn. 10:18). Jesus clearly understood that, ultimately, it was not the religious leaders, Pharisees, Scribes, and Roman soldiers who plotted against Him and killed Him. Jesus' death and its manner, even the mocking and the insults He faced, was all under God's control. After narrating the events leading up to Jesus' legs not being broken, John writes, “For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken’” (Jn. 19:36). As we reflect on how God was sovereign over the death of Jesus, we can be assured that He is in complete control even of His followers' suffering and death.

2

OUR LIVES ARE CONTROLLED BY OUR SOVEREIGN GOD

A truth that brings comfort to our souls is that God is the author of everything and the One who moves all things according to His will. Nothing takes place unless He moves things on earth. God is sovereign over our ministry. God is sovereign over bringing people to church, bringing people to repentance, and saving people. God is sovereign over even the suffering that we face for doing right.

Jesus uses powerful imagery in Matthew 10. Before sending out His disciples to preach the gospel, Jesus informs them that they will face persecution. People will oppose the gospel, hating and rejecting it. Nevertheless, no one can do anything or harm them unless the Father permits it. Here is what Jesus says: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.” Sparrows are little birds, and the sparrow was used for food by very poor people, as it was very cheap. In fact, Luke says

you could get five for two pennies. And yet, Jesus says, “Not one of them falls to the ground without your Father knowing it” (Matt. 10:29). If this is referring to the death of birds, God must have a

hell if they fear. What He is saying is that they are to correct their fear before they go and preach the gospel—fear the One who is truly powerful, the One who determines the destiny of souls.

“As we reflect on how God was sovereign over the death of Jesus, we can be assured that **He is in complete control** even of His followers’ suffering and death.”

But notice what happened to Jesus’ disciples at the time of His arrest. They all fled the scene and were even embarrassed of being associated with Him. And even in John 20:19–31, they were hiding in a secure

room behind closed doors, fearing that they might face the same fate as Jesus. For the disciples, death was still death. Fear was still fear.

long list of dead birds! God is sovereign over even the smallest of insignificant events on earth; nothing happens outside of His will. Jesus then assures His disciples that they are more important than the birds. We may struggle with the fear of dying, but God will take care of us, and nothing will happen in our lives and ministry without His permission. Therefore, we can find comfort and can work hard for the Lord, without fearing men.

room behind closed doors, fearing that they might face the same fate as Jesus. For the disciples, death was still death. Fear was still fear.

But there was a dramatic change in the book of Acts. This group of cowardly, frightened men became brave as lions! This all happened because of the appearance of Jesus and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This changed everything. The disciples’ eyes were opened to a completely new world, a world in which death was a minor thing and fear was no longer crippling. This is the power of God for us who are trusting in Jesus and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. God has given us everything we need to overcome the fear of death and to face persecution with boldness.

3 GOD ENABLES US TO OVERCOME FEAR OF SUFFERING AND DEATH

WHEN JESUS WAS PREPARING to send out His disciples for ministry, He clearly told them, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Here, Jesus uses the idea of killing the body, comparing it with destroying the soul to show that God has so much more power. He tells His disciples they are to fear the One who can determine the destiny of souls, not the ones who can only determine the destiny of bodies. He’s not telling His disciples that they will go to

hell if they fear. What He is saying is that they are to correct their fear before they go and preach the gospel—fear the One who is truly powerful, the One who determines the destiny of souls.

As we live our lives, let us not be caught off guard like my friend and his church. Instead, let us have peace in the midst of persecution, knowing that God was sovereign over Jesus’ death, God is sovereign over every detail of our lives, and God is the One who enables us to endure suffering.



Joseph K. was born and brought up in a Hindu family. He gave his life to Christ in the 10th grade; later, he was called to be a pastor.

INDIA PRAYING FOR THE PERSECUTED

By J.S.



As long as God's people dwell upon this earth, there will be persecution. This is expected. It is promised even. The darkness hates the Light, and while this may take various forms throughout the world, it is open and clearly seen in parts of Asia. Physical violence continues to rise, and laws continue to be established for the sole purpose of trying to destroy the church of Jesus Christ. This

is especially true in India, where there is an ever-increasing pressure mounting against the Lord's people.

The following is an account of a faithful pastor and what he has recently experienced. This is a common occurrence that is happening throughout the country. I trust it will help the reader to pray for our brothers and sisters in these areas.

The pastor writes:

As we were excited about Christmas, the news of an anti-conversion bill came, and many worship places were shut down by the government. The persecution rose, as the police—under political pressure—were in support of anti-Christian groups. I was called to the local police station and warned to immediately stop Sunday worship. In this meeting, I personally witnessed Psalm 23, as the Builder of the church was ahead of us and we were not harmed. The police warned us, as did the hall owner. Thus, we were asked to vacate the hall immediately.

As we were being watched by police and anti-Christian groups, we decided to meet at the hotel over food and discuss our next steps. Everyone was happy to continue meeting on Sundays to worship our Savior; so we decided to meet at my home every other week, alternating on the odd Sundays at different places so we would not be located by the anti-Christian groups and police.

When the anti-conversion law was passed, there were protests. Rallies were held to bring to the attention of legal bodies the illegal persecutions faced by Christians, against their constitutional rights. Several visits were made to the district superintendent's office to seek permission to gather on Sunday for worship, but no attention was given to those. A day of fasting was organized outside of the government building, and a written report regarding illegal persecution was submitted to the Secretary with a request for the cancellation of the anti-conversion bill.

While there are certainly sad aspects to all of this, we were able to see that God was separating His sheep from the goats. Many self-appointed pastors quit and churches were closed, and a few went online. Also, those churches that rented a hall were forced to stop immediately by police and anti-conversion groups. The hall owners also turned their faces, as they were similarly threatened.

During these days, God has been faithful to us, providing us places at various locations to meet on Sundays. I am very much encouraged that all the members regularly attend Sunday worship, no matter the distance or risk. We praise God for His grace!

WOULD YOU CONTINUE TO PRAY for the church in India? This is but one account of many. And though our hearts break for our brothers and sisters in India, we rejoice in the indestructible nature of the gospel and Christ's church. We know that He will use this persecution to accomplish His purposes.

In II Cor. 4:6-12, Paul writes: "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not

destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you."

May life work in us as we read accounts such as this. May we lift up our voice to the Lord on their behalf, and may each of us press on to know the Lord and make Him known among the nations.



J.S. began working for HeartCry in 2015. As coordinator for Asia, North America, and Western Europe, he currently oversees missionaries in over ten nations. He currently lives in Virginia with his wife and four children.

RESCUE WORK

TAKES PLACE AFTER
ROCKET ATTACKS IN
KHARKOV, UKRAINE,
ON MARCH 2, 2022.



PRAY FOR UKRAINE

By Don Currin

The following is an update that I recorded from three HeartCry missionaries in Ukraine on the Russian invasion of their country. The men are presently pastoring churches around the city of Chernovtsy, Ukraine. Please note that what was related to me is their personal account of the conflict and its effects. This account of an obviously developing story was written on 2/24/2022.

SPEAKING THROUGH A TRANSLATOR earlier this morning, I was provided the following info from HeartCry missionaries Ion Gireada, Vitalii Rusnak, and Iliya Hlushchak. In response to various questions that I asked pertaining to the military conflict that began on the Ukrainian-Russian border overnight, Brother Gireada said that the Russian missiles that have been launched on Ukraine have not come any closer than a hundred miles from their area. The missionary brothers said that according to news sources, approximately forty people have died and twenty have been wounded. But they agreed that the number of casualties could be significantly higher, as the government does not want to incite greater fear since the the nation is already in panic.

The Ukrainian cities of Kiev (capital city), Odessa, Lvov (the largest city in the west, with a population of half a million), and Chernobyl are being bombed. Some of the small-

er cities in the southern part of the country have already been taken by the Russian troops. The missionaries are concerned for Chernobyl, the nuclear power plant, for fear that another nuclear disaster could occur if the Russians destroy it.

Brothers Gireada and Rusnak confirmed that the Ukrainian banks have shut down and that the accounts of the citizens have been frozen. In addition to this perplexity, grocery stores, pharmacies, and means of transportation have been significantly affected.

Tomorrow, the Ukrainian government will decide whether to impose a mandatory draft in which all men from twenty to sixty years of age will be expected to enlist in the military.

Upon inquiring further how the church could pray for our missionary brothers, they requested prayer for wisdom to counsel the many refugees they will encounter in the days ahead. With so many of the Ukrainian citi-

zens attempting to flee harm's way, the missionaries anticipate hundreds of men, women, and children coming to their region for shelter and food.

On an encouraging note from a morning meeting with our other brothers and sisters throughout Eastern Europe, what was supposed to be our normal study of the Scriptures turned into a passionate prayer meeting. Oh, how they prayed for Ukraine and our missionary brothers there! Some prayed with earnest expectation, others in tears. And God, without exaggeration or presumption, was in the midst! Their prayers were full of reality. We were embraced by the Father; and the Ukrainian brothers, Ion, Vitalii, and Iliya, were embraced by their HeartCry faith family.

Among the needs of the people, please pray also for communication. Internet connections are very unstable at present. Also, pray for general mobilization for recruitment. The missionaries said that they do not know whether they will

serve in combat or as military chaplains if they are forced to go to war. One of the brothers said that his son was in a large city that was under Russian attack and was unable to get out of the city. He has no money or food, as the banks are closed.

Most of all, pray that the conflict will turn to the furtherance of the gospel. We have every confidence in our sovereign God to take the atrocities of war to expose men to the redemptive work of Christ. With the growing anticipation of refugees coming from across the nation to escape the carnage, the missionaries see a great opportunity to share the gospel.



Don is serving as the HeartCry Coordinator for Eastern Europe. As an itinerant evangelist, his pulpit ministry is directed toward preaching on the inner life of the believer and the spiritual need of the lost. With HeartCry, his ministry includes organizing Bible conferences and corresponding with the HeartCry missionaries in Europe.



REFUGEES CROWD AT THE UZHGOROD-VYSNE NEMECKE CHECKPOINT ON THE UKRAINE-SLOVAKIA BORDER IN THE WEST.



CHRIST'S UNCHALLENGED CHURCH IN *CHALLENGING TIMES*

By DAVID PELOSI | FRANCE

PREVIOUS PAGE: PASTOR DAVID PELOSI LEADS HIS CHURCH IN WELCOMING NINE NEW MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH IN PARIS, FRANCE.

A YOUNG CANDIDATE FOR BAPTISM SHARES HER TESTIMONY DURING THE SERVICE ON FEBRUARY 13. SHE, ALONG WITH THREE OTHERS, WERE BAPTIZED THAT DAY.



Greetings to all dear brothers and sisters who prayerfully follow our work in France. As you help us persevere through our challenges, we would also have you rejoicing with the marvels our God is doing amidst our church. Last Sunday (February 13th), we had an overwhelming service, with Christ adding nine new members to our church—four of whom through baptism. France is known as one of Western culture’s most resistant countries to the gospel, due to its post-modern and post-Christian worldview. So, it naturally seems unlikely for a church to develop faithfully in France. Statistics and our own experience confirm how long perseverance is demanded and how hard the battle is for fruit to be borne. That is why in these eleven years of missions and of slow-paced growth in the Parisian field, we have strongly rejoiced with each new church member added and with each baptism celebrated.

On top of the challenges each local church faces regularly, Christ’s church all around the globe has been facing the added trials brought on by the pandemic. In the beginning, it felt like

terror from every side. Many lost relatives or friends, others got sick, and not a few experienced intensified anxiety. The plague was reaching both the godly and the ungodly. The practical challenges also seemed to threaten the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom. Our church gatherings at times had to be canceled or moved exclusively to virtual meetings; and baptisms and the Lord’s Supper were suspended for a season. Later, standard sanitary measures such as masks, tests, and distancing were adopted to allow us to keep the essential elements of church life, even if not in their full expression. And now, with the COVID variants, some churches are challenged by growing governmental pressure.

But contrary to most predictions we could make according to the church’s faith in such times, in the long run, spiritual improvement became more evident than our trials. In spite of the sensation of our wavering faith, we were all attesting to God’s steady hand comforting His people and saving the lost. This became especially evident amidst our own church, which by God’s grace experienced the steadiest and fastest



growth in its whole history.

During the past two or three years, we have received more members than in the previous seven! In this recent period, we received through baptism almost double of what we had celebrated before. This is the context in which we cherished with joy the receiving of nine new members—four of them through baptism—last Sunday. Most of the beautiful testimonies of conversion we heard also attest to the purifying effect of Christ’s church through this pandemic. Many put emphasis on how the true gospel of Christ saved them from sects that preached legalism, triumphalism, and prosperity counterfeit gospels. They all shared great thankfulness, mainly toward the welcoming fellowship and the faithful preaching they found among us. It was all very encouraging! Thus, after all these years, by God’s grace and for Christ’s glory, we are have reached the significant mark of sixty members.

May it please our Lord to keep allowing us to grow not only numerically but also (and mainly) spiritually. Please pray for us to find a new meeting place, as our current place is too small to host

all our members. Please ask our Lord to strengthen our pastoral team, so that we can keep providing substantial shepherding for a growing community. Would you join us in thankful prayer and deep rejoicing with each soul that is saved, for “there is joy in the presence of God’s angels over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10)?

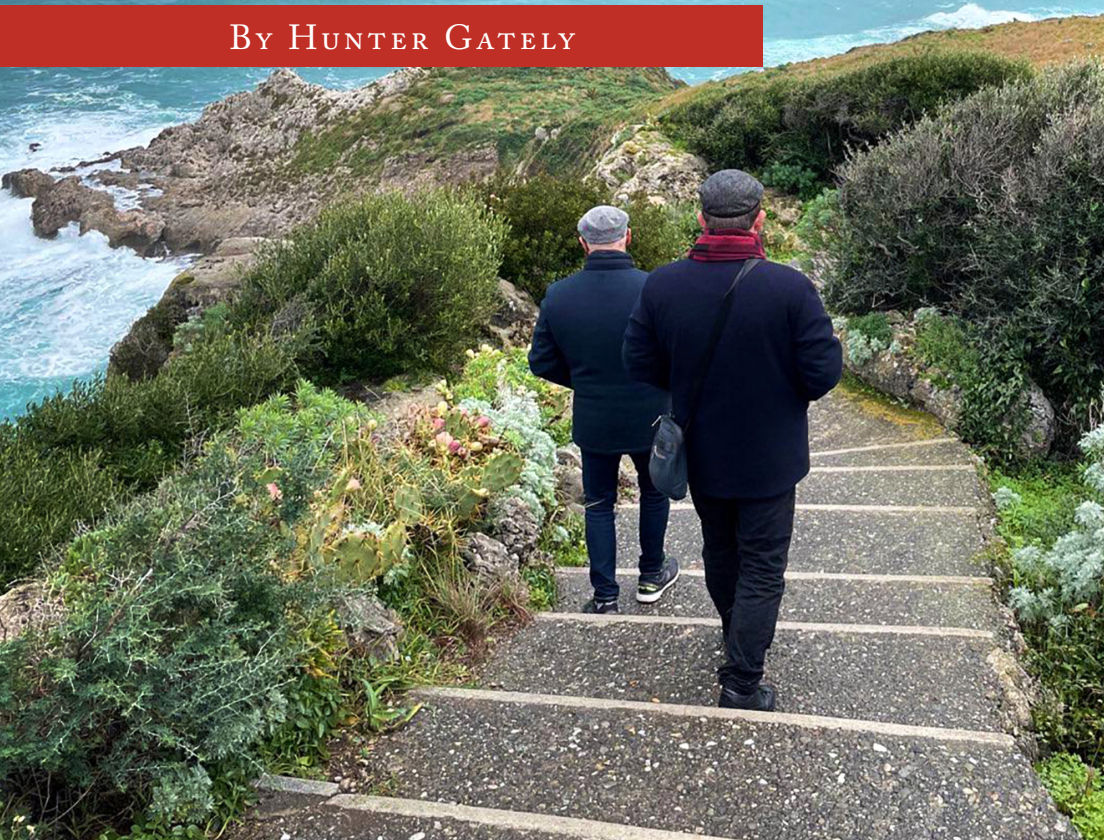
We hope this letter can serve to the encouragement of Christ’s people today. Despite the impressions of oscillations to the surface of our faith, we can be certain that the throne of the Rock of Ages is unshaken! God is governing this global pandemic with surgical precision over both the macro and the micro cosmos for the gathering of His people and the glory of His Son. Christ’s church marches forward, unchallenged by the challenges of our age, because He promised that He would build His church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).



After graduating from Bible School in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, David and his wife Myra were called to France. David is currently pastoring a church plant in Paris.

ITALY TRIP REPORT

BY HUNTER GATELY



In the first two weeks of January, I was able to travel to visit some of the works HeartCry supports on the island of Sicily, Italy. International travel is accompanied by unusual difficulty and plaguing uncertainty, especially these days; but upon reflecting on the fruit of this trip, I am confident the extra effort required to visit such places is a worthwhile investment. Before I could make it out of the U.S., my plans were changed: one brother I was planning to visit in the north of Italy became sick and was unable to host.

Additionally, the trip was supposed to end with a visit to Hungary, but that was thwarted as well due to more unexpected illness. These changes resulted in more time in Sicily, which turned out to be a great blessing and encouragement.

MORE ONLINE

A few years ago, Paul Washer visited Sicily, at which time we produced a short film about the work there. Scan the QR code to watch this video!





PASTORAL FELLOWSHIP. NAZZARENO ULFO AND FRANCESCO POLICINO OFTEN WALK TOGETHER ALONG THE SICILIAN COAST. AS INSTRUCTED IN THE SCRIPTURES, NAZZARENO HAS INVESTED GREATLY IN YOUNGER MEN LIKE FRANCESCO ACROSS THE ISLAND.

building as it stands today.

I spent one Lord's Day here and was invited to preach. I preached on Romans 5:1-5, encouraging the saints to consider what God has done for them in Christ and to keep their eyes fixed on Him. One man who was visiting the church came up to me afterward and said that he had lived in almost constant fear of death and illness until that day. However, he was leaving the service encouraged to look to Christ instead. Another man, I found out later, was visiting a church for the first time in his life. Please pray for these two men, that the Lord would work in both of their lives. Pray that this church would be salt and light in the community around it, as a Reformed Baptist congregation with its own building is highly unusual in Italy!

THERE IS ONE YOUNGER MAN, Francesco, whom HeartCry supports partially, who is pastoring a small but growing church on another part of the island. While in Sicily, I had the chance to spend an evening service with this church and have dinner in one of the member's homes. I was greatly encouraged by this congregation. They have had a number of difficult trials in the past few years. Francesco was installed as pastor at the beginning of 2020 and, by God's grace, has led the church through each difficulty. It is evident the church loves its pastor and trusts his leadership and teaching. As they grow, they are considering buying a permanent facility in which to meet as a church. Please pray that the Lord would continue to

PASTOR NAZZARENO ULFO has been laboring on the island of Sicily for many decades. His current church is located in the heart of Sicily: near the exact geographic center. He, along with Giovanni Marino and the church they serve, hosted us for the majority of our time on the island. The church's building itself is a wonderful testimony of God's grace and favor to this assembly of believers. The Lord provided in miraculous ways through eager laborers, unexpected funds, and numerous providential aids to help produce the church

add to their number and that He would provide a place for them to purchase.

I HAD THE PRIVILEGE of meeting a group of men, all of whom came to faith by sharing the gospel one to another, who are now pastoring a church together in northeastern Sicily. Three of these men are from a nearby island where no gospel-preaching church exists. Lord willing, two years from now, two of these brothers plan to return to their home island to plant a church there. Would you pray that the Lord would raise up laborers who are willing to undertake such an endeavor? Would you also ask the Lord to bring many to faith through the ministry of these men?

One of the most encouraging things to see in spending time with Reno is the number of younger men who look to him for spiritual encouragement and advice. One of those men is named Marco.

Marco is studying at a Reformed Baptist seminary in the U.S. via an online program and leads a small Bible study in his parents' home. I had the chance to speak briefly to this small gathering and also to spend time on several occasions with Marco. It seems as though the Lord has blessed Marco with a keen understanding of the Scriptures, a desire and ability to teach, and love for the many lost people in his large city. Please pray for Marco and his small gathering as they begin to meet more regularly on Sunday evenings. Pray for wisdom and direction as he considers his own calling and the possibility of planting a church. Pray that the Lord would raise up more laborers like Marco throughout Italy.



Hunter came to Virginia to begin serving with HeartCry in 2019 with a desire to see local churches established and flourishing all around the world. He oversees works across Southern and Eastern Europe.

ROMA. AN ANCIENT AND BIBLICALLY SIGNIFICANT CITY, WHERE MODERNITY IS STACKED UPON RUINS, ROME HAS A SMALL BUT GROWING PRESENCE OF BIBLICAL CHURCHES. PRAY FOR MORE!





MISSION SNAPSHOTS



A WINTER BAPTISM!

BY LUIS R. | JAPAN

LUIS HAS BEEN SERVING the Lord in Japan since 2004. He is a native of Lima, Peru. He met his wife Nicola in Japan, and they were married in 2005. They are primarily laboring among the large Latin American community in Tokyo.

Praise God for reconciling us to Himself through Christ and for giving us the ministry and message of reconciliation. Paul gave us a great example in brothers like Philemon and Onesimus to reconcile the lost with Christ. When the world tells us that the only option is to take sides, divide, and separate, let us always remember that we have the option to become peacemakers through God's truth; let us work and pray so that, through the power of the gospel, we will see reconciliation between the lost and Christ and, if necessary, among our dear brothers.

Praise the Lord for finally blessing us with the opportunity to baptize a dear brother. He was supposed to be baptized a while ago; but we had to postpone, because he fell ill with coronavirus and because there were public space restrictions and states of emergency. Finally,

all our church was able to go to the river to celebrate our brother's baptism. He shared his testimony that day, and it was a blessing for all the church and guests to hear how our Lord saved him from a false profession of faith. He told us that he was affirmed as a Christian as a child without even understanding the gospel. After living a sinful life apart from God, he came to our church in need of answers; that was the moment when he heard the gospel for the first time and surrendered to Christ. Now he is being trained in teaching the Bible to our children, serving the church, and helping us to reach people in need of Christ at the hospitals. Please keep praying for his growth in the Lord.

Ten years ago, I spent four months teaching Bible studies in a hospital to a Bolivian grandmother diagnosed with cancer. At first, there was tension in the family, because some did not want me to

share the gospel with her or talk about sin and the need for repentance. Finally, for the glory of God, the grandmother decided and told everybody that she wanted to hear the truth. She repented of her sins and believed in our Lord's gospel. We spent the last months of her life studying Christ, heaven, and eternal life. Last month, I received a phone call from this grandmother's family asking me to share the gospel with a Japanese friend. We started to pray for him with our church, and we contacted him. Sadly, he rejected all offers of help and did not want to hear about Christ. But we are continually praying for him, and we plan to send him a letter with the written gospel, through his friend. Please pray that our Lord will do a miracle in the heart of this man and will open the doors to his only hope—the gospel of Christ!

Praise God that we now have a team of church members helping with ministry during the year. Our ministry has

blessed us with the privilege of sharing God's Word and meals with the homeless under a bridge in Shibuya and helped our church have proper order while serving. For some years, people from our church wanted to serve in the homeless ministry; however, I always explained that they needed first to start serving their brothers and sisters at the church. So today, the members of our homeless team share the blessings of going out to help the needy, while knowing also that they are already serving and loving their church. Please pray for all Christians in the world not to skip serving their own (church) family, but to follow Jesus' example: He did not only care about the lost outside, but He also washed the feet of His church.

Thank you always for your prayers, encouragement, and support.



Read more about Luis and his ministry online at: heartcrymissionary.com/luis-r



THE R. FAMILY. LUIS, NICOLA, ROHAN, LORIEN, AND ERENDIR IN TOKYO, JAPAN.



REFUGEE Ministry Resumes

BY NAPHTALLY OGALLO | KENYA

NAPHTALLY HAS BEEN INVOLVED in church planting since 1975, when he was a part of establishing Trinity Baptist Church in Nairobi, Kenya. He holds a B.A. in Theology from Wales Evangelical School of Theology in Brynterion, Wales. Naphtally is a pastor at Grace Baptist Church in Eldoret, north of Kisumu. He and his wife Helida have two children.

When the long civil war in Sudan caused thousands to flee south to Kenya for refuge, the Kenyan government and the U.N. set up huge camps in the area around Kakuma in the north. This has been “home” to South Sudanese refugees for many years. Children have been born and have grown to adulthood in Kakuma Camp.

In 2016, God’s providence led us to a group of South Sudanese. Listening to their stories, we felt convinced that we needed to help them in a sustained manner by making God known through regular missions among them. With the partnership of HeartCry Missionary Society, we identified one of the young men from among the Unity Churches based in Kakuma; this young man is now receiving theological training at Kisumu Reformed School of Theology (KReST). Babale is our key man on the ground, and through him we have

had opportunities to hold mission conferences for church leaders and others within the Kakuma Camp for a couple of years. We were not able to hold them for the last two years, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2021, there were persistent calls from these friends to hold another conference. HeartCry once again came on board and facilitated the conference.

A two-day conference was planned for November 23-24. The Unity Churches had requested to be taught on *How does one become a Christian?* and *How should a Christian live?* I planned to answer their two questions by teaching them through I Peter 1. I felt that this passage would resonate with them—a people far from home and struggling from different angles of life. It was also my hope that, by using that passage, I would teach them how to study the Scriptures for themselves.

I held three sessions each day with Q&A sessions following. I learned a lot



FAITHFUL MINISTER.

NAPHTALLY HAS BEEN PASTORING IN ELDORET SINCE 2006 AND CONTINUES TO PREACH WHEREVER OPPORTUNITIES ARISE.

from the questions they raised. The most outstanding questions were asked by a 16-year-old youth called Agayan Simon, who is spiritually serious (I have mentioned him in

my previous reports). Two of his questions were: (1) Can a person be saved at the last minute of their life if they repent of their sins and turn to Christ? 2) What about a person who is in a village where the gospel has not been preached but who did good things in the community—will they be judged to hell or heaven?

You will appreciate that these are questions of very real concern. In answering them, I sought to make sure that the listeners personally understood the implications of these questions. Babale and John helped as interpreters to over 120 Murle people who came

from various sectors of Kakuma, some of them walking for over an hour to be at the meetings. They sat and listened very keenly through the sessions which took over an hour and a half each. The Murle only have the book of Genesis and the New Testament in their language, and this is only in the hands of a few!

I had a special occasion to speak with the church leaders, who presented several concerns. I encouraged them to seriously search among themselves and recommend to us another man like Babale, one who demonstrates a call to the ministry and who can cope with the rigorous standard of studies at KReST. I also agreed with them that visiting them only once a year for a two-day conference is not enough. I left Kakuma with a deep burden in my heart for them.



Read more about Naphtally online at: heartcrymissionary.com/naphtally-ogallo

An aerial photograph of a mountain valley in Peru. The foreground shows a lush green valley with terraced agricultural fields, some of which are covered in white plastic mulch. A small village with several buildings is nestled in the valley. In the background, steep, rugged mountains rise, their slopes showing signs of erosion and some sparse vegetation. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

JACINTO *CRIED OUT* TO CHRIST

BY CARLOS GARCIA | PERU

Carlos is the pastor of the Baptist Church "Christ is the Only Hope" in one of the poorest and most dangerous areas of Sullana in northern Peru. He also helps with the discipleship of mountain pastors through training by extension.



HUARAZ, PERÚ. THE STARTING POINT OF PAUL WASHER'S MISSION WORK, PERU IS AT THE CENTER OF HEARTCRY'S LABOR IN LATIN AMERICA, WITH INDIGENOUS PASTORS AND MISSIONARIES SUPPORTED FROM THE LARGEST CITIES TO THE REMOTEST JUNGLES IN THE COUNTRY.

For many years—perhaps 15 or even more—people had preached to Jacinto about the salvation that is in Christ. Somewhere in that span of time, his wife and daughter were converted to the Lord. They both continue to be steadfast in the faith to this day.

Despite many difficult trials in his life, Jacinto continued unbroken and rejected Christ. He would not let go of his traditional religion and false gods. Over time, through the constant prayers of his wife and daughter and through the different opportunities that we had to visit him and talk to him about the gospel, God was beginning to break his hardness little by little. He became more willing to listen to us and, sometimes, he even visited the church. In fact, he began to have a good relationship with me, and we developed a friendship. But he resisted the gospel still and refused to confess Christ as his Savior.

Later, Jacinto became sick and had a hemorrhage. Though he was an older man—around 85 at the time—the Lord raised him up, and he recovered. But this year he became sick again. His wife became more and more concerned for his salvation, and in her pain she talked to him every night about Christ. For more than a month we visited his home and had services there. It all seemed to be in vain.

One day when he was getting very weak, I went to his house and prayed

with his family for his salvation. Jacinto was not awake, but we spent a long time together crying out to our God who is rich in mercy and grace that He would not let Jacinto leave this world without Christ. I was there with a deacon, along with his wife and daughter; and while we were crying out to God, Jacinto reached up and clung to the rails of his bed. We could see that he was desperate, but he could not speak.

The following day, at six o'clock in the evening, his wife called me and told me that Jacinto wanted to speak with me. I went again to the house and spoke loudly into his ear. I told him I was Pastor Carlos, and I told him of his need to confess Christ. At that moment, in a weak voice, he said, "I want Christ." He cried out, "Christ, save me!"

When I heard his cry, I broke down

in tears. Amidst our sobbing, we asked God to hear Jacinto's cry, to save him, to forgive him. We praised God because we know that salvation belongs to Him and that He is patient and loving toward sinners, promising to save those who call on His name.

After that, Jacinto never spoke again. He died around 10 o'clock that night. We were able to preach the gospel for six consecutive nights during his funeral ceremony. We told people about the hope that is in Christ. We told them that He is patient toward us, but that we must not wait to come to Him. We urged them to repent and trust in Christ, the powerful Savior.



Read more about Carlos and his ministry online at: heartcrymissionary.com/carlos-garcia



A TRUE PASTOR. BROTHER CARLOS IN HIS HOME IN SULLANA.



THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

BY PAUL WASHER

This article is comprised of excerpts from Chapter 8
of Paul Washer's forthcoming workbook,
Christ's Design for the Church.

Throughout the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), the book of Acts, and the Epistles, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the kingdom of God and of His Christ. We will now turn our attention there, to the relationship between the church and the kingdom. Although they are not the same, they are inseparably related to one another.

THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

THE “KINGDOM OF GOD” refers to the rule of God over His creation. The church is not the kingdom but is a fellowship of men and women who have acknowledged and submitted to the rule of the kingdom. The following quotes from George Eldon Ladd and J.L. Dagg give helpful distinctions about the kingdom and the church:

While there is an inseparable relationship between the Kingdom and the church, they are not to be identified... The Kingdom is God's reign and the realm in which the blessings of His reign are experienced; the church is the fellowship of those who have experienced God's reign and entered into the enjoyment of its blessings. The Kingdom creates the church, works through the church, and is proclaimed in the world by the church.¹

The kingdom of Christ is the kingly authority with which He, as Mediator, is invested and which He exercises over all things, for the glory of God and the good of His church... Having all power in heaven and earth committed to Him, He rules in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Hence every relationship among men, and all the duties arising from it, come under His authority. The family, the nation, and the local church are all institutions in His kingdom or under His reign; and the external organization of these institutions should be regulated according to the will of the sovereign King; but the kingdom itself exists, independent of all external organization... The kingdom of Christ is not of this world; but at the end of the world, when earthly organizations shall have passed away, Christ will gather the wicked out of His kingdom; and the kingdom itself, freed from all rebellious subjects, will continue forever. Then shall the righteous, who alone are the children of the kingdom, shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.²



These descriptions are extremely important. Every church and individual member must realize that they are under the sovereign rule of the God of heaven and His Christ. We are never to do what is right in our own eyes or in the eyes of an ever-changing, ever-corrupting culture. Instead, we are to be diligent to know God's will as it is revealed in Scripture and order every aspect of our churches and private lives according to the rule of the King.

THE KING OF THE KINGDOM

GOD IS NOT MERELY *a* king or *like* a king. He is *the* King. In fact, He is the only true King that has ever been. All others that have reigned and will reign are merely faint shadows of His person and office.

The same Scriptures that declare the kingship of God also teach that God has exalted Jesus to His right hand as King

and Mediator over all creation. Now, having reconciled His people to God through His suffering and death, Jesus reigns over the universe as King and directs all things for the glory of God and the good of the church. This great truth is clearly expressed throughout the Old Testament (Psalm 2:1-12; 110; Daniel 7:13-14) and New Testament (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; 7:56; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; I Peter 3:22). One of the most remarkable texts regarding the kingship of Christ is Ephesians 1:20-23:

"He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

GOSPEL WITNESS. MARIO MANEVILLE IS THE PASTOR OF REFORMED FAITH MISSION IN BELLVILLE SOUTH, SOUTH AFRICA, A COMMUNITY DEVASTATED BY DRUGS AND GANG VIOLENCE. THE CHURCH HAS SEEN MANY LIVES TRANSFORMED BY JESUS CHRIST.





Jesus is the absolute sovereign over the universe. He does not lead by committee or by general consensus. He is not voted in and cannot be voted out. All creation owes allegiance, obedience, thanksgiving, and praise to Him. This is especially true of Christians and the church, which He purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28; I Peter 1:18-19). He is the Head, and the church is His body. As members of His body, Christians must acknowledge Christ's reign and deliberately—even joyfully—submit to His will. We must worship the King, obey the King, and be conformed to the character of the King.

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

GOD'S KINGDOM SPANS the entire universe throughout all time. In the Old Testament, God's kingdom was manifested in creation, the formation and preservation of Israel, the maintenance of the messianic line, and the governance of the nations. In the New Testament, God's rule found its greatest expression in the person and work of Christ—especially His death, resurrection, and exaltation to the right hand of God. From the First Advent of Christ

until His Second Coming in glory, the kingdom of Christ is displayed in His ongoing redemptive activity in and through the church and His sovereign control of all things for the good of the church. At the Second Coming, the kingdom will be manifested in the Final Judgment and the restoration of all things. Until then, those who partake in the kingdom's blessings through faith in Christ will also partake in its tribulations. Thus, great perseverance is required (Revelation 1:9).

The kingdom of Christ is not manifested on earth through some political or even ecclesiastical hierarchy. It is manifested in the willing submission of His people to His reign and will. Furthermore, Christ's kingdom is not advanced in the world through political or religious coercion but through the heralding of the gospel, the teaching of Christ's will, and the transformation of Christ's people.

Finally, we should recognize three important truths about the coming of Christ's kingdom. First, the kingdom *has come* in the incarnation of Christ and His great work of redemption. Second, the kingdom *is coming* as it advances in the world through the conversion of the nations and the sanctification of Christ's people. Third, the kingdom *will one day come* in its full-

ness at Christ's Second Coming and the restoration of all things. In heaven, Christ's rule is a present and perfect reality. On earth, it is a present reality in the church as it advances toward its future and perfect consummation. This is one of the outstanding truths revealed in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:10:

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The church is to pray and labor until Christ's kingdom comes in its truest and fullest sense on the earth. This truth is also revealed in the parables of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32) and the leaven (Matthew 13:33).

THE ETHIC OF THE KINGDOM

THE WORD "ETHIC" IS DERIVED from the Greek noun *êthos*, which means, "custom" or "habit." In the context of the Christian faith, it suggests a form of conduct or behavior that is in accordance with the character and will of God and is, therefore, radically different from that of the unbelieving world. Even a partial exposition of the kingdom's ethic goes beyond the scope of this chapter. However, Paul's words in Romans 12:2 offer an overview: "And do not be conformed to this world, but

revealed throughout all the Scriptures, one of the greatest and most concise expressions of this ethic is found in the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7. The ending of the Sermon (Matthew 7:24-27) explains that being a member of the kingdom consists of more than right knowledge or intellectual faith but demands obedience to the will of Christ:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.

ADVANCEMENT OF THE KINGDOM

THE KINGDOM OF GOD ADVANCES in the world as men turn from their rebellious autonomy and submit to the sovereign will of Christ. Even though the advancement of the kingdom is foremost the sovereign work of God, He

"In heaven, Christ's rule is a present and perfect reality. On earth, it is a present reality in the church as it advances toward its future and perfect consummation."

be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Although the ethic of the kingdom is

also uses means to accomplish that end. For example, God uses government to restrain and punish evil (Romans 13:1-4) and family to nurture each subsequent generation (Deuteronomy 6:4-9;

Ephesians 5:22-6:4). His greatest instruments for advancing His kingdom are His people—individual believers and the collective church. As a unified witness in the world, the church advances the kingdom through three primary means: *prayer*, *proclamation*, and *good works*.

The *first means* of kingdom advancement is prayer, which comes with biblical instructions. In Matthew 6:9-10, Jesus commanded His disciples:

Pray, then, in this way: “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

There are three petitions here: (1) that God’s name be separated and esteemed above all others; (2) that His sovereign rule advance in every individual and institution of the world; and (3) that His will be recognized and obeyed as supreme. These three facets should be the great theme and goal of every prayer, whether individual or corporate, private or public.

The *second means* of advancing the kingdom was demonstrated by Jesus as He proclaimed throughout Israel that the reign of God had drawn near (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 8:1; 9:2, 60). This same message continued in the preaching of the Twelve Apostles and the early church. Acts 1:3 teaches that Christ taught the Apostles “concerning the kingdom of God” during the period between his resurrection and ascension. Throughout the rest of the book of Acts, we see that the Twelve (along with many other disciples) both heralded and taught the good news about the kingdom. Philip preached the good news about the kingdom of God to the Samaritans, and those who believed

were baptized (Acts 8:12). Paul and Barnabas strengthened the souls of the disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, encouraging them to continue in the faith (Acts 14:22). In fact, Paul’s

“The church is to dispel the world’s ignorance of God and expose its moral corruption through proclamation and good works.”

proclamation of God’s kingdom is a recurring theme throughout Acts (e.g. Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31).

The *final means* for advancing the kingdom is the good influence of the church. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus described His disciples as “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” The strong emphasis in both metaphors is not only proclamation but also character and conduct. Salt influences everything that it touches by giving flavor, purifying, and preserving. In a similar fashion, the church is to impact the world by demonstrating the qualities set forth in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Light dispels darkness and exposes what is hidden. The church is to dispel the world’s ignorance of God and expose its moral corruption through proclamation and good works. For this reason, Paul admonishes the church in I Thessalonians 2:12 to “walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”



¹George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1993), p.117

²J.L. Dagg, *A Manual of Church Order* (Gano Books, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1990), pp.139-141

CHRIST'S DESIGN FOR THE
CHURCH

PAUL DAVID WASHER

PART 1: THE CHURCH'S PURPOSE
&
PART 2: THE CHURCH'S STRUCTURE

MAY 2022

www.heartcrymissionary.com/books

HEARTCRY MISSIONARY SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 3506 RADFORD, VA 24143-3506

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CPC

HeartCry

MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Subscribe To Our Weekly Email Newsletter:
www.heartcrymissionary.com/subscribe

Get Updates on Social Media



@HeartCryMissionary