

MESSAGE

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abwe[®]
INTERNATIONAL

CRISIS

CHRIST IN THE



‘What’s Really Worth Fearing



A DEADLY DISEASE IS RAVAGING THE WORLD. It brings nations to their knees and paralyzes governments. It separates families and divides neighbors. It affects every human being regardless of race, religion, or creed. And its mortality rate is 100 percent.

The disease is *sin*.

But unlike viral pandemics, sin and death give us no reason to stay home. Rather, they are what compel us to spread the cure of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the hope of eternal life to everyone we meet and touch. We have the antidote.

Throughout the Bible, the “fear of the Lord” marked those whom God used in the face of adversity. Job was targeted by Satan, not because of his wealth, but because of his fear of the Lord (Job 1:8), and he refused to forsake God in his trial. Joseph, who ascended from slavery to Pharaoh’s right hand, feared God (Genesis 42:18) and saved his people.

In this issue, explore how ABWE missionaries past and present faithfully conducted themselves in fear toward God in times of crisis and risked their lives for the sake of the gospel. Even in the throes of war, disease, and death, they courageously obeyed the Great Commission.

Now more than ever, the body of Christ needs to show the world who is ultimately worth fearing—the Creator and Judge of the universe.

I hope this edition of the *Message* inspires you to remain steadfast during trials so that they might purify and strengthen your faith, just as gold becomes more beautiful through the heat of the furnace (1 Peter 1:7).

Paul Davis, ABWE President

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WHO IS ABWE?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. We are dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, planting churches, and launching missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 1,000 ABWE missionaries are working to advance God’s work in more than 70 countries by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith, and serving the world with love.

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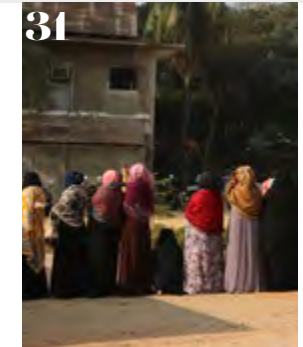
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CONNECTIONS

Peanuts & Prayer

📍 LOCATION: SOUTH ASIA

EVERY MORNING, BABU READIES HIS PEANUT CART BEFORE setting off down the road, his wares frying on a charcoal stove resting atop his rickshaw.

His simple catchphrase—“Peanuts for sale!”—has earned him a reputation on the crowded streets.

While working one day, Babu met some local Christians partnered with ABWE through Live Global. They gave him gospel tracts, but Babu despised their teachings and found a new use for their pamphlets—packaging for his peanuts.

Then Babu’s daughter became very ill, developing a dangerously high fever. The doctors could not heal her and doubted that she would recover.

Babu sought the counsel of the Sikh priests in his village, who suggested his daughter drink holy water. Babu bought gallons of it.

But it did not work, and his daughter’s health continued to worsen. Although devastated, Babu was too poor to stop working. He went back to selling peanuts, his mind consumed with worry for his dying daughter.

The evangelists returned. Now at a breaking point, Babu figured it could not hurt to ask them to pray to their foreign God. They began to tell him about Jesus, but he did not care much about the specifics of their deity. He simply wanted someone to pray for his little girl.

Babu escorted the Christians to his home, and they laid hands on his daughter and began praying for her. She gave her dad a small smile and her temperature broke immediately.

A devout Sikh, Babu was amazed at what he had just witnessed. His native religion had proven worthless in a time of need, while the God these men followed had shown his power to heal.

As a result, he and his whole family wanted to hear more about Jesus. After learning of the death and resurrection of Christ and asking many more questions, each of them trusted in Christ and were baptized.

Babu still sells peanuts. But instead of using tracts as wrappers, he hands them out to his customers to be read. Today, he has planted a church with 60 families—all from Sikh backgrounds. •

LEARN MORE about Live Global, an ABWE ministry initiative that partners with and empowers national believers liveglobal.org



LEARN MORE about EveryEthne, an ABWE ministry initiative that crosses cultures without crossing borders everyethne.church

Activists and political organizations flocked to Ferguson in the wake of the Michael Brown incident, but many left the city as soon as the national attention faded. Their abandonment sowed distrust between the people of Ferguson and outside groups offering help, according to Chris.

Chris hopes local churches can use the chaotic circumstances surrounding the George Floyd aftermath as an opportunity to prove its permanence and dedication to communities like Ferguson, with the prayer walk as a step to winning trust.

“In the years I have known Chris, I have continually noticed how he leads with Christ and the hope the gospel brings amid chaos,” comments Thad Bergmeier, Midwest Regional Director for ABWE North America. “I believe this path toward redemption is exactly why the Lord opened the door for him to plant a church in Ferguson.” •

Praying for Justice

📍 LOCATION: UNITED STATES

TEN DAYS AFTER THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD, a crowd of 80 people marched the streets of Ferguson, Mo., and raised their voices—not in protest, but in prayer.

In response to national riots and violence, a group of pastors both, black and white, organized a prayer walk with members of local churches. Among them was EveryEthne church planter Chris Brown.

After gathering together at the First Baptist Church of Ferguson to pray corporately, the group walked to the police station and prayed with the chief of police, who welcomed their support and spiritual encouragement. Some of the building’s windows were shattered, smashed by protesters with bats four nights earlier.

The group continued through Ferguson, praying and delivering Bibles to passersby. As Chris walked the streets and prayed with pedestrians and fellow believers, his foremost prayer was not for a social or political cause merely, but that lost souls would come to know Jesus Christ in the midst of injustice.

“It’s been a wound reopened,” said Chris, referring to the controversy over the 2014 shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson police officer. “Now it’s time to begin the healing process and help the gospel move forward. The best way to do that is by finding ways to serve.”

Training Centurions

📍 LOCATION: UNITED STATES

AFTER GRADUATING WITH HONORS FROM THE NAVAL ACADEMY, Dan and Amy were commissioned as second lieutenants in the Marine Corps—and soon married in a storybook wedding. But their bliss was cut short by new duty station assignments and rapid training cycles.

Then they met ABWE missionaries Jenny and Rich Culp. Rich was serving as an assistant pastor at the time. They asked the Culp questions about marriage, life, and Christianity. The Culp, also a military family, counseled Dan and Amy on how to strengthen their marriage and pursue Christ despite being worlds apart on future deployments.

The rubber hit the road when the deployments came—two of them at once. Amy deployed to a small country in Africa, while Dan was assigned to a non-tactical executive staff in the Middle East. While Amy dealt with the friction and distrust of local leaders, Dan monitored the movements of highly trained teams patrolling through some of the most dangerous settings in the world.

But when a bomb killed a respected Marine team leader, Dan was reassigned to lead the grieving unit—an assignment no one wanted. The tight-knit group received Dan coldly, suspicious of an outsider.

When their deployments ended, Amy returned from Africa physically tired, and Dan came back from the Middle East feeling utterly defeated. The emotional and spiritual strain, coupled with a long period of separation, was taking a heavy toll on their marriage.

Rich connected Dan with a retired veteran from the Middle East who could disciple him. They soon formed a trusting relationship, and Dan was renewed as a warrior and husband.

Rich and Jenny were inspired by Dan's turnaround, but also concerned by how his situation and marriage might have played out without access to a Christian support system. "We wanted to see churches around Fort Bragg working together to strengthen and disciple military leaders," Rich explained.

So, Rich and Jenny founded the Centurion Project, now a ministry of ABWE's EveryEthne, to train servicemen like Dan. Working with 100 churches, the Centurion Project is equipping military laborers who desire to carry out the Great Commission wherever their duties take them. •

LEARN MORE about how the Centurion Project is discipling and equipping servicemen and women to carry out the great commission
abwe.org/centurionproject



“Where man sees unexpected obstacles, our sovereign God sees the unfolding of his plan.”

— Paul Davis, ABWE President —



This year has not gone according to plan for our missionaries. But nothing—not even a pandemic—is unplanned to the God they serve. Give to the Global Gospel Fund and help our missionaries fulfill God's plan to make disciples even through setback.

abwe.org/GlobalGospelFund

SHORT STORIES



📍 LOCATION: COSTA RICA

Ryan & Gretchen Rought

Police officers were sent to protect the border as an influx of Nicaraguans attempted to illegally enter Costa Rica, seeking asylum and medical treatment for COVID-19. The Roughts, through their ministry TACTICA, supplied over 600 Costa Rican law enforcement officers heading to the border with food supplies, PPE, and Bibles. They then gave extra food to the families in San José who were without their deployed spouses. While at the border, a group of officers distributed the food they had received from TACTICA to poor, rural Costa Rican families (pictured).

Quarantine Views

As COVID-19 spread throughout the world and countries went into lockdown, our missionaries quickly pivoted to meet the most urgent needs in their communities. Here are some of their stories.



📍 LOCATION: PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Phillip & Jan Smith

After collecting 13 treadle-operated sewing machines and recruiting more than 30 women, the Smiths began producing and selling masks for \$1 each. The proceeds help pay for the students' food, housing, and tuition at Goroka Baptist Bible College, where the Smiths serve. A tract with Bible verses and contact information was attached to each mask.

As of the beginning of June, the Smiths and their team had more than 9,000 orders.



📍 LOCATION: SOUTH ASIA

THE WILLIAM CAREY FREE SCHOOL IN SOUTH ASIA is comprised of students from the most impoverished slums in the area. During the COVID-19 lockdown, many of these families lost their sources of income and could not afford basic necessities. ABWE workers have been providing food for 80 slum families on a weekly basis. During a delivery to one family, a parent said it was the first time they had received a quality amount of food in over a month. The need for these families is being met weekly through our team members and the generosity of many who have and are continuing to give.

🌐 **LEARN MORE** about how you can help at abwe.org/wcfs

📍 LOCATION: TOGO

Hannah Strayer

"While my office is still a utilized room in my house for meetings and projects, quarantine has provided me with more 'couch time.' I have been able to delve into deeper Bible studies, which allows me to work on creating Bible study materials for the locals. Quarantine has also given me more time to take photos of the team and life in Togo."



📍 LOCATION: BRAZIL

Erin Wawro

"This is from my balcony in São Leopoldo, where I've been doing *The Story of Hope* Bible studies with two girls over the phone. One girl, Camile, is a recent convert. The other, Marcela, has also been attending our church plant, Logos, for a while. The study is still an evangelistic one. Both of them are from my coffeehouse ministry. The Hangout, which is currently closed due to COVID-19."



📍 LOCATION: SOUTH AFRICA

Darin & Kathy Ishler

Darin and Kathy worked alongside two African pastors (pictured) to feed hungry and impoverished families in Durban. Having the ability to shelter in place for an extended period is a luxury that many Africans cannot afford. The Ishlers and their team partnered with local grocery store managers to get discounted



goods. Their goal is to share the gospel and connect families to local churches in the area.

🌐 **LEARN MORE** at abwe.org/DurbanMinistries

Quarantine Views

LOCATION: THAILAND

Greg & Rachel Vrugink

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS PREVENTED MILLIONS OF THAIS from performing their regular jobs and buying food. The Vruginks used their home as a makeshift food pantry, taking trips to the grocery store and preparing bags of deliverable items. One mother who typically spends her day pushing a cart with her little girl inside while collecting recyclables, wept as she repeated, “Kap khun ka!” (*Thank you!*) They also gave food and feeding tube supplements to a single mother who must stay at home to care for her handicapped daughter (pictured).



LOCATION: CHILE

Jennifer Taylor

WHEN A YOUNG WOMAN CALLED about a pregnancy test, Jenn and the pregnancy center team set up an appointment that complied with government health guidelines: masks, gloves, a bleach-covered towel to wipe her feet on when she arrived, no physical contact. The new client was able to talk through her feelings, learn about her baby's development in the womb, and sign up for a motherhood preparation course. She chose life for her unborn baby! Jenn and the team praise the Lord for the ability to meet this woman's needs and offer her support even during COVID-19.



I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

-John 16:33



Jennifer Holsinger weighs beans for the 600+ food packs the Nicaragua team distributed to the needy in their community. Mark is shown teaching *The Story of Hope* to food recipients.



LOCATION: NICARAGUA

Mark & Jennifer Holsinger

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19, the Holsingers and the Nicaragua team launched the Soap and Hope evangelism project, which presented poor and unchurched families with food, hygiene supplies, and the gospel. They have already delivered more than 600 packages and have also witnessed more than 100 professions of faith. Many of the families are receiving information on how to connect to local churches.

LEARN MORE about how you can help at abwe.org/soapandhope



Brennan and Kathleen Coughlin's children (Marielle, Caroline, Kelly, Brennan, Kathryn) assemble brown bag dinners to help feed hungry children in Trenton, NJ.

Brennan & Kathleen Coughlin

LOCATION: U.S.

When public schools closed, families dependent on the government to feed their children struggled to provide food. The Coughlins decided to put together brown-bagged dinners for underprivileged children in the area. They also wrote Easter cards and created care packages for the first responders, thanking them for their tireless efforts in serving the community during the pandemic.

Steve & Sue Mayo

LOCATION: AUSTRALIA

Because of the increased online presence of an ABWE church plant north of Sydney, Calvary Baptist Church became aware of a woman and her special-needs daughter in the immediate neighborhood of the church who were without food. Steve and Sue Mayo delivered groceries on behalf of the church and enjoyed an hour-long conversation. Since that engagement, the woman and her daughter have been watching the sermons online.



SERVING WITH ABWE FOR 35+ YEARS

HONORING

Glenn & Dorothy Budd,

"Both Glenn and Dorothy have been greatly used by God in so many different kinds of ministries over the years. They have loved the Peruvians well, and the Peruvians have deeply loved them. They are among ABWE's choice servants bringing light to a dark world."

- Scott Russell, Executive Director for Latin America -

GLENN AND DOROTHY BUDD HAVE BEEN SERVING FAITHFULLY with ABWE since 1984. They have spent over three decades in Peru's coastal cities and mountainous settlements, performing a variety of ministries: church planting, discipleship, counseling, pastoral training, aviation, and co-founding a pregnancy care center. Glenn and Dorothy were recognized as Bomm Award recipients at the 2019 Missionary Enrichment Conference for their 35 years of service.

Q: How did God first call you to missions?

A: (Glenn): When I was eight years old, I responded to the challenge of doing missions as a career at a Christian camp. I also loved aviation, so I naturally wanted to be a missionary pilot. I read many books on missionary pilots like Nate Saint.

(Dorothy): Growing up in a Christian home, I was exposed to missionaries at an early age. The calling to become a missionary came about with one small thing after another. My parents were encouraging of it, and my grandmother gave me an influential book on missions work in India. That calling was affirmed in my teenage years and throughout college.

Q: What was the best part being a missionary?

A: The most wonderful thing is when someone who we've been ministering to finally understands the gospel and asks us how to be saved. People don't just simply walk up and ask this question. It only happens after devoting time and sharing love with them. Seeing them go on to assume a leadership

role in the future or disciple someone else is extremely rewarding.

Q: What had the biggest impact on your ministry?

A: The power of prayer has played the biggest part in our ministry. We always had people praying for Glenn's safety as he flew near the terrorists in the early years [Shining Path, a revolutionary communist party that persecuted Peruvian villages and cities through guerrilla warfare], for our son's health when he suffered from typhoid fever and hepatitis, and for the many specific Peruvians who are now saved.

Q: What is your favorite memory from the field?

A: We loved mentoring a boy named Davy, a Peruvian national. He is like a brother to our three children who grew up with him. Watching him grow up, become saved, and mature in his faith to the point of becoming co-pastor of our church plant is awesome. To us, Davy is the equivalent of Paul's Timothy.

There was also a priest in one of the mountain villages named Eloy, whom I [Glenn] had witnessed to for years. At first, he was opposed

to my evangelism efforts, calling down curses on me and the airplane. He even falsely accused me of being a drug runner. However, our relationship strengthened when one of our missionaries treated Eloy for a shoulder injury. Just before he died, I was able to share the gospel with him one last time, and Eloy accepted it. He passed away in my arms soon after.

Q: What advice would you give someone considering missions?

A: Let trials and difficulties do their work. We must allow them to mold us; otherwise, we will miss out on how God is using them for our good and his glory. Also, a person usually doesn't come to salvation until you've established a personal relationship with them first. Friendships are so important! We have a saying in Peru: They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care. I think that is universally true.

Q: How has COVID-19 affected your ministry perspective?

A: When we first heard we could not go back to Peru [the Budds are quarantining in Texas], we struggled with feeling useless. And now there is uncertainty if we will be able to go back in October. But having to stay in the States has given us more time to invest in Peruvians through technology. We are trusting in God's timing, taking everything day by day. •

Despite the pandemic, ABWE's priority to send laborers has not swayed or veered off course. God blessed us with 24 new missionaries during the most restrictive months. Read two of their stories in this special preview, and be on the lookout for the upcoming missionary candidate class in the fall issue of the Message.



Prodip Das & Cathrin Anee | U.S.

📍 Christ Bangla Church in Woodhaven, New York

Every Saturday, Prodig would distribute Bengali gospel tracts to any passersby who could read the language in an unlikely place—Jackson Heights, New York City.

Prodip had immigrated one year earlier to the US from Bangladesh, the world's third-largest Muslim country by population.

Although Christians comprise less than 1 percent of Bangladesh's population, by God's grace, both Prodig and his wife Cathrin grew up in Christian homes. Prodig's forefathers converted to Christianity from Hinduism, changing the family's religious trajectory for generations. Prodig followed that course and trusted in Christ in 1991, soon becoming a deacon in his home village church.

In 2008, Prodig sensed God calling him to leave his comfortable life as a banker and pursue missions. He was compelled to reach his ethnic group in the US with the gospel. For the next four years, Prodig saved enough money so that he could move to America and begin seminary. This was all in preparation to plant a Bengali church in New York, home to some 400,000 Bengalis.

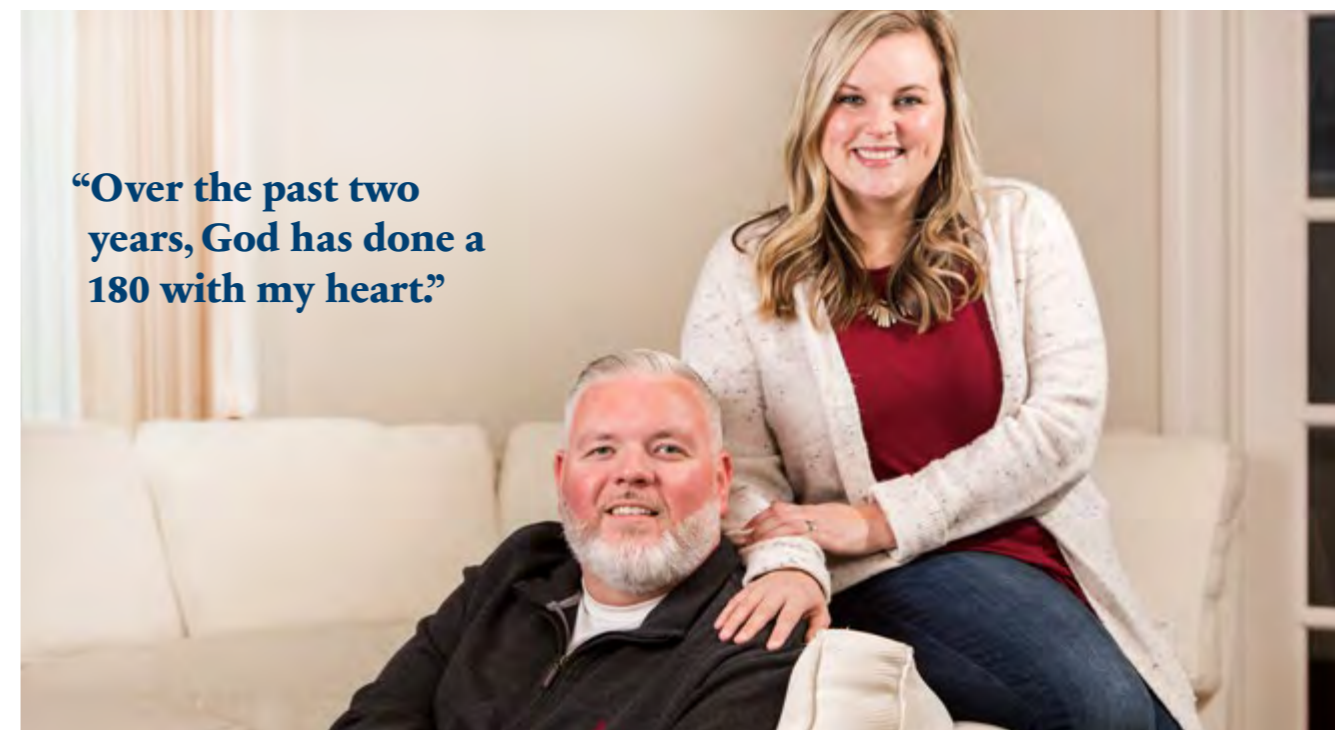
In 2013, on one of those typical Saturdays in Jackson Heights, Prodig shared the gospel with a Muslim man who spoke Bengali. They kept in touch over the next several years, meeting frequently to discuss religion. Two years after their initial conversation, the Muslim man visited Prodig's church and placed his faith in Jesus Christ. Now, he is a dedicated member of the church.

"I clearly understood that God used me for his purpose and plan by helping bring him to Christ," Prodig explained.

Prodip's wife Cathrin and daughter Gloria joined him in America in 2015, and Prodig planted Christ Bangla Church the following year in New York. Committed to reaching the Bengali diaspora in the US, Prodig and Cathrin needed an organization with which to partner, and ABWE was the answer to that prayer. Now, their goal is to continue to spread the gospel to the hearts of Bengali unbelievers in New York City as a part of EveryEthne. •

LEARNMORE about how you can serve with ABWE
abwe.org/go

"Over the past two years, God has done a 180 with my heart."



Josh & Sarah Ball | Portugal

📍 The Summit Church in Benton, Arkansas

"Lord, either take this desire away from me, or please change my wife's heart."

Josh muttered his prayer in frustration as he closed out of Google Maps. After spending the past hour on a virtual tour of Europe while waiting for his next client, Josh was torn between God's call on his life to pursue missions and his wife Sarah's reluctance.

Tensions had grown between Josh and Sarah since he first approached her to discuss ministry overseas. Sarah could not imagine being so far away from her loved ones.

"No one in my immediate family has ever moved more than an hour or two away from home, so moving out of the country was out of the normal for my family," Sarah said.

The thought of leaving them behind was deeply unsettling. She also felt unworthy to become a missionary, a vocation in her mind that was reserved for "perfect Christians."

Yet pastors and church planters continued to affirm Josh's passion for the nations. Aware of Sarah's hesitations, they encouraged Josh to continue praying and gaining experience. Josh began leading a Bible study and sharing the gospel with coworkers at his barbershop. If he

truly sensed a calling to conduct ministry overseas, what better place to start preparing than within his local community?

Josh soon felt exhausted from what seemed like a tug of war between God and Sarah pulling at opposite ends—with Josh in the middle. At work, after perusing maps of Europe on his phone, Josh finally laid his concerns at the Lord's feet, asking God to either extinguish his ambition or change Sarah's mind.

Josh returned home that night strangely relieved. Later, he and Sarah found themselves on the couch enjoying some precious solitude, their children now in bed.

Unprovoked, Sarah turned to Josh and said, "What do you think about moving to Europe?"

This was God's answer. Sarah had not known that Josh had been praying specifically about Europe. The pair stepped out in faith by contacting ABWE, which Josh discovered while listening to The Missions Podcast.

"Over the past two years, God has done a 180 with my heart, completely turning it toward missions," Sarah said.

Now, Josh and Sarah both share a passion for the nations and are currently preparing to serve as church planters in Portugal. •



ALL THINGS

by Loren Skinker

FOR GOOD

EPIDEMIC. WAR. IMPRISONMENT.

Throughout ABWE's 93 years, some of our missionaries have faced unprecedented challenges. In choosing to follow the call of missions, they left behind family, friends, and the familiarities of home for unfathomable hardships including, starvation, sickness, oppression,

EVEN DEATH.

But that is not where the story ends.

God used their sacrifices to not only to accomplish a mission but to leave a legacy for the name above every name: Jesus Christ.

NEW DISEASE. NEW MINISTRY (EAST PAKISTAN: 1968)

Jeannie Lockerbie stared at the ceiling, trying her best to lie perfectly still. Quarantined to her bed, she could barely raise her head to eat.

The pain that had begun in her chest now spread over her liver and spleen.

Earlier in 1968, on her way back to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) after furlough, Jeannie started to feel sick. She initially blamed the long journey and the sweltering

heat and humidity for her growing fatigue. In her book *Write the Vision*, she later described the climate with words borrowed from British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge in his description of Calcutta, India:

"We arrived at the airport on one of those heavy, humid days for which Bengal is famous. The air seems to distill into water as one breathes it, and every movement costs one stupendous effort" (*Guideposts*, 1988).

As the days went by and Jeannie did not improve, the doctors concluded her sickness was not the result of weather; it was hepatitis.

The treatment: six weeks in bed. But at the end of six weeks, Jeannie felt even worse, and more of her teammates had also fallen ill. This was an epidemic. Soon,

only five out of the 35 ABWE missionaries remained healthy. Jeannie and others who were infected were confined to their beds for as many as 11 months.

With the long recovery time came the realization that they were not dealing with hepatitis, but rather an altogether new disease with varying symptoms. Abdominal pain, excruciating headaches, and fevers sapped the strength of those infected.

Yet as weeks and months of quarantine rolled by, the Lord was working out a greater plan—even through the pain and searing migraines. And Jeannie was about to see a part of it.

One afternoon, Jeannie heard a familiar voice in the hallway. Mrs. Basanti Das entered her room.

A schoolteacher by profession, Mrs. Das was working with Lynn Silvernale and the Bible translation team to produce a readable, Common Language Bengali Bible. During the visit, Mrs. Das noticed Jeannie's bookshelf and marveled at the sight of the books.

"You have *so much* in English; we have *so little* in Bengali."

Jeannie latched on to those words. Even after two centuries of ministry work in South Asia by missionary giants such as William Carey and Amy Carmichael, the quantity of Christian literature in the Bengali language was scarce and difficult for common people to understand. Soon after her conversation with Mrs. Das, Jeannie stumbled upon Habakkuk 2:2: "Write the vision and make it plain."

Jeannie knew something had to be done.

The verse compelled her to develop and open the Literature Division with the goal of translating and producing Christian materials in common language Bengali. Since then, the team of missionaries and local believers has written, edited, designed, and published hundreds of Christian

resources: Sunday school curricula, Bible studies, reference books, children's books, and much more.

Today, it still operates under Bengali leadership and direction.

But the formation of the Literature Division is just one of the handful of fruitful projects that came out of the epidemic. During that time, missionaries also started translating the New Testament into the tribal language of the Tripura people. When missionaries delivered it to the tribe's leader, he said, "Now that we can understand the Bible, we have no excuse not to obey."

Nearly a year elapsed before the missionaries recovered, and many had life-long symptoms as a result. Jeannie herself spent nine long months in bed.

But 52 years later, she recounts the time with one word: "Blessing."

Were it not for the virus, it's possible that many Bengali-speakers would not have any access to Christian books, biographies, study guides, and the Bible in words they can understand.

"You have so much in English; we have so little in Bengali."



During the epidemic, missionaries began translating the New Testament into the tribal language of the Tripura people. When missionaries delivered it to the tribe's leader, he said, "Now that we can understand the Bible, we have no excuse not to obey."

Jeannie Lockerbie started a literature ministry after God used a serious illness to speak to her heart about the lack of Christian material for Bengalis.

Left: National believers joined the team and were critical in the translation and daily operations. Today, they lead the ministry.



Salvador Allende held the office of president for three years before being overthrown in 1973. During the coup, he reportedly committed suicide with an AK-47 gifted to him by Cuban dictator Fidel Castro.



Larry Smith and his family faced threats and harassment from the government and their neighbors.

**THE "OTHER" 9/11
(CHILE: 1970-86)**

For decades, Chile shined as a beacon of democracy and political stability in South America.

But that began to change in November 1970, when Salvador Allende won the presidency, becoming the first Marxist leader to capture a South American free election.

The following day, thousands of people—fearful of the new government—rushed to get tickets to evacuate the country.

At the time, ABWE missionary Larry Smith led a field team in the capital city of Santiago. They faced daily risks as American church planters living under an anti-Western government. Despite the obstacles, the team chose to stay, trusting that God was at work amid the tumultuous political climate.

For the next three years, Larry and his family received personal threats and intimidation.

“Rocks were thrown through our windows, and I was threatened to be killed by our neighbor who was a communist,” Larry wrote.

Informants advised Larry to take different roads to church as to avoid assassination, but Larry refused.

“[I] continued as usual, in part to show I would not be intimidated by such threats,” he explained.

Larry was even accused of being a CIA spy. On one occasion, two armed officers showed up at his doorstep unannounced and interrogated him at gunpoint,

investigating his supposed “illegal entry” into Chile.

A group of armed men even attempted to kidnap Larry by forcing him to drive his own truck as the getaway vehicle. But while starting the truck, Larry disengaged the manual choke to grind down the battery, causing the engine to sputter and buying him time so that someone could discover and stop the abduction. Eventually, the noise caused Larry’s neighbors to check out the commotion. Their plot foiled, the kidnapers abandoned the mission and fled the scene.

The economy faltered under Allende’s reforms and wage increases, which sparked an uncontrollable spree of consumerism that the economy could not keep pace with. Stores rationed goods to avoid scarcities, and Chileans turned to black markets for meat and other necessities. The middle class suffered the most.

“The country went on a downward spiral, with shortages of everything, even toilet paper.” Larry wrote. “There were riots on a daily basis, and worst of all, political division resulted in dislike or hatred toward those of the opposite viewpoint.”

The Chilean church was divided too. One Sunday, Larry heard an unpleasant grunt from the congregation as he prayed for the salvation of President Allende. After the service, he asked the woman who made the noise for an explanation.

“If Salvador Allende goes to heaven, I don’t want to be there,” she replied.

Photo Credit: Wikimedia Commons

September 11, 1973 marked an abrupt end to Allende's reign. Larry remembers the fateful day as the "other" 9/11.

A coup d'état, led by army chief Augusto Pinochet and backed by the US, deposed Allende and his left-wing allies in less than 24 hours, swinging the balance of power to the far right overnight.

Pinochet would rule with an iron fist for the next 17 years. It is estimated more than 3,000 people died in the aftermath of the coup as Allende supporters were arrested and executed.

Although the coup rescued the missionaries from the dangers of Allende's government, the revolution only widened the fissure in the church. The missionaries' initial support of the junta quickly eroded when they witnessed its horrors: tanks rumbling through the streets, fighter jets buzzing over treetops, and trucks piled high with dead bodies.

Augusto Pinochet's military junta seized power in 1973 and didn't relinquish it until 1990. In its course, it committed a litany of human rights violations, detaining up to 80,000 dissenters in concentration camps.

Pinochet's liberation of Chile from Marxist rule had simply turned the country into an equally dangerous autocracy. He had no intention of relinquishing power and returning Chile to a democratic society.

However, as evil as Pinochet's regime was, the church began to experience growth under his leadership, which welcomed the evangelical community.

The Smiths stayed in Chile for 13 more years, and Larry became known as the "before-during-after missionary" because he had remained on the field all through the crisis. By risking their lives, the team won the locals' favor and trust, sowing the seeds for a great gospel harvest, according to Scott Russell, Executive Director for Latin America.

"It's harvest time in Chile, and that means we need all hands on deck—because we only have so much time," Russell said. "It won't be harvest season forever."

By risking their lives to stay during the coup, ABWE missionaries won the locals' favor and trust.



Chile is currently one of ABWE's largest mission fields in Latin America. More than 30 churches have been planted, and Chilean believers have even formed their own missions agency, reaching more than 15 different countries.

Before and after the coup, Larry continued teaching at the Bible institute, now the Facultad Teológica Bíblica Bautista, an ABWE seminary in Santiago.

Today, some 50 years later, it still raises up and prepares dozens of Chilean nationals as pastors and missionaries each year.

PRISONERS OF WAR (THE PHILIPPINES: 1942-45)

Edward Bomm and the other missionaries knew this day was coming.

The bombings had begun several weeks earlier, with the first barrage falling just hours after the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor. However, these preambles of war did little to prepare Ed and the rest of the team for the inevitable. The unnerving cadence of the Imperial Army's victory march echoed throughout the streets of Manila.

The Japanese had arrived.

By the beginning of 1942, ABWE's ministry in the Philippines was well-established. Founders Raphael Thomas and Norma Peabody had planted churches and started Bible schools over a decade earlier. Ed and Marian Bomm had been serving on the island for seven years, with Ed pastoring the First Baptist Church of Manila and helping lead the 24-worker team.

Once the Japanese overtook Manila in January, they tried to gain the people's trust and cooperation by coercing their religious authorities.

On January 27, 1942 Ed and a group of 38 other ministry leaders from the Philippines, America, and Great Britain were told to attend a meeting at the Manila Hotel. They were forced to listen as a Japanese colonel delivered an oration touting the recent invasion as an act of deliverance from American oppression.

After being harangued, each man was asked to sign a pledge of loyalty to the Japanese.

Ed and two other men refused, which angered the officers. As the other men left, the three were pulled aside and harassed

again. But the modern Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood their ground, aware they would face harsh retribution.

Unsurprisingly, Ed was the first ABWE missionary shipped to a detainment camp in Santo Tomás, his new home for approximately the next three years. In time, his 23 teammates, including Marian, would filter in and out of Santo Tomás in an uncertain cycle of release and recapture.

Santo Tomás was the largest internment camp in the Philippines, consigning a staggering



Ed and Marian Bomm stand outside of the First Baptist Church of Manila, where Ed served as pastor until the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.



Santo Tomás was the largest internment camp in the Philippines, holding a staggering 3,200 prisoners.

3,200 prisoners to scavenge for food and build their own makeshift shanties within its walls.

Although subjected to repressive orders barked over loudspeakers, the prisoners were afforded a degree of self-governance. Internees appointed directors to oversee aspects of camp affairs including education, food, and religion.

Because of his faith, Ed stood out as a leader and was selected to run religious activities, like camp-wide Sunday services and weekly Bible classes. He was also chosen to be a floor monitor, overseeing 225 men. In a letter, he reflected on how guiding these men through “personal problems” offered a “rich experience,” opening doors for the gospel.

When three men escaped Santo Tomás and were later caught, the floor monitors were forced to watch their executions. Word of their deaths quickly spread throughout camp and deterred further escape attempts.

But the greatest threat to the internees was not the Japanese, who stationed minimal guards at the camp, but starvation. Food became scarce as the war raged on. The gardens failed to provide enough food, and canned rations gradually depleted. Watery mush made from corn and beans was

considered a good dinner. Some people resorted to eating slugs and grass to alleviate their hunger.

“[We] have had dysentery, colitis, tonsillitis, dengue fever and many other dietary ailments,” later wrote Kay Friederichsen, an ABWE missionary held at Santo Tomás. She described the declining health of her two sons Bobby and Doug and husband Paul toward the end of their confinement: “Bobby had T.B. for a year...Doug is 20 lbs. underweight. Paul weighs 130 and I am 109. Just before deliverance we had to spend most of our time in bed from sheer weakness. We killed a cat for dinner the day before the army came in.”

For two years, disease and malnutrition claimed lives each day, and many began to lose hope that they would see freedom again.

One ABWE missionary, Harold Palmer, died from an infection after a botched appendectomy while imprisoned.

But then on February 6, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur came to the rescue in a swift military campaign through the islands, and Santo Tomás was finally liberated.

Liberation day for each camp was not a peaceful event; the camps felt like war zones. Missionaries took cover from the gunfire as paratroopers descended and tanks smashed through fences. Ed and other internees were held hostage for several tense hours until the Japanese gave up and fled.

When Ed finally reunited with Marian after more than two years of separation, she was barely recognizable. Marian had been falsely accused of subverting Japanese authority and was forced into solitary confinement for 72 days, where she was abused and starved.

Upon liberation in 1945, 21 missionaries and their families returned to the US to recover, yet the Bomms remained in the Philippines.

The Bomms set to work rebuilding and reorganizing the scattered churches and destroyed Bible schools. The team’s legacy of courage and faithfulness imprinted itself upon the hearts of Filipino pastors and churches, and in time, more than 1,500 churches and multiple Bible schools flourished across the island nation.

Right: During 1941-45, Manila was destroyed by Japanese bombings and the subsequent Battle of Manila between US and Japanese forces

GOD MEANT FOR GOOD

Romans 8:28 reminds us that all things work together for good. Yet missionary stories like these, as well as the story of Joseph, remind us what exactly “all things” entails. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers, falsely accused by his master’s wife, and imprisoned for years. But God rewarded his faithfulness by placing him at the right hand of Pharaoh to rescue not only Egypt but his own family who betrayed him.

What men mean for evil, God means for good, even in the darkest hours.

“The Lord’s sovereignty reigns supreme, even when evil forces seem to be thwarting his plans,” said Paul Davis, ABWE President. “But God always means for good—whether that’s ministry growth in the Philippines, the creation of a publishing program in Bangladesh, or the survival of a very successful seminary in Chile.”

If history holds any lesson for today, it’s that God can do his greatest work in times of crisis. •



Above: A typical thatch shanty in Santo Tomás, the residence of the Friederichsen family during their internment.



Right: Ed and Marian after liberation day.

What men mean for evil, God means for good, even in the darkest hours.





DECIDING TO STAY

Melissa Baccarella had just finished a two-week study in the UK. After landing in Italy, she and the other passengers had their temperature checked before disembarking the plane.

The Italian government was beginning to impose mitigation restrictions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and on March 9, enforced a total lockdown. As Italy's coronavirus cases skyrocketed over the subsequent weeks, the field team considered the possibility of evacuation by preparing an emergency contingency plan.

There were three main reasons to stay.

First, reports at the time suggested Italy's healthcare system would be adequate in dealing with the virus. Second, most team members were seasoned missionaries, having called Italy home for the last 15-30 years.

"Other than going to my parents' home in California or seeking shelter from my sending or a supporting church, I don't have a home to return to in the States," Melissa said. "My home, routine, and primary community are here."

Third, the status of Italy's future immigration system was uncertain.

"The Italian economy will be unstable for the foreseeable future, and we don't know what impact that will have on Italy's immigration policies," Melissa said. "If we went to the US, we couldn't be sure when we would be allowed back."

Melissa has used her quarantine time in Italy to help her community by learning to sew masks and make hand sanitizer. She gave them to a local doctor, who shared his gratitude on social media. The extensive quarantine also enabled Melissa and her team to conduct additional Bible studies through video conference with Italians on weekdays, which they had not previously been able to do because of Italians' work schedules.

In choosing to stay, Melissa and her team found open doors to impact the lives of the nationals that otherwise might have remained closed.

DECIDING TO LEAVE

Andy and Diane Large had been serving in Nicaragua for 16 years when political upheaval erupted. In April 2018, massive demonstrations broke out in response to changes in government policy which Nicaraguans felt impinged on their rights. By August hundreds had been killed in the escalating confrontations involving public protests and combative authorities.

Given Nicaragua's violent history of overthrowing governments, the Larges and their team were overwhelmed with concern. Their team was in the capital city of Managua, the epicenter of the chaos.

"There was uncertainty about everything," the Larges said. "Would we get caught in the crossfire of the violence? There was minimal healthcare if someone were to get hurt. Food and gas were getting scarce."

The US embassy urged all non-essential Americans to evacuate, but a mountain of prep work prevented the team from immediately evacuating.

Ministry responsibilities required delegation to nationals, children had to be unenrolled from school, and missionaries needed to arrange caretaking plans for their homes in their absence. The team was divided about the financial and ministerial prudence of departure.

"Missionaries didn't like the idea having to pay rent for homes they weren't going to be living in, and finding nationals prepared to carry on the work of their ministries was difficult," the Larges said. "What's more, we didn't know at the time if we were going to be allowed back."

After returning to the US, the Larges discovered that close family members needed support—something Andy and Diane would not have been able to offer if they had not left Nicaragua. Another team member found out she needed a kidney transplant. In these ways, God revealed his sovereignty to the team by exposing problems on the home front that required attention.

Once the political unrest cooled, the team returned to Nicaragua. •

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Should a missionary stay or leave during a crisis? The biblical answer is: it depends.

Here are two ABWE missionaries' explanations as to why they did and didn't leave the field.



“This is a time of introspection, repentance, and perhaps reconciliation with others.”

READ MORE
from our missionaries
abwe.org/blog

Sitting on the Sidelines

“Sometimes following Jesus means taking a timeout to reflect.”

- STEPHANIE BOON, ABWE MISSIONARY IN TANZANIA -

THREE OF OUR FIVE CHILDREN PLAY SOCCER for their local school in Tanzania, and every new season we have the same conversation with them.

It goes something like: “If the coach chooses to put you on the sidelines, you need to respect his decision, even if you don’t agree or if you still want to play. Don’t pout. Be a good sport. Be the best sideline teammate you can be. Cheer for the people who are still playing, but also prepare yourself to get back in the game when your coach decides that it’s time.”

During quarantine and social distancing, it feels like God is giving me this same pep talk.

Sometimes, despite our best attempts to stay in the game, we are temporarily pulled out. Like my children, I long to be on the field with my friends, my team, my people. But here I am at a social distance from them. I need divine strength to pray, “May your will be done.” I need to learn how to obey God’s mission for me even when it is different from what I thought—or want.

Being pulled off the field gnaws at our souls, but God has a way of reminding us that he is at work even when we aren’t. Father, forgive our pride!

We have a choice. We can pout that other players are still in the game, complaining about leaders, governments, and God. We can feel desperate and bitter, fixating on what the crowd—our friends, families, supporters, and churches—are thinking as they watch, judge, and question us for sitting on the sidelines of ministry.

Or we can choose faith. This choice isn’t easy; it’s a daily, hourly, moment-by-moment decision. But we must use our time on the sidelines to prepare to get back in the game.

Let us learn to wait on God.

Let us intensely and intentionally abide in Christ.

Let us be good teammates by becoming more dependent on God and more spiritually fit than before.

Let us forget the crowd and repent of how good it felt to be praised by them in the first place.

Let us recall past seasons of activity and consider whose strength we were truly relying on.

Let us repent of our pride and how often we are fueled by human approval rather than an awe of the God who enables us.

Let us worship our Father in spirit and in truth, not worshipping at the shrine of idols of our own control or performance.

And let us try to fix the mistakes we were making in the game.

Were we lazy teammates, coasting by on past victories? Out of spiritual shape? Were we angry teammates, criticizing the other players? Were we judgmental or rude when others had different strategies? Could we rejoice in the accomplishments of teammates? Were we leaving others behind in our selfish ambitions? Were we running ragged rather than pacing ourselves at a healthy stride for the long term?

This is a time of introspection, repentance, and perhaps reconciliation with others. Only when this is done, may we return to the game healed and ready for battle.

God wants our hearts. This season of soul-work is just as critical to our mission as any “work” we did before or any “work” we will do after. •



3 WAYS To Do Missions From Home

- TAYLOR C, LIVE GLOBAL WORKER -

When planes are grounded and stay-at-home orders keep millions isolated, it may seem like missions has been put on hold. How can Christians go and make disciples of all nations when we can't even leave home?

The coronavirus may have shifted the missional landscape, but God is still working, and he invites all believers to labor for his purpose. Here are three ways every Christian can engage in that global task.

1. Embrace National Partners

Faithful, trained, missional believers exist all over the globe—not just in North America. Sometimes we are called to go, but other times we are called to partner with national believers already on the field. From itinerant evangelists and seminary teachers to orphanage directors and traveling musicians, these national workers are often more effective in their own culture than outsiders—without needing a visa or language school to do it. Live Global, a ministry initiative of ABWE, helps the North American church connect with these gospel ambassadors and meet their needs.

Anyone can be a prayer warrior, financial supporter, or advocate for these national partners from home. Even the Apostle Paul did missions through partnerships during his ministry (Philippians 1:5). God works best when two come together with the same vision, each giving what God has given them.

2. Redeem Technology

Technology can reach where the gospel has yet to reach. There are more than 4.3 billion active internet users worldwide, and the majority are in Asia. Five billion people worldwide own a cell phone. Just as the Apostle Paul used the tools of his day for the gospel, we must do the same.

During the coronavirus pandemic, thousands of churches across the globe transitioned to online services. But this is only the beginning of what can be done.

The internet goes places North Americans can't. Use it to send free gospel materials and evangelism resources to people in hard-to-reach countries.

Use an app like Marco Polo, Signal, or WhatsApp to send a short recorded message. Read a verse, say "I'm thinking of you," or pray for someone.

Use Facebook, Zoom, or Google Meet to video chat. You can use these for online discipleship, to read Scripture together, or to talk about how you're managing the challenges we share.

3. Believe that God Can Use COVID-19 for Good

Throughout both Scripture and history, what we see as spiritual opposition is often what God uses to stimulate kingdom expansion. The Apostle Paul couldn't get to Rome, so instead he wrote a letter to the Romans. Jim Elliot was killed, but through his wife and the wives of the other men on the mission, God saved the Auca people and a new missions movement took off. We don't know entirely what God is doing through COVID-19, but we can praise and serve him creatively in the midst of it because the Lord says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing" (Isaiah 43:19). ●



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'More Than Medicine

LOCATION: SOUTH ASIA

IN FEBRUARY, 2,000 PEOPLE GATHERED TOGETHER to celebrate the opening of the new Memorial Christian Hospital (MCH). Local officials, important dignitaries like the prime minister, and Ed Graham, representing Samaritan's Purse, all attended the ceremony.

The dream for this new hospital, which now stands just 100 yards away from the original property, began in 2012. Eight years later, the four-story facility boasts four times the square footage of the old one. It also includes more than double the amount of bed space and ten more operating rooms than the previous facility.

"This project is not the plan of any one or two men," explained the ABWE Executive Director for South Asia. "It is the result of God moving in the hearts of hundreds of people. We want to thank each person who partnered with ABWE by giving toward this hospital, it's more than a place of healing—it's a vital instrument in expanding God's kingdom to the unreached in South Asia."

The hospital represents so much more than a brick and mortar structure. It is a symbol of restoration, where broken bodies are healed with superb medicine and broken lives are mended through the gospel of Jesus Christ. ●



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