

Vol 64 | Issue 1 | 2016

spread the word

MESSAGE

abwe[®]
INTERNATIONAL

Able

Enabling the Disabled
through the Body of Christ





Revealing Brokenness

When Jesus and His disciples come upon a blind man in John chapter 9, his disciples ask Jesus who had sinned to cause this man to be born disabled. They wanted to know if it was the man's or his parents' sin that made him blind. But Jesus' response is surprising and profound.

Jesus tells His disciples — and us — that a disability is not the result of someone's sin; rather, it is an opportunity for God's work to be revealed.

According to the United Nations, roughly 15 percent of the world's population — an estimated one billion people — live with some sort of disability, and nearly 80 percent of them live in the developing world. That means that the world is overflowing with opportunities for God's work to be revealed.

Across the globe, people with disabilities face increased levels of discrimination and decreased levels of education and employment, but our missionaries have seized this as an opportunity to share Christ's love. From a ministry to disabled refugees who have fled the war in eastern Ukraine to a school for disabled children in South Africa, God is revealing His love in amazingly beautiful ways.

As you read through this issue of *Message*, I hope you will be inspired by the way God takes what seems to be broken and uses it for His glory, and I pray that God will also work in each of our areas of brokenness to reveal Himself.

Jim O'Neill | President

PS. *If you want to get involved with an impactful ministry, I invite you to **join me in Brazil for the Rio Olympics Outreach in August**. Led by ABWE Board Member Dr. David Crandall, this is an amazing opportunity to share the gospel with thousands of Olympic attendees from around the world, and I hope you will prayerfully consider joining us for this unique ministry.*

To learn more or register, go to: www.rio16outreach.com.

Director of Communications: Leah Pickard

Editor: Ingela Hartman

Art Director: Lauren Miller

Staff Writer: Paul Luce

ABWE PO Box 8585

Harrisburg, PA 17105-8585

Phone: 717.774.7000 | Fax: 717.774.1919

www.abwe.org | Email: info@abwe.org



WHO IS THE ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM (ABWE)?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. We are dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 900 ABWE missionaries are working to advance God's work in more than 60 countries by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith, and serving the world with love.

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ON THE COVER:

A sunset silhouette of a person in a wheelchair with a caregiver
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com/imaginegolf



hands to God and worship Him,” said Josh. “It was one of the purest displays of worshipping God that I have ever seen in my life. It still gives me chills when I think about it.”

When the song ended, Tandjom began to pray and accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior. On her deathbed, Tandjom received new life, and shortly after that, her daughter made the same commitment.

“This is just one story among many, but every time we share the gospel with someone who has never even heard of Jesus, we are reminded of why we are here,” said Josh. “God is opening doors and changing lives for all eternity.” ■

TOGO

New Life on a Deathbed

When Tandjom* came to the recently-opened Hospital of Hope in northern Togo, her cancer had already spread too far. Her physical body was beyond medical intervention, but she was not beyond hope.

As she lay in intensive care, a Togolese hospital chaplain and ABWE Missionary Josh Farver came to visit her and discovered she had never heard of Jesus or the Bible. They found a short audio message in her local dialect of Moba and played it for her and her daughter. The women were intrigued and listened closely as the audio discussed the trap of fetish worship, which is very common in the Moba culture. It went on to talk about the origin of sin and the salvation Jesus brought when He died on the cross for man’s sin. Then a

short song asked, “Will you follow Jesus?” The women listened to the song’s message, and as the simple refrain repeated, they softly began to sing along.

After the song ended, the audio shared how they could receive salvation, and then a final song thanked God for Jesus’ saving sacrifice. This was the first time Tandjom had heard Jesus’ name, but she instinctually raised her frail hands toward God and sang along.

“She was never taught what to do, but her natural response was to raise her

Since the Hospital of Hope opened its doors one year ago on March 2, 2015, many lives, like Tandjom, have been touched:

- More than **11,500 patients** have been seen from all over West Africa
- More than **2,200 patients** have been admitted into the hospital
- More than **750 surgeries** have been performed
- More than **290 babies** have been delivered
- **Thousands of patients** and family members have seen the "Jesus Film" and heard the gospel
- Many people have given their lives to Christ and more than **12 house groups** have been started



NICARAGUA

Bee the Church

Every new church prays to be a hive for their community, buzzing with life and activity. But in Nicaragua, ABWE missionaries and local pastors are taking this literally.

Last spring, Al Tuttle, an experienced beekeeper, went to visit ABWE Missionary Bruce Edgar in Nicaragua with the hope of lending a hand and finding a way to use his God-given skills to support existing ministries. After visiting several small and struggling church plants, Al realized that beehives would be an amazing way to help support fledgling churches in rural, low-income

areas. He saw that Nicaragua has an ideal climate for beekeeping, and honey would inject new churches with much-needed income to help provide for their pastors and aid in church growth.

Feeling God’s leading, Al gave the idea wings by generously providing two hives for two church plants. The first church to receive colonies was Iglesia Bautista Hebron II, whose colonies are being

overseen by an involved church member named Alvaro.

“Alvaro was my first choice because he had an ideal location, the ability, and the dedication,” said Bruce. “He is the guy willing to do anything that needs to be done at the church — including being stung by bees.”

This winter, the two Nicaraguan church plants had their first honey harvest.

Most of the honey was sold to cooperatives that give fair market value to local producers, but visitors to Nicaragua can also purchase the honey at ABWE’s Nicaragua Ministry Center.

“We always strive to equip church planters with the tools and training that will help them thrive in their unique area, and this now includes beekeeping,” said Bruce. “We pray this ministry will grow and allow more church plants to flourish in hard to reach communities.” ■

AUSTRALIA

Ministry at the Movies



For as long as he can remember, Australia missionary Russ Matthews has had two great loves: ministry and movies.

As a kid growing up in Iowa, Russ cherished the family tradition of going to the movies. He continued that tradition as he started his own family, even after he, his wife Cathy, and their four children moved to Sydney. But he never imagined that God would show him a way to combine his love for movies with his love for ministry.

The idea was sparked several years ago at a panel

discussion hosted by the City Bible Forum, a ministry that aims to share the gospel in the business districts of every major Australian city. The event discussed Hollywood's influence on culture and religion, and Russ had the opportunity to meet several writers, editors, and producers who were Christians working within Australia's film industry. Together, they realized how they could be using their

interests to engage Australia's spiritually-resistant culture, and The Forum at the Flicks was born.

This unique ministry brings Russ, several panelists, and moviegoers together to screen upcoming films in a rented theater, and then they discuss them through the lens of the Bible.

"We get tons of people coming to these events. And they're so engaged that we usually have to cut off the conversation because we're limited on how much time we can spend in the theaters," Russ said. "It's a really nice way for Christians to invite their non-Christian friends and work colleagues to something where they can ask their questions and hear a solid message."

Russ' ministry has been a tremendous success in a country where less than 15 percent of the population regularly attends church. At the first Forum at the Flicks, more than 50 people came to watch and discuss "The Wolverine," and more than 120 people turned out for "Rise of the Planet of the Apes." The most recent screening of "Age of Adeline" also had more than 120 attendees, and each time, almost half of the audience is non-Christian.

Check out Russ' movie reviews & discussion on his blog www.reeldialogue.com



“To have the Lord use something you really love for His glory is simply amazing.”

— Russ Matthews

UPCOMING EVENTS at ABWE’s Headquarters | Harrisburg, Pa.

“It’s all part of us looking for creative ways to engage people, especially city workers, with the gospel,” Russ said.

After the film is over, panelists participate in dialogue with the audience regarding biblical concepts and themes that appeared in the movie, such as life after death, redemption, and humanity’s need for a savior. The honest back-and-forth dialogue is proving to be a powerful tool in engaging unbelievers and opening the door for discussion about the gospel.

“This ministry definitely was not on my radar of possibilities, but to have the Lord use something you really love for His glory is simply amazing,” Russ said. ■

APRIL
24-Hour DEMO

When: April 28-29, 2016
About: Interested in becoming a missionary? Come find out what it means to be an ABWE missionary and how we can help you get to the mission field. Learn about different missions opportunities all over the world, and receive guidance for the next step of your journey.
Learn more: www.abwe.org/demo

MAY
ABWE’s Good Soil Basic Seminar

When: May 16-17, 2016
About: This seminar will equip you to share God’s story of redemption chronologically, so that people will clearly understand, sincerely embrace, and firmly hold on to the gospel.
Learn more: www.goodsoil.com/training

ABWE’s Good Soil BibleStorying Workshop

When: May 19-20, 2016
About: Come learn how to tell Bible stories effectively so that you can:

- Use Bible stories to reach children & adults
- Use Bible stories to reach postmodern & tribal people
- Enhance your preaching & Bible teaching skills

Learn more: www.goodsoil.com/training

JUNE
ABWE’s Roots of Faith Bible Courses

Old Testament: June 13-17, 2016
New Testament: June 20-24, 2016
About: Join us for this study of God’s redemptive plan as it unfolds chronologically through the Old and New Testaments. Together, these two courses include lessons that feature 100 key Bible events in 25 major Bible eras, from Genesis through Revelation.
Learn more: www.goodsoil.com/training



GIB & MARILYN DICKINSON

CANDIDATE CLASS: 1979

COUNTRIES SERVED IN: Togo & Canada



I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

—Psalm 32:8



1974

Married on January 26



1988

Began working with Anfamé Church in Lomé



1993

Returned to Canada for children's education



Arrived in Togo

1984



Began ministry with the Avédzi church in Lomé

1992

Q&A

Q: How did God first call you to missions?

Marilyn: We met at Ontario Bible College, and although we came from different church backgrounds, we believed that God was leading our lives together in marriage and ministry. After graduating, we were married and began our ministry at Essex Baptist Church in Ontario, Canada where Gib served as an assistant pastor.

During our two years there, the Lord continued to burden our hearts for foreign missions and we eventually left the church to pursue the Lord's leading. We remained active in our home church of Central Baptist in Brantford, Ontario and explored different interests we had for a future ministry, while Gib worked in a local factory and we started a family.

Then, a missionary spoke at our church about his work in church planting, and his presentation helped us understand that the basis of Biblical missions is planting local churches. His message, combined with the influence of our pastor and the missionaries our church supported, led us to apply to serve God through missions with ABWE.

Q: How did God call you to Togo?

A: God gave us Psalms 32:8 as His promise that He would show us where He wanted us to serve Him. We were confident that God had led us to ABWE, but like others in our candidate class, we had not yet discerned what country God was leading us to. We prayed that God would give us more direction during the candidate classes, but each day we were overwhelmed with needs and opportunities for service around the world. Then, halfway through the course, we were introduced to the new ministry that had begun in Togo in 1974. Following the presentation, we had the opportunity to talk with two of the missionary families and hear their goals and vision for the future expansion of the ministry. We could see ourselves being involved in this new ministry. We prayed, and then, while walking around one evening, our prayer for direction was answered. We knew that God had been preparing us for Togo.

Q: What is your favorite memory from the mission field?

A: The planting of the Anfamé church in Lomé will continue to be

our favorite memory from our missionary service. The church began with a core group of 25 members from the first church planted by ABWE in Togo, and from the start, God blessed the church as the gospel was shared. People were saved on a regular basis. Baptismal services were held about every three months. It was a challenge to keep up with the rapid growth, but we were excited to see the Lord was at work in the lives of the Togolese. In just three years, the membership grew to more than 150 and the church was able to financially support a local pastor. Today, the church is completely run by Togolese. It has a thriving Christian school and has given birth to five daughter churches.

Q: What advice would you give to those considering missions?

Marilyn: Never be afraid to follow God's leading. A wise woman told me that God would never lead us where He would not also provide for every need.

Gib: When the difficult times come in ministry and we don't understand what God's will is, remember that we are being conformed to the image of Christ. ■



2002-2004

Moved to Kara in northern Togo to provide furlough coverage at Grace Baptist church & directed Kara Bible Institute



2010-2014

Worked with the Kpalimé Bible Institute & continued ministry with the Kpogadzi Church



Moved to Quebec to Word of Life Bible Institute & ministered with a local French church

1994-1998



Organized the leadership training team with Togolese pastors to direct the Kpalimé Bible Institute

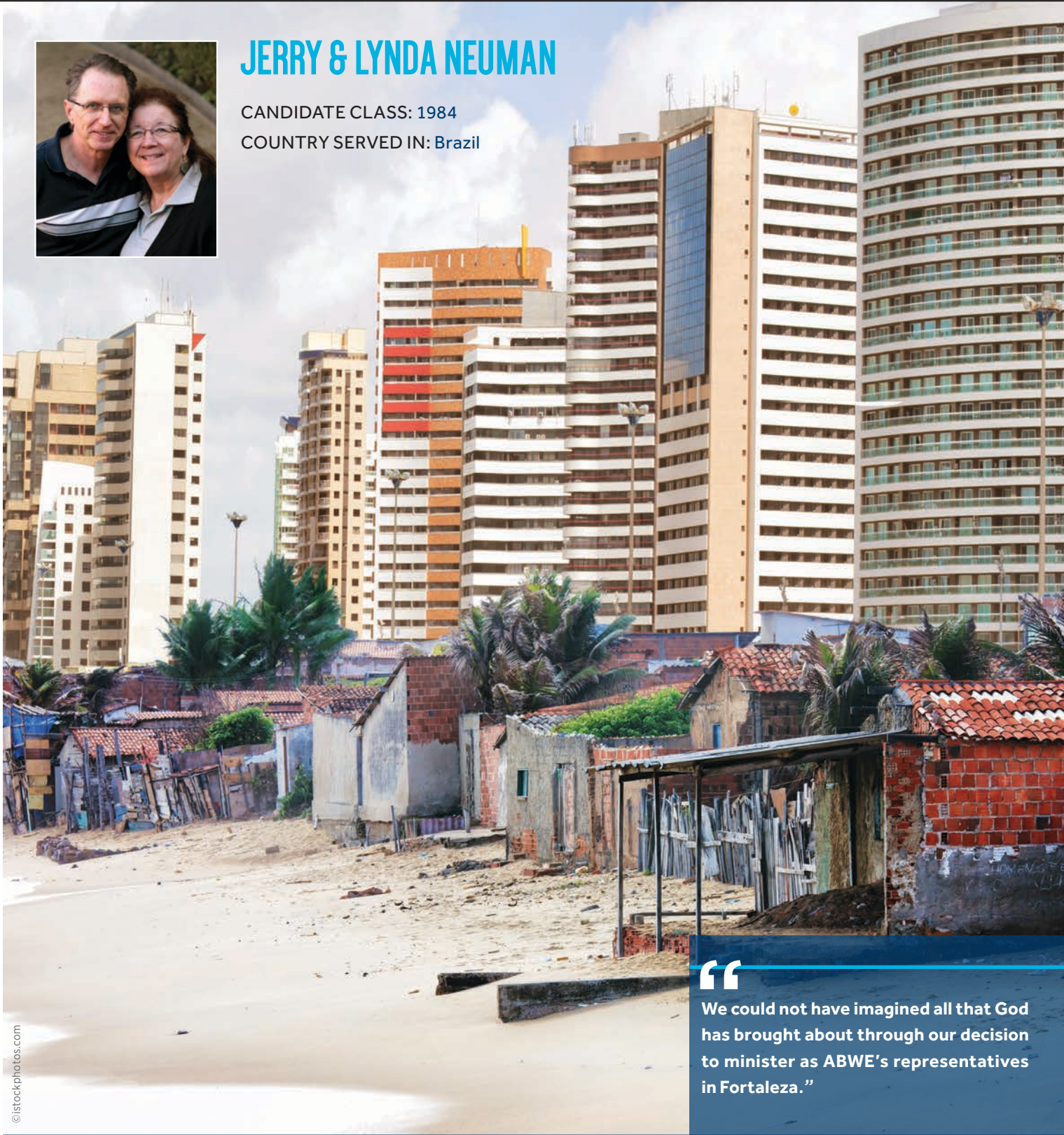
2005-2009



JERRY & LYNDA NEUMAN

CANDIDATE CLASS: 1984

COUNTRY SERVED IN: Brazil



We could not have imagined all that God has brought about through our decision to minister as ABWE's representatives in Fortaleza."



1984
Arrived in Brazil



1989-1992
Jerry taught part-time at Berean Baptist Bible Institute and Seminary in Natal



2002-2014
Jerry and Lynda taught at Maranatha Bible Institute and Seminary in Fortaleza



Helped start the Hope Baptist Church of Itaberaba
1986-1993



Jerry taught full-time at Berean Baptist Bible Institute and Seminary
1996-2001

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE NEUMANS

Q: How did God first call you to missions?

Jerry: I felt called to missions through the study of His word, and I felt it confirmed in the fall of 1970 when ABWE Missionary to Peru Jerry Russell gave a challenge for missions in my home church in Northern California.

Lynda: Interestingly, Jerry Russell also spoke at our college that same fall and challenged us to be willing to go wherever God wanted us to serve Him. I accepted that challenge, and later, as God led Jerry and I together, I realized that “wherever” would be on the foreign field.

Q: How did God call you to Brazil?

A: ABWE Missionary Dick Buck visited our college and challenged students to consider missions — specifically missions in Bahia, Brazil. We both put our names on a list of possible summer internship candidates, and while neither of us went to Brazil, Dick continued to pray for us. When he returned on his next furlough, we had gotten married and Dick again challenged us — personally this time — to consider missions in Bahia. Dick continued to pray for us through the next four years as Jerry went through seminary, and God led our hearts to Brazil.

Q: What is your favorite memory from the mission field?

Lynda: It has been a great joy for me to teach women biblical principles and see them make changes in their personal lives, marriages, relationships, and in the way they care for their children. It was especially rewarding to see two marriages restored, in part because of changes in attitude and behavior of the wives.

Jerry: I have been most blessed to see so many of my former students go on to lead churches, teach in schools, and minister as missionaries and pastors around the world.

Q: What story or moment had the biggest impact on your ministry?

A: We were at a crossroads in our ministry in 2002: return to Bahia to help with a new Bible school, or teach at the Maranatha Bible Institute and Seminary in Fortaleza? Our administrator, Dave Southwell, counseled us to “Go where you will have the greatest impact for Brazil.” Fortaleza, with its greater pool of churches won out, and we have been amazed by how God has used us.

In 2005, Lynda organized a translation team to work on ABWE’s new evangelism and discipleship books, and now these materials are having a huge impact throughout Brazil.

In 2006, we invited ABWE’s Horizon Schools to help the institute evaluate and update their Bachelor’s degree program, resulting in significant expansion of programs and an increase in student enrollment. In 2010, we recommended our ABWE colleagues, Al and Kim Yoder, to host a biblical counseling conference and that blossomed into an annual conference.

In addition, we had the opportunity to help start Maranatha Multicultural Ministries, a Brazilian-led, Brazilian-supported mission agency that currently has 32 Brazilian missionaries serving in 12 countries on four continents. Talk about worldwide influence! We could not have imagined all that God has brought about through our decision to minister as ABWE’s representatives in Fortaleza.

Q: What advice would you give to those considering missions?

A: Seriously consider your background, education, experiences, gifts, and interests when deciding where you will serve and in what type of ministry. The book “Unpacking Your Sixth Suitcase” by John Bradley was very instrumental in our decision to leave church planting and go into full-time teaching. ■

**2005-2009**

Helped a team to plant the Maranatha Baptist Bible Church of Edson Queiroz in Fortaleza

**2008**

Jerry helped organize MMM and continues to serve as Administrative Director



Lynda helped with Portuguese translation of the Bible study “The Way to Joy”

2005

Helped launch the Maranatha Multicultural Ministries (MMM), a Brazilian missions agency

2006

WAR

PEACE IN

Caleb carefully pushes Sveta across the rutted sidewalk, working hard not to tip her wheelchair as they hit large cracks.

“I have a very nice chair at home with bigger wheels,” Sveta says apologetically. “Unfortunately, they won’t let me go home.”

The pain in her voice is evident as she talks about being forced to leave everything behind when the war broke out in eastern Ukraine. Her feelings of homesickness are interwoven with a profound sense of powerlessness that she, and so many others, are experiencing in this war.

Shortly after the war began, the Ukrainian government hastily evacuated people with disabilities from the conflict zone. Most were only given a moment’s notice to hurriedly grab a few things before they were bused away from their homes, their loved ones, and the life they knew. They were told it would only be for a month, but for some, it’s been more than 20 months and still the war drags on — and home feels further and further away.

By INGELA HARTMAN

While the war in Ukraine has faded from international headlines and has long been forgotten by most of the world, it is still a heartbreaking reality for the people living here. After two tumultuous years, most Ukrainians are wondering if the war will ever end, and more poignantly, the 2.6 million Ukrainians who fled the conflict zone are wondering if home still exists.

Ever since Russia attempted to seize control of Ukraine’s southern Crimea region and began supplying support to rebels in eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian government has



been battling for control — leaving the Ukrainian people caught in the middle of a war that has simmered to a stalemate of occasional fighting on the frontline. Much of the country has become hostages in this never-ending war, but perhaps, the most powerless population is Ukraine’s disabled. When war broke out, more than 60,000 disabled people fled or were evacuated from the conflict zone. Many were moved into rundown government-owned buildings in western and southern Ukraine, like the old Soviet mud sanatorium near ABWE Missionary Caleb Suko’s church in Odessa.

The sanatorium was a wellness facility built in the 70s on the shores of a salt lake whose mud was reported to have medicinal and healing properties. Originally part of a government health program for factory workers, the building now sits in disrepair. Its old wooden windows and doors are drafty, and the heating system is weak. It was never intended to be used during the winter, but for more than 500 disabled refugees, it is now home.

“We just sit here and wait,” said one of the refugees living at the sanatorium. “We think about home all the time.”

The uncertainty about their living arrangements, combined with inability to do anything about them, is agonizing for the people living here.

More than 60,000 disabled people fled or were evacuated from the conflict zone after the war broke out in eastern Ukraine.

Many disabled refugees from Ukraine's conflict zone have been unable to return to their homes for nearly two years.

“They long for home more than almost anything,” said Caleb, who has been ministering to the sanatorium residents for more than a year. “While I can’t bring them home or stop the war, I can give them hope that will overcome all their problems — even this despicable war.”

The Start Of A New Ministry

Caleb and his Hope for People Church learned about the refugees living at the nearby sanatorium through Alex, a new believer at his church who worked with the local city government to relocate these refugees. Alex immediately saw a unique opportunity for ministry, and in December 2014, Caleb’s church invited the refugees to their elaborate Christmas outreach event. They bused over about 50 people from the sanatorium to

“While I can’t bring them home or stop the war, I can give them hope that will overcome all their problems — even this despicable war.”



©Galina Pritula

watch a live reenactment of the Christmas story, featuring 75 actors from local churches, alongside real horses, donkeys, goats, pigs, chickens, ducks, and ponies.

“They were grateful that we went out of our way to do something special for them,” said Caleb. “Life as a refugee can be pretty bleak, and it’s a rare occasion when they get to enjoy something like this.”

Afterwards, the refugees joined more than 2,000 attendees for games, food, and fellowship. For most of the refugees, this was the first time they had heard the gospel, but Caleb made sure it wasn’t the last.

At Easter, he extended another invitation to attend a special picnic in his church’s courtyard. More than 50 refugees eagerly accepted the invitation, and while at the picnic, a few of them asked if Caleb would come do regular Bible studies with them at the sanatorium.

“It was clear they had been through a lot. They needed physical healing and spiritual healing,” said Caleb. “They needed Jesus.”

Ministering To The Broken Hearted

In late spring, Caleb and a few members from his church began going out to minister to the refugees every Sunday afternoon. They welcomed any refugee who wanted to join them in the sanatorium’s small courtyard to discuss the Bible.

As they sat together under warm blue skies, they would sing songs of hope, Caleb would preach the gospel, and then they would pray together. Almost all those who attended were unfamiliar with the Bible and had rarely, if ever, attended a church, so Caleb also spent a lot of time answering questions. Some of their questions were difficult, like “Is God punishing us with this war?” But every week, Caleb worked to show them how faith in God could give them peace during times of tribulation.

While many continued to struggle with anger, hopelessness, and depression, the tone of the group seemed to be changing, and one Sunday in July, Caleb’s words finally hit home for Sveta, a disabled refugee who had been coming to the services for several months. Caleb’s sermon that afternoon had explained how the Bible sets a standard for our lives that we can never meet on our own and how Jesus offers forgiveness to all who believe.

ABWE Missionary Caleb Suko and his Hope for People Church began a weekly ministry to disabled refugees living at a nearby sanatorium in Odessa.





Every week Caleb Suko and members from his church invite these nearby refugees to join them to learn more about the Bible and God.

When he concluded, there were still a lot of questions, but this time his words resonated with Sveta and she asked to pray a prayer of repentance.

While Sveta's spiritual walk is still new, and change among the refugees has been slow, a shift is happening in the attitudes of those who have been attending the outreaches. One man named Misha came for several months without hardly saying a word. Caleb began to wonder if he even knew how to talk because every time he saw him Misha would just give Caleb a little grunt and go on his way. However, in the last couple of weeks, something has shifted in Misha, and instead of greeting Caleb with a gruff grunt, he now greets him with a hug and a kiss. Every week, he tells Caleb how glad he is to see him.

"God is working in the hearts and lives of these people like I have never seen before. The change can be seen and felt. Many of them have the glow of hope in their eyes that they did not have just a few months ago," said Caleb. "This can only be God working through the power of the gospel."

“God is working
in the hearts and
lives of these
people like I
have never seen
before.”



Nearly 70 refugees attend the Sunday services Caleb and his church organize, and last September, they added a Tuesday night Bible study.

“Please pray for these disabled refugees. Pray for peace. But more importantly, please pray that our words and Jesus’ love will reach their heart.”

Through these uncertain and seemingly hopeless times in Ukraine, Caleb and his church have been given a unique opportunity to share the source of their hope.

While only a small group of about 10 refugees initially attended the sanatorium services, that number has grown to nearly 70 regular attendees, and last September, Caleb added a Tuesday night discipleship and Bible study group.

“Please pray for these disabled refugees. Pray for them to find a stable housing situation. Pray for peace,” said Caleb. “But more importantly, please pray that our words and Jesus’ love will reach their heart.” ■

Support ABWE’s Ukraine Crisis Fund

Established by ABWE missionaries in partnership with local church leaders, the Ukraine Crisis Fund is strengthening the church’s ability to share Jesus’ love by ministering to people’s physical needs during this time of war.

In the past two years, the fund has helped provide relief and hope to thousands of people by funneling money to churches ministering within the conflict zone and to churches ministering to refugees.

Help us help more hurting Ukrainians by supporting the Ukraine Crisis Fund:
www.abwe.org/ukraine



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THE 4 P's OF ESTATE PLANNING

Estate is just a fancy word for all of the things a person owns. It doesn't matter if your estate is modest or large, faithful stewards should plan for what happens to their assets when their life ends. And planning is easy when you focus on the Four P's of Estate Planning:

- 1. Property:** Make a list of everything you own, including life insurance and retirement plans.
- 2. People:** List any family, friends, and ministries you want to receive a portion of your estate.
- 3. Plan:** Match your property with the people and ministries you want to receive them. Distributing by percentage often works well.
- 4. Professionals:** Be sure to seek professional advice as you draft and formalize your plans.



To help you begin this process, we would love to send you our **FREE** estate planning record book.

To request this **FREE** resource and learn more about ABWE gift planning options, contact:

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 Director of Generosity Planning
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For personalized legal and tax advice,
 please consult an attorney or tax expert.





Able

Enabling South Africa's Youth with Disabilities

By Paul Luce



When you first walk into the simple concrete building that's home to ABWE's Simanyene Center for the Disabled, you will most likely be greeted by the bright smile of a young man in a khaki bucket hat. His name is Letsekang.

When he was 20, Letsekang lost a portion of his brain in a horrific car accident on the dangerous highways of Cape Town, South Africa. He also lost his abilities to speak, walk, and care for himself, and he was placed in the care of older siblings who sadly lacked both compassion and understanding for his situation. Often, his brothers would leave him alone for long periods as they squandered and drank away Letsekang's government-provided care stipend. His family assumed Letsekang was brain dead, but they were wrong. He was very much alive and very much in need of love.

God brought that love to him two years ago in the form of Wayne and Sue Royce, ABWE missionaries and Simanyene Center founders.

Called into Question

The Royce's journey to Letsekang began 30 years ago when Wayne and Sue became believers in their early 20s. Wayne immediately felt called to be a missionary, but when their third child, Craig, was born with multiple handicaps, they thought it was God's way of telling them to stay stateside.

“Obviously, when God chooses to give you a child with disabilities, you and your family change. I knew early in Craig's life that we needed to accept this, or we would not be able to help him. We could choose to be bitter, or we could choose to let Craig make us better,” Sue said. “Although it's difficult at times, we are the better for having Craig. He teaches us to love unconditionally, be very patient, and look for the little successes in life.”

Although they went to South Africa because it promised the best schooling options for Craig, those promises failed to materialize. School after school had long waiting lists or viewed Craig as too disabled or too old. It was frustrating, but the Royces soon discovered that the continuous roadblocks they encountered were not unusual.

In 2015, Human Rights Watch published a scathing report of the country's education system. According to the report, an estimated 500,000 children with disabilities had been shut out of South Africa's education system, many of whom were discriminated against during enrollment decisions. Although South Africa claimed to reach the United Nations' goals of enrolling all children in primary school and was one of the first countries to ratify the UN's Disability Rights Treaty

“Although it's difficult at times, we are the better for having Craig. He teaches us to love unconditionally, be very patient, and look for the little successes in life.”

After eight years, Wayne and Sue's perceived leading to stay in the United States was challenged when Wayne attended a men's church retreat. ABWE missionary Don Trott was a guest speaker, and he helped Wayne see that his initial desire to be a missionary was indeed a calling from God.

The Royces applied to serve with ABWE and began praying for guidance on where to serve. They soon felt drawn to Cape Town, South Africa, as it was both English-speaking and had schools for special needs children. It sounded like a near perfect fit, but that didn't make the transition from a comfortable American lifestyle to the unknown any less challenging.

“It was a very scary thing for me to take our son, who had everything he needed in the US and trust the Lord to provide for his many needs in South Africa,” Sue explained.

that promotes inclusive education systems, the report found that many children with disabilities in South Africa were not in school at all.

“The current system is ad hoc and expensive, and isolates children with disabilities from other learners,” wrote report author Elin Martínez. “As a result, the government is failing hundreds of thousands of children with disabilities, violating its own policies and laws.”

From Roadblock to Roadway

After much prayer and heartache, Wayne and Sue finally found a school for Craig, and for several years, he seemed to be progressing well. But when Craig's teacher moved away, his growth at the school began to decline. The Royces thought about trying to find another school in South Africa's broken system, but instead, felt God calling them to be the solution.



“An estimated 500,000 children with disabilities had been shut out of South Africa’s education system.”

Almost as soon as they began to investigate if there were other young people like Craig in their township, God began bringing them to the Royces.

First, there was Sinethemba, a homebound young man with severe cerebral palsy who showed up at one of the Royces’ children’s outreach ministries in a nearby town. Then, they discovered Anda, a boy who suffered a stroke when he was dropped on his head as a child and now wandered the streets of his neighborhood aimlessly. So with Sinethemba, Anda, and Craig as their first students, the Royces opened the doors to the Simanyene Center for the Disabled.

That was four years ago, and today, the center is buzzing with 11 students receiving physical therapy and learning English, math, and Bible lessons. Every day, Sue, along with a very small professional staff, shows her students and their families that everyone is worthy of God’s love.

“Our desire is to provide compassionate care and have an environment where children and young disabled adults can learn new skills and be taught the word of God each day,” Sue said. “We believe every individual counts and each person can learn and grow at their own ability.”



Craig (25)

About: He is Wayne and Sue Royce’s son. He is intellectually disabled and has cerebral palsy, autism, bi-polar, and seizures. He enjoys playing the piano and loves being the taste tester when the team bakes treats.

At the Center: He communicates with his eyes and is being trained to use a Picture Exchange Communication System.



Sinethemba (23)

About: He was never in a special education program until he became one of the center’s first students more than three years ago. He has cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, and suffers from seizures, but he loves to talk and get around in his wheelchair. Sadly, both of his parents passed away last year.

At the Center: He is learning to read Xhosa sight words, count to ten, and write his name, and he recently accepted Jesus as his Savior.



Anda (26)

About: He has autism and limited function on his left side, but he is a wonderful young man who loves to be helpful. He helps keep track of the keys at the center and loves playing piano.

At the Center: He is learning basic math, computer, and writing, and recently, he accepted Jesus as his Savior.



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Bongiswa (19)

About: She is intellectually disabled, but loves school. She is very shy and talks very quietly. She can write her first and last name and knows her colors.

At the Center: She is learning to count and add, and she is also learning sight words in English.



Songezo (20's)

About: He is intellectually disabled, but very street smart. He learned how to survive by begging and scavenging, but now has difficulty being indoors and following a routine. He is strong-willed, but he is still very sweet and lovable with the biggest laugh you've ever heard.

At the Center: He can sort simple items, loves to help carry things, and is building on his limited speech and fine motor skills.



Siyabonga (11)

About: He is a very sweet and bright little boy with cerebral palsy. He loves math, and his parents are thrilled that he is at the center.

At the Center: In addition to receiving physical therapy each day, he is learning to read English using phonics, and he is learning to do simple arithmetic using an iPad with his mouth and feet as he has no use of his hands.



Mangaliso (13)

About: His mother struggles to make ends meet so this is the first time he has ever received any formal education. His cognitive skills are similar to his peers, but he has spina bifida and cannot walk and speech is severely limited. He loves using the computer.

At the Center: He is working on sorting shapes, counting, learning the alphabet, and writing his name.

Spread The Good News

As word of the Simanyene Center spread, people from all over began informing the Royces about potential students, including a physical therapist who thought one of her clients would be a perfect fit for the center. His name was Letsekang.

“We found him at home in a room, staring at four walls, with nothing for stimulation,” Sue recalled. “When we asked the family what he liked to do, they replied, ‘Nothing.’ His family thought he couldn’t do anything.”

his own!” said Sue. “From that, we knew Letsekang could learn and knew everything that was going on around him.”

Initially, Letsekang was incredibly shy and struggled to make much progress at the center, but as he observed Sinethemba, Anda, and Craig learning to read, write, and feed themselves, he started to come out of his shell. Since then, Letsekang has learned to use a computer, add, subtract, multiply, and write his name and address. But best of all, he has learned about God’s unconditional love, and one day, as the Royces were telling him about Jesus and the reason for the cross, Letsekang raised his hand to accept Jesus as his Savior.

“It takes a long time and a lot of repetition of the Bible for some of them to gain true understanding,” Sue said. “But they do learn and several have accepted Jesus as their Savior, including Letsekang, Anda, and Sinethemba.”

At the Simanyene Center, the Royces are teaching these children how to care for themselves and how God cares for them. But Sue says she is the one who comes away with the greatest education of all.

“The center is an amazing family, and these are God’s special children who we have the privilege of ministering to,” she said. “One can learn so much godly character by being with these kids.” ■



The center is an amazing family, and these are God’s special children who we have the privilege of ministering to.”

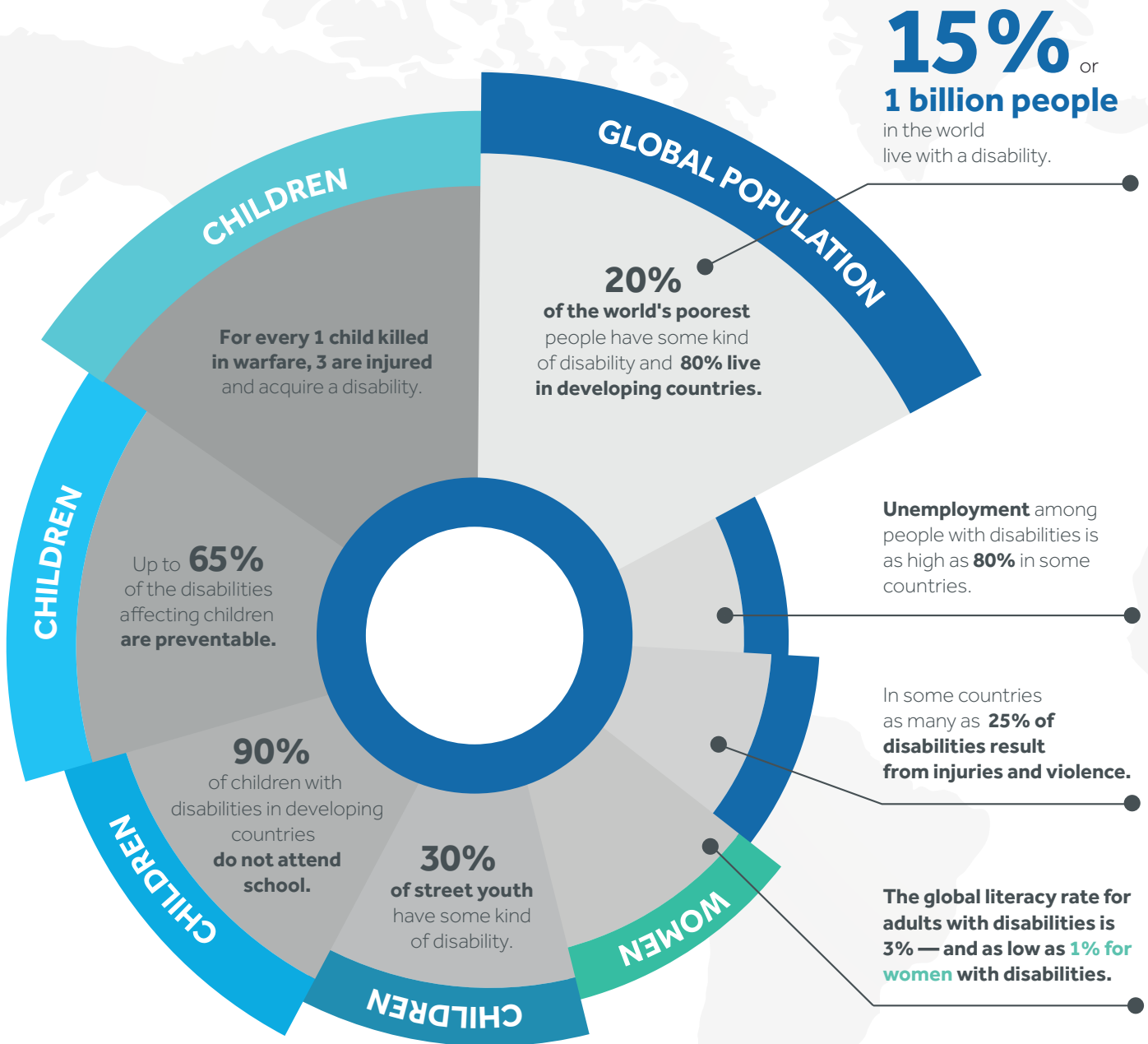
After several visits from the Royces, Letsekang’s family finally brought him to the school. Sue was overjoyed to see her new student, but she got nervous when she realized he was the most disabled student they had ever accepted.

“We had no clue what we could do for him — so we started by teaching him the first letter of his name, and we were blown away when he finished the rest on

LEARNHOW you can help the children and young adults of the Simanyene Center continue to learn and discover the love of Jesus at www.abwe.org/simanyene

DISABILITY

Around the World



93-150

million children

are estimated to live with disabilities.



“... when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

Luke 14:13:14

ABWE Ministries to the Disabled

Africa



Village of Light School for the Blind | Kpalime, Togo

Founded in 1974

Nearly 1,000 blind children have been given an education that includes French Braille, trade work skills, and God's love



Simanyene Center for the Disabled | Cape Town, South Africa

Founded in 2012

Provides 11 disabled youth with therapy, education, personalized care, and the gospel

Asia

Brace and Limb Division at Memorial Christian Hospital | South Asia

Founded in 1979

More than 13,000 adults and children with amputations or malformed limbs have received prostheses, braces, walkers, and other medical equipment

Heart House | South Asia

Founded in 1972

Shares the love of Christ by teaching widowed and disabled women marketable sewing skills



Izumi Deaf Ministry | Izumi, Japan

Founded in 1960

ABWE missionaries partner with nearly 20 churches to coordinate outreach ministries to deaf people in their communities

South America



Jamaican Christian School for the Deaf | St. James, Jamaica

ABWE missionaries minister at this residential facility to share the love of Jesus with more than 50 deaf children

West Haven Children's Home | Copse, Jamaica

ABWE missionaries help this orphanage care for and share the gospel with more than 80 youth with disabilities

Robin's Nest Children's Home | St. James, Jamaica

ABWE missionaries partner with this Christ-centered orphanage to minister to its 35 children — several with disabilities

Europe

International Christian School of Budapest | Budapest, Hungary

Founded in 1992

Provides a Christian education to 260 kindergarten-through-12th grade students — 25 of whom have disabilities



Disabled Refugee Ministry | Odessa, Ukraine

Founded in 2014

Ministers weekly to more than 500 disabled refugees who were relocated from the conflict zone to a rundown sanatorium in southern Ukraine



THERE'S NO PLACE
LIKE HOME

FN

..... *By an ABWE Missionary*

Nearly two years ago, an emergency situation forced my family to leave our mission field. We hastily packed up our lives and boarded a plane bound for the US — leaving behind our ministry to refugees and the country we had come to call home.

Once back in the US, we began a difficult period of wondering if we would be able to return, waiting to see if it would ever be possible, and longing to be back where we were seeing God work so powerfully. Then,

after 10 long months of intense prayer and uncertainty, our prayers were answered.

We were finally able to return home, but as I stood in our kitchen the first morning back, trying to remember where

a certain item could be found, I was struck by a profound and unexpected sense of unsettledness. I couldn't put my finger on the root of the feeling. Homesickness? No. Jet lag? Not this time. It didn't make sense.

This was the place I had so desperately longed to be for 10 months, and I expected to walk into our apartment and immediately feel at home. But instead, I felt less settled and less at home.

As I thought about it, I realized this feeling wasn't new. Like many of us, I have spent much of my life looking for a place where I belonged, somewhere with a hole exactly the size and shape of me. I imagined a

place where I would feel perfectly at home and at peace, but I have never found it. And now, I realize that is a blessing.

During our time waiting in America and throughout my life, God has shown me that discomfort is a faithful teacher if we are willing students. I now see that the more at home we feel in our current setting, the less likely we are to long for something better. As believers, we know that our real home is waiting for us in heaven, but how often does that intrude on our daily thoughts or capture our hearts? If I feel even just a little out of place where I am, I am more likely to look ahead with eager anticipation to where I am going — a place that was created just for me where I can spend eternity worshipping and enjoying my Creator.

Not only does such meditation put this fleeting thing we call "life on earth" into perspective, it gives us an unparalleled message of hope to share with the hurting and suffering masses around us. While my

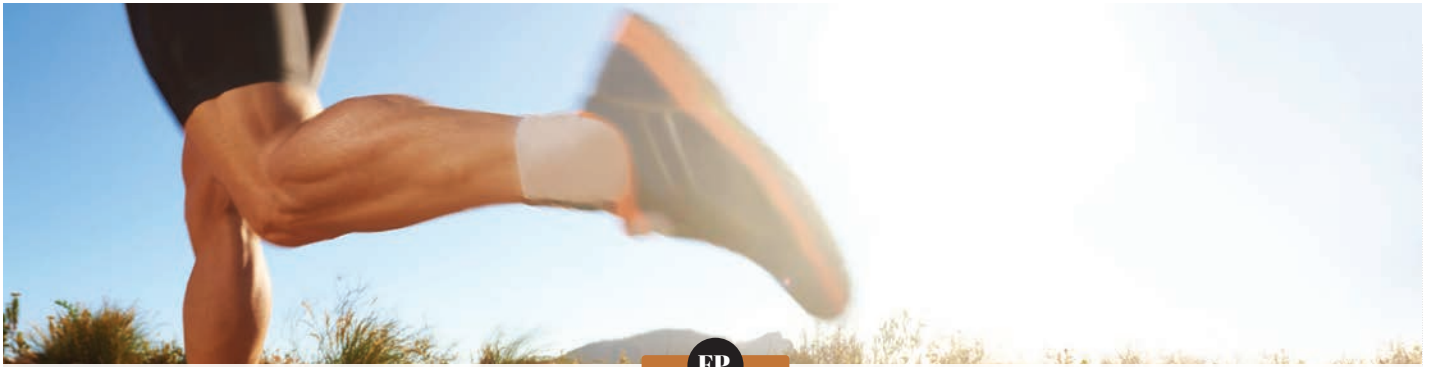
family and I long to make this life better for the Syrian refugees we work with, ultimately nothing can compare with the beautiful truth that this world is not our home. We want the world to know what we know: there is something coming that is beyond our wildest imagination, created for us by our Creator, that we can enjoy for all eternity if we will just trust in Him. The more deeply we believe it, the more likely we are to

believably share it.

Please don't misunderstand me. This great epiphany hasn't inspired us to suddenly get rid of all our stuff so we can live more uncomfortably and long for heaven that much more — we like indoor plumbing, comfortable furniture, and kitchen appliances. But it has inspired us to live in the mindful knowledge that this is not our true home.

While God created this world for us to enjoy, He wants us to enjoy Him infinitely more, and we want our desire for Him to shape our time and our efforts. I pray that it captures our focus and imagination above all else, so when that feeling of unsettledness creeps in, as it always does, I can rest in the knowledge that the perfect home I've been longing for does exist — in heaven. ■

**“I have spent
much of my life
looking for a place
where I belonged,
somewhere with a
hole exactly the size
and shape of me.”**



FP

10 Ways Missions is Like Running

..... According to Shawne (*writer*) & Harold (*runner*)

ABWE missionaries in South Asia

Harold drips his way onto our back veranda. His shoes squish as he walks. He just ran for two hours. Before breakfast. In the dark. In our stifling South Asia heat.

“Productive discomfort,” he says with a smile, before guzzling a bottle of recovery drink.

Productive discomfort? Sounds like the definition of our lives. Is that what missions is meant to be? As he wipes sweat from his eyes, I ponder the many parallels between running and missions work.

1. Practice. Before we came here, Harold and I had received advanced training. We thought we were in-shape and ready for life here, but we quickly discovered we were weak and needy. We had much to learn.

2. Focus every motion on forward movement. As I converse with neighbors, I jot down new vocabulary. Harold discovers that his national co-workers share concerns and insights over cups of tea, not during formal meetings. We learn and press forward.

3. Don't tense up. Countrywide strikes and world events can cause tension. Unexpected speaking opportunities, unplanned daily events, and unanticipated guests at the door can cause panic. But we give our fear to God and pray for His peace and calm.

4. Pain is a message; make adjustments. We cross-cultural workers make mistakes; we hurt feelings of nationals and miscommunicate with our colleagues. So, we ask forgiveness, make adjustments, and pray to do better the next time.

5. Lean into the run; your feet will leap forward to catch you. We never know how God is going to work in the hearts of the people we minister to, but we run in faith. We keep leaning into God, and over the years, He has never let us fall.

6. Keep looking up. Solomon wrote, “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” And so we pray for guidance. We strategize with teammates, but all the while, we keep our eyes up and fixed on God.

7. Appreciate your whole body working together. Our team is a diverse mix of ages, backgrounds, and personalities, but our work is united by the same purpose.

8. Enjoy the run. As marathoner Ryan Hall tells it, “the most powerful mental tool in running is joy.” Missions is no different, so at our prayer meetings, tea breaks, and in the middle of the struggles, we work to find joy in the many stories of God’s grace and provision.

9. Be content with where you are in the process. No matter the pace, we’re thankful to be able to run and to be a part of God’s amazing work. It’s all God’s grace from beginning to end.

10. Think hope on those hills. Our hope is in our Lord. And He is the reason we are happy in our productive discomfort and the reason we keep smiling in our squishy shoes. ■



SL

Among THE REEDS

“Along the Peruvian Amazon River, this canoe sat tied up near the village of Santa Rosa, where we occasionally take medical and short-term missionary teams. The village is a short distance from our home in the city of Iquitos and is one of several places that is ministered to by Brother Felix, a national missionary

who is fully supported by a local church in the city of Iquitos. We partner with Brother Felix and his sending church in church planting, church training, medical evangelism, and child evangelism. Together, we have been blessed to minister and share the gospel in several remote villages along the Amazon. ■

About Andy and Carol Patton | *Missionaries to Peru*

Andy grew up as a missionary kid in the Amazon jungle, and Carol grew up as a military kid in the US Navy. In 2004, they followed their call to missions in the Upper Amazon of Peru where they disciple and minister to the local people.

LEARN MORE about the Pattons' ministry in Peru | www.8pattons.org

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