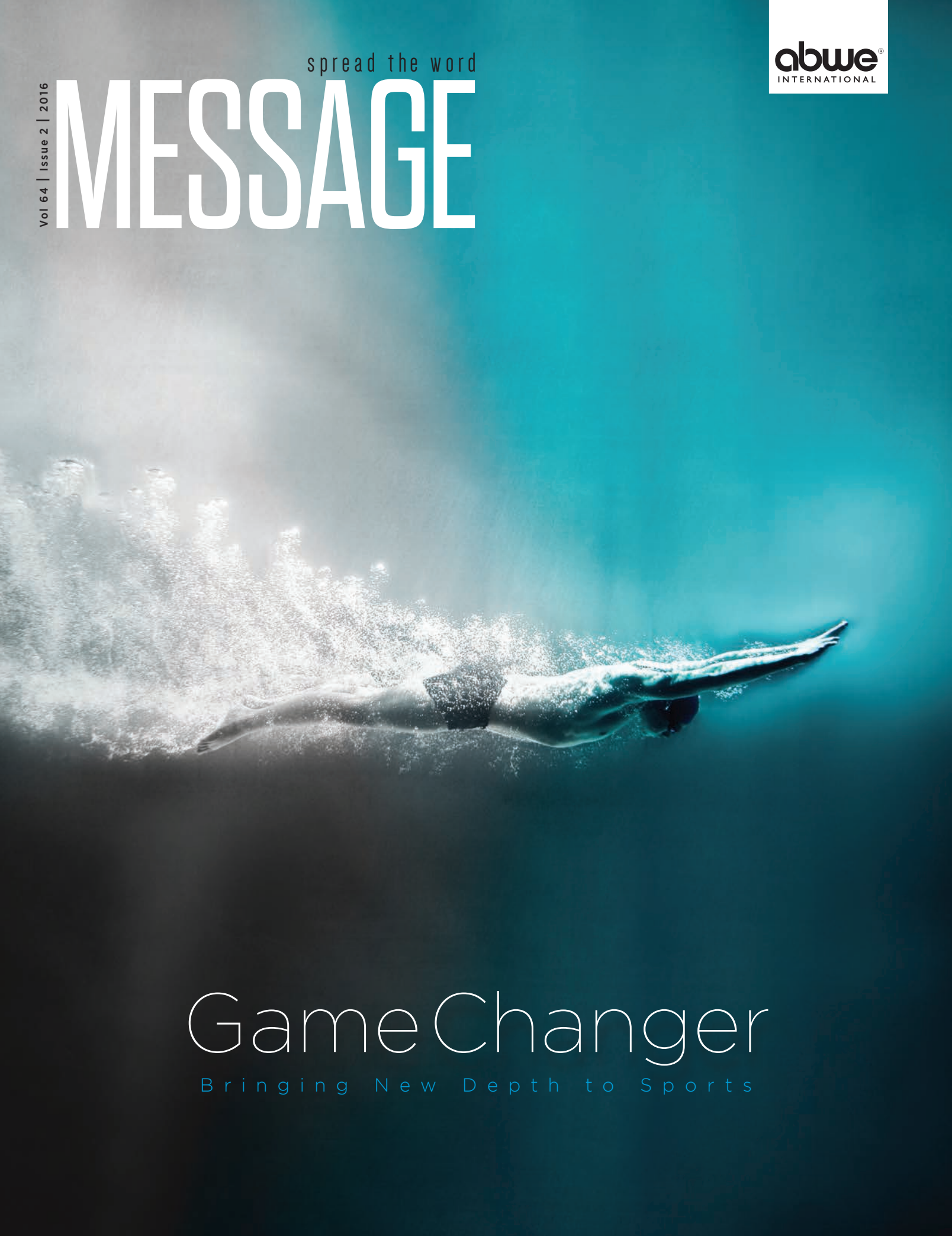


spread the word

abwe[®]
INTERNATIONAL

Vol 64 | Issue 2 | 2016

MESSAGE



GameChanger

Bringing New Depth to Sports



We Are All Called

We are each called to answer the needs before us — needs that can challenge us and send us to our knees in prayer. As I look back on my life, I see many times when I was called to tasks way beyond my capabilities that God used mightily to strengthen my faith and build His Kingdom.

Recently, I answered such a call when I was asked to serve as Interim President of ABWE just as the mission began processing the troubling and heartbreaking findings of an investigation into the historic sexual child abuse case by a former missionary and the mission's response, which you can learn more about at www.abwe.org/ProtectingOurChildren. Despite overwhelming challenges, I am working with leadership to cultivate a ministry culture that values and exemplifies integrity, accountability, and transparency. And together we are working to find a president who can carry this vision into the future as we continue to share Christ with the nations and fulfill the Great Commission.

While there is much to be done, every issue of this magazine helps remind me of the importance of the work we are doing. Each story shines a light on the amazing things God is doing through our missionaries — normal people who eagerly answered His call. I hope their stories inspire you, as they do me, to respond to the unique opportunities God has put before you — even when the task feels too great.

Al Cockrell | Interim President

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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 70 countries by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith, and serving the world with love.

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Gridiron Gospel

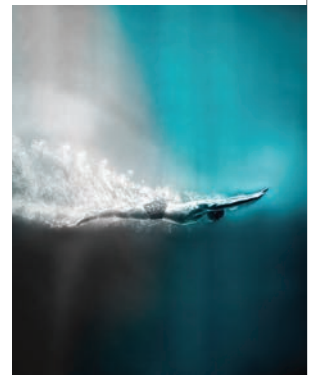
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Swimmer dives into water
©Petrellos

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ONLINE

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UKRAINE

Fleeing to Salvation

© Ozgurdonmaz

*“NOW I SERVE
GOD WITH JOY,
BUT I STILL MISS
MY HOME.”*

While Tatyana and her son’s family were enjoying a lakeside picnic near her home in eastern Ukraine, an explosion of artillery fire ripped through the air. They managed to get home safely, but the fighting between Ukrainian troops and Russian separatists turned Tatyana’s city into a war zone.

“Every day, I saw dead and injured people in the street, others hiding in basements with children crying for something to eat and drink,” she said. “On the bus going home from work, I often saw buildings on fire, and people covered with blood.”

Shrapnel damaged Tatyana’s

roof and blew out her windows. She went without power, gas, water, and heat for 11 months, until she finally fled to a safer area of Ukraine. Tatyana was fortunate to find a small room in a dormitory, and a young lady told her about a nearby church that was providing relief aid to refugees.

Using money provided by ABWE’s Ukraine Crisis Fund, the church gave Tatyana free hot lunches and groceries, and the pastor told her about a God who loved her deeply.

“The pastor’s words lifted the veil from my eyes,” Tatyana said.

Tatyana began to attend the

church regularly, and after a few months, she began to feel God pulling at her heart. She was burdened by the full weight of her sin until she prayed to God for forgiveness.

“After that, I felt light, as if I had wings,” she said. “Now I want to do everything in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Tatyana’s new found salvation began with the help of the Ukraine Crisis Fund, which was established by ABWE missionaries in partnership with local church leaders to strengthen their ability to share Jesus’ love by ministering to people’s physical needs during these uncertain times. Over the past two years, the fund has helped provide relief and hope to thousands of people through churches ministering to refugees and those in the conflict zone.

“Now, I serve God with joy, but I still miss my home,” said Tatyana. “I hope to return someday so I can share Christ with my friends and neighbors.” ■

LEARNHOW you can support the Ukraine Crisis Fund at www.abwe.org/ukraine

C

© UNHCR / Andrew McConnell



MIDDLE EAST

Giving Living Water to Syrian Refugees

According to a recent study, the number of displaced people in the world has hit 60 million, with Syria’s more than 4.5 million refugees in the spotlight. The need worldwide is overwhelming, but for ABWE workers Brock and Sarah Snow*, this need is opening doors for the gospel in the Middle East.

For the past 11 months, the Snows have been working with a team of national partners to share Christ’s love by providing practical aid to Syrian refugees who

have sought shelter in their Middle Eastern community. Recently, their team received a donation of blankets and personal items that allowed them to help and forever change the life of a refugee named Rashid*.

Rashid is a father of seven, but he used to be the father of nine. Two of his sons died in an explosion in northeast Syria when a shell hit their home, trapping the boys in the rubble and badly injuring another of his sons.

Two years later, his one son still bears the scars of

those injuries, and the pain of losing two of their sons is still fresh on Rashid and his wife’s faces.

When the Snow’s team visited them, Rashid and his family were cold, exhausted, and dejected. They had been to more than five mosques in their area, but no one would help them.

“When we came to them — Christians willing and ready to help — they were amazed,” said Brock.

After giving them blankets and hot water bottles, Rashid cried with relief. He

had felt helpless and hopeless for so long. As Rashid wiped his eyes, he asked them why they were helping his family, which opened the door for them to share the source of their hope.

As they shared the gospel, a peaceful calm came over Rashid’s face, and that very day, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. ■

LEARNHOW you can help give hope to Syrian refugees like Rashid, at www.abwe.org/syria

*names changed for security

INDIA

Training Up Leaders in India



© Pixelfusion3d

Over the past 30 years, ABTS has trained nearly 350 graduates from 26 Asian countries.

This year, Asia Biblical Theological Seminary (ABTS), an ABWE partnering school, celebrated their first class of graduates at its Delhi, India satellite campus.

While many were already impressively educated — an engineer, a social enterprise manager, a corporate lawyer — these eight students studied theology and ministry methods for more than three years. Now, with a solid ABTS biblical education, they join the ranks of the rare 5 percent of people in the world with any kind of pastoral ministry training and are better equipped to share the gospel

in their own country, which is just 2.3 percent Christian.

“The gospel is expanding so rapidly in the Asia-Pacific region that many pastors are doing their best without theological training — though they eagerly desire it,” said ABWE missionary Jim Blumenstock, who serves as both a professor and dean of ABTS. “In order to better reach Asians, we give church leaders a solid foundation in God’s Word and train them to share the gospel in their unique culture.”

Over the past 30 years, ABTS has trained nearly 350 graduates from 26 Asian

countries to share the gospel, build disciples, and plant churches in regions where Christ’s name has rarely been heard. ABTS graduates are changing the spiritual landscape throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and its newest Indian graduates are already adding to that momentum.

“Along with seeing their proud family and friends, the best part of the graduation ceremony was hearing their stories,” said Jim. “Because of them, churches are growing, people are being saved, and the gospel is going to villages where Christ has never been preached.” ■



1983
FOUNDED



342
TOTAL GRADUATES

4

DEGREES Master of Religious Education
Master of Arts in Bible
Master of Arts in Theology
Master of Arts in Ministry



STUDENT MINISTRIES

Upon graduating, many ABTS students have used their degrees

in the following ministries:

Administration, Bible College Teacher, Camping Ministry, Chaplain, Christian Educator, Church Planter, Deacon, Discipleship Ministry, Evangelist, Leadership Trainer, Literature Ministry, Missionary, Pastor, Sports Ministry, and Youth Ministry

LEARNHOW you can help Asian students receive impactful ministry training at www.abwe.org/abts

ABOUT ASIA BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (ABTS)

Students from all over Asia come to study Theology and Ministry at our 9 satellite campuses.



Delhi, India (Satellite Campus)

26 STUDENTS HOME COUNTRIES

- Australia
- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- Canada
- China
- Finland
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Singapore
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- UAE
- United Kingdom
- USA
- Vietnam



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

OCTOBER

Good Soil Basic Seminar

When: Oct 17-18, 2016

About: This seminar equips 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

Good Soil Trainer Certification

When: October 19, 2016

About: This one-day workshop equips and certifies missionaries and church leaders to train other believers in Good Soil evangelism and discipleship principles and techniques.

Learn more: www.goodsoil.com/training

Moving Beyond Lecture

When: October 20-21, 2016

About: Want to be a more dynamic speaker? Discover a six-step process for designing presentations and training sessions that consistently engage participants.

Learn more: www.goodsoil.com/training

24-Hour DEMO

When: October 27-28, 2016

About: Are you pursuing missions but don't know what your next step is? 24-Hour DEMO is a chance for you to come and get to know the people, ministries, and passions of ABWE!

Learn more: www.abwe.org/DEMO

GHANA

A Small Kindness with Big Results



©Peter Viisimaa

Missionaries Jim and Carla Junge discover how one simple act of kindness helped lead a young man to Jesus.

On an ordinary Wednesday, ABWE missionaries Jim and Carla Junge learned that one small act of kindness can have eternal effects.

Jim was in the house preparing for a meeting, and Carla was pulling clothes off of the line when a handsome, well-dressed, young stranger showed up. He asked to talk with the pastor, so Jim came out on the front porch to meet Elvis.

Elvis quickly opened up and shared how he was concerned about his future. He had failed his exit exam from high

school, and the implications of this failure had led him to drinking and eating himself into a stupor just to be able to sleep at night. Elvis said he had tried several churches and many different things, but he tearfully admitted that nothing seemed to work for him. He told Jim he had even entertained the idea of taking poison to end his life.

Jim listened and then he shared the hope and redemption that Elvis could find in Jesus Christ. After much discussion, Elvis accepted Jesus as his Savior, and that night, he

slept soundly for the first time in a long time.

Jim continued to disciple Elvis, and it was during one of their discipleship times that Jim discovered how a small act had led Elvis to his door that Wednesday — Jim had once given Elvis a ride into town in his truck.

“We were humbled to think that such a simple act of human compassion — stopping to offer a ride — would be extending a lifeline to a hurting soul,” said Carla. “Please pray for Elvis. Pray for his spiritual growth.” ■



Avoid Taxes By Using
— Your —
Retirement Money
**TO SHARE
THE GOSPEL**

Did you know that Congress now allows individuals 70½ or older to make gifts directly from their IRA to a charity? This could be a tax-smart way for you to support missions.

When funds from your IRA (up to \$100,000)* are sent directly to ABWE, you are not required to add the distribution to your taxable income. While you would not receive a charitable income-tax deduction for this gift, a charitable distribution from your IRA would allow you to meet your annual required minimum distribution without paying more in taxes.

GETTING STARTED with your IRA Charitable Rollover gift is easy:

- 1:** Decide what size gift you would like to make to ABWE from your IRA
- 2:** Call your IRA custodian and instruct them to send the check directly to:
ABWE c/o Lee Jantzen | P.O. Box 8585 | Harrisburg, PA 17105-8585
(If the check is issued to you, the IRS will consider it a taxable distribution.)
- 3:** Notify ABWE's Director of Generosity Planning at **717.909.2332** | leejantzen@abwe.org

 For giving options in Canada, contact
David Green - Planned Giving Representative
1.877.690.1009 | planned.giving@abwe.ca

**This option is for traditional IRAs that have been funded with pre-tax dollars. No legal or tax advice is intended. Please consult with your own legal and/or tax advisor to determine if an IRA gift is appropriate for your personal situation.*



abwe® | Planned Giving
FOUNDATION



DAVID & EVELYN STONE

CANDIDATE CLASS: 1978

COUNTRY SERVED IN: Peru

“Be determined to know Christ intimately, profoundly and sincerely. That determination will take you into unending Bible study, onto untraveled trails perhaps in foreign countries, through unimaginable joys and heartrending sorrows, until that day when you will see Him face to face.”

—Evelyn Stone

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1976

Married on May 31



1983

Founded the Living Hope Baptist Church in Ica and were blessed with three children



1992

Began teaching and administrating at the Lima Baptist Theological Seminary



1981

Arrived in coastal desert city of Ica, Peru



1992

Moved to capital city of Lima and founded the Chapel on the Rock Baptist Church

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE STONES

Q: How did God first call you to missions?

Evelyn: As preachers' kids, we both remember hearing missionaries share their exciting stories of God's work in foreign lands and that influenced us to commit our lives to missions at a young age. When God called me to salvation at age six, He also called me to be a missionary, and I never lost that conviction.

David: When I was 14, I publicly committed my life to Christ at a Bible camp and said I would be whatever He wanted me to be and go wherever He led me. By the time I began my studies at Baptist Bible College, I was convinced God was leading me to be a missionary.

Q: How did God call you to Peru?

A: In 1977, a missionary apprenticeship in Peru convinced us that God was leading us there as church planters, but it was our trip to the Andes Mountains that had the greatest impact upon that decision.

The first day was miserable with suffocating dust, unbelievably bumpy roads, and altitude sickness, and then we spent the night at "The Grand Andes Hotel," which had no electricity, a dirt floor, a thatch ceiling, rodents roaming, and narrow hardboard beds. It was a rough night, but when we awoke

the next day to a beautiful sunrise over a breathtaking landscape, God changed our perspective. We had both been reading a book about two brothers who had suffered deeply for their faith during the Spanish Inquisition, and that morning we read 2 Timothy 2:10, "... I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus..." We knew then that any suffering we endured to bring others to Christ is well worth it, and the many people who were saved during that trip confirmed it.

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

David: For me, it's the annual graduation at the Baptist Theological Seminary of Lima. Training Peruvian church leaders has always been an important part of our ministry so seeing them graduate and serve God has been a huge blessing.

Evelyn: I thought abortion was illegal in Peru and never happened until I started counseling women in our church-planting ministry. I found that most women with serious emotional and spiritual problems of depression or anxiety had had abortions, and in Peru, abortion rates were twice as high as in the US. Women were suffering

and babies were dying. I knew we needed to do something, and at the same time, I was convicted that people were dying without Christ. We had only led 10 people to the Lord in a whole year of ministry, and every one of them was in the church. What about the 8 million people in Lima who never came to church? That conviction motivated us to begin the first crisis pregnancy center in Latin America, the New Life Prenatal Center, to prevent abortion, promote abstinence, restore marriages, and heal women after abuse and abortion. Over the years, it has grown to become a dynamic evangelistic ministry where nearly 1,800 people have accepted Christ.

Q: What advice would you give new missionaries?

David: My advice is the same counsel I received from a veteran missionary when I was packing our barrels to ship to Peru in 1981. He said, "Dave, you can fill your barrels with many things to make life more comfortable and enjoyable, but there is one item that is absolutely essential and more important than everything else — a towel." Never forget the significance of Christ's towel of humble service (John 13). It must be used continually. ■

**2001**

Began mobile clinic ministries in shantytowns

**2013**

Initiated a joint online masters-level biblical counseling program for Latin America



Founded the New Life Prenatal Center

1999

Became an International consultant for Life Matters Worldwide and trained volunteers to begin pregnancy centers in 13 other countries

2003



AL & KIM YODER

CANDIDATE CLASS: 1980

COUNTRY SERVED IN: Brazil



© Thinkstockphotos.com



1979
Married on June 16



1983
Went to the interior of Brazil with Tom and Sue Jernberg to plant our first church in Itaberaba, Bahia



1982
Arrived in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil for language study and to help in the Pituba church plant



1992
Transferred to Benjamin Constant in the Amazon to help rebuild the aviation church-planting work

AN INTERVIEW WITH **THE YODERS****Q: How did God first call you to missions?**

Al: Both of us were missionary kids, and I grew up knowing God had this for my life. My parents had to leave the field because of my sister's terminal disease, but missions still permeated our family's thought process. Having grown up without America's comfort and prosperity idols, there was little to interfere with this path, and then God supplied me with the best of missionary helpmeets.

Kim: My parents were missionaries with ABWE along the Amazon River of Brazil, so I grew up seeing missions firsthand. Ever since I can remember, I was interested in becoming a missionary, and in the 10th grade at a missions conference, I made the decision to pursue it if God so chose. I began serving in several church ministries and attended Bible college for further training, which is where I met Al. As part of our college's requirements, we had to do a six-week missionary apprenticeship program, and we chose to go to Bahia, Brazil. God used that time to burden us with the tremendous need of the area, and soon after, we began the process of joining ABWE to return to Bahia.

Q: What is your favorite memory from your time as a missionary?

Al: There are so many beautiful memories so it is difficult to pick, but if we had to pick one, it would be when a church we planted sent out its first missionary. She was a young lady whom my wife trained in all aspects of the church and whom I trained at our church's Bible institute. We got to see her put her faith and training in action as she joined a Brazilian mission, raised support, and then headed to a foreign country to share the gospel.

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

Al: When I was flying a plane home for retrofitting, I was 9,000 feet over the mountains of Guyana with solid clouds underneath us when a brand new cylinder split due to a factory defect. The plane plummeted my passengers and me down into the clouds and rain. I was flying at 500 feet per minute through steep mountains with no visibility, and I was sure the time had come to go home to heaven. After 25 minutes of flying blind, we suddenly popped out of the clouds 100 feet above the trees with cliff faces on both wingtips. God allowed us to land safely, and in a period of very few

days, we experienced more than 20 miracles as God not only saved our lives but also provided for all of our needs during our time in British Guyana.

Q: What advice would you give new missionaries?

Al: Culture has changed. I have seen few finishers. The new generation is more intelligent, more creative in many ways, but rarely sticks with missions long term. To do a good job of Great Commission church planting and discipleship, you have to finish. Give your life to God — not just fuzzy feelings, not just a few years, not just until it gets hard or boring. Give it all. ■

“God allowed us to land safely, and in a period of very few days, we experienced more than 20 miracles as God not only saved our lives but also provided for all of our needs.”

**2000**

Moved to São Paulo de Olivença to start another church plant



Helped re-plant the church in Benjamin Constant


1989 - 1999

Transferred to Fortaleza to help a church start a training center and masters degree program for biblical counseling at the SIBIMA seminary

2016




GRID
IRON
GOSPEL



FOR YEARS, SOCCER HAS DOMINATED BRAZIL AS THE MAIN SPORT, WITH AMERICAN FOOTBALL FOLLOWING IN POPULARITY SOMEWHERE AROUND DENTIST VISITS.

Brazilians called the sport too violent and the rules too complicated, but with the growth of cable television giving them more access to the sport, it has been attracting a growing number of Brazilian fans and players. Today, Brazil has two well-established semi-professional leagues, a competitive national team, and more than 120 amateur American football teams playing throughout the country, including in ABWE Missionary David Carrel's town in northeast Brazil. While it is not likely to ever seriously challenge the popularity



of soccer, the growth of American football's popularity is opening doors for David to share the gospel in a region that is less than 5 percent evangelical.

David and his family moved to Arcoverde, Brazil, in early 2014 — not long after the city formed a new American football team, the Arcoverde Templários. ►

“I was looking for ways to get connected in our new city, so when I heard a team of American football had started, it really sparked my curiosity,” said David. “I was definitely a fan, and I had played as a kid and then pick-up games as an adult.”

David got in touch with the team’s founder and coach who invited him to come to their next practice. Unsure of what to expect, he arrived at the athletic park and found a group of players milling around.

When the coach arrived, the team quickly lined up and tried to look tough. The coach spotted David and shook his hand before addressing the team.

“This is David,” the coach announced. “He is going to coach the offense.”

This was news to David, but he agreed and feverishly began trying to recall the basics of offense. Luckily, his training and routes came flooding back — 2,4,6,8 are the gaps to right, and 1,3,5,7 are the gaps to the left. And he breathed more easily when he realized the men knew little about the details of playing the game. He had a lot he could teach the men — about the game and about his faith.

David began by building real relationships with his team members. Slowly, he earned their respect through his knowledge of the game, but it didn’t take long for him to reveal himself as a spiritual mentor and begin inviting the men to functions at his church plant.

“On our team, I try to emphasize character and truly helping each other through life,” said David.

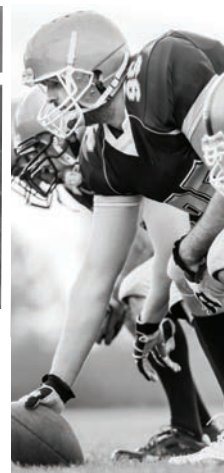
In the fall of 2014, David was promoted to the team’s head coach, and despite some disheartening losses, the team has made great strides. It has become more organized, developed a strong fan base, and each player has improved — as has David’s relationship with them. It is because of these deepened relationships that David has been able to continue sharing his heart for God.



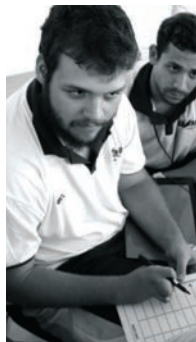
NFL IN BRAZIL



ESPN begins broadcasting NFL games in Brazil



The Super Bowl is broadcast in Brazil for the first time





©Tommerton

“I often incorporate biblical character traits and principals in my coaching, and after a recent disorganized practice, I unashamedly told them we need the gospel because we need to learn to serve each other,” said David. “Many of these guys have nothing to do with church and I know it will take time to reach them, but I am just glad that they are listening.”

GAINING TRACTION

While progress is slow, it is evident. Many have had solid one-on-one spiritual conversations with David, several players are now attending David’s church plant, and a group of five players is about to finish the Story of Hope Bible study, including a man named Rodrigo.

Rodrigo was seven years old when his father passed away from a heart attack, collapsing after a soccer game at the same field where Rodrigo now plays American football. While Rodrigo claims the loss of his father doesn’t bother him, it is clear he has a lot of rage inside of him. He is so passionate about football that when things are not going well he often takes out his frustration on someone else, usually in the form of an aggressive legal hit. While his anger is well channeled through football, it shows David just how much he needs the peace of Christ. ▶

THE GROWTH OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL’S POPULARITY IS OPENING DOORS FOR DAVID TO SHARE THE GOSPEL IN A REGION THAT IS LESS THAN 5 PERCENT EVANGELICAL.



David Carrel



National American Football League formed in Brazil



NFL games per week now broadcast by ESPN



Average number of viewers for broadcasted NFL games

“I have struggled with anger in my life so I can relate to him,” said David. “It has given me an opportunity to show him how God can calm rage and give him peace.”

Rodrigo grew up with spiritism and Catholicism, and he believed in God generally, but through David, he is growing to understand the Bible and the gospel. Rodrigo regularly attends David’s Bible studies and shows great respect for David and his teachings. He calls David his coach, and his friends notice how he has grown on and off the field.

“It’s amazing to think that God is using an American sport to help me reach Brazilians,” said David.

In addition to coaching, David recently hosted his second regional football clinic where he had eight experienced Americans come to train players from throughout northeast Brazil — headed up by Hoss Johnson, a former NFL player and Christian.

The clinic attracted more than 50 athletes from five different states who studied football, listened to character lessons, and heard the gospel.

“Football has a unique way of opening up doors to share the gospel and has helped me make important connections in the community,” said David. “In Brazil, Americans are instantly respected as football authorities, and for anyone interested, I could find a 100 places in Brazil for them to get involved in church planting through football — including here in Arcoverde.” ■

6K FOOTBALL PLAYERS IN BRAZIL

7,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED BRAZIL'S AMERICAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN 2011

AMERICAN FOOTBALL IN BRAZIL

50+ PLAYERS PER TEAM

25 AMERICANS PLAYING OR COACHING IN BRAZIL

2 BRAZILIAN NATIONAL SEMI-PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES

3 MILLION BRAZILIANS CONSIDER AMERICAN FOOTBALL THEIR FAVORITE SPORT

120 AMATEUR AMERICAN FOOTBALL TEAMS IN BRAZIL

▶▶ **LEARN MORE** about this ministry and how you can get involved at www.abwe.org/football

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of a football being held by several hands. The hands are of various skin tones, suggesting a diverse group of people. The football is the central focus, with its laces clearly visible. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a football field. A yellow-bordered box is overlaid on the image, containing a quote in white, all-caps text.

"IT'S AMAZING TO THINK THAT GOD IS USING AN AMERICAN SPORT TO HELP ME REACH BRAZILIANS."

BY INGELA HARTMAN



Game Changer

SHARING THE GOSPEL ON THE SIDELINES

At a lookout in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, an American pastor sat down next to a young Australian and struck up a conversation. Pastor John Nixon learned the young man's name was Paul and that he had a very troubled life.

As they sat above the expansive valley, Paul shared how he had been in trouble with the law and drugs many times, and his wife, child, and parents had turned their backs on him. John listened with compassion, and then he shared the new life he had found in Christ. After more than an hour of deep conversation, Paul put his trust in Jesus.

Pastor John was one member of a 165-person evangelistic team at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games serving with a sports outreach ministry that has led more than 1,000 people to make the same decision as Paul. ▶



SHORTLY AFTER MEETING IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, PASTOR JOHN NIXON (RIGHT) POSES WITH PAUL (LEFT) IN N SYDNEY.



© iStock

THAT DAY, PAUL AND JOHN WENT TO A POPULAR PARK IN SYDNEY. PAUL TOLD PEOPLE HOW HE WAS *about to commit suicide* BEFORE HE MET THE PASTOR, AND JOHN TOLD THEM MORE ABOUT *Jesus*.

When it was time for John to leave, he asked Paul where he was headed, and Paul confessed that he had no plan because he had planned to throw himself off the cliff. John and the outreach team gave Paul a room for the night, and the next morning, Paul came to breakfast wearing a team t-shirt and hat.

“What are you doing?” John asked.

“I want to help you tell people about Jesus,” Paul said.

That day, Paul and John went to a popular park in Sydney. Paul told people how he was about to commit suicide before he met the pastor, and John told them more about Jesus.

Paul is one of thousands of lives impacted by a ministry that began when ABWE Board Member Dr. David Crandall helped with an evangelistic outreach at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. More than 600 people were bused into Atlanta daily from Chattanooga, Tenn., to share the gospel, and in two weeks, they distributed 500,000 booklets to thousands of people from all over the world. Dr. Crandall saw the immense impact as more than 600 people made professions of faith, and the seed was planted for a robust ministry that is now called Sports Event Evangelism (SEE).

“I saw a parallel between Acts Chapter 2 about the day of the Pentecost. The Bible says the whole world was gathered and represented in Jerusalem at that time and people heard the teaching of God’s word in their own language,” said Dr. Crandall. “And I thought, ‘Well that’s what happens at the Olympics.’”

Every four years, thousands of people flood in to watch more than 200 nations compete at the Olympics, and Dr. Crandall’s strategy for reaching them was simple: train outreach volunteers to strike up conversations and share the gospel; equip them with gospel booklets related to that year’s Olympics; and then send these volunteers into the major tourist spots in the Olympic host city.

IN THE BEGINNING

Dr. Crandall saw this strategy work in Atlanta, but when he and ABWE missionaries

Steve Mayo and Matt Douglas first pitched this idea to a small group of Australian pastors and ABWE missionaries for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, it was met with skepticism. Sydney was a tough mission field, and they struggled to see how a handful of small church plants could make an impact at such a large-scale event.

“They thought they were too small, but God is big,” said Steve Mayo, regional administrator of ABWE’s Asia-Pacific region.

Thankfully, the skeptics did not win out, and by the time the opening ceremony was held, more than 100 witnesses from Sydney churches were on the street, and more than 60 Americans came over to help. They shared the gospel in the shadow of the iconic Opera House, in historic Hyde Park, and at every major tourist destination in Sydney. ►

“GOD SURPRISED ALL OF US WITH RESULTS THAT WERE *beyond* WHAT WE IMAGINED.”



STREET TEAMS SHARE THE GOSPEL AT PARKS AND EVERY MAJOR TOURIST DESTINATION THROUGHOUT SYDNEY DURING THE 2000 OLYMPIC GAMES.

It was at Sydney’s world-renowned Manly Beach that Pastor Ken Lesta, ABWE missionary church planter, met a group of athletes from North and South Korea. Ken was carrying booklets in Korean, so he asked the team’s interpreter if he could give one to each of the athletes. The interpreter grabbed one and suspiciously leafed through it. Then he smiled.

“Do you preach?” he asked.

“Yes. I’m a pastor,” Ken replied.

“Then preach!” the interpreter commanded.

The interpreter had the team sit along the sea wall, and as the waves crashed in, Ken presented the gospel. Not wanting to abuse the privilege he had been given, Ken kept it short, but as he concluded, the interpreter urged him to preach more. The team members listened intently as Ken spoke, and when he finished, the interpreter confided, “I’m a Christian. They told me I couldn’t tell the team about Jesus, but no one said anything about interpreting!”

Every day, stories like that happened all over Sydney, and each night of the outreach, all

of the participants gathered and shared the stories of the amazing things they saw God do.

“The Olympics were unlike any other event I had ever been to,” said Matt. “I was sick one day so I went and just sat on a wall, but I was able to share the gospel 14 times that day and I never moved from my spot.”

The overall results in Sydney were staggering: 171 street evangelists were trained and mobilized; 500,000 gospel booklets were distributed; 512 people from 17 different countries were saved; and 286 people were followed-up with personally by Matt and referred



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IN SYDNEY: 171 STREET EVANGELISTS WERE TRAINED AND MOBILIZED; *500,000 gospel booklets* WERE DISTRIBUTED AND 512 PEOPLE FROM 17 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WERE SAVED.

to Bible-believing churches near their home.

“God surprised all of us with results that were beyond what we imagined,” Matt said.

Not wanting the momentum to end, a small group of pastors quickly organized and began to form an ongoing strategy to evangelize churches into existence. The 2000 Sydney Olympics ignited a church-multiplying and missionary-sending movement that continues more than 16 years later.

Before the Olympics, Sydney was one of the hardest missions fields with an average of one church plant every 14.5 years. Churches were isolated with only a few pastors meeting informally, but after the Olympics, they came together to create a formal network of churches focused on evangelism, church planting, and theological education. In the years that followed the Olympics, they have averaged one church plant per year, and 18 church plants have since graduated to self-support. In

addition, this nationwide network of 32 Australian churches has now sent three long-term missionary families and various short-term mission groups to Asia, Africa, and South America.

“The Olympics lit a spark in Australia,” said Matt. “It showed local pastors and missionaries how they can share the gospel and the amazing impact it can have.” ▶

REACHING THE WORLD

It also lit a spark in Dr. Crandall and Matt Douglas to expand and formalize this sports evangelism ministry. They began exploring the idea of sending teams to World Cups and organized another team for the 2004 Athens Olympics.

As they were preparing to leave for Athens, they received a letter from an athlete in Nigeria who had participated in the Sydney games. The athlete wrote that he was preparing for the Athens games by looking back through his notes, photos, and souvenirs from Sydney and found the SEE booklet he had been given. He said he read the booklet cover-to-cover and got saved. Four years after the Olympics, one booklet made him the 512th person to get saved from the Sydney Olympics.

“While conversations with our outreach team members are designed to be the primary way we share the gospel, the booklets are important tools,” said Matt.

According to Dr. Crandall, the average gospel tract/booklet is read by eight people, and more than 3 million of SEE’s booklets, authored by Dr. Crandall, have been distributed in more than 15 languages.

One SEE booklet was taken home by an Indonesian athlete, and it led him to Christ. Then, that athlete shared the booklet with a friend who was also saved, and his

“I COULDN’T BELIEVE HOW GOD HAD ARRANGED EVERYTHING,” SAID DR. CRANDALL. “I WOULD HAVE SPENT *my whole life wondering* IF HE HAD TRULY UNDERSTOOD.”

friend also passed the booklet on. In total, 17 people were saved.

The athlete used the response card in the back of the booklet to reach out to Matt Douglas, who sent more materials for all 17 new believers. Matt also found a local missionary in Indonesia to meet with them and disciple them. Eventually, they started a church with the founding members being the 17 people who got saved from the one Olympic booklet.

The booklets have also helped SEE’s teams bridge language barriers. At one Olympics, Dr. Crandall tried to speak to a man, but the man didn’t understand English, so he fanned out the booklet and the man chose the French one. Dr. Crandall didn’t speak French, but he knew the word “oui” for yes, so Dr. Crandall walked through the English book as the man went through the French book – page by page. At the end, Dr. Crandall pointed to the prayer of salvation at the end of the book and gestured to ask if he was ready.

“Oui,” he said, and he bowed his head and began reciting the prayer.

When he finished the prayer, tears were flowing down his eyes.

Later that day, as the team shared stories from their day, Dr. Crandall told the story of the French man. Before he was finished, a woman jumped up and shouted that she was a French teacher and asked for the man’s phone number. Dr. Crandall gave it to her and she spoke with the man for over an hour. When she hung up, she confirmed that the man had in fact been saved.

“I couldn’t believe how God had arranged everything,” said Dr. Crandall. “I would have spent my whole life wondering if he had truly understood.” ▶

OUTREACH TEAMS START CONVERSATIONS AND HAND OUT BOOKLETS TO OLYMPIC TOURISTS AT ATHEN’S WORLD FAMOUS MARS HILL.





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“EVERY YEAR AND EACH
EVENT IS DIFFERENT, BUT
○ *God* IS CONSISTENT.”

MAKING AN IMPACT

Since Dr. Crandall started the ministry after the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, SEE — in partnership with ABWE, Baptist Mid-Missions, Gospel Literature Services, and Answers in Genesis — has sent street evangelism teams to five Olympic Games and three World Cups.

According to Spiros Zodhiates, a Greek-American Bible scholar,

SEE’s Athens Olympic outreach was the largest organized evangelistic outreach in Athens’ recent history. More than 165 volunteers from all over the world handed out about 500,000 booklets in 15 different languages, and 620 people were saved. The majority of those who were saved in Athens were Greek, and four churches were started in the greater Athens area. Today, the smallest of those churches has 235 members.

“Every year and each event is different, but God is consistent,” said Matt.



“THE OLYMPICS AND THE WORLD CUP ARE AMAZING BECAUSE YOU GET A DOZEN OPPORTUNITIES TO *share the gospel* EVERYDAY, IF YOU HAVE YOUR EYES EVEN HALF OPEN.”

ENERGIZING AND TRAINING BELIEVERS

Beyond the vast number of unbelievers reached by these outreaches, this ministry has also consistently energized local churches and missionaries.

In London, the idea of an Olympic outreach was also met with skepticism. England is a hard place for evangelism, but all skepticism was quickly squashed as local pastors and missionaries watched God provide opportunity after opportunity to share the gospel.

Within the first three days, the SEE team had witnessed to people from 111 countries.


“I’ll never forget when a teammate started talking to a man on the streets in London who remembered our outreach ministry from when he was at the Vancouver Olympics. He even remembered the names of the two people he spoke with and those same people were able to share Christ with him again,” said Stefanie Cannon, Olympic outreach participant and SEE committee member. “It was a divine appointment — two of them!”

Along with energizing local ministry workers, Matt says that these large-scale sporting events are also valuable training grounds. They provide a unique opportunity for anyone interested in missions to get first-hand, cross-cultural evangelism experience.

“I was so scared going into it because I had never put myself

out there like that before. Witnessing to people on the street is much more intense than trying to witness to a friend,” said Valerie Miller, participant at the London Olympics. “But I learned so much and I made so many lifelong friends.”

This August, Dr. Crandall and Matt are leading another team to the 2016 Rio Olympics, where more than 100 volunteers and missionaries will have the opportunity to reach the world.

“The Olympics and the World Cup are amazing because you get a dozen opportunities to share the gospel every day, if you have your eyes even half open,” said Matt. “I invite anyone interested in missions to join us.” 



LEARN MORE ABOUT SEE OR
SIGN UP FOR THE NEXT OUTREACH,
GO TO WWW.COMESSEE.EVENTS

SPORTS EVENT EVANGELISM

THE STATS AT A GLANCE

..... 1996 - 2016



AN AVERAGE OF
3.9 MILLION

tickets sold for each Olympic Games since 1996

4.5 MILLION

spectators attended the Sydney Olympics in 2000 — the highest attended Olympics in the past 20 years

200 OVER MILLION

people attended a top 10 sports league game in 2014-2015.



AN AVERAGE OF
3.3 MILLION

spectators have attended the World Cup since 2006

32 countries are represented each year

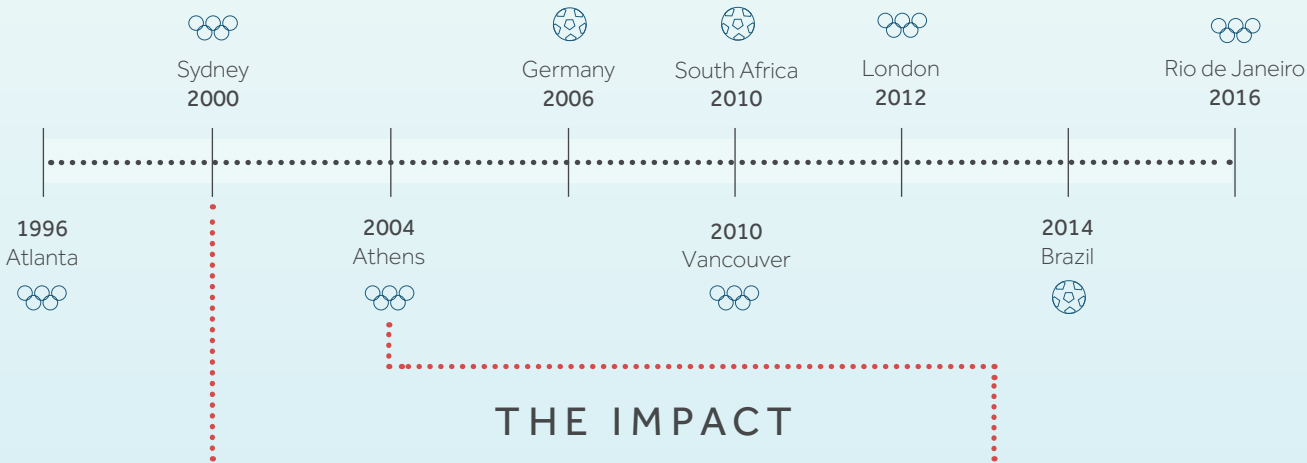
more than
10,000

athletes per year compete at each Olympic Games, with Beijing topping the charts at 10,942 athletes

more than
195

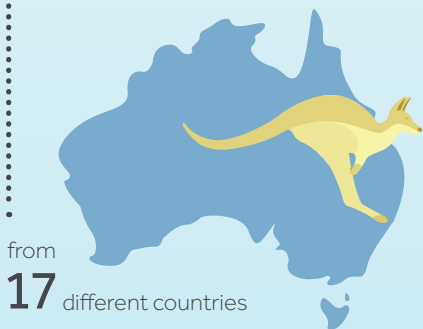
countries have been represented at the Olympics since 1996, and 2016 will be the first year South Sudan participates

ABWE OUTREACH EVENTS



THE IMPACT

512 total professions of faith



650 total professions of faith



30% from different countries
70% Greeks

OVER 3 MILLION

outreach booklets have been distributed since 1996



translated into **15** LANGUAGES

AT LEAST 100

Christians have been involved at each Olympic outreach since 1996



Since 2006, SEE has held evangelism outreaches at **3** WORLD CUP GAMES

*Sources for the listed details can be found at www.abwe.org/sports



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STOP & THINK

FN

..... By Maicol Venter | *ABWE Missionary to & from Brazil*

Stop and think. My basketball coach introduced me to this concept for the first time when I was 17 years old. I didn't like to stop; basketball was my life 10 hours a day. And I wasn't sure exactly what to think, but my coach had interesting things to say about that — and he said it all came from his Bible.

Jesus was familiar enough to me. He was the man hanging on a cross in every Catholic church throughout southern Brazil. His name was the swear word of choice in casual conversation. But what did Jesus have to do with deep-seated peace, eternity, and my behavior? Three years into Saturday morning basketball games, my coach, ABWE missionary Dan Richner, would help me figure this out.

As a teenager, the basketball court was my refuge. After dropping out of middle school to work and bring home a paycheck for my family, the court gave me purpose in life. Then, Coach Dan showed up and began training me to be a better player. I felt like I was finally getting the leg up I needed in life. I felt like I could see a future for myself.

In the middle of most practices, the coach would have us sit down for what he called a “stop and think.” We would catch our breaths and drain water bottles as Coach would tell us about Jesus — a man he modeled his life after. I listened closely, wanting to know why this American basketball coach was here in my hometown and why he always seemed so at peace.

It baffled me. How could this book he carried around and this Jesus he talked about make me a better basketball player? One day, Coach took me out for a Coke. I asked questions, and he did his best to answer them. The next week we talked over cheeseburgers at McDonald’s and I opened up about the reasons I wanted to be anywhere but home.

A few weeks later, Coach invited me to Word of Life summer camp. I told him I couldn’t afford it, but he offered to pay my way. I still wasn’t sure I could find a way to make it work, but as we parted ways, I asked, “Will they have a basketball court?” He said yes, and I made sure I found a way.

At camp, Coach’s words finally made sense. After three years of Saturday morning basketball, afternoon cheeseburgers, plenty of conversations about the gospel, and liters of ice cold Coke, my heart finally responded to

the gospel. Jesus’ truth came crashing in, and I wanted that peace that Coach had. I wanted to know this Jesus. I wanted him to change my life. And He did.

It’s been nearly 20 years since that camp, and I can’t imagine my life if I had never heard the truth of God preached through my coach. I was recently ordained, and Dan — my pastor, my coach, my mentor, and my friend — told the congregation about the journey he has helped me walk that all started on a small basketball court in my hometown.

Soon, my wife and I will be returning as missionaries to my home state of Rio Grande do Sul, where just 2 percent are evangelical believers. There are plenty of my neighbors in southern Brazil who only know Jesus as the Son of Mary, and my desire is to use sports ministry to meet a younger version of myself and help him to “stop and think.” Will you join us in praying for the people of Brazil and for more workers to join us as we seek to share God’s love there? ■

*“I wanted
the peace that
Coach had.
I wanted to
know this
Jesus.”*



Maicol Venter (left) poses with his coach and mentor, Dan Richner, while serving together on ABWE’s South Brazil church-planting team.



12 Lessons From Life's Second Semester

..... According to Becky McClarren

ABWE Missionary to Ethiopia

In school, the year is divided into two semesters. Mid-year becomes a natural time to take stock, figure out what's working and what's not, and adjust accordingly. Birthdays can also be natural landmarks that call us to assess and redirect. When my husband and I turned 50 (just 17 days apart), our kids threw us a 100th birthday party. Suddenly, the psalmist's plea to, "...teach us to number our days aright that we may get a heart of wisdom..." (Ps.90:12) had a new urgency, and as we took stock and looked ahead, we sensed God directing us to international service. We began looking for where and how we might serve during what we called "our second semester."

Although neither of us had ever attended a Christian university, a very wise friend reminded us that God doesn't waste experiences. Her comment was right on, and we found that there are places in the world where even a seasoned farmer and a family physician can share in the Great Commission.

After additional training and several short-term trips to Ukraine, we were eventually directed to Ethiopia and arrived just six months before our 60th birthdays. As we celebrated our birthdays on the compound of Soddo Christian Hospital, we found ourselves taking stock of the many things God had shown us through our journey to Ethiopia:

1. Life is a gift. Gifts are to be given and enjoyed, not squandered or hoarded.
2. Languages should be learned by young brains! Fluency in English does not predict fluency in other tongues. Thankfully laughter covers a multitude of bloopers.
3. Children are great tutors to technologically challenged parents.
4. Leaving grandkids, kids, and aging parents is incredibly painful but email, FaceTime and Viber make it doable.
5. MK's need surrogate grandparents and the 50+ bunch needs surrogate grandkids.
6. Taking care of our health is not just a good idea; it's essential! Probiotics, water filters, and immunizations are not luxuries, and neither are sunscreen and insect repellent.
7. Gray hair may help facilitate relationship building.
8. Learning curves are steep and must be navigated in partnership with team members.
9. Stress abounds! Friends on both sides of the pond are lifesavers — as are running shoes, music, and bits of home.
10. Sleep is not overrated. A good mattress and comfy pillow are important investments.
11. Our to-do lists will never be completed, but that's okay.
12. His word is truly "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." - Ps. 119:105

Ultimately God is the One who numbers our days, and although our journey has not been easy, it has been good. We do not walk alone, even in our second semester. ■



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A BRIGHTER FUTURE

“**Children are the future**, but in Nicaragua, that future is often hard. Babies are commonly born to teenagers, and today, more than 50 percent of Nicaragua’s population of 6 million is under 25 years of age. Because so many Nicaraguans are becoming parents before they have the emotional or financial

means to support their children, each generation is facing deeper material and spiritual poverty. Please pray for ABWE’s Nicaragua team as they seek to share the life-giving hope of the gospel with the youth of Nicaragua through feeding programs, Bible clubs, camps, and other outreach ministries.” ■



About the Photographer | *Marissa Dickey*

Marissa is a missionary serving in Bogotá, Colombia. In addition to supporting local church plants and ministering to youth, she uses multimedia storytelling to share how God is working in order to promote missions movements within Colombia and beyond.

You've got the
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training, expertise, & support

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