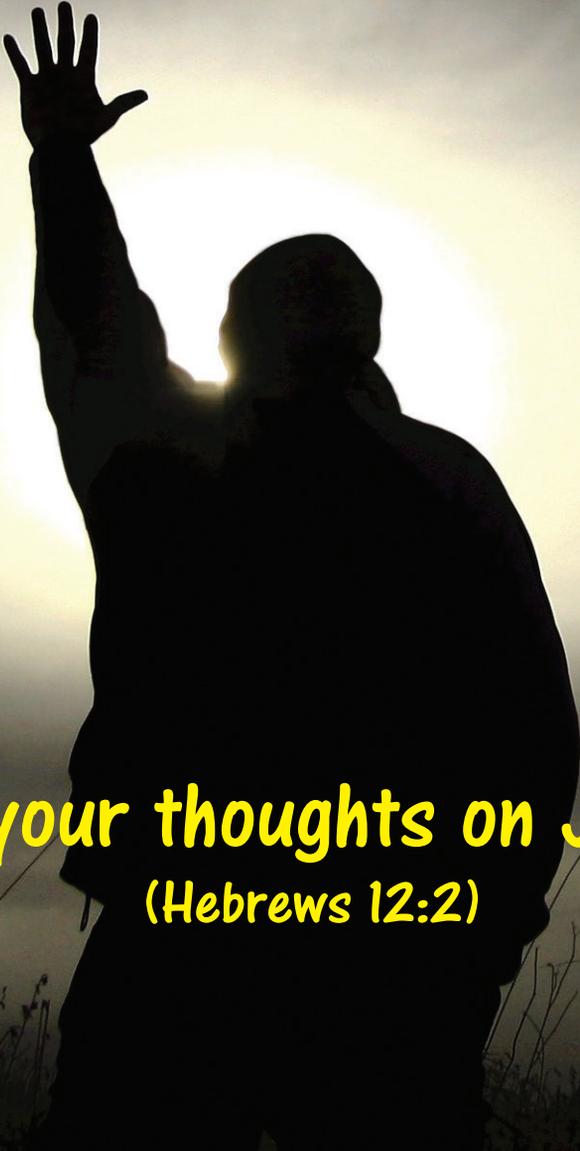


January, February,
March 2015

Horizons



“fix your thoughts on Jesus”
(Hebrews 12:2)



**Reggie
Hundley**

**Editor,
HORIZONS
and**

**Executive
Director,
Mission
Services
Association**

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters no longer than one typewritten page are more likely to be published. Include your name and address on all correspondence. Only signed letters can be printed. Letters may be edited for the sake of length and clarity.

If We Want a GREAT Missions Program, We Must Take Our Shoes Off! (Part 2)

For Review from the last issue...

“The account of Moses and the ‘burning bush’ in Exodus 1-4 is familiar to all Horizons readers. Someone has probably already wondered aloud, ‘How does this have any application to a congregational missions program?’ The question is valid, because improper interpretation and application of scripture can create any number of issues.

“God was on the verge of unveiling His grand plan to bring freedom from the slavery of the brick pits of Egypt to the people of Israel. The plan would eventually lead them into the land that had been promised. In the recorded events, God invited Moses to play a role of God’s choice in this grand drama. Similarly, God has unveiled His plan to bring freedom from the slavery of sin to all of mankind through His Son Jesus. Like Moses, God has invited His church to play a role in this grand drama. Thus, we may carefully enter this story discovering how the church may best prepare itself to fulfill its role of God’s sovereign assignment.”

The sandals of the day were an important symbol. They were not necessarily a symbol of wealth or prestige. Sandals were not available in hundreds of styles, with brands from foreign lands, on display in the best stores, declaring to all that the wearer was someone special. During biblical times, sandals (much like the ubiquitous head dress) represented man’s ability to control his or her environment. Travel by foot was the primary mode of transportation over rough, rocky, dusty terrain. A piece of leather from the hide of an animal strapped to a human ankle did not provide much protection but, without it walking would produce constant pain, daily injuries and many accompanying infections from open wounds. Wearing sandals was a psychological statement, “the environment will not conquer me.”

When God told Moses to take off his shoes, he was putting Moses physically and emotionally in a place of uneasiness. Moses would

Horizons

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suddenly have nothing between himself and the burning sand and sharp stones. Moses would immediately sense the pain and realize he was not in control of his surroundings. God was placing Moses into a circumstance where it was essential for him to accept that God was the only one in control, and he was totally reliant upon God for his well-being.

If we want to have a great missions program, we must have this same sense of utter dependency reside deep in our knowledge and emotions, and this will not be easy for us. We control EVERYTHING. When it is hot, we cool the air. We choose between 600 entertainment channels from well across a room with the movement of one finger. When we prepare a meal, we choose the temperature of the element rather than simply start a fire! I am not advocating a chaotic missions program without planning, but too often we begin with what we know and the plans we have created. A successful church and a successful missions program will be one that accepts situations over which they have no control and commit hours to seeking God's wisdom. Before we think, discuss, or act we must remind ourselves we are not in control, and we must rely upon God to guide us. You think about that!



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June 23-26

North American Christian Convention

Duke Energy Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

Theme: We Speak

2015 President: Mike Baker

Contact information: North American Christian Convention
513-772-9970 / www.gotonacc.org

July 19 - 25

Lake James School of Missions

Angola, Indiana

Contact information: Scott Saltsman, Program Chairman
260-316-7268 / scottlacc@gmail.com

October 29 - November 1

International Conference on Missions

Greater Richmond Convention Center, Richmond, VA

Theme: The Away Team

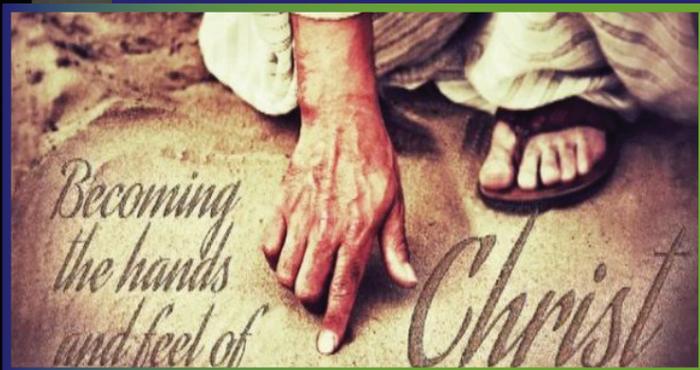
Contact information: David Empson
317-539-4231 / david@theicom.org

Eastern Christian Conference

In lieu of a separate conference, the ECC is encouraging the Northeast population to actively participate in the International Conference on Missions being held October 29 - November 1 in Richmond, VA.

Going Vertical Makes Horizontal Happen

by Dave Butts, President
Harvest Prayer Ministries



It's easy to get directionally confused. Daniel Boone was once asked if he ever got lost. He answered, "No, never been lost. Been a might confused for three days, but never lost." I'm operating on the assumption that most of us are directionally challenged in ministry priorities. We move in the direction of ministry and effectiveness, and sometimes find ourselves wandering....confused...worn out from moving in the wrong direction. This is a call to the directionally challenged: Go Vertical before you move Horizontal.

Going Vertical is at the heart of Biblical Mission.

It doesn't sound like the Great Commission, but God put Israel on mission. He told them to "go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Ex.33:1) The land promised to Israel was already inhabited and it was going to take an immense amount of effort to dislodge the current inhabitants and establish their "promised land." Moses had the wisdom to realize that it could not happen unless God Himself went with them on their mission.

In one of the more amazing conversations in Scripture, Moses and God talked about how important it was that the people of Israel have the Lord's Presence with them if they were to accomplish their mission. As you read this passage, carefully consider

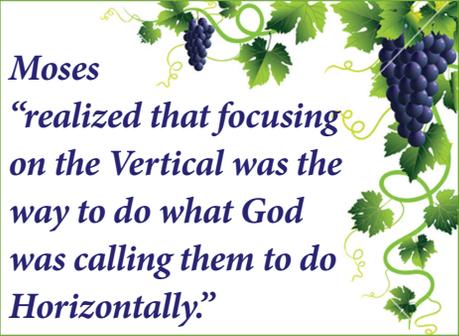
how Moses' insight regarding the Lord's Presence might impact the effectiveness of your own mission today.

"Moses said to the Lord, 'You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.'

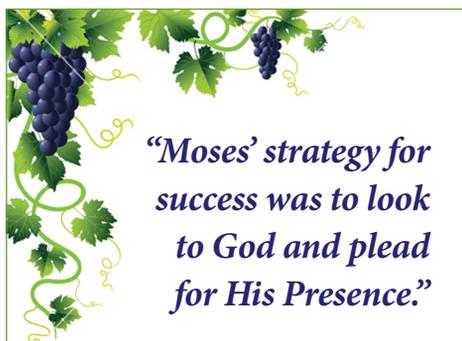
The Lord replied, 'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'

Then Moses said to him, 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?'

And the Lord said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with



Moses
"realized that focusing
on the Vertical was the
way to do what God
was calling them to do
Horizontally."



you and I know you by name.” (Ex. 33:12-17)

This man of great leadership skills, Moses, understood that it was the Lord’s Presence that was the key to the success of their mission. To put it in another way, he realized that focusing on the Vertical was the way to do what God was calling them to do Horizontally. Moses’ strategy for success was to look to God and plead for His Presence. As long as God was with them, they couldn’t fail in the long run.

When we think of world missions, it is almost always a Horizontal focus. We show videos and pictures of people in great need, physically and spiritually. The statistics we present of those without Christ move us to compassion. The possibilities before us of reaching the world for Christ galvanize us to action. And there is nothing inherently wrong with looking Horizontally at the great needs around us. But it is not by focusing Horizontally that will

sustain and empower us to finish the task.

It’s pretty easy to be overwhelmed by the Horizontal...the size of the task before us. Israel’s mission was huge! Maybe yours is too! When we focus on the Horizontal...people and the mission in front of us, we can wear out from the immensity of it. In today’s world, there are literally billions who do not know Jesus as their Lord. Just using the word “billions” can cause us to want to curl up and watch TV and not give ourselves to a task that seems impossible.

Like Moses and the people of Israel, what we really need is the Presence of God. Our focus must be Vertical in order to be successful Horizontally. The author of Hebrews commands us, “fix your thoughts on Jesus.” That’s a Vertical focus! It’s not a command to pay attention to what you are doing for Jesus, but to actually look to Him. Isn’t it very possible that our attention is in the wrong place?

Jesus taught us much about this by using the illustration of the vine and the branches. Jesus is the vine and his followers are the branches. We often think that our job as branches is to produce fruit (horizontal thinking). But that’s not the case. The vine produces everything needed to bring

“fix your thoughts on Jesus” (Hebrews 12:2)

“apart from me, you can do nothing” (John 17:5)

about fruit on the branch. The branch just needs to stay attached (vertical thinking). Jesus made it very clear, “No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine.” (John 17:4) To underline it, he then said, “apart from me, you can do nothing.” (John 17:5)

Though Moses had not heard these words of Jesus, in a very real sense, his response to God fit within this teaching. It is as though Moses said, “Lord, I want to stay attached to you, our Vine. We can’t do what you want us to do on our own. We are branches incapable of producing fruit. The only thing that distinguishes us as branches is that we are attached to you.”

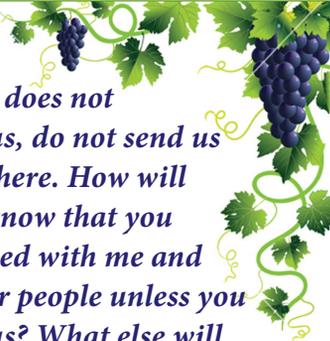
The Presence of God going with Israel in Moses’ day and the branch staying attached to the vine in our day are both about the same thing. We can’t effectively do the work of God without God Himself! A Vertical Focus on God will produce the Horizontal fruit that God desires.

I’ve served for over twenty years on the board of a great mission organization, Pioneer Bible Translators. It has always been a good, godly ministry that honored the Lord and served Him with integrity in Bible Translation, literacy, and church planting. Seven years ago we brought on a new Presi-

dent who brought with him a new strategy. It was very simple: Prayer is our strategy. It was a Vertical focus.

The results have been amazing. The number of missionaries has doubled. Our stateside structure has been greatly strengthened. The number of portions of scripture translated has sky-rocketed. Finances have grown steadily, matching the growth. Don’t misunderstand me...before this emphasis we had prayed and served and had experienced good growth. But with a new, radically Vertical focus of prayer, we saw an explosion in our effectiveness Horizontally.

What land is God calling you to take? What mission does he have you on? Determine to not go anywhere without Him. Go Vertical before you go Horizontal!



“If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” (Ex.33)

Christian Barriers to Jesus

by Paul Pennington, Journey Services

Recently, three conversations brought into sharp focus for me an issue that had nagged me for some time. Veteran missionaries from three disparate fields described their frustration with how Christian traditions where they worked kept people from meeting and following Jesus. An Indian missionary described multiple ways in which Christian dependence on Western traditions and funding creates significant barriers to the majority of Hindus in his country. A week later a European missionary expressed concern that the congregations he worked with reflected worship traditions from 1950's Mid-western congregations. These foreign traditions presented an insurmountable barrier to people in his community considering or following Jesus. The following evening a worker from a former Soviet republic described how Orthodox and Evangelical churches in his area, by their anti-Muslim spirit, kept local Muslims from following and then witnessing for Jesus in their culture and community. The specifics

they described were unique to each context. Yet the underlying issues were always the same. Believers from one part of the world had assumed that their Christian traditions were normative for all believers in every place, every culture, and every community. In some instances, they emphasized buildings and worship order, in others language and expression, and in other financial resources. In every instance, however, the local community primarily rejected Jesus because the Christianity that represented Him was foreign and alien. In other words, **they were not rejecting Jesus Himself, they rejected Him because of the foreign package in which Christians wrapped Him!**

So what should we do when elements of our Christian package hide Jesus or actually drive people away from Him? I would like to explore some specific examples that those conversations raised. Then I will suggest some New Testament attitudes and approaches that

would help us remove the barriers and place the focus squarely on Jesus.

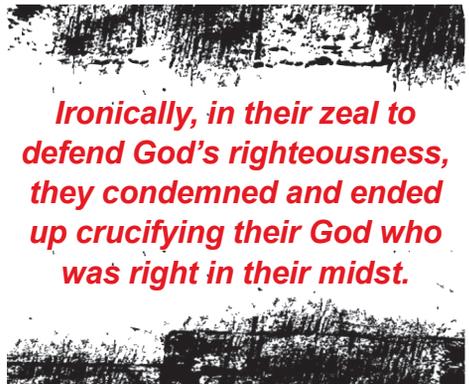
Christian Anti-Culture as a Barrier to Jesus

My Soviet republic friend repeatedly noted two critical issues that created barriers to Jesus. Many believers in the Orthodox and Evangelical congregations did not like Muslims and avoided the local Muslim community as much as possible. This anti-Muslim sentiment created a barrier to anyone from that community, even for those he found who honestly wanted to follow Jesus. As a result, their Christian package of Jesus included anti-cultural attitude. This posed a significant barrier even to those who were interested in Jesus.

Occasionally my friend convinced a new Muslim-background believer to join one of the Evangelical churches. In every instance, the new believer was ‘discipled’ to use anti-Muslim rhetoric and to adopt Western Christian behaviors and language. He shared that within three to six months, they were no longer able to relate to or communicate respectfully with their family, friends, or community. The Christians quickly enculturated these new believers to offend and alienate their own people “in the name of Jesus.” They were taught to be “Christians” and as such to become a barrier to Jesus. This practice of extraction and negative discipleship isolated the new believers from their communities that desperately need Jesus.

The Jews of the first century had their own list of “those people”: tax-collectors, sinners, Samaritans, Gentiles. The spiritual leaders of Jesus’ day condemned Him for associating with such people (Matthew 9). He did it so often that He eventually was called a “friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Matthew 11). The Gospels do not give a single example of Jesus pointing a judging, condemning finger at tax collectors or sinners and calling them out in harsh tone! He reserved His censorious tone for the leaders who thought they were serving God by staying away from and condemning “bad people.” Ironically, in their zeal to defend God’s righteousness, they condemned and ended up crucifying their God who was right in their midst.

One barrier in the Christian package can be an anti-cultural spirit that avoids “those people” or that condemns “those people” in Jesus name. Jesus, in contrast, still wants to be a friend of sinners today, not their enemy. He still wants to eat, drink, and engage with them. The language and demeanour of



the Christian package needs to communicate His grace and good news to others whatever their culture or community.

Christian Worship Forms as a Barrier to Jesus

My European friend's problem appeared somewhat different initially. The worship services of several churches he served were conducted in the local language by local believers ("indigenous"). Yet the songs, order of worship, seating, decoration all looked like a 1950's Midwestern US church. In this instance, though, the Christian package again presented a barrier to Jesus. Missionaries had assumed that their forms of worship were essential aspects of the package. New believers had to adapt to their expressions of worship.

A couple years ago, a group of church leaders discussed a related worship issue with me in Northeast India. Long Christian tradition held that their local musical instruments and expressions were "the devil's music." They were expected to use "Christian" music instead. But "Christian" music was simply European or American worship music that was familiar and comfortable to those who introduced it to the new believers.

As these leaders wrestled over the worship issues with me, the Lord nudged me to turn around and look at the platform. There I noticed an electric guitar

and a Western drum kit! I couldn't help but laugh at the irony (the alternative was to weep!). Here were two instruments that all Western churches had labeled "the devil's music" in the 1950s and 60s. I went on to point out that a century before Western congregations had largely labeled pianos "the devil's music" only to later adopt and utilize that very instrument to engage their culture.

So I asked those leaders, "If Western Christians within a century twice adopted the culture's music to reach their culture, why is it still wrong for believers in India to do the same?" In the West, believers have chosen repeatedly to "become all things to all men" musically in order to reach the culture. So why can't believers in other parts of the world do the same? When Western Christians export their forms (organ, piano, worship team) as "Christian music," their worship package can create barriers to Jesus. Instead, Jesus should be allowed to sing, play, and dance using local cultural forms. Then He would become their Jesus, not a foreign, Western god.

The Lord has repeatedly led Western Christians to adapt their culture's expressive forms to glorify Jesus. There is no "Christian music." It all represents Christian adaptations of cultural music. So Western Christians should be honest with believers in the rest of the world in this matter. If they could repeatedly adapt the worship package

to local cultural expressions, why must national believers only use the West's worship package? When they are forced to use foreign music, lyrics, or instruments, they shout to the community at large that Jesus is the foreign god of a foreign religion.

In the Christian worship package, we need to be much more careful about "becoming all things to all men" musically (words, tunes, instruments, rhythms, and movement). We should allow local believers the same freedom to use their culture's expressions of worship that Western Christianity has repeatedly exercised.

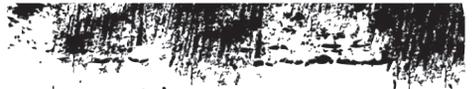
Christian Dependency as a Barrier to Jesus

My Indian friend identified a third common Christian barrier to Jesus. He articulated a number of ways in which Western funding drives Hindus away from Jesus. When missions set up individual pastors to start and run churches, they are commonly funded from Western sources (even adopted by Western churches). This is often justified because "we get more bang for our buck."

Yet, as I have talked with numerous believers in different parts of the world, this part of the Christian package can have serious issues both biblically and culturally. From a biblical perspective, we have no evidence of churches governed by an individual "pastor" who was paid by external mission funds. That model is a Western cultural inven-

tion found nowhere in the New Testament. "Pastors" (simply a Latin word for shepherds) were always a team of elders and overseers in a local congregation. All of the New Testament evidence points to the apostles and evangelists setting up a local eldership early in the life of a congregation (even in pagan, idolatrous communities like Corinth and Ephesus). Yet biblical models of responsible congregations with a team of elders and deacons (Acts 20, Philippians 1) rarely, if ever, become a part of mission-supported congregations.

Godly, devout "pastors" serve the Lord faithfully around the world. I have known and respected many of them in a variety of places. However, Western-funded pastors can present a barrier to the good news especially in Hindu or Muslim contexts. I repeatedly hear that because they receive foreign funding, such pastors are often perceived as agents of Western proselytizing and subversion. If, additionally, their "Christian" package includes condemning the local culture, they further gain



In the West, believers have chosen repeatedly to "become all things to all men" musically in order to reach the culture.



a reputation as foreign-supported agitators within the community. In many instances, they may use mission-provided benevolence to help people in the name of Jesus. But if this is done in ways that make assistance contingent on or subsequent to conversion, local non-believers accuse them of buying or inducing converts. Just Google “inducement” with “conversion” to see what an incredibly emotional barrier this presents in India particularly. When the West funds its Christian package, then, it can create numerous barriers to Jesus in the minds of non-believers.

When Paul articulated his principle of “becoming all things to all men,” he started that discussion with a financial application of the principle. In 1 Corinthians 9:1-17, he discussed the issue of whether to take money from local hearers or whether to work with his own hands and offer the gospel freely. Paul indicated that funding for his ministry could present a barrier to his Greco-Roman audience. He worked with his own hands in order not to present an obstacle to the good news of Jesus. This was his practical application of the “become all things to all men” principle. Since funding was a barrier, he removed that barrier so that people could meet and consider Jesus without that cultural obstacle.

So today, in certain contexts Western funding and paid pastors can create significant barriers in the minds of outsiders. We seriously need to consider how Paul’s principle should be applied to our Christian package. In

order to “become all things to all men,” we might need to invest in alternatives to direct Western funding: local tent-making training, businesses to provide livelihoods, and local community empowerment projects. Rather than perpetuating dependency on Western funds, Christians ought to invest more to ensure local responsibility and sustainability as early as possible. In contexts where Western funds present a significant barrier (especially Hindu and Muslim contexts), believers should give more attention to social entrepreneurship, micro-enterprise, and micro-finance rather than outright donation and direct funding. By reducing and redirecting Western funding of ministry, we would help believers say to their skeptical neighbors that they serve Christ for Him, not for the Western funds.

Further Exploring Christianity’s Barriers to Jesus

Those three conversations about Christianity’s package only scratched the surface of a deep issue in Christian missions. We often do not realize how many elements of our package are our cultural adaptations, rather than biblical faith and practice. There are parts of the world where new believers have readily embraced and adopted the West’s package. At the same time, though, some of the most unreached parts of the world are highly resistant to that same package. They often do

not reject Jesus Himself. They reject our “Christian” package without ever having a chance to actually meet Him!

We are currently collaborating with a growing network of believers in different parts of the world to explore and address these Christian barriers to Jesus. Journey Services partners with churches and ministries to advocate for and equip believers to incarnate Jesus naturally within the culture rather than carry and present Him in foreign packages.

Suggested Reading:

Bharati, S. D. (2004). *Living Water and Indian Bowl*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Kinnaman, D., & Lyons, G. (2007). *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Viola, F., & Barna, G. (2012). *Pagan Christianity? Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

news briefs

Bacoor, Philippines

Christ Reaching Asian Mission Worldwide Inc. has begun a new work in Bacoor Philippines. This area is a mixture of wealth and great poverty. Our work is with the “boat people” of the area. We will concentrate on their physical needs of food, and shelter first. Once this is established we will begin efforts of education and evangelism. Missionaries Sang Ho Kim and his wife Lisa will be our field workers. If you would like more information please call our Bedford, Indiana office at 812-275-6476.



A sleeping girl



Slum area of Bancoor, Philippines

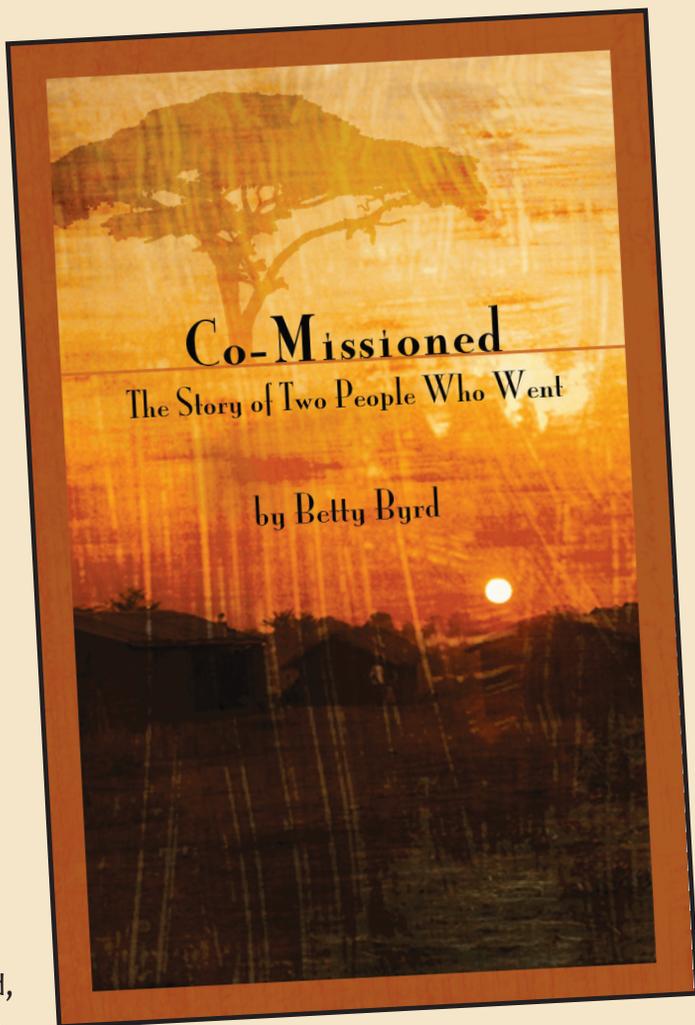
The purpose of this book is to chronicle the journey and experiences of two people who came to be known as missionaries.

**They were ordinary people -- from ordinary places.
And they followed the most extraordinary God.**

May those who read these pages be inspired to listen to and act upon the call of this same God, the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in their own lives.

To God be the glory.

For copies of this book, please contact Betty Byrd at 4113 Old Routt Road, Louisville, KY 40299.



A suggested donation of \$15.00 to Team Expansion is appreciated for each copy ordered.

**This is the story of my journey
from evil spirits
to the Holy Spirit;
from Satan-worship
to God-worship;
from fear of death and hell
to peace and glory in the
One who has already saved me and
prepared a place in Heaven for me.**



Ben Alexander, author and founder of Exposing Satan's Power Ministries, has spoken on 5 continents, in 17 countries, in 49 States, and in countless prisons and schools.

ghosts
séances
ouija board
speaking in tongues

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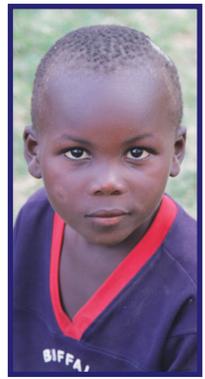
Worms with a Chance of Malaria

Dwain C. Illman, M.D.

"My stomach is swollen and I have no appetite," was a complaint of hundreds at Global Health Outreach (GHO) medical evangelistic clinics in lower Volta region of eastern Ghana. Again and again, kids of all ages came in with bellies like a 6-month pregnant woman. Scores had serious malaria. Someone dies of malaria in Africa every 30 seconds. During the course of our clinics at Agbadzakofe and Torve nearly 2000 patients were seen, treated and given personal prayer and counseling.

God blessed us with a team of 16 dedicated servants. In II Corinthians 13:5 Paul asks the believers: "Do you not realize Jesus Christ is in you - unless, of course, you fail the test?" Our team visualized fully, passing this test that "Jesus Christ is in you."

A personal triumph was noted for last year's Ghana team. We had twins Peter and Paul who, at 2 months of age were cachectic and nearly dead. Dr. Diane and



Young boy who came to the clinic at Agbadzakofe.



The USA team along the Volta River Sunday evening after a day of worship and praise.



Dr. Diane M. and Marilyn Illman at Torve clinic with the two miracle babies. A year ago they were under 5 pounds, dehydrated and had no sucking reflex. Dr. Diane went to the local chief to ensure that this mother would get care. We spent a lot of time with her last year. She came back this year to show off her thriving babies. Dr. Diane: This is my God sighting!

our NICU nurse led to their immediate rescue. Diane told the chief he was responsible for getting breast milk for them. They came back this year, healthy, beautiful and very responsive -- a sure victory, demonstrating God at work!

Alex came in from previous years. By a long process of injury, infection, surgeries, etc., this man had to have a high

amputation of his foot. Lauren and Van have been working with him the last 5 years. He walked in wearing his new prosthesis. (When the team was at Terry and Amy Ruff's in northern Ghana last year, there "happened" to be a woman whose ministry was prosthetic extremities. A connection was made. This brought tears to our eyes.)

In the hundreds of patients I saw, there are many interesting stories. Here are a few:

- A 90-year-old woman was carried some distance into the clinic. She was taking no medicine but had gangrene of her left foot extending just above her ankle. The only life-saving procedure would be an amputation so the daughters carried her off down the road.

- Several patients came in daily with serious tropical ulcers, most around their feet and ankles. An insect bite or small cut left untreated can break down in this climate and be very stubborn to heal. Nurse Claudia had an entire "station" for wound care and injections.



Claudia H. praying for a patient at one of the clinics.



Rachel Matsumoto with the family dressed similarly at the clinic.

She was our Mother Teresa in wound care and would not have done "it for a million dollars" (Mother Teresa quote). Claudia is being treated aggressively for breast cancer and put a hold on her chemo to serve. I am so glad the Lord led her to this ministry. Her caring ministry was unequalled.

- There was 35-year-old Victoria who has been on leprosy treatment and now has a fulminating infection in and around her left eye, creating a frightening and repulsive appearance. Claudia stepped up and we also referred her to the hospital.

- A lot of young men and a few women had STD's. My interpreter, Wisdom Korsinah, said he had done his masters thesis on the church and AID's. He found that this district has the highest incidence of HIV in the country of Ghana. The national prevalence is 2%; in this eastern Volta it is 3%. Our local Grand Team Leader had to go to a local pharmacy and get more Doxycycline for treatments. Young Doctor James was very good in teaching Christian sexual

practices with the young men.

- Fourteen-year-old Mark is very intelligent and spoke English like a teacher. He is a Christian and wants to be a pastor. I took him to our pastors for prayer and encouragement.

- Daniel is 25 and completely blind. His sister walked him in over several miles. Two years ago robbers stopped him and shot him twice in the head. We pray for God's healing.

- One mom said her daughter was 14 months. When I asked when her birthday was, she didn't know. She looked like 9 months. However, we saw scores of underweight and malnourished children, so she could be 14 months.

- Little Dogbeda is three years old. She is the daughter of a satanic priestess. Her mother is Agbawa and wore completely white and had distinctive beads on her wrists. My interpreter said she is known by the beads.

- My interpreter Wisdom said: "Twelve years ago I was in that cult. My father was, and still is, deep in idol worship. I became troubled by worshipping idols and only saw evil. I heard of Jesus and ran to Him when I was in high school. I went on to Ghana Christian



Waiting at clinic registration -- this is beginning of the process to be seen.



Rachel Matsumoto dancing during worship at the giant Sunday rally.

College and graduate studies."

- Diane saw 10-year-old Stephen who had severe ear infections and was nearly deaf. She treated him with antibiotic injections, pills and eardrops. The next day he had no fever and could hear. Diane: "This is my God moment!" We only treat; God heals.

- Mary is 68 and said she was "bewitched" 3 years ago and has had sores and leg pain ever since. We sent her to the pastors for demon cleansing with prayer and laying on of hands.

- So many of the people do heavy work and have intense back pains. Several had obvious foot drop and other weaknesses in their legs from apparent bulging lumbar discs.

- Jennifer saw Jesus in Kevin as he quietly counted thousands of pills each day in pharmacy. Our pharmacist, Natalia, liked that he would put his hulk body in the doorway and block people from infiltrating the pharmacy!

- From my doctor table I could see all the triage staff. With every patient I saw a Jesus encounter. It warmed my heart to watch everyone greeting and checking in over 2000 patients. There were NO RESTFUL DAYS!"

- Rachel M. saw Becca sobbing after lunch about some of her patients. "Pretty amazing love."

Scores of different conditions and serious illnesses were seen and treated. We had leprosy, septic eyes, deaf mutes, strokes, textbook of rashes, frequent nausea and vomiting, headache, serious pneumonia, asthma and, of course, worms and malaria. Hypertension is huge. It is endemic in Ghana. 240/120 was common. The people eat basically no salt which again shows the minor role salt intake plays in most hypertensives. The HTN leads to strokes, heart attacks, heart failure, etc. I had my pediatrician, Diane, help me with FLK's - funny looking kids. There is little in Ghana to assist those with syndromes and developmental problems. There were a few with sickle cell disease. One morning two critically ill patients had to go right to the hospital due to acute abdomen and sickle cell crisis. There were also several tropical conditions as well. There are few wells in this area. We were told this is because when they drill one it is brackish. The locals basically drink from the Volta River and its



Medical student Jenn with a patient at Agbadzakofe.



The cutest baby I treated this year at Ghana -- ok, there were one or two more just as cute!

tributaries without any filtering and/or purification.

This population seem to be farmers (with only a hoe), wine makers (from sugar cane or palm trees), traders (carrying a tubs of product on their heads and selling to people in town or stopped at one of the many massive speed bumps), fishermen (both off boats and from shore with nets). It doesn't take much imagination to see why there are multiple musculoskeletal complaints. A lot of teaching was done on body mechanics and exercises.

We went from Mercy to Comfort to Peace. These are just some of the names of our clients. Others included: Happy, Patience, Rejoice, Beauty and Hoop (sic).

Marilyn artfully guided the group to tell about happenings in the clinic where the person saw someone or something that looked like Jesus was there. Here are a few:

- Six of our local pastors slept on the cement floor of our pharmacy to

watch over our supplies while we slept in an air-conditioned room on a bed. The pharmacy is in a schoolroom that reeks of bat guano and urine. It is difficult to just walk in the room, let alone spend the day and night there. Natalia, Kevin, Rachel L. and Ernest spent all clinic days there. We mostly held our clinic under shelters away from the bat-infested classrooms.

- Diane prematurely commented: "We only have a testimony if we have a test." Two days later 11 of 16 team members became very sick with what was probably Norwalk virus (cruise ship virus without a cruise!). Interestingly, the 5 men on the trip did not get sick, making me think the source was in a women's toilet on clinic site (hole in the floor) or at our breakfast and dinner eating home belonging to local doctor Pius. For most, the illness was 2-3 days; others 5-6 days. We had several team members miss clinic days. In fact, a local Ghana leader got so ill the day we left he was hospitalized.

- Dwain saw Jesus as Rachel carefully



Tim Lange loved triage. He was almost 16 and missed his first week of football practice back home. He said this means he can't play the first two games. He is confident he made the right decision to come to Ghana.



High school senior Rachel Matsumoto enjoying herself with one of our patients.

taught scores of people back exercises

- Marilyn brought up Dr. Annie. Her sister had sent her a box of medical supplies shortly before departure. There were half dozen-liter IV bags of saline. Annie's roommate, Claudia, got so sick she required an IV and received nearly 3 liters of fluid one night. She cared for her the entire night and then Annie came to clinic.

- Our local leader is Enoch Nyador. He said: "I saw Jesus working through the team. I appreciate the seriousness you apply to every patient. This is important business. God is sending us hundreds of people to serve and talk with about Jesus. I led a fetish priestess to The Lord today. I asked,



Celebration dancing at the large Sunday rally with 1000 attending. Dr. Illman was the speaker of the day.

'Are you sure?' She said, 'Yes, I want to follow Jesus only.' A fetish person will change her name when she becomes a Christian."

- The local chief came to our closing



The entire team at Torve. Over 50 people worked every day to actuate this ministry.

program. He was all attired in traditional clothing. He said: "We have never seen anything like this in our community. All of a sudden many 'uncomfortable' Americans were here to offer care. By the grace of God you came to help us. You have made us aware of our health problems and have taught us much. I appeal to FAME Ghana to build a clinic in this area. We will do all we can to help."

- Marsha said her interpreter, Nelson, said: "My sister died last night but I want to help here." (Sister most likely refers to a cousin.)

- Marilyn said: "I heard Dwain's voice and saw him caring for a patient. I love that man!"

- We don't judge a day by the size of a harvest but by the number of seeds planted.

Sunglasses were the most popular item that the eyeglasses department dis-

pensed. Marilyn had a pair for each of the 34 interpreters/pastors. Some literally danced with joy when they received their pair. Marilyn and Sara fit a total of 450 pairs of sunglasses and readers for the people in this lower Volta region. This is life changing for many. "I can read my Bible" is a recurrent response.

The team shared some summary thoughts about their ministry in Ghana. Please read them and listen to their hearts speaking:

1. Marsha: malaria, malnutrition and waist pain treated under a tree.

2. Kevin: Counting pills in the bat cave. (Pharmacy assistant)

3. Matt: I got to listen to the heartbeat of Africa. (Triage lead)

4. Annie: time and talents for God's glory.

5. Jen: 85 and counting (new believers and more).

6. Tim: 27 short (short of 2000).

7. Becca Lange: genuine joy and genuine faith - people full of joy, many have one or less meal a day but have joy. Need their faith; we at home can get in comfort zone and feel like there is no need to rely on God.

8. Natalia: don't worry your heart,



I always say, "We are not Walmart." This lady had 8 kids and took one of my Walmart bags because she had so much medicine.



Dr. Illman and a young college student at Agbadzakofe.

God will provide. Also, adoption central - team is a huge family from the very beginning. Kevin is like a father, barricaded pharmacy door when I needed it; Jen is like a sister, also spiritually the entire team. I am refreshed after being with strong Christians and their positive attitudes.

9. Diane: wait a second, this wasn't in the travel brochure; Carnival cruise line may turn around and go home, but we got God, so bring it on. (Reference to presumed Norwalk virus mentioned earlier.)

10. Marilyn: Weebles may wobble, but they don't fall down. I fell down but rest of the team kept on working even while they were sick. I got back up. Perseverance of people who live here in such difficulty is remarkable. I learned again

to do the best we can with what we have.

11. Rachel L: speedy recovery on the long road home; Psalms 73:26 - God is the strength of our heart.

12. Rachel M: In the palm of God's hand. The trip has gone smoothly; there has been so much peace even when all the people got sick. We were surrounded by God's hand and God's love,

13. Sara: God and Ganki for Ghana -(ganki is local Ewe language for glasses)

14. Annie: precious living water. Went to Torve, a place so deprived. Lots could be done if they have clean water.

15. James: staffing my first clinic; no power except prayer. We didn't have electricity. Local pastors have been praying for us months in advance. As our team started to crash, we prayed, and people at home prayed. Keep on praying for this.

16. Enoch: God's grace at work. By his grace; we get our strength from God's grace. Also, God can use anybody; the body of Christ working together. GHO, Agave Christian Union



Pastor Nelson Bansah, from Tieve Christian Church, is enjoying Sunday worship. He gave the group a wonderful testimony as to the long-term effectiveness of our short-term medical clinics. It was very encouraging.



The Nyador brothers -- all active in local Christian Churches with brother Enoch the director of Ghana Christian Mission or also called FAME Ghana. The brothers are Emmanuel, Eric, Enoch, and Ernest. Thank you Mama Nyador!

(union of 20 plus different church groups in the area), FAME Ghana, local communities, cooks, chief, etc.

17. Dwain - worms with chance of malaria.

The team rejoiced in hearing Psalms 73:25-26, a portion of which says: "whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you."

God is using GHO. Pastor Nelson Bansah gave a stirring testimony on the phenomenal effectiveness of the GHO/Agave Union pastors ministry in 2012 at Fieve. He said:

1. We met with the chiefs and other community leaders prior to GHO coming.

2. The church and community came together.

3. The local leaders decided which churches would contribute to feed the pastor-interpreters. Which is usually 30-40 men and women.

4. Different churches brought varied gifts.

5. Rice farmers gave rice to feed us.

6. Many new believers are in church today as a result of the 2012 GHO Fieve outreach.

7. Many would not have become Christians without this.

WOW! Ghana 2014 is in the books. 472 pairs of glasses were fitted; 85 people accepted Jesus for the first time. Never have so many been so sick at these clinics. We thought the clinics at Agbadzakofe were full of chronically ill, acutely ill and malnourished people. Then day two at Torve was loaded with more in greater acuity and number. Never have I personally worked so hard. I saw about 150 patients in one day. This day fatigued us all.

The spiritual impact of this outreach is nearly unequalled. Pastors dedicate their time to come and testify to Jesus. The Sunday rally day is always outstanding. About 1000 people come to sing, praise, dance, fellowship and listen. I was the speaker of the day with Enoch as my interpreter. I spoke for 10 minutes; he spoke for 20 minutes. He makes my messages better! The times are a bit of an exaggeration. Enoch said: "after patients proceed through the clinic they have received a heavy dose of the gospel."

For 2015 Agave Christian Union in conjunction with FAME Ghana (Ghana Christian Mission) would like to host clinics at GONU-KORKUVIKOPE AND AGBATIVI with the rally day at Agbativi. The team would lodge again in Sogakope and go out about an hour travel each day to clinics and also the Sunday rally. This would be July 25-August 7, 2015.

Marilyn and I are praying about our part in this wonderful ministry. This is a difficult and labor-intensive outreach. Work in Africa is hard with serious chance of illness. Marilyn and others of the team were very sick this year. There is no doubt that God is blessing this ministry and those who serve are filled with blessings. There was a road sign: "Without passion life is nothing."

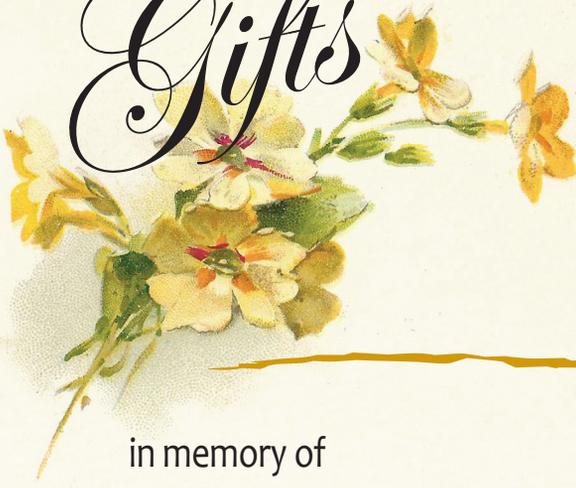
I have passion for medical missions and feel God is using me through these outreaches to expand His territory. Please pray for your part in Ghana 2015 as we pray for ours. In Ghana 2014 we were overwhelmed with people and with God's blessings. What does 2015 promise?

thank you!

MSA greatly appreciates your special gifts to our “raise the banner higher” appeal. The following have given a total of \$15,935.00 through January 13th!

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in memory

Jesus “Chuy” Ramírez-Briseño

December 2, 1949 - December 22, 2014



Jesus “Chuy” Ramírez-Briseño, 65, of San German, Puerto Rico, went to be with the Lord Monday,

December 22, 2014, in SwedishAmerican Hospital.

“Chuy” was born December 2, 1949, in Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, the son of Manuel Ramírez-Mendoza and Julieta Briseño-Nava. He married H. Jane Barnes on January 29, 1972, in Mount Auburn, Illinois. Together “Chuy” and Jane served as missionaries in Puerto Rico with Caribe Christian Mission for 42 years. “Chuy”

also served as a trustee of Puerto Rico Christian School.

Survivors include his wife, Jane; children, Joel (Christina) Ramírez of Elgin (IL), Miriam Ramírez of Rockford (IL), and Jonathan (Jo) Ramírez of Mahomet (IL); grandchildren, Jordan, Abigail, Alexis, Ethan, and Emily; father-in-law, Price Barnes; four sisters; one brother; many nieces and nephews.

“Chuy” was preceded in death by his parents and two sisters.

A memorial service was held in Central Christian Church, Rockford (IL) and a second service followed in Puerto Rico.

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in memory



Marcia Kay Thomson

November 28, 1937 - September 21, 2014

“I am the putty that fills in the cracks.” This was Marcia Kay Thomson’s description of her years in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Marcia Kay arrived in (then) Rhodesia November 10, 1963 to work as John Pemberton’s secretary-bookkeeper at Mashoko Mission. Until her death September 21, 2014 she remained in that country “filling the cracks” in the work of the Lord through Central Africa Mission.

Marcia Kay was born November 28, 1937 in Lamar, MO to Waymeth and George Terrill Thomson. When she was two months old the Thomsons moved to Mt. Vernon, IL, where she grew up. When she was 12 she was baptized into Christ and continued to walk close to Him all her life. She graduated from Mt. Vernon Township High School in 1955. After graduation she went to work for Bell Telephone Company.

In 1957 Marcia Kay went to Joplin, MO and entered Ozark Bible College (OCC). She continued working for Bell Telephone 40 hours a week. On Sundays she attended Carterville Christian Church where she taught a youth group. She graduated from OCC in 1963 with a B.S.L.

Having met many of the missionaries then in Rhodesia, Marcia Kay felt led to join the work in the Education Department of Mashoko Mission. She was a versatile worker and always fulfilled her assigned duties and went beyond them.

In 1969 the main office of the Education Department was moved to Chiredzi. From that venue Marcia Kay still paid the teachers in the Mashoko area as well as Chiredzi. She also taught Scripture classes in the Chiredzi Primary School and Bible classes in the Chiredzi Church of Christ.

In order to have more time to teach, Marcia Kay moved to Fort Victoria (now Masvingo) and taught 10 hours a week at Central Africa Christian College, Bible classes at three government schools as well as the Christian Church Bible school. She also helped out at the Christian Book Shop and C.A.M.E.L.S. print shop. Marcia Kay lived there during the war years of the late 70’s and filled the gaps for several missionaries who had to leave their areas of work because of the fighting. Shopping for Mashoko Mission was done in Ft. Victoria and often Marcia Kay was needed to find the right products or straighten out accounts. Some things were not available in town and Marcia Kay would phone Salisbury to have them sent to her. She then got the items to the people who needed them. When the Doug Johnson family went on furlough, Marcia Kay agreed to do the payroll for the Duwure Secondary School that they operated. Putty – filling the cracks wherever needed.

At the time the government of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia changed in 1980 there was a national Council for Christian Education. Marcia Kay and Jack Pennington were selected to be on this council. As a result,

Marcia Kay was involved in the writing and approving of the materials that were taught in government school Bible classes all over the country. She took the government training on how to teach this material and used this training to teach many students and other teachers over the following years.

Marcia Kay moved to Harare (Salisbury) to help in the work of the growing Zimbabwe Christian College. She continued teaching Bible classes in government schools.

Early in her time in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe Marcia Kay had gotten permanent residence and did not have to apply periodically for work permits as did missionaries arriving after 1980. This freed her to move from assignment to assignment. When Francis Johnson retired from managing Central Africa Mission Evangelistic Literature Service (CAMELS) Marcia once more was the putty, stepping into this position and moving back to Masvingo (Ft. Victoria) in 1991.

Marcia Kay was always involved in the lives of the people around her. She paid school fees for several students of families she knew had need. She helped at least one family have a place to live. A widow with several children had no home and Marcia Kay helped her find a place to live, furniture for the house, sewed curtains and saw to it that the house had locks and the security gates it needed.

By 2007 things in Zimbabwe had become very bad and there was nothing on the store shelves. Marcia Kay began to go to South Africa once a month, to the home of Alice Fishback, a missionary & close friend, to spend a week filling her pickup with supplies for the print shop and basic food supplies (corn meal, flour, sugar, etc).

Returning home, she would distribute the food supplies to people in the print shop and church.

In addition to her work with CAMELS, Marcia Kay was very active with the Masvingo Christian Church. For a time she served as treasurer and sang in the choir. Some of Marcia Kay's friends lived in the retirement home across the street from the church. Marcia Kay liked to bake cakes, cookies and other goodies to take to the residents of this home. She also helped some of the people by taking them to Salisbury to doctors and the hospital.

After several cancer treatments she began to search the internet and talk to others who had cancer. She decided to go on a strict vegetarian diet. Feb. 18, 2014 she received a CT scan report stating that she was cancer free. What rejoicing! It was a real blow when the cancer returned. She was due to come to the States on furlough and did so in the spring of 2014 after learning the cancer was back.

One of Marcia Kay's nephews, John, said of her: "I only saw her every few years when she returned on furlough, and even then I didn't see her much because she was going to visit churches and supporters or doing other things to prepare for her return to Africa. She was always thinking of the people there. In fact, when I saw her 3 weeks ago when she was very sick and very weak, she talked about needing to work on things that she needed to finish before she went back to Africa. When she traveled here [to the USA] earlier this Spring, she bought a round trip ticket. As sick as she was, she intended to go back."

Instead, Marcia Kay Thomson went home to be with the Lord on Sept. 21, 2014. She is greatly missed by all who knew her well.

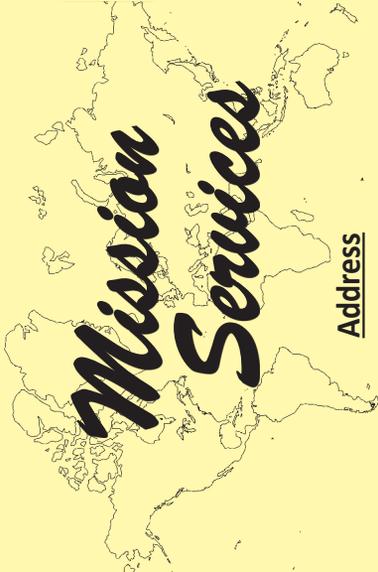
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