



Tell Me How To Be
A Christian
PAGE TWO



The Great
Commission In
Monterrey, Mexico
PAGE THREE



The Kinship
of Ministry
PAGE THREE



Meet the Pastor:
Jim Wiebelhaus
PAGE FOUR



GREAT
COMMISSION
CHURCHES

CHRISTIANITY IN

action

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CHANGING LIVES



MISSIONARIES TO AMERICA

By Yumi Wolf

My husband, Dan, and I have been married and serving the Lord for almost twenty years. The last twelve years we have been in Wisconsin.

Before that we served God in Japan for a total of eight and a half years. Although we were married in America, we met and began serving together in Japan. My life is happy and filled with so many blessings but we have had some difficult choices.

It was hard for me to leave Japan, to be a missionary in America and to start a church. I didn't know exactly what we were being called to, other than that my husband Dan told me: it would be very hard and that there were no promises that things would work out. We took several months to pray and talk to wise Christians. It was hard to leave our ministry, family, friends, my language, culture, and also Dan had a very good job. Like Abraham and Sarah, I didn't know what we were being called to other than what Dan had told me.

I remember how we were busy up to the last day in Japan, not only packing years worth of possessions and memories, but Dan was preaching and I was translating. Our last moments in our empty apartment, we gathered on the tatami floor and prayed and remembered all the places where we had ministered with people and prayed with them to be saved. Lots of tears were coming down not because we were worried, but with gratitude that God had used us to bless so many people.

We went forward without certain plans just trusting that if we made ourselves available, He would use us in America too.

That was twelve years ago. God has been faithful and blessed us to plant the Foundation Bible Church. Not long after, we found Great Commission Churches. We are so glad to have found this family! Everything went well!



HOOKED ON LOVE AND GRACE

By Jonathan Kimball

At 15 years old, I had little idea of what it meant to live as a Christian. I attended Sunday services, half-heartedly attempted to change my foul language, and had a suspicion that my media choices wouldn't make Jesus happy. Then came High School Leadership Training in Myrtle Beach. I was invited by friends that neglected to inform me they would not be attending the conference. By the time I found out that my friends withheld such vital information, I was stuck.

Surely I couldn't go an entire week without slipping up and showing people how unchristian I really was. I had become accustomed to a social pecking order, a striving to impress that seemed necessary if one was to survive high school. But none of that seemed to be present in this community. It was easy to see the closeness this group of people shared with one another and with Jesus Christ. They prayed together for hours on end, sang passionately to the Lord, and shared deep things of the heart. There were no signs of the judgment and gossip to which I'd become so accustomed.

Throughout my time in Myrtle Beach I began to feel a real part of this group. Although their fellowship was precious, they shared it freely. I was invited into a community founded not on social status, outward appearance, or long-held associations but on a devotion to Jesus Christ and His Great Commission. Of course, I was hooked! Jesus pulled me into an intimate relationship with Himself, and He gave me something that had not been part of my understanding—a mission. The Spirit of God formed in me a deep conviction to share Jesus Christ with others and invite them into a family that had so changed my life. By His grace God has used me these last 15 years and it's my prayer and striving that many more would be welcomed into His kingdom.

MISSION USA

TELL ME HOW TO BE A CHRISTIAN

By Bob Bartlett & Paul Letvin

By faith and trusting God, our plan is to start 10 churches in 10 cities in 10 years.

This past February, Paul Letvin was raised up as an elder. We also had a small core of young people who wanted to plant a church in Fargo, North Dakota. After much counsel, planning and prayer we launched Submerge Church in September. With the launch, we operated a summer program in Fargo for ten weeks.

It was at Sunday evening services in local parks that we first met an Iranian student attending North Dakota State University. Paul explains:

I met with an Iranian student who had been hanging around with our group ever since he heard the music at one of our park

services this summer. When I asked about his thoughts on our group and about his religious beliefs, he said "I didn't really have any spiritual beliefs before coming here, although my mother is Muslim and my father claims no religion. After coming here in January, I soon became sad and missed my home and wanted to leave. But then I met your group and saw how they interacted with each other, and I wanted to be a part of that. I have been so joyful since being with your group, and now I have just wanted someone to tell me how to be a Christian." What an answer to prayer! I prayed with him right there to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior.

We are ever confident in accordance with the measure of faith God has given us to continue building our Fargo church and also praying, planning and preparing for



the next church plant. Job 8:7 promises "Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be." In this we believe we are faithfully fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" Psalm 126:3.

VINTAGE FAITH CHURCH - STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

By Jeff Wieman

My wife Grace and I started praying about planting a church at Oklahoma State University several years ago and this past May God had us move from Denver, CO to Stillwater, OK with our four children.

Throughout the spring and summer Grant and Elisa Shaffer and their son Link, Rick and Neva Whitney, Amy Olson, Bre Gallagher, Tara Werner, Kayla Lindsey, Andrew Harris, and Alfredo Ponce quit jobs, sold houses, and moved to Stillwater to help us start Vintage Faith Church - Stillwater.

God has blessed by giving everyone jobs or allowing us to work remotely with the jobs we had before. He also has given six of our men and women jobs on campus.

Over the last several months we have been spending a lot of time together praying and seeking God for what He might have for us in this town. Oklahoma State University is one of the largest agricultural schools in the country. We have enjoyed getting out on campus and handing out personal testimony tracts, gospel tracts, and other literature. We have talked to a lot of students and in the



process God has blessed us with fruitful relationships that have enable us to start an official student organization started on campus.

Our prayer as a team is that God would add to our numbers those who are being saved and give us influential men and women who want to change this campus, this city, and this world for Him. Please join us in these prayers.

INTERNATIONAL



THE GREAT COMMISSION IN MONTERREY MEXICO

By Sergio Handal

The experience of serving the Lord isn't fully complete without having the blessing of planting a church.

We have experienced the most amazing and the most challenging times in our lives as we have undertaken the church plant and establishment in Mexico with our Great Commission Church. This only seems predictable, as the enemy of God does not want good churches to advance in what he considers his territories. These churches become a threat to his interests.

After experiencing God's grace, challenges, and lessons for eight years, we see a solid, healthy church that is growing and we see expansion to other locations in the vast Mexican territory.

God has given us a church in Monterrey, but also Bible studies in other state capitals such as Querétaro and Oaxaca. In addition, we have already started a mission in Chicontepec, Veracruz, a small city embedded in the mountain chains of the country's midwest.

As far as Great Commission Latin America (GCLA) is concerned, we have been working in the planning and preparation of our "10:5 Project" that we'll launch in early 2015. This is a bold vision to plant and establish 10 new churches in the next 5 years. We pray that 2 of these 5 new churches will be planted in countries where we currently don't have a presence. This involves the training and equipping of around 200 leaders.

We know we will have new big challenges



as we embark on this adventure. We count on your prayers and encouragement. The Great Commission is taking place in distinct places around the world. Let us not give up, no matter how hard personal or family circumstances get. We are confident the Lord can come back at any time; let us be found doing the work that He has commanded us to do!

THE KINSHIP OF MINISTRY

By Roz Short

In the spring of 2014, I accompanied my husband Tom on his trip to Europe. It was a whirlwind of activity.

Within a period of 18 days, we ministered in 8 different cities—Salzburg and Graz (Austria), Regensburg and Munich (Germany), Turin and Milan (Italy), Toulouse (France), and at a campground outside Amsterdam (the Netherlands). We were also able to fit in a memorable one-day tour of Normandy, France.

What always strikes me when I'm traveling with Tom and as I listen to his preaching, is the universal need for the message of the gospel. It's exciting to witness the power of God at work, changing lives all over the world.

In addition, I marvel at the greatness of the family of God—not only in its scope, but also in the kinship that can be

experienced. Regardless of cultural, racial, economic, and age differences, I have felt instant bonds of genuine love that can only be described as true family. People I have met on these trips have become friends whom I will treasure forever.

Finally, while Tom ministers in a very public way, I have had the great privilege of ministering one-on-one to women who have made the sacrifice of moving to a foreign land. They face unique challenges, and they miss what we often take for granted—ease of getting around, communicating effectively without any language barriers, and having peer relationships. The missionary wives also bear the burdens that their husbands carry for their churches. In many places we visited, I kept hearing the plea: "Pray for more workers in the harvest!" They are truly thankful for the encouragement, the prayers, and the financial help we can give, but they especially appreciate



the physical presence of people coming alongside, working in the harvest.

I was truly blessed to have been with these faithful women. God gave us some very special times of sincere conversations and heartfelt fellowship.

I echo what David said in Psalm 16...*"The godly people of the land are my true heroes! I take (great) pleasure in them!"*

INSIDE GCC

GCC PASTORS CONFERENCE 2015 LORD, SPEAK!

America needs a breakthrough. God's church in America needs a breakthrough.

This year, pastors will gather together June 15-17, 2015 in St. Louis for a special time of prayer and ministering God's word. Our prayer is that as we seek God, He will bring about a spiritual breakthrough in our lives, and in the churches we serve.

The format of the conference will allow for more pastors to speak, especially those new pastors from the next generation. So join us June 15-17, 2015 in St. Louis...and be ready to hear from the Lord!

For more information about the 2015 Pastors Conference, log on to:

www.gccweb.org.

MEET A GCC PASTOR

THIS EDITION:
JIM WIEBELHAUS

As a freshman engineering student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Jim came to know Christ through the work of a new GC church plant from Manhattan, KS in 1983. He began to join their Bible studies and then the church a year later. Jim met his wife, Diane, when she moved from Manhattan to Lincoln to help the team in the spring of 1985. Jim graduated from college, went on staff with the church and married Diane in 1989. They have had the joy of raising six children who are now between the ages of 11-23. Jim was appointed as a pastor in 1994.

Jim and Diane have had the privilege of winning and discipling a number of American and international students over the years and of seeing many of them join up with GC churches around the US and Asia. Besides local church responsibilities, Jim serves GC churches as an International Student Ministry (ISM) catalyst and organizes a yearly ISM/Cross-cultural Ministry Conference. Most years Jim is leading a team to Asia to help



build a foundation for church multiplication.

"He says: *'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'*" Isaiah 49:6

George Verwer once said he had not seen half of his prayers answered. But if you were to list the answers to prayer that George has seen, you would be overwhelmingly amazed! The lesson is to pray a lot and then pray some more and then move forward, expecting God to answer, being determined to never give up. Never!

RAISING UP FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

JOHN HOPLER - DIRECTOR, GREAT COMMISSION CHURCHES



"So David came to Baal-perazim and defeated them there; and he said, 'The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters.' Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim (the Master of breakthrough)." 2 Samuel 5:20

Spiritual breakthroughs. We all need spiritual breakthroughs.

It is so easy to get into a rut and to plateau in our personal lives and ministries. That's why we need God—the Master of breakthrough—to help us breakthrough like He did with King David. We need an extra measure of faith and perseverance to overcome the inertia that is holding us down.

In this newsletter there are stories of men and women who didn't settle for the status quo. They left their old lives behind and stepped out in faith for something better—the advancement of the Kingdom of God. They are good examples to follow.

As we begin 2015, ask yourself, "What new goal does God want me to set?" C.S. Lewis said, "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." I might add as well, you are never too young to set a goal or to dream a new dream.

So, join with other members of your church to set some new goals and dream some new dreams....so that the name of Jesus Christ might become famous throughout your community, your state and the world.



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