

# On **mission**

## STORIES OF THOSE WHO WENT

Wiebe \* Grunau \* Worsley \* Tjosvold \* Nilsson \* Baudais  
Thompson \* Hogenbirk \* Teo \* Hansen \* Golding \* Jaffray



Compiled by Ronald Brown

Copyright © 2021  
Published by Ronald Brown

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Brown, Ronald, 1949 —

On Mission: Stories of Those Who Went, Volume 2 / editor Ronald Brown

Issued in print and electronic formats

ISBN 978-1-008-92031-6

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®  
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Published in Canada

# Table of Contents

[Introduction by Ronald Brown](#)

[Preface by Ronald Brown](#)

[Foreword: Why I Love These Stories by Mike Linnen](#)

[1. In Various Kinds of Service: Doug, Hilda, and Judith Wiebe](#)

[2. Our Journey with Jesus: Floyd and Joyce Grunau](#)

[3. Change Agents: Pat and Ardyce Worsley](#)

[4. God's Care: Tim and Brenda Tjosvold](#)

[5. Blessing the Nations: Ruth Nilsson](#)

[6. Trusting the Lord for the Unknown: Colette Baudais](#)

[7. Progress at Turtle Speed: Kay Thompson](#)

[8. Watching God at Work: Gerald and Dorothy Hogenbirk](#)

[9. Good News to the Diaspora: Jonathan and Ruth Teo](#)

[10. Advancing the Niger Vision: Dennis and Dorrie Hansen](#)

[11. Called and Carried by God's Grace: Dave and Denise Golding](#)

[12. Unwavering Faith: Robert, Minnie, and Margaret Jaffray](#)

## Introduction

by Ronald Brown

Central to most of these stories is the role of Canadian Bible College (CBC), where most went for theological training. Several went on to graduate studies in other places. It is worth noting that in those days, CBC became the meeting place for young people; it was where many found their life partner with whom they would journey to the ends of the earth.

In these stories, you will also see the role of sending churches across Canada. These workers did not need to spend years raising their own personal support; they immediately qualified for funding from the central fund to which Alliance churches across Canada contribute. Today this is known as the Global Advance Fund, providing funding for travel to the venue, living allowance, children's education, etc. In a way, this book provides some accountability to both donors and those who faithfully prayed for what God did through these international workers.

We must note some vocabulary has changed over time, and so some authors will refer to their "furlough," but today, furlough is more likely termed a home assignment designed to help them engage with local churches in their sending district. The word "term" refers to the usual four-year cycle in their country followed by one year of furlough or home assignment back in North America.

When most of these international workers went out to their countries of service, they were under the North America Christian and Missionary Alliance office's mission administration in the United States. It was not until 1998 when Global Ministries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada began administering and caring for Canadian workers.

So, what are the stories in this book trying to do? Why do people go on mission? Ultimately, it goes back to the Great Commission's call (Matthew 28:19-20). The Church is being obedient to the heart of God, which is to see people in nations around the world given the opportunity to respond to God's invitation to become a follower of Jesus. So, we do not tend to go where there are already many Christians and a viable church; instead, we aim to go to the least-reached peoples of our world where there is not yet a church.

Like those in this book, many went as missionary church planters; today, many go as professionals into various global marketplaces. Missionary tasks, of course,



vary, as you will notice. Some missionary assignments were to evangelize, disciple, establish, and plant churches; for others, their main task was training leaders for the new churches. There were specialized ministries such as compassion and medical work; some had to teach missionary children, and some were mission administrators. Some worked in rural areas while others were in urban centres.

The goal ultimately is to see the nations of the world worshipping their Saviour and Redeemer. God would get to hear His favourite song of all.

Thank you for your service.

## Acknowledgements

This book has been a team effort. I am so grateful for the editing expertise of Shelby Keith in taking the original writings from a variety of missionary authors and transforming them into more readable chapters for us all.

I am grateful to my “fellow African” Dan Nel, who did the design work for our cover (<https://www.marula.ca>).

Gladys Thompson previously worked at The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada’s National Ministry Centre (NMC) in the Communications Department and was the project manager for the trilogy I worked on with Charlie Cook. I was thrilled when she agreed to come “out of retirement” to bring her considerable talents and experience to consulting and the formatting of the interactive PDF.

The Communications Department at the NMC placed the book on their website and did promotion <https://www.cmacan.org/resources/>.

Alexis Tjart and I previously worked together for three years in the same office. She is behind the organizing and uploading of books in three languages to the Global Vault Mission Books website and has prepared this book’s formatting. <https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/globalvault>

To Shelby, Dan, Gladys, Alexis, Jared, and Matt, my sincere thank you. I love working with you.

## Preface: God's Favourite Song of All

by Ronald Brown

I was driving my blue Land Cruiser along a dusty road in the Congo, on my way to visit several villages where we understood the Gospel had never yet been preached. I was with a Congolese pastor friend, and on the night I'll always remember, it was my turn to preach. The roofed shelter was crammed with about sixty people seated on benches and others standing at the back. As I spoke, one man was staring at me, listening intently.

With the Holy Spirit's anointing, I explained, as best I could in the local language, the story of Jesus coming to Earth to redeem lost people. At my invitation, he began weeping and walked quickly to the front. I was privileged to pray with him, and he entered the Kingdom of Christ. At that moment in Heaven, God's favourite song of all was being sung—a newly redeemed Congolese man started to worship his Saviour.

I began to understand God's favourite song of all some years later when I was an international worker in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo, from 1994-1997. During those years, the Phillips, Craig, and Dean trio was popular, and one of their songs stayed with me, *Favorite Song of All*. The truth of their lyrics has now seeped into my very soul, becoming the foundation stone for this book.

The picture painted in the song is of God enjoying the sounds of His creation worshipping Him. He loves the heavenly choirs praising Him, but there are times when He asks His singing angels to tone it down, to be quiet for a while, as a newly redeemed soul begins to sing the song of the redeemed. That particular song is God's favourite song of all.

In honour of God's favourite song, this book has been put together. God has called Canadians from across this vast nation, who, in obedience to the call, moved to the ends of the earth to announce the good news of Jesus. Then from those places, newly redeemed women and men began to sing His favourite song of all. I can only try to imagine the grand, joyous celebrations in Heaven as lost people in Papua, Niger, Mali, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Argentina, Indonesia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Jordan heard about Jesus in their own language and responded to the redeeming message of Christ.

These international workers tell their stories. From Canada to the ends of the

earth, they were sent by local Alliance churches, prayed for, and supported with funds and encouraging communications. They were resilient through multiple changes and transitions caused by the ever-changing circumstances of global living. Many managed their missionary careers while raising their third-culture kids in new territory.

And during those years, God was frequently having to ‘shush’ the worshipping angels for a while as the newly redeemed peoples began to sing. You are about to read these inspiring stories.

So many times, I have listened to this recording by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, often with tears in my eyes—God’s favourite song of all.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDsAGdPBvug>

## Foreword: Why I Love These Stories

by Mike Linnen

A community on mission for Jesus Christ is a bonding family experience like no other. If you have ever followed His call in taking a leap of faith with others and jumped into some project to make His name known—then you know what I’m talking about.

Is this just a warm fuzzy experience of relationships developed in the crucible of ministry? No, it’s so much more than that! Being in partnership for the Gospel together links us with Jesus in a way that builds an extraordinary, unified experience of humanity-as-we-have-been-longing-for: forgiveness and love freely given; full of purpose and hope in the future; diverse in background, culture, language and personality; fruitful in bringing new life in both spiritual and practical ways to every place in which we find ourselves.

And it’s very attractive to anyone who draws near.

When Paul says to the church in Philippi, “all of you share in God’s grace with me,” he means the reward and blessing of their commitment to the Gospel together. This leads to an outburst of that bonding family experience: “God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:7-8).

In the same way, the stories in this book are from friends, uncles, parents in the Lord with whom we have partnered over many years. We are starving ourselves of the gift of joy, love, and affection of Christ Jesus to not cherish them! This world, and our churches, need more of these kinds of relationships. That’s why I love these stories, and I hope you will too.

Mike Linnen

Cedarview Alliance Church, Ottawa

## Chapter 1

### In Various Kinds of Service: Doug, Hilda, and Judith Wiebe

by Doug Wiebe

#### Change in Perspective

Sometime in my early Christian training, I learned and believed God allowed Communism to take over China, bringing with it much suffering because the people as a whole rejected the Gospel preached to them in the early 20th Century. Early in my missionary life in Hong Kong, I casually shared this perspective with a young Chinese intellectual. He promptly informed me I was the reason for Communism and his people's suffering. From his perspective, the so-called Christian countries exploiting China were to blame. Being from one of those countries, white and Christian, I was, therefore, personally to blame.

I began to absorb something of the Oriental concept of time, something of their perspective of the glory of the past, and something of the eternal present of the past. It also helped me throughout my ministry that I realized I was not highly regarded because of my history, my noble ancestry, my white skin, or my great sacrifice to bring the good news to Hong Kong in the early seventies. Basically, I was the foreign devil (*kweiloo*) and the barbarian of inferior culture, customs, and intellect.

I also came to realize I should regard cultural politeness for what it was, but not to determine my ministry and lifestyle according to it. I also learned I was a guest, unwelcome and uninvited, as were my other missionary coworkers. It became clear to me if I could live with that worldview—accept it, love it, laugh at it, respect it—then I could be accepted, loved, and respected on another profound and deeply satisfying level. I was distraught when others would make racist remarks, knowing how thoughtless they were.

#### Where it Started

I grew up on a prairie farm near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the third of eight children. My grandparents on both sides had arrived in the Northwest Territories in 1904, my mother's parents from London, England, and my father's from Russia. The Wiebes were devout Mennonite Brethren. The Bates (my mother's side of the family) were devout Plymouth Brethren, recently converted through

the Moody/Sankey revivals in London. They ended up farming a few miles apart near Saskatoon.

I attended the Strawberry Valley Gospel Hall, built by my great-grandfather in 1917. I prayed to receive Christ at Redberry Lake Bible Camp (Mennonite Brethren) in 1952, the same year we got electricity on the farm. I was baptized four years later at the Gospel Hall in Saskatoon by Elder Bev Tansley, whom my great-grandfather had led to Christ years earlier.

My earliest exposure to missions came through missionaries Herb and Eileen Thiessen. They visited our little Gospel Hall to report on their work in India, and I will never forget the wonder I felt when Herb unrolled the skin of a snake that stretched the entire width of the building. I also recall an old white-haired missionary showing us black and white pictures of his life in China.

I went to the same one-room schoolhouse my mother had attended, being the only one in my grade from grade two to grade eight. I attended two years of high school in Saskatoon and then two years in Aberdeen, Saskatchewan. I then attended the University of Saskatchewan, obtaining a BA in Psychology/Sociology.

After graduation, I was immediately employed as a social worker with the provincial government, requesting a posting in Saskatchewan's far northeastern area, working primarily with Indigenous people. For a time, I lived in Prince Albert and soon met Ernie and Helen Regier, who were planting an Alliance church there. I then heard about Canadian Bible College (CBC), so I resigned from my job and moved to Regina. From 1966-69, I attended CBC while working as a social worker during the summers to cover my school fees. Through high school and university, Inter-School Christian Fellowship and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship played important roles in my spiritual formation.

Having no particular interest in China until my third year at CBC, I was assigned a "younger brother," Stephen Lee. He had escaped China for his faith by swimming through shark-infested waters. Since he was now in the dorm room next to mine, I often heard him praying, loudly and with tears. Once I asked him the subject of his prayers, and he said, "I am praying that you will be a missionary to China!" The Chinese students who lived on my floor in the residence gathered around me once and decided to give me a Chinese name, "Yip Wai Dak," *Yip* meaning "leaf," and *Wai Dak* meaning "Maintain Virtue." Little did I realize how the name would stick with me for the rest of my life.

## **Where it was Realized**

My missions professor from 1968-69 was a Vietnam missionary, Victor Oliver. Along with his wife, Dixie, he counselled me to marry my classmate Hilda Amels and encouraged me to apply for missionary accreditation. When I said I did not feel called, he responded: firstly, I should give God a chance; secondly,



I should give God the benefit of the doubt; and thirdly, I should immediately fill in the forms.

On January 15, 1969, he called me to his office and advised me to apply for Alliance Youth Corps and spend a year at Alliance Bible Seminary in Hong Kong, teaching Greek and English to seminary students. The same evening was Hilda's birthday party, hosted by my Chinese dorm mates. This juxtaposition of events seemed significant.

The summer of '69, Hilda and I were engaged at Glen Rocks Bible Conference, where her folks lived as caretakers. Hilda went on to work as a children's worker at the Guelph Alliance Church and agreed to wait for me while I went off to Hong Kong. Her commitment to missions was solid.

When I stepped off the plane in Hong Kong in August 1969, I had an overwhelming sense this was home. I considered the sensation to be my missionary call. Dr. Oliver's words came to me many times when facing challenges and, by God's grace, enabled perseverance.

I spent my first year in Hong Kong lodging with veteran missionaries, C.C. (Charles) and Esther Fowler, learning much of being a missionary through their example and teaching. I loved working with the seminary students and, in my youthful idealism, refused to eat meals with the professors, choosing to eat with the students (getting less meat as a result)!

I unintentionally broke numerous unspoken rules during the year, for which I was graciously forgiven and scolded in good humour. At the end of the year, the mission field director, Anthony Bollback, and National Church president, Phillip Teng, invited me to return after getting married and more educated first. I had hoped to visit the Thiessens in India that year, but unfortunately, just as I was making arrangements, Herb was killed in a motorcycle accident.

## Meeting the Qualifications

I returned to Canada, married Hilda Amels at Glen Rocks Conference Grounds in Ontario, and set off for the USA. When border patrol asked how we would support ourselves, I said my Father would take care of us. He accepted my answer!

Miraculously, we were given an empty church manse of the Evangelical Free Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to live in free of charge in exchange for making sure the church doors were locked each evening. Hilda, a trained lab technician, was unexpectedly granted a work visa within a month of our arrival due to a shortage of lab techs at the time in the USA. We had been short on funds, and some classmates encouraged us to work without a visa, but God wanted to show us when we did His will, He would provide.

God wanted to show  
us when we did His  
will, He would provide.

I obtained a Master of Arts in New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School while Hilda worked and gave birth to our son, Michael. On graduation, I was invited to go to Honolulu and work as a youth pastor with former Hong Kong missionary Anthony Bollback, who was by then pastor of Kapahulu Bible Church. Since Hilda already had a work permit for the USA, I accompanied her and shortly had my own.

Alf Orthner also invited us to go to Churchill, Manitoba and pastor there, but we chose Honolulu. Our two years there gifted us with a daughter, Miriam, and many cross-cultural experiences, facilitating our move to Hong Kong. I was also ordained there in 1973.

### **First Term 1974-78**

Arriving in Hong Kong in August 1974, the first task for both Hilda and me was to complete two years of full-time language study. It was a challenge with two small children, and life grew even more challenging when Hilda became pregnant with our third child. A wonderful extended visit from my Saskatoon-based parents was a great source of help and encouragement during this time.

One of my Chinese classmates from Trinity arrived back in Hong Kong at the same time we did. He worked at Far Eastern Broadcasting Company (FEBC), where



First prayer card, 1974. Courtesy Doug Wiebe.



Coworkers in Hong Kong, c. 1975. Courtesy Doug Wiebe.

they urgently needed an English-speaking announcer for one afternoon a week. He prevailed much upon me, and I agreed to help out. It was a tremendous delight to be doing something useful, to be making friends with Chinese coworkers, and to be learning about radio work for mainland China which, while unknown to me at the time, would open doors for ministry in the future.

For our third and fourth years, we were assigned to assist in church planting. The first year in Aberdeen, in a young plant, and the following year in Kwai Chung for entirely new work. It was a wonderful time seeing new churches planted and working with young seminary graduates. These works prosper to this day, and we could easily see the value of foreigners like ourselves in outreach ministries.

Working among the lower classes, we found the people eager to talk to us, especially since we could speak something of their language, which they had not encountered before.

The Hong Kong government would grant ground-floor space in high-rise buildings to religious organizations for operating youth, daycare, and senior centres. If we ran the programs during the week, we could use the facility for church activities on the weekend. This was a great advantage, forcing us into the community during the week, making friends and helping families, and it was a perfect bridge for building relationships. The Alliance had a good reputation for doing this kind of work, and many churches were planted this way.

During our third year (1977), the American Alliance head office in Nyack determined the Hong Kong field should start a radio ministry to mainland China. The field administration was not interested, but pressure from Nyack persisted as

they had signed an agreement with Transworld Radio (TWR). Since I was the only one with any radio experience, I was eventually asked to head this up.

Space does not permit to tell the story of how it all came together, but God miraculously provided, and on May 1, 1978, the first program went on the air. This was a grassroots movement with volunteers from the Alliance church writing scripts and recording programs in their various areas of interest and training.

Our first program was a sort of university-of-the-air format, attracting listeners who had not had the opportunity to study. A witness to Christ was always part of the program. Due to political change, we began to get listener responses from China, and within a year, we had five full-time workers just in the follow-up department writing letters. We had no funds to support the workers; they joined us out of vision and passion, raising their own support from families and home churches. Their excitement in receiving letters from China, and being able to respond, was contagious.

An organization from Holland heard of the work and sent workers and funds to build us a recording studio, so we did not have to rent. Other organizations, including the USA Foursquare church, gave significantly to sponsor program production. Famous Christian movie actors, Roy Chiao and his wife, spoke beautiful Mandarin and joined us part-time to help with writing and recording programs while also giving great encouragement and inspiration to the staff. A great day was when the National Church president, Phillip Teng, decided to record Bible study programs for us. Eventually, the National Church agreed to take over the whole ministry, and it continues to prosper to this day.

In May 1978, China opened the door for limited tourist travel, and I was able to join the seventh small tour group going into Gwanjou (Canton). The widespread poverty and suffering were overwhelming. I was able to pass out a few Bibles and, whenever clear of our tour guide, eagerly passed out small cards advertising Alliance Radio. More than anything, I was impressed with the great need and value of the radio ministry.

## **First Home Assignment 1978-79**

I settled my family in Bracebridge, Ontario, to be close to Hilda's parents. My first tour took me to Saskatchewan, reporting to churches. I will never forget the graciousness of Ron and Sharon Erickson, who, while I was recovering from pneumonia, gave up their master bedroom so I could have a good rest.

The eleven-week tour ended in Meadow Lake, where Wayne and Dawn Boldt had arranged only one service saying, "We knew you would be tired and would need a break, so we are just going to rest!" We spent some good hours in the bush, around campfires, and on the snowmobile, sharing our journeys.

The spring tour was in Ontario. The visit to Rexdale with Ross Ingram was a

highlight, as well as staying with Fred and Marie Harold in Chatham. This visit stretched into two weeks because the churches scheduled both before and after Chatham had cancelled their missionary conferences.

## **Second Term 1979-82**

In August 1979, we were back in Hong Kong and spent three beautiful years overseeing Alliance Radio's development. In 1980 and 1981, I had the opportunity to tour post-Mao China, visit Alliance English teachers, and assess listener response. On one trip, I travelled with Bill Kerr, senior missionary formerly to Tibet.

In Szechuan, we visited with former Alliance pastors who had been imprisoned for two years. One pastor came to our hotel room with his three sons, all pastors in the underground church. His faith and the faith of his sons were immeasurably inspirational. In Cheungdu, as in other cities, we were able to visit buildings that had formerly been churches and were now were being used as factories, offices, etc.

In Shanghai, we passed by the old Alliance Tabernacle and could clearly see where the C&MA logo, which had been inlaid brick, had been chopped out. In HangJou, we were able to attend a large church that just recently opened. It was packed, everyone in their blue padded jackets. I will never forget their passion for singing the doxology and "I Need Thee Every Hour." These pieces took on a significant new meaning for me.

After the service, I was hugged by an elderly Chinese lady who was so excited to see me. I could not understand her but, through translation, discovered she thought I was Hudson Taylor the third, whom she had cared for as a baby. My blond hair and blue eyes had convinced her I was Taylor. Fortunately, we knew the man she was looking for, who was still active in ministry and gave contact information.

In July 1982, Hilda developed cancer which necessitated our immediate return to Canada for treatment. We settled in Orillia, Ontario, to have family support and access to medical care in Toronto. Home assignment ministry took me again to Saskatchewan as well as Ontario. In February 1983, the LaRonge Alliance Church in Saskatchewan, where I had visited briefly on tour, called to invite us to come there to pastor for at least two years, saying they felt the Lord was telling them we needed a rest. They were a church that had just experienced a split and was also hurting. It was a perfect match, and we happily accepted, taking a two-year leave of absence from the mission before returning to Hong Kong in August 1985.

## **Third Term 1985-89**

Our third term was spent church planting in the Temporary Housing Areas amongst the poorest and most marginalized people of Hong Kong. We worked in practical outreach ministries and gave oversight and encouragement to workers

in nine different housing areas, again access being given freely to us by the Hong Kong government.

One of the significant challenges of this ministry was helping the recent seminary graduates understand the importance of evangelism through involvement in the community and social work. The residents of these “areas” were primarily recent refugees from China, many of them unable to speak Cantonese, and most unskilled, hence living in the very poorest of conditions.

The “areas” were extended motel-like row-houses, made of corrugated metal, one hundred square feet, with a water faucet. The washrooms were public, which also served our centres, and were not pleasant to visit. Most of these people had never heard of Jesus and had never spoken with a white man before. It was a good place for a missionary to be.

As I walked up and down the narrow alleyways, I got to know people, often being invited to join them in their evening meal and enjoyed trying to be understood. For some, I knew their children, if they came to the study centre. If someone was sick, I would pray for them, and whether the person remained ill, was healed, or died, it was the most effective means of opening their hearts to the Gospel.

Having recently arrived from China, some returned to China for visits and often invited me to go along. It was on these trips, late nights on the train, or hiking to the home village, where opportunities for sharing the Gospel were many and natural. One resident asked me to visit his family in Shanghai when he heard we were going there. What a privilege for my son and me to stay with his Muslim family in their tiny house for three days and to be able to take his brother to the only open Shanghai church.

Back in Hong Kong, I recall one night feeling somewhat discouraged as I walked about. I was invited to join a *wah-kiuh* family for supper. *Wah-kiuh* families had fled to Indonesia during the cultural revolution in China, only then to be persecuted in Indonesia, eventually returning to China, only to be persecuted there again, and finally settling in Hong Kong. As we chatted, he commented on how big my church was! I was surprised as, typically, there were only ten or fifteen people there. When I asked him what he meant, he said, “So many people invited you to eat with them!” What I had not realized was in the sight of the community, I was the accepted *SunFu* (Godfather, priest/pastor), and them inviting me in indicated their acceptance of me. I then also understood why some did not invite me in.

Most of these people  
had never heard of Jesus  
and had never spoken  
with a white man before.  
It was a good place for a  
missionary to be.



## **1989-1995**

At the end of the term, we were invited to teach at Canadian Bible College in Regina and spent six wonderful years there while seeing my wife's health restored. Our children, Michael, Miriam, and Marcie, happily readjusted to Canadian life.

## **1995-2015**

During the next twelve years, I served as the district superintendent for the Eastern Canadian District (ECD) of the C&MA in Canada. My overseas and teaching experience served me well in this role.

Hilda's cancer returned, and she passed away in May 1997. As a family, we experienced generous support from the district churches and the C&MA family. My daughter Miriam came to live with me for the following year. Through volunteering at World Vision, upon graduation, she was offered a position in nutrition and has been with them ever since. She currently lives in Greece and has two children. My youngest daughter Marcie (born in Hong Kong) now has three teenagers, and her husband is a pastor in Regina. My son Michael manages a resort in Costa Rica, has one married son and two daughters.

Four years after Hilda's death, I married Judith Milne, who worked in member care out of the National Ministry Centre (NMC) of the C&MA<sup>1</sup>. In 2008, her son developed brain cancer; we moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, so we could support him and his family.

The Exchange Community Church (C&MA) in Winnipeg was looking for a pastor. I accepted the position, and Judy continued her role as director of Member Care with the NMC. Our church was a drop-in centre during the week in the downtown Winnipeg Exchange District, and we lived not far from the church. This opened a whole new ministry experience of reaching out to the marginalized downtown people of Winnipeg.

The district purchased an old office building for the church, which served as our base and a type of community centre. The top three floors were rented out to young artists, which opened doors into the community. It was a time of rich ministry experience for Judy and me, and we are grateful for the C&MA district support during that time.

## **2015-present 2021**

In November 2017, we moved to Calgary to be with family. At age seventy-one, I officially retired. Since then, I have experienced the grace of God in opening doors for friendship and ministry to Islamic Syrian refugees, working as a volunteer with

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Making God Known: To Least-Reached People in Extraordinary Ways*, Chapter 3: Caring for International Workers by Judith Milne Wiebe.



Family reunion, 2018. Courtesy Doug Wiebe.

four families containing a total of twenty-eight children under age sixteen. With COVID, the visits have been restricted, but contact through FaceTime is continued. They are lovely families who have suffered much and are a delight to be with.

For the district, I have been working with men and women in the ordination program, listening to the sermons submitted and evaluating them.

Since coming to Calgary, I have also been preaching on Sundays at the nearby senior's residence as a ministry of First Alliance. Although limited by COVID, getting to know the residents, their families, and staff has been especially rewarding. I have seen the immense value of these folks having regular pastoral visits rather than a different speaker each Sunday. I have even had the special privilege of conducting funerals for some of them.



Doug, Judy, and international workers Richard and Merinda Enns, 2017. Courtesy Doug Wiebe.

Judy is involved in volunteering for the NMC and serving as spiritual director via Skype for workers world-wide. She has graciously supported me, adjusting to life with me in the district office, pastoring in Winnipeg, and now in retirement.

## Tributes

In conclusion, I pay tribute to my first wife, Hilda, who felt a strong



Doug and Judy Wiebe.

Courtesy Doug Wiebe.

call to missions which was a key factor in us getting together. She served faithfully and enthusiastically as a missionary in Hong Kong, as a professor's wife in Regina, and as the district superintendent's wife. Her gift of hospitality was enjoyed by many. At one of the farewell services in Hong Kong, a young man came up to me to say a few words. I thought he was going to thank me for my inspirational teaching. Instead, he said, "I hope I can find a wife like yours!"

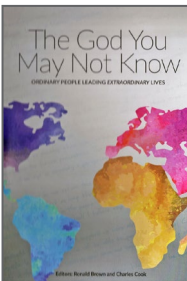
I am also thankful for my children, who gracefully endured our many moves, back and forth across the ocean, without complaint. They loved Hong Kong, and Hong Kong loved them. It was a huge adjustment to move from there to Regina. The CBC staff and faculty, and district churches were a great help and support to us all during that time.

I commend my wife Judy for her gracious love and support during our married life as the wife of the ECD district superintendent and wife of a pastor in Winnipeg, all while continuing full-time work with the NMC.

And last, but certainly not least, I'm grateful for the privilege of serving the Lord throughout these years.

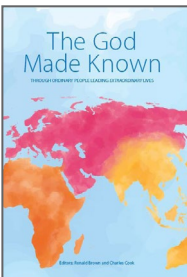
Adapted from a biography written in 2013

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

"Tibet: A Vision Revisited" is chapter 4, written by Grace Jordan. Also, chapter 23 by Wilson Kaan, entitled "Jonathan and Huilan Kaan: Sixty Years on the Mission Field."



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 5 by Thomas Ford is entitled "China: From Receiving to Sending."

## **Chapter 2**

### **Our Journey with Jesus: Floyd and Joyce Grunau**

by Floyd and Joyce Grunau

I was travelling up the Mahakam River with Joyce and our five-year-old son when I started shaking. My fever was over 104° F. Another malaria attack! We had left our home in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, about an hour before, going on a two-day trip into the jungle of Borneo to participate in a church conference. There would be no medical services available. The public taxi boat had around twenty passengers and could hardly turn around for just one sick person. What could we do?

#### **Growing Up**

##### **Floyd (1943-1962):**

I was born on June 22, 1943, the fiftieth birthday of my grandfather, Edwin Schmidt. My parents, Rudy and Miriam, were Christian Mennonites attending Salem Church near our farm north of Waldheim, Saskatchewan. As a child, my dad had immigrated from present-day Ukraine during the Bolshevik Revolution. Our family was struggling financially and so decided to move into Saskatoon. Dad got a job in a stationery store. We had an old car but not enough money to buy gas. As a child, I didn't realize how poor we were.

My mother would faithfully read to my sister and me from a thick purple Bible storybook. These stories and Christian teaching got me to think about the selfish things I did. At the age of six, with help from Mom, I confessed my sins and invited Jesus into my life. I felt relief and joy. Mom suggested we celebrate by buying ice cream cones at the corner store (five cents each). I look back on that day as my entrance into the family of God when my spirit was reborn!

In the city, our family attended a special conference on the deeper life at the Alliance Tabernacle. My parents continued to attend, fascinated with the teaching on the Holy Spirit and the emphasis on missions. I remember pre-service prayer meetings in the basement where we knelt on fluffy pillows to pray.

My dad missed the farm, so after four years, we moved back. My many

happy experiences included riding around the countryside on my new CCM bike! Sometimes in the evening, I would lie on my back outside in the dark and look up in wonder at the star-studded sky! How great God must be! I enjoyed school, especially playing softball, ice hockey, games, and running. I read most of the books in our church and school libraries.

When I was twelve, I felt moved at a Christian camp to give God my whole life for whatever He had for me. One year, the Mennonite churches in our area sponsored mission meetings at the curling rink in Waldheim. I was impacted by the preaching of our first speaker, Oswald J. Smith. Fifty years later, I was invited to be the speaker at this same annual missions conference held in Salem Church.

In 1958 my parents sold the farm, held an auction, and moved to Red Deer, Alberta, where we attended the Alliance church. What a culture shock for me at age fifteen, moving from a one-room country school of fifteen students to a high school of one thousand! I didn't know how to relate to guys who boasted about getting drunk on the weekend. I enjoyed sports, and the coach wanted me to join the volleyball team, but my parents thought it would not be good to travel with "worldly" students. Looking back, I realized it would have been an excellent stretching experience for me.

God gave me a strong  
desire to know Him  
better and study the  
Bible in greater depth.

Our Alliance Youth Fellowship met each Friday and also for a youth prayer meeting each Tuesday. God gave me a strong desire to know Him better and study the Bible in greater depth. After high school, I worked for a year selling Fuller Brush products and took a couple of courses to qualify for university entrance. Then I was off to Canadian Bible College (CBC) in Regina.

### **Joyce (1945-1962):**

I was born in the Maritimes to Lloyd and Kaye Matheson. My father had received Christ as a teenager, and my mother as a young married woman. While I was still young, we moved to Moncton, New Brunswick, where they grew in their faith through Gunningsville Baptist Church.

When I was seven years old, I asked my mother if I was a Christian. Since I was learning about Jesus at church and Sunday school, I expected a Yes. Her answer troubled me; she said only I could know for sure. Shortly after, I asked her again, and she simply explained salvation. I confessed my sin and invited Jesus to forgive me and come to live in me. I still remember the feeling as a child of a burden being lifted off my shoulders. There was peace.

One day walking home from school, I realized I was feeling happy but could not find a reason why. I decided it must be because I now had Jesus living in me. One Sunday, I was deeply stirred by the pastor's sermon even though I did not understand it. Then I heard my mother say it was the best sermon our pastor had ever preached, and it was on the Holy Spirit. Her comment confirmed to me the Spirit was stirring my heart as I listened. I was not always a submissive, happy child, but I never doubted Jesus lived in me, and I wanted to learn to listen to Him.

My father was transferred to Regina when I was ten; this became very significant for our family as we were introduced to the Alliance church. My father was a businessman, and my mother had been a nurse. I was the second of seven children. We were never expected to consider full-time ministry, just to be open to God.

During my young teen years, I became active in ministry. I started with teaching Sunday school in English to children in the Alliance Chinese Church and being trained by Arlene Orthner, the wife of our pastor, Alf Orthner, to teach beginners in Vacation Bible School (VBS). Then came my involvement in Youth for Christ (YFC) leadership, quizzing, seeking to share my faith, and church youth group. I told God I would do whatever He wanted.

My first year at teen camp was significant. Murray Downey came to represent Canadian Bible College. There was no appeal to commit to going, but God spoke to me very clearly. He showed me I was resisting going to Bible college because I would be embarrassed to tell those in my high school class applying to major universities. I repented and committed to obeying, not knowing where it might lead.

In my teens, I learned from a YFC speaker how to have a meaningful daily time in God's Word. He suggested we read until we came to something significant to us, then we were to stop and reflect on what it would look like to believe and follow through on that truth. This way, we would seek to build response to God into our lives, one truth at a time. Over the years, I added journaling and other practices, but this was invaluable to establishing a pattern of listening to God.

## **Canadian Bible College (1962-1966)**

### **Floyd:**

I arrived at CBC in Regina, looking forward to learning from God. My life verse became Philippians 3:10, "That I may know him...." I enjoyed being involved in music ministries, singing in the CBC Chorale on CKCK-TV, as well as touring in male quartets after my first and second years. I had been praying since age fifteen for God to lead me to a girl who would become my wife. Soon I started noticing this red-haired girl named Joyce Matheson. She had a delightful sense of humour, a



sharp intellect, and a passion for knowing and loving God. It took me a few months to fall in love and know Joyce was the girl God wanted me to marry! It took Joyce a little longer to decide, but by the next fall, we knew God had led us together!

**Joyce:**

My years at CBC brought a growing hunger for God. I had a fresh experience of the full forgiveness of God through reading *We Would See Jesus* by Roy Hession. I met Floyd during our first year, and by the second year, we were committed to one another. But what was God calling us to? Ministry at home or overseas? I felt it would confirm God's call for us to be together if he called us to the same ministry, but as I prayed, I could not hear God. Finally, God showed me that I could not hear Him because I was not open. I felt I could trust God to serve Him in Canada, but I was not cut out for "roughing it" overseas.

The revelation came during a Thanksgiving service at CBC. Rev. Landis shared how he was taken as a prisoner during World War II while ministering in the Philippines. He described being in the hold of a ship with rats running over his body. His face radiated with the light and joy of Christ as he shared his story. There was no call to missions, just thanksgiving. I could not get up from my seat. I turned to Floyd and said, "God is calling me to overseas ministry." Floyd responded, "God is saying the same thing to me!" God also used Matthew 28:18-20 to answer my objections; if He has all the power in heaven and earth, and He would go with me and never leave me, how could I say I could not go?

We were married on May 29, 1965, three weeks after I graduated with a Bachelor of Religious Education. Floyd added an extra year, graduating in 1966 with a Bachelor of Theology degree. That summer, we welcomed the birth of our first son Paul.

## **Pastoral Ministry (1966-1969)**

**Floyd:**

As prospective missionaries, we were required to serve in pastoral ministry for two years. I briefly served as a pastor in Mica Creek, B.C., and then had two years of ministry at the Alliance church in Oliver, B.C. I was a solo pastor, but I was encouraged by all the support I received from the church family.

One highlight in Oliver was the birth of our second son Greg. Another was receiving our appointment to overseas ministry in Indonesia. We had applied "open" with Joyce leaning towards Africa and me towards Brazil; in the end, we had to check a world map to find out where Indonesia was!

## **The Dyack Chapter: First Term in Indonesia (1969-1973)**

### **Joyce:**

After waiting an extra five months, our visas came through shortly before Christmas in 1969. I boarded the plane with Floyd and our two sons, age three years and fifteen months. We were headed for our first four-year term in Indonesia. I was not your typical excited missionary; I expected this to be like medicine tasting bad but ultimately being good for you.

In spite of how gracious missionaries were in welcoming us to Indonesia, it was difficult to celebrate Christmas away from extended family and in such unfamiliar circumstances. I missed the typical honeymoon stage where everything looks wonderful.

We were the first new Alliance missionaries to arrive since the bloody attempted national Communist coup and the resulting counter-coup in 1965. We both enjoyed language study. We each studied two hours a day with a tutor and then were on our own to practice. This meant outside of my time with our tutor, I could study with our two boys playing in the same room, a skill learned in a large family.

During language study, we got involved with the youth in a local church and also met some university students who were eager for us to teach in their “English for Everybody” club. This was not tasting like medicine!

The National Church wanted us to stay on the island of Java and work with youth, but the Alliance Field Mission decided we needed to get to know the National Church base in Kalimantan (Borneo). We were assigned to Samarinda, East Kalimantan.

Missionaries had been expelled from the area before the coup attempt. They had previously travelled up the rivers into the jungle and saw thousands of Dayaks, an unreached people group, turn from Animism to Jesus. The Dayaks had witnessed missionaries being captured by the Japanese during World War II and held them in high esteem. We were blessed to enter an area with a warm relationship between the Mission and the National Church. There had been great evangelism but less discipleship.

### **Floyd:**

The only Alliance church in the city was composed mainly of youth who had come from jungle villages to attend high school in the city where we worked with the national pastor. We had youth activities and training open to all. We organized two small groups for guys and one for girls. This was an entirely new experience, as young people were used to simply listening to sermons. Now they could discuss God’s Word together, seeking to connect truth to their lives, and

they responded!

We learned the cultural value of people dropping by each other's homes. It was an adjustment to have people come by at any hour, but it was an important time to minister to the needs of each person. I also organized a youth choir and we sang at special church programs, in a few nearby villages and on radio. We loved having them in our home.



Discipleship group in our office, Samarinda, May 1972. Courtesy Floyd Grunau.



Reconnecting after 29 years with youth group leader from Samarinda (back row, middle in photo above). Courtesy Floyd Grunau.



Youth Camp, 1973. Courtesy Floyd Grunau.

Because we were one of only two couples who were evangelical international workers in the city, we often were invited to participate in special events such as retreats, women's gatherings, and National Church district conferences. The small Christian minority in the city felt a unity with one another. This provided many invitations to speak at their special events and to interact with others.

I had the opportunity with national workers to go on a couple of evangelism trips to visit interior Animistic villages. It was a joy in one village to baptize three young men. On another trip in a different village, the district superintendent baptized thirty-nine former spirit worshippers! In 2015, I visited the same village where there is now a thriving church!

Back to my malaria attack, what could we do? We could pray! Joyce laid her hands on me and prayed earnestly. In a little while, the shaking stopped; my fever started to go down. I did not have another attack the entire week of the trip! Thank you, Jesus, for Your healing touch!

**Joyce:**

The most challenging part of this

term was that our oldest son had to go far away to Bandung for grade one and part of grade two. He did not share how difficult this was emotionally for him until we were back in Canada. We are so glad that the mission has changed this policy.

A lot of energy was consumed in seeking to understand the culture and these very gracious people whose politeness required sophisticated indirect communication. More energy was required for adjusting to the simple lifestyle of no city water, no electricity during the day, living in the heat near the equator, and small uninvited creatures who shared our home. But we learned and bonded with these wonderful people! I label my first term SURPRISED BY JOY!

### **Further Education: Three Financial Miracle Years (1974-1977)**

#### **Joyce:**

Floyd had wanted to get a Master of Divinity before going to Indonesia, but the mission encouraged us to wait. Now we were ready. After returning to Canada, we welcomed the birth of our third son Steven. We felt, if Floyd would be in school full-time, I needed to basically be at home to focus on our children. We sensed God urging us to trust Him for the finances without going into debt or asking anyone for funds. We had no idea how He would do this. God gave me *Give us this day our daily bread* as a theme, which included tuition and books. We asked God to provide finances for the first school year as a sign this was His idea. Every year the Lord provided in a different way! The final year was the tightest, but when Floyd graduated, we had no debts and a grand total of two hundred dollars in the bank to tide us over until he started a summer job while waiting for visas again.

The home we were renting was promised to others, so we had no home, no job, and two sons who needed to start school in the fall. God opened a door for Floyd to serve as interim pastor at the Alliance church in Unionville, Ontario, “until our visas came.” How this congregation blessed us! While there, a two-week window opened where Indonesian visas were granted for missionaries. We stayed in Unionville for five months and returned to Indonesia in January 1978.

### **The Jaffray Chapter: Second Term in Indonesia: (1978-1981)**

#### **Floyd:**

Our new assignment was for both of us to teach at Jaffray School of Theology in Makassar. I experienced real joy in teaching courses and interacting with students; it was special to have Dayak youth from Samarinda show up at Jaffray. At different points over the four years, I served as academic dean,



Floyd with men's group,  
Day of Prayer, Jaffray School,  
Sept 15, 1981.  
Courtesy Floyd Grunau.

faculty advisor for student council, director of the internship program for the evangelism department, mission representative on the Jaffray School Board, and director of a male chorus. Some students later became pastors, evangelists, and area Bible school teachers. I am still in touch with a few of them.

It was also a delight for me to work closely with Peter Anggu, the rector, to develop a master's program. I served on the Missions Education Committee and enjoyed travelling to a few area Bible schools in Kalimantan and Timor to upgrade their teachers. I also organized the city English worship service and took my turn preaching.

### Joyce:

I discovered I loved teaching these students. For the most part, they were respectful, privileged to be at school, and eager to grapple with issues. I eventually started developing a Christian Ed department by adding a new course each semester. One of the students' favourites seemed to be *The Christian Family*, a new concept, which Floyd and I co-taught. As students later taught in area Bible schools, *The Christian Family* was often included. After we left, a professor with an MA in Christian Ed came from the Philippines and further developed the department, qualifying it for training teachers of the Christian religion in public schools.

During this time, our youngest turned six. I had prayed earnestly, if it would damage him emotionally to go away to the Missionary Kids' school, God would miraculously provide a school in our city for him. An American teacher's arrival looked like our miraculous answer, but she was transferred shortly before school was to start. I had peace; God was in control.

Five weeks after our son had gone to Bandung for grade one, I got a call that he was gravely ill with juvenile (type 1) diabetes. I was shocked and turned to the Psalms where I had been reading. There it was—Psalm 72:4,14, "May he...save the children of the needy.... He will rescue them...for precious is their blood in his sight." All I knew about diabetes was it meant the blood was full of sugar. I sensed God saying, "You have no idea why I am allowing this, but do you know Me well enough to trust Me?"

The evening I arrived in Bandung, our son was very close to a coma. No doctor there had experience with type 1 diabetes, and none of them stayed in the hospital overnight. During the night, he was hallucinating and could not sleep; I finally convinced a nurse to phone the doctor who prescribed a small amount of

insulin. I realized I had always said I believed in the loving-kindness of God. Now I would find out.

This was a traumatic experience for a six-year-old. Once he was strong enough to travel, I took him home to Regina, where Dr. Wong, a wonderful Christian pediatrician who specialized in diabetes, took care of him for two months. In Makassar, Beth Yarberry, a godly American woman working with her husband in universities, told Floyd she was opening a small international school just so our son could stay at home while I continued teaching at Jaffray. God's intervention and guidance continued.

## **Retooling in Canada (1982-1986)**

### **Floyd:**

After returning to Canada, I became missionary-in-residence at CBC for a year. Then I served as pastor of personal care at Hillsdale Alliance Church under senior pastor Dick Sipley. I loved pastoral care as well as heading up small groups and Evangelism Explosion training.

During this time, I started studies in a doctoral program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School near Chicago and received a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1986.

## **The Manila Chapter: Third Term in the Philippines (1987-1992)**

### **Floyd:**

As we prayed about returning overseas, we needed to find a location where our son could live at home. I was invited to teach at Alliance Biblical Seminary (ABS) in Manila, the Philippines, where Faith Academy, an international school, was located. I was glad for the opportunity to teach mainly in pastoral studies. At ABS, we were blessed by international students from countries like Thailand, Singapore, Burma, and Indonesia. I again enjoyed teaching some Indonesian students who had been in our classes at Jaffray School.

While teaching pastoral courses, I realized I wanted to practice what I taught. A Christian man sponsored me in the Rotary Club of Greenmeadows. It was a stretching experience to relate to these businessmen with their "green" jokes. God opened the door to begin a Bible study with a few Rotary members, then another Rotary Club asked me to lead their mixed group Bible study. We were able to bring these two groups together for worship in our home. What a joy to bring some of these people to Jesus and baptize them! Another missionary, Jack Herman, had contacts in his Rotary Club, and we brought our groups together for



the beginning of a church fellowship.

We stayed in Manila for five and a half years to allow our son to finish grade twelve. In 2002, we returned to visit Manila and spoke at this church plant now led by a Filipino pastor.

### **Joyce:**

After two fulfilling terms, our years in Manila were the most challenging for me. I did not have the education required to teach at the post-graduate level. I was enriched by involvement with some of the seminary students and some Rotarian wives and couples. However, I was experiencing health issues, and we faced spiritual opposition from various sources. All this pushed us to worship, gaining spiritual strength through focusing on the character of God. Significant revelations came as I worshipped, exposing sin I was not aware of.



Roast pig lechon, Filipino delicacy, for Joyce's surprise birthday at our home in Manila, March 1992. Courtesy Floyd Grunau.

One day, as I complained to God about having to confess so much to Him, I clearly sensed Him asking me, "Do you want me to stop?" It did not

take long to respond, "No, don't stop! The new freedom is worth it!" Although I loved Him, God also revealed that I was blocking enjoying His love by feeling unworthy. How freeing this was! It led me on a new ongoing journey of seeking to go deeper into His amazing love.

## **Pastoral Ministries in Canada (1992-2000)**

### **Floyd:**

Arriving back in Canada, we spent one year as missionaries-in-residence at First Alliance Church in Calgary. God led us to North Vancouver, where I served as associate pastor at North Shore Alliance Church. It was now Joyce's turn to get more education. She commuted to Trinity Western University to earn a Master of Theological Studies in Counselling. Living in the beauty of North Vancouver was amazing! Should we hike in the mountains or go for walks on the sea wall? I enjoyed my ministry as a pastor and thank God for the many opportunities to make a difference in people's lives.

**Joyce:**

I had developed an interest in counselling through interactions with some Rotarians' wives and wanted to be more prepared to help women. I eventually had my own practice. One day I asked God why I had this counselling practice developing. Although He led me to study counselling, He reminded me that I needed to hold this practice lightly. Floyd and I both sensed someday we would be back in cross-cultural ministry. It was in our blood.

**Intercultural Connections: Fourth Term in the Greater Toronto Area (2000-2016)**

**Floyd:**

In our sixth year at North Shore Alliance, I received a phone call from Wally Albrecht, vice president of Alliance Global Ministries, asking us to consider coming to Toronto to help in training people for ministries to Muslims. Our spirits responded. Leaving North Shore Alliance was difficult, but God was at work. Finances were not quite in place; God opened the door to serve for the winter at the Alliance church in Spruce Grove, Alberta.

As we drove into Toronto in April, we were taken aback at how fast the radio announcer described traffic flow!

We felt we needed to learn more about loving Muslims. We attended some intensive courses in Colorado Springs and took an amazing tour of five Middle Eastern countries, talking to Christian leaders who had a heart for Muslims. What we heard over and over was emphatically expressed by one national pastor, "You must love Muslims! Don't send us anyone who does not love Muslims!"

The Alliance decided to open a seminary branch in Toronto named Canadian Theological Seminary (CTS) East. They brought in experts in Islam to teach related courses and offered other classes as well. We prepared and taught a course called "Mentored Field Experience." It was my dream of the way to teach and learn realized, guiding students in integrating their personal journey with God, what they learned in other classes and their ministries to Muslims in Toronto. After a valiant effort, CTS East closed down for lack of students, unable to compete with established seminaries in the area. This was a great disappointment for me! What would we do now?

We ramped up our own outreach to full-time. As we prayed, God gave us divine appointments. Then we heard from Jim Christie, an Alliance pastor in an area with a high immigrant population. Muslims were knocking on their church door asking to do community service so they could get a free bus pass from the city. The

church wanted help! Together we organized a huge yard sale, giving away Jesus videos and advertising English as a Second Language (ESL) for the fall. We also established relationships with two Muslim couples volunteering at the church.

### Joyce:

Several very conservative Muslim women came to ESL. We believed it was because of prayer. For a number of months, three of the church women from three ethnic backgrounds prayed every week outside the most conservative apartment building. Then they knocked on doors talking to people and inviting them to ESL. In class, we discussed Canadian, Christian, and Muslim special days.



Joyce at day camp parents' program.  
Courtesy Floyd Grunau.

Over the years, our Christmas party for families became a much-anticipated event, with more and more men attending. We included international food, music, drama, a video section, a testimony, gifts for each child and family, and crafts for children. A presentation of some amazing aspects of the Christmas story was always highlighted.

None of our ministries would have been possible without teams of dedicated volunteers from various churches committed to helping. In later years, our Christmas party included around ninety guests, mostly Muslims, and forty to forty-five Christian volunteers.

Over time, we started a week of summer day camp. Together with Harriet Sherman, who had been trained in children's camps at Unionville Alliance, we adapted their program to be sensitive for Muslim children.



Intercultural Connections barbecue.  
Courtesy Floyd Grunau.

Our stories focused on one of the prophets, including Jesus. Eventually, we began in-home tutoring for children, bringing a Christian volunteer tutor into the home every week. When asked why this was a free community service, we responded, “We receive so much of God’s love through Jesus, we just want to pass it on.” Each summer, tutoring ended with a family party and barbecue.

During these years, we also spoke in churches and provided training in loving Muslims, sometimes working together with other ministry networks.

Through ESL, I met a refugee claimant woman, a young widow with minimal English, suffering from end-stage liver disease. God called me to be her advocate. For the next three years, I spent many hours taking her to medical appointments while working with lawyers and social services. Her four children were in her home country with her mother. We became very close. Finally, near death, she received a new liver! But her liver was attacked again. Working with one of her friends, we applied to personally sponsor her two older children to come to see her, but she passed away with the application still in process.

I had been in burnout for the last year. Finally recognizing it, I could no longer push myself; I needed a break. This was 2008.

As we came to Toronto, I had been asking God to make these *harvest* years! I had recently led a Muslim-background woman to Jesus and trusted for more, earnestly praying for the harvest. But it was not happening except for one woman I knew of. God reminded me I am not Lord of the Harvest; He is. If He was calling me to plant seeds, it would be my joy to plant them.

Many were drawn to Jesus but not ready to cross the line. One of my greatest joys was praying in the name of Jesus with Muslim women. They were often in awe, silent, some teary-eyed, as they sensed the actual presence of God.

### **Floyd:**

When I reached the age of sixty-five, we retired as international workers under Alliance Global Ministries. We were invited then to continue serving immigrants in Toronto under PALM Ministries. God supplied our needs enough to support one full-time person. Joyce had the major responsibility, and I served with her. I also worked as a chaplain in a senior home for a few years and continued providing spiritual direction for men.

We returned to Samarinda and Jakarta in 2002 with Church Partnership Evangelism and in 2015 to lead spiritual retreats for pastors. In 2019, we conducted a two-day spiritual retreat for faculty and staff at Jaffray School. All joy!

## Retirement in Calgary (2016-Present)

### Floyd:

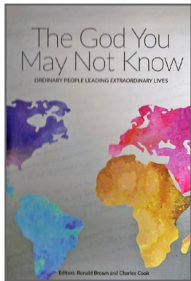
We sensed 2016 was the right time to bring our ministry to a close. SIM (Sudan Interior Mission) International agreed to take over the ministry of Intercultural Connections. We moved to Calgary to be near our two oldest sons and their families. One has been in business here, and the other on a pastoral team of a church. Our third son works for Canadian Foreign Affairs and presently lives in Ottawa with his family. We have thirteen beautiful grandchildren!



Floyd and Joyce Grunau, August 2017.  
Courtesy Floyd Grunau.

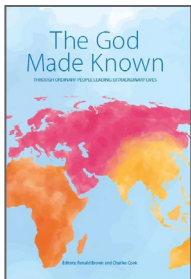
I love serving Jesus in spiritual direction and singing in homes for seniors. We both lead a small group through our church. It's our passion to keep going deeper into God's love and passing it on to others as He opens doors.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Muriel Entz wrote Chapter 19, "Elmer and Muriel Entz: God's Purpose for Me."



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 7, by Bonnie Burnett is "Thailand: The Light in the Night." Darlene Dreger wrote about her parents in Chapter 20, "Clem and Maddie Dreger: For Every Nation, Tribe, Language, and People."

## **Chapter 3**

### **Change Agents: Pat and Ardyce Worsley**

by Pat Worsley

Who could ever imagine God would direct people from Communist Mainland China to go to the Arabian Peninsula, the heart of the Muslim world, and give them the opportunity to hear the good news of the Gospel? They, in turn, would believe in the Lord Jesus and be baptized by the hundreds, yes, even the thousands! This happened towards the end of our international ministry, but we have also experienced other examples of seeing God at work throughout our journey, which officially began in 1972.

#### **The Early Years**

I was not born into a Bible-believing Christian home. At the age of ten, in a small rural church, I committed my life to Christ and shortly after that had my first cross-cultural involvement when this small church conducted services at the nearby First Nations reserve on Sunday afternoons.

In contrast, Ardyce was raised in a Christian home and had exposure to missions early in life through First Alliance Church in Calgary and a cousin who served in Africa with the SIM mission agency. Much later in life, Ardyce learned she was destined to be a missionary; her mother had promised God her first child would be a missionary to fulfill a personal vow and desire she had not been able to honour.

God's calling intensified when I was a high school senior listening to missionary speakers. I determined to serve God where the workers were few. After one year at the University of Calgary, I worked for five years as a power plant engineer to gain a trade, save some money, and begin preparation for overseas service. Because of a mechanical inclination, I thought God might use me as a missionary pilot, and so while working, I also obtained a private pilot's license.

Ardyce sensed a call to be a medical missionary, a doctor, but other options influenced her to become a registered nurse instead. After we were married in 1965, we saw God close the door, which would have allowed service in mission

aviation; still, during a mission's service at First Alliance, it was confirmed to both of us that God was calling us to overseas ministry. Thus, open to see how and where God would use us, we pursued theological training at Canadian Bible College (CBC).

We were already twenty-four years old when we started at CBC and were eager to complete our studies quickly and be on our way. But, as God often does, He did not reveal the complete journey all at once, instead leading us step by step. My studies were extended to include graduate work. I had the privilege of being part of the first graduating class of Canadian Theological Seminary in 1972 when I earned a Master of Divinity. By the time our two years of required home service were completed, preparation had consumed eight years (I also took a BA in History at the University of Regina). We were pushing the stipulated maximum age limit of thirty-two and had added a chosen son to our family.

I had developed an interest in India, while Ardyce had a yearning for Africa. Still, we expressed to our mission leadership a willingness to serve wherever they thought the need was greatest. We were tentatively appointed to Indonesia, and I did my area study with that as our goal.

Because of earlier political decisions in the region, The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) had two offices, two field directors, and two large teams of workers in Indonesia. When Indonesia claimed independence in 1947, the Dutch continued to retain the western half of the island of New Guinea, which was known as Dutch New Guinea, later becoming West Irian and, still later, Irian Jaya. By 1974, Irian Jaya was a part of Indonesia, but the mission retained two fields with an office in Jakarta and an office in Jayapura. Our preliminary appointment had us assigned to somewhere under the Jakarta office's administration. Only months before our deployment, we were asked to consider a change and ultimately were sent to Irian Jaya (now Papua), Indonesia.

## **Arriving in Indonesia**

The challenges of the first months and years are often determining factors in whether you endure or quit. Some of those challenges included an air freight shipment that did not arrive for six months, labour disputes resulting in no mail or communication from home for two months, language learning, and isolation from other English speakers. Also, a total of seventeen babies and small children died in Ardyce's arms while she was helpless due to lack of equipment or because help was sought too late. Through it all, God was faithful, and our commitment to Him allowed us to persevere.



First-term language study always provides some interesting and challenging moments. Our field leadership decided we should study a tribal language before the national language. Their reasoning was the tribal language was more complex, and our study would benefit from the unspoiled new energy we would bring to the task.

I enjoyed the practical application of language learning and took the opportunity to go with the men, talking with them while sharing their various activities. There were days we went high in the jungle and I saw them making a dugout canoe. This trip taught me a great lesson in gratitude when two tribal men took the pre-cooked sweet potatoes from their net bags and gave thanks before eating during the lunch break. I recalled instances in the church where I served before departing to Indonesia. When refreshments were served, we would flippantly say, “It isn’t worth twenty-five cents,” and then not pray. But in the village where we now lived, you could get a large net bag of sweet potatoes for twenty-five cents, and here these men were expressing their gratitude to God for their sweet potato lunch worth less than a penny. I determined I wanted to express my gratitude to God whenever the opportunity occurred.

During our second year of tribal language study, we found ourselves in a larger village with several locals who knew Indonesian, the national language, but did not know the tribal language of the region. As a result, we experienced the humbling situation of using our four-year-old son as our interpreter because he had learned the tribal language and quickly picked up some Indonesian in our new location.

Upon completing tribal language study in 1976, we were assigned to district ministries, which meant assisting the leaders, pastors, and churches in six districts formed by the National Church known as the Gospel Tabernacle Church of Indonesia (*Gereja Kemah Injil Indonesia – GKII*). This meant providing in-service training and upgrading for numerous pastors who faithfully served their congregations with minimal theological education. Their only formal education was four years of

study at a tribal language Bible school. Although their study was limited, I believe the developed training was used and blessed by God to see His church grow in amazing ways.

The people of this island were of oral tradition with no written language and no literate nationals prior to the arrival of missionaries. One of the first tasks of those who had preceded us



Unloading New Testaments from an MAF plane in Kebo. Courtesy Pat Worsley.

was to analyze the language and begin Bible translation. As missionaries learned the various languages, even before much Bible translation was completed, they began to share the Gospel by telling Bible stories. This developed into what was known as the Witness School, where each week, a missionary would teach selected leaders a biblical truth through a story and then send them back to their villages to re-tell it. Thus, the Gospel was quickly spread into the villages through native speakers.

As linguists analyzed the language and created a script and written language, they produced primers and taught people how to read. Later, the Scriptures and other materials became available in the tribal languages, and Level One tribal language Bible schools began with a more formal western-style education. As secular education was introduced, Bible training building on each successive level of secular studies was presented.

At the time of our arrival in 1974, each of the churches in our region had a national pastor, but most of them had only Level One training. As their culture was rapidly changing, there was a great need to upgrade their education or to have what we have come to know as life-long learning. This was done via



Ardyce preparing teaching material.

Courtesy Pat Worsley.



Ardyce at a medical clinic.

Courtesy Pat Worsley.

modular seminars and classes. The mission's primary focus was church planting. Still, when we began our work in Indonesia, biblical training and administrative instruction were key elements because churches were being planted by national workers.

Our ministry was always wholistic with church planting as our primary goal, but development and compassion ministries were important. Ardyce produced Sunday school materials in the tribal language while also providing regular medical treatment and health teaching at all of our outposts. I assisted with developing co-operatives (small shops selling basic merchandise at a fair price) in each church district along with agricultural improvement through seed, rabbit, and bee distribution and training.

Unfortunately, the introduction of new ideas and methods is not accepted or utilized as quickly or readily as one might think and desire; we experienced this numerous times. For example, Ardyce worked with the local Indonesian doctor and hospital staff to teach health and nutrition in the tribal language so all the material could be clearly understood. After, participants were asked if they would prepare the available protein-rich foods to improve the health of their malnourished children. They either thought it was too much work or wanted to sell the products to pay for things they determined to be a higher priority, such as children's schooling.

The same was true of simple agricultural changes. Why should they keep rabbits in hutches and bring food to them when the rabbits could be left on the ground free to find their own food? The only problem with this was the rabbits did not reproduce at the same rate, and most of the offspring died due to poor nesting situations. We did not give up, but we came to realize that some of these changes were going to take a generation rather than just a few weeks or months.

Missionary work always comes with difficulties and challenges. For many in the isolated parts of Irian Jaya, the missionary children's education was challenging because the mission required all school children to attend the mission-run boarding school. National schools and homeschooling were not options. Fortunately for us, our son, Rob, was eager to go off to boarding school for grade one at the age of six. He was very disappointed when the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) plane could not pick him up because of a tragic MAF plane crash at another station in the province. Rob was worried he was going to be late for school. His disappointment paled in comparison to that of a second-grade girl. She arrived at the school on time only to find out her entire family—Dad, Mom, and two siblings—had all died in a plane crash a short time after she had been dropped off in the village of Wamena to make her flight on to school. For Moms and Dads, the difficulty and heartache occurred when your child was homesick, sick, or having some other challenge and you were far away, not able to comfort and console, not able to do anything except pray.

In 1978, we completed our first term and returned to Calgary for home assignment. As we visited churches, many people commented on the sacrifices we had made living in isolated areas with limited communication options while needing to send our son off to boarding school for extended periods. Jesus said to be His followers, we need to take up our cross and follow Him, but we did not see our living conditions as great sacrifices.

I came to believe one of the greatest sacrifices I had to make was during home assignment. Our son Rob wanted to play hockey, so during the summer and fall,



Rob's Grade 8 graduation, 2009.  
Courtesy Pat Worsley.

we went from arena to arena where there was artificial ice and public skating so he could learn to skate like a seven-year-old Canadian kid. He did well and was ready to play on a team as the season began. The real sacrifice came during a home assignment when Dad wanted to see his boy play hockey and be at his awards banquet but instead was away from home on a twelve-week ministry tour.

## Continuing Ministry

The beginning of our second term again saw us in language study, this time in Bandung, Indonesia, to study Indonesian, which was the national language. We studied for six months as Rob completed his first semester in the third grade at the mission-operated Bandung International School. Upon our return to Papua, we went back to the city of Enarotali and continued our district ministries amidst blessings and challenges.

A plane crash in 1981 became one of those difficult and challenging times. In Irian Jaya (Papua), we were very dependent on MAF for all our transportation needs because there were no roads in the rugged mountainous highlands where we lived and worked. Airstrips were built on mountain slopes, and flying conditions were always challenging because of rapidly changing weather conditions.

On one occasion, we departed from a station in the Baliem Valley where I had done an internal financial audit. We were on our way to visit our son Rob at his boarding school in Sentani when the six-seat MAF Cessna aircraft had engine failure. We crashed into sweet-potato gardens in the valley. The pilot and I received only minor injuries. Ardyce received multiple fractures because her seat came loose, and she was thrown around the cabin of the plane as we crash-landed, ultimately coming to rest with the plane upside down. We received many notes of encouragement and some speculation about the possible cause of the accident from our colleagues. We strongly believed God spared our lives because He had something more for us to do here on earth and in Indonesia.

In 1986, I was selected by my colleagues to become the field leader. My role changed dramatically from teaching and development to one of leadership and administration. I worked closely with government officials of the province, the



Baptism service in Timiki.  
Courtesy Pat Worsley.

leadership of our missionary children's school, the provincial leadership of the National Church, and the leadership of eight other evangelical mission organizations working together in Irian Jaya with clear parity agreements.

It was a wonderful experience to see how God blessed the ministries of all these missions and their personnel as we worked independently in designated regions and cooperatively

in areas of ministry common to all the regions. For example, linguists organized workshops where all the linguists would come together to work on their common translation challenges in individual language projects. There was also cooperation by the various missions in providing transportation, radio communication, medical services, missionary kid (MK) education, material publication, and document services.

During this period, the missionary force numbered from sixty to seventy individuals, depending on home assignment absences at any given time. The National Church included nearly 156,000 in 724 churches. While I served as field leader, more and more young people were making their way to the coastal cities to pursue higher education. Thus, youth ministries became an important focus, with a full-time missionary using the national language to minister to students from various tribes. Because a central location was difficult to secure, we used temporary structures on our office's flat roof to reach and disciple numerous young people.

One youth-related incident stands out in my memory. It was a Monday when Ardyce and I served at the MK (missionary kid) school dorm so the dorm parents could have a day off. They made their way from Sentani to Jayapura, a distance of about forty kilometres, on their motorcycle. On the way back to the school, they were in a serious accident, being hit by an army jeep driven by a teenager without a license and without his soldier father's permission. This young man was clearly at fault and destined to jail, but the police asked what punishment we desired to see. I suggested this young offender not be required to do jail time but instead be put on probation and required to attend our youth program for a specified period while being accountable to our youth worker. This recommendation was approved. During the ensuing weeks, this young man and many of his friends gave their lives to the Lord.

Later, some of the young church leaders who had the privilege of obtaining





New Testament dedication in Tangma. Courtesy Pat Worsley.

graduate and post-graduate degrees outside the country believed it was time for the regional church to have its own college-level theological school in Irian Jaya. Here Irianese could obtain baccalaureate degrees without having to leave family and home. For many years I wondered why I had spent the extra years getting a graduate seminary degree. Now the reason was revealed as those degrees were necessary for the college to meet accreditation requirements. I served the college as an adjunct professor, teaching one class each semester in a one-week module format. This position meant class preparation and marking papers filled all my waiting hours at airports, between meetings, and any other time not taken by the urgent needs of the mission, the church, and other personnel.

Many memories were made during those years as I experienced emergencies, celebrations, misunderstandings, and accomplished goals. We missionaries often express our ultimate goal is to work ourselves out of a job, which is often more easily said than done. I soon realized it is much easier and desirable to grow larger in function rather than smaller! During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, field ministry evaluations were typical, and the concept of redeployment was coming into vogue to reach the least reached with the Gospel. Thus, retiring missionaries were not replaced, some MK school staff were transferred to other schools, and the MK school, which had been operated by the C&MA, began including other mission agencies. During this period, much time and effort were spent trying to

secure property deeds so mission assets could be turned over to the National Church for their ongoing ministries.

By 1994, many of these tasks were completed; various circumstances caused us to consider a transition. Two significant factors included an ageing mother who needed support and the invitation from the Western Canadian District of the C&MA in Canada to fill the district missions consultant's role.

## Ministry in Canada

We worked out of the district office in Calgary for the next six years and initiated what was to become the cluster model for home assignment ministry. This was an effort to enhance the relationship of a missionary with a set cluster of churches. This meant the missionary was not required to be away from his/her family for extended periods as the previous linear tours had demanded. The change initially met with some resistance from the churches and the missionaries but eventually gained increasing favour.

Our plan had always been to finish our career in an overseas cross-cultural setting. Yet, each time the National Ministry Centre contacted us with a possible new assignment during our years in the district, we felt God's check in our hearts telling us this was not His time. But, in January 1999, when we were asked to consider giving leadership to a new C&MA team being formed for the Arabian Peninsula, we both felt an inner urge saying this was God's plan. Events over the next year confirmed this direction.

## United Arab Emirates

In July 2000, we began preparing to move to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). We arrived in Dubai in February 2001 and started some of the most exciting



Workers in UAE.

Courtesy Pat Worsley.

and fulfilling years of our ministry, watching God build a group of multi-ethnic people with various spiritual gifts and abilities into an effective ministry team.

Again, many memories were made, some exciting and some challenging. Each team meeting encouraged us with what God was doing, especially among Chinese contract workers coming to



faith and being baptized by the hundreds. Team meetings also challenged us to pray more fervently for our local Arab cousins as the work among them was slow and sometimes discouraging. The goals we set up as a team were being realized far more quickly in some areas than we had anticipated, and it was all to the praise and glory of God.

Our team members were involved in several ministry areas such as theological training for expatriates, working in business, direct evangelism among unreached expatriates, hospitality, and marriage seminars for mixed ethnic marriages, to name a few. While contact with the local population was problematic at first, God allowed some team members to build friendships that continue to this day, allowing those team members to openly speak of Jesus.

When we originally agreed to lead a new team in the Arabian Peninsula, we set a goal to serve six years, during which time we would work with team members to take over leadership of the growing team. Because of the anticipated tenure of our service, we did not study Arabic. We settled in the United Arab Emirates, where it was possible to get a working visa and the second language, albeit unofficial, is English. Our primary ministry was teaching Theological Education by Extension (TEE) to other expats, but we were also part of a growing international church's leadership team.

One highlight of this period was the Dubai Evangelical Church Center (DECC) building project (a co-operative project of the United Christian Church of Dubai and the Arab Evangelical Church). This included growing the multi-ethnic team, the salvation of many Chinese and other expat workers, the spiritual growth of many laypersons who studied via TEE, and even the graduation of one student after ten years of faithful part-time study.

Some of the challenges in the Arabian Peninsula were very different from those in Indonesia, security being one of them. It was a learning experience for all involved in setting policies and following procedures meant to protect our team's



Pat and Ardyce Worsley.  
Courtesy Pat Worsley.

safety and ministry. On one occasion, a Filipino church worker gave some Christian materials to an Egyptian expat who reported him to the authorities; the next day, he was picked up by the secret police for violating the country's anti-proselytism law. We worked closely with this brother to get him released on bail, but during the ordeal, he spent forty-one days in jail

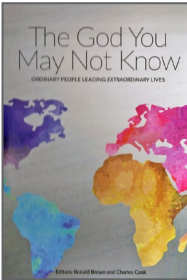
and was ultimately deported to the Philippines.

Throughout our ministry, the times of encouragement vastly outnumbered the times of discouragement, but there were times of disappointment. There were times when a national leader turned his back on all our help and advice; we saw his role come to a sudden and disgraceful end. There were those times when team members misunderstood my communication and intent and accused me falsely. And there was an occasion when our Canadian leadership conscripted one of our field personnel without ever communicating with us in advance so the leadership transfer plans could be made appropriately.

For me, the greatest joy of being an international worker is the privilege of being a change agent. I have always enjoyed change and seeing lives changed. Setting goals and accomplishing them, as well as seeing dreams and visions become a reality all brought unspeakable joy and fulfillment.

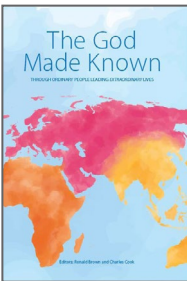
Adapted from a biography written in 2013

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 10 by Lauren Spenser is entitled, “Laos: Little Land of Hope.”



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 6, entitled “Cambodia: Rivers of Living Water” was written by Ilana Lobbezoo. Pat Worsley has written Chapter 8, entitled “Irian Jaya: The People Time Forgot.”

## Chapter 4

### God's Care: Tim and Brenda Tjosvold

by Tim and Brenda Tjosvold

Looking back over the years, our service to the Lord has been a fulfilling experience, reminding us once again of the wonderful care our Father gives to those who give themselves to Him. We recall the words of Carman's song *Fear Not My Child*, "Fear not my child, I'm with you always. I feel every pain and every tear I see. Fear not, my child; I'm with you always. I know how to care for what belongs to me." Our lives and ministry thus far have been a living out of the wonder described in the song. He has taken such good care of us, and we are thankful.

#### Tim: Beginnings

The time was Remembrance Day 1952, at almost midnight. The place was Outlook, Saskatchewan, in the small village hospital where only one nurse was on duty. A gentleman on a bed in the hallway was about to expire, and there was Esther Tjosvold in a room not far away, awaiting a baby. All was quiet until a good scream broke out. Little Timmy was noisily letting the world know he had arrived, as he would continue to do for a good many years to come.

I was born seventh of what would eventually be eleven children. Dad was expected to have died of congestive heart failure a few years before my birth. He was given two weeks to live but was healed through the anointing and prayer of a servant of God. Without that miracle, I wouldn't have happened. My family moved so often I became used to it, which may have facilitated the over thirty different moves I would go through before retiring.

I had diarrhea for my first two years. Mother told the story of the day God healed me, something I will never forget. A radio preacher was speaking on healing, and he wanted to make it real, so he said, "Put one hand on the radio and the other hand on that sick one as I pray." Sounds a bit hokey, but after the prayer, I was healed!

When I was around five years old, a missionary from Taiwan, Pearl Fustey, came to our home and served a Chinese meal to the family. The experience started

me thinking about serving the Lord and going to China. Childhood exposure to international ministry continued as missionaries visited our home and church. In grade three, when the teacher asked what everybody was going to be, all the regular answers of a farmer to fireman came out. Little Timmy spouted off a very solid, "I'm gonna be a missionary."

During a Canadian Bible College Youth Conference at the age of fifteen, I sensed a call to be faithful but had moved away from thinking about missions. I was very involved in my church, Beulah Alliance in Edmonton, and was the Alliance Youth Fellowship (AYF) president in my grade twelve year.

Over Christmas, I got a job as Christmas help at Canada Post. There I met Alfie, a true hippy who wore torn jeans before they came into fashion. Alfie believed in the teaching of Herbert W. Armstrong, founder and head of the group Worldwide Church of God. From him, I learned some untruths about theology. I would call my youth pastor, Roy Taylor, almost every night after work, around midnight, with complicated questions. Then, each following day, I would be popped into another corner by Alfie's grip on his theology. On the last day we worked together, I got blown away when Alfie told me, "I know this stuff and believe it, but I'm not going to live it, so I'm going to hell. But you say you believe it and want to live it. You really should know the Bible better." The Lord twisted my arm in this conversation, and it pushed me to the decision to attend Canadian Bible College (CBC) after high school graduation.

At CBC, I grew in the Lord, but after a couple of years realized I was more into having fun in singing groups than growing in the Lord. In my freshman year, I was in every music group except the Ladies Trio. I took a year out, intending to return after just one year unless I got into a full-time musical ministry. Before the year was over, I was asked to serve with Sound Alliance, a group of singers from different Alliance colleges. I grew in ministry and was ready, after a year of construction and a year of singing ministry, to return and get serious about my studies and serving the Lord. As I studied and served, it became clear the Lord wanted me to move toward international service.

## **Brenda: Beginnings**

I grew up in a railroad family. I was born in the Canadian National Railway (CN) town of Biggar, Saskatchewan and was raised in Edmonton. Because of my father's connection to CN, I got to travel every summer to eastern Canada. I remember going, with my family on the train, to Montreal for Expo 67. I got used to travelling a lot and loved it. Was the Lord preparing me a bit for a life of travel?

My friend, Linda, took me to Beulah Alliance Church, where I got involved with the youth group (AYF). At the time, if you were involved in the Beulah AYF, chances were pretty good you would end up doing summer camps at Nakamun Bible Camp. It was at Nakamun where I got to hear Jess Jespersen, who, at the time, was serving in Côte d'Ivoire (CI). Through his preaching, I gave myself to Christ. Interestingly, a few years later, I would arrive in CI, two years after Jesse and Ann Jespersen left the field for ministries in Quebec. Was the Lord preparing the way for His servant, Jesse, to bring his eventual replacement into the family?

At a CBC youth conference, I felt a call to follow Jesus more seriously. I came to understand I was to follow Him, not the kids in the youth group. As I grew in my walk with the Lord, I completed my studies as an X-ray technician and began working at the St. Albert Hospital, close to Edmonton. During this time, I attended an early Edmonton MissionsFest. It was 1976, and there I sensed the Lord calling me to international service. My response was, "Lord, I will go, but you have to give me a man to go with." I wanted to obey, but I was a bit hesitant, and I thought having a man to go with might be a safer bet.

## **Coming Together**

My (Tim) first full-time ministry was as a youth pastor for Delta Tabernacle in Hamilton, Ontario. While serving there, I returned to Alberta for the Alliance Council in Calgary in 1977. I spent a few days in Edmonton before and after Council, and so got to spend some time together with my friend of eight years, Brenda MacKay. Brenda was also heading to Council in Calgary and had planned to stay with a cousin there. I convinced her to stay with my cousin instead so we could have more time with each other and go back and forth to the meetings together. After Council, we each headed our own way for a bit of vacation time. We met each other in Edmonton before my return to Hamilton and had a lovely evening at a concert, followed by a sweet goodbye.

Brenda was a tad blown away when I called the day after getting back to Hamilton. I asked her, "Hey! Should we get married?" Then there was some SERIOUS LAUGHING FROM BRENDA! What was happening on this May evening when the crazy Tjosy came up with the idea? Brenda was surprised but, after some good laughing, she promised to think and pray about it. Well, my idea changed a lot and was the beginning of a bunch of great stuff. Through a change of senior pastor, I felt I should move on after a bit more than a year in Hamilton. We were brought back together in Edmonton, where we would be married and begin our life together.

While we worked in lay jobs, we were very involved with the Beulah youth group and ended up being called to be the youth pastor. We could only serve one year because we were heading to seminary to prepare for overseas ministry. At Beulah, we were blessed to work with many wonderful teens and families, and we are still in contact with many of them. Another blessing from our year at Beulah was the birth of our first child.

Our year of ministry in Edmonton was followed by two years in Regina, where I did one year of seminary study and worked full time as Brenda took two years of full-time Bible college study and had our second child. The Lord provided in wonderful ways for all our needs.

## **Beginnings of Overseas Experience**

Because we were headed off to serve in CI, a West African country where the official language is French, we took one year in France for language study. The year was a fantastic time of learning the language and getting some cross-cultural training. It also did not hurt us to study in Albertville, nestled in the beautiful French Alps. We began to see when we gave ourselves to the Lord for His service, He would always take care of us. This was one of those experiences of being incredibly spoiled by the Father who had called us into His service. We began to learn, more than ever, He knows how to care for what belongs to Him.

We began to see when we gave ourselves to the Lord for His service, He would always take care of us.

## **First Term in Côte d'Ivoire 1982-1985**

Our first two years in CI were primarily taken up by studying the Baoule language. As we grew in our language capacity, we got involved in lay leadership training ministries in villages located in the country's central area, where the Alliance mission office was situated. We were also privileged to have a baby girl added to the family during our first year in Africa.

Another lesson on the Father's perfect care came when Brenda's parents visited us in CI. They were held at the airport because of a visa problem, and we had to stay in the capital city, Abidjan, for an extra day. It just so happened our little girl was not well while we were waiting. Because we were in the capital, with excellent medical facilities, we could take her to a clinic where she received excellent care.

She would not have been able to get the same care in Dimbokro, our little town, three hours away. The Lord was showing us, He who had called us was faithful, and He would do the work through us, taking care of us along the way.

## Second Term in Côte d'Ivoire 1986-1990



Village preaching in Côte d'Ivoire.  
Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.

This was a term of living in three villages and doing leadership training – Soubre, Tiebissou and Sakassou. Then followed time in the city of Bouake, administering a Bible translation project that had slowed down. We got it going and got the church involved, so the project got completed more quickly.

One of the challenges we faced at the end of our second term was a call to be Missionary-in-Residence

at Canadian Theological Seminary (CTS). I was not an academic, and a man I respected greatly, Arnold Cook, wrote asking us to take the position and stay for three years! I wrote back, "Dear Dr. Cook. You lived in Colombia too long with all kinds of drugs around. You must still be under the influence to ask me to do something like this!" In his strategic but sneaky response he called me on the phone, in CI. "Will you stay open?" What could I say to that? I was not going to close my heart to the Lord or to the authorities He had set over me. We accepted.

Many on our field did not think it was the right thing to do. CI had lost four worker couples in the years just prior. They all went to leadership positions in North America. Most said they would be back, but none returned. One precious sister told us, "You're leaving a ministry that only you can do, to do something anybody over there could do!" Nobody thought we would return, which made the move much harder.

We held to our decision and saw the Lord minister in wonderful ways. Before school started, we attended The Christian and Missionary Alliance's (C&MA) biennial Assembly in Quebec. The Lord knew I needed help in heading to CTS, and He blessed me through one of the youths I had served at Beulah when I was there. Don and Dolores Tjart sang in one of the services; the song has become a foundation for me, and it got me through those challenging three years. They sang Steven Curtis Chapman's "His Strength is Perfect." I sat in the meeting with tears pouring down my cheeks. The Lord was telling me He would be all I would



need as I headed into a challenging ministry, teaching at the school where He was training His servants. It was a great three years. Jesus came, helped, and worked through us to bless and train many beautiful people.

Another challenge piled on top of the CTS challenge was, during our third year, I started experiencing what looked like multiple sclerosis (MS). I was hit by weakness in the legs and pain that was very difficult to control. Doctors told me heading back to Africa would be very unwise as MS exacerbations were very much more likely to occur in high heat and during hard work. After a Christmas banquet in 1992, Jesus let me know we would be heading back. During the meal, we sat at a table with a lovely couple from the church. She told us how her mother had come down with MS, and in three years, she was gone. Because of my pain, I had been unwittingly overdosing on Ibuprofen and damaging my stomach, so I was not feeling very well throughout the night.

After the banquet, we returned to Brenda's parents' home, where we were staying. I put the family to bed and stayed up to cry and to pray. As I knelt, I cried, and I asked the Lord what was going to happen. Would I live or what? He blessed me with something I had never before experienced. I saw an image of a whole bunch of African people walking toward a massive light. There in the middle of them all was one white man, and it was ME! Well, I cried some more for sure, but I never again had any questions. It was obvious Jesus was sending us, and He would be there with us, using us to bring people to Himself and to the Light.

Some questions were asked by others about whether or not we should be sent out by the Alliance. After our wonderful boss, Wally Albrecht, heard what Jesus had told me, he backed us 100%. Wally had lost his own father to the effects of MS, but he was ready to trust the Lord to take me and care for me through whatever would come about. Thanks, Wally!

### **Third Term in Côte d'Ivoire 1993-1997**

We surprised the CI team and returned, as we had promised, after three years. Even though I was still no academic, it seemed right to them for me to teach at our Bible school, the Yamoussoukro Bible Institute, for the next term. This term was another great time of seeing the Lord's excellent care.

There were questions about my health because Yamoussoukro is the second hottest city in the country. And as for workload, I served as the program director and as a professor, so I rarely got six hours of sleep on any given night. But the Lord took care of me and made me strong through it all.

Five years into the supposed MS adventure, I was able to have an MRI, which



Yamousoukro students, 1997.

Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.



Brenda doing accounting work.

Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.

revealed I did not have MS. I have some weakness and pain, but it is assumed to be the result of an inflammation of the spinal cord. Unlike MS, it was a one-time thing that did its damage and left. If it had been MS, it could have remained, creating ongoing and damaging exacerbations throughout my life. Hallelujah! It was not MS, and though I am a bit gibbled, I am vertical pretty much whenever I want to be, and I am grateful!

It was an excellent term for Brenda. She was able to handle the accounting at the school and have a great ministry among student wives. She enjoyed teaching the women and got to be a big help using one of her favourite books, *Where There is No Doctor*. Brenda helped the women take care of their families and brought

them to the hospital for complex cases. For two ladies, she assisted them to give birth in their homes when things moved too quickly for them to be taken to the hospital.

## Fourth Term in Benin 1999-2004

Our fourth term was a move to another country where we hoped to take the Ivorian church into international mission. They never did accompany us; due to a coup d'état in CI that year, the National Church did not feel able to send anyone with us considering the crisis. However, in light of its size and health, we showed them they did not need us, and we could go toward people who had less access to learning about Jesus. Our move created some tension among our workers in CI, but we went following the vision of our Canadian leadership. We ended up doing research to see where we would find unreached peoples we could work among in the country. Our study showed us the Church in Benin was strong enough and could reach Benin's remaining unreached on its own. Therefore, we spent the rest of our time in mobilization. We worked with all the three hundred and seventy-three



Teaching in Benin. Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.



Students in Benin. Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.

evangelical denominations and tried to prepare them to reach out to the unreached of their own country.

The beginning of our term in Benin was a tough one for me (Brenda), with many adjustments. There were multiple reasons for this. First of all, my parents were both gone. We missed them, but it also left us without a base in Canada. I was feeling like an orphan.

Additionally, we left our two eldest children in Canada to go to university. The move to the country of Benin meant our remaining two high school kids would attend high school in Côte d'Ivoire. But the most significant adjustment was being a mom for a baby again.

While on home assignment, Tim's youngest brother and his wife had a baby boy they were not able to keep. Through different ways (dreams and messages we heard), each of us felt God was asking us to care for this child. We were able to gain custody and took him with us to Benin. Our youngest of the first four was already twelve, so this was like starting all over again. After arriving in Benin, Tim was very busy trying to figure out what the Lord wanted us to be doing. It became evident to me that I would not be getting a lot accomplished with our little one-year-old taking up a lot of my time.

Once, when Tim was out of town, I cried out to God and asked, "Why am I even here? I'm not accomplishing anything." To make things even worse, I had experienced my most fulfilling ministry in our last term in CI. Now I felt like I was doing nothing. I even wrote a letter to my then boss, Ron Brown, telling him how I felt and suggesting maybe I should go off allowance or be sent home. He very graciously and lovingly assured me our son was my main priority for such a time.

A couple of years later, we had a terrifying experience. The rebels in Côte d'Ivoire decided to fight against the government; with two of our kids at MK school in CI, it was very frightening for us to be so far away. Eventually, the school sent them home, but it turned out to be a false alarm, and life settled down. They were able to go back to finish the year. It was the following year when, once again,

the rebels got things heated up, and an actual war broke out.

Our third child had since graduated, leaving only one son in CI. It was a terrifying time as rebels and soldiers camped on opposite sides of the school with the kids still there. Eventually, they were rescued by the French military, and our son was taken to the capital city from which he flew home to us, who were anxiously waiting.

God had given me a verse when I was expecting our first child, Isaiah 40:11, "He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young." Over the many years since God gave me this verse, He has fulfilled His promise. He led us when we had young children, and He gathered His lambs and carried them close to His heart, protecting them in a scary situation.

In the last three years of our time in Benin, the Lord especially blessed me through some productive ministry opportunities. The research Tim had been involved in required the publishing of a couple of books. I got to do the layout and editing for those. We also undertook the administration of the French translation of a theological training program, the OMEGA Program. In the end, there was some questioning and pain, but He took care of me just like He had always done.

## Final Terms in Niger 2005-2016

After five years in Benin, a time of helping the church prepare to reach out to the least reached, the Lord called us to work among some truly unreached peoples. He moved us north to the country of Niger to work among the Fulani and the Tuareg.



Speaking in Niger. Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.

As we ministered through the first year, building relationships and seeking the Lord's direction for our ministry, we came to a new realization. First of all, we saw the Muslims were not responding very much to the preaching of the Gospel and the ministry of international workers. Secondly, we realized that Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world. Our new idea

was, rather than carrying on with traditional evangelistic work, we should simply show love. We concluded that the Lord wanted us to prioritize obedience to the Great Commandment in our efforts to fulfill the Great Commission.

Our arrival was in the midst of a year of tremendous need for Niger. There had been a drought and a locust infestation, so people were hurting badly. We





sought out ways to bless them and ended up partnering with Samaritan's Purse to make an impact with the love of Jesus.

One of the biggest joys in Niger was the privilege of being field leader. We were given the blessing of receiving a great bunch of fantastic people, sent by the Lord, to be part of the team. It was an incredible experience to see the Lord bring diverse personalities, with unique giftings, together to build a ministry that added a lot of good things to the Nigeriens' experiences in our lives. We did all we could to help the team learn and fit in effectively while ministering to those needy people. Our Friday morning team meetings were a highlight for us. They were a chance to be together, hear how things were going, and support each other in the Lord.



Travel in Niger. Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.



Development of clean water wells; Tim with Ken Driedger. Courtesy NMC.

It was an especially neat time when the Lord brought a ministry from Guinea to join our team. Dan and Melody Ibsen's WAVE internship ministry included the Ibsens, Jose and Jocelyn Reverente and four interns, who joined us for ministry in Niger. They were forced to leave Guinea because of the Ebola outbreak. Rather than sending those students home, they accepted our invitation to Niger, continuing the African learning experience in another country and blessing our team.

## Conclusion

Looking back, we see the Lord used us to follow the vision of our Alliance Family. We went out to bring access to the Gospel to the unreached. While we were serving in CI, we could have stayed in our comfortable setting ministering to the Ivorians, but the Lord, through the Alliance, moved us to CTS and leadership training. We realize training the next generation is of utmost importance, and it was a privilege to interrupt our other ministry to help out in the endeavour for a while.

Then, we moved from a well-reached group in CI, to reach out to less-reached peoples as we moved to Benin. It was a move to the uncomfortable for the living out of the Alliance Family values. In this case, the need of the unreached called us. Many of our colleagues in CI were not excited about our moving, but they blessed us as we went. We got there and realized that the need was more one of training the church to reach out to the least reached, so we gave ourselves to the training of God's people for mission to them.



Brenda loving on a baby in Niger.  
Courtesy Brenda Tjosvold.

Finally, we moved to a land of truly unreached peoples. In Niger, we reached out to them, but our ministry took a bit of a turn as we gave ourselves to a new emphasis. Rather than continuing to minister in traditional evangelistic strategies, we felt called to love the people in the name of Jesus. We came to believe that we had to live out the Great Commandment in a way that would truly enable us to obey the Great Commission. We needed to love people through development, helping them in their difficult life situations to provide for their families. We became a non-governmental organization (NGO) rather than a denomination, religious organization, dedicating ourselves to help people through development teaching training, which always found its roots in Bible teaching. We believe our demonstration of love will

eventually bear fruit in bringing them to the One who is behind the love that we showed. Our team has now moved to the status of a religious organization. Still, it

continues to work in development as we tie in with other national church groups, helping them minister to the unreached peoples of Niger.

As we left Niger and headed home toward retirement, two very encouraging comments helped us. We were saddened by what seemed to be a lack of significant evangelistic results in Niger and wondered what the Lord had really done through us. It was beautiful to hear from one former leader in a Fulani community, "Monsieur Tim taught us to work." Monsieur Garso, the head "cowboy" of the community, hit one of those very special spots for anybody working in development. It was not a decision for salvation, but it was an expression of impact we had prayed for the Lord to use in drawing this wonderful man to Himself. We had the privilege of helping them learn to work to bring themselves further along in developing independent accomplishments.

The other expression to encourage us as we were settling back into retired life in Canada came from Midou, the community chief's brother. Our colleague, Kristi Hopf, was talking with him when my name came up. Midou said he would never forget Monsieur Tim, "He loved people." I believe such a reputation is a significant

goal for anybody who longs to bring access to Jesus for people who do not know Him. We see the Lord used our love to sow His Word among the Fulani and Tuareg people of Niger. Our prayer is for the harvest to come soon and be an abundant harvest for the glory of Jesus.

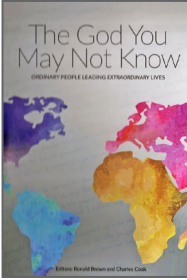
In all the years and all the settings, we came back to one wonderful reality. Our perfect Father truly does know how to take care of what belongs to Him. We went through some hard times. From time to time, we had questions and wondered if things were really okay. There was some pain, but through it all, our loving Father showed Himself to be perfect in providing the care that we needed. We are grateful.



Tim and Brenda Tjosvold, 2007.  
Courtesy Tim Tjosvold.

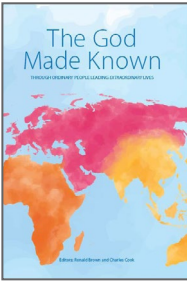


## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 13, by Glen Scorgie is “Ruth Patterson: Experiencing God’s Presence Wherever I Go.” Mabiala Kenzo wrote Chapter 16, “Mabiala and Lau Kenzo: Freely You Have Received, Freely Give.”



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Julie Fehr shares her story in Chapter 16, “Julie Fehr: He Will Give You a New Name.”

## **Chapter 5**

### **Blessing the Nations: Ruth Nilsson**

by Ruth Nilsson

It was May of 1986 in a small church in a village called Barrio Virginia on the outskirts of San Jose, Costa Rica. For the previous ten months, I had been learning Spanish in preparation for my time in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I offered to teach a children's class; this particular Sunday, I presented the Gospel. After asking if anyone wanted to receive the gift Jesus offered, I told them to stay behind so we could talk. At least, I think that is what I said; remember, I was just learning Spanish. Most left, but I was surprised to look up and see a boy named Steven had stayed. Steven and I sat there, and, in my bumbling Spanish, I led him in a prayer to receive Jesus into his life. I left there wondering if Steven had understood anything I said, trusting God, who knew all languages, to make it clear.

So, how did I end up in a poor neighbourhood on the outskirts of San Jose talking to a seven-year-old boy named Steven?

### **The Early Years**

It started in the small northern city of Grande Prairie, Alberta, where I was born into a Christian home on June 6, 1956. My parents attended Grande Prairie Alliance Church (GPAC), and I grew up going to Sunday school, church, and evening service. I loved it. My father was a mechanic, and my mother stayed at home until we were in school, then she went to work in a doctor's office. Both of my parents were quite involved in the church. We always attended the missionary conferences at our church and at the local Bible school, Peace River Bible Institute.

Though I grew up hearing about Jesus and asked Him into my heart several times, I somehow knew it was a done deal at the age of eight. I was "born again," and Jesus lived inside of me. Later in the year, I remember attending a Friday night youth service at GPAC where at the end, the speaker gave an invitation for whoever was willing to become a missionary to come forward. I sat on the end of the bench and said, "God, I will be a missionary if You want me to be, but I am not going forward because they will think I am too young and don't know what I am

doing.” Even still, I knew in my heart the commitment I had made. I am not sure why, but even at an earlier age, I can remember telling people I wanted to be a missionary nurse when I grew up.

My parents provided well for me. Life was good with school, church, Pioneer Girls, friends, and family. Every year GPAC held a week-long missionary conference which I loved attending. One night as the missionary showed slides of faraway places, tears ran down my cheeks; at that moment, I believe the Spirit moved in me as I thought about people who did not know Jesus. At twelve years old, I heard a message of Abraham at GPAC where we were challenged at the end of the service to put our most prized possession on the altar. Right then, I put my family on the altar. I told God I was willing to be single if He wanted. Looking back, I wonder how at the age of twelve, I saw having a family as my most prized desire and put it on the altar. I loved babies and children even then, so I know God was working in me.

Junior and senior high school brought their typical adolescent identity and self-acceptance issues, but God was always a part of my life, as was church. Growing up involved Sunday school, youth group, camp, youth retreats at Peace River Bible Institute, and even a long bus trip to Regina for the Canadian Bible College (CBC) retreat. God had put a strong purpose in my heart, and through all of those

adolescent struggles, I knew I wanted to work internationally. The church continued to affirm my call; at fifteen, I remember going forward to be prayed over for filling of the Spirit. At GPAC, I was disciplined, taught the Bible, given community, baptized at twelve, learned about missions and the work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) worldwide, and was given the opportunity to respond to the call.

The goal of being a missionary nurse still stood in the forefront of my mind, so after finishing high school and one year of Bible school at Prairie Bible Institute, I entered nursing at Red Deer College. Upon entering my first year, I took an interest test which showed medicine as seventh on the list



Ruth Mitchell (Nilsson), c. 1981.

Courtesy Ruth Nilsson.

and kindergarten teaching as number one. These results would be significant in God's plan for me and His desire for winning children to Himself. Not one to quit, I continued forward and received my registered nurse designation. Then on to Canadian Bible College, where I graduated with a Bachelor of Religious Education.

After graduation, I found myself travelling to Grande Prairie to candidate for a part-time position in Christian Education in the church where I was born and raised. It was a great experience, and it was there I met Stan and Carol Nilsson.

Stan was an elder on the church board, and Carol became the administrative assistant at the church and we became good friends. Little did I know how this friendship would affect my life later on.

August of 1985 found me in San Jose, Costa Rica, facing my fear of lacking the ability to learn another language.

One God moment in San Jose was after lunch, in a lovely restaurant in the middle of the city. I admitted to God I was pretty upset over Psalm 37:4. "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." The conversation went something like this:

Me: "Well, God, I don't think You have kept Your part of the bargain. Here I have done all I thought You were asking of me, and here I am a single missionary, something I never wanted to be."

God: "Yes, Ruth, you have done the "right things;" I just haven't seen much delight in Me in the process."

That was a "light bulb moment." Thus began my journey in trying to discover what it meant to delight myself in God. My journey continues today, and it has been such a rich experience demonstrating the reality of the song by Jason Ingram, Elle Limebear, and Ran Jackson: "And all my life You have been faithful And all my life You have been so, so good..." As I sought to serve God, He was changing and blessing me.

Meanwhile, people back at GPAC were praying and giving. I was learning Spanish and many spiritual lessons; together, we were seeking to bless the nations.

## **Reaching My Mission Field**

In August 1986, I was met in the Buenos Aires International Airport by the family of Alliance missionaries who became lifelong friends, mentors, and coworkers.

If I had to describe my first term in Buenos Aires, I would say it was humiliating as I stumbled through mistake after mistake, trying to speak Spanish. I didn't know

how to fit into this team of strong, gifted leaders, and I struggled to navigate the culture. The whole time I felt inadequate as it seemed my time was more about learning than contributing anything.

There was also the absolutely delightful aspect of loving the food unbelievably well done on their *asados*, including delicious freshly made pasta with Italian influence, fresh fruits and vegetables found on stands just a block away, and fresh European bread from the many bakeries scattered throughout the city.

Another exciting challenge was living and driving in a city of over twelve million people! I remember driving through the maze of traffic and thinking, “if only my friends from my small hometown with possibly twenty-five thousand people could see me driving now!” Then there were the many rich relationships formed both with Argentines and North Americans.

When I arrived in 1986, Argentina was in the midst of a massive change. They had lost the war of 1982 against Britain over the Falkland Islands. People were disillusioned with their government and began responding to the Gospel in surprising ways.

The so-called *Dirty War* of the late 1970s, which resulted in thousands of the political ‘left’ being tortured and killed, culminated in the brief but deadly Falkland’s War with England in 1982. The national economy was in serious crisis and the nation was transitioning from military rule to a democratic form of government.

At the same time, a movement of God was gaining momentum... Thousands of lives were transformed, many sick and crippled people gave testimony of being healed, and many who were demonized were delivered through the aggressive prayer ministry. (*The God Made Known*, pgs. 98-99)

This movement of God was affecting all churches. I became part of a church-planting team working with a strategy known as Buenos Aires Encounter with God. We never seemed to grow like the stories we heard from other churches, and I ended my first term feeling like God was doing more in me than through me. Meanwhile, back in Canada, people were praying and giving.

I spent another term in Buenos Aires, where God was beginning to grow a heart in me for children’s ministry, even though I resisted it. I mistakenly thought, “the important people work with adults.” Despite my resistance, I spent four years helping other children’s workers to teach both children and adults more effectively in the local Alliance churches in Buenos Aires and the surrounding area.

Three of us developed a teacher training course during my first term, which I



Ruth Mitchell (Nilsson), c. 1990.  
Courtesy Craig Bundy.

modified to use in several churches in Argentina. I then went on and taught in Cuba, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, and Serbia. Many children's ministries leaders came, representing hundreds of churches and a great many more children. Remember my interest exam showing a desire to be a kindergarten teacher? Well, God took my desire, used nursing to pay the college bills, and allowed me to influence others who influenced way more children than I could have ever reached.

### **The Local Church and Mission**

The year 1994 found me employed at Sherwood Park Alliance Church (SPAC) as the missionary-in-residence.

A year later, I became the director of children's ministries. My commitment to international missions had not ended, and my heart for reaching the children of the world was growing. SPAC supported me by allowing me to help lead mission projects, including a short-term youth trip back to Argentina.

There were also several "mission" events for children, exposing them to what God was doing worldwide. I also accompanied another short-term youth

mission trip to Ecuador, taking another children's pastor with me who had never been on a missions trip. Later, she led several other trips to Latin America and Serbia to come alongside churches in their children's ministries. SPAC was also blessing the nations through their going, giving, and praying.

In 2004, after returning from a short-term trip to Ecuador, God opened the door for involvement in a mission I had never dreamed of. SPAC allowed me to work with them for seven months



Ruth and Kelly Dyer on a short-term mission trip in Venezuela, 2007. Courtesy Ruth Nilsson.



of the year; then, I was on loan to the mission for the other five months. During those five months, I came alongside smaller, younger, first-generation churches and assisted them with their children's ministry. I travelled to Mexico, Cuba, and Venezuela, where first-generation Christians were planting churches. The C&MA was relatively new in these places, and children's ministry, in particular, was underdeveloped. There was the opportunity to reach children at an early age, disciple them, and see them know God all their lives, unlike many of their parents who had not heard about a relationship with Jesus Christ until adulthood.

God turned my resistance to being in children's ministry into a passion for reaching them early in life. Each time I went into these countries or made a trip, I would take other children's ministry leaders with me so they too could see what God was doing around the world and be a part, along with their church, of blessing the nations.

Remember Stan and Carol, who I met in Grande Prairie during my home service? After a couple of years of bravely fighting cancer, it took Carol in January 2005. Stan contacted me following her death, and in 2006 we were married. You might be thinking, *Wait, you were on a roll; God was doing things. Did He stop?* Definitely not.

Stan had been on the board for many years at GPAC, having publicly given his life to Christ at sixteen. After we were married, I learned that when Stan was eighteen, he had a vision of Mexico, which he later forgot about. When we began dating, and I told him what I was doing in Latin America, he was unsure what God was doing.

Because of Stan, I resigned from Sherwood Park and moved back to Grande Prairie. From there, I continued my trips into Mexico, Cuba, and Venezuela. Stan joined me in 2007 when we lead our first short-term missions trip with a team

from GPAC into Cuba. People in Cuba were so responsive to the Gospel. The government had allowed house churches beginning around 1990, and things were not as hard on Christians as they had been previously, though there was still opposition in subtle ways.

We went in to help a small town clean their beach. Incredible friends were made, and we met Nazarene brothers and sisters in Christ who were able to help us obtain religious visas. GPAC was being exposed to what God



Retreat group in Venezuela, 2006.

Courtesy Ruth Nilsson.

was doing in other parts of the world; we were learning from our brothers and sisters abroad what faith really looked like when you have so little in the way of material possessions. They were reaching out in friendship, helping to clean beaches and attract more tourists to villages while also helping them improve living conditions. We went in every year for seven years to clean the beach, to reach out to the couple trying to help their people learn to grow their own food, and to come alongside the little church planted there.

Between our summer trips to clean the beach, we went in with some teams to teach children's ministry to the Nazarenes and the Alliance. Sherwood Park and Grande Prairie Alliance Church were sending in short-term teams.

Stan's background was in construction, contracting, and real estate and God



Stan and Ruth Nilsson. Courtesy Ruth Nilsson.

used him to help lead a team to finish building a Nazarene church in Cuba. God took a layman who loved the church and used him with the skills He gave him. Stan started doing it at age fifty-eight. Meanwhile, GPAC was still praying, giving, and going.

In 2008, Stan felt God telling him to get out of the real estate business he and a partner owned. Stan was not sure what God would do next, but he knew God was up to something, and by faith, stepped back. In October, on a trip to Cuba, we met the new directors for the Sun Region, who invited Stan to come to Mexico City.

It seemed the National Church was

reaching both the northern and southern borders of Mexico, but there were not many churches in their mega capital city. There were a few missionaries already there attempting to plant churches.

One of the vision statements at the time was "Establish a ministry centre in the 'hub of the city,' Benito Juarez area of Mexico City." This vision statement coincided with God placing Stan. So in 2010, commissioned by GPAC, Stan and I packed up our car and drove to Mexico City.

While there, we went into Cuba a couple more times, accompanying GPAC and SPAC short-term teams. We turned the beach project over to Stan's sister, who had come with us several times, and she began to take in short-term teams from



Ruth teaching, 2010. Courtesy Ruth Nilsson.

another church in Grande Prairie. The last time I was in Cuba to do training in children's ministries, I turned all my materials over to a Cuban colleague who had been through the course twice and was able to teach in my absence.

In Mexico, I turned my attention to hospitality and loved it. The Alliance bought a building, and Stan was busy renovating it to be used as an operations centre, a guest house and a church. Wherever we lived, we had people in, both Mexican and Canadian. We hosted friends who came down from GPAC to help us in the construction—a plumber, an electrician and his wife, a painter, Stan's brother and his wife—all from GPAC, all part of blessing the nations.

GPAC contributed financially to the finishing of the ministry centre. After a three-month trip back to Canada in 2012 to raise funds for construction, we were able to return and finish the building in 2013.

One of our goals, at the time, was to start another English-speaking international church in Mexico City. An estimated 125 least-reached people groups in Mexico were represented in this megacity. This number is a rationale for the ongoing investment of Global Ministries resources in the capital of Mexico. The desire was



Stan and his coworkers taking a break from a work project, 2011. Courtesy Ruth Nilsson.

for an international English-speaking church to reach out to some of these unreached people groups.

Since Stan only spoke English, his desire, after finishing the renovation of the ministry centre, was to come alongside and help make this English church a reality.

After some time back in Canada in 2014, we returned in 2015 to officially open and manage the guest house in the ministry centre. We also started an English-speaking Bible study with the

hopes of seeing an English international church born.

Many people came through the guest house. We saw the nations passing through as the board of the Alliance World Fellowship met there, bringing leaders from Thailand, Holland, the United States, Africa, and Peru. More short-term mission teams, along with international workers leaving the country or coming in, found a place to lay their heads. God was moving people through Mexico City. He placed us there with the gift of hospitality, providing a safe and comfortable place to come and go with good food and, many times, a listening ear as people were processing the changes around them.

Our English Bible study floundered, but we had a core group for about eighteen months, including Stan and I, a Filipino couple, a Mexican family, another Canadian couple, a single person from Colombia, and several other Mexicans who spoke English. We were moving forward and even called a pastor. The pastor did not arrive, but before we left Mexico City in 2017, we had contacted another couple who eventually came. Today they are pastors of one of the international churches in Mexico City called Union Church.

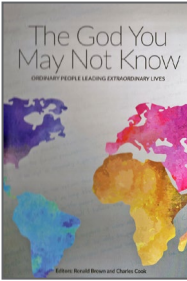
Because of Stan's age, he would no longer qualify for medical insurance with the Alliance. We returned to GPAC and found ministry there. In 2018 I started at GPAC as their director of missions.

I have just returned from having tea with some of my former youth sponsors who have been in the church since the late '60s and continue to have leadership roles at Grande Prairie Alliance Church. They were there in my youth when I graduated from CBC and made it known to the staff at the church that I needed a place to do my home service before heading overseas. During my years in Argentina and later, when I needed a charity to sponsor me so I could continue

working in Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela, they were there for me. They are still there today.

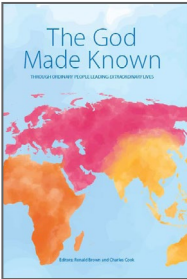
People like this make up the Body of Christ, the local church, and provide the prayerful and financial push making it possible for people like me to serve internationally. Today, I count it a privilege to be involved in mobilizing our congregation to continue blessing the nations by sending out and supporting more people, and encouraging them to continue praying, giving, and going.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

John Healey has written Chapter 7 on “The Encounter Initiative: Passionate About Evangelism.”



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 9, entitled “Argentina: Ashes and Burning Coal,” was written by Craig Bundy. Also in this book, Dave Peters has written Chapter 21, “Dave and Arlene Peters: Lessons Learned on the Mission Field.”

## Chapter 6

### Trusting the Lord for the Unknown: Colette Baudais

by Colette Baudais

It was 1999. I was in Mali, West Africa, sitting in a small grass hut made of harvested millet stalks, squeezed in between an old Dogon pastor, a younger man who was my translator, and six Fulani nomadic shepherds. Suddenly I found myself witnessing a very lively and animated conversation. Everyone was talking at the same time! *What was so exciting*, I wondered, asking, “Please translate this for me!” But before I share this compelling God story, let me tell you how I got into the hut in the first place.

#### The Early Years

I grew up going to church and hearing about Jesus. But I found what was said about Him and how people lived were polar opposites. I knew by age seven how I lived in this life now was going to make a difference in the afterlife, so I began looking for the hope of a happy immortality in other philosophies, religions, and paths. However, God was protecting me from the wrong pathway. I would explore a course, read, go to meetings, and talk to others; it never rang true. So I would move onto another group, another philosophy of life, another path, until one day I had stepped over the line and got into a teaching so dark I knew I could not just move on to another idea. I had to do something with what I now knew.

This path was not going to let me go. So I told my friend, “I know I need to find God. That is my solution. I know He has the answers to life and knows what I am supposed to believe and how I am supposed to live, so from now on, I am looking for Him.” I had already tried “church” and did not think Jesus was the Way, but a work friend knew I was searching and told me the real truth about following Jesus. I was led in the “Sinner’s Prayer.” I did not know what I was saying, but I did pray earnestly. My friend did not follow up with me, but I believe God took me seriously and began leading me to truly know Him.

A new friend came into my life and invited me to an adult Bible study at Circle Drive Alliance Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Nine months later, in my



kitchen, the Lord gave me a vision of a curtain being drawn open and behind it, on one side, were all of the philosophies I had ever heard; these were from Satan. He revealed this clearly to me, then on the other side was His Son Jesus, who truly loves me—"Choose today who you will follow." That day Jesus chose me, and I chose Him! This was in April when I was twenty-seven years old, my "birth day."

God put wonderful mentors in my life at the Alliance church who helped me to dive headlong into a radical way of living for Jesus alone. I got involved in Evangelism Explosion and then in being a youth group sponsor. I learned quickly what a missionary was and chose to avoid all of those kinds of meetings, just in case I would be "called."

A year and a half after my new birth, I went to Capernwray Bible School in Australia and New Zealand for a year. I was not allowed to avoid missionary meetings there. After hearing a few missionaries tell of their adventures with God, I was hooked; excited, I told God, "You can call me now." All year I waited. He didn't call.

I went back to Saskatoon, earnestly praying He would choose me to be called. About six months later, a missionary spoke at our church. The Holy Spirit powerfully convicted me to go and proclaim Him where people had never heard before. I ran to the altar with tears of joy to accept the call. This same powerful conviction happened numerous times over the next year. I waited and watched for the Lord's leading in how the call would be worked out.

A few years later, I interned for a year at Circle Drive Alliance in youth ministry with Garth Froese. During the year, the vice president for missions, Arnold Cook, came and spoke. Pastor Garth encouraged me to talk to him, but I didn't meet The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) requirements to be an international worker. At thirty-three, I was already too old for their criteria, and I had not even finished high school. How could I go to Bible school? And even if I did, then I would really be too old to be sent. I went and talked to Dr. Cook anyways. His parting words were, "No, you don't meet our requirements, but we make exceptions for exceptional people, so be exceptional." I left, thinking the door was slammed shut.

I applied and was accepted to go to Canadian Bible College (CBC) in Regina as a mature student without a high school diploma. God led me to leave Saskatoon and move to Grande Prairie, Alberta, for work. I immediately got involved in the Grande Prairie Alliance Church. The job had not worked out, so the door to Bible school was closed to me due to a lack of funds. Then miraculously, the church hired me as the Christian education director. I had experience with adult and high school Bible studies, but not so much with children. This was so challenging! However, God gave me some great ideas and people to help implement them. It

was an exciting adventure with the Lord!

I had such a good time; I changed how I interpreted my call and now looked to raising up others to go instead of going myself. A year later, Ron Brown came as our missions speaker. At lunch, he asked me, “So what is God’s plan for missions in your life?” He got the extended version. As we stood to leave, the Holy Spirit spoke clearly, “I am sending you now!” I asked the Lord to give me one other confirmation to ensure I heard correctly. The following week He sent one of our Sunday school teachers, Barry, to the church to tell me God had spoken and I should obey.

“So what is God’s  
plan for missions  
in your life?”

I knew I needed not only four years of Bible school but at least one year of seminary to meet the C&MA requirements. I applied at the seminary, and they accepted me as a mature student. Arnold Cook wanted me to do a three-year Master of Divinity, so at thirty-five years of age with no high school diploma, I arrived at Canadian Theological Seminary (CTS) in Regina to begin a Master’s Program. To say the coursework was challenging would be an understatement. The Holy Spirit guided me in every assignment and paper I had to write, and, in the end, I graduated in the top half of my class! This was not done in my own strength, something I could always sense.

## **Burkina Faso, West Africa**

In my final year at CTS, I was assigned to go to Burkina Faso, West Africa, and left for Quebec to complete one year of French language study in January 1995. I arrived in Burkina in January 1996. The mission was not ready to give me a people group or a language to learn yet, so I was assigned to teach three classes at the Burkina Faso Alliance Bible School in Bobo Dioulasso—in French!

One year of study did not leave me with this level of language competence, but with help from many others, we got the course together and began. Thankfully, my first-year students also had twenty hours of French classes weekly, so their level of French was not very high either. Really, we were at the same level. It was challenging, and the Lord helped me teach in a foreign language each day.

Additionally, I was not yet assigned to a people group or to learn a local language. I was concerned about my age—already early forties—and learning was not getting easier with age. I knew I needed to remain patient, seeking the Lord for daily contentment. My desire was to get into ministry again. Three years of theological studies, one year of the French language, and now waiting again for

my “assignment” in Burkina.

In these challenging days of waiting, I was so thankful for dusty bookshelves. They were dusty because we were living on the edge of the desert. Missionaries do not throw things out. You never know when you will need something, and most items we had back in these days were sent over on a container because they were not locally available. While waiting in Burkina, I read every missionary biography I could get my hands on. It inspired me to know God does not waste any of our days. He will use them in His time, so patience was formed in me, and these biographies helped me see the larger picture.

## Mali, Africa

During my second year in Burkina, it was decided by the mission leadership I would join the Fulani team in Mali. So, in May 1997, the big truck was loaded. My German shepherd and Ron Brown (who was now our Canadian regional developer living in Ivory Coast) got into my miniature Suzuki Samari. We made the over 700-kilometre drive to a town called Severe, located on the edge of the desert north of the capital Bamako. It was over fifty degrees in the shade!



Fulani believers conference, Severe, Mali, 1999.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.



Colette visiting a Fulani village, 1999.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.

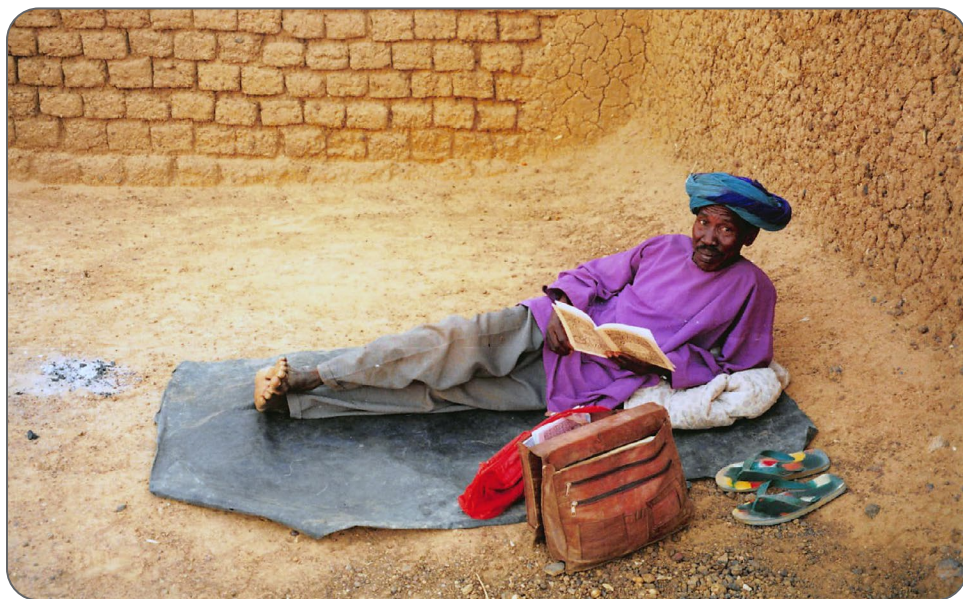
Finally, I was officially assigned to a people group and a language! Then I realized, *WOW! This language is tough*. But I loved the nomadic people I had been assigned to. I really loved going into the Savanna Desert to speak with the shepherds and sleep in their nomadic camps, learning their customs and language. It was like living in a *National Geographic* article. During language learning, I was not allowed to be officially assigned to a ministry. These years were a time of discovery and learning. In the process of learning, I visited the office of the Lutheran Mission in my town of Severe to get some language study books and hopefully some tips.

One day I met John McKinney, a former C&MA missionary who was

visiting from the United States. He had worked for over twenty-five years with the Dogon people, and in his last five years, worked with three Dogon pastors among the Fulani nomads. He told me there had been about eighty nomadic believers when he moved back to the USA ten years earlier for a home assignment. Unfortunately, he had not been able to return to Africa. The Lutheran missionary in the office had participated in many of their yearly conferences, but her mission was working in an entirely different part of the country, so she had no new information on them. John told me how to connect with Pastor Sangou, and I immediately decided to go to his village. This was exciting news! There were only a handful of known believers from all the mission work amongst the nomads, but there had been no missionaries assigned to this vast area for almost ten years.

I got to the pastor's village the following week. Through the translator, he said he would like to go visit the place where the believers had travelled. Would I want to go with him to look for them? YES!

Off we went into the desert in my little Samari. A few days later, I was sitting in a grass lean-to with six Fulani shepherds, the pastor, and a young interpreter. The interpreter said, "All these men are followers of Jesus, and they are listing the others who they know still follow." Twenty-six men were named. We organized a time to meet at a watering place for the cows. We met, and it was miraculous to see that they still named Jesus as Lord after all these years.



Dogon pastor, Fulani team in Mali, 1999. Courtesy Colette Baudais.

The mission thought a single woman could not work in the desert without a partner, and they did not have anyone available to work with me and the nomads, so it was decided I would go to Guinea and work there with the Fulani team. It was a hard pill to swallow, but I did. I did not want to leave these lost and now found believers without someone to help them grow in Christ. I knew the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) Mission in Mali worked among the nomads in the Delta region, so I invited them on a survey trip to the “Plains” and introduced them to the group of believers. They assigned two families to the work.

I went on home assignment and then to Guinea, not knowing what had happened to them. These were the days before email, the internet, and cell phones. Over twenty years later, I was on home assignment speaking in Beaverlodge, Alberta. After the service, a couple I sort of recognized approached me. It was Pat and Deb de Reutter, who had been assigned to the Fulani on the Plains! Now retired, they were living just thirty minutes north in Hythe. They briefly shared with me how the body of believers grew in the area. The Lord had given me a very, very special gift. He let me know the rest of the story, showing my years there had born fruit for the Kingdom.

## Guinea, Africa



Man with radio in Guinea.  
Courtesy Colette Baudais.

I arrived in Guinea in 2001. I would again be working with the Fulani, but there was a very different dialect to learn along with a very different culture. The Fulani in Guinea were not nomads. There I was at forty-five years of age in language study again, up-country in Labe. It was a challenge being patient for my assignment.

Ten years after being appointed, going to Bible school, learning two new languages, and moving to three countries, I still did not know what God’s assignment was for me. As I neared the end of my two-year language study in Labe, I still did not have a specific word from the Lord for an assignment.

## Radio Ministry

Another Mission had a recording studio which intrigued me as a possible ministry. Gospel recordings are very effective amongst illiterate people. I received



permission to visit Mali, Burkina, and Niger for a vision trip. God often speaks to me when I am in motion. My roommate Cheryl and I drove 6,500 kilometres, visiting many recording studios and radio stations. After six weeks, I returned with no word from the Lord.

Now I had finished language study and, in ten days, was scheduled to go on home assignment. In desperate prayer, I said, “Lord, I don’t want to be embarrassed in front of everyone at home saying I don’t know what You want me to do here. I’ll do anything You want—just ask.” The Word came as clear as a bell, “You do not have because you do not ask and when you do ask, you ask with wrong motives.” Well, what were the wrong motives? You see, I had so often come before the Lord with my list of conditions to His assignment; I wanted to live here, work like this, do this, not do that, etc. I repented and again said, “Lord, I will do whatever you ask.” He replied, “Ask me for a radio station, and I’ll give it to you.”

This was a bit of a step up from a recording studio, and Guinea did not give licenses to private radio at the time. I asked. The Lord said, “You need to move to the capital city because that is where you need to ask for the license.” Oh, how I did not like that city. Big, dirty, and dangerous. But I did not hesitate to say yes, and the adventure with God began. I did not even own a radio and only found out later the

day I had submitted to the Lord was the day the government announced they would grant private radio licenses.

I left for home assignment, and every day God gave me another sign the radio station was His assignment, and He would provide. The Lord had already prepared supporters. At Sherwood Park Alliance Church, God had a radio owner and promoter, Roger and Marj Charest, praying for me for the past three years. It turned out he could donate all of the equipment for the station and raise up people to come and build it! God had prepared people in every church who also believed in this assignment; I arrived back in Conakry after six months, ready to proceed with applying for the Guinean non-profit to be licensed and



Installing a radio antenna.  
Courtesy Colette Baudais.



obtain the community station license. God was so obviously making the way and opening the doors. The following year, in fall 2006, the container and twenty-six people arrived over the course of two months to build the Familia FM community radio station. We were on the air!

The government did not allow us to be a “Christian” station, but we were a community station that could put on Christian content. We resolved to be a station giving the people what they wanted to hear, news, interesting programs, and music, so they could listen to what they needed to hear, the Good News of the Kingdom. First, we had the Proverbs of Solomon each day. Then we added a gospel message from a pastor and other biblical programs a few at a time. We changed our name to Renaissance Fm in 2011.

In 2012 we began a call-in prayer program with a team of local believers. It is to this day our most popular program. We started with one day a week and shortly afterwards added another day. On average, we receive eighty-five calls a week, or 4,500 calls a year. People call non-stop. Each caller is followed up on, and literally, thousands have found Jesus through the prayer and healing programs.

It is easy to know how many people call, but not how many hear the calls broadcast. As our team went to people’s homes for face-to-face prayer, many people told us, “You are my church. I listen every week!” I love the Bible stories and the testimonies of people who have received from the Lord. Sometimes we



Radio program, 2019. Courtesy Colette Baudais.



Radio staff, 2008.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.



Spiritual clinic, 2017.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.



Colette with baby at the rescue centre, 2012.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.

find people in a church who say they gave their lives to Christ through our program, and God led them to the church. WOW, eh! Only in Heaven will we know the whole story of how many were impacted by this program and our praying team. But we know God is using this to bring all the language groups in Guinea into His Kingdom.

For two years, we rented a house and had a sign on the road leading people to the “Spiritual Clinic,” where callers to the program could come for face-to-face prayer. In these two years, we received more than 4,000 people at the clinic. Probably ninety-five percent were not followers of Jesus when they came, but many left as new creatures in Christ. We saw many healings and deliverances, with many people born into the Kingdom of God. After the clinic closed, we began accepting people into the radio station, which is now our “birthing room.” Home cells are formed, believers are baptized, believers are integrated into local churches, and the Kingdom of God is established in their lives.

### **Baby Rescue Centre**

After we had been broadcasting for eighteen months, a young woman with a two-week-old baby came to the station and said, “If someone does not take this baby from me right now, I am going to throw it away.” One of my female employees took the child and adopted it. This was so shocking to me,

and I began to be very interested in this huge problem. I am not very “motherly” and know nothing about babies, except they are adorable when they are not crying. However, I felt God asking me to help them, so only a few months later, we opened a centre for abandoned babies in the same building as the radio.



Staff and babies at rescue centre, 2011.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.

Over the next eight years, thirty-six families adopted babies from our centre. God used us to help with the process of creating new laws for child protection. Because of the exposure on the radio and through public events, we began to see other rescue centres and orphanages opened, to the point where we were not receiving any more infants. This work bore much fruit for the Kingdom, but God closed the door and the centre.



Baptism at local prison.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.

## Prison Ministry

In 2013, I awoke to the Scripture talking about when we visit someone in prison, it is like we are visiting Jesus there. In response, I took my assistant with me, and we found the local jail. Having never been inside a prison before, I had no idea what was going to confront us. I was certainly not prepared for a third-world jail!

Despite the circumstances, I felt so at peace being there; I know this was a God assignment. We began visiting the women every week. Then I brought another lady, and soon we had a vibrant team sharing Jesus with the women. We taught literacy for a time. We would always sing, pray, and testify to what Jesus had done in our lives.

One day someone showed me a



Baptism at local prison, 2018.

Courtesy Colette Baudais.





Prison hairdressing school graduation, 2016. Courtesy Colette Baudais.

chapel built inside the walls, and we could use it for a church service, so I recruited a men's team and began weekly church services. The women and the men were not allowed to mix.

I knew our once-a-week visits for the women were not enough. Our team wanted a tangible way to show Christ's love to the ladies. I built a metal container just outside the women's cell to house a four-day-a-week hairdressing school. After four years, it became a sewing school.

Our men's team had the blessing of hosting the very first baptisms in prison. Twenty-nine men were baptized. Working in prison is so challenging but also so rewarding and profitable for the Kingdom. It is hard to see the suffering and injustices, but there is no other church I would rather be in when we worship on Tuesday. They sing and pray with all their hearts.

## Conclusion

I can honestly say every project God has asked me to begin has been in an area I had no experience in beforehand, no real training for, and nothing I could ever do singlehanded. I always need others to make this work! He has raised up gifted, trained, and experienced people, and we work alongside each other. When God asks me to do something new, even though I may not have

the experience, training, etc., I know I can do it because He asked me to do it. He would not ask me to do something if He thought I would never get His job done. He has asked me to do challenging things. Some things took years to bear any fruit. God has never expected me to be perfect at anything either. He usually

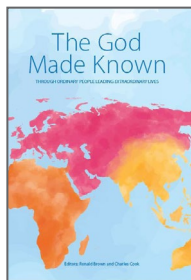
only gives me the light of a flashlight, not a spotlight; just walk in the light you have, and the light will keep you on the path.

For every project God has asked me to steward, He has provided others with a like vision to support and be involved. This is the family at work, and it is a wonderful family we belong to. It's really all about Jesus and giving Him all the glory!



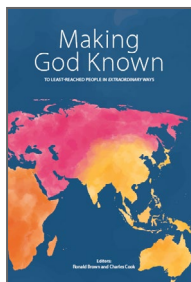
Colette Baudais. Courtesy Ron Brown.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Dan Ibsen has written “Guinea: C&MA Ministry, Conception Through Maturity,” as Chapter 1 in the book. Chapter 4 is “Gabon: Three Aspects of Missionary Work,” by Laurie McLean.



***Making God Known: To Least-Reached Peoples in Extraordinary Ways***, edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Lois Grant’s “Facing Risk,” is chapter 16.

## Chapter 7

### Progress at Turtle Speed: Kay Thompson

by Kay Thompson

#### The Early Years

##### Hessett Farm - Three Miles West, One Mile South

The gate in the barbed wire fence was open, and the empty hayrack was hitched to a stomping, very impatient team of horses. The driver jumped aboard in time to grab the reins while two seven-year-olds watching in excitement begged, "Can we come?" The answer was a swift and emphatic, "No!" Knowing a runaway was imminent and almost unavoidable, the team was steered directly towards a willow-woven binder shed a hundred yards away. The result? Two horsehead-shaped holes in the fragile shed and two subdued, stunned animals.

This happened at Hessett farm, fondly named after a spot in England. The hayrack driver was my Dad, and the seven-year-olds were my twin sister, Marion, and me. Here on Hessett Farm, west of Lloydminster, my life began. At the time, my mother was gravely ill in the hospital, and Grandpa Thompson, a baker from England, lived with us. Times were tough, but for the most part, my twin and I were blissfully unaware of it. We had enough to eat, a wholesome farm life, were taught to say *please* and *thank you*, and had the Bible read to us. Honesty was expected. We even said a mealtime grace, but one which came after the meal. For us, it went speedily like this, "Thank God for my good dinner. Amen. May I go, please?"

##### School Days – In one Room

For eight years, we had the fun of attending a one-room school, Westminster Park, located a mile and a half from our farm on Highway 16. On winter mornings, we walked there on a hard-crusted, three-foot layer of snow and came home in the afternoon on skis we had carried with us in the morning. Spring and Fall were more manageable because we rode our pony to school.

Our mother passed away in 1938. Seven years later, while we were still living on the farm, Dad married Elizabeth Payne, one of our housekeepers who had cared for us. After his marriage, there were many changes in our lives, but we



had always understood we would finish high school after grade school. The farm was sold, and our family moved to Lloydminster. One of my high school memories involves a grade nine French class. It was not at all to my liking, so I gave it up, a decision I later came to regret.

### **Saskatoon, Lamont, and a Thailand Connection**

It was decided Marion and I would do well during high school if we went our separate ways for a time. Marion went to stay with relatives in Surrey, BC, and I went to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It was, as one could imagine, a real learning curve for both of us. I took grades ten and eleven at Saskatoon's City Park Collegiate. Between the two years, I worked at the hospital in Lamont, Alberta, scrubbing stairs, mending hospital linens, and cleaning the nursing director's private room.

Fortunately, I was in Lamont while Paul and Priscilla Johnson were at the local Alliance church, doing home service, before going to Thailand as overseas workers. They were a delightful couple and a real blessing to me. Later, while in Thailand, they were shot, and their three children were orphaned<sup>1</sup>.

### **Prairie High**

Our stepmother was a godly woman, and mainly due to her influence Marion and I went to Prairie Bible Institute. We found Prairie to be neither dull nor suffocating. There were about one thousand students at the time, and I found the courses and programs to be very beneficial. It was there I prayed with Mrs. Waldock, one of the faculty, and became a child of God. At Prairie, I also learned the value of quiet time with the Lord first thing in the morning, developing this discipline as a lifelong habit. Great emphasis was placed on the Scripture, and I remember having a metal ring with Bible verses attached for easy carrying and memorization.

My sister and I both finished high school there and also took two years of Bible college. Then, due to financial restraints, we returned to Salmon Arm, BC, where our folks were then residing. In Salmon Arm, we both took hospital jobs, but Marion eventually became a legal secretary, working in Salmon Arm, Vernon, and Calgary.

### **White Uniforms and Caps with a Black Band**

Nurse's training was on my radar, becoming a reality when I completed the three-year nursing program at the Yorkton General Hospital in Saskatchewan. Naturally, after those years of sparse finances, a position with a good salary was necessary, so I found myself at the Vernon Jubilee Hospital, where I worked on the surgical floor for two years. At the time, Roy and Connie Batchelor were planting

---

<sup>1</sup> Their story is written in the Jaffray Collection, *Please Leave Your Shoes at the Door*

the Vernon Alliance Church. My sister, a nurse friend, and I were part of the church youth group and profited so much from the Batchelor's godly influence. It was a delightful and satisfying time of my life at the church and at the hospital, but I became restless. I felt spending the rest of my life making money, buying all the stuff I wanted, and just enjoying life would be a worthless way to live.

## **CBC Two Years and a Dilemma**

I went on a bus vacation to Washington State and did much thinking on the way home. I decided to hand in my resignation at the hospital, giving the required one-month notice and applying to Canadian Bible College (CBC). It was late in the Fall, and college should have begun, but 1956 was the year CBC in Regina moved to a new campus, and the building was delayed a month. I was accepted and got there right on time.

CBC was wonderful for me. Rev. W.M. McArthur was president, and Rev. M. Downey and Rev. A. Martin were on faculty along with Rev. K. Kincheloe, his wife, and Miss Lone Anderson. What a group of educated and dedicated leaders they were! We students could not help being influenced for the good. I was given a year's credit for my studies at Prairie, so I graduated in 1958 after two years of study.

During those CBC years, great emphasis was placed on overseas ministry, but I felt much too inadequate for that. However, the Lord used various ways to point in that direction. One day, on the way out of chapel, I met Rev. Martin at the door. He made just one statement, and it stuck! "It would be nice if some of our nurses got to the mission field."

Despite the clear statement, I found myself uncertain of what to do next. During the summer, I worked at three summer camps, Whitewood Beach, Crowsnest, and Echo Lake in the Qu'appelle Valley, but still lacked direction for the future. I then worked nine months at the Indian Hospital (now the All Nations Healing Hospital) in Fort Qu'appelle during the same period when Dr. Arnold and Marylou Cook started the Alliance church there. My friend, Adeline Mohninger (nee Yuzek), worked at the same hospital, and we were able to give some support to the Cooks.

I had heard about the beautiful Peace River country for some time, so I applied for a job at the Grand Prairie hospital and was accepted but found myself without peace. "Okay, Lord," I said and cancelled my application for the Grand Prairie job and applied to New York Alliance Headquarters for overseas ministry. As a result of this decision, I felt I was going in the right direction for the first time in months.

## **A Bouquet of Glads**

Once I started the application process for overseas ministry, an interview with Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) authorities was mandatory. The week it was scheduled in Regina, there was a special train fare, so transportation from Vernon was easy. When I arrived, Rev. Downey was at the station to meet someone else, so I immediately got a ride to the college.

If you can imagine, a room was offered with Dr. and Marylou Cook in the men's dorm! It was all very proper since the Cooks had a private suite due to Dr. Cook's position as dean of men. Mid-morning the next day, I faced Dr. L.L. King and Rev. Alvin Martin. They asked the inevitable questions; how would you react if your housemate left shoes in the middle of the floor day after day? Who wrote the book of Acts? What about boyfriends? My reply to the latter question was, "I guess I didn't love any of them."

Shortly after my return to Vernon, application papers for overseas service arrived. I sat for hours answering pages and pages of questions. Some left me amused like this one, "what would you rather do, design a birdhouse, calculate the cost of building a birdhouse, or build a birdhouse?" For me, it was definitely the latter.

After completing the whole bundle and applying open (I did not state a preference to be sent to any particular place), I sent the application off to New York. Not long after, I received my acceptance as an international worker in Mali, West Africa.

Mali! Where would Mali be? Yes, it is the Mali of 2013 headlines, but it was pretty much unknown in 1960 even though many people had heard of Timbuktu. Many might have thought Timbuktu was a fictional location, but it is an actual town located in Mali.

I left for New York in 1960, where I met the Loyal Bowmans, Roy and Cathy Solvig, and Arlene Miller, all headed for Africa. We left New York harbour for a beautiful six-day cruise on the *New Amsterdam*. Our destination was Harve, France. One very happy incident occurred just before leaving New York harbour. A steward came to my stateroom and set down on the floor a vase containing a huge bouquet of gladioli, saying, "These are for you." They were from the alumni of my nursing school in Yorkton, Saskatchewan!

## **On Missionary Service**

### **Calvin's Cathedral and The Salvation Army**

Our plans were to study French in Paris but, since Mali had just become

independent from France, it seemed wise for us to be sent instead to Switzerland. We settled in beautiful Geneva, studying at the Shultz School of Languages, the University of Geneva, and Berlitz language school. This was the time I wished I had stuck with high school French! I stayed for half the year at The Salvation Army guesthouse overlooking Lac Geneve, right next door to Calvin's Cathedral. My roommate was Corinne Horn, who had flown to France to meet us. After six months, wanting to improve our French ability, we arranged to stay with local families. I was in the delightful home of the Barbey's whose grown daughter was no longer at home, so I took her place and her room while being duly spoiled with cookies and language encouragement.

### **Mamou, Driver Ants, and Measles**

Africa! My first stop was a year at the missionary kid school at Mamou, Guinea, where I was the school nurse. It was a beautiful setting with mango trees, palm trees, and delightful kids. Two things stand out in my mind from those days at Mamou. Shortly after my arrival, I went on a hike with some of the children into the surrounding hills, and we ran into driver ants, a truly electrifying experience. The second significant event was a measles epidemic where I saw wave after wave of kids become incredibly ill with high fevers. This was an era of no immunization and no e-mail; some parents were about a thousand miles away. The Lord was good, and no child died. Rosalys Tyler and Prudence Gerber cared for patients in the daytime, and I worked nights. After this detour year, I flew to Mali, my intended destination.

### **The Inbetweens**

Every four years was a home assignment. On my first furlough, I took midwifery at the University of Edmonton, and on ensuing furloughs, I worked several months at various hospitals to keep my nursing current.

Home assignments also afforded much travel. I went on tour in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Washington State, Canada's B.C. lower mainland, and up and down in Alberta.

Back in Mali, my terms were varied. One year I was the school nurse at Ivory Coast Academy, and several years I was stationed at the men and women's Bible School at N'torosso. There was a stint at Yorosso, working with the Larry Wrights, whose ministry I greatly admired. During that time, I drove up to women's conferences in the Sangha district towards the Sahara Desert and Timbuktu. Sun, sand and scorpions; it was a wonderful experience.



Kay enjoying a cuddle with a puppy.

Courtesy Kay Thompson.



Mali hospital. Courtesy NMC.

## Mali, Mangoes, and Migraines

The teen girls' school in Baramba was my first station in the country of Mali. Constructed of mud brick, my house was comfortable, and the surrounding trees yielded up an abundance of tropical fruit like mangoes, papaya, guavas, limes, lemons, and grapefruit. At Baramba, I was immediately thrown into the medical scene when a woman at the front fence held a convulsing baby in her arms, something I had never seen before. Besides medical and maternity concerns, however, language study, six hours a day, was required.

Some medical situations were very frustrating such as the night a man on a motorbike drove up to my north window. He was so anxious he left the motor running. "If you would just turn that motor off," I shouted, "I could hear you." He turned it off and told me his wife, from a village eight kilometres

distant, was hemorrhaging. I knew her story but had not seen her myself. She had hepatitis and recently had delivered a stillborn baby at our mission clinic; the next day, she went home on the back of a bike.

I quickly got my trusty fishing tackle box with supplies and the car ready. The husband was in the passenger seat, and his friend was following us on the motorbike. I knew the road, but it was often hidden by hood-high grass. Suddenly I hit a foot-high stump on the right side of the road. The impact shot my passenger forward, and he hit the windshield (no seat belts in those days!). The windshield stayed intact, but the centre of the steering wheel flew out; the wipers went on, and the wheel jerked out of my hands, causing my arm to hit the door. The tire rim was bent enough to expose the inner tube, but the tire was not flat. I could not go on, so I gave them some oral meds and returned home. The woman passed away later in the town hospital, a sad ending indeed. Is it surprising, therefore I had migraines from time to time?

Fortunately, there were happy and rewarding times at the school. The girls were a delight to teach. Many were illiterate when they came, but they left after the first year able to read. Each girl had her own Bible, and following three years, she knew much of the Bible and math, geography, and knitting skills. Some of these girls became leaders in Mali's women's ministries.

## **N'torosso**

I have no idea where the name of the village N'torosso originated; a loose translation would be "my trouble home." The meaning had no connection with what N'torosso meant to those of us who lived there, including those in the men's Bible school. At N'torosso, I spent several terms involved in teaching, classroom, and district church work, along with much medical, clinic, and maternity involvement. During this time, Joan Sylvester (nee Foster) and I did a series of women's classes in district towns, ending up with parties, headscarf gifts, and coffee served with milk and much sugar.

## **The Bako Era – Enter Doris**

Doris Bruckner was one of the teachers at the N'torosso school previously mentioned. She hailed from France, was fluent in English, German, French, and Bambara, and was both a nurse and a visionary. She became curious about a part of Mali little known to us, a region between Mali's two big rivers, the Niger and a branch of it called the Bani. This region, Bako (Ba means river and ko means back of), is a fertile area with six hundred villages that are home to numerous ethnic groups, including the Fulani, Bobo, Bambara, Tureg, Dogon, etc. This Bako region was my destiny.

## **Mud and Mud**



Digging out the Toyota. Courtesy Kay Thompson.

You cannot travel or work in Bako without giving careful attention to roads. The wagon trails are winding and signless; in the rainy season, the Africans describe them as "mud and mud." When the roads are a foot deep in fine-as-flour dust in the dry season, they earn the label "graves."

Our first forage into the area was an eye-opener. Women and children had never seen white people before,



so they were terrified. They would drop their loads, scream, and run. Over the months, they came to understand we had come to help. When Doris and I, and other teams with Africans and two other nurses, Veronika Volland and Gabi Wolterstorff, visited villages, we were greeted warmly.

Eventually, a mud-brick house and dispensary were built at Kalan, where Pierre Dembele and another gifted nurse, Olive Gifford, took care of the medical work. I was on home assignment at the time. Bob and Myrtle Overstreet also built a house and station at Katiena in 1983-84. Daniel Thera, a Malian lawyer and military officer who loved the Lord, was a tremendous help in getting the land. What a time it was!

### **A Team in Trouble**

One day the Overstreets and I were at N'torosso on business. Our friend, Joan, the nurse there, cared for a newborn baby whose mother had died. A couple in Bako wanted to adopt the baby, so we left for Bako in two vehicles, a Toyota truck and Joan's smaller Peugeot. Shortly after leaving the main paved road, the truck went down in the mud. All winching, digging, and pushing failed, and so did the battery! What to do now? Remember, we had a baby on board. Finally, the decision was made; Bob and Joan, with the baby, left in the smaller vehicle to get to Kalan, home of the future parents. They then continued on to Katiena for jumper cables and African help. It was dark by then, and they had fifty kilometres to go.

Meanwhile, Myrtle and I stayed with the truck. We knew we would be waiting a while, maybe overnight! I planned to sleep on the baggage rack on top of the car, and Myrtle was going to sleep in the front seat, but first, we needed a cup of coffee. We did not have a thermos, but there was a dead tree close by being burnt for charcoal. We confiscated a few nice coals, set our tin can of water on it, and enjoyed our Nescafe!

I was about to climb up to my perch when lights appeared on the horizon; our travellers were back. The truck was excavated, and we were on our way, but about an hour down the road, the truck decided it had had enough; abruptly, the engine died. The rest of the night the Africans were lying on a tarp and blanket on the ground. Joan and I were in her car and the Overstreets in theirs. We dozed and dodged mosquitoes. At daylight, Bob repaired the problem. Bless the Lord for good mechanics!

### **Progress at Turtle Speed**

Famorila, a market crossroads, was pinpointed as a good location for a mission station. A storage building went up first; it would also be used for a dispensary.

Water was a must, so a well was hand-dug. Then a clinic building was erected with much African help. It became my first residence before being used for treating patients. My living room was the consultation room, and my bedroom was the future pharmacy.

As soon as possible, I moved to the almost completed duplex, only to move back to the secure clinic building after finding my curtains blowing parallel to the ceiling in a storm and water pouring onto my dresser from the unfinished windows. I was by this time quite adept at moving since I had done so nearly a dozen times throughout my career.

I like setting up a house, so moving was not too onerous, just lots of work! Doris, bless her, made arrangements for a new deep well to be drilled at the station. We had clear, pure, and soft water in abundance and indoor plumbing in the clinic and house.



Mali village. Courtesy NMC.

### ***JESUS* Film on Mud Walls**

Gradually work was established for the Kingdom. My good German nurse friend, Veronika Volland, came to Bako and settled into the other half of the duplex. What a treat to have another nurse close by. Besides caring for numerous patients (on market days, we could treat over one hundred patients), we did prenatal checks and immunizations. By this time, three male nurses had joined us and were living with their families adjacent to the station.

We could not forget surrounding villages which had no knowledge of Jesus. Teams were organized, and visits were made with African pastors, clinic nurses, medicines, and the *JESUS* film. The latter was projected onto a smooth mud wall in the town centre. I



Driving the Toyota through the mud.  
Courtesy Kay Thompson.



Mother with her newborn. Courtesy NMC.

had the fun of running the projector and driving the 4 x 4 Toyota truck.

Katiena station, with the Overstreets' ministry expertise, was the logical location for numerous camps for kids, youth, and women. To this day, Myrtle and I laugh at our experiment with dish soap, blowing bubbles in their living room in preparation for the kids' participation. They loved camp and were taught how to wash hands and have hearts made clean by Jesus' forgiveness. Many children responded to the Gospel.

Teaching the Good News, literacy, health, and the Ten Commandments was our challenge and our privilege.

## The Ongoing Saga



Mali's women's and children's hospital.

Courtesy NMC.

Three young men went to Bible school and three teen girls to the girls' school at Baramba. Male nurses had further education, and some learned to drive the clinic ambulances, which were really just Toyota trucks. Churches, where our African colleagues did the preaching and teaching, were built at five different locations. A beautiful maternity

building was created thanks to the vision of nurse Olive Gifford and her parents, along with lots of African labour. There was no more need to deliver babies in cornfields, bathhouses, and amid wagons on market day! This maternity facility is still staffed by African midwives who have had government training. In 2013, Bako had five medical clinics, not just one.

## Calgary, Canada, and a Twin Sister

At the beginning of my foray into international work, I had a special verse, Psalm 121:8 (NKJV), “The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth and even forevermore.”<sup>2</sup> He has done just that in all the numerous

comings and goings of thirty-four years; He continues to be faithful to His Word.

I finished overseas service in 1993 and came home to live in a comfortable condo with my sister—my dedicated assistant all these years, taking care of letters, income tax, driver’s permits, my nursing registration, and giving financial support as well. My hat is off to all the parents, brothers, sisters, and families of international workers. They don’t get much acclaim but will surely share the reward.

One other wee detail, did you wonder what happened to the travelling baby we took from N’torosso to Bako? He grew up and recently got married!

Adapted from a biography written in 2013

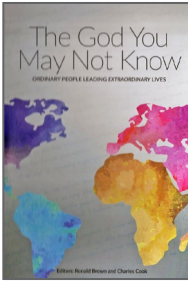


Kay and Marion’s 90th birthday, 2019, with Joan Sylvester. Courtesy Joan Sylvester.

Editor’s Note: Kay lived in Calgary with her twin sister Marion and was an active member of First Alliance Church. Marion passed away on March 10, 2021.

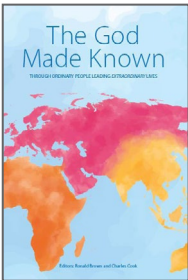
<sup>2</sup> Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 15 entitled, “Ruth Stanley: Leaning on His Word,” was written by Ruth Stanley.



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 13 is entitled, “E. Joan (Foster) Sylvester: Caring for Bodies and Souls.” Eric Persson’s Chapter 15 is “Eric and Gwen Persson: Fruit That Will Last.”

## Chapter 8

### Watching God at Work: Gerald and Dorothy Hogenbirk

by Gerald Hogenbirk

#### Ministry in Africa

##### An Inconvenience Becomes an Opportunity

It was the year 1987. Dorothy and I had been in Dimbokro, Côte d'Ivoire for two years learning the Baoule language and a unique dialect of West African French. The Sunday before, I had gone to a village with four other young men to preach in five of the thirty-eight churches in the surrounding district. Monday was finally a day to relax. It was the beginning of February with the hot, dry, dusty, Harmattan season, and we looked forward to the rest. Our house-help, a wonderful man with ten young children, came to our home at eight in the morning. After the usual greetings, there seemed to be an urgency in his heart. "You have to come to my village, Kokokro; there is a young man who is very sick!" I thought to myself, *Yes, there are many sick people, but this is my day off.*

I hummed and hawed but whispered a prayer to our Lord, "Lord, give me strength." As we headed down the road, I was reminded there were hardly any followers of Christ in Kokokro except our house-help. We turned down the dusty road toward the village with clouds of red dirt billowing behind our Nissan Bluebird. There in the distance were the thatched-roofed mud huts; a few huts had tin pan roofs and cinder block walls. During our approach, we saw a group of people huddled under a grove of mango trees. Upon seeing us, several kids sprinted toward our car with concern and fear etched in their faces. Many explanations were given, "He ate the wrong food that the spirits forbade!"

Walking toward the group of people, we noticed a young man in his early twenties laying on mats on the ground. His eyes had a glazed stare. After inquiring, we found out he had been circumcised a few days prior, according to local custom, with a straight unsterile razor blade; now tetanus had set in. I asked, "Didn't he get a tetanus shot before this?" Shoulders were shrugged; a seemingly needless expense when you are just trying to survive on little food. I sighed a prayer of frustration, concern, and anguish, "O God, help!" Short



prayers are good. They picked up his rigid body; we opened the two back doors of our car and slid him in.

The motel-style building of the little hospital in Dimbokro had a line-up with dozens of people in the blistering heat, all waiting to be attended to by a single French doctor. We were called up. The doctor shook his head, "Not much hope here, but I'll do what I can." The life of the young man hung in the balance for weeks. Some days it looked hopeful, and others thought the time of his departure would be imminent. During this time, we, and other followers of Jesus, would come to sit and pray for him, telling him about the healing power of Jesus and the peace He gives if we turn to God with all our hearts and invite Him into our lives.

Just over a month later, early in the morning, there was a knock on the gated doors of our home, perched on the top of the Dimbokro hill. I peered out of the louvred window, wondering, *Who could that be?* There stood a good-looking young man calling the words, "*koko, koko,*" the Baoule call accompanied by clapped hands.

As I came out, I could not believe it, here he was! I invited him into our home, "Please sit down! Let me get you some water." He easily seated himself, and there was joy radiating from his eyes. A man made new. He said his health took a quick turn for the good but, more importantly, he had unbelievable peace and joy in his being because he asked Jesus to come into his life, forgive him, and spare his life.

I drove him back to his village, and the villagers came running with astonished looks, some uttering the words, "He lives!" We were ushered to see the chief of the village surrounded by his elders. Words of tender thanks and handshakes ensued. The young man joined us in saying, "Thank you, but Jesus did this in answer to the prayers of His people with the help of the physician."

"Please come back and tell us more."

Partway through March, we returned with a group of Christians from a Bible study we led studying the Christian family. Twelve people attended at first, and now over seventy came as they highly valued this biblical teaching. As we arrived in the dusty late-afternoon heat, two twenty-foot wooden poles were cut and planted in the ground, between which we tied a white king-sized bed sheet. A generator, projector, and sound system were set up; the atmosphere was electric. The young man was proudly there. Four reels of the *JESUS* film were to be shown. With a view of the glorious red sunset descending over the palm trees, in time to the rhythmic sounds of the African drums, the believers from the Bible study group started to sing the praises of Jesus.

Everyone from the village came out. Hundreds of people, men, women,



Dorothy with Ivory Coast friends. Courtesy Gerald Hogenbirk.

children, goats, sheep, dogs, and chickens, were drawn to this unusual event. The story of Jesus—how He came, loved people, helped, transformed, and healed—was presented. For over two hours, people stood transfixed as the *JESUS* film progressed. Tears rolled down the cheeks of many who watched the brutal crucifixion of our Lord as He gave His life for us, then cheers of rejoicing and wide-eyed wonder as He rose from the dead.

The invitation to come to Jesus was given, to receive healing, forgiveness, hope, and freedom from fear. Dozens of people came forward to be prayed for. This new group of believers were so excited they said, “We have to build a church in our village!”

Permission and free land were given by the village chief, who had previously wanted nothing to do with Christianity. They had seen the power of Christ in this young man’s life. We will never forget the Christmas our three sons, and we celebrated with one hundred and twenty-six people in a new church with wooden stick walls and a tin pan roof, decorated with bright red flamboyant flowers.

What seemed to be an inconvenience was a God-transforming opportunity. We saw this type of thing happen multiple times during our twelve years and saw

twenty-three churches of various sizes in different villages and cities established. Our God is a miracle-working God.

### **Protected by God**

Learning a new language, ways of cooking new food, getting to know people in the church and neighbourhood, caring for two small children, and delivering a third son in a mission hospital kept Dorothy's days filled. The incredible privilege to do manuscript typing for the Baoule Old Testament was another highlight which filled siesta time while the rest of the family was napping. Evening rest was most welcomed.

As we prepared for bed one evening, fear gripped our hearts as we listened to panicked yelling, "Thief, thief!!" Then we heard the incessant clanging of a machete on the metal barred windows of our neighbour's house across the street. The engulfing darkness enlivened the stories we had recently heard about armed robbers terrorizing people in their homes. There were no streetlights along our usually quiet and sparsely populated, gravel road, and we could see little outside in the darkness. We were foreigners getting used to a new country, language, and culture with no telephone or way of communicating with others. What could we do?

Turning to God in prayer, some of the fear subsided. Then we started to sing songs of praise to God. Afterwards, an overwhelming sense of peace and calm invaded the fear and darkness. The shouting and banging stopped, and we were able to sleep. The next morning, we woke to find danger had indeed been right outside our door, but God had protected us. We learned in a new way, not only the power of prayer but also the power of praise not just in the physical but also in the spiritual realm.

### **Prison Ministry**

It was a pleasant afternoon during the rainy season. Everything was green, and the sun had just come out. I decided to walk to the church in the centre of town to visit with the senior pastor and catechist with whom we worked. The church in town had over eight hundred members. I was thinking about the request from the youth group and pastor to visit a village to bury one of the Christians. My eyes glanced to the left as I walked down the hill from our home. There stood a grey seventy-metre square cement building with no windows and one metal door I had often seen. It was the notorious regional prison with approximately three hundred and fifty prisoners crammed into this dismal space. It was a place I would rather not go, and it was not part of my job description. Fear of the unknown

gripped my heart. There was a deep impression from the voice of God, “I want you to go there.”

After the meeting in town, I returned home, wrestling in my heart, should I go or not? I came up with a whole load of reasons why not. My Mother in Arnhem, Holland, had lived right near the ‘bridge too far’ during the war and wanted to be a missionary. Because of the war, she could not go, but she prayed, if she would ever have a son, he would go.

My Father, from Harlem, Holland, and mother immigrated to Montreal, Canada, in 1952, just after their marriage, leaving family and home behind. They faithfully took me to church, but I did not find much joy, purpose, or meaning in my life. I had just turned sixteen when Billy Graham’s message came through the little black and white TV. *This is the last thing I want to hear*, I thought to myself. He spoke of a holy God, who gave His Son, who loves us and gave His life, so we could have life. I went up to my bedroom, and for the first time, I prayed. Joy, forgiveness, peace, and His presence overwhelmed me. A deep impression came; *You need to tell others about Me*.

Delivering newspapers early the following day, I told my friend what had happened. He took it upon himself to tell the pastor’s wife. The pastor called and said, “Great! I’d like you to give your testimony to the youth group on Friday night.” To speak before more than two or three people terrified me! To hike up Mount Everest backwards would have been easier. I almost wanted to give up my newfound faith. A short prayer, “God, help me!” Once again, a deep impression came over me, *Don’t talk about yourself, tell people about Me and what I’ve done*. That has been the story of my life, going from incompetence to incompetence, but with enthusiasm and with God’s amazing help, as He is competent.

Jeremiah 1:5-10 are the words God gave my mother to pass on to me at my ordination: “‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’ ‘Alas, Sovereign Lord,’ I said, ‘I do not know how to speak’ ... ‘You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you’ ... ‘I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.’”

With these words echoing in my heart, I said, “Lord, I can’t, but you can.” As I approached the entrance to the prison, some of the guards jumped up with their rifles. “Who are you, and what do you want?”

I introduced myself as the pastor from the Protestant church, coming to see how we could help the prisoners. They laughed. “Protestant minister, what are

you protesting about today?"

After a lengthy discussion, they ushered me in to see the warden. He was kind but said, "You're wasting your time with these guys." Some were in for theft, murder, or corruption. Then he said, "Sure, you can come every other Saturday morning at 6:00 a.m. for one hour." I could hardly contain my excitement!

With a couple of young men from our youth group carrying drums and a few Gospels of John, we arrived as the sun began to show its first rays of light. The metal door creaked open and slammed shut behind us. They marched us to the congregating area for the six sub-court yards. A thick metal chain and the massive lock fell to the ground as they opened the second barred gate. Guards with rubber truncheons pointed to the meeting room. I said, "You're coming too." They replied, "No," and proceeded to lock the gate behind us.

The word was out; anyone who wanted to hear something about God could come. Courtyard gates were opened, and about seventy-five men and boys shuffled in with their tattered T-shirts, shorts, and flip-flops. There were no benches or roof; you could see the early morning blue sky with a little bird perched on the top of the soaring walls. With melancholy, hopeless eyes and drooping heads and shoulders, the men clustered around. Many were scratching with scabies; some were coughing with tuberculosis. They said a couple of bodies had been taken out the night before, afflicted with AIDS and unceremoniously buried.

The three of us started to sing praises to God, joined by a few others from the group who seemed to know the songs. I thought, *Let me just tell them how Christ changed my life. The only difference between us is you were caught, and I was not.*

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

An invitation was given, and over twenty came forward for prayer. We handed out the Gospels of John and said, "If you memorize John 14, we will give you a New Testament when we return in two weeks." When we returned, the despondent look and atmosphere seemed to have lifted. I brought three New Testaments, but sixteen had memorized John 14! Every week they learned more songs of praise. They began growing, and as time went on, over one hundred and twenty made commitments to Christ.

The entire atmosphere of the prison changed. One civil servant shared, "I'd rather live in this hell-hole for the rest of my life and serve

"I'd rather live in this hell-hole for the rest of my life and serve the Lord than go back into the world and serve the Devil."

the Lord than go back into the world and serve the Devil.”

Four choirs were formed, singing in four-part harmony. One scrawny young man from Guinea prayed and fasted and said, “If I ever get out of here, I want to become an evangelist to my people group.”

Eventually, complete Bibles, theology books, and Christian literature were shared. We brought them food and personal toiletries; a couple of Catholic nurses joined us in helping with some of their medical needs. It became one of the greatest joys. They would sing and pray with more enthusiasm and gusto than I have ever seen. When we returned from home assignment in Canada, the warden said, “You and your team can come back at any time. This place has a completely different atmosphere.”

As the metal door clanged shut behind us, and I returned home on the dusty path, my heart was filled with ecstatic praise to God; His words ring in my ears to this day, “Take courage, it is I, don’t be afraid...Watch me do amazing things.”

### **Maranatha Bible School**



Dorothy at Maranatha Bible School, 1991.

Courtesy Gerald Hogenbirk.

We were finally becoming somewhat comfortable with our lives, languages, culture, and ministry when a request came for us to move to Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, the next country north. We were to teach about sixty students for fifteen hours a week from Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire at Maranatha Bible School. Dorothy could care for the office and finances, as well as our youngest son. Two of our sons were already at

International Christian Academy (ICA) boarding school in Bouake. Once again, a feeling of being overwhelmed flooded our hearts. We said yes.

A wonderful but hectic year was spent training leaders and preaching in the local churches. We loved the students’ passion, zeal, and love for the Lord. It went so well our colleagues in Côte d’Ivoire asked us to come back and help revamp the campus, curriculum, and church participation to support Yamoussoukro Bible School. Dorothy would teach English and music along with office duties. Hospitality and correspondence kept us connected to others. Through a lot of collective hard work, the student body grew from fifteen to over sixty students.

One of the great joys was the practical ministries with the students on



weekends. Outreach to villages and cities, teaching Bible classes in primary schools, wheelchair help for the handicapped, and other small business ventures provided great joy and impacted many people's lives. I thoroughly enjoyed running with the students and then praying together before classes began early in the morning. Time was spent researching property and being treasurer of the board of the West Africa Alliance Seminary (FATEAC), a graduate school to be established where trainers of trainers could be taught.

There was explosive church growth with over two thousand churches and many new pastors trained to give leadership in Côte d'Ivoire. They were doing well, and then came another request from our Mission leaders in Canada and the U.S. "We would seriously like you to consider leaving Africa in 1996 to redeploy to Central Europe as the team leader for our new work in Poland, Hungary and the Balkans."

With the fall of Communism, a brand-new world was erupting with many opportunities. We had come to know and love the people and the work in Africa. Why would we make yet another change? We sensed God saying, "Trust your leaders. I've used all these wonderful experiences of the past to prepare you for something new."

## Ministry in Europe

### In a War-Torn Land

In January 1997, we left our three sons at the Ivory Coast Academy boarding school. On a bright warm sunny day in Africa, with the wind rustling through the palm trees, we left Côte d'Ivoire and arrived in Budapest, Hungary, to freezing cold, grey, coal-saturated air filling our nostrils. Four days later, a new teammate and I headed by car to the war-torn country of Bosnia. Visas were not required—enter at your own risk. Crossing the border from Hungary into Croatia, there were tanks and military all around with clear instructions to avoid the mine scattered shoulders of the road, marked by yellow flags.

We drove to the Dalmatia coast, where the Apostle Paul had served the same Lord years before, then went up to Sarajevo and stayed in an apartment just off "Sniper Alley." The beautiful former host of the 1984 Winter Olympics was now covered in snow littered with bombed-out buildings and graves filling the Olympic Stadium and community parks.

As my colleague and I sat on our beds in a small apartment with no electricity or running water, wrapped in sleeping bags to keep warm, I could not help but think to myself, *A few days ago, I was eating ripe bananas from the tree, and now I'm eating frozen bananas in a dark and freezing place, far from my wife and children.*

Was it worth it? I did not know the language nor the cultures. We had heard there were very few committed followers of Jesus Christ in the entire country. Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians who had once lived peaceably together were now enemies. Loss, pain, poverty, destruction, hopelessness, and racial tensions marked the surrounding area.

We heard of a small group of young Christ-followers in the city of Mostar. The famed historical bridge had been blown apart. To cross over into different sectors was life-threatening. With a guide, we found this small group of forty or so young believers. Gathered on the first level of a house where the second story had been blown out by a mortar shell, they cautiously opened the door. When they heard we were followers of Christ, they warmly invited us in. To our surprise, there were Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians all together. Some young men who had been in the military were helping lead this small group.

When they heard I was a pastor, they asked me to speak, so I spoke on the extremes of John 3:16. The presence of God was there in a powerful way, and the palpable joy as they worshiped Christ was phenomenal. Then they started to say, “We need to go to this city and that city and tell them about this wonderful news of Jesus. Let’s set up an aid group (Agape) to meet peoples’ desperate needs.



Gerald speaking at the Holland Chinese Church, with Ann Louie translating.  
Courtesy Gerald Hogenbirk.

Would you help us?" Wow! I knew now the transition was worth it.

What a joy to see fledgling groups develop in Poland, Hungary, and Serbia. They showed the love and compassion of Christ through humanitarian aid, refugee work, drug rehab, marriage enrichment, leadership, and church planting coalitions to impact the region of Central Europe for Christ. Groups of Christians who had not worked together in the past started to come together for this purpose.

A few months later, our leadership in Canada proposed a broader new role to become regional developers for our work in Europe, the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, and Central Asia, later named the Silk Road Region.

## Regional Developers



Gerald speaking with regional leaders, 2005.

Courtesy Gerald Hogenbirk.

Our family moved yet again, this time to southwest Germany. We were blessed to work with wonderful teams in nineteen countries for many years. Through the years, we were involved in ministries among multi-ethnic groups, establishing international churches of thousands of people. There was also medical work, marketplace mobilization, relief and development for marginalized people and workers, and collaboration with local believers

in Christ to do whatever they could to love people and see Christ lifted up. There is a myriad of equally fascinating God stories from each of the countries in the region.

## Back in Canada

Now, after forty years, we are back in Canada, and we reminisce. We are so thankful for a covenant-keeping God who has shaped us, formed us, loved us, and guided us on this fantastic journey. Who we are and what we have done was by the grace of God and the impact of other wonderful people in our lives.

We are so grateful for the privilege of being part of The Christian and Missionary Alliance family. We thank the Lord for Avenue Road/Bayview Glen church in Toronto, where Dorothy grew up and where we served and received support for decades and Surrey Alliance Church, where we did our home service for four years where they taught us and loved on us. We are grateful for Fairview Alliance Church in Montreal, where Gerald was nurtured after coming to Christ.

We are thankful for Ontario Bible College/Tyndale, where we both did undergraduate studies and Canadian Theological Seminary/Ambrose, where Gerald did graduate studies. To all the teachers, elders, church and denominational leaders and members, colleagues, friends, and even acquaintances, who helped shape our lives—a huge THANK YOU.

To our parents, siblings, and broader family members, we owe a debt of gratitude. To our three sons, Peter, Jonathan, and Timothy, who spent many years in boarding schools in Ivory Coast Academy, Africa and Black Forest Academy in Germany, our hearts cannot sufficiently express our great gratitude. We are so thankful for those who loved, cared for, and taught our sons when we could not be there. Thanks to our sons for always being up for another adventure, learning many cultures and skills, and appreciating people from all over the world. They were totally part of our team, and without their enthusiastic support, we could not have carried on.



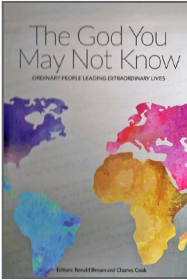
Gerald and Dorothy's 40th Anniversary, 2017.  
Courtesy Gerald Hogenbirk.

So now, the best is yet to come, the rest of life, for which the first was made. What a joy to return to the Greater Toronto Area, connecting with so many churches and fellowships from various ethnic groups. Geography is not the determining factor to the vocational calling.

Being involved with the Power Team/C&MA alumni to encourage each other to live lives filled with heroic virtues and deeds for the good of people and the glory of God gives us joy and fulfillment. Connecting with neighbours and people from our fitness centre has helped us fit into our community.

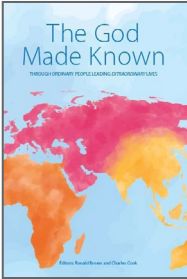
We are so thankful for the past, content for today, and anticipating all God has for the future. It is great to continue to live with one foot raised, learning new ways to love God and people.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 1, “Congo: From Strength to Strength,” was written by Ray Downey.



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 3, entitled “Ivory Coast: Where Have You Been?” was written by Tim Tjosvold. Jess Jespersen shares his story in Chapter 18, “Jess and Anne Jespersen: How We Learned to Depend on God.”

## Chapter 9

### Good News to the Diaspora: Jonathan and Ruth Teo

by Jonathan and Ruth Teo

A diaspora is a large group of people of similar heritage who have moved out to places worldwide. We got to experience firsthand how God touches the hearts of people dispersed in a foreign land.

#### Our Early Days

##### Ruth:

I had an unhappy childhood in Malaysia. I was unloved when I was young. My only wish was to run away from home. Death frightened me, and I thought no one would know I existed if I died. I longed to be remembered.

One day in junior high, I found a gospel leaflet on the ground where the very last page was an application form for a Bible correspondence course. Out of curiosity, I completed several of these courses. Through this, I gained basic knowledge of the Bible, but no one told me how to accept the Lord.

Five years later, while walking miserably down the street, I saw a sign outside a church that enticed me to join a worship meeting. The message preached there has been forgotten, but I do remember the tears would not stop rolling down my face. I knew I had found the answer I was looking for. At this point, I turned to the Lord and, in doing so, resolved three doubts continually plaguing me: I am loved by Christ, I don't have to prove myself to be recognized, and after death, there is eternal life.

I am a first-generation Christian in a family composed of atheists. From my experiences, it was obvious there is a strong contrast between life before and after Christ; it is the difference between darkness and light, living in sin and pursuing holiness, fear and trust, carrying my burdens and letting Jesus take them. I decided the most meaningful thing I could do with my life was help others believe in the Lord as early as possible so they could live a joyful life walking with Him. "Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days" (Psalm 90:14).



My family strongly opposed my belief in the Lord, but I chose to believe. After attending no more than five church services, I decided to study theology. I knew my family would stop me from going, so I signed up in secret. One day, when my family was out, I ran away from home and went to Singapore Bible College. I had made up my mind. I knew I had to decide my own path for life.

With only forty cents in my pocket, I arrived at the college; I had no idea how I would finish a four-year program. Through His provision, the God who sent the crow to supply Elijah with sustenance to survive provided unknown “crows” to meet all my needs. This is how I started to practice the lesson of faith. After graduation, I served full-time at the Singapore Life Church as an associate pastor for nine years. In His timing, my family members turned from atheism and came to the Lord one after the other, some of whom dedicated their lives to serve the Lord.

### **Jonathan:**

I also had an unhappy childhood where I ran away from home at the age of twelve. In Singapore, every eighteen-year-old male is required to serve in the National Service. I was not used to a life of military-level discipline and wanted to escape. Instead of going AWOL (absent without leave) and getting arrested, I found my only escape during the ten days of annual leave. Some Christian friends invited me to a gospel retreat, a foreign environment to me, where they called each other “brothers and sisters” and prayed for one another. It all seemed very strange to me.

I left before the end of the first day, having an idea of the God about whom they talked. I prayed this unknown God would find a way for me to get out of the Army while not expecting anything to happen. Back at the barracks, I discovered a new program posted to a notice board from the Ministry of Defence; it offered an opportunity to legally leave the National Service and apply for academic study. I applied for the program, was accepted, and was discharged by the tenth day of my annual leave! To my knowledge, this program had never been offered before, nor was it ever offered again. The God I had just learned about answered my prayer in a way I never expected, only nine days after I threw a prayer in the air. Two years into the program, I accepted the Lord. After graduating, I worked for three years in the same department, the Ministry of Defence, through which the Lord answered my original prayer.

After choosing to follow Jesus, I was excited to tell others about Him. I organized evangelistic meetings, joined short-term mission teams, and served in the church; still, I felt ill-equipped to lead these ministries. I know the Lord led me to my job at

the Ministry of Defence, but I felt a stronger urge to serve the Lord full time rather than remain in the position. During this time, my friend led me to Singapore Life Church, where I met my wife.

## **Our Journey in Canada**

Shortly after we got married and had two children, we moved to Regina, Saskatchewan, in central Canada, where summers can get hotter than forty degrees Celsius and winters can be colder than minus fifty degrees Celsius. This, coming from the island nation of Singapore, where temperatures sit between twenty-three and thirty-two degrees year-round, was a massive change.

The three years of studying at the Canadian Theological Seminary (currently called Ambrose University) was an unforgettable test of faith. At the time, we had a two-and-a-half-year-old son and an eight-month-old daughter. We had travelled across the ocean, from an oven to a freezer, to a place far from our relatives and friends. When we first arrived, we had only enough to cover basic living expenses for the first year, trusting the Lord would provide the rest. After three years of study, our bank account still held the same balance of exactly one year's worth of living expenses on the day I graduated. "Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?'" (John 11:40). We believed in God as our provider, and we saw His glory.

Before I graduated, we prayed to the Lord; if someone came knocking at our door and asked me to work at their church, this would be a sign God wanted us there. Sure enough, one day, a senior pastor of a Canadian Chinese church, Rev. Yeung, came and knocked at our door looking for a Mandarin pastor who could also communicate to their Cantonese and English congregation. Our mother church in Singapore also invited us to return to serve at our home church.

We chose the first option, staying to work in Canada. There were many Chinese students and visiting scholars coming to Canada, and many of them wanted to know more about the Gospel. However, an insufficient number of pastors could speak Mandarin; we would be uniquely positioned to reach out to these students and scholars entering the country. We felt evangelizing them was of great significance because of their impact on the Mandarin-speaking population growing in North America. We decided to become pioneers reaching out to them, and so, I became the associate pastor of the Mandarin congregation at Ottawa Chinese Alliance Church (OCAC).

Before going to Ottawa, I had a dream; I was riding on a golden horse; the horse went up to a mountain and then dropped dead. After our family arrived

in Ottawa, I realized we had bought a second-hand, golden-coloured car to drive from Regina to Ottawa. After we arrived, the car died by Parliament Hill. We knew this was where God wanted us to be.

After serving at OCAC for five years, and with the congregation's blessing, we planted the first Mandarin Alliance Church in Ottawa and I became the senior pastor of the church. We prayed God would raise up people among the congregation to go to full-time ministry, and He did! Ottawa Mandarin Alliance Church (OMAC) became our home for three years before we began working overseas.

While pastoring at OMAC, we saw joint church conferences and gospel camps for the Cantonese-speaking congregations in Ontario, but there were none for Mandarin. We gathered a group of young students to start planning. Ruth and I visited Mandarin churches in different cities around Ontario and asked church pastors and co-workers to encourage Mandarin-speaking brothers and sisters to participate.

Soon after, the first Ontario Alliance Mandarin Joint Gospel Camp was held. We asked God for sixty participants, and exactly sixty people signed up. Amazingly, because this was a gospel camp, half of the participants were non-believers; many of them came to the Lord through this camp and became church leaders themselves. After three years, the camp grew to four hundred attendees.

## Our Calling

In 1993 we went with a short-term mission team to China, where God brought us to a town with an ethnic minority population. We took a three-hour car ride to the bottom of a mountain, and, with the help of some locals, we climbed to our destination up a pathless slope. At times, a misstep would have certainly risked death down impossibly steep cliffs.

As we neared our destination, we noticed a lone, bare, tall tree towering near the peak. I curiously asked the brother who led the climb, "This tree looks unusual. Why is it there?"

He responded, "Over one hundred years ago, a western gospel messenger came here. In the beginning, no one believed in Christ, but later, village after village came to the Lord, and churches were established. This tree was planted so that people from all around would know the location of the church. This gospel messenger is buried here."

"This tree was planted so that people from all around would know the location of the church. This gospel messenger is buried here."

We can only cherish the memory of this pioneer who left his home country and came to these barren mountains, where even the Chinese were unwilling to venture. He came to spread the Gospel to people unrelated to him. We were moved by what we saw and heard and were in awe of the legacy he left behind. Standing below the tree, we prayed together, “Lord, we are willing. No matter where you send us, we are willing to go. No matter how remote, how dangerous a place may be, we will go. To the least-reached people, or to the most challenging circumstance, we will go. We have seen the example of this self-denying, courageous gospel messenger, and we are willing to do the same.”

Following the trip, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 rang in our hearts, “For Christ’s love compels us...that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” There is a saying, “Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” This lingering urge pushed us to leave our familiar environment and venture to an unknown future beyond the horizon.

## **Our Journey in Israel**

In God’s sovereignty, He was preparing our hearts simultaneously while five thousand construction workers from China were preparing to go to Israel. The Lord allowed us to journey with these lost sheep to the Great Shepherd to drink from His Living Waters.

When Israel was founded in 1948, millions of Jews returned from all over the world. Following the first Intifada (Israeli-Palestinian conflict) in 1993, Israel began to import many temporary foreign workers to replace its traditional Palestinian labour force.

It says in Isaiah 61:5: “Strangers will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.” Migrant workers came from all over the world. Filipinos came as caregivers, taking care of the elderly and providing domestic help for working families. Thais worked as agricultural workers; Romanians and Chinese workers built houses and worked on construction sites. Together they helped Israel develop and rebuild their homeland. While the incomes of these foreign workers were lower than a typical Israeli salary, it was still higher than in their home countries. Many workers borrowed money from their friends and relatives to come work in Israel. In some cases, these legal workers became undocumented workers for various reasons, leaving them in unfortunate and difficult situations.

## Ministry Among Chinese Construction Workers and Scholars



First prayer card photo, 1998.

Courtesy Jonathan Teo.



Jonathan sharing the Gospel.

Courtesy Jonathan Teo.

The Chinese ministry in Israel is nothing short of a miracle. In the years leading up to our arrival, a local elder, without knowing the thousands of Chinese that would come over the next few years, purchased ten thousand Chinese Bibles at a discount due to a wrong cover colour. God was preparing the way for us!

At the beginning of the ministry, finding the workers was like a treasure hunt. We would drive down the road searching for a “cross” (a construction crane) in the sky and would stop to ask if there were Chinese workers on site. If they were open to visitors, we would start a weekly Bible study with them. Our van was equipped like a mobile church, including Bibles, Christian literature, a projector, screen, and audio gear to show the *JESUS* film. We met in unconventional places such as unfinished construction sites, cafeterias, rented apartments, or even in their living quarters which were, in fact, converted shipping containers.

We visited sites every night of the week and all-day Saturday to reach as many workers as possible. They were starved for interaction; their hearts were of good soil, ready for the seeds of the Gospel. Thousands of them accepted the Lord in this challenging and lonely time of their lives, and over one thousand were baptized.

At the same time, there was also an influx of Chinese scholars who came to Israel with their families to pursue their studies and conduct research in Israeli universities. We rented a house near a prominent campus to be close to them. We would bag our lunches, join them in their cafeterias, or join in their activities like volleyball or soccer to reach out to them. As relationships grew, many came to study the Bible, and again, by God’s grace, many became believers and were baptized.



A home church is essential for all believers. It is a place for worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and mission. During the ministry, we planted two churches, one for the workers in Tel Aviv and one for the scholars near the university campus. These churches served as spiritual homes and community centres with a library where people could learn Hebrew, play ping-pong, discuss current affairs, sing karaoke, and of course, share a meal. It was a place to celebrate Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn festival, and other Christian and Jewish holidays. In Israel, Saturday is observed as the Sabbath, a day of rest in accordance with the fifth commandment. This regular practice gave the Chinese a chance to come to church consistently. After a few years, more than twenty thousand Chinese workers came to Israel. At one point, the Tel Aviv church held three services every Saturday with a total of around two hundred worshipers.

For many, it is only a dream to be baptized in the Jordan River, but we are so blessed it was a reality for us. With so many interesting biblical sites to visit, the chance to experience the Gospel was too good an opportunity to pass up. The baptism trips turned into Holy Land tours, including Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jericho, Jerusalem, and more. At its peak, we shuttled ten busloads of five hundred and forty people to tour around different holy sites, including



59 people were baptized in the Jordan River, 1999. Courtesy Jonathan Teo.



climbing Masada and floating in the Dead Sea. Everyone enjoyed the experience, and many of them came to the Lord having walked where Jesus walked.

Over the years, we collected four big storage boxes filled with the written life-changing testimonies of the baptized brothers and sisters. Workers and scholars came to Israel to earn money and do research; however, many said their most significant gain was accepting Jesus and being baptized in the Jordan River.

Chinese New Year was the best time to reach out to the Chinese, especially construction workers. It was during this holiday the workers missed their families most since they were alone in the country. We planned activities, games, skits, Kung Fu demonstrations, and shared the Gospel. This celebratory festival drew out thousands from every corner in Israel. In 2002, we hoped for one thousand people, and the Lord blessed us with over two thousand in attendance. Hundreds could not make it through the doors for lack of venue capacity and overflowed into the streets. In 2003, thirty-two hundred were in attendance, and over four hundred came to the Lord. A Jewish pastor noted it may be the largest evangelistic meeting in Israel after the Pentecost; never did he imagine it would be hosted by the Chinese.

We encouraged the believers who returned to China to keep in touch with each other so they could transition back home into a local church. Later on, we had the opportunity to go to China to visit with some of the brothers and sisters who became believers in Israel. It made us incredibly happy to see them and their families; many not only continued to follow the Lord but also led their entire families to Christ. Changed by the Gospel, they became better husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, and blessings to the local church. Some brothers created blogs to share the good news, others became full-time preachers, and others even built buildings as a meeting place for worship. In Israel, some brothers invited us to their living space in a shipping container and treated us to their afforded diet of five hard-boiled eggs. Out of gratitude for introducing them to the Lord, these same brothers insisted on putting us up in the five-star hotel when we visited them in China.

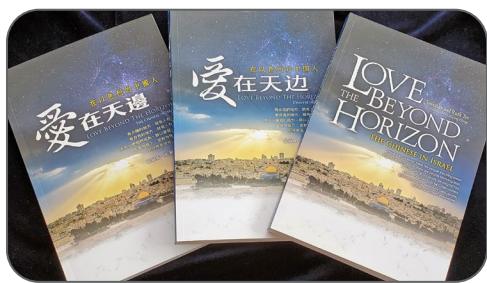
There's a saying, "Where the sun shines, there are Chinese people shedding sweat. Where the moon shines, there are Chinese people shedding tears." Among the migrant workers and the hard-working scholars, all of them had personal difficulties which they did not want to share with others. Our prayer, not only for the Chinese people, is "Where the sun shines, may there be messengers of the Gospel. Where the moon shines, may there be songs of praise." In journeying together through tears of loneliness, hardships, and the joy of salvation, many of us have become lifelong friends. Psalm 126:5 says, "Those who sow with tears

will reap with songs of joy.” The days in Israel have been a highlight for many of our lives.

Many short-term mission teams visited over the years. Their contributions of prayers, participation, and resources helped sustain the ministry over time; we are eternally grateful. After coming to minister alongside us, one brother donated one year’s worth of rent for the Tel Aviv church. One sister brought fabric from her home country to sew curtains for the church building. Another brother sent us eight thousand Christian music cassette tapes for distribution. Because of donations like this, we could distribute thousands of Bibles, music and preaching cassettes, and printed thousands of Bible study materials. Through all contributions, both large and small, the Lord blessed the ministry by bringing partners every step of the way.

## A Life in Ministry

As the ministry evolved, we had the opportunity to work and serve in three other countries along the Silk Road. In 2004, I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease. In 2012 we returned to Canada, where I underwent deep brain stimulation surgery. Following this operation, my voice became very soft, and I could no longer preach by 2016.



Jonathan and Ruth’s book in three languages.

Courtesy Jonathan Teo.

Despite my health situation, we continued to look for ways to serve. We started the Dedicator’s Fellowship, a fellowship to provide mentorship and encouragement to brothers and sisters seeking to dedicate themselves to serving God in full-time ministry. We organized an event known as the “Life Game” to raise up workers for the Kingdom. Our greatest joy is to see people coming to the Lord, growing in

the Lord, and serving Him in different ways. In 2017, we published a book called *“Love Beyond the Horizon: The Chinese in Israel”* where we talk about God’s work in the lives of Chinese in Israel.

We thank the brothers and sisters who continued to care for and pray for our children in our absence. Daniel (Grade eight) and Joyce (Grade six) attended a boarding school in Germany and returned to Canada for university while we were working overseas. Daniel, with his wife Emily and children Lucas and Madeleine,

and Joyce with her husband Andrew and children Hannah, Stephanie, and Benjamin, love and follow the Lord. We love all of them very much. May God continue to guide and protect them.

We thank God for His mercy and grace and praise Him for how He designed the Body of Christ to care for, pray over, and support His diaspora ministry. We are humbled God can use ordinary people from non-Christian backgrounds like us to be His servants. “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—” (John 15:16). God compelled our hearts to leave what was familiar and build a church in a far-away land where there was no church; we obeyed and went, and the rest is history. We are glad we went. Whether you work in full-time ministry or in the marketplace, listen to His whisper. When God calls you, step out of your comfort zone and go, your life will never be the same again.

## **Diaspora Ministry**

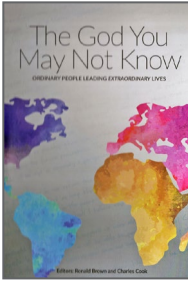
Luke 7:22 says, “So he (Jesus) replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor....”

The good news is proclaimed to the poor and goes out to the diaspora. These people are all around us. Jesus has not forgotten them, and He loves them. A diaspora ministry may not have a considerable return for the time being due to the nomadic nature of their situations, but it is definitely worth the investment. After becoming believers, those impacted by diaspora ministries spread the Gospel to the people around them and their home countries. The impact is profound. In Missiology, this is called the *Reverse Mission*.

A diaspora ministry can fall within a specific window of opportunity during which people are more receptive due to particular circumstances. We need to be aware of these openings, catch the wave and take advantage when they are presented. We need more gospel messengers with creative, flexible, and committed spirits, willing to take the risk, pay the price, and reap the harvest for the Second Coming of Christ.

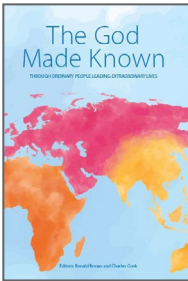
The history of the Church is like a symphony. God is the composer and conductor; we are merely one of the musical instruments. Let us play our music beautifully and in time.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



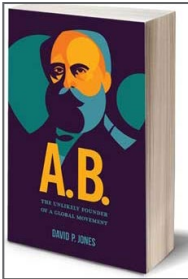
***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 2, “The Arab Lands and Israel-Palestine: The Fruit of Courage and Perseverance,” was written by D.F. Allen.



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Don Dirks has written Chapter 12, entitled, “France: A Witness to the Nations.”



***A.B.: The Unlikely Founder of a Global Movement*** by David P. Jones

This book not only gives us a glimpse into one man’s remarkable transformation of mind, body, and soul but also reminds us that the same loving Father longs to do the same in us—to shape us into exactly who He made us to be and prepare us for the unique work He’s called each of us to do.

## Chapter 10

### Advancing the Niger Vision: Dennis and Dorrie Hansen

by Dennis and Dorrie Hansen

We were on home assignment in Calgary, Alberta, when the General Assembly was held there in 2000. This was following our third term as international workers (IWs) in Mali, West Africa. We had asked for and been granted a second year of home assignment, partially for family reasons and because we were at a critical decision-making point in our ministry lives.

The assignment given to us by the Mali field in August 1985 was to learn the Bomu dialect and then work alongside the National Church leadership in helping to reach over two hundred unreached villages in the northern part of Bwa country. When we left for home assignment in July 1999, we rejoiced; the task had been completed. Through evangelism teams, mainly using the *JESUS* film, the Tominian and Zamana districts of the National Church with whom we partnered had taken the Gospel or at least offered the opportunity to hear the Good News, to every village in the region. Well over one hundred churches had been planted and were being led by newly trained pastors.

We had heard the expression, *‘A missionary’s job is to work themselves out of a job,’* many times and probably even said it ourselves. It’s a true statement, but when it becomes a reality for IWs, the resulting mixed emotions coupled with all the questions related to *‘what’s next?’* can sometimes seem very ominous. That question was the topic of conversation with our Desert Sand regional developer, Ron Brown, during General Assembly as we had lunch in the food court at the University of Calgary. We shared with Ron the questions we were grappling with and the emotions we felt as we knew we would not be returning to ministry with our beloved Bwa people. The Mali field had asked us to consider other ministry opportunities elsewhere in the country, but we did not feel at peace in following through on any of their suggestions.

As we talked, Ron told us about a vision God had given him and the burden he was carrying for a large nomadic people group known as the Tuaregs (Tamajek) who lived in Northern Mali and the neighbouring country of Niger. As he wondered out loud whether we could become part of that vision, I (Dorrie), without thinking

of the implications, immediately and excitedly said, “Yes!”

Years earlier, while travelling with a team of Alliance Youth Corps students, we had been invited by our IW colleagues in the Mopti region to visit them and help with some ministry projects. John and Jeannie took us to see an encampment of Tuareg refugees who had come down from Timbuktu. When Ron talked about the possibility of us initiating a ministry amongst the Tuareg, our minds immediately went back to the wonderful visit we had in the refugee camp, the welcome we felt, and the hospitality extended to us. It seemed like a little thing at the time when the Tuareg formed a circle and began dancing for us; then, to my surprise and embarrassment, they invited me (eight months pregnant!) into the circle to dance with them. Looking back, I see how God used this serendipity moment in my life to prepare me for a new ministry adventure years later.

### **An MK Friend, a Mexican Experience, a Knife, and the Alliance Youth Corps**

Both of us grew up with Christian parents who had a strong interest in and commitment to supporting IWs. Missions’ conferences and mission emphases in our churches during our childhood years were highlights for us, made even more special because our parents would often host the missionaries in our homes. God used these personal contacts and friendships with IWs in our childhood to plant the possibility of missions as a career in our young minds.

God used these personal contacts and friendships with IWs in our childhood to plant the possibility of missions as a career in our young minds.

#### **Dorrie:**

When my family moved to Seattle, I took my junior high and high school in a Christian school. My Dad had accepted the position of principal of the affiliated elementary school, which was the reason for our move. My Spanish teacher was a missionary to Mexico, and very quickly, her daughter and I became best friends. My friendship with Joy and her mother, my love for the Spanish language, and my adventurous spirit were the catalysts the Holy Spirit used to prepare me for a calling to overseas ministry.

When I was given the opportunity to participate in a short-term mission trip to Mexico with Operation Mobilization after my first year at Canadian Bible College (CBC), I eagerly applied and was accepted. During the journey, I came face to face



with the reality of the powers of darkness and their hold on the lives of the local people to whom we ministered. I had a scary personal encounter one night with demonic forces but learned by experience the power and victory we have through prayer and the proclamation of Jesus' name. Strange as it may seem, God used my frightening experience to confirm His call to missions in my life.

**Dennis:**

The possibility of becoming a missionary was often on my mind as a young child, even though I loved life on the farm and thought I would become a farmer like my Dad. I still have the snake-skin-handled knife given to me when I was maybe ten years old by a single missionary lady who would stay in our home for weeks at a time while on home assignment from Nigeria. When a missionary family from Benin was visiting in our home, I told them that when I grew up, I would go to Africa as a missionary so they could come home to retire. Interestingly, the very summer Howard and Louise came home from Africa, we arrived to begin our IW ministry a couple of countries to the northeast of Benin!

After two years at Canadian Bible College, I had begun to pursue my dream of farming when the Holy Spirit interrupted my plans and showed me full-time ministry was God's desire for my life. I cancelled my plan to buy some land close to my family's farm, sold my cattle for just enough money to pay off the loan I had taken to purchase them, and returned in the fall to complete my studies at CBC.

It was the same fall (1971) when Dorrie and I met in front of the business office at CBC. However, it was not until after the Christmas break when we were both part of an Operation Mobilization Christmas campaign in Monterrey, Mexico when our relationship began to take shape. Dorrie was already passionately committed to her call to missions, so the topic always entered any discussion we had about the possibility of a future together. She knew I was planning on full-time ministry, but my assertion of being 'open' to overseas ministry was not good enough for her. In the summer of 1973, following my Alliance Youth Corps trip to Mali and Burkina Faso, I told her God had used the trip to confirm a missions' calling in my life as well, so she was free to agree to my marriage proposal.

## **Preliminary Preparation**

In those days, Alliance IW candidates were required to serve in a church or pastoral ministry for a minimum of two years before being given their international ministry assignment. We stretched the minimum and served for eight years in Manitoba, first in a two-point charge in the farming communities of Poplar Point

and Oakville, and then by planting the Alliance church in Virden. Our three oldest kids were born in Manitoba.

In 1982 we headed back to Regina so I could complete my Masters in Missiology. When we were finally appointed to Mali in April 1984, Dr. Arnold Cook quipped about how he felt obligated to appoint us then so we could have at least one term of international ministry before we retired.

Our next step was learning French, which we did at the Université Laval in Quebec City. We loved Quebec City and made many great friends there, had a lot of fun, and even learned some French along the way! The province of Quebec holds a special place in our hearts.

## Finally, Mali 1985-99

Our family of five arrived in Mali at the beginning of August 1985, smack dab in the middle of the best rainy season the country had seen for many years. We spent a few days in Bamako, Mali's capital, and then at our Mission's headquarters in Koutiala for some orientation. In what looked like it might be a few days break between rains, our co-worker Barb from Sanekuy, where we would be living, came to pick us up. We packed all our stuff into the back of her double cab Toyota Hilux, and the six of us crowded into the two seats for what is usually a two-and-a-half-hour trip.



A rainy road in Mali. Courtesy Dennis Hansen.

We left Koutiala in bright sunshine, but I guess God wanted us to experience right off the bat what the rainy season in Mali is like. There was a downpour in the Sanekuy area which rendered the road pretty much impassable. We got stuck about twelve kilometres from Sanekuy just as dusk was setting in. As we attempted to get the vehicle free, I had decided that I would go barefoot rather than ruin my leather shoes in the mud and water. Bad decision!

While helping to push the truck, I felt a burning sensation in my foot like I had stepped on a burning ember, which of course, since we were in a few inches of water, was not possible. I mentioned it to Barb, who nonchalantly said the village men who had come to help us had just killed a scorpion; I must have been stung. Scorpion stings are seldom fatal unless one is allergic to the venom, but I would not

wish the pain I experienced for the next twenty-four hours on anyone!

Our excitement as a family at finally being 'home' in Sanekuy was tempered by the dread we were facing in having to leave our two daughters, then ages nine and seven, at the International Christian Academy in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire. Neither homeschooling nor putting our kids into a local school were options in those days. Saying goodbye to our girls and leaving them in their dorm that day was one of the most challenging things we have ever experienced in our lives. It did not get any easier as the years went by.

## **New Names**

We were immediately accepted into the lives and culture of the Bwa community, both in the village of Sanekuy and by the leadership of the four church districts with which we were partnering. Shortly after our arrival, all the pastors from the four districts gathered for a three-day meeting in Sanekuy. They invited us as a family to join them to be officially introduced as their missionaries.

Pastor AbedNego, the president of the Tominian district where we would eventually live, welcomed us and then told us we were now part of the Bwa community, and so they wanted to give us Bo names. Then they proceeded to give us new names and explained their meanings. We were absolutely astounded with how well the names they gave us fit our personalities and giftings, even though they had no way of knowing this apart from seeking the Holy Spirit for guidance, which they assured us they had done. To this day, we are known as Tan'ère and Demuchiri by our Bwa friends in Mali.

## **Learning Bomu**

Though French is the official language in Mali, it is not well understood or spoken by most village people in the rural areas. If we were going to adequately proclaim the Gospel and communicate with our new Bwa friends, we would need to learn their heart language, Bomu. So, language learning was our primary task for the first two years of our first term. There was no language school nor any organized classes for us to attend, so Barb, as our language supervisor, helped us find language informants who would assist us using the barefoot language-learning approach. We would meet for an hour or two each day with our informants to get vocabulary and help in figuring out the grammar. Then we would be expected to try it out with the village people.

Bomu is a tonal language, so it is not easy to learn. There was a lot of laughing

at and with us at some of the mistakes we made. As we progressed in our ability, Barb would arrange opportunities to do short public presentations to different groups of people.

**Dorrie:**

My first speaking assignment was to share a Bible lesson with the teenage girls in the girls' school run by the Sanekuy church district. I decided to prepare a lesson using the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. At the time, I was pregnant with our youngest daughter, it was sweltering in the crowded classroom, and the only light was from a small kerosene lamp. I was extremely nervous and felt like I had done very poorly in my pronunciation and especially being on tone. But at the end of my presentation, I felt led to invite any of the girls who wanted to become followers of Jesus to come forward so Barb and I could pray for them. I was astounded when more than twenty girls came forward.

**Dennis:**

I joked with our Bwa friends, saying Bomu is undoubtedly the language spoken in Heaven because it would take me all of eternity to learn it!

## **Feeding Hungry Tummies Results in Hunger for God**

Our arrival in Mali was at the end of a very severe drought and famine, resulting in a great deal of physical hunger in Bwa country. In response to this need, the Mali Alliance mission had partnered with CAMA Services (C&MA relief and development agency) and World Relief, who designed a Food for Work program to respond to the crisis. The project was to repair, and in some cases totally rebuild, the twenty-seven-kilometre road from Sanekuy to Tominian. Family representatives would work for a certain number of days and then receive a sack of millet or corn for their work. The grain was sent to Mali by the Canadian Food Grains Bank. Not only were hungry tummies fed, but our main road out of Sanekuy was being significantly improved.

In this project, the real God story was how it opened a spiritual hunger in the lives of many who previously were distrustful of Christians and the God they served. As non-believers were invited to come and work to obtain food for their families, they experienced the love of Jesus and responded to it. There was a significant spiritual harvest in Bwa country as the famine came to an end.

## **What? No Old Testament?**

The next time you are trying to choose which one of the 450 English translations of the Bible to read from, think about Mali. *Ethnologue* (the ultimate source of knowledge on the world's languages) counts over 80 languages there, 13 of which are considered official national languages. There are less than 10 of these languages with a complete translation of the Scriptures. Many languages do not yet have even portions of the Bible available.

When we arrived in Sanekuy, we found out, though there were two translations of the New Testament in Bomu, there was no Bomu Old Testament. The pastors did their best at translating Old Testament stories and passages from French or Bambara for their sermons, but there was a definite dearth of Old Testament teaching and knowledge in the churches. God placed a heavy burden on the heart of our fellow Canadian co-worker, Rose Nickel, to see the Old Testament translated into Bomu.

As we prayed together as a team, we felt it was time to present the need to the district leaders and gauge their interest. They were entirely on board. Rose got some linguistic training through Wycliffe while the district leaders appointed a young Bomu speaking man who had just graduated from university with a Masters in Linguistics, and a young pastor fluent in French and Bomu to work with Rose on the translation team.

The United Bible Society agreed to sponsor the project and eventually publish the Bible. I was invited to serve on the oversight committee as a consultant. It was a long and tedious project with several setbacks. Finally, in 2015 we accompanied Rose back to Mali for the unveiling and dedication of the complete Bible in Bomu. What a joyful and God-honouring event!

## **Christ, Our Healer**

Just over two years into our first term, our fourth child was born at the Baptist Mission hospital in Côte d'Ivoire, one day after we dropped off all three of our older children at their school in Bouake. We were, of course, overjoyed. Having this sweet little one in our home helped to lessen the pain of missing our other three kids.

When Marian was about eighteen months old, she became ill with severe vomiting and diarrhea. After a few days of trying various treatments to no avail and watching our little girl become more and more dehydrated, our nurse co-workers suggested we head for the Baptist hospital in Côte d'Ivoire. They did not tell us at the time, but they suspected cholera and were extremely concerned for

her survival. The trip would take a minimum of nine hours, so we packed up as quickly as we could and travelled to Koutiala, where our Mission headquarters is located. Because it was getting dark, our field director advised us to spend the night in the guest house and get an early start for the remainder of the trip in the morning. This turned out to be God-inspired advice, as the next morning, about an hour out of Koutiala, my vehicle began to act up. The gas filter was faulty. I was able to coax it to run for short periods and made it to Sikasso, where, thankfully, we could purchase a new gas filter and keep travelling.

Pastor AbedNego and other Christ-followers back in Tominian had prayed for Marian's healing and protection as we left the day before, and we knew everyone else who was aware of the situation was praying as well. We watched our baby's health digress, and, with a broken heart, Dorrie prayed, *Father, You know how much we love our little girl and what a blessing she is to us, but if You want to take her to be with you...."*

Shortly after, Dorrie noticed a difference in Marian's demeanour. She was drinking fluids more easily and even began to smile and talk a bit. By the time



Dennis greeting AbedNego. Courtesy Dennis Hansen.



we arrived at the hospital, she was pretty alert. A former nurse colleague from Mali met us as we drove up to the hospital and asked why we were there. As we explained the situation, she looked at Marian and said, “Well, I can see she has been sick but let’s get her in and have the doctor look at her.” The diagnosis was a very severe gastro infection. She was put on an appropriate antibiotic, and we were able to travel back to Mali a few days later with a healthy, happy little girl. Indeed, Christ is our Healer!

## **Move to Tominian**

Between the third and fourth years of our first term, we moved to Tominian, working towards partnering with the two northern districts to reach the more than two hundred remaining unreached villages in the region. The district allowed us to temporarily convert their brand-new youth centre into living quarters, though we would have no running water, indoor washroom facilities, and no electricity. This was a bit challenging with a baby. However, it was a blessing to live right across the street from Pastor AbedNego and his family. AbedNego and Abiza very patiently mentored us in our continued learning of both the language and the culture. Relationships are everything in the Malian culture. The time we spent together with them, developing a deep friendship, proved invaluable to our ministry.

In the ensuing months, we collaborated with the local and district church leaders in many different areas. Dorrie was actively involved in the local women’s group, spoke in district women’s conferences, and taught in the Tominian Sunday school. We regularly visited churches throughout the region on the weekends; I would often preach, though our main objective was to get to know and encourage the pastors and their families. I also helped to facilitate a regional pastors’ seminar and, of course, joined the evangelism teams on their evangelistic forays to villages where there were not yet believers. We also began construction of our future home during those months.

## **A Huge Disappointment**

We left for home assignment ready for a change of pace and excited to re-engage with family and friends in Canada. But we were also really anticipating our second term back in Tominian. As we prepared for our return, we dreamed, strategized, and set objectives for continuing our partnership with the districts. Also, we were pumped to be able to move into our new house!

Unfortunately, when we arrived in Bamako to begin our second term, our

colleague met us at the airport bearing exceedingly difficult news. A major dispute had erupted between the National Church Association, made up of thirteen districts representing at least seven major ethnic groups and the four Bwa districts. The National Church Association had made a major decision with which the Bwa districts strongly disagreed. As a result, the Bwa church leaders rescinded their membership in the association and formed their own federation of churches. Because our Mission had a formal partnership with the National Church Association, we were informed we could not continue serving the Bwa districts that were now branded as rebels. We were absolutely devastated! But we believed surely such a church split could be only the work of the Enemy, and God would prevail. So, we held on to hope and prayed desperately. However, reconciliation was not immediately forthcoming; we were redeployed to Bamako for a time and then to the city of Sikasso, where we were asked to learn Bambara, the national trade language.

Despite the shroud of discouragement hanging over us for the next four years as we attempted to remain faithful to our calling and commitment to living out and proclaiming the Gospel, our faithful God provided us with some reassuring ministry opportunities. We had redeployed from what had been a spiritually responsive region to a much more resistant area. In fact, Sikasso was the city where Alliance missionaries first established a beachhead for the Gospel in Mali back in 1923. The first mission house was still standing on the same site where the Sikasso central church functioned.

For over sixty years, the proclamation of the Gospel had produced minimal fruit in Sikasso and the surrounding area. Thankfully, this began to change in the 1980s with a heightened response to the good news of the Gospel. After spending several months learning Bambara, we collaborated with both the Sikasso city church and the Sikasso district in their ministries.

During our stay, we had the privilege of witnessing the establishment of two new congregations in the city, bringing the total number of churches in this city of one hundred and fifty thousand people to three. Dorrie and a Dutch colleague were asked to provide Sunday school teacher training for the district churches. Dorrie also began a kids' club in our yard for neighbourhood kids and had the privilege of leading a teenage boy to the Lord. We still hear from him.

As I had done in Bwa country during the second half of our first term, I focused much of my ministry on providing logistical support for the district evangelism teams in their forays to unreached villages with the *JESUS* film. Each year the district would determine which villages they wanted to target.

Typically, on arrival in a village, we would go first to the village chief's home.

We would officially ask permission to have an outdoor gathering in the village centre if prior arrangements had not already been made. The gathering would include singing, preaching, and culminate with showing the *JESUS* film, after which there was always an ‘altar call.’ In villages where people decided to follow the Jesus way, the pastor or catechist from the closest church would be assigned to provide follow-up and discipleship. If there was a large response, a catechist or pastor moved to the village to lead the new church as soon as possible. Once we had the projector screen (often a white sheet on a mud or cement wall) set up, we would sit and visit with our hosts while waiting for the evening meal and for darkness to descend so we could show the film.

On one occasion, I had a large group of kids crowded around my chair and was joking around with them. I pushed my upper denture out with my tongue, expecting they would be frightened and run away. The joke was on me. They got really excited and started shouting, “Miracle! The white man did a miracle!” From then on, I was known as the miracle missionary in those parts.



Mali pastors in the reunified church.

Courtesy Dennis Hansen.

Three weeks before we were to leave for our second home assignment, our field director contacted me and said I was being called to a meeting in Sanekuy. He did not know any details. I arrived to find the newly elected National Church president and his committee were there to meet with the Bwa Church federation committee. I had been invited as a witness.

When President Timothy was given the floor, he stated he and his committee had come to end the ‘fight’ and seek reconciliation with the four districts. Even though he had not been in leadership when the schism happened, he took full responsibility and asked the Bwa leaders to forgive him. Though the atmosphere remained tense at times throughout the day, the Holy Spirit was at work, and by the end of the day, full reconciliation had been attained. I will never forget the scene as forgiveness, tears, and hugs flowed freely. We moved our belongings back to Tominian and stored them in our new house, awaiting our return in a year. I re-learned a valuable lesson about the value of humility and obeying God’s voice.

I mentioned already Alliance missionaries first entered Mali in 1923; at the time of writing, a one hundredth anniversary celebration is being planned for 2023.

## Saturation Evangelism

We arrived back in Tominian in the summer of 1995, extremely thankful to be back in Bwa country. The adage ‘absence makes the heart grow fonder’ certainly proved true in this instance as we were able to pick up our relationships right where we left them years earlier.

Remember the dreams, vision, and strategies I said we had for our second term in Tominian? Well, everything on our list for our second-term partnership with the districts had been accomplished under the direction of the Holy Spirit, with God’s enablement, and without us! They had started their own Bible school, worked



Bible school students’ families.

Courtesy Dennis Hansen.



Dorrie training Sunday school teachers.

Courtesy Dennis Hansen.

hard at strengthening the already established churches, and continued evangelizing and church planting in the unreached villages. We quickly understood our role for the next four years, to submit to their leadership and collaborate with them to reach their objectives. The mutual trust we already had between us made this easy to do.

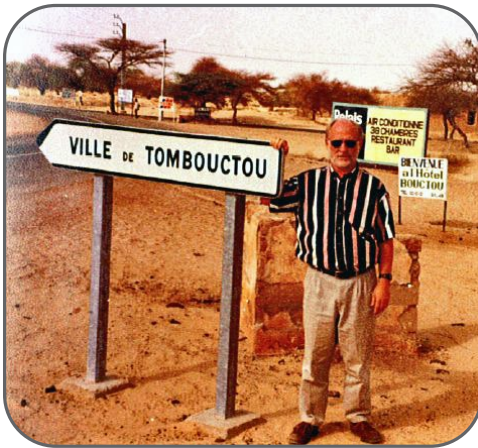
The districts felt a need for Sunday school teacher training and curricular development, both of which Dorrie was passionate about. She was able to translate and publish two years’ worth of materials. She was also asked to begin a Bible study group in French with the youth chorale in the Tominian church. In addition, she had a small group of girls to whom she told Bible stories and taught sewing. One of the joys we had during our third term was both of us being asked to teach in their

new Bible school. It was incredibly fulfilling for us to have a part in training the young pastors and wives who would lead the many new churches being planted in the region.

One big change from our first term in Tominian was the *JESUS* film, a major tool used by the evangelism teams, produced in the Bomu language. It was amazing to see the response of the villagers as they heard Jesus speak Bomu! As we closed in

on the end of the term, the Federation leaders proudly announced every village in the region had been presented the opportunity to hear the Gospel, with many villages joyfully accepting, which resulted in churches being planted. This brings us back to the story at the beginning of this chapter. We prepared for our third home assignment knowing our task among the Bwa had been completed. By the way, at the dedication ceremonies for the Bomu Bible in 2015, it was reported a full forty-five percent of the population of the Bwa region were professing Christians. Wow!

## Impacting Niger 2001-2005



Ron Brown at the Timbuktu airport.  
Courtesy NMC.



Tombstone of an early Alliance missionary,  
Myrtle Kurlak in Timbuktu, died in 1930 at  
age 32. Courtesy NMC.

At the conclusion of our meeting with Ron one afternoon in Calgary during the General Assembly, we agreed together we would take ample time to seek God and discern His will regarding the idea of beginning an outreach to the Tamajek peoples. As Ron and we prayed through the fall and winter months, we did indeed sense the Spirit's prompting to move forward with this idea.

Ron suggested he and I make an exploratory trip to where the Tuareg live, which we did at Easter time, 2001. We took separate flights to Africa, but we were to meet in the airport of the legendary Timbuktu in northern Mali. Yes, it is a real place!

Did you know Timbuktu was cited by A.B. Simpson as a place to which the Gospel should be taken in the very beginning years of the Alliance? It was part of what became Simpson's Niger vision, written about in a book by that name by his compatriot, R.S. Roseberry. Simpson's vision to see the

Gospel proclaimed to those who had never heard in the bends and winding flow of the Niger River was one step closer to reality.

Ron and I felt like we were stepping into another world as we passed the police checkpoint into the city that morning. There we were graciously hosted by Baptist missionaries who had an active ministry to the Tamajek people; we discussed the possibility of partnering with them. They welcomed us to do so. We then flew on SIMAir (SIM Mission airplane), a little four-seater Cessna, to Niamey, Niger, where there is a large Tamajek population. Our time in Niamey included meetings with existing mission groups as well as visiting a small Tamajek group of Jesus followers.

One Mission leader told us he had been praying for years that the Alliance would come to Niger! After more prayer and evaluation of what we had learned on our exploratory trip, the decision was made for us to be appointed to Niamey, Niger, to research the need for and means of establishing an Alliance presence amongst Tamajek-speaking peoples in the region.

**Dorrie:**

While Dennis was able to do his research and administrative work using French, I decided to attempt learning Tamajek so I would be able to communicate with the women in their heart language. A Wycliffe worker kindly offered to introduce me to some lovely women who lived in grass huts in vacant lots. We immediately bonded, and they were eager to help me learn their language. Tamajek proved to be even more challenging to learn than Bomu. As our relationships grew, I was able to begin a sewing and craft class with them.

Sometimes God chooses to use difficult scenarios in our lives to accomplish His purposes. I underwent skin cancer surgery on my face and was told by the doctor I needed to stay home as much as possible and not expose the wound to the dust and excess heat. In order to be able to continue to see my friends, I decided to invite them to my home, which then allowed me to share my testimony with them in very stammering Tamajek and show the *JESUS* film in Tamajek. I am still praying for these dear ladies' salvation.

**Dennis:**

It did not take us long to realize the needs among the Tuareg were many. But we also discovered quickly, these deeply devoted Muslims would never become followers of Jesus through the more traditional methods of evangelism which had worked so well in Bwa country. It was essential for us to establish trust through compassion and relationship building, and it would all take time. It would mean a lot of what a colleague coined as a 'ministry of hanging out.' However, it also required finding ways to meet real and felt needs. Most of the Tamajek in the city





Dennis with head covering like the local Tamajek wear. Courtesy NMC.

had migrated from further north and east in the country and were basically living a refugee lifestyle. We knew we would not be able to do this alone, so we began praying for and inviting others to join our team.

One of the things I kept hearing from other mission leaders as I continued researching and strategizing was, “Don’t forget the Fulani.” It was clear God was also calling us to establish a ministry to this large unreached group. Barry Newman was appointed by Alliance

Canada to join us and spearhead the Fulani outreach. Lisa Rohrick redeployed from Benin to be part of the Fulani team as well. Sandra Scott came over from Mali to take on our financial and administrative duties.

Due to some personal health and family challenges, we regretfully left Niger after only one term to continue ministry in Canada. We are encouraged to know the Tamajek and Fulani people of Niger are part of the ‘vast crowd from every nation and tribe and people and language’ who will stand in front of the throne and before the Lamb one glorious day! And the Lord continues to use the gifted team who have followed us to help make that happen for the Tamajek and Fulani of Niger.

## **Mobilization 2005-Present**

On our return to Canada, God graciously led me to a missions’ pastor role at RockPointe Church in Calgary, which allowed us to continue to pursue our passion for seeing the Gospel proclaimed to the least-reached peoples of our world. One of my early delights in the role was recruiting Kristi Hopf to the Niger team and mentoring her through the application and preparation processes. She is serving well on the Fulani team.

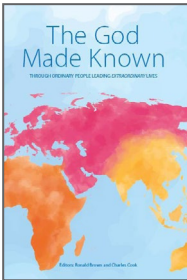
Dorrie and I were able to lead some RockPointe short-term mission teams to Niger. I was also privileged to journey with several other individuals or couples as they prepared for international ministries around the world. Under my tenure, by God’s grace, RockPointe’s Global Advance Fund reached the ten percent of ministry funds goal.

In 2013, I was encouraged by Ron Brown to take the Kairos Course. I did and immediately became an avid advocate of the course. Both Dorrie and I trained as

facilitators and have served as such together in several courses. I also became a head-facilitator and have led or co-led twelve facilitation teams since 2014. When I left my role at RockPointe in 2019, over seventy RockPointers had been through the Kairos course, including eighty percent of our pastoral staff and all the IWs serving worldwide in partnership with RockPointe Church. Even in my current transitional pastoring role, Dorrie and I still emphasize mobilizing the church to actively work towards fulfilling the Great Commission.

None of this story would have happened without the unconditional love and enduring faithfulness of our loving Heavenly Father. To Him be glory and honour forever. Amen.

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 2 by Eric Persson is entitled, “Mali and Burkina Faso: The Road to Timbuktu.”



***The Niger Vision*** by R.S. Roseberry

When recalling the treacherous conditions early workers encountered, R. S. Roseberry wrote: “It is doubtful if any effort to open a road into the Dark Continent surpasses the heroism of the early pioneers of the Soudan Mission.” (p. 5)



***On to Timbuktoo*** by Rebecca Steiner

Response among the Animistic tribes has developed a strong Christian community among these ethnics and a vibrant Christian witness in Mali.

[https://issuu.com/ronaldwbrown/docs/  
book - on to timbuctoo rebecca stei](https://issuu.com/ronaldwbrown/docs/book-on-to-timbuctoo-rebecca-stei)

## Chapter 11

### **Called and Carried by God's Grace: Dave and Denise Golding**

by Denise Giffen

"It's Dave Golding! Is Denise here?" Those simple words will always be etched in my memory as they rocked my world and changed the direction of my life forever. I had been curled up in a comfortable chair with a cup of coffee in the home of the dorm administrators, Evan and Jewel Evans, at International Christian Academy in the Ivory Coast. It was our day off from our active role as dorm parents to twenty-two middle school boys, and I was enjoying a relaxing visit with several other staff women before my husband Dave and I planned to spend the day together. Suddenly one of the dorm assistants came running through the door with panic in her voice. I ran as fast as I could down to the track, where she told me Dave had collapsed.

As soon as I rounded the corner and saw his lifeless body receiving CPR from both school nurses, I knew in my heart my gentle giant was gone. The nurses continued CPR, and he was lifted into the back of a truck and rushed to a local clinic. Instead of going with him, I made the quick decision to go and find my three children, Josh, Mark and Nikki, in their classrooms. I wanted to be with them when they got the news about their dad. It was not long before the director of the school, Dan Grudda, came to our dorm apartment. My children will never forget his words, "I am sorry, but your dad isn't coming home."

So many thoughts and emotions overwhelmed my mind and heart in the following hours and days. I remember thinking, *how can I raise my children alone? How do I help my children cope with this loss when my own grief is so overwhelming?* And another huge question was, *Is this the end of my life as a missionary?*

### **Called by God**

My call to missions actually began when I was a young girl, several years before I came to know Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I was born in Vancouver, B.C. and then spent my childhood in Vernon, B.C. I was raised in a non-Christian home. Though I understood God was real, I was not taught anything about a personal relationship with Him. My parents sent me to a girl's club at the United Church

where, from time to time, we were shown slide presentations about missionaries in different parts of the world.

I still remember the day I saw the slides of Africa. Though as a young child, I thought being a missionary simply meant going and helping people, I decided I wanted to be a missionary in Africa when I grew up. But, of course, these were the thoughts of a young child of ten. Several years later, at the age of seventeen, I was introduced to Jesus and began to understand what it meant to give Him my heart.

In my teenage search for meaning and purpose, I encountered friends who spoke to me about the Christian faith and modelled radical change in their lives. One night, alone in my room, I knelt beside my bed and gave my life to Jesus. With my decision came a refining of the call to be a missionary. I had already planned to go to nursing school after graduation, but now I knew I wanted to use my nursing skills to serve the Lord in Africa. I started attending the Alliance church in Vernon, and there I was discipled in my new faith and encouraged in my future goals. Pastor Keith Taylor recommended I consider eventually attending Canadian Bible College in Regina, Saskatchewan.

## Preparing for Missions

After two and a half years of nurses training at Okanagan College to acquire my diploma and become a registered nurse, I got my first job in a small hospital in Creston, B.C. I had not given up on my missionary plans but felt I wanted to spend some time gaining nursing experience. I was only there for a few months before the Lord used a dating relationship gone sour to direct my sights on the goal of heading overseas. That summer, while taking a day off at the beach, I read through the brochure for Canadian Bible College, and within a couple of days, I began the application process to attend a year later.

Though I knew there was a possibility I could meet a man at Bible college who would be my life partner, I did not want to go there with that being my focus or expectation. So, I made my plans believing there was a good chance I would go to the mission field as a single woman, and I was perfectly at peace. I was not prepared for reality; after only one week at Bible college, while sitting in the college cafeteria, I would meet the man who would become my husband. Dave Golding was a tall, gentle, godly man

...I made my plans  
believing there was a  
good chance I would go  
to the mission field as a  
single woman, and I was  
perfectly at peace.

whose heart was also set on serving the Lord overseas. We married the summer before our final year of college then finished classes, received our accreditation with The Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), and graduated together.

Before being approved for overseas service, the C&MA required that we serve at least two years in a local church. We were invited by Harvey Town, the district superintendent of the Western Canadian District, to do a church plant in Yellowknife, NWT. So only a few weeks after graduation, we took the long road north. I was eight weeks pregnant with our first child, so we were very excited for our first ministry together and to start our family.

The time in Yellowknife was challenging in many ways, but at the end of our two years, we felt it was not yet the right time to leave this floundering church; if we did, it would feel like we were just looking for an escape. So, we spent two more years there and then sensed it was the right time for the church and us to move toward our goal of overseas ministries. Looking back, I know all the challenges helped us grow in our marriage, grow in our ability to work together, and prepare us for even more significant challenges ahead.

While we were in Yellowknife, God defined His calling on us as a couple. Up until then, though Dave knew he was called to the mission field, he did not sense a call to any specific place. For me, I still felt a very definite call to Africa but was open to God redirecting my heart. While I stayed home with our very young boys, Dave attended General Assembly in Eastern Canada. He had a couple of life-changing conversations with missionaries from Africa, who told him that his friendly, open personality would fit well within the African culture. Dave came home from his week away and said to me, "Denise, I feel that God is calling us to West Africa."

The next couple of years were spent back in Regina, where Dave attended Canadian Theological Seminary to earn his Masters in Missiology. I supported him by caring for our little family of three children and helping edit the many papers he had to write. One of his most extensive assignments was to do an in-depth study on the Senoufo people, an essentially unreached people group in the southern part of Burkina Faso. After completing this study, we were officially assigned to church planting and evangelism among the Senoufo people, serving with the C&MA. We then moved to Quebec to attend Laval University together for our French language training. Because Dave found language learning incredibly challenging, we extended our time there a few extra months. Finally, in late December 1994, our young family boarded a plane for Burkina Faso, West Africa.

As we circled over the capital city of Ouagadougou before landing, my anxiety was very high, and I was asking myself, *what have we got ourselves into?* All the

preparation we received through language study and pre-field orientation just seemed to disappear in the overwhelming reality of spending the next three and a half years, and potentially many more, in this extraordinary place. The large “boulder” I felt in my stomach would not go away for almost six months. I found out later, Dave had a matching boulder.

## Reaching the Senoufo for Christ

We were met at the airport by Doug and Karen Conkle, veteran missionaries to Burkina Faso. Doug was the field director at the time, and his wife Karen ran the guest house for the missionaries on the field in the city of Bobo Dioulasso, about four hours south of Ouagadougou. They were so friendly and relaxed, speaking the local language so fluently, and I remember thinking, *how will I ever get to be that relaxed in a foreign country?* Our first (sleepless) night in the Ouagadougou guesthouse and the road trip to Bobo Dioulasso felt like some of the most prolonged hours of my life as we struggled with jet lag while helping our kids adjust to this strange new world. I am pretty sure they heard every mosquito in the room our first night.

Over the next few days, weeks, and months we would come to slowly adjust to life in a culture so different from our own, where our white skin set us apart. One day I realized the boulder in my stomach was gone, and there were many things I loved about this place where I knew God had called me as a little girl. We settled into a missionary home in the town of Banfora, just an hour south of Bobo Dioulasso.

Just days after arriving in the country, we had to experience for the first time the heartache of sending our oldest son to boarding school in the Ivory Coast, a seven-hour drive south of Banfora through multiple police and border stops. Though we knew long before we arrived on the field we were going to have to make this sacrifice, nothing could have prepared me for the deep emotions I felt while separated from him for weeks at a time. Josh had just turned seven in December and was the smallest student on campus. But by God's grace, Josh adjusted well to life at International Christian Academy (ICA). In fact, it seemed the separation was a lot harder on us than it was on him. The campus was situated on a large piece of beautiful property and served students from grade one to twelve, with eight dormitories. I have often said, in many ways, for the kids, it was like summer camp all year round. He was safe, he was loved, and he was happy.

Our primary task for the first two years in Burkina Faso was to learn Jula, the local trade language in the region. But this was not classroom learning. It was a





The Hema and Golding families.  
Courtesy Denise Giffen.

huge lesson in self-discipline, using the written materials available, and then practicing in everyday life. Eventually, we also found conversation partners who were willing to patiently work with us. Banfora had a well-established church, and slowly we began to build relationships with several local pastors and believers. One of our most special friendships was with Pastor Henoah Hema and his wife, Sylvie. They were warm and genuine, and we shared

many meals, deep conversations, and laughter together.

In those early years, I realized I had come into the missionary life with some preconceived thoughts, which were changed and shaped by our reality. A lot of time was spent just living. Coming from a life in Canada where there are so many conveniences and everything was familiar and readily available, I did not expect so many hours of my day would be required just to make life work for my family and me. I also was not prepared to deal with the almost daily begging and requests for financial assistance coming our way just because of the colour of our skin. No matter how simply we tried to live, we were comparatively extremely wealthy in this very poverty-stricken country; consequently, it made us evaluate the motivation of every contact and every relationship.

Though not consciously, I believed we would be received and accepted simply on the merits of the good news of the Gospel of Jesus we desired to share. I also thought missionaries always worked together in harmony with one another. I was to observe in a new way just how human we all are and how working together in ministry requires intentionality, grace, and a heart of forgiveness. Though I was personally not involved in any significant conflicts, I was very aware of their existence among some of our colleagues. These things helped me become more acutely aware of how being a follower of Christ and a missionary is so much more about who I am than what I do.

After two challenging years of official language learning, my final exam was to teach a one-hour lesson at Poundou Bible School, where our colleagues, Arjo and Adrie deVroome, were serving. This Dutch couple had become good friends and mentors to us. I was so thankful when this milestone was complete for me, but it would be another several months before Dave was officially done, as the Jula language was also a struggle for him. But what he lacked in language skills he

more than made up for in personality and the ability to build relationships with the Burkinabe people. I do not think the sound of his laughter will ever leave my memory.

While working hard to learn the language and culture of Burkina Faso, another significant role I had was as mom to our three children. I never wanted them to become “victims” of our career decision. It was our desire to trust God’s calling on our whole family, and He would use our years on the field to shape our children for His glory. We endeavoured to be in tune with how they handled the unique situation we were living in, being very intentional about family time and positive experiences. When Josh, and then later the other two children, were away, we worked very hard, so when they were home for vacations, we could focus more on them. I home-schooled Mark for kindergarten, and then he joined his brother at ICA. Our lives included regular trips to visit our boys at the school, where we would spend weekends at the guesthouse across town while also enjoying interacting with other dorm kids and their families on campus. I remember even back then thinking the role of a dorm parent was one I might really enjoy, not realizing this was part of God’s refining process in His calling on my life.

During language study and in the following season, we worked on making connections and participated in activities to help reach the Senoufo people for



Dave and Denise with Banfora district pastors. Courtesy Denise Giffen.

Christ. They lived in relatively remote villages outside of Banfora. Because there was an already established National Church in the region, we partnered with local pastors to hold gospel presentations in those villages. One of the highlights of the term was hosting a dental team from York, Pennsylvania, who came and held clinics during the day, which in turn brought people out to evening evangelism campaigns. We spent three days each in three villages. Not only did the dentists pull out several hundred teeth, but we saw many individuals give their hearts to Jesus through the preaching of God's Word by national pastors.

Despite the preparation and the assignment among the Senoufo, we went into our home assignment year back in Canada with a lot of uncertainty about what our next term would hold. There had to be collaboration between the Mission and the National Church to determine ministry priorities and work in unity, which was not always easy. However, near the end of our whirlwind year serving at Vernon Alliance Church as missionaries-in-residence, we were given the green light to

return to Burkina Faso. Soon we began building a missionary home next to the pastor's house in the village of Dakoro, a Senoufo village about one and a half hours southwest of Banfora.

Once again, God blessed us with an extraordinary friendship as we lived and ministered beside Pastor Joachim and his wife, Marthe, and enjoyed the antics of their daughter Jedida. Despite the incredibly glaring differences in our material wealth, we experienced true fellowship with this couple; I even was



Dave and Denise with Joachim, Marthe, and Jedida in Dakoro. Courtesy Denise Giffen.

privileged to be present at the birth of their son Emmanuel. Whether we were enjoying a simple meal of rice and sauce cooked outside over their fire or sharing a meal at our dining room table, we connected with our love for Jesus and desired to grow together. One of my favourite memories is the night we invited them into our home for a movie night and watched the Disney cartoon movie "Tarzan" with our kids, who were home from boarding school. Their laughter over watching the antics on the screen was contagious.

We found our primary role as missionaries was to equip and encourage the national pastors so they could reach their own people with the Gospel. So, during our time in Dakoro, we made weekly trips by motorbike to visit each of the other four pastors in the surrounding villages. While Dave met with the men, I would

work with the pastor's wives, teaching them to read and write. In Dakoro, I worked with Marthe to conduct a reading and writing class in the village.

Another large project I took on during our years in Burkina Faso was translating an English Sunday school curriculum into French and Jula. The material, thirty-seven in-depth lessons on Bible stories and theology from Genesis to Revelation, had been donated to another missionary who had since left the field. I took on the task of simplifying the lessons in English and then working with an English-speaking Burkinabe pastor to translate the lessons into French and Jula. All the long, meticulous hours were worth it when I found, even after we left Burkina Faso, this material was being used by the nationals to teach their own people. But, just as important, I know God used that experience to deepen my own faith and be awestruck at the wonder of the gospel message contained in these lessons.

While we were in Dakoro, God laid it on the heart of a couple back in our home church to visit us in the village and bring the financial resources needed to build a church structure for the small body of believers there. Unfortunately, partway through the building process, we were stopped by the authority of the village chief, and none of us would be there for the completion. I found out several years later the door finally had been opened to complete the work. Due to the ongoing work of the national pastors and other missionaries, there is a growing church body in the village.

During this second term, despite the direction, resources, and good relationships we had while doing ministry in the village, there was a tugging on our hearts we found hard to understand. While on our visits to ICA to see our children, the boarding administrators approached us multiple times to consider changing our missionary career to become dorm parents. They strongly felt that our gifting and natural love for kids would be assets to the school boarding program. We could not deny the strong pull we felt to say yes, but at the same time, a strong sense of loyalty to continue what we had just begun in Dakoro and the surrounding area. We questioned if this was God calling us, and if so, why would He have us in Dakoro for such a short time? We wrestled with the motivation of our own hearts. Were we just feeling this way because it would keep us close to our kids? Dave voiced the struggle in saying he felt like being a dorm parent was not "real" missionary work.

Then one night, Dave woke up suddenly and was washed over with an overwhelming peace and an almost audible voice saying this was from the Lord. In the following days and weeks, many miracles and changes took place, none of which we could have imagined or orchestrated ourselves. After a short return to North America for screening and training, in August 2001, we moved from



Dakoro to Bouake and started our new role as dorm parents to the middle school boys of Bethel dorm.

## Dorm Parents



Bethel dorm boys. Courtesy Denise Giffen.

Despite a big learning curve and many challenges, the following year was a year of deep fulfillment in ministry. We loved being dorm parents to these third culture kids whose parents were serving in missions, and we loved the process of strangers becoming family in a very short time. We also loved being a part of our own kids' lives in what had been their world up until then. Dave and I were deeply

impacted by the reality of our work being just as vital to the gospel message going out as if we were on the frontlines. We knew from first-hand experience, if we had the assurance our children were doing well, then we could pour into our ministry wholeheartedly. This was now a gift we had to offer the families of "our" boys.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere in the Ivory Coast had been changing, and there was unrest in the air which had not been there when we started our missionary career. In the summer after our first year, we experienced the trauma of armed robbers invading the campus, shooting a guard while he was face down on the ground, and taking our business manager captive for several hours before he was able to escape. As we entered our second year, there was a sense of uneasiness, compounded by Dave experiencing some heart symptoms of concern. Even after he saw a cardiologist and was given a "clean bill of health," I could not let go of my concern; I found out later Dave had actually asked permission to take a leave back to Canada to get more thoroughly checked. But before this could ever happen, on September 18, 2002, Dave collapsed and died instantly while running on the track at ICA. I was told he did not even put his hands down to stop his fall forward.

Two days later, still in shock, we suddenly found ourselves caught in the middle of a civil war breaking out between government military and rebel forces. Though our campus was not under direct attack, we were certainly in danger at times as gunfire raged around us. One evening it was right over our walls. What followed was a week of putting grief on hold while, with help, I continued to care for my dorm family and my own children. We experienced several lockdowns in

the lower hall of our dorm. Finally, after what seemed like the longest week of my life, we were evacuated by the French army. Multiple French military vehicles escorted twenty-six campus vehicles carrying one hundred and sixty-five staff and students on a twelve-hour trip overnight through the bush. We arrived at the city of Yamoussoukro, located only one and a half hours south of Bouake by the main road. Each of us was only carrying a backpack of belongings.



Ron Brown and Dave Ingram at Dave Golding's grave in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast.  
Courtesy Denise Giffen.

From there, after quick and painful good-byes, my children and I were driven by a U.S. embassy vehicle south to the airport in the capital city of Abidjan, where we were met by colleagues Dave and Cyndy Ingram. I will never forget the relief I felt when I saw their familiar faces as they stood on the curb waiting for us to arrive. They helped us through the steps of getting on to our pre-booked flight home, and soon we found ourselves in the air, leaving the place we had come

to love as home, without our beloved husband and father. I was to find out later Dan Grudda had stayed and taken the risk to get Dave's body out of the morgue and down to Yamoussoukro, where he was given a proper burial by the grace and help of the body of believers at the Bible school there.

## Return to Canada

Back in Canada, after being quietly whisked through a private, customs check in Calgary to avoid the possible onslaught of media, my children and I were welcomed by our family and Ron and Myra Brown. They were our regional developers at the time. Two days later, in a planned press conference at Harvest Hills Alliance Church, the media was given the opportunity to hear my story before we left for Vernon to stay with my parents.

It was very surreal to read the multiple newspaper articles surrounding the events of Dave's death and our escape from the war zone. It would be three years before I dared to watch the news clips. Even amid all the turmoil, I remember thinking how gracious God was to have called us from Burkina Faso to the Ivory Coast, and the tapestry of His planning even when we do not understand it. If



Dave's heart had given out when it did while living in Burkina, my children would have been separated from me when they got the news about their dad and when the war broke out. The borders were closed, and I would not have been able to get to them.

Upon Dave's death, we began making plans to only spend a couple of weeks back in Canada before returning to finish the school year, but the war changed everything. Within a brief time after arriving, I received a call from Ron Brown letting me know I needed to enrol my children in school and make plans to stay in Canada. When I broke the news to them, the deep sadness in my children was a reflection of the deep sadness in my own heart. Africa, where I had felt a boulder in my stomach when I first arrived, had become our home, a place our family was thriving, and where we were being used to advance the Kingdom of God.

The next few years were challenging ones. I took a position at Vernon Alliance Church as children's pastor, as my nursing license had long expired. Though I worked hard, my heart was not in it. Instead, my heart ached for Dave, for Africa, and for my hurting teenage children, struggling with their own grief. I kept wishing we could "rewind the tape." One of the few highlights for me during this season was serving alongside Becky Matchullis in running the kids camp for the Alliance third culture kids attending Home Ministry Seminar (HMS) with their parents each summer. It was a small way I could serve the missionary community I had once been a part of.

I have often heard the expression "time heals," but my experience is "time helps," and nothing ever stays the same. In 2006, I decided to refresh my nurse's training and become a practicing R.N. once again. During Spring Break, I took my children on a trip back to Africa, to Dakar, Senegal, where a large number of students and staff from ICA had moved to immediately after the evacuation from the Ivory Coast. We stayed with the Evans family and connected with many friends who were now a part of the Dakar Academy (DA) campus. It was a healing time for all of us, but little did I know that the Lord was using it to prepare me for another season of missionary service.

## **For Such a Time as This**

In February 2009, Evan and Jewel Evans approached me to consider taking a year to go to Dakar and fill in for the regular dorm parents in the C&MA high school girls' dorm for the 2009/2010 school year. It was the first year all three of my children would be in college or university; I just had a sense of peace that this was God's calling and timing. Once again, I saw Him put miraculous pieces



Dakar Academy dorm family 2009-2010.

Courtesy Denise Giffen.

together to make this happen, and I spent a very challenging but fulfilling year as a single dorm mom to ten amazing young ladies whose parents were serving all over West Africa.

The year before leaving for Dakar, the Lord had given me direction to sign up on eHarmony, a trusted online dating service. In April 2010, while still in Dakar, I met Peter Giffen, a quiet, godly man who lived in Edgewood, a tiny community just under two hours

from my home in Vernon. Peter worked as a paramedic for B.C. ambulance. We wrote back and forth extensively, and upon my return to Canada, we began officially dating. On January 1, 2011, we were married in the presence of a small group of family and friends, including my three children and his five.

In the following years, Peter partnered with me each summer at the HMS Kid's Camp, and three different times we were contacted by Evan and Jewel to consider dorm parenting in Dakar. The first couple of times, we knew in our hearts the timing for our family and us was not right. The third time the request came, however, we knew this time was different. We took a big step in taking early retirement from our respective careers. Sure enough, once again, the miracles

fell into place, opening the door for us to commit to the 2018/2019 school year. We were directly hired by DA and spent a whirlwind year as dorm parents to seven middle school girls. Despite being more grandparent age to these girls, we bonded quickly and had a year to see each of these new boarding students adjust and blossom. We truly felt we were there for "such a time as this."



Dorm outing breakfast, 2018-2019.

Courtesy Denise Giffen.

## Carried by God

Just as I have experienced the grace of God in my life in the wake of tragedy, I have also seen this very clearly in the lives of my children. Despite the significant



Denise Giffen, 2019. Courtesy Denise Giffen.

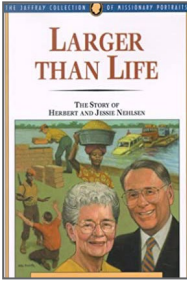
losses they experienced while still young and the many challenges they faced in the years that followed, they have grown into mature adults who handle life in healthy ways. They do not live as “victims” but are always seeking to grow and learn, not only in their relationship with the Lord but in all aspects of life’s journey. Each one has chosen a career path that serves people. God has carried them just as He has carried me.

As I have walked this life filled with great joy and great sorrow, I have learned some significant lessons on the journey.

- When God asks us to trust Him, He allows opportunities for us to have to do that.
- When God calls us to serve Him, He does not promise that it will be without sacrifice.
- When God says that His grace is sufficient, we may need to lose everything to truly understand.
- When God calls us to serve Him, it is not up to us to decide what it will look like.
- When God says He loves us, we are challenged to redefine our understanding of love.
- When God says He will give us hope and a future, it is much more about our relationship with Him than our life circumstances.

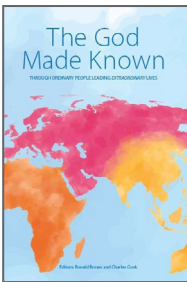
These are not necessarily one-time lessons, but without a doubt, the same God who calls me will also carry me until the day He takes me home. There have been many times over the years, as people have heard my story, they have suggested I write a book. My answer has always been, “The story isn’t over yet!”

## More Stories of Those Who Went



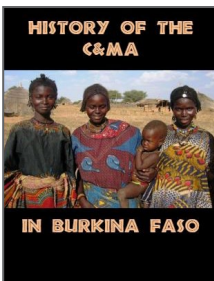
***Larger Than Life: The Story of Herbert and Jessie Nehlsen*** by Myra Brown

The years the Nehlsens spent in the brutal heart and dust of the sub-Saharan town of Tongan produced abundant fruit visible not only in physical things like churches and schools and wells, but also in spiritual things like the thousands of once-pagan believers who came to worship the One whose name they heard first from the lips of Herb and Jessie.



***The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Chapter 15 by Eric Persson is entitled, “Eric and Gwen Persson: Fruit That Will Last.”



***History of the C&MA in Burkina Faso*** by Milton and Nancy Pearce

The triumphs, trials, tidbits, and trivia of seventy-five years of Alliance ministry in Burkina Faso.

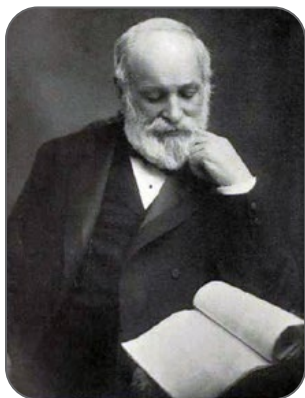
[https://issuu.com/ronaldwbrown/docs/history\\_of\\_cma\\_in\\_burkina\\_faso](https://issuu.com/ronaldwbrown/docs/history_of_cma_in_burkina_faso)

## Chapter 12

### Unwavering Faith: Robert, Minnie, and Margaret Jaffray

by Louise Green

The Jaffray Centre for Global Initiatives at Ambrose University and the Jaffray Project of The Alliance Canada (C&MA) are two Canadian endeavours underlining the importance of ongoing missional focus in the denomination. Both are named after Dr. Robert Alexander Jaffray, one of the first missionaries sent out by the C&MA in Canada.



Honourable Robert Jaffray Sr.,  
Senator, was Rob  
Jaffray's father. Courtesy  
Alliance Archives.

Robert Jaffray, known by his family as Rob, was born in Toronto, Ontario, on December 16, 1873, to Robert Jaffray and Sarah Bugg. Rob's father had immigrated to Canada from Scotland and first worked in a grocery store, which he later owned. Eventually, he moved into politics as campaign manager for Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) George Brown, owner of the Globe Printing Company. From being on the board of the newspaper to eventual ownership of *The Toronto Globe*, Mr. Jaffray sought to modernize the newspaper, bringing in illustrations and the use of linotype. In 1906 he was appointed to the Canadian Senate. His oldest son William became president of the newspaper until it was sold in 1936.

### Early Life – Spiritual Legacy

While Mr. Jaffray was not a committed Christian, his wife Sarah was, and they attended the Gould Street Presbyterian Church. Rob experienced health issues as a young man, including a weak heart and diabetes. At age sixteen, Rob was converted under the influence of his Sunday school teacher, Miss Annie Gowan, a follower of Dr. A.B. Simpson<sup>1</sup>, who first began preaching in Toronto in 1889. Articles in *The Toronto Globe* at the time described Simpson's preaching about divine healing.

After several years of college in Toronto, Rob began work at a life insurance company. As Dr. Simpson continued coming to Toronto and Hamilton to preach

---

1 Founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

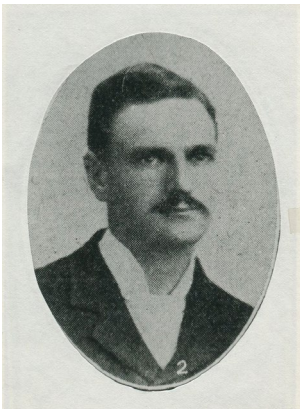
on diving healing, the deeper life, and world missions, Rob attended meetings at Bethany Chapel and personally felt the call to foreign missions. His first step would be Bible training at the newly opened Missionary Training Institute founded by Dr. Simpson in Nyack, New York.

Rob's father was not in favour of this and proposed his son attend the Presbyterian seminary in Canada with his support. However, Rob felt the unmistakable call of God and decided to move to New York and support himself by working his way through college. His three years of study focused on training in the Bible and practical ministry, including student preaching at a small church in Kenwood Heights, New York. The theme of "bringing back the King" was much a part of the teaching at the Missionary Training Institute, and Rob was strongly influenced by the need to take the Gospel to every tongue and tribe and nation, so then, the King (Jesus) would return.

In the later part of his ministry, while starting the Bible school in Makassar, Jaffray reflected on his time at Nyack:

"I personally remember definite impressions made by the Spirit of God on my heart as I sat under the teaching of men of God, including Dr. A.B. Simpson, [at] the home Bible School. These deep impressions have continued with me and have been like guiding stars in my whole missionary career, for over forty years. I often pray that my words to the students may in like manner cause deep impressions of the Spirit to be made upon their hearts."

In 1894, Jaffray travelled to raise prayer and financial support with Robert Glover. He was examined for his ordination by Dr. A.B. Simpson in Nyack in 1896.



Robert Jaffray, 1896.  
Courtesy Alliance Archives.

That same year, Alliance missionary conventions first became an annual event in Canada and were written up in the local newspapers. On January 20, 1896, seven ministers placed their hands on Robert Jaffray and George Shields while Dr. Simpson prayed, consecrating them to missionary service. An official announcement of this ceremony was reported the following day in *The Toronto Globe* owned by Jaffray's father.

This was the first ordination of Alliance missionaries in Canada. However, several other missionaries had already been sent overseas including Elizabeth Hawkins to China in 1894, William Wallbrook to Congo in 1895, and Margaret Quinn to Tibet in 1897, likely travelling with George Shields.



## Family Life

In 1897, a few months before turning twenty-four, Robert Jaffray and three other new missionaries travelled by ship to China. Jaffray and Dr. Robert Glover arrived in Guangxi Province. They studied the Chinese language in Teng County, joining a small group of missionaries who had been in China for three years already, including American missionary Minnie Donner.

Minnie was born in Medway, Ohio, on October 21, 1871. After becoming a believer at age seventeen, she soon felt the call to missions and was in one of the first classes of the Missionary Training school in New York. She went to South China in 1894, where her sister, Maizie, was married to Rev. Isaac Hess, field chairman.

The Chinese called Minnie “Sister Duna” and referred to her as a “preacher,” showing her involvement as an active Bible-teaching missionary in her own right. Jaffray married her in Hong Kong on August 7, 1900.

Minnie’s compassion drew her to the sex trafficking of young girls and women into slavery in the brothels, especially along the riverfronts. She was involved in the Door of Hope Mission organization in both Hong Kong and Shanghai. Working with Chinese helpers while based in Wuchow, Mrs. Jaffray endeavoured to visit women enslaved in these brothels.

Their daughter Margaret Morrison was born in 1907. When she was of school age, she studied in Chefoo, North China. The Chefoo School was founded by China Inland Mission in Yantai (Chefoo). As a Christian boarding school, with separate schools for boys and girls at the time Margaret attended, the students were given a British preparatory school education from a Christian perspective. Children were usually only able to visit their parents during December and January when the weather was healthier in the south and because travel to and from the school could take weeks at a time. By the time Margaret attended the Chefoo school, students were given Chinese language lessons to preserve the language they may have learned from their Chinese nanny (*ayah*).

Margaret attended high school in Toronto, where her Uncle William lived. She then took a business course and returned to China, where she worked as her father’s secretary while studying Chinese.

## Missionary Strategy

Jaffray’s leadership abilities were quickly put to use in China. Shortly after learning the Chinese language, Dr. Glover and the Jaffrays moved to Zhangzhou, where Jaffray followed Glover’s leadership in setting up the Jiandao (Wuchow) Bible College. When Dr. Glover returned to New York to become Foreign Secretary

of the C&MA, Jaffray added the role of principal to his position as professor of the seminary. After the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949, the college was moved to Hong Kong, where it became the Jiandao Theological Seminary or the Alliance Seminary in Hong Kong.

Wuchow was also the location of a guest home for missionaries, which Mrs. Jaffray headed up; her duties included orienting new missionaries to China. Jaffray was the head pastor of the Wuchow church, and when Rev. Isaac Hess (Jaffray's brother-in-law) retired in 1916, Jaffray was elected chairman of the South China field.

The Alliance workers in China followed a pattern of evangelism based on the strategies of the Apostle Paul. They sought to preach the Gospel, often in the local markets, disciple individual Christians, form local churches, and train leaders to lead those churches. Churches might begin as a loosely organized group of believers and later be more formally organized with a pastor, deacons, and elders. While the missionaries brought financial and spiritual support in the early days, they quickly formed local congregations and sent leaders to the Bible school for training.



Robert Jaffray, date unknown.  
Courtesy Alliance Archives.

## From a Publishing Family

New believers were brought to Wuchow to the Bible school, then sent out to preach God's Word and make disciples all around China. Jaffray was most aware of their need for further training in the Bible and in church planting methods, so he began writing to each graduate individually. Eventually, Jaffray realized the necessity of more formal ongoing communication and training.

In 1911, Jaffray began what became a pattern for him in ministry, first in China, then in Vietnam, and finally in the East Indies: establish a publishing company to write, print, and distribute Christian materials to strengthen local believers and Bible teachers. While he did not take over leadership at *The Toronto Globe*, the influence of his family remained clear throughout his ministry in Asia.

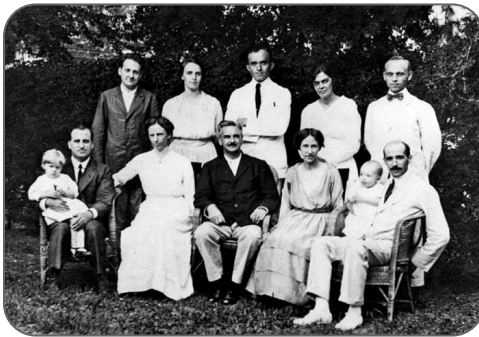
Lacking mission funds, Jaffray wrote to his supporters, raising funds for a printing press, and

the South China Press was established. Located for many years in Wuchow, the company eventually moved to Hong Kong. Jaffray's *Bible Magazine* was written in literary and colloquial Chinese. While Jaffray did most of the writing, he employed a Chinese secretary to edit and perfect his written Chinese. Using material from his Bible school lectures, he published commentaries, hymnals, devotionals, and the *Bible Magazine*; literature was distributed all over China and to Chinese readers throughout Asia, the United States, and Europe.

When news of Jaffray's death reached the mission leadership in 1945, one of the first questions asked, as reported by Foreign Secretary Alfred Snead, was how would the Chinese *Bible Magazine* continue without Robert Jaffray to write its main articles each month?

## Deeper Life

In his prayer letters in 1907, Jaffray wrote about a revival among the missionaries in Wuchow, South China. He described how several, though not all, missionaries received the gift of speaking in tongues and explained how the "anointing" he received gave him a "deeper love for, and understanding of the Word of God than ever before" and "an unction in witnessing and preaching." He carefully noted the gift of tongues was not the only evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. While even a year and a half after this conference, Jaffray recorded he continued to speak in tongues and his anointing "abideth" to that day, he also wrote, "One lamentable lack in connection with this outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been the spirit of evangelism. Divine unction bestowed on a child of God should lead that one out to seek and save the lost as Jesus did." First and foremost, Jaffray's calling was to seek and to save the lost.

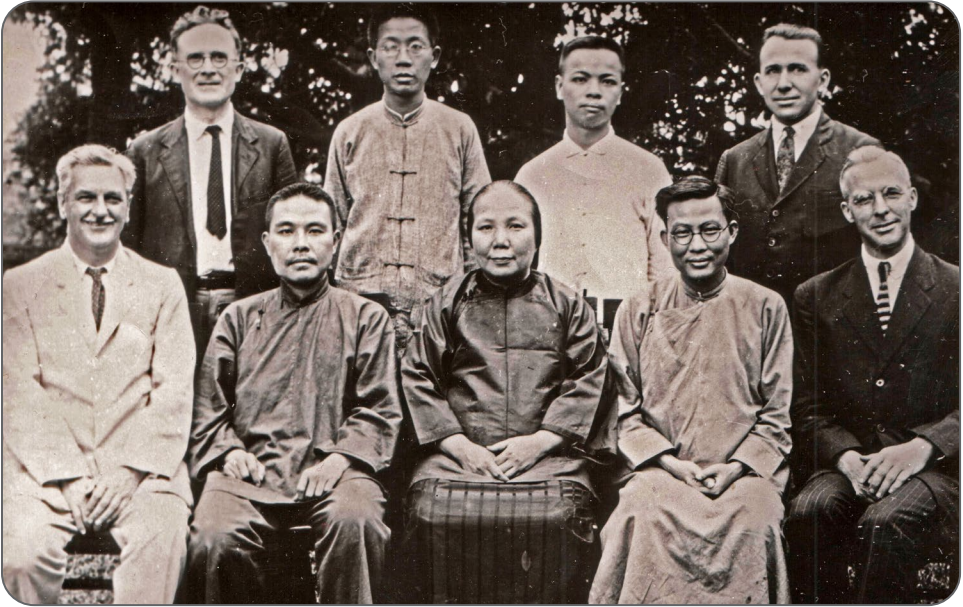


Jaffray, mid front row, with workers in Indochina, date unknown. Courtesy Bonnie Burnett.

## Entering Vietnam

In 1898, just a year after arriving in China, Jaffray made his first trip to Vietnam, called Annam at that time. Eventually, missionaries were sent to Vietnam from the China field, and the field grew despite opposition from the French government and the difficulties caused by World War I.

In 1916, while remaining in



Jaffray with the China Team (includes Walter Oldfield). Courtesy Alliance Archives.

Wuchow, Jaffray became the director of the mission to French Indochina or Vietnam. Jaffray visited the French Governor-General in Vietnam and persuaded him to allow the preaching of the Gospel in that colony. Using at least eleven languages, missionaries worked to spread the Gospel. Bible translation into the main language was emphasized, and under Jaffray's leadership, a printing press and publishing house were set up in Hanoi. Hymnals, tracts, books, and Bibles were published and widely distributed.

Jaffray was repeatedly re-elected field chairman of the Vietnam field while still superintending the South China field from his home in Wuchow. To keep the mission work in Vietnam progressing well, Jaffray encouraged the field in their election of Walter Oldfield as vice-chairman. Jaffray made frequent trips to Vietnam, on occasion accompanied by his wife, Minnie. In 1920, they made a six-week trip to open a chapel in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) and take a vision trip to the as yet unreached Cambodia. They travelled more than one thousand miles north to Tourane and Hanoi.

## Self-government

Jaffray was earnest in his desire to bring the Gospel to China and plant an independent, autonomous, self-leading Chinese church. This was not an opinion

held by all the members of the Chinese mission field, and many of his fellow missionaries felt the church should not be fully autonomous until the church was financially self-supporting. Jaffray was forced to compromise and set up governance by three committees: one of missionaries, one of Chinese Christians, and one of leaders from both groups. When there was a difference of opinion, Jaffray brought himself into conflict with his fellow missionaries, often siding with the Chinese church.

By 1925, there were seventy-seven Alliance stations in Kwangsi in China. But in the face of the 1,533 market towns in the region, Tozer notes that Jaffray asked, “What are seventy-seven stations among these?”

## Political Stress and Theology of Risk

In the 1920s, China became politically unstable with outside influences from Bolshevik Russia and roving bands of armed militia became commonplace. In 1923, a militia group laid siege to the city of Kweilin for seventy-seven days. Among those in the city were several Alliance workers who watched over the Chinese girls’ boarding home at the Alliance school. One of their number, Rev. Cunningham, was shot. In Wuchow, Jaffray and the rest of the Alliance team prayed for Kweilin and eventually decided to try to rescue their fellow workers.

On their way to Kweilin, their riverboat was attacked by militia who demanded they pay a toll or ransom, and their armed escort of eighty soldiers abandoned them. The militia took the missionaries with them into the mountains and held them for ransom. With good humour, Jaffray later recounted how God had made sure he was wearing his most comfortable shoes when he was taken, so he could march without getting blisters. Jaffray continually proclaimed the Gospel to the

militia despite their mistreatment. Eventually, a ransom was paid by Chinese officials, and the missionaries were released. Tozer notes, Jaffray found at the end of this ordeal, “his condition was definitely improved,” and he was able to “enjoy better health from that time forward.”

Later in the 1920s, the British were expelled from China, and soon other foreigners, including North American missionaries, also left. Then the



Jaffray is seated in the middle, date unknown.

Courtesy C&MA-USA.





Robert and Minnie Jaffray.  
Courtesy Alliance Archives.

persecution began to include local believers who endured beatings and imprisonment. In 1925, many Alliance missionaries were sent to Hong Kong to be safer under British protection. By 1927, five thousand missionaries had been forced to leave China.

Alliance missionaries re-entered China for a short time, but the continuing persecution and turmoil increased pressure on the local church and the North American missionaries. Jaffray used this time to encourage giving more independence to the Chinese church and to its leaders. During the four years of political instability, the Alliance workers continued with their evangelism, using

gospel advertising on billboards, and publishing the *Bible Magazine* every month, smuggling issues of the magazine through roadblocks as necessary.

## The Power of a Dream

In 1927, Jaffray turned fifty-five. After thirty years of ministry in China, he was asked to return to the U.S. as vice president of the C&MA. Holding his call to foreign missions tightly, Jaffray refused politely, suggesting to work in the home office would be a step down.

By then, Jaffray was looking ahead to a world outside of China. The reality of thousands of Chinese working in the port cities of the South Seas without a gospel witness could not be ignored. In 1928, Jaffray made an exploratory trip by freighter to Sandakan, British Borneo, then later to Balikpapan in Dutch Borneo.

While in Balikpapan, Jaffray sensed a cloud of darkness there. He wrote, "It came upon me like a dark, thick cloud of gloom, and I could not shake it off. Only His light and joy finally dispelled the darkness. [I realized] I was on the enemy's territory. Yes, here is a place where the supreme rule of Satan has never been disputed."

Jaffray wrote in his prayer letter, "I hear the call of the great cities of Makassar and Surabaya. Those names were new to me.... Now they ring in my ears all day long and in my dreams at night! Makassar! Makassar! Surabaya! Surabaya! They



now represent to me places of midnight darkness.”

Once back in China, Jaffray sent his report to New York and his request for funds to open a new mission in Borneo was denied. Yet, the needs of the people in the unevangelized area would continue to pursue him. One night, Jaffray had a dream which spoke to him clearly. He described it in 1928 in *The Pioneer*, “But the Lord gave me a dream. One of those vivid dreams which leaves a deep and lasting impression. I have seldom had such dreams in my life, but when He sends them, there is no question but that the dream is from Him.”

Jaffray continued, “It was a horrible dream. ...I was a fugitive fleeing from justice. I thought I had stains of human blood on my hands. I thought the Lord Jesus was pursuing me. I was full of fear and was running for my life.... I awoke. My first words were, ‘Oh Lord Jesus, what does this mean?’” Jaffray, as he reflected on his dream, heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him, “If I warn them not, if I preach not the Gospel to them, I will be accountable for their blood. No wonder I have heard in my ears all these days the cry of the people of Borneo.”

In response, Jaffray wrote again to the board in New York but did not request funds or personnel. Instead, he told them that he was going to the Dutch East Indies or Borneo with their support or without. In response, a cable came giving permission to go, but with no promise of funding.

As Jaffray prayed over the lack of personnel and funding for this new outreach, the Lord clearly spoke to him, and the decision was made to send Chinese Christian workers to the Dutch East Indies as missionaries. Jaffray wrote in the *South China Alliance Tidings*, “Suddenly I was conscious the ‘Still Small Voice’ was speaking to my listening heart. I love to hear his voice.”

## The East Indies



Jaffray with the Indonesia Team.  
Courtesy Alliance Archives.

In July 1928, only a few months after his trip to the area, Chinese missionaries S.W. Chue and later Leland Wang reached out to the Chinese in the East Indies. In 1929, Jaffray made another trip south, taking two more Chinese workers with him, and upon his return, more support for the endeavour came. Throughout the various articles written by Jaffray about the work in the East Indies, there is a reference to



Jaffray with Indonesians, 1936.  
Courtesy C&MA-USA.



Jaffray visiting the Lowlands in Irian Jaya, date unknown. Courtesy Alliance Archives.

his Chinese fellow workers. He often mentions Pastor Chue, stating that he “was the first resident missionary in our work in the N.E.I., and ...labored for many years, in Makassar, [and now] is in charge of the work in Soembawa.”

Pastor Chue led the outreach to Chinese merchants in the East Indies and reached out to the Indonesians in his region. In 1941, Jaffray noted in the annual report while, at first, the Chinese missionaries worked with the Chinese along the coast, they “soon felt ... that their call was not to the coast towns but to the Dyaks in the interior.” Their work led to more than seven hundred Dyaks coming to the Lord at that time.

Jaffray used his own personal funds while supporters throughout Canada and the USA also sent in finances. As Jaffray wrote detailed descriptions of every region of the East Indies in his prayer letters, word went out about

Borneo, head-hunters, and the Dyaks. New missionaries from North America volunteered and were soon studying the Malay language. Within a few months, a gospel hall was built, and a new magazine started, *The Borneo Pioneer*, which was first printed in Wuchow. Jaffray also made plans for a printing press to publish the *Bible Magazine* in the Malay language and for a Bible school.

In 1930, at age fifty-seven, despite his ongoing struggle with diabetes, Jaffray continued to live in Wuchow and make frequent trips to the various islands of the East Indies. On a trip in 1930, Jaffray wrote of how he felt the Lord saying to him, “We pray, ‘Even so, come Lord Jesus, COME QUICKLY. But He seems to say to me, ‘Even so Disciple GO, GO QUICKLY. When you have gone into all the world with my Gospel to every land and kindred, then will I come.’”

By 1931, thirteen foreign missionaries were on the new field, along with numerous Chinese co-workers, working in eight different mission stations. At the highest, there were thirty foreign workers, twenty Chinese workers, and one



Robert Jaffray, 1930. Courtesy C&MA-USA.

hundred and forty local evangelists. Despite limited financing from North America due to the depression, the work in the East Indies went forward.

### **Sense of Humour**

Showing the appreciation fellow missionaries had for their field director's wife, on Mrs. Jaffray's forty-sixth birthday, Rev. and Mrs. Alvin Field wrote a long humorous poem about Minnie, reminding us, while missionaries work hard, they also play hard and celebrate well together as a family. They wrote about her work with newly arrived missionaries and her delight in giving generously to the poor, among other accolades:

"Who takes each new recruit in hand,  
And fits him out so find and grand,  
He's glad he came to China-land?  
Mrs. Jaffray.

Who gives her husband's clothes away  
Till he never knows in what array  
He may appear in class next day?  
Mrs. Jaffray.

But here our praise begins to halt;  
We must confess she has a fault!  
The Customs caught her smuggling salt!!!  
Mrs. Jaffray."

The move to the tropical East Indies from a more temperate South China was not without its difficulties. In one of the earliest editions of *The Pioneer* in 1929, Jaffray published a humour piece by Rev. Clench, one of the five North American

missionaries who had just arrived in Makassar with Jaffray. Clench described with sarcastic wit life in a small hut, shared with a Chinese missionary family, sleeping on a cot under a mosquito net, and working daily on his Malay language study:

“Let us locate ourselves in our Missionary Home in Balik-papan. It is twelve o’clock midnight. You are stretched out on a little, hard, narrow, hot, folding cot, perhaps your legs are draped out over the edge of the thing, and as for your arms, you have moved and shifted them so many times that you’ve forgotten just where they really are. A herd of mosquitoes have stampeded their way into the private sanctum of your net, and it’s a ‘slap here, a slap there, everywhere a slap;’ when will morning come?”

In one of his *General Letters* in 1934, Jaffray’s sense of humour was again shown when a Balinese man in Lombok tried to guess his age, and when told how old he was, remarked, “But, what wonderful teeth he has for a man of his age!!” Jaffray wryly noted, “I have a quick knowing look at Mr. Brill, and, mum was the word. ‘Where ignorance is bliss’ etc.” Jaffray was making reference to his dentures, perhaps?

## Move from China

In 1931, Jaffray and his wife left their home of thirty-four years in Wuchow, China. While Jaffray’s role as missionary statesman led him to travel throughout China, Vietnam, and later the East Indies, he always wrote frequent letters home to his wife Minnie and daughter Margaret.

In February 1931, Mrs. Jaffray and Margaret, age twenty-four, sailed for North America, where Mrs. Jaffray stayed for two years. Margaret attended the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York, then worked in ministry in Kentucky before arriving in Asia as a missionary. Mrs. Jaffray met her in Hong Kong and accompanied her to her post in Makassar in October 1934. Margaret wrote in *The Pioneer* in 1934:

“I’m glad to be home again! Four years have passed since I bade farewell to Makassar, and the shores of the Netherlands East Indies to attend the Missionary Training Institute at Nyack. Surely the goodness of and Mercy of the Lord have followed me these years, and I thank Him from the depths of my heart for leading me back to these needy islands.”

Margaret continued, “Four years have passed—and what are my impressions as I return to Makassar? How wonderfully the Lord has developed the work here

General Letter No. 39

En route from Saigon,  
Nearing Hongkong,  
June 22, 1931

Dear Friends, -

If God will, I reach Hongkong tomorrow morning early, and have the full day there, and leave on this same steamer in the late afternoon for Shanghai. It seems strange to be coming into Hongkong and not making that my getting-off place. As you know, I think, I am making now for the Conferences in North China. The Peitaiho Conference opens on July 3rd. and I am to be there most of the month of July, and then go on to Kuling for most of the month of August. Many times I have felt like regretting having promised to go, for I feel as pressed for time as I ever did with the full responsibility of the South China work upon me, and again I seem to dread the standing before so many missionaries and Chinese leaders as a teacher of the Word of God. But, these Conferences have been asking me to go for some years, and I feel now it is His will for me to go, and I believe that there is a unique ministry awaiting me there, and possibly the opening of a wide door of opportunity for the Conferences under The Chinese Foreign Missionary Union in various parts of China in the interests of the work in the Dutch East Indies, for which we have been praying.

Excerpt of letter written by Robert Jaffray to fellow workers, 1931.

Courtesy National Ministry Centre.

at headquarters in this short time! Then, there was no Bible School. Now, over seventy students assemble daily to study the Word of God.... Four years ago, seven missionaries composed the staff of foreign workers. Now we are 17. Then we had no... converts in the city of Makassar, and during these years over a hundred have been saved and baptized."

Jaffray wrote to his supporters while his family was in North America, "During these days alone here I have made it an almost invariable rule to retire early... and then to rise early in the morning at 4:30 or 5:00 o'clock and give three hours of the best part of the day to the Word and Prayer. I am having a wonderful time in the book of Revelation.... Thus, after three hours before breakfast in the Word of God and waiting on Him, I am ready for the 101 duties of the day." It was also in the early morning hours when Jaffray often composed his many articles for *The Bible Magazine*.

## Printing and Praying

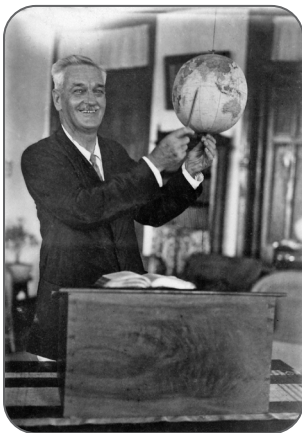
The printing press in Wuchow was burned in the fall of 1932 and could not be sent to Makassar. Using his own money and again gifts from his supporters, new presses were sent out and set up in Makassar to print hymn books, tracts, commentaries, and devotionals. Jaffray continued to write how the still, small voice of the Lord was speaking to him. In 1935, he noted the Lord "whispered in my ear time and again that He has 'much people' in Bali."

Jaffray used the Scriptures in his prayer times, and during a visit to Bali, seeing the persecution of new believers, he spent time in prayer for them, and the words of Acts 8:1 came to him “with great force, and they proved to be a help and strength to Pastor Tsang and the Christians.” It is clear here how Jaffray prayed using Scripture and how he worked alongside Chinese missionaries sent from the church he had helped to plant in South China.

Jaffray wrote, “We must lengthen as well as strengthen” and underlined it was not enough to see more than forty-five hundred conversions by 1934, but strengthening by systematic training in Bible schools must be undertaken. By 1941, two hundred and nine local believers studied in the Makassar Bible Institute, and seventy-four Sunday schools, reaching over thirty-two hundred students, were organized. The church was also nearly financially self-supporting.

Jaffray also extended the mission into Malaya, three hundred miles north of Singapore, and purchased land for a mission station and Bible school using his own funds from the sale of *The Toronto Globe* in 1936. This independent initiative was not without criticism from the Home Office. William Smalley said, “Dr. Jaffray’s keen desire to have a part in every effort of getting the gospel to all men everywhere may have caused him to close his eye to what some thought were serious errors in judgement and administration.” In the end, with the Japanese invasion of Singapore, the project never progressed.

Jaffray also wrote in *The Pioneer* in 1933 about his own love of reading maps and praying about where God would next send the Gospel: “But the pouring over a map will not do any good, or bring the Gospel to lost souls, unless it begets prayer. We did pray, and we offered ourselves to go to these still unoccupied parts. The Holy Spirit has given us some experience in travail in prayer for these who sit in utter darkness and the shadow of death.”



Jaffray prayed over maps.  
Courtesy C&MA-USA.

One of the essential needs in the work in the East Indies was a place at a higher elevation, with cooler weather, where the missionaries could go for rest and healing from tropical diseases. In his letter in 1937, Jaffray thanked those friends whose gifts had made possible a “Rest Resort” in the mountains of Benteng-Tinggi, not too far from Makassar. Jaffray spent time there when he was ill for several months in 1937. Also, the annual mission conferences were held there.

Jaffray noted, “Some of our missionaries came to Conference badly broken in health, and in need of a



prolonged rest and change ere they will be able to go back to work again.” Jaffray talked of the need for prayer on the one hand, and on the other hand, he blessed his supporters for their provision of this restful area for missionaries to have time to heal in body and spirit within the region.

## Home Visits

The life of the Jaffray family included brief visits to Canada or the USA every three to four years. Jaffray needed to see doctors for his personal health issues, and as a member of *The Toronto Globe* board of directors, he needed to attend meetings at least periodically. As well, as an ordained minister, Robert Jaffray was also part of the leadership of the fledgling C&MA in Canada. On a year-long furlough in Canada in 1900, Jaffray and Rev. Salmon, who had presided over his ordination in 1896 along with Dr. Simpson, were together made associate superintendents of the districts of Ontario and Quebec.

In 1909, the Jaffray family was again in Canada for furlough, and their September 1909 farewell service was presided over by A.B. Simpson. Jaffray’s father, now a Senator, was listed as one of those attending. Rev. Salmon was not part of this service as he had already left on a world tour of Alliance missions in August where he would visit the Jaffray family, and other Alliance workers, in China.

Rev. Salmon described his visit to Wuchow, “I hear the mission well-spoken of before reaching Wuchow. The home is on the top of a large hill.... It overlooks the city and is designed to be a home for missionaries in coming and going to their fields of labor. I spent a happy Christmas among brethren and sisters though. I had the privilege that day of addressing about five hundred Chinese Christians in a union meeting of Wesleyans, Baptists, and Alliance people.... On the Lord’s day I preached morning and evening through Mr. Jaffray interpreting. I learned from a missionary in another body that Brother Jaffray is the best interpreter in South China.”

Jaffray’s last visit to Canada was in 1938 with his wife. While at home, he was extremely ill, and refusing surgery, he prayed for and received healing. He wrote in his *General Letter* of how, as he prayed, the Lord spoke to him in the still small voice, saying, “With long life I will satisfy him.” He continued, “Then I felt a slight sensation in my upper bowel as though Someone had touched me; and again, He touched me. I knew that the stoppage was opened. The pain ceased, and has never returned.”

During the 1938 furlough, Wheaton College conferred on Jaffray an honorary Doctorate of Divinity. His brother Will, now the head of *The Toronto Globe*, attended this ceremony, putting to rest rumours of Jaffray being alienated from his family.

On their return to the field in 1938, Jaffray and Minnie travelled by steamboat. He records, “We were met by our daughter in Singapore, and, were we glad to see her again?” After a few days in Singapore, Margaret traveled to Makassar with her father, leaving Mrs. Jaffray in Singapore “to follow later.”

## Spiritual Warfare and Divine Healing

During his time in Makassar, Jaffray, now age sixty-three, wrote clearly in *The Pioneer* about spiritual warfare: “How can we scatter this terrible Satanic Darkness? ...What I know about the ministry of prayer, and its power, is not equal to the task of enlightening this thick, black darkness.” Two years later, he stated, “We are fighting, in these last days, the last battles of the Age, and we are confronted with the most fearful powers of the kingdom of darkness that the Christian Church has ever known.... It is a warfare of faith, a conflict with the powers of darkness.... Only by the faith of prayer-warriors can we prevail.”

Jaffray also ensured the Makassar Gospel Tabernacle held monthly healing services for both believers and unbelievers. He wrote in 1934 in *The Pioneer*, “We have come to feel strongly that we need such ‘signs and wonders’ in the Name of the Lord Jesus to attest the message of the Gospel here in Makassar.” Jaffray described training Bible school students to pray for healing and for individuals to be delivered from demonic influences.



Robert Jaffray in his later years.  
Courtesy Alliance Archives.

Jaffray further noted, “We laid down no restrictions as to the use or non-use of remedies, leaving everyone free to consult doctors... and use of ordinary means desired, but we emphatically claimed that the right thing to do in any case was to come first to the Lord Jesus, to commit our case to Him, be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord, and then obey His will as He would indicate.... We have seen nothing spectacular, but there have been some very definite answers to prayer for the sick, and some clear ringing testimonies of the healing power of the Lord Jesus.”

Jaffray, while diabetic, having heart issues, and later a gastric ulcer, determined to live life as a healthy man in God’s power. He wrote about his belief in God’s provision of the health necessary for service, stating, “I have already experienced definite touches of His life in my body in times of need. I fully expect to be restored to full health

and strength.” Throughout his time in China, Vietnam, and East Asia, he travelled incessantly, eating local food and going third class to save money.

In the fall of 1938, Jaffray, Minnie, and Margaret returned to Makassar from Canada despite inklings of worldwide instability and war. Margaret continued to teach at the Bible School and, for a time, in the Women’s School. Jaffray wrote of their return to Makassar, “If I do not go back now, there is little likelihood that I can ever go back at all. I must return to the Far East. I want to die out there where my life has been.”

In 1939, war was declared in Europe and funds to the field dropped off. Jaffray spoke to his team of the joy it will be in Heaven to meet the new believers from Borneo face to face: “No sacrifice that we have made will then seem too great.”

## **World War II**

In 1941, fearing if they took their regular year-long home assignment in Canada, they would not be able to return to Makassar, the Jaffray family, including Minnie and Margaret, travelled to Manila, The Philippines, for a much-needed six-month furlough instead. Shortly after this, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, and Hong Kong was soon captured, along with Manila and Singapore.

Jaffray gave permission to the missionaries under him to return quickly to the U.S., and while some did leave, many stayed, including Robert, Minnie, and Margaret. Jaffray wrote, “I cannot leave while one missionary remains on the field.”

Within a short time, the Japanese took hold of the Dutch East Indies, the mission plane was captured, and the pilot, Rev. F.C. Jackson, was executed. Another worker, Rev. Andrew Sande, was also killed, and his wife and infant son soon after.

Jaffray moved the missionary team from Makassar to the mission rest home in Benteng Tinggi. But, on March 13, 1942, the Japanese placed the men under arrest in the police barracks in Makassar and interned the women in Benteng Tinggi, where Jaffray was kept with his wife and daughter. A total of ten Alliance missionaries were interned. Later, Jaffray was moved to camps in Molino and Pare-Pare. Allied planes flew over Pare-Pare and bombed the area. The prisoners were then moved to a mountain camp. Those interned were forced to work hard and fed barely enough to stay alive.

Life for the women missionaries interned at the Kampili Protection Camp, where they were moved to, was difficult. Mrs. Deibler wrote her family in North America in 1943 when she found her husband had died three months before. After two years of internment, Mrs. Deibler wrote, “It seemed even worse things could not happen but they did. Miss Jaffray and Miss Seely were both quite



Missionaries in Macassar two months after their liberation. Lillian Marsh, Margaret Jaffray, Ernie Presswood, Ruth Presswood, and Philomena Seeley. Courtesy Alliance Archives.



Nathan Bailey, C&MA-USA president from 1960-1978, lays a wreath on Jaffray's grave in Indonesia. Courtesy Alliance Archives.

mentally deranged for some time but are, thank God, quite well at the present." What type of abuse these young single women endured can only be imagined.

Rev. W.E. Presswood, who was interned with Jaffray, wrote two-thirds of the six hundred men interned had dysentery, and many died. Food was minimal, and it was the rainy season. The guards beat and abused the interned men. Presswood writes of Jaffray, "He weakened rapidly, like everyone else, but because of his age he could not hold out as long."

Robert Jaffray passed away on July 29, 1945. Living in the camp with him was independent missionary Rev. F.R. Whetzel, who later wrote, "One of the great blessings of my life was the privilege I had of being interned with Dr. Jaffray on the island Celebes. I learned to love him as a great man of vision and faith." The day after Jaffray died, Rev. Presswood conducted a funeral service for him, and a combined choir of interned Catholic and Protestant workers sang "Nearer My God to Thee." Later a memorial service was held at the gravesite.

Mrs. Jaffray and Margaret had not been with Jaffray in two years and had no way to learn of his death until their own eventual release from the women's internment camp. A memorial stands in Makassar at the site where his grave was moved after the war.

In his last prayer letter, written in 1942 upon his return to Makassar from the Philippines, Jaffray had written, "The promise is 'When thou passest *through* the waters, I will be with thee.' He is with us not only before and after the danger, but *when we pass through it*. His promise is very real to our hearts."

## After Internment



Minnie Jaffray in her later years.  
Courtesy Alliance Archives.

After their release, Minnie and Margaret Jaffray returned to North America. Mrs. Jaffray, despite her ill health after years of internment, travelled throughout the U.S. to visit friends and family. She passed away very suddenly on November 10, 1946. *The Pioneer* in 1947 described Mrs. Jaffray as a “veteran of many years of consecrated missionary service in China, and finally also in the Netherlands, Indies. [She] endured the long and terrible ordeal of internment. God was pleased to bring her through this long period and give her the joy of reunion with loved ones and friends in North America. And then suddenly, she who had spent many years in His service, was removed from this earthly scene.... The strength of purpose, and the whole-hearted devotion to the Lord Jesus, which distinguished the life of our lamented and esteemed sister, were truly a challenge to us.”

*The Pioneer* in 1948 noted, before WWII, Margaret Jaffray had previously spent a term in the East Indies as a

missionary, then was interned by the Japanese with the other missionaries. After her time in Toronto, she had now returned to Indonesia. By 1950, Margaret was teaching Dyak believers in the Malay language at the Long Bia Bible School in East Kalimantan, Borneo. In May 1950, violence between pro-Dutch and nationalist Indonesians brought violence to the Makassar, and Margaret described how God protected them with only a few shots being fired. She noted the missionaries were taking refuge from the violence at the Mission Home, and some were aboard the Borneo boat, hoping to leave the area soon.

In 1951, Margaret left by plane for the United States and then Canada due to ill health. In *The Pioneer*, it was written her “command of the Indonesian language

has made her ministry a great blessing among the students” and it was hoped God would “touch her with His quickening power and give her a ministry among you also.” Back in Toronto, Margaret taught Sunday school in the Alliance Tabernacle but unfortunately, in 1959, she passed away after being in a car accident with friends in Orillia, Ontario.

## Conclusion

After his death, the Board of Managers in New York approved the Jaffray Memorial Fund to raise fifty thousand dollars as a memorial to Dr. R.A. Jaffray. The funds were to go to the projects in line with Jaffray’s vision: pioneer evangelism in New Guinea, and literature ministries and publication work in Indonesia, New Guinea, Vietnam, and China.

Jaffray’s legacy of praying over maps and strategizing how to reach those who had not yet heard the name of Jesus, of making Bible schools accessible for the training of new believers in their mother tongue, of using literature and publishing as a means of discipleship and training, of planting churches by grouping new believers into fellowships and training their leaders, and of involving recently trained believers from non-North American fields in the mission enterprise stands yet today as a path forward to reaching the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom.

**Editor’s Note:** Today there are people all over the world who are eager to hear more about God. Alliance Canada introduced the Jaffray Project in 2016, which sends international workers to least-reached people groups such as the Fulani, Wolof, Yazidis, and Huichol. The Jaffray Project brings awareness, increases prayer, and raises financial resources for new efforts to send and support workers around the world to share the hope found in Jesus. Your support launches new workers and supports the Global Advance Fund—[cmaacan.org/jaffray/](http://cmaacan.org/jaffray/). Like Robert Jaffray, we want to continue sharing the Good News! The Alliance Canada is committed to Jesus and His mission. We want to bring access to Jesus.

## Sources

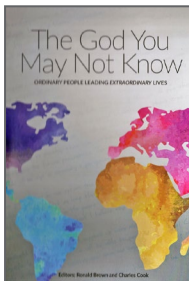
Beeby, Dean. (2003). Jaffray, Robert. In *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Vol. 14), University of Toronto/Université Laval. Retrieved from: [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jaffray\\_robert\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jaffray_robert_14E.html)

cmalliance.org. (2021). Robert A. Jaffray. Retrieved from: <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/history/in-the-line-of-fire/jaffray>



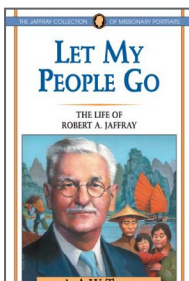
- Green, Louise. (Mar. 1990). Robert Jaffray: Man of Spirit, Man of Power. *His Dominion*, (Vol. 16, 2-14). Retrieved from: <https://www.cmresources.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CMR-JAFFRAY-Robert-Sojourn-in-Mission-FINAL.pdf>
- Reynolds, Lindsay. (1981). *Footprints: The Beginnings of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada*. Buena Books: Beaverlodge, Canada.
- Smalley, William. (1976). *Alliance Missions in Indonesia*, (Vol 1, 1929-1945; Vol. II, 1946-1965).
- The Story of the Wuchow Bible School. (Nov. 1940). *The Herald*, (Vol. 2, No 1). Retrieved from: <http://www.bsmi.org/download/newbern/Herald.pdf>
- The Pioneer*. (1929-1941; 1946-1958). Retrieved from: <http://cmalliance.org/resources/archives/pioneer>
- Thompson, Larry. (n.d.). *Missionary Children in China: The Chefoo School and a Japanese Prison*. Retrieved from: [https://www.academia.edu/8994079/Missionary\\_Children\\_in\\_China\\_The\\_Chefoo\\_School\\_and\\_a\\_Japanese\\_Prison](https://www.academia.edu/8994079/Missionary_Children_in_China_The_Chefoo_School_and_a_Japanese_Prison)
- Whetzel, R. Randall. (August 2008). A Man to Follow. In *Alliance Life*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cmalliance.org/alife/a-man-to-follow/>
- Wu, Paul. (July 19, 2019). Biography of Robert Alexander Jaffray: Founder of “The Bible” Newspaper. *China Christian Daily*. (Transl. Charlie Li). Retrieved from: [http://chinachristiandaily.com/news/china/2019-07-10/biography-of-robert-alexander-jaffray--founder-of--the-bible--newspaper-\\_8432](http://chinachristiandaily.com/news/china/2019-07-10/biography-of-robert-alexander-jaffray--founder-of--the-bible--newspaper-_8432)

## More Stories of Those Who Went



***The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives*** edited by Ronald Brown and Charles Cook

Reg Reimer has written chapter 9 entitled “Vietnam: The Coming of the Protestants.” Chapter 11, by Hendrik Schmetz is entitled “Indonesia: Great Exploits for God.” Helen Douglas has also written a chapter entitled “Frank and Marie Irwin: Trusting God in All Areas of Their Lives.”



***Let My People Go: The Life of Robert A. Jaffray*** by A.W. Tozer

The story of how God used Robert Jaffray to bring thousands of people to Himself. Jaffray’s keen administration, extensive writing, and incessant strategizing made him a natural leader as he orchestrated the missionary effort in Southeast Asia.

## Canadian Alliance Missions Engagement

### More books that tell our story



### **The God You May Not Know: Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives**

In *A God You May Not Know*, Ron and Charles provide a compelling collection of true-life stories. This autobiographical material by people who have "been there, done that" is both informative and inspirational. As Alliance missionaries, when they tell their stories, they are telling our story. They provide a window through which you catch a glimpse of our mission.

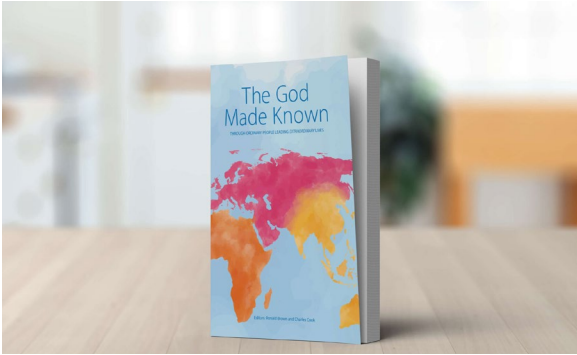
Mel Sylvester, President of C&MA in Canada 1980-1992

If you don't like to read long biographies but love short stories, if the exploits of extraordinarily gifted individuals often leave you wondering whether God ever uses ordinary people like you to accomplish His global agenda, if you find yourself wondering whether the Gospel is really the power of God unto salvation for all nations, if you want to understand why "missions" is part of the DNA of our denomination, then this book may have been written just for you. Just the introduction made me want to read it.

Sunder Krishnan, former pastor Rexdale Alliance Church

This book should come with a warning. Consumption may result in focused resolve to be about God's mission, a spirit stirred towards the least-reached peoples of the world, and a heart that bursts with godly pride of that which he extraordinarily accomplishes through his ordinary, faithful and Spirit-filled people.

Doug Balzer, Western Canadian District



## **The God Made Known: Through Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives**

Warning! The stories in this book may inspire you to greater sacrifice. *The God Made Known* celebrates the extraordinary work of God through faithful men and women who “had given up all for Christ, and His work meant all to them” (Simpson). Reading this book makes me want to join this missionary Alliance all over again. Many things have changed in the world of missions. Least-reached people groups are now moving into our backyard. New and creative opportunities for missions abound. What has not changed is the power of the Gospel to save and the need for the Church to proclaim it...Everyone! Everywhere! All the time! “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).

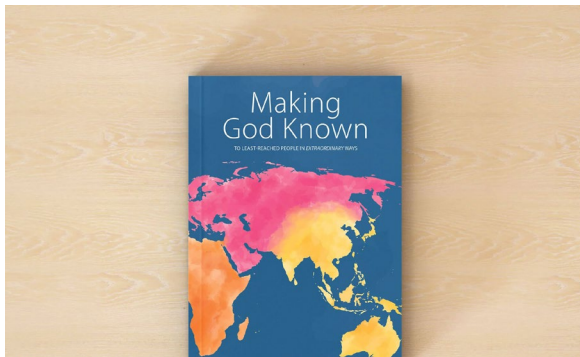
Stephen Harbridge, District Superintendent, Central Canadian District, Burlington

*The God Made Known* should be required reading for anyone ministering or leading within our Alliance churches, as well as for anyone looking to be inspired and encouraged by God’s hand and provision in the joys and deep challenges of reaching out to the nations with the Good News of Christ. How does God work in the world? For some insight, read through the pages of this compelling history.

Clyde Glass, Lead Pastor, Southview Alliance Church, Calgary

The compilation of stories in this book reflects people empowered by the Spirit, living on mission and bringing God’s Kingdom to earth. They tell our story, the story of The Christian and Missionary Alliance around the world. I am grateful for the godly examples of men and women taking risks to go where others may have never ventured. They inspire the readers’ own pursuits of going to those on the margins, to those often forgotten and in need of the good news. I highly recommend this book.

Glendyne Gerrard, Director of Defend Dignity, Toronto



## **Making God Known: To Least-Reached People in Extraordinary Ways**

This book tells our story. You'll recognize names and legendary accounts from our shared past. As with any good family narrative, you'll also discover connections and explanations about people and initiatives that were previously unknown to you. It is like reading a collection of family stories. This book chronicles how our denomination got the Gospel message out to people and places where Christ is unknown. It recounts how it all came together and the people who made it happen in a world where there was war, uncertainty, chaos, and upheaval. We learn how our international workers leveraged their talents to reach others, and in the reading, we become aware of the profound sacrifices they made and the burdens they bore. And throughout our stories, we see how God is writing a bigger story of love.

Pamela M. Nordstrom, Ph.D., Vice President, Academic Affairs, Ambrose University

This book unfolds like a theography of mission. It traces God's work and faithfulness through the continued development and formation of the international missions movement of the C&MA in Canada. Giving access to Jesus to the whole world, especially the least-reached, is at the heartbeat of the C&MA, and this book functions like an EKG of that movement in Canada, vibrating with the pulse of Jesus.

Bryce Ashlin-Mayo, Lead Pastor, Westlife Church, Calgary

This book is like holding a "missions convention" in your hand. As I read, I found myself once again enraptured by the stories of what God is doing in and through His people around the world. I was given a fresh look at the "unfinished mission" we all share. I was inspired by the stories of pioneer work, creative ventures, new opportunities abroad and at home, and it prompted me to consider how I might engage further with Jesus in His mission. And as I put down the book, I found myself once again raising my hand and whispering the words, "Here I am, LORD, send me."

Kirk Cowman, Lead Pastor, Living Hope Alliance Church, Regina

To download a zip file containing a PDF of:

- *The God You May Not Know*
- *The God Made Known*
- *Making God Known*

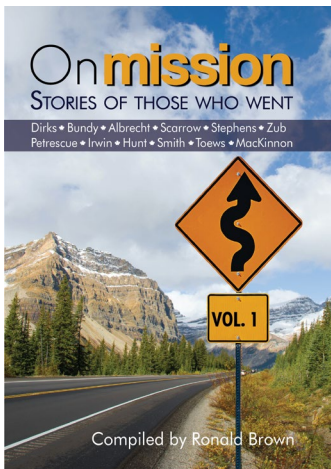
click on the link below and the download will start immediately.

<https://www.cmacan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Book-Series-CMA.zip>

**On Mission: Stories of Those Who Went, Vol. 1** contains the stories of twelve more Canadian Alliance international workers. This book celebrates the redeeming work of God and at the same time provides some accountability to the people of God who faithfully provided sons and daughters, finances and prayer, for the mission of God.

This book describes how missionaries in obedience to God's call engaged in His redeeming activities all over the world by going to some of the toughest and most difficult places. They persevered, some under horrible conditions, having survived traumatic events, in order to see communities of faith established amongst least-reached peoples.

Today, we rejoice, that in many nations of the world there are vibrant congregations, some small, some large that are living out the Gospel in their communities.



**[Download your FREE copy today!](#)**  
**[Purchase a print copy](#)**

**For more biographies, podcasts, blogs  
and book reviews, please visit**

# **The Global Vault**

The Global Vault – A Toolbox for Missions

**Biographies**



**GVPodcast**



**GVAcademy**



**[globalvault.ca](http://globalvault.ca)**



# On mission

## STORIES OF THOSE WHO WENT

In obedience to God's call, missionaries engage in His redeeming activities worldwide by going to some of the most challenging places. They persevere, some under horrible conditions, having survived traumatic events, and are seeing communities of faith established amongst the least-reached peoples.

Today in many nations of the world, there are vibrant congregations— some small, some large— living out the Gospel in their communities. As a Family of Churches, we continue to send workers into difficult places where the good news of Jesus Christ has not yet taken root.

*I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds (Psalm 9:1).*

**Compiled by Ronald Brown**

Cover Design: Dan Nel  
Cover Photography  
Joel Dunn & Fabien Bazanegue



**global vault**

[www.lulu.com/spotlight/globalvault](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/globalvault)