

THE CALL

Zimi

Made new from
head to heart

THE CALL

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IN THIS ISSUE

HOW ARE YOUR New Year's resolutions holding up? Doing OK with one or two? Did the others get left behind already?

We all need tune-ups throughout the year, reminders of why we set the goals we make for ourselves. I hope you will consider this issue of *The Call* a little boost to remind you of choices you can make now that will help you live a missions-active life.

One of the hardest things about keeping resolutions—or any long-term goals—is sticking with them through hard days or failure. Failing to exercise for a week when you want to lose weight or missing too many days when you plan to read the Bible all the way through in a year does not mean you should stop altogether.

It's time to dust off your feet, your Bible, or your dreams of serving God in a cross-cultural context and get to work. If you need motivation to stay the course with the goal of investing in a relationship or ministry, read Zimi's story on page 10. He's a stunning example of the power of people sticking with it, people who invested—and are continuing to invest—in his spiritual growth over the years.

One of my goals is to spend more time in prayer. As a busy mom, prayer and time in the Word are two of the first things to go when my day fills to the brim. But I want to be more intentional in praying for missionaries. From the beginning of missions in the first century, the Apostle Paul repeatedly exhorted Christians to pray for him and for other workers. But it's hard to know where to start. John Kunkle, missionary on the Texas/Mexico border, offers some great tips on specific ways to pray on page 20. I will definitely be incorporating these into my prayer time.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
Want to walk with me?

In Christ,



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CONTENTS



10

Made New: From Head to Heart



6

Nine Reasons



16

Listen and Examine



18

Breaking Down the Sacred/Secular Divide



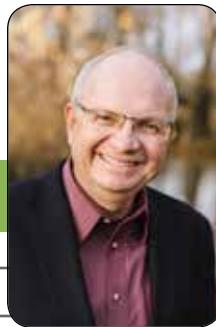
20

Four Ways to Actually Pray for Your Missionaries

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Be a Gate-Crasher

DR. DAN SCHAFER | *President*



WE FIND OURSELVES in the midst of a grand scheme—an elaborate web of lies that leaves us struggling to find the truth. The originator of the deception—the father of lies—has one purpose: to devour us as a roaring lion would his prey. Satan wants us to believe we are a defeated Church, void of power and no longer able to transform our world.

In blitzkrieg style, his deception—the alternate reality he is creating—is delivered via a steady barrage of cultural “truths” that are defacing our long-held values and eroding the very bedrock on which we have stood as a nation for over two centuries.

But none of what Satan proclaims as reality is true!

The real truth is found in Matthew 16:18 (ESV): “...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Do you see it? The truth that sets us free. Do you see it? This is not the depiction of a defeated Church; it’s the revelation of a triumphant Church, a Church experiencing victory over Satan and his kingdom of darkness. It reveals a Church bringing restoration and wholeness to the lives of individuals who have been imprisoned behind the gates of hell.

Don’t get confused here as to who is on the defensive. Think about it: gates are not an offensive weapon. This scripture reveals that Satan, in a last-ditch effort, has erected gates around those he has imprisoned in darkness to keep them from being exposed to the good news of Jesus Christ. But the ineffectiveness of those gates is here declared: they shall not prevail; they cannot withstand the advance of the Church.

When the Church marches on the gates of hell, it will overpower them, setting free those Satan has enslaved.

So why does it appear the Church is in retreat? It is simple. The Church—the people of God—has stopped being the Church. They have stopped advancing on hell, because Satan’s menacing roar has convinced them they are on the losing side.

This is Satan’s only possible winning strategy. Defeated by the cross, he can only win if the Church doesn’t engage him in battle.

Too many Christians have believed his lies and are sitting on their hands. They see the gates of hell from where they sit, watching prisoners being dragged into a hellish prison. However, they do nothing. Not because they don’t care, but because they are convinced there’s nothing they can do.

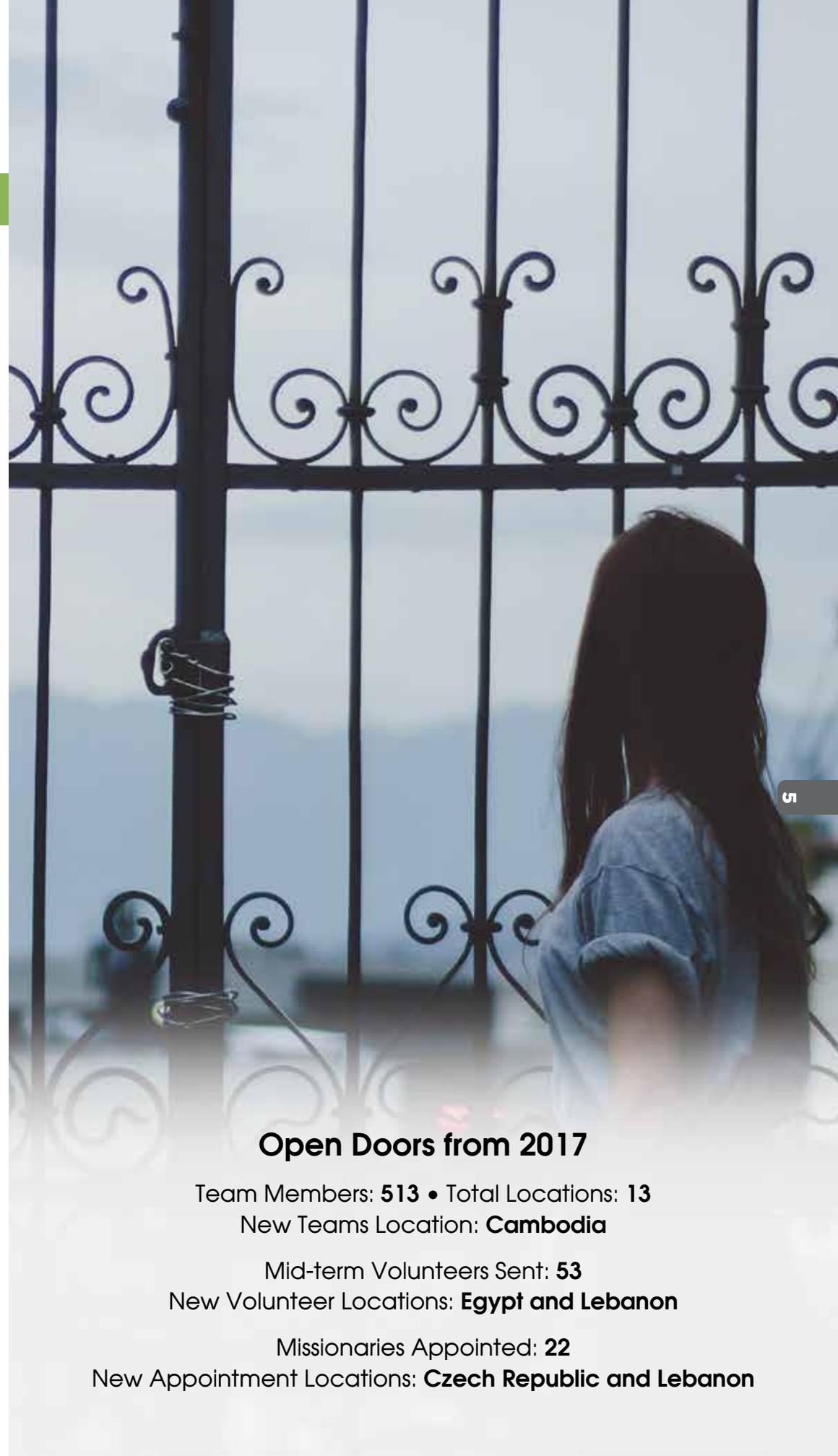
But Matthew 16:18 is a call for action. It’s time to ignore the lies.

If you don’t want to settle for the lies of Satan; if you don’t want to settle for a life that is less than God’s best for you, then rise up and join us at WGM and become a gate-crasher. Rise up and join us in declaring God’s truth—the gates of hell shall not prevail against us!



PRAY: Become a gate-crasher by joining the Luke 10:2 Challenge. Pray with us every day at 10:02—a.m. or p.m.—for more workers to join us in the Great Commission, declaring God’s truth to the nations.

“The gates of hell shall not prevail against us!”



Open Doors from 2017

Team Members: **513** • Total Locations: **13**
New Teams Location: **Cambodia**

Mid-term Volunteers Sent: **53**
New Volunteer Locations: **Egypt and Lebanon**

Missionaries Appointed: **22**
New Appointment Locations: **Czech Republic and Lebanon**



T.J. | *Missionary, South Asia*

GROWING UP AS the youngest child, trailing my siblings by eight and 10 years, I had lots of experience in sibling rivalry, comparison, excuses, and attempts to get away with things my older siblings weren't so lucky in getting away with. I was a wild child, ornery in spirit and in deed. I was concerned little with what others thought of me or how I behaved. I skinned my knees, made mud pies, and climbed up the stairwell walls, leaving handprints and toeprints evidencing my mischief. I took being told "No" as a challenge that I accepted.

The Lord called me to missions at a young age while this fire burned bright. With excitement and confidence, I claimed this calling that He had given me.

I can't quite figure out when it happened, but it happened nonetheless. Call it middle school insecurity, high school complacency, or the prevailing distractions that seemed so fulfilling at the time. Whatever it was, it hit hard. The fear set in. I became reserved, shy, and retreated to the shadows. What did I have to offer others? I questioned what impact I could make in the world, let alone in my own community. The time came when I chose another path, and I walked in the opposite direction of where He was calling me. The road of my choosing looked less intimidating, less rocky. It was smoother ground. I liked this road. It made me feel safe. It looked more familiar. I knew the people walking alongside me here.

And yet, I was not released from His calling. While I knew I was not released, I thought I had missed the window for it, that the time had passed. There would be no other exits to return to that path.

"And yet" is God's specialty. When I had given my reasons, my fears, and my best efforts of digging my heels in, God demonstrated His "and yet" to me.

But let me be the first to tell you, I have every reason in the world not to go. These reasons I've clung to are extremely logical and justifiable. They are the same reasons that many others take comfort in. These reasons have kept many—who knows how many—comfortable, secure, and safe. I share with you nine reasons why I should not go to the mission field.

1 I am young. My adult life is really just starting. Relationships and friendships are beginning to blossom, and I do not want to miss out on them. Can I still be present in those friendships if I am not physically present and available to invest in them? Not only am I young but my nephew and nieces are also young and are at such a fun age in life. Will they really know me when I return? How much will have changed in their lives?

2 I am settled in my current circumstances. I've lived on my own now for three years and am finally starting to get settled into my home and my life, really claiming it as my own. I have a great job with promise of upward growth, great benefits, health insurance, a 401(k)...you name it. Limits and restrictions are not well-known to me.

3 I am still quite unestablished. Although I am on my way to getting settled in my life stateside, I am just starting. I have not worked anywhere more than three years. I call my Dad often when something goes wrong with my house or my car. I haven't quite figured out what IRA or escrow accounts are. There is still so much I don't know about life.

4 I have little experience. Graduating with a psychology major that I pursued no further than a bachelor's degree leaves me feeling unqualified in many areas. I didn't graduate with any specialization or directed studies in ministry, missiology, or an international studies program.

5 I am single. Every day I am faced with the reminder that the majority of the world holds an expectation that marriage is the ideal. In some cultures, including the culture I will be immersed in, marriage opens a door for specific ministry to take place. Those who are married are viewed with respect and esteem. I have yet to claim that status, if I ever will.

6 I am a woman. The region I will be calling home for two years is a male-dominated society. The plight of women is ever-present. Opportunities are limited, and safety is not an assurance. In a culture that still practices outlawed sex-based abortions, bearing a female child is viewed as an unnecessary burden. Widows are viewed with shame and as an inconvenience, deemed as bad luck merely because they have outlived their husbands. It has been said that simply being a woman is hardest and most dangerous in this country.

7 I am vulnerable. The fact that I am a single woman leaves me vulnerable and possibly subject to unwanted notice. Being a single woman certainly does not seem ideal.

8 I am afraid. I would like to tell you that I am a strong, independent, young woman who laughs in the face of danger—strong and courageous, taking brave steps into the unknown. But I know myself too well. I am not that brave. I am fearful.

9 I can't tell you the name of the country where I am traveling. In print, social media, and large public settings, I can only reference this region as “South Asia.” The persecution that takes place is not some far-off idea—it is a daily reality. The risk is too great in exposing the truth of my motives to those not yet vetted.

I'll leave you with this abridged version of my justifiable, logical list of reasons why I should not be going to the mission field. Can you blame me? This list is sound and reasonable.

Unfortunately for me, God does not care about my logical reasons not to go.

Jeremiah 1:4–9, 18 (RSV) states: “Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.’ Then I said, ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.’ But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am only a youth”; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.’ Then the LORD put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, ‘Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls.’”

When God put out His hand and touched my mouth and I said, “Yes,” Christ crucified all those logical reasons.

I know, as you must know now, that God is not sending the most educated, the most experienced, not even the most established person. But when I raised my hand and said, “Yes,” He promised to send a Jeremiah, an iron pillar, and bronze walls. He promised to send a Jeremiah, a fortified city. He washed away every logical reason I gave Him, and my excuses are gone.

I have every reason in the world not to go.

But only one reason is needed not to stay.



GO: What's holding you back from following God's call on your life? What are the reasons—however logical—that you're clinging to? We know that taking steps of faith into the unknown are scary. We know it's overwhelming. But if you're willing to trust that God will guide you every step of the way, we're here to walk with you. Start the conversation at wgm.org/serve.





Made New: From Head to Heart



RACHEL ELWOOD | Staff Writer

“ARE YOU STUDYING the Bible?”

Zimi* looked up from behind the bar at the local all-night café where he worked in Albania. Two young men he slightly knew stood in front of him, looking curiously at the collection of books and notebooks laid out on top of the bar.

“Yes,” he replied.

The man was shocked. “No, it’s impossible that you would read that. I have seen your uncle read the Koran.”

“No, I’m OK,” Zimi said. “It’s my choice to read it.”

The man was silent for a moment. Then he said, “Well, what can you tell me about it?”

“Oh, man,” Zimi answered, smiling. “Come on, let me explain it to you.”

Zimi has always stood out in a crowd. In a land of short, dark-haired, brown-eyed, primarily Muslim people who generally stay close to their ancestral homes, Zimi is tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed, and has embraced Jesus Christ as his Savior. When Zimi was very young, he and his family moved from the mountainous north after an earthquake destroyed their home to the village where WGM missionaries Nathan and Cydil Waggoner live. I caught up with him and Nathan on Skype and chatted about 18-year-old Zimi’s story and plans for the future.

As a child, Zimi often felt like an outsider. He was bullied at school and fought back when boys taunted him by calling him *malok*—the Albanian equivalent of hillbilly. Whether he was searching for a place to belong or just trying to find a place to play when his mother shoed him out of the house in the afternoons, Zimi ended up at the ministry center anytime the doors were open.

As he grew into his teens, Zimi continued to study the Bible weekly with Nathan and began serving at the center, washing coffee cups, distributing food, helping with Kids Club, and translating for visitors. (He was even mocked for these acts of service, which are considered “women’s work.”) If you had asked him two years ago, Zimi would have said he was a Christian; what he really meant was that he thought the Bible made more sense than the Koran. He was fueled by insatiable curiosity—his head was stuffed full of knowledge—but it was simply that...head knowledge.

“He was fueled by insatiable curiosity—his head was stuffed full of knowledge—but it was simply that...head knowledge.”

From Head to Heart

But even then, Zimi was often brought into arguments with his peers about Islam vs. Christianity, and he wanted to defend his head faith. One day, he and the others in the Bible study asked Nathan, “Can you teach us how to evangelize?”

“Sure, I can do that,” Nathan responded.

The next week, Nathan taught the group the Four Spiritual Laws. They nodded and took notes as he explained that:

1. God loves you and has a plan for you.
2. Sin has separated us from God and His plans.
3. It is only through the death and resurrection of Jesus that we can come to God.
4. You must personally decide to open your heart to Jesus.

Nathan shared Revelation 3:20 (ESV): “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” He also showed an artist’s rendering of Jesus knocking at a door, wanting to be invited in through a door without an outside doorknob.

Nathan noticed that Zimi was especially intent on the lesson. He asked if anyone believed Laws 1 through 3 but had never taken the step described in Law 4. Zimi raised both of his hands, as if in surrender, and that night he prayed in front of his peers to invite Jesus into his heart!

“It was the picture of Jesus knocking on the door; that was key to his understanding,” Nathan said. “Jesus was knocking, but He hadn’t opened the door. The doorknob was on the *inside*. It couldn’t be opened from the outside. It had to be Zimi’s choice.”

Made New

After this, Zimi became a new creation. He became a peacemaker at his school with even the teachers calling on him to settle arguments and disputes. He was a better student, earning higher marks than ever before. He began to read the new Bible Nathan gave him and quickly read through the entire New Testament *out loud* at home so his family would hear it. Every day, Zimi would tell Nathan a new truth he had learned or ask a question about something he didn’t quite understand.

“Let’s just say I was completely changed, from the roots,” Zimi said. “I have more friends than I did before, and they respect me for the way I treat them. I have learned that fighting goes nowhere.”

Nathan offers cultural insight into this mindset shift. “Culturally, to be a man is to not back down. If you are offered a challenge, you will take that challenge and fight to the death. You’ll fight for your honor. And for Zimi to take verbal taunts and not fight, that’s an oddity. But it’s attractive, and people wonder at the change in him.”

Zimi’s Baptism

Zimi wanted to be baptized right away. Baptisms are a big deal in Albania, because they are the public declaration that a person has converted from Islam to Christianity—not something to be taken lightly. He wanted his friends and family to know how firm his commitment was to follow Jesus. However, this small congregation does their baptisms in the Adriatic Sea, and Zimi accepted Christ in November—not a great time to be in the sea! A baptism service was planned for May 2017.

It was a windy, overcast day on May 7 when Zimi and six others from the church were baptized. After gathering in a circle and singing praises to God, a friend or family member read a promise or challenge from Scripture for each participant before they shared a brief personal testimony with the group. When it was Zimi’s turn to be immersed, he leapt out of the water and went running around the beach! It was a holy, joyful moment.

“When I accepted Jesus, I felt joy in my soul,” shared Zimi. “But when I was baptized, something deeper changed inside me.”

Growing in Christ

Knowing he wanted to grow in his knowledge of God even more, Zimi began exploring his options. A friend from church had translated for a YWAM DTS (Discipleship Training School) and encouraged Zimi to apply. He was accepted into the program. This intensive six-month training experience, which began in January 2018, combines lecture-style learning about God and His plan for the world with practical outreach activities. Although his parents don’t share Zimi’s faith, they are supportive of him attending DTS.





Soon after Zimi wrote this prayer for a job to pay for DTS and stay involved with the center, God provided one.

In order to pay his way, Zimi needed a job—specifically, a job that would allow him to keep helping with the center and stay involved with church. He prayed earnestly for this and wrote in his notebook that he was claiming the promise of God’s provision. Soon after, he was able to begin working nights at a 24-hour café/gas station. He doesn’t mind the late hours; he brings his Bible, notebook, and Bible study guides and pores over the texts when business is slow. He actively shares his faith with people who come into the café, like the two young men who came in at the beginning of this story. The night shift also allows Zimi to remain active in church activities. He still ends up at the ministry center anytime the doors are open.

In Albania, religion is inherited; you are born a Muslim or Catholic or Orthodox. The idea that faith can be chosen is a radical concept, and evangelical Christians make up just 1 percent of the population.

“I have started learning more about my culture and how to disciple this nation for Jesus,” Zimi shared. “I am finding out the lies that my culture is telling us. Lies like if my father and grandfather are poor, I will be poor, too. I’m realizing how these lies affect my people.”

Many of Zimi’s prayers are for his own family, particularly his two sisters. One sister is married and lives in Kosovo, and the other still lives in the village. It has been many years since she came to the Kids Club as a young girl, but recently, she has been coming back to church and Bible study. She was even able to sing along with the worship songs—songs she remembered from attending Kids Club many years ago.

“Prayer changes things, and so I pray,” Zimi said. “But it’s a battle for my family to transform. It’s hard being the only ones in a place to change.” At that, Zimi’s phone rang and he hurried off to meet with his co-leader for a Kids Club they were doing in a neighboring village.

“Zimi is the first believer in his family, but he’s definitely not the last!” said Nathan. “We see Zimi as a leader in this community and in the church in the future. He’s a victory story that’s still being written.”

(*Name changed for security purposes.)

“Prayer changes things, and so I pray.”



PRAY: Pray for Zimi as he completes DTS in June. Pray that he will learn more about God and His plan for the world and for protection and health through this intense experience.



GIVE: The WGM Albania team wants to reach even more “Zimis” through an indoor soccer field next to the ministry center. This will allow sports-related ministry and interactions to greatly increase, reaching into the hearts and minds of boys and men in the village. Please partner financially with this ministry at wgm.org/project/albania-soccer.



GO: Do you want to be a part of investing in the lives of children and youth in Albania? Ministry opportunities are available in education, sports, and more. Visit wgm.org/serve for more information.



MORE: View the video of Zimi’s baptism at wgm.org/zimi. See if you can spot Zimi in the video—it’s not hard!

Listen and Examine: The Scars of Life

MICHAEL JOHNSON | *Missionary, Out of Nazareth*

“**A** TIME TO weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,”
(Ecclesiastes 3:4 NIV).

I wanted to cry with him, but he wasn't crying. It was senseless to cry *for* him, because he didn't appear sad. He was very matter-of-fact after having spent over four decades in prison. Now at age 58, he could breathe air on the other side of the bars, cement, and barricades. He didn't have to ask permission to come and go. Gone were the mealtime schedules imposed on him. He could dress in whatever fashion he could afford. The only limitations now were the societal norms of how ex-cons are treated and the expectations of family and friends who were still around and willing to welcome him home. These were fewer than he expected.

Both of his parents had died during his incarceration for murder. Yes, it was murder. He did not try to assert his innocence. I was sitting in a room alone with a confessed, convicted, and formally incarcerated murderer.

I would not have believed it possible 25 years ago to have this conversation face-to-face in a private clinical setting. But I felt totally at ease. He described the event to me as though it were happening in the moment. He had been angry, grabbed the gun, and shot his victim several times.

I usually ask routine questions about allergies to medications, previous surgeries, ongoing medical illnesses, or family history of illnesses. I have never thought to ask: “By the way, have you killed anybody?” I have learned over the years to never ask why they are or were incarcerated. If they want to, they will tell you. He told me. It was relayed as easily as he told me about having his appendix removed. “It's just what happened,” he said.

He missed almost half a century for something that “just happened.” A lot had changed. He was just happy to be free. He did not want to miss anything else.

As I examined him, I could see the scar from his surgery. As I listened to him, I could hear the scars from his life. Both had healed. Both were still tender to examination. But he did not wince. He did not cry.

In the half hour we were together, I could not begin to properly assess the depth or impact of the scars in his life. It would be pretentious of me to try to display emotions commensurate with what I assumed he was feeling. I still have my appendix, and I've never murdered anyone. I have never been incarcerated. I have always had liberty to come and go as I please. So, I just listened and examined. I did what I was called to do—listen, examine, and order the appropriate tests. After that, I scheduled him for the next office visit to discuss results of the tests and order any additional imaging studies deemed necessary.

Wounds are interesting things. Physical wounds heal and are constantly remodeled throughout life. Wounds can become large scars even from what appears to be trivial trauma. A pimple can cause a hypertrophic scar or keloid. Yet a gunshot wound or

stabbing may leave an almost unnoticeable, small blemish. It may be the result of the instrument or the intent which caused the scar or the individual body's genetically determined defense mechanisms.

Multiple trauma to the same site can delay and prevent healing. So, it is important not to probe scars and to recognize when we should only look to discover what is necessary. I have learned that there is a time for weeping. This was not that time. This was a time to rejoice with him in his newly found freedom and not relive his past four decades. This was a time for laughing and dancing.

Romans 12:15 (KJV) says, “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” At Miriam Medical Clinics—a medical and social outreach to people like my patient in inner-city Philadelphia—this is what we do. We meet people right where they are—even when it's messy—because Jesus is right there in the mess too.



GO: Do you want to join in the sometimes messy work of helping people, many of whom don't “have it all together”? Miriam Medical Clinics, an outreach of WGM Out of Nazareth, has need for a variety of medical and other volunteers. Visit wgm.org/serve to learn more.



Breaking Down the Sacred/Secular Divide

OLIVIA LAURITZEN | Intern with HEIDI BUELL | Missionary, Honduras

MANY OF US buy into the stereotype—the lie—that only doctors, preachers, or teachers are or can be missionaries. Although it took 10 years from the time Heidi Buell was called to missions to the time she moved to Honduras to serve as a missionary disciple, she learned early on in that decade that her passion for accounting did and does line up with God’s heart for the world.

“I was called as a missionary right after high school,” Heidi shared. “A big part of my journey was realizing that, as an accountant, I could still serve on the mission field. I had only heard about missionary doctors and preachers and didn’t feel called to either of those directions. It was really a big moment when I realized that God uses the entire body of Christ to advance His kingdom and that there is no sacred/secular divide in that way.”

Heidi knew she had been called to missions and wondered how God was going to use her particular skills. She served as a Volunteers In Action participant while in college and was so excited to see firsthand how accountants can integrate into the ministries on the field. She wanted to return to Honduras right after college. Instead, God led her to work as an auditor at an accounting firm that specialized in nonprofit accounting. This work helped prepare her for what was to come three years later when God opened the door for her to serve full time in missions.

She was appointed as a two-year missionary disciple to Honduras, working with missionary treasurer DeeAnn Rich in the field office and teaching personal finance classes to Honduran nationals.

WGM Honduras partners in ministry with Disciple Nations Alliance. Heidi explained that she’s excited about how God is using the DNA training in Honduras as it focuses on “ministering from a biblical worldview and bringing God back into the whole of life, breaking down that sacred/secular divide. It focuses on discipling the nations not just converting the nations.”

As part of its training, DNA strives to impress God’s kingdom model on these sectors of society: government, economics, science and technology, church, family, education, communications, and arts and entertainment. A specific part of the DNA Network working toward that end is Work 4 A Living...a perfect ministry fit for business-minded individuals wanting to minister in a holistic way!

“[Work 4 A Living] runs job training centers that teach basic and very practical skills needed to help the unemployed find and keep jobs by working to a standard of excellence,” Heidi explained. “The program also empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty in their own lives, on their own, by addressing mindsets—the poverty mindset, the entitlement mindset—and replacing them with the gospel truth. So, it’s not just about finding jobs; it’s about discipleship.”

“It takes the entire body of Christ,” Heidi said about reaching the world for Christ. “Regardless of our skills and personalities, God can and does use us in the unique ways He has created us to spread the good news of the gospel around the earth. God can and wants to use each of us to make missions happen.”

“God can and wants to use each of us to make missions happen.”



PRAY: Pray that the biblical truths of whole-person, whole-community transformation will permeate throughout the nation of Honduras.



GO: Are you a business, finance, or accounting minded person? Find out how you can use your skills and background to advance the kingdom of God at wgm.org/serve.



Four Ways to Actually Pray for Your Missionaries

JOHN KUNKLE | *Missionary, Texas/Mexico Border Ministries*

“’LL BE PRAYING for you.”

“You’re in my prayers.”

“I’ll remember to pray for you whenever the Lord brings you to mind.”

I’ve said these words a million times, and I’m sure you have too. Prayer is important; we all know that. We know it’s also very important to pray for missionaries, pastors, and others in Christian service. They are on the front lines of the Great Commission, facing near-constant spiritual attacks. But what if we don’t know much about the missionary or the location? What do missionaries need prayer for, anyway?

How do we make praying for missionaries a regular practice?

When I have needed the most prayer on the mission field, it’s also been the most emotionally and physically challenging time to send out requests for prayer. It’s as if the devil knows I desperately need prayer support and does everything possible to prevent me from sending the appeal.

Missionaries are real people with real doubts, fears, challenges, and struggles. They face spiritual battles, cultural and language barriers, and physical exhaustion. They need our prayers to face each day with wisdom, grace, and strength from on high.

The following Bible verses easily apply to any Christian, especially those serving in ministry. For the sake of focusing on missions, we will look at them through the lens of the missionary. (All scriptures are taken from the NIV.)

1. Pray that missionaries will speak God’s message clearly and boldly.

Early believers knew they needed God’s divine power to confront the evil attacks of Satan coming through Jewish religious leaders and Roman leaders. They prayed specifically for “great boldness” to be poured out on those who were proclaiming the gospel of Christ.

The Apostle Paul knew he needed the prayers of God’s people so he could be strengthened by God to make His message go forth with freedom and power. It was a life or death matter. In Colossians 4:2–4, Paul gives several prayer requests: “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”

In 2 Thessalonians 3:1, Paul shares a similar prayer request: “...brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.”

2. Pray for the protection of missionaries from the attacks of Satan and evildoers.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:2 and Romans 15:30–31, Paul requested prayer for his safety, that he would be rescued from the unbelievers and evil men who were trying to destroy his ministry. He was clearly aware of the devil’s attacks, and he warned Christians to be careful and alert.

We need to pray that missionaries will daily “put on the full armor of God, so that [they] can take [their] stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against...the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil...” (Ephesians 6:11–12).

Is it biblically acceptable to pray for safety? Don’t we need to be willing to put ourselves in harm’s way if we are serving God? It’s true; God can protect us. But it doesn’t mean we are not vulnerable to attacks from Satan or people. Missionaries follow Paul’s example of requesting prayer for safety so when those prayers are answered, all the glory goes to God. In 2 Corinthians 1:8–11, Paul gives us a great example of the stress and dangers he had to endure as a missionary. The outcome of answered prayer is praise to God for His grace.

Prayer is amazing! It’s through prayer that we get to work in concert with God. Through our fervent prayers for missionaries, we can show our love and support for His work and see Him move in miraculous ways to expand His kingdom. It’s an awesome privilege to do battle in the heavenly realm through prayer. We can only imagine the hidden reality of the flashes of light penetrating the darkness around us when the angels of God do warfare with the forces of darkness.

Jesus Himself prayed for His disciples and all of us who would believe in Him through the gospel message. In John 17:15, Jesus prayed that God the Father would protect us from the evil one—meaning the devil, of course—and all his host of wicked demons trying to destroy the good work of God in the world.

3. Pray for the sanctification of missionaries’ lives, hearts, and work.

In John 17:16–19, Jesus prayed for the sanctification of His disciples, which includes us as a Church and the missionaries who take the Word of God to other cultures.

The word “sanctify” Jesus uses means “to set apart a person for a sacred use or to make holy.” When we are called to serve God, we are set apart for His use. Pray that God will purify the missionaries each day for His purpose. Because missionaries are real people, they are vulnerable to temptations leading them astray. Pray that God will preserve them in the way of holiness as they proclaim His message to others through their words and lifestyle. Pray that they will display the fruit of the Spirit and serve others in love.

When hardships and difficulties are encountered on the mission field, it’s easy to question your calling and usefulness for the kingdom of God. I’ve wondered if I’m making a difference at all. Missionaries become shadowed in doubt and fear, not knowing if we are really doing God’s will. This is a direct attack from the dark forces of the devil. We as a Church must pray that God will renew their calls, strengthen their feeble hearts, and establish them on solid ground when the going gets tough.

“When hardships and difficulties are encountered on the mission field, it’s easy to question your calling and usefulness for the kingdom of God.”

In Romans 15:30–32, Paul wrote: “I urge you...by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord’s people there, so that I may come to you with joy, by God’s will, and in your company be refreshed.”

Paul was exhausted from his ministry, and he knew he had to build up his prayer team to support him in his struggle. He needed them to pray for him so he would one day return to them and be “refreshed” or renewed.

Missionaries need those times of refreshment, and WGM makes providing special times of renewal for missionaries a priority. Missionaries need those times to “sanctify” themselves by the truth of the Word of God and dispel the darkness of doubt that brings discouragement to their hearts.

4. Pray for the spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational needs of missionaries.

- Pray that they will develop a closer walk with God each day, depending on Him for every breath and step. Spiritually, missionaries are expected to give an example and live above reproach. Missionaries become spiritual giants in the eyes of many, but they are just frail human beings with a great need for friendship with God. Pray that they will love Jesus with all their hearts.
- Pray for physical health and that they will have all daily bread supplied in abundance. Pray that they will be supplied with every good thing to accomplish the task set before them. Pray for protection from illness and disease and that medical care will be supplied when needed.
- Pray for their emotional health. Cross-cultural living can be extremely emotionally stressful. Even the simplest things—finding clean water to bathe or riding on public transportation—can be a stress, exacerbated by overwhelming cultural and language barriers. Misunderstandings of expectations by the host people can also lead to emotional stress. Pray that missionaries are able to learn ways to adjust and cope with these differences.
- Pray for developing relationships on the mission field. Pray that God will open doors for missionaries to make at least one close friend to be a help and encouragement. Pray that daily routines of shopping for food, working on visas, or finding transportation may be times where they are met with God’s unexpected joys and kindness. Pray that the relationships the missionaries develop will be real and heartfelt, so the gospel message can be shared with sincerity and honesty. Pray for unity among missionaries.

In John 17:20–26, Jesus prayed for unity in His Church body. Unity is the most important thing we share with our heavenly Father, and it is through Jesus and His Holy Spirit that we have perfect unity. Unity in the Church, on the mission field, and in our relationships with others who love God is what Christian life is meant to be.



PRAY: Please pray for the missionaries and other workers God has laid on your heart. Pray for them when you see their picture on your fridge or read their updates on Facebook. Pray when God awakens you at night. Pray for them when you see news of world events. Although you may not see how, God *is* moving through missionaries across His great creation to make His name known and to bring salvation to the ends of the earth. Helpful resource: wgm.org/praycal.

MARCH 1–3: Pray for Zimi in Albania as he grows and matures in his faith. p. 10

MARCH 4–10: Pray for Heidi Buell, missionary to Honduras, who serves in financial ministries. p. 18

MARCH 11–17: Ask God to grant a spirit of boldness and courage to all who serve with World Gospel Mission. p. 4

MARCH 18–24: Pray for John and Priscilla Kunkle, missionaries with Texas/Mexico Border Ministries, serving in education and community outreach. p. 20

MARCH 25–31: Pray for Nathan and Cydil Waggoner as they reach out to their community in Albania with Christ’s love. p. 10

APRIL 1–7: In celebration of Easter, pray for the message of the resurrection to be effectively communicated around the world. p. 4

APRIL 8–14: Pray for Hondurans who are currently involved in Work 4 A Living, a program used by Honduran Holiness Church to teach biblical stewardship and career practices. p. 18

APRIL 15–21: Pray that God will send more workers to WGM with the skills needed to fill the incredible variety of roles in missions. p. 18

APRIL 22–28: Pray for a missionary you know personally. p. 20

APRIL 29–MAY 5: Pray for Michael and Kay Johnson as they work with Miriam Medical Clinics in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. p. 16

MAY 6–12: Pray for missionaries serving in sensitive areas. p. 6

MAY 13–19: Pray that the small number of believers in Albania will be the salt and light of Christ in their country. p. 10

MAY 20–26: Pray that God will remove barriers for people who have been called to missions. p. 6

MAY 27–31: Ask God to give you a heart of compassion for broken, hurting people. p. 16

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