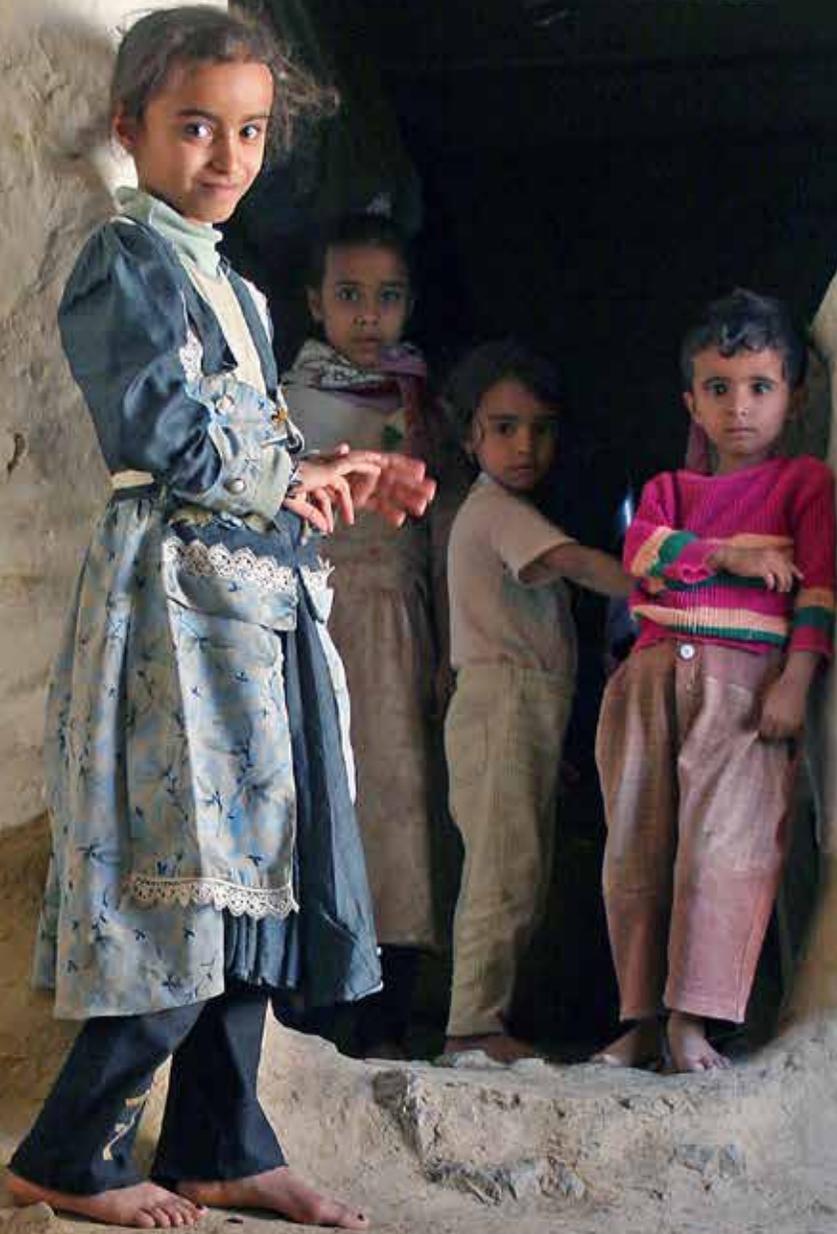


THE CALL



An Open Door

THE CALL

December 2017
World Gospel Mission
Vol. 99 No. 2

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
John Rinehimer

COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR
Laura Winningham

MANAGING EDITOR
Rachel Elwood

COPYEDITOR
Tracy Dubois

DESIGNER
Adam Lorenz

WORLD GOSPEL MISSION is an interdenominational missionary-sending organization that is Wesleyan-Arminian in doctrine and worldwide in scope.

World Gospel Mission, Inc., ©2017

The Call (USPS 085-420) is the official publication of World Gospel Mission and is published quarterly. International headquarters and publication office is at 3783 East State Road 18, P.O. Box 948, Marion, IN 46952-0948. Nonprofit Standard Mail postage paid at Marion, IN, and additional office. A free subscription is available for anyone wishing to learn more about leading an active missional life. Printed in USA.

Contributions are solicited with the understanding that World Gospel Mission has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.

IN THIS ISSUE

Have you ever cried over the story of someone you've never met?

One of God's greatest gifts to humanity is the capacity to feel the pain and joy of others: a soldier running into his child's arms after a long deployment, a hurricane victim finding her lost dog, an abandoned baby rescued from certain death. Even more so, He gives us a special connection to our fellow believers.

As I worked on John Raad's story (page 10), I wept.

God uses many pathways in our lives to get our attention. One of these pathways is the testimonies of other believers. As I pored over the transcript of John sharing his journey from anger to forgiveness and deliverance, I felt conviction in my own heart. Had I been withholding forgiveness? Had I been carrying a grudge that was destroying my own soul? Am I taking steps of faith to reach out to the unwanted, the voiceless, the powerless?

We are each on our own journey of knowing Christ and becoming more like Him, but it's hard to hold up my piddly complaints against the struggles that our brothers and sisters in the Middle East are facing. And if God gave John the grace to forgive his sister's murderer, I know that grace is available to me—and you—as well!

The incredible truth is that God chases after us despite ourselves. I also teared up (okay, it's possible I'm an emotive person) as I worked on Bonnie Gouge's "My Log Cabin Calling" story (page 20), in which she recounts how God spoke to her and Ron so clearly in calling them to missions.

Friends, we serve a great God! May you find Him speaking to you in these pages.

P.S. You might have heard, but we are shifting delivery dates of *The Call* to December, March, June, and September. See you again in March!



3783 East State Road 18, Marion, IN 46952-0948
Phone: 765.664.7331 • Email: wgm@wgm.org • Website: www.wgm.org

United Kingdom Office, "Bethel", 7 Beechfield Manor, Lurgan
BT66 7GR, Northern Ireland, UK, Phone: 011.44.28.38328197



CONTENTS



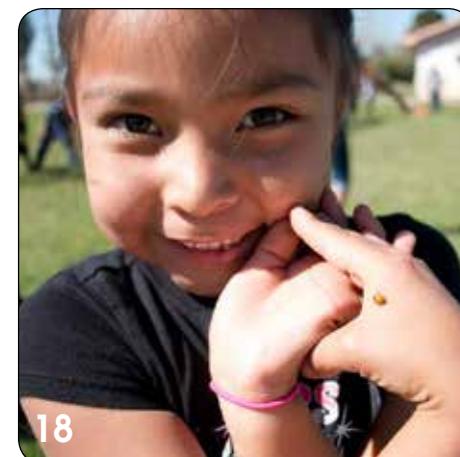
10

"I'm Not Here to Kill You"



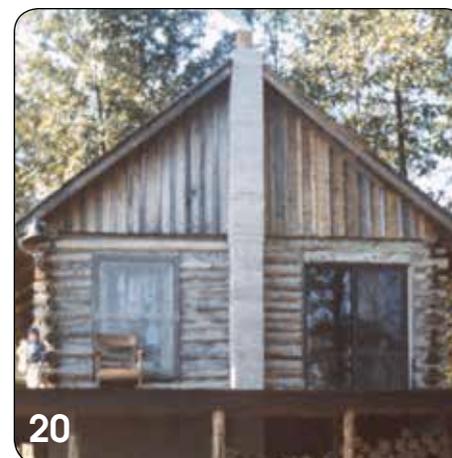
6

Take the Luke 10:2
Challenge



18

Rekindled Vision



20

My Log Cabin Calling

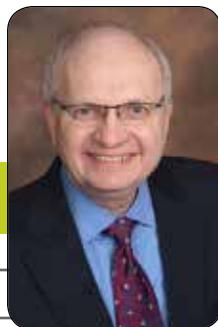


22

A Chaplain's Diary

An Unprecedented Harvest

DR. DAN SCHAFER | *President*



Shocking! Unfathomable! In every direction I looked, there were signs of significant deterioration. I was standing in the heart of Cairo, Egypt. This once thriving city now reeled under economic devastation. This devastation has arisen partly from the Arab Spring uprisings, partly from the loss of tourism purposefully orchestrated by Islamic terrorists, partly from the spiritual darkness that holds the majority of its citizens captive, and partly from the constant tensions among the various factions of Islam.

These economic challenges affect the very fabric of Egyptian society. They leave people struggling to make ends meet, communities suffering from high levels of unemployment, and a whole society questioning whether there is any real hope for the future.

Matthew 9:36 (NASB) captures a similar scene: “Seeing the people, He [Jesus] felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.” But Jesus saw more than just their mental and spiritual devastation; He also saw the openness to the gospel that their difficult circumstances had produced—a plentiful harvest.

As I stood there in Cairo, I realized that the men, women, and children I saw represented millions upon millions of Muslims who are living in distress across the Middle East and Northern Africa. Unable to find hope in their religion to survive these difficult days, they have lost their spirit; Satan has stolen it from them. That’s the bad news. The good news is that this has made them a plentiful harvest field.

4 But before you rejoice, there is more bad news: “the workers are few” (Luke 10:2). In fact, many Christian workers have pulled out of these areas of the world because of the increased danger. The workers are decreasing at a time when the harvest is ripening. In fact, there are more Muslims—and not just a few more, exponentially more—coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ right now than there have ever been in the history of Islam.

Several factors have brought about this unprecedented harvest, not the least of which is the people’s disillusionment with Islam, partially brought about by groups like ISIS. Another attributing factor is that the governments of many Muslim majority countries are so occupied with bringing stability back to their countries that they are too busy to suppress the evangelistic efforts of Christians.

This opportunity will likely be short-lived, so we must act now before the door closes again!

Jesus gave us the strategy we need for this abundant harvest. Pray to “the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2 NET). At WGM, we’ve been praying; and God is, of course, answering those prayers. He is raising up workers for His harvest field. He also instructed us to act: “Go therefore and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19 NKJV). The story of John Raad (page 10) in this issue of *The Call* is the story of one worker God has raised up for this harvest.

“There are more Muslims—and not just a few more, exponentially more—coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ right now than there have ever been in the history of Islam.”

Greater Middle East Initiative

Engaging and mobilizing leaders and churches to impact their nations for Christ



GIVE: Support the Greater Middle East Initiative at www.wgm.org/global-impact-fund. Help engage and mobilize leaders and churches to impact their nations for Christ.

Take the Luke 10:2 Challenge!

He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Luke 10:2 NIV)

CASEY MAZZOLI | *Volunteer*

In a full conference room at WGM headquarters, a staff member’s phone plays a small tune. Downstairs, a similar alarm sounds from someone’s pocket. In an office across the hall, another person looks up from a computer and sees that the clock reads 10:02 a.m. Work and conversation trickle to a stop. Throughout the building, employees bow their heads.

Back in the conference room, the leader of the meeting asks, “Will someone pray?”

Since January 2017, members of the WGM family—staff and missionaries alike—have been participating in the Luke 10:2 Challenge. The name refers to Luke 10:2 (NIV), in which Jesus tells 72 appointed disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”

The challenge was inspired abroad when an Albanian pastor encouraged missionary Nathan Waggoner to pray Luke 10:2 at the corresponding time each morning. By taking part in the challenge, WGM seeks to root its goal of doubling its impact in an appeal to God—a faithful entreaty for Him to act miraculously according to His power and desire. Indeed, Scripture tells us that God desires for all people to hear His message (Acts 1:8, 2 Peter 3:9, Matthew 28:19). And for these purposes, we know we need more workers.

The time is ripe for the kingdom of God to welcome even more people. Therefore, the time is ripe to pray. To participate in the Luke 10:2 Challenge, set your alarm for 10:02—a.m. or p.m. At the time you select, take a moment to pray—by yourself or with others—that God will send workers from around the world to mission fields around the world. He who hears our prayers is faithful, and we’re believing Him for a great impact!



PRAY: Join us in the Luke 10:2 Challenge! Pray for God to raise up new missionaries and to make the efforts of those already serving fruitful.



GO: Is God calling you to go outside your current community to spread the gospel? Visit www.wgm.org/go for a list of long- and short-term ministry opportunities. We have a place for you!



Luke 10:2 *Impact*

As a result of Nathan Waggoner’s Luke 10:2 prayers, one of Nathan and Cydil’s ministry partner families shared that God is calling them to serve in Albania regularly and for extended periods of time!

Tom and Emily Dillard, new missionary disciples to Kenya, stated: “Our family was serving in Kenya at Tenwek Hospital for six months in the beginning of 2017. We were seeking out whether missions was right for us longer term. We admit, we did not receive any sign in the sky telling us what we should do next. Instead, we felt a gentle nudging to keep going with the process of coming back to Tenwek; that meant applying with WGM. Little did we know that there were many people praying for the number of harvest workers to increase! We kept praying and walking forward, and now we are thankful to say that we will be going back to Tenwek in mid-2018 (we hope) as missionary disciples. When we interviewed at WGM, we were humbled to realize the ‘bigger picture’ that we were involved in all along; God knew! He had us at just the right place the whole time. Now we join in praying that more will hear the call and follow the gentle nudgings they receive to be ‘laborers in the harvest.’”

Since January, 8 new missionaries have been appointed. An additional 10 candidates are under review for possible service with WGM. Please join us in praying that the total number of new missionaries for 2017 will equal 18!

A total of 575 short-term volunteers served around the globe in 2017.

What Is an Unreached People Group?

The term **unreached** refers to a people group with no indigenous community of Christians. People in these groups will likely not come to Christ without outside assistance.

About **10%** of the world's people do not have a translation of the Bible in their language.



There are **over 6,700 unreached** people groups in the world; that's **40.6%** of the world's people groups.

Over **10 million** people from **84** people groups who live in the **United States** are considered unreached.

Go to www.joshuaproject.org to find a group that lives near you.

The top **three** unreached countries are **India, China, and Pakistan** with a total of **3,024** unreached people groups amongst them.

People from every tongue, tribe, and nation will stand before the throne of God. With the Great Commission still far from finished, the task is clear. **Are they waiting for you?**

“I’m Not Here to Kill You”

One Man’s Journey from Revenge to Redemption

JOHN RAAD | Lebanon WITH RACHEL ELWOOD | Staff Writer

10

H

is sister and niece were killed by terrorists. A trained military machine, John was determined to exact revenge and had the skills to do so. However, God completely rewrote and redirected John’s heart and soul, and he is now sharing the love of Christ with thousands of people in the Middle East. Here’s John’s story in his own words.

Beginnings of Faith

I am from Kfarhabou in the northern part of Lebanon. I was born into a large family of the Greek Orthodox Church. My father died when I was very young, and my older sister practically raised me.

Some missionaries came to Lebanon, bringing revival to our church. For the first time, I heard the good news about the love of God. I wanted to hear more about this kind of love, but it was just intellectual, mental knowledge and nothing more.

When I was 15, I realized I had to make a choice: either I had to submit my life to Christ or stay away from Him and enjoy my life the way I wanted. But away from God, my life was totally empty. Sometimes I prayed, “Lord, I want to live for you!” but the next morning I would wake and forget what I prayed for the last night.

One night, I felt the Spirit of God surrounding me. I felt that if I didn’t give my life to Christ, I would have lost the opportunity forever. I was very fearful, and, in my mind, I saw all the sins and mistakes I’d committed playing like a tape. While I was struggling with God

and asking Him to come and change my life, I felt something amazing; the power of the Holy Spirit filled my heart, and I felt joy and peace. I started to weep, but the tears were tears of joy.

Military Career

I decided to enter the military, and I was selected to be the special guard of the president of Lebanon. At that time, there was a war in Lebanon. I was almost killed many times, but the Lord delivered me and gave me life. I received very special, tough training and became a strong and powerful man. That made me very aggressive, and my heart also became hardened.

I spent five years in the military. After that, I married my wife, Vania, in 1999. I thank the Lord, who gave me a godly woman like Vania. Her brother was also married to my sister’s oldest daughter, my niece.

Four months after Vania and I got married, we began to have a lot of troubles in our area. Terrorist groups began coming down from the mountains and infiltrating the towns. The army and police began fighting a war against these groups.

The Attack

My sister was now a widow and living with her daughter and her husband. On New Year’s Day in 2000, they spent the evening at my house. At midnight, we said our goodbyes, and they left to return home.

11



After undergoing a miraculous transformation of his heart and mind, John Raad now dedicates his life to sharing Christ's love with refugees from Syria who are fleeing into Lebanon.



A short time later, we heard shooting from the part of town where their house was located. I wanted to go outside, but Vania was pregnant and didn't want me to go. I called my sister's phone, and a strange man answered. I knew then that the terrorists had their house. Was my family even still alive?

I took my weapon and ran out of the house into the night. I began to pray, "Lord, deliver us!" As I ran, someone started shooting at me. I didn't know who was trying to kill me, but I kept running. The terrorists had occupied my sister's house and the one next door. Before long, the army arrived with tanks and heavy artillery.

The army and terrorists battled for two days. Eleven soldiers were killed in front of my eyes. I could do nothing but watch the bloodshed. I could not rescue anyone. I could not do anything. I was completely helpless. The houses were close to collapse, almost leveled to the ground.

Inside the house, my sister and my niece were terribly injured and died from their bullet wounds. My niece's husband, who was also injured, stayed with them until they passed away, and then he jumped out the window to the ground and escaped. After the battle was over and I saw what had happened to my sister and niece, I lost it; I beat my head against a wall. People had to restrain me.

"I could do nothing but watch the bloodshed. I could not rescue anyone.... I was completely helpless."

After the Battle

My heart became like a stone. I lost every kind of feeling. I swore that I would not only kill some Muslims but that I would also destroy the entire village and kill everyone, especially the man who killed my family. I knew who had done it; he had escaped after the battle.

I was tortured by my craving for revenge. I was working as a salesman, but I had my gun with me at all times, ready to kill. I lost my home. I couldn't live as a Christian man, and I started to forget everything Jesus taught about love and forgiveness. I didn't want to hear it. But then the Lord slammed me in my face. One person from the terrorist group came to Christ. My reaction? I said, "No, that will never happen. I don't want those guys to be Christians." But when he came to Christ, he became a totally different person. He started coming to my mother's house, kissing her hand and serving her. He was transformed, and my hard heart hated to see it.

In 2004, we had a revival in our church. I went with my wife out of obligation, nothing more, and I felt the Lord inviting me back into His arms to enjoy His love—His unconditional love—to the maximum. My heart was broken, and finally I accepted the invitation and His sanctification. The Lord brought me back to Him in a very strong way, to the point that I was spending all night reading the Word of God.

But a voice kept whispering, "If you truly come back to the arms of God, you must forgive the leader of the terrorist Muslim group that killed your family." After prayer and fasting, I knew it was the voice of God speaking to me. I realized that to live a truly Christ-like life, I had to love my enemies, even the man who killed my sister and niece.

John, pictured here with two young refugees, works with a small team of volunteers to bring practical help and spiritual care to thousands of Syrians.



Confronting the Killer

I had been looking for this man for years, and even though he was a fugitive, I tracked him down. I went to the place where he was based, and I asked to speak to him privately. He brought some of his guards with him, but I told him, “I want to be alone with you; send these guards away.” When they realized I wasn’t armed, the guards went back to their place, and I stood alone in front of the man who killed my family.

I was a powerful man, a fighter. I could have finished his life in less than a second without using any weapon. As I looked at him, I struggled hard between loving him or killing him. It was as if I had a voice in one ear saying “kill him” and another voice saying “love him.”

Finally, I decided to release love to the man.

“My name is John Raad,” I began. “I am from Kfarhabou, and those who were killed in that house were my sister and my niece.” He jumped back in shock. His eyes filled with fear; he knew his life could be over. He knew what I could do to him if I wanted to.

But then I said, “Do not be afraid. I am not here for revenge. I am not here to kill you. I came to you with the love of the Lord. This love changed me and did a turning point in my life. I came here because of the love of the Father God and His Son Jesus Christ.”

I began to weep, “I came to tell you that I love you, and I forgive you.”

He couldn’t face me; he couldn’t even put his eyes on mine. He tried to justify what happened, trying to prove himself innocent to me. I told him, “I don’t want to hear any justification. It’s over, it’s done, and it’s behind us now.

“I care about one thing: I want you to hear clearly that God loves you, and I forgive, totally. If you think you’re pleasing Allah by what you’re doing, look at yourself. You’re not pleasing God, and you’ll never be able to please Allah. The only thing that will bring joy to the heart of God is when you accept Jesus Christ as Savior over your life.”

Then I gave him a Holy Bible as a gift. He took the Bible, and I invited him to read it and search for the true God. We had a long talk. I still see him from time to time, and every time he sees me, he gives me a salute.

“But then I said, ‘Do not be afraid. I am not here for revenge. I am not here to kill you. I came to you with the love of the Lord.’”

15

Freed to Forgive, Freed to Love

Jesus is the One who gave me the power to forgive. I could not have done it on my own. But since then, I have been totally at peace with myself.

I never imagined one day that my hatred for those who killed my family would turn into absolute love. In fact, I lived my life saying I would never share the gospel with a Muslim. But then God gave me a tremendous love for Muslims.

The war in Syria has brought over 1.5 million refugees into Lebanon (our pre-war population was only 2.5 million). I felt God leading me to introduce the life in abundance to them. When refugees cross the border, they often have nothing but the clothes on their backs. Once stopped by border guards, they are taken to large government-run refugee

camps. I began traveling to the border and meeting refugees as they crossed. Along with volunteers I lead from my church and my wife, Vania, we give them food, blankets, and other supplies.

Then, I go into the refugee camps and offer more help there, building the relationships further. We are even able to have regular meetings where I can share about the love of Jesus.

I feel so blessed, so humbled, so honored that the Lord is using someone like me to share the love of Christ with Muslims. I serve with all my heart and all my strength; I love them with all my heart. You would not believe: in the past six years, I have shared the good news with over 60,000 refugees from Syria. God gave us favor in their eyes and grace in their eyes, and we are impacting their lives for Christ.

**Editor's Note: Since this story was written, John and Vania Raad have been accepted as field workers to Lebanon. We are excited to see how God has led them to serve Syrian refugees, and we look forward to working more closely with them in the days ahead.*

 **MORE:** Watch more of John's powerful story in a special video on WGM's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/DiscoverMissions.

 **GIVE:** Do you want to be a part of sharing Christ's message of forgiveness and redemption in the Middle East? You can join John's ministry to refugees—and many other dynamic, life-changing leaders—by donating to the Global Impact Fund at www.wgm.org/global-impact-fund.

The Middle East: An Open Door

John's inspiring story of forgiveness and selfless love is being replicated across the Middle East. Men and women of faith are risking their lives and livelihoods to share the gospel with their neighbors.

With the Middle East more open to workers now than it has been for many years, WGM is seeking to partner and equip leaders like John to reach out to millions of people in great physical and spiritual need. Through leadership training and mentoring, a network of faith leaders is being built and strengthened. The approach is five-fold:

- Empower leaders
- Disciple believers
- Empower missionaries
- Work alongside nationals
- Serve refugees

"If we can train leaders to do the Lord's work, we can make a difference in this dark and broken world," shared Dr. Dan Schafer, president of WGM. "We must move quickly; the door could close as quickly as it has opened. Our brothers and sisters in the Middle East need our help to be the hands and feet of Christ."

 **PRAY:** Pray for God to bless believers in the Middle East as they act with great courage to share Christ with men, women, and children. Pray for physical safety, financial provision, and wisdom in reaching out to their neighbors.

 **ACT:** Do you have neighbors from the Middle East living nearby? Invite them into your home and start building that relationship. Don't worry about not knowing everything about their culture; reach out with Christ's love and be amazed how God will help you.

 **GO:** Do you want to serve alongside leaders in the Middle East? Join the Journey 10.40 experience May 16–July 13, 2018. Visit www.wgm.org/journey1040 for more information.

Rekindled Vision: In His Strength, On His Time

JON AND LINDSAY BIRKEY | *Missionaries, American Indian Field*

We were at our wits' end. We were about ready to throw in the towel, folks. Raising financial support is HARD! We were moving at a snail's pace, and the month of May did not go as planned. Despite our efforts, we did not make much headway in those 31 days. We were starting to feel down.

And, as we all know, this is when Satan likes to creep in; and he did. He attacked us hard. We began looking at the progress we had made since we left the field in August 2016. We had only raised about 57 percent of our monthly support, and the devil used this number to make us feel more discouraged.

After all the traveling, speaking, and time invested, we had little to show for it. Or so we thought. As the doubt began to creep in, we thought: can we really do this? Previous conversations with people we had met along the way were recalled. Many had asked, "Why do you do this?" or commented, "I could never do what you do." We began to think maybe they were right. Maybe this just isn't us. Maybe this isn't the right path for us anymore. Maybe....

Friends, have you caught the pattern in this thinking? *We* this, *we* that, *our* efforts, *us*, *we*, *mine*.... Where was God? Well, right there of course! However, we were too focused on us, our worries,

and our doubts—things the enemy had carefully planted inside us.

We had a real, heart-to-heart conversation with a WGM vice president and our fundraising coach. They encouraged us; built us up; gave us new, fresh ideas to try; and challenged our way of thinking as well as our methods. We left the meeting encouraged yet overwhelmed. There was much to be done. We would have to go after this at a full sprint. We were going to have to push HARD. Still we wondered, can it be done?

It was then that we asked ourselves a fundamental question: if fundraising were not an issue, would we return to the field? Did we truly believe in the work we were doing and the calling God had placed on our hearts?

YES!

We began discussing our passion and vision for this ministry. We revisited our callings and how God was preparing us—even at early ages—for our roles as Summer Bible Camp directors at Southwest Indian Ministries Center in Arizona.

Do you see the change in mindset? What *God* had done and what *God* was doing were now our focus, not doubt or lack of funding. God began revealing to us steps we could take and people we could go to for help in the process. We felt a weight lifted off our shoulders.

We knew things were in God's hands, not our own; and we knew that He provides in His timing, not ours. In the week following this shift in thinking, God helped us raise almost \$400 in new monthly support!

We may never fully know or see firsthand how God worked in that seemingly unproductive month of May or what He did in the hearts of those we have met since August 2016. Maybe someone we spoke to dedicated their life to missions. Maybe someone surrendered their life to the Lord. Maybe seeds were planted for the kingdom that we will not fully comprehend until we all get to heaven. But two things remain certain—God's Word never returns void, and we don't believe His callings on our lives return void either.

The Lord gave Lindsay a clear confirmation of our calling in June. It came as she was sorting through camp pictures. We were helping with VBS at Jon's home church at the time, and they were raising money through their offerings to donate to our ministry. They always have a fun way of measuring how much money has been raised each day. We decided to show them a picture of a camper each day for every \$25 dollars they raised. Lindsay's task was to find pictures to show what our camps and campers are like.

She was completely blown away the moment she started this task. As she looked through the hundreds of camp photos on Facebook, God pulled at her heartstrings.

"I CANNOT leave these children!" Lindsay thought. "Everyone in their lives has left them. Their mothers or fathers might be gone. Their other family members and friends might be gone. Life is a revolving door for most of our campers. Many of them do not have any consistent people in their lives. We are not naive enough to think that we can always be there for these kids, but we can introduce them to Someone who is. We HAVE to continue sharing Jesus with these kids! I miss them so much. I miss hearing about what God is doing in their lives. I miss their smiles and giggles. I miss watching them kneel in surrender at the altar! We HAVE to go back!"

And so, it is with this rekindled vision of what God has done and what He's continuing to do that we move forward—in His strength, on His time.

**Update: The Lord provided the funding needed, and Jon and Lindsay returned to their ministries on the American Indian Field in September.*



ACT: Are you down, discouraged, or in need of hope? Start at the beginning.

What has God done? How has He shown His care and provision? How could He be working now? How will you move forward, joining Him in what He's doing? He's always been there, and He will always be there. Sometimes it just takes looking at things from a different perspective to get you on board with where He's going next. Enjoy your journey with Him!



My Log Cabin Calling

BONNIE GOUGE | *Regional Director, South America and Iberia*

Why do you do what you do?

I do what I do because God made it very clear to me that He was calling me to serve Him.

In the spring of 1980, we loaded up our worldly goods and our two babies and moved to a 16x30 log cabin in Casey County, Kentucky. Just getting to the cabin was an experience, driving up steep hills and bumping over rough Kentucky dirt roads. Electricity stopped at the neighbor's house two miles away, and our "running water" sloshed out of the buckets as we ran from the pump to the cabin. Rain pouring off the roof became our shower. But we loved our homestead and embraced life in rural Kentucky.

Looking for a church to call home, we settled in the small congregation of Atwood Chapel United Methodist. At the end of a revival service message, our young pastor, Dave, stood up. "God is speaking to someone about their gifts or a calling. Please come and pray." As the congregation stood, Ron headed to the altar. Our friends gathered around to pray. As time passed, they slowly eased away, leaving Ron and I to pray with the pastor and his wife. Wanting to get our small children to bed, we suggested that our prayer continue at our cabin.

With the oil lamps burning, we sensed the burning presence of Almighty God as we earnestly sought Him. After pouring our hearts out in prayer, Dave said, "Do you remember the first time I visited you at this cabin on the hill? Well, I went home and told my wife, 'I don't know who those people are or what they are doing up here on this ridge in Kentucky, but God has a call on their lives for missions.'" Ron quickly assured Dave that he was mistaken and that he certainly was not missionary material. Yet, we left that night certain that God had met with us and that He had set us apart for His service.

We sought confirmation of what we had sensed, and it seemed that every time I opened the Bible, I found verses like Luke 10:2 (KJ21): "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." Later that week, I was so confused and uncertain about what God was truly saying to us that I resorted to a form of Gideon's fleece. I begged God to confirm to us His working in our lives by giving us a phone call from Ron's brother, Rich, who was traveling.

Before the era of cell phones, we did not have phone access at the cabin. However, we did receive calls at our neighbors', Carroll and Candy. The next day when I drove around the ridge to visit Candy, she informed me that Rich had called the night before and would return the call that evening at 6 p.m. Sure enough, Rich called and shared that we were on his mind and he wanted to check in with us. Hallelujah! God answered prayer, revealing Himself to us and assuring us that He was calling us to serve HIM.



Later that winter, Pastor Dave announced that the district was sponsoring a work team to Haiti. Ron was drawn to this opportunity and felt that he should go. In just a few short weeks, each barrier and obstacle was broken down by God's powerful intervention. As he built a school in the mountains of Haiti, Ron experienced what it could be like to serve God in missions, using his hands or skills.

Ron came back from Haiti saying YES to God. We spent a year seeking the Lord and researching missions organizations and were discouraged that we did not meet any of the requirements. In desperation, Ron cried out to God, "Please reveal Yourself to me. Send someone with a word from You so that I know that You are leading. If not, I guess that I will just stay here."

The next night at the hospital where Ron worked as a lab tech, he was sitting in his lab waiting for an automated test. A local pastor, whom Ron had met at the hospital, stopped by to chat. Ron shared his struggle and desperation to hear from God. Pastor Lloyd, a big ex-Navy man, pointed his finger at Ron, saying, "God is definitely working in your life, and you had better get yourself in college to prepare for whatever God has for you." As Ron was dyslexic, that was the last thing he wanted to do. However, he knew that God had answered his prayer and sent someone to him with a definite word from the Lord.

Meanwhile, I wasn't so sure. I was a country girl at heart. I had come to love Abigail, the milk cow, and Sweetie Pie, an orphaned calf. I didn't want to say goodbye to our rabbits and chickens. I wanted to take them all with us as we moved to Asbury University (Kentucky) to study.

But God clearly spoke to me one night. I climbed the wooden ladder to our loft bedroom, blew out the last oil lamp, and snuggled in my bed under the peak of the roof. Reading the Bible with a flashlight on my shoulder, I turned to Habakkuk. In Habakkuk 3:17-19a (NASB) I read, "Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, Though the flock be cut off from the fold and there be NO CATTLE IN THE STALLS, Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength" [all caps added for emphasis]. God assured me that He was my God and my strength and that my joy did not depend on cattle in the stalls but on HIM.

Why do you do what you do? Is your heart open to do whatever God would ask you to do? Ask Him! You might be surprised what He has in store.

**Editor's Note: Ron and Bonnie Gouge were appointed as career missionaries with WGM in 1984. They served in Bolivia from 1985 to 2009 before ministering in Argentina from 2009 to 2012. They were appointed as regional directors for South America and Iberia in 2011 and continue to serve in this role.*



MORE: Take a closer look at Habakkuk 3. Ask God to speak to you through His Word.



A Chaplain's Diary:

Stories of Miracles and Transformations

ELIPHAS MUTEGI | *Chaplain, Kenya*

Chogoria Hospital is *blessed to have four dedicated chaplains who serve the staff and patients. This is Eliphas Mutegi's ministry story.*

I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior in 1976. From then on, I started witnessing about the love of Jesus Christ. After completing college, I continued doing the same within my home area. In the early 1990s, we started venturing farther. I was involved in nursing services and sharing the good news with the patients as a chairman of my church's missions committee. In March 2016, I became a full-time chaplain after completing theological training by extension.

I have seen God do many great things. Here are some of my favorite stories of God working in amazing ways.

- In April 2016, a Muslim man who was paralyzed and had contractures (permanently bent limbs or joints) became healed after many prayers. This was a miracle! Even greater, this man accepted Jesus as his Savior.
- Later, a young university student was admitted who had gone mad and was hallucinating, saying he was God the Creator. He found deliverance after hearing God's Word, followed by a prayer of faith and subsequent counseling.
- A man with a severe heart problem called me when he was at the point of death. He told me that he was once a believer but had walked away from his faith. He wanted to repent and come back to Jesus. After prayers, God did another miracle; the man got better.
- A young boy had attempted suicide by taking poison. His relatives were distraught because of the deep coma he was in, and they couldn't afford medical treatment. I prayed for the family, and we were able to find help for them. Three days later, the boy had recovered and accepted Christ as his Savior.
- More recently, a girl who had been involved in devil worship was admitted with a fractured leg. After I realized this, I called her to the chapel. Jesus delivered her after intensive prayer. She told us her story about how her cousin who is a magician introduced her to devil worship. When she went back to the patient ward, other patients wondered at the change in her; she left with scary, wild eyes and came back filled with peace.

Over 250 souls have been saved since March 2016. Friends, this is God's doing. I could share many more stories, because God is a big God. May He be glorified through all these miracles and transformations!

"Over 250 souls have been saved since March 2016. Friends, this is God's doing."

PRAY: Pray for strength and wisdom for the chaplains as they minister to patients at Chogoria Hospital in Kenya. Pray that they will share Christ's love and communicate the gospel effectively.

DECEMBER 1–9: Join the Luke 10:2 Challenge by committing to pray every day at 10:02—a.m. or p.m.—for God to send more missionary workers to World Gospel Mission. p. 6

DECEMBER 10–16: Pray for Eliphas Mutegi and his chaplain coworkers as they bring Christ's message of hope to patients and their families at Chogoria Hospital in Kenya. p. 22

DECEMBER 17–23: Ask the Lord to show how you can be a missionary right where you are. p. 8

DECEMBER 24–30: Pray that the true message of Christmas is conveyed clearly around the world this week.

DECEMBER 31–JANUARY 6: Pray for Jon and Lindsay Birkey as they share the hope of Christ with Native American children and adults in Arizona. p. 18

JANUARY 7–13: Pray for John and Vania Raad as they share their story of forgiveness, declaring God's message of peace to Syrian refugees. p. 10

JANUARY 14–20: Pray that the more than 60,000 Syrian refugees who have been reached by John Raad and his team will find hope and eternal security in Jesus. p. 10

JANUARY 21–27: Pray for the children and youth who will be attending Summer Bible Camps at Southwest Indian Ministries Center in Arizona. p. 18

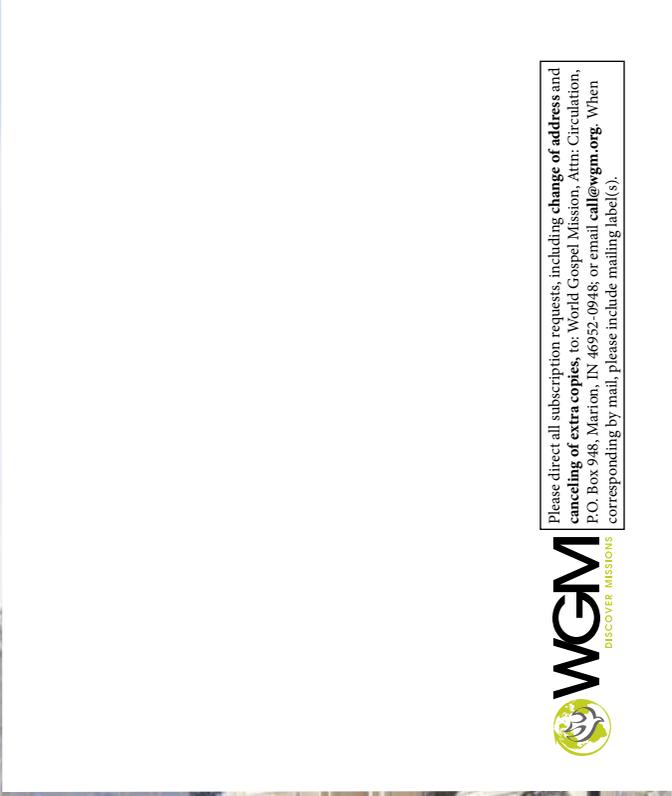
JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3: Ask God to help you determine ways to encourage and lift up others in their service to Him. p. 20

FEBRUARY 4–10: Pray for Ron and Bonnie Gouge as they provide servant leadership to missionaries serving in Latin America and Spain. p. 20

FEBRUARY 11–17: Ask God to give WGM's leadership wisdom and discernment as we move into new and exciting ministry opportunities in the Middle East. p. 17

FEBRUARY 18–24: Pray for new missionaries as they adjust to new cultures, new responsibilities, and new relationships. p. 7

FEBRUARY 25–28: Pray that the Lord will fill you with a passion to serve Him and be obedient to His calling. p. 20



Journey 10.40

Albania



Jordan



Spain

May 16–July 13, 2018
www.wgm.org/journey1040

Please direct all subscription requests, including change of address and canceling of extra copies, to: World Gospel Mission, Attn: Circulation, P.O. Box 948, Marion, IN 46952-0948; or email call@wgm.org. When corresponding by mail, please include mailing label(s).

