

## THE MARCH 2010 MISSIONS UPDATE

contains portions of letters from various missionaries we support. We encourage you to share in the praise and also pray for these special people and their ministries. If these letters spark an interest in financially supporting one of our missionaries or serving on a Missions Care Team, please contact Pastor Dave Wardle at 224-764-4012, dwardle@theorchardefc.org, or a member of the Missions Ministry Team (see back panel).



### Missionaries in an undisclosed location

The Lord continues to work in incredible ways throughout the country. Today we met with the church planters for our monthly prayer meeting. I was so encouraged to hear of the many new believers. For years we struggled to see people come to faith. Now every month we are seeing many new believers enter the Kingdom of God.

One of our leaders was called to the mosque last Friday to be confronted by a mob. The man did not come and put it off until Monday. The Lord has interceded in the situation and brought the issue to a resolution. The village knows that he is a Christian but are now afraid to take any action against him. Another woman, who has been persecuted for months, was told by her persecutor that he is tired of trying to get her to return to Islam. So he has given up and will let her remain as a Christian.

Praise God for His faithfulness toward all who call on the name of the Lord.



### Ajith and Nelun Fernando/Sri Lanka/ Youth for Christ



*Ajith has been National Director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka since 1976. Ajith also travels the world extensively, preaching and teaching.*

I have just returned from Cairo, Egypt, where I attended a meeting of the Bible expositors for the *Lausanne III Congress* to be held in Cape Town this October. While in Egypt, I completed the first draft of my book of 62 expositions on

Deuteronomy. Egypt is where the stories in the book of Deuteronomy begin. How wonderful, after seven years of writing, to end the book where the story began! Now I will go through the book, refine, and try to condense the material. While doing that I will write a much smaller commentary on Deuteronomy for the one-volume *South Asia Bible Commentary*. I hope to complete both assignments in June this year. Please continue to pray for these tasks.

These past few months I have seen much more fruit in Asia from my writing ministry than I had ever thought possible. Recently I've been hearing so many stories of lives totally transformed by Christ through the ministry of YFC. This is wonderfully encouraging. God has called us to work with hurt people. That is a painful call. But when you see hurt people transformed by love, it gives you a fresh vision of the possibilities of grace.



### Byron & Michelle Graham/Illinois/ InterVarsity Christian Fellowship



*Byron is the Divisional Director for Northern Illinois and Northwest Indiana, which includes 26 fellowships and 32 staff. Michelle is the Area Director for Chicago West, which serves four campuses and five staff. Their role is to hire, train, coach, and mentor InterVarsity staff to be effective in their ability to reach college students with the Gospel.*

"He dwelt among us" was the theme for the Urbana '09 conference. Studying John 1-4, we were challenged to dwell among those who don't yet know Christ.

Hundreds of students from the Division were able to attend the conference. One student, Marilyn Ramirez from Northern Illinois University, shared a testimony from the stage. She gave witness to God's faithfulness in her life as she spent last summer in Kenya serving AIDS orphans. She challenged students to put their futures in God's hands and make missions a permanent part of their lives. Marilyn was one of thousands of students who committed to serve long term in missions.

We also praise God for the number of staff candidates who are applying for ministry positions this year. We are in the process of interviewing and

then hiring them for this coming school year. Please pray for wisdom for all the directors as they place staff on campuses throughout northern Illinois.



### Ben and Elizabeth Hagerup/ Pennsylvania/DiscipleMakers



*Ben now serves as Chief Operating Officer at DM's headquarters in State College, PA. His main focus is training team leaders so they are more effective disciple-makers.*

We're praising God that Margaret Christine Hagerup was born at 8:05 AM on Tuesday, January 19!

I have the great privilege of working with both those who stay with the supplies and those who go down to battle on DM's staff team. As DM's Chief Operating Officer, I'm part of the "behind the scenes" work of the ministry, training DM's headquarters' staff. As a member of DM's Senior Staff, I'm active in training our campus staff as well. Here are two updates, one from behind the battle lines and another from the front line.

Accounting is one of the central functions of DM headquarters and a critical component of our being above reproach in our handling of finances. Because our HQ staff use our accounting software every day, improvements in this software significantly impact how effectively our support staff can get their jobs done. We recently completed a major project to upgrade to new accounting software. The new software streamlines the processes our HQ staff follow and also provides all our staff with better access to their financial information. Another benefit: the new software is free! It's free for us to use and free to other organizations who might benefit from the improvements we've made. Imagine our staff cheering when these benefits were described at our most recent staff conference!

We have continued to see fruit from our seminar on "Questioning Christianity" at Bucknell, as well as at Bloomsburg. We met with a Muslim student who wanted to talk about Christianity. He asked, "Why would God punish Jesus for sins he

did not commit? That doesn't seem just." We shared with him that Jesus' atonement for our sins allows God to be both just and merciful. God is just because sin is really punished in Jesus and not simply ignored. God is merciful because through Jesus he forgives sin and restores our relationship with him. At the end of our conversation, the Muslim student said, "I have talked to other Christians about this, and you guys have given me some of the best answers so far." We asked him what has made him consider Christianity more. He said, "The Christians I know keep God's rules because they love God, not simply for the sake of keeping them."

Just as God uses our staff who work in the headquarters and our staff who work on campus, so also God uses you, our financial and prayer supporters. And just as those "staying with the supplies" and those "going down to the battle" receive the "same share," so too God credits you with the evangelization of college students. Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel!



**Janet Murray/Chad/TEAM**



*It is Janet's privilege to help develop leadership among the women, working with pastors' wives and lay leaders in Chad, Africa.*

Last year, two of us from Chad went to Thailand to participate in a consultation on member care. Now we are going to start putting into

practice what we learned. We missionaries in Chad will be getting together for a spiritual retreat in late March. The emphasis will be on building our relationship with the Lord and with each other. Please pray that our time together will be refreshing spiritually and physically; a time of renewing our vision and enthusiasm; a time of mutually encouraging one another in our walk with the Lord and in our ministries; and a time of cleansing/repentance—dealing with any issues that are straining fellowship among ourselves and with the Lord.

This is a year for planning big events. The church from the national level down to the local level is having important elections this year. Two

national women's groups are supposed to take steps towards merging. It will be interesting to see how this evolves since the leadership of the two groups do not work well together. Please pray that I would recognize opportunities for influence and use them wisely.

For the last four years the Lele ladies have been meeting quarterly for Bible study and learning practical skills. Some of the practical things they have been learning include knitting, embroidery, macrame, making soap, drying food, making jam, etc. At the end of this year, the ladies would like to do a fair at the site of a local market, displaying and selling their wares. The objectives are to raise money for translation and literacy work, mobilize other Lele ladies to be involved in the work and general evangelization in the community of the market. We have never done anything like this before. It will take a lot of preparation as well as funds we do not have to provide the ladies with the materials they need to make their projects.

Currently I am teaching Esther in the vernacular Bible school. Soon I will be teaching it to a group of ladies who will hopefully take the lessons to their local churches and teach them. We are waiting to see how the Lord works.

*If you would like to receive this monthly Missions Update via email, please send your request to: [echeck@theorchardefc.org](mailto:echeck@theorchardefc.org).*

**Missions Ministry Team**

Beth Su Anderson, Jon Goreham, Joy Goreham, Liz Lightbody, Gary McKee, Rich Stienstra, Debbie Wardle, Amy Wilson, and Pastor Dave Wardle.



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# MISSIONS UPDATE



**MARCH  
2010**

**"To glorify God  
by multiplying God-centered,  
Christ-exalting, world-transforming  
believers through the Gospel in the greater  
Chicago area and around the world."**

Mission Statement  
The Orchard Evangelical Free Church