

ON EARTH
AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN

MATTHEW 6:10

1 3 D E V O T I O N S



CHAPTER 1

immigrants & refugees

Ray Schellinger

Ray is part of a denominational task force on immigration to help churches see beyond the difficulties and begin to embrace the possibilities of mission to and partnership with immigrant individuals and communities. As a global consultant, he works with IM partners and colleagues around the world to help them strengthen their witness to families suffering from domestic violence.

December 18 - International Migrants Day



CHAPTER 2

theological education

J.D. Reed, MDiv

J.D. and his wife, Rhonda, work to strengthen the Christian church in Bolivia by developing leaders through theological education, planting churches and developing new ministries. They also oversee the House of Hope, which focuses on urban ministries to families, at-risk women and children.

January 16 - National Religious Freedom Day



CHAPTER 3

economic & community development

Bruce Borquist, MBA

Bruce and his wife, Ann, serve as regional consultants in Southeast Asia. They come alongside partner Baptist conventions to develop and strengthen ministries such as church-based community and economic development, including social entrepreneurship.

February 27 - March 11 - Fairtrade Fortnight



CHAPTER 4

training & capacity building

Carole Sydnor

Carole is a U.S.-based missionary working closely with IM partner organizations in Nepal. She helps to fill personnel needs through full-time service placement in Nepal and promotes special projects. Her ministry also focuses on continuing relief efforts in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes in central Nepal.

March 8 - International Women's Day



CHAPTER 5

health & wellness

Kristy Engel, MSN, CPNP

Kristy is a global consultant for Health and Wellness. She visits countries in need of health assessments, ongoing education, health team visits and other forms of collaboration. Her goals are to empower local leaders and to build relationships that increase the health of populations around the world through innovation, networking and encouragement.

April 7 - World Health Day



CHAPTER 6

everywhere to everyone

Ann Borquist, MUP, MDiv, DMin

Ann is a regional consultant in Southeast Asia. She and her husband, Bruce, support the work of local and national Baptist groups by promoting the development of servant leadership and cross-cultural missionary training. They have also helped equip Brazilian missionaries for service in Brazil and around the world.

May 21 - World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development



CHAPTER 7

evangelism

Stan Slade, MA, PhD

Stan serves as an IM global consultant for theological education. He supports the training of future and current pastors, church leaders, missionaries and others interested in Christian ministry as a writer, visiting seminary professor, teacher in non-formal education programs and guest speaker.

May 20 - Pentecost



CHAPTER 8

abolishing global slavery

Lauran Bethell, MDiv, DD, LHD

Lauran is a global consultant who works to encourage grassroots projects addressing the exploitation and abuse of women and children. In pursuit of this goal, she collaborates with governmental agencies, non-government organizations and faith-based groups and promotes networking between those who are seeking to bring healing to survivors of prostitution and human trafficking.

July 30 - World Day Against Trafficking in Persons



CHAPTER 11

peace & justice

Dan Buttry, MDiv, ThD

Dan, an IM global consultant for Peace and Justice, works with global servants and church partners around the world to deal constructively with conflict situations. He provides training for church and community leaders in conflict transformation skills, consults with church leaders about ongoing conflicts and in some situations participates in mediation teams.

October 19 - Conflict Resolution Day



CHAPTER 9

youth & young adults

Emily Ferrin

Emily joined IM because of her interest and background in community-based development, and she now serves as assistant director of Short-Term Mission. A naturalist and educator at heart, she strives to create unique mission experiences for both youth and young adults that incorporate creation care and provide valuable opportunities for learning and personal growth.

August 12 - Youth Day



CHAPTER 12

discipleship

Sharon Koh, MDiv, MAT

Sharon sees discipleship as the way Christ led, taught and modeled. She has been discipled by a handful of excellent followers of Christ and has, in turn, discipled many men and women along their journeys of imitating Jesus. In her role as the CEO of IM, she has enjoyed witnessing the many creative ways that global servants disciple others in Jesus' name.

November 1 - All Saints' Day



CHAPTER 10

education

Ruth Fox

Ruth has worked for many years with the approximately 100,000 Akha hill tribe people living in Northern Thailand as well as with the Chiang Rai International Christian School. Her ministry has been focused on education, development and women's ministries.

September - National Learning & Development Month



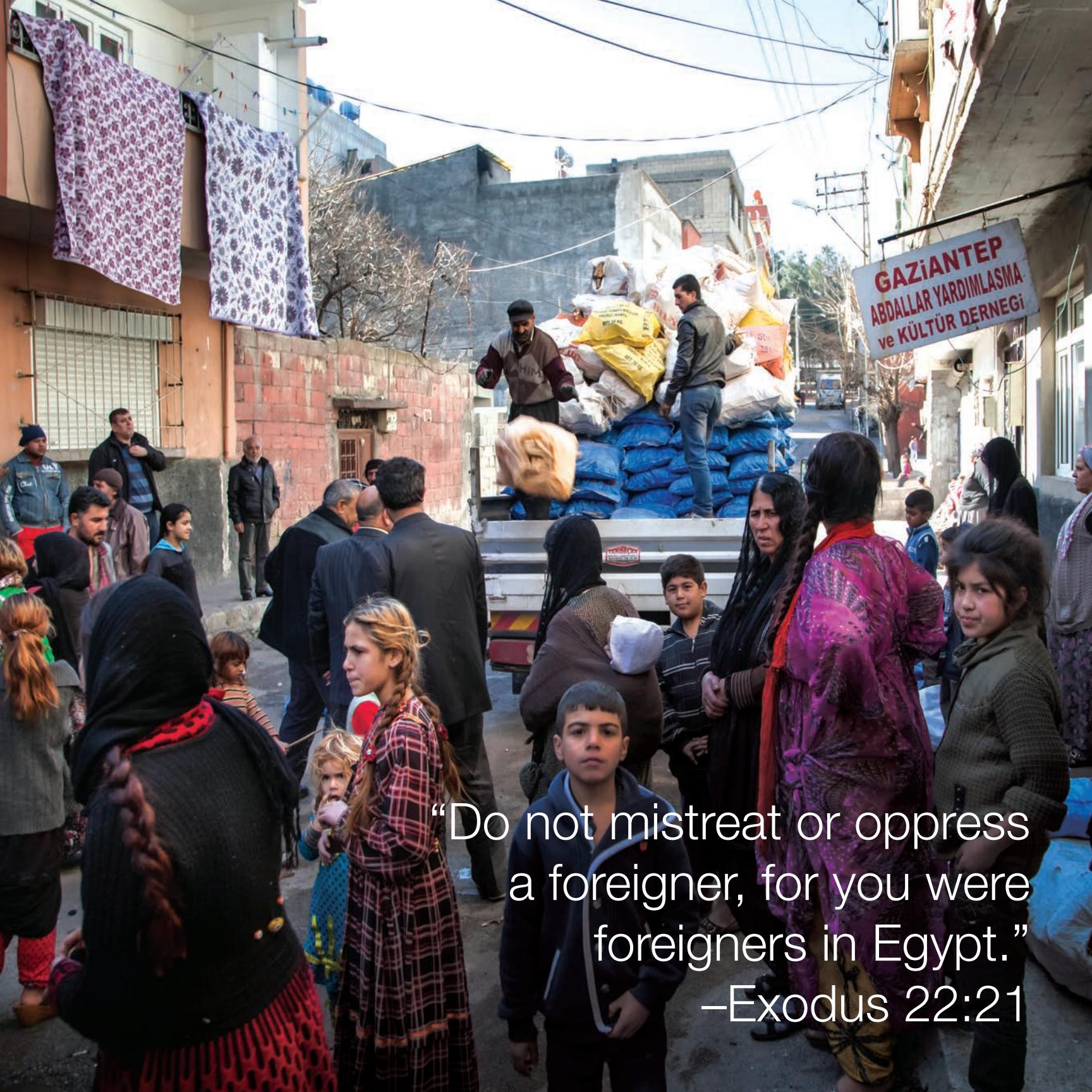
CHAPTER 13

short-term mission

Sandra Dorsainvil, MDiv

Sandra, who joined IM as director of Short-Term Mission in April 2017, led many mission trips throughout the U.S., South America, the Caribbean and Africa in her previous role as associate executive minister of Mission and Stewardship for the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. She invites volunteers to participate in cross-cultural engagements and faith formation through a variety of global service opportunities.

December 5 - International Volunteer Day



“Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.”
–Exodus 22:21

1

immigrants & refugees

• Exodus 22:21 •

International Migrants Day
December 18

It is a simple command, repeated again and again: You shall not mistreat, you shall protect, you shall care for, you shall love the other. Jesus tells us that when we welcome a stranger, we welcome him. The special protection for the stranger is repeated hundreds of times throughout the history of God's people. Why is it of so much concern?

Because the stranger is the most vulnerable among you.

You were once sojourners yourselves. You were powerless and oppressed. You were foreigners in a foreign land; you know what it is like to be marginalized. And so you should recognize yourselves in the strangers, and even see God's countenance in the faces of the least of these.

I have spent the last 16 years working with victims of domestic violence, and I have seen how violence can be generational. When children are exposed to violence, as they grow up they follow one of two paths: either they develop a heightened sense of empathy toward others and look to bring healing to those who are suffering, or they come to see themselves as victims and define their relationships through this lens, justifying their mistreatment and abuse of the people who come under their power.

This dynamic also holds true for nations and people groups. We cultivate our national identity based on shared

narratives. The Israelites rooted their self-understanding in the Exodus, God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. It would have been all too possible for them to emerge from this experience with a sense of victimhood that would allow them to justify the oppression of anyone who got in their way. They could easily have become oppressors. That is why God reminded them, "you know what it is to have your vulnerability turned into oppression; this must not be how you treat those who look to you for hope."

As a nation, we now hold greater power and wealth than any that has ever existed, but in order to justify our indifference to others' struggles, we often define ourselves as the victims. Even though we are a nation of immigrants, when the most vulnerable strangers come to us today, looking to us for help, we accuse them of stealing from us. We forget who we were and therefore lose sight of who we are supposed to be.

Day after day, God calls us, "Love the alien among you, for you know what it is like."

By Ray Schellinger

“It was for freedom that
Christ set us free.”
—Galatians 5:1



2

theological education

• Galatians 5:1 •

National Religious Freedom Day
January 16

What does it mean to be free? Some people associate freedom with ability. The ability to hold a good job gives freedom from poverty; the ability to feed one's family gives freedom from hunger. For others, freedom is having access—access to better education, better housing or a better quality of life. However, the harsh reality for many is that these kinds of freedom will never be anything more than a distant dream.

For this reason, in the mid-twentieth century, theologians like Orlando Costas and Gustavo Gutiérrez began looking to God's Word to redefine their concept of freedom. This led them to develop what would later be called "Liberation Theology." The idea that God wants to free people from poverty and to give them abundant life is appealing to many in Latin America, especially those who lack material wealth. Although many people disagree with the tenets of Liberation Theology, one thing on which we can all agree is that God desires for us to have freedom that can only be found in Christ Jesus.

For many, this freedom peaks with the acceptance of Jesus as Lord, but God's desire is that we all strive to be lifelong students of salvation, ever growing in the freedom that God offers. The New Testament is filled with commands like "work out your salvation with fear and trembling," (Philippians 2:12) "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18) and "let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom." (Colossians 3:16)

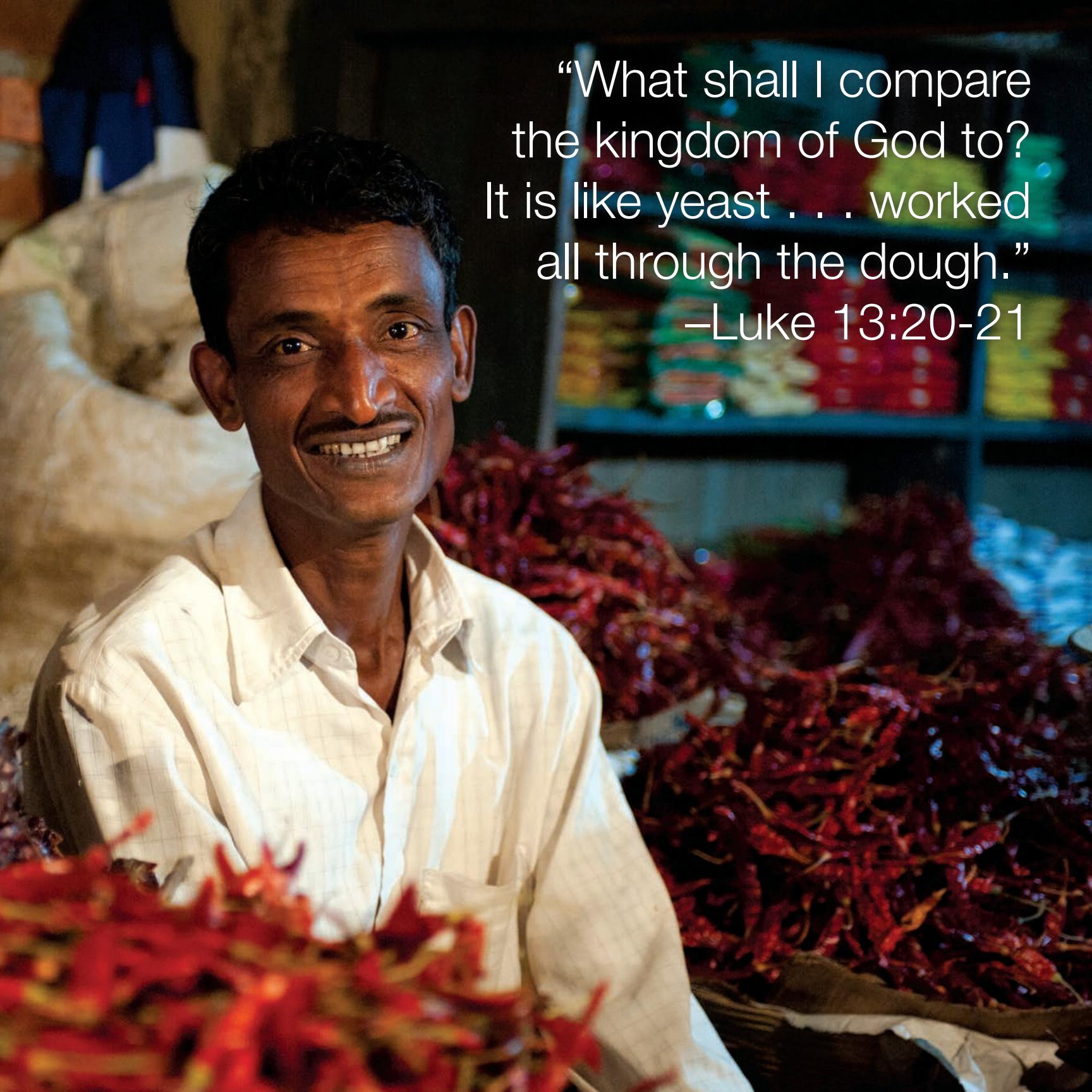
The work of teachers within the church plays a vital role in the spiritual growth of believers, but in much of the world, there is no one to teach the teachers. For many Christian leaders and pastors, a Christian education that would prepare them to lead God's people well is out of reach—either too expensive or too far away.

This is why IM's global servants worldwide are working on innovative initiatives to bring education to these pastors. Whether it is a certificate program for rural pastors using videos and learning communities or an online Master's degree in Theological Studies for Latin American pastors, IM actively pursues ways to help educate Christian leaders around the world.

When a pastor is educated, the church gets a little stronger. When that pastor discipiles a church leader or a young person who is interested in ministry, the church gets a little stronger. When friends and churches support missionaries providing theological education, the church gets a little stronger. When the church is strengthened from within, it reaches out to its community and shares God's love with others.

And it is in the love of God that all people are made truly free.

By J.D. Reed, MDiv

A photograph of a smiling man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. He is positioned in front of large piles of dried red chili peppers. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the same red peppers and some green structures.

“What shall I compare
the kingdom of God to?
It is like yeast . . . worked
all through the dough.”
—Luke 13:20-21

3

economic & community development

- Luke 4:42-44; Luke 13:20-21 •

Fairtrade Fortnight
February 27–March 12

The people of Capernaum wanted Jesus to stay. They were astonished at the authority of his teaching, and amazed and delighted at how he healed and delivered people. But Jesus needed to move on: “People in other towns must hear the good news about God’s kingdom. This is why I was sent.” (Luke 4:43, CEV) So Jesus went from town to town teaching, preaching and showing what it means when God rules as king in people’s lives and communities.

What is it like when people surrender their own little kingdoms and let the King of Kings rule? When God’s will is done in our world? One of my favorite descriptions is that it’s like a little bit of yeast that leavens a whole lot of flour. I worked in a bakery one summer to earn money for college, and ever since then I’ve loved to watch yeast turn flour into leavened dough ready for baking.

Yeast is a perfect example of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Yeast starts small and makes a big difference. Yeast works quietly and unseen. Yeast transforms from the inside, rather than controlling from the outside. But yeast can only do these things if it gets mixed throughout the dough. Dough can’t change itself. Dough needs the “good news” brought by yeast.

Good news can come from a coffee shop in an inner-city Baptist church in Bulgaria, a handicraft jewelry business in Thailand or a greeting card business in the Philippines.

These enterprises, started by IM global servants, provide spiritual and emotional care and vocational training for survivors of human trafficking, while also generating income to support prevention programs.

Good news can also come from an integrated development project run by IM global servants in Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Laos or Thailand. These programs help individuals and communities organize and manage projects in animal husbandry, agriculture, health care, water supply, cooperatives and church planting that transform people’s spiritual, social, economic and environmental conditions.

The global servants and their partners who run these programs are “yeast” that isn’t afraid to get mixed up in some messy situations. They are slowly but surely leavening individuals and communities with the good news of the presence and power of the kingdom of God. Pray for them today, and consider supporting them with a regular financial gift to IM.

What about your church and community? Are there some messy situations in your town that need the yeast of God’s kingly rule? Pray about how God wants to get you mixed up in one of them so that God’s will may be done here, there and everywhere.

By Bruce Borquist, MBA

“We too may live
a new life.”

–Romans 6:4



4

training & capacity building

• Romans 6:4 •

International Women's Day
March 8

Leaving Nepal for the first time, two women leaders flew to Egypt to participate in the Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers (TCTT) led by Dan and Sharon Buttry. Each woman shared her own experience of the program differently, but both had their lives transformed.

One woman shared with me that going to Egypt was a wonderful thing—seeing the Nile River and the pyramids, stepping for the very first time into the sea and visiting first-century churches. Surrounded by a culture so different from her own, her narrow idea of what it meant to worship God had become much broader. One of things that impacted her most was seeing Muslims and Christians coming together to making peace in their country. The experience left her feeling humbled.

The other woman told me that, during this trip, an outpouring of God's grace had transformed her attitudes and understanding. When she left Egypt, she was no longer the same person she had been when she arrived, and since then she has seen God's transformative work throughout her life—in her close personal relationships, in her perceptions and in her ability to facilitate reconciliation between people.

These women serve with a Christian-based nonprofit organization called the Elijah Counseling and Training Center (ECTC) in Nepal, one as program manager and

the other as senior counselor. ECTC works in partnership with social and religious organizations including churches and hospitals, as well as with the local public, to build a community of psychologically and socially stable people.

They commented that the training they had attended in Egypt was rich in teaching tools that they can adapt to their own context in Nepal. This is exactly what they are doing now. ECTC has held conflict management training for its staff, and now all are certified as facilitators. As part of an interfaith peace-building team, the two women plan to continue to share these resources and knowledge and to use skills gained from TCTT to further the work of their program.

As these women continue to walk in newness of life and to bring God's transformative power to the community they serve, I pray with confidence that the one who began a good work among these IM Nepali colleagues will bring it to completion by the day of Christ's return.

And that is God's promise to us: to transform us so that we may walk in newness of life, and to keep on working in our lives until God's work is completed within us.

By Carole Sydnor

“Rise and go; your faith
has made you well.”

—Luke 17:19



5

health & wellness

• Luke 17:11-19 •

World Health Day
April 7

Some of the most memorable stories of Jesus' ministry are the miracles by which he returned people to physical wholeness. Through Jesus' touch and his word, lives were forever changed. Many sought him out because they had been suffering from a physical problem, often for many years, and Jesus offered hope.

Sight was returned, withered bones straightened, bleeding ceased, frenzy and madness were calmed and leprosy vanished. The Gospels tell story after story of people with diseases and disabilities restored through miracles of healing.

"Cure" is defined as "recovery or relief from a disease." "Healing," on the other hand, means "to make sound or whole." There's a difference between the two. One brings relief, while the other brings wholeness. Health professionals spend many years learning to cure disease, but Jesus restored people to a state of wholeness—the original completeness that includes communion with God.

Although many people who sought Jesus for a miracle cure likely came to him simply for physical healing, they found something much greater. Jesus offered restoration of not only the body, but of the soul—the opportunity to be made whole and to know God once again.

One of the greatest examples of this restoration is the story of the ten lepers in Luke 17. Jesus healed them and asked that they return to the synagogue to show themselves as healed before the priests. All but one ran off to the synagogue to be reunited with the community.

Imagine the joy, the relief and the possibilities that filled their minds! They could finally be with friends and family again. No one could condemn them for rushing away to begin their new life.

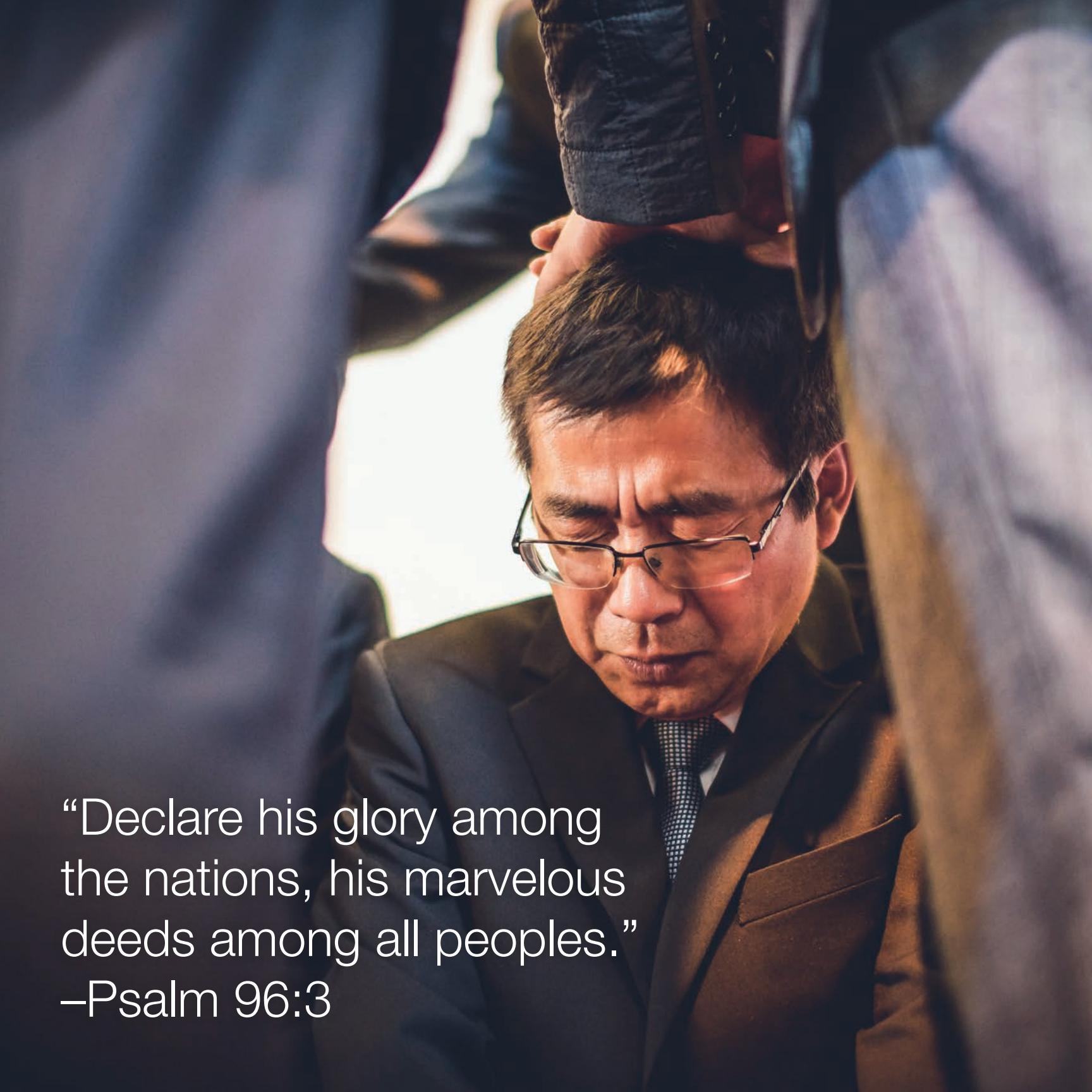
And yet one remained.

One bowed before Jesus and worshiped, acknowledging that all of this was possible only because of God's grace. This man recognized Jesus' authority and power—not only to heal, but to offer restoration. He recognized that Jesus alone could give hope for a new existence. And because of this, he could do nothing but bow down and praise him.

The leper understood an aspect of this healing that the other nine had missed. The healing that Jesus offered was not only physical, but also spiritual. As miraculous as the leper's return to bodily health was, his return to a healed relationship with God was so much more important. And so, while the other nine lepers celebrated the restoration of their physical health, the one who remained received Jesus' word that, through faith, he had been healed in both body and soul.

Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, offers each of us the same healing today. What a gift! It is a blessing that no one deserves, but that is freely given with grace and love so that we can be restored to a healthy relationship with God. May this miracle bring each of us before God with thankfulness and praise today.

By Kristy Engel, MSN, CPNP

A close-up photograph of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. He is looking down with his hands clasped together. The background is blurred.

“Declare his glory among
the nations, his marvelous
deeds among all peoples.”
–Psalm 96:3

6

everywhere to everyone

• Psalm 96:2-3 •

World Day for Cultural Diversity for
Dialogue and Development

May 21

God is doing amazing things in our world today! God is working through Christians in every nation to bring hope, healing and wholeness to a world suffering from broken and twisted relationships. When we have eyes to see God at work, we naturally want to praise God and tell others about the marvelous ways God is moving in our lives, in our communities and in the world.

The Body of Christ looks fundamentally different today than it did in the past few centuries. Christianity's center of gravity has shifted from the Global North to the South. The Christian family circles the globe with diverse expressions of theology, worship, prayer and practice. It is amazing to see the tremendous impact followers of Jesus from every continent are having on their communities.

Another marvelous bit of news is that nations that formerly only received missionaries from Europe and North America are now sending thousands of their own missionaries to countries around the globe—including to the U.S., which is the third largest "mission field" in the world!

Did you know that churches in the majority world (formerly referred to as the "third world") send almost half of all cross-cultural missionaries? Top senders include Brazil,

India, the Philippines, Mexico and China. Many of IM's international partners are among those identifying, equipping and sending believers whom God has called to testify of his love and grace throughout the world. The mission of God's people is now truly "from everywhere to everyone"!

Let's join with our sisters and brothers in Christ in Asia, Africa, Latin America—and, yes, the U.S.—to boldly share the marvelous good news that God's love through Jesus transforms our lives, setting us free from all that binds us and makes us less than what God created us to be. God calls us to be ambassadors of reconciliation—to heal broken relationships in our families, with our neighbors and with the stranger and foreigner in our midst. Together, we can be instruments of God's justice and hope—of God's desire to put things right in individual lives and in society.

Sing to the Lord; praise his name! Let your joy in the Lord overflow as you testify to God's marvelous work in your life and in the lives of God's people all around the world.

By Ann Borquist, MUP, MDiv, DMin

A close-up photograph of an elderly woman with grey hair, wearing a red patterned headband and a black top with a large red flower brooch. She is looking upwards with her hands raised in prayer. In the background, other people are visible in a crowd.

“This promise is for you . . .
and for all who are far off.”

—Acts 2:39

7

evangelism

Acts 2

Pentecost
May 20

Each year in El Salvador, people celebrate as the maize begins to ripen. Even though the harvest is still weeks away, the expanding, ripening ears are full of promise. Time to celebrate! People harvest some of the ears and prepare a special hot drink called atol, or atol shuco (or often, just shuco). Communities gather to drink the thick, warm, sweet beverage and to rejoice at the prospect of the coming harvest. These gatherings, or atoladas, are full of contagious joy.

Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, was like that. The first fruits of the coming wheat harvest were gathered in and presented to God in thanksgiving for God's provision. As one of the three major pilgrimage festivals each year, the farming festival was an ideal time for Israel's teachers to reinforce and deepen the people's understanding of and gratitude for God's provision throughout their history.

Over time, Pentecost—50 days after the Passover deliverance from Egypt—came to be linked with Sinai, the giving of the Law and the renewal of God's covenant with the children of Abraham. God's provision from the fields was also the promise of a coming harvest of blessing: first, for Israel... and then, through Israel, for all the families of the earth. (Genesis 12:3)

On the first Pentecost after Jesus' death and resurrection, God's Spirit drew together a crowd of pilgrims by using

the believers in Jesus to put on an amazing "sound and light show." Then Peter explained that this "show" had substance: God was delivering on ancient promises! That which prophets like Joel (2:28-32) and Ezekiel (36:25-28) had announced, and which many had longed for, was now happening in Jesus. The full harvest was still to come, but the first fruits could be tasted today! Here and now, God's Spirit was empowering young and old, slave and free, male and female to live in and to bear witness to the life of the age to come.

As he spoke to the crowds on that Pentecost, Peter announced that the promise of salvation was "for all whom the Lord our God will call," including those "who are far off." (Acts 2:39) At the time, no one knew just how far that meant—and they would soon be surprised to learn that it extended beyond the borders of the Hebrew people to the Gentiles. Even today, as we witness to the good news across physical and cultural distances that Peter could not have imagined, God's plan remains bigger and broader than we can know.

Pray to be filled with the Spirit who empowers us to both tell and show God's love in Jesus to those who are near, and to all who are far off.

By Stan Slade, MA, PhD

“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’” —John 4:39



8

abolishing global slavery

• John 4:6-39 •

World Day against Trafficking in Persons
July 30

She was an “immoral woman” with whom no one wanted to associate. Her promiscuous lifestyle was culturally unacceptable. And so, when a Jewish man asked her for a drink of water at the public well, she was amazed. Wasn’t he concerned about his reputation? She concluded that he must not know who she was.

But when he asked her about her husband and she responded, honestly but incompletely, that she was not married, that theory quickly crumbled. He responded by letting her know that he understood exactly who she was—that she had been married five times and was now living with a man who was not her husband.

She began to realize that this was someone who saw her differently. This stranger, Jesus, saw into her heart and did not turn away.

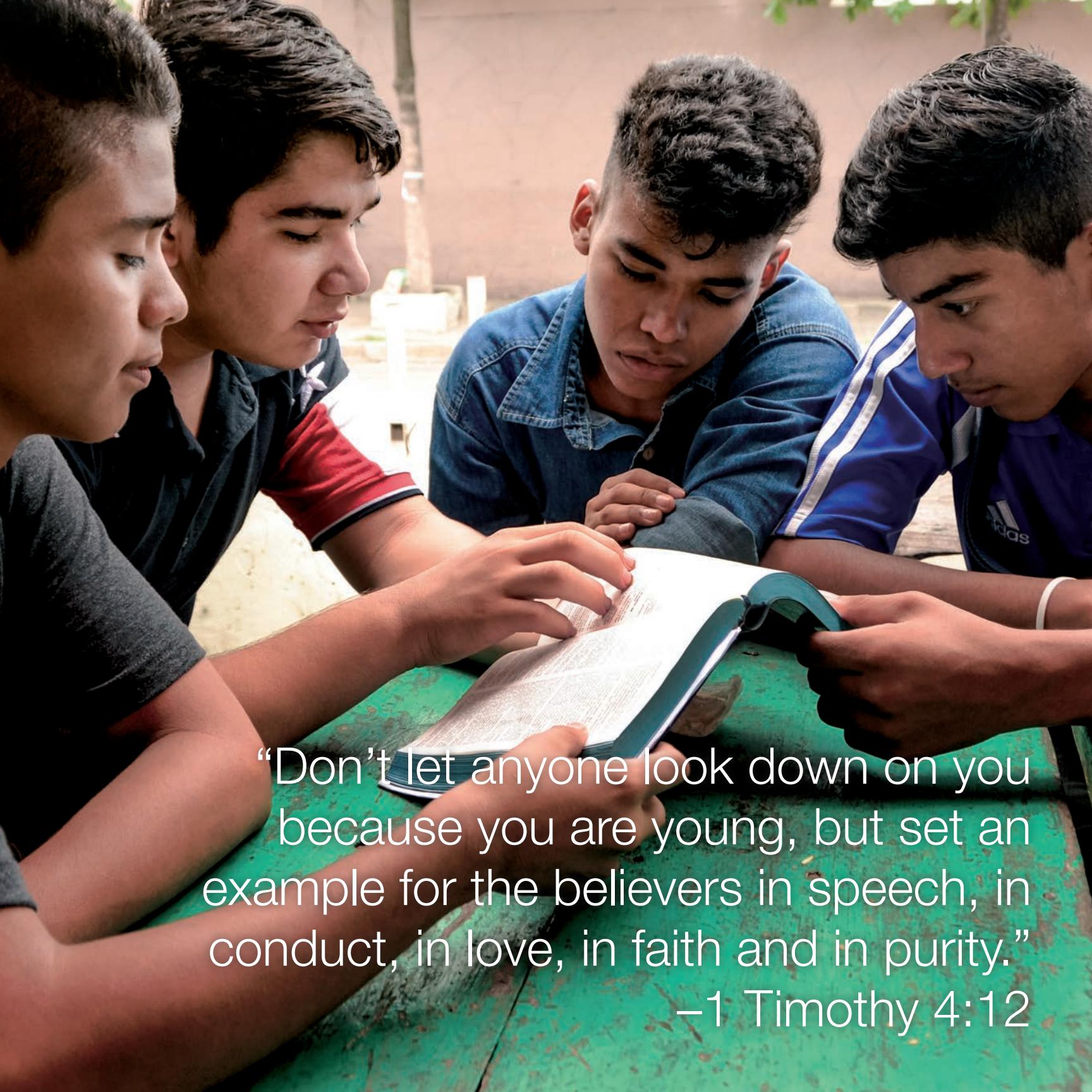
We will never know why this woman’s past was filled with so many broken relationships. What wounds had prompted such a life? Had she been abused, destroying her ability to trust and sustain a long-term intimate relationship? How did she cope with the intense loneliness she must have felt as an outcast from her community?

Jesus met her in a familiar public place, opening the conversation with a simple question about a drink of water, and ended up offering her healing. He knew her in the darkest caverns of her heart where she was most wounded. He met her at the deep well of her soul and offered her the water of eternal life and peace. And then this woman whom everyone else had rejected became one of Jesus’ first evangelists: “Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony.” (John 4:39)

Jesus approached this woman without any concern for his reputation or hers. He saw her with eyes that didn’t judge or condemn. He treated her with compassion, knowing that her heart was lonely and longing for a touch of care.

Combating human trafficking requires us to enter into uncomfortable places of physical and spiritual darkness with Jesus’ heart of caring, unconditional love and hope for a just future. Will you join us?

By Lauran Bethell, MDiv, DD, LHD

A photograph showing four young boys of diverse ethnicities gathered around a green metal table, looking intently at an open book. They are all dressed casually, with one boy in a blue denim shirt and another in a blue polo shirt with white stripes. The scene is outdoors, with a brick wall and some foliage visible in the background.

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

—1 Timothy 4:12

9

youth & young adults

• 1 Timothy 4:12 •

Youth Day
August 12

Growing up in churches where youth ministry was a priority, I was very familiar with 1 Timothy 4:12. At many times in youth group meetings, retreats and other ministry settings, this was our rallying cry.

No—we were not going to let the world look down on us because we were young! Yes—we were going to prove our worth by emulating the good characteristics that Paul exhorted of his younger comrade. We would make ourselves examples to those who surpassed us in age.

Now I see another side to this passage: “Don’t look down on anyone because they are young, but watch as they set an example for you . . .”

If I have learned one thing from the years I spent as a camp counselor, tutor and teacher for youth and young adults, it is this: Age and experience influence ability much less than we allow ourselves to believe, and young people are so much more capable than we think. I saw this time and time again as they eagerly engaged in new, complex topics or exemplified leadership, responsibility, loyalty and compassion.

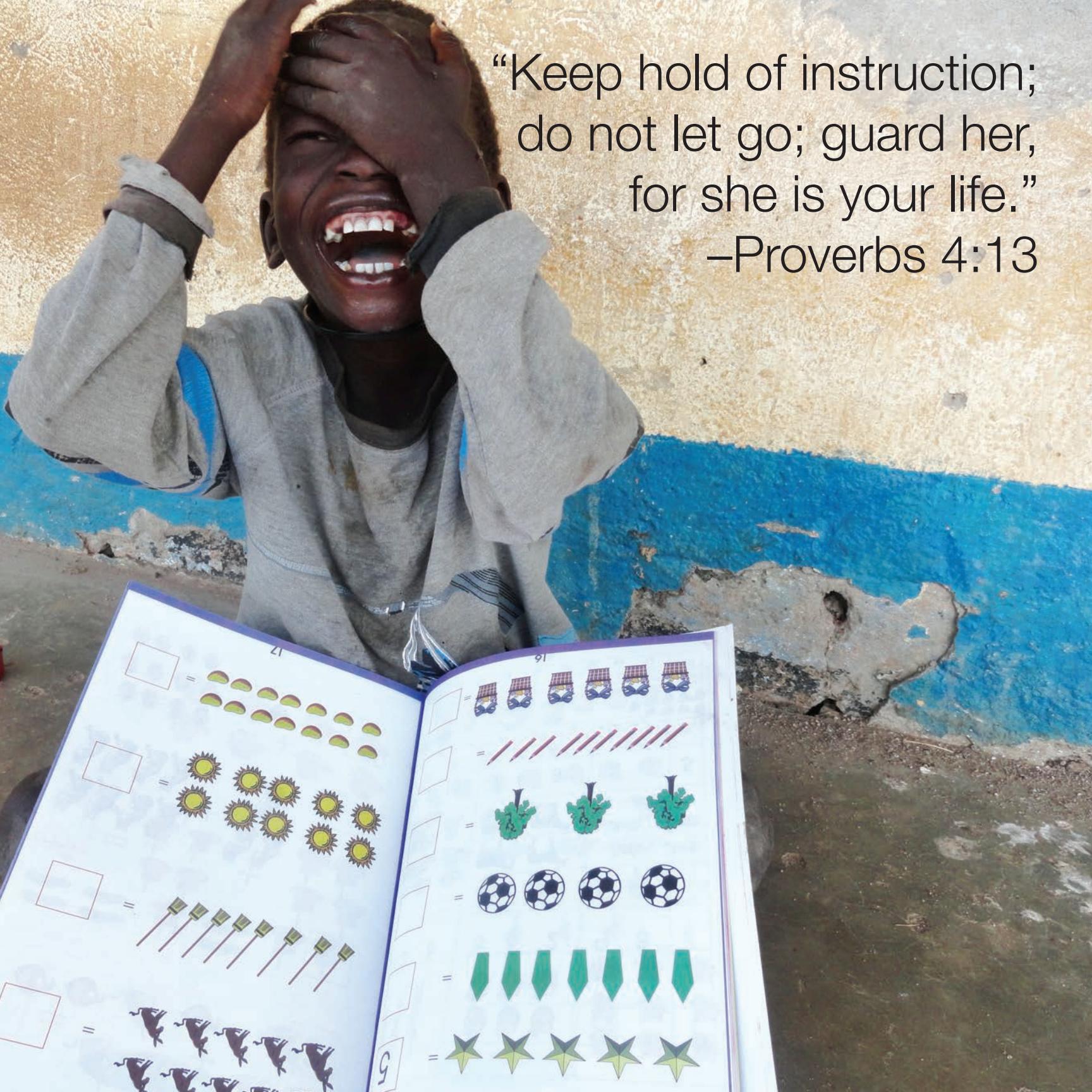
As Jesus said, “unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

(Matthew 18:3) Let us take these words to heart and see our youth as an example to follow, instead of viewing them as incapable or naive. Rather than looking down on young people for their age, here are some ways you can encourage their abilities:

- Engage them in conversation about current events
- Apprentice them in a skill (home maintenance, personal finance, first aid, etc.)
- Teach them about something you know
- Grant them more responsibilities
- Invite them to find their own ways to serve their communities, especially by using their creative and artistic abilities

If we devote more attention to affirming youth and young adults, I think we will find that God uses them more than we realize. So let us open up opportunities to them, pray for them and take strides to keep our own mindsets from hindering them. Allow yourself to be surprised by the glory God shows through youths!

By Emily Ferrin



"Keep hold of instruction;
do not let go; guard her,
for she is your life."
—Proverbs 4:13



10

education

• Acts 22:1-3; Proverbs 4:13 •

National Learning & Development Month
September

I agreed to meet with Anaw, a young Akha boy who had just completed the sixth grade and hoped to continue his education. Anticipating someone around the age of 12, I was surprised to meet an older boy of 16. He had only been able to begin his schooling at the age of 11, after his family of nine crossed the border into Thailand from Myanmar in 1998, escaping Burmese military conflicts.

Despite his age, Anaw was determined to study in a traditional school setting rather than an alternative program, because he wanted to “really get the material.” With support from IM’s Student Tuition Expense Program (STEP), Anaw graduated from the Sahasartsuksa School, a local Christian school begun 60 years ago by American Baptist missionaries and Karen ethnic minority leaders to provide much-needed education for children from the hill tribe groups and ethnic minorities.

Since completing a BS from Maefahluang University, Anaw has become a highly respected and committed Christian leader. He and his wife both work in administrative roles for a Christian anti-human-trafficking organization operating in five countries in Southeast Asia. He holds a position of great authority and connects with other NGOs and government officials trying to bring freedom and justice to the oppressed. God opened the doors to his educational possibilities; Anaw’s education opened the doors to his future. It is the foundation of his work today.

Education is part of our mandate to bring the gospel to the whole world. It promotes the idea of a person as

a holistic being. Education is deliberate, hopeful and purposeful. It develops understanding, critical thinking and judgment, creating a foundation that enables action.

Paul was an ardent student of the law. In Acts 22:1-3, he speaks of studying with Gamaliel, perhaps the most renowned rabbi of the day. He points to this as part of his preparation for his ministry and calling. We often think of Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus as the defining moment that gave him not only his faith in Jesus Christ, but also his ability to teach and debate. However, it was his solid foundation in the Old Testament Scriptures that gave him the knowledge he needed to become such an effective leader and teacher in the church. Paul’s education gave him the ability to see and understand the connections between what was prophesied in the Old Testament and the revelation of the Messiah in Jesus Christ.

Please pray for our educational ministries around the world. Because globalization and technology have exposed children and young people worldwide to issues never seen before, it is more important than ever to intentionally provide education to empower them, to promote creativity and out-of-the-box thinking when the world tries to tell them what to think, to give them hope for their futures and to prepare them to be used by God for His purposes.

By Ruth Fox

“First go and be reconciled.”
—Matthew 5:24



peace & justice

• Acts 6:1-7; Matthew 5:23-24 •

Conflict Resolution Day
October 19

As a young married seminarian, I led a fellowship of young adults in our community. One single woman was shocked when I mentioned a conflict that my wife, Sharon, and I had. She thought Christians shouldn't have conflicts. But that certainly is not how the Bible presents the life of the early church, and it certainly hasn't been my experience!

Acts 6:1-7 tells how the office of deacon was established, but it's also a great story about conflict transformation. Conflict erupted as the early church experienced stunning growth following Pentecost. The church developed ethnic diversity as it embraced Hellenist Jews from the Jewish diaspora who had come back to Jerusalem on pilgrimage and responded to the gospel preached by the apostles. Differences between the Hebraic Jews from Judea and Galilee, who spoke Aramaic, a dialect of Hebrew, and the Hellenist Jews, who spoke Greek, lead to difficulties among believers, who frequently split along cultural lines. During the distribution of food, glowingly portrayed in Acts 4:32-37, the Hellenistic widows were being overlooked. They were literally going hungry. A conflict was brewing!

Being filled with the Spirit doesn't mean you won't have conflict, as we see here in the early church. But being filled with the Spirit does mean that you will handle your conflict in a positive, transformative way—a way consistent with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We can see that concept illustrated in this story.

First, those in the margins did something positive: they raised their voice! They said that the system wasn't working. We also see a bit later that they didn't just complain; they were willing to join in the problem-solving effort and step up to take on new responsibilities.

Second, those in the mainstream, in positions of power, listened to the voices from the margin. Peter could have pulled apostolic authority and overruled them, but instead he listened to their concerns and acted to solve the problems they brought to his attention. He acknowledged both the needs of the Hellenistic widows and the needs of the over-burdened apostles. He brought together the entire community—mainstream and margins, Hellenists and Hebrews, men and women, apostles and widows—and together they crafted a win/win solution.

The church was stronger after the conflict than before it. Conflict transformation, or dealing with conflict in the Spirit, can take us to better places in our churches, homes and communities, than we were in before the conflict took place. May you be blessed with conflict—in the Spirit!

By Dan Buttry, MDiv, ThD

A photograph of a young woman with dark hair, smiling broadly. She is wearing a colorful, patterned top with white lace-trimmed sleeves and a beaded necklace. She is holding a dark book or folder against her chest with both arms. The background consists of wooden stairs.

“Go and make disciples
of all the nations.”
–Matthew 28:19

12

discipleship

• Joshua 8:9; Matthew 28:19 •

All Saints' Day
November 1

Joshua's life exemplifies the concept of discipleship. The Bible often mentions him as Moses' assistant and, through its depiction of their relationship, shows how Moses mentored him for leadership from the very beginning. In these early years, Joshua was close enough to Moses to see the heart of each difficulty the Israelites faced. He witnessed Moses lead the Israelites out of Egypt and heard firsthand what was on Moses' mind when he had to make tough decisions during the long years of wandering in the desert.

After spending so much time learning from this man who was empowered by God to provide miraculous delivery from plagues, water from rocks and manna from heaven, what would it have felt like to know that Moses would never enter the Promised Land? How devastated must Joshua have been when he and the other leaders buried Moses just within sight of the land flowing with milk and honey?

Joshua's first notable moment of leadership was the battle of Jericho. As you may remember, the Lord's deliverance was so powerful that the Israelites only needed to walk around the city in silence, and then blow trumpets and shout when instructed to do so, in order to assure their victory. The Lord clearly gave Jericho over to the Israelites.

But do you remember the battle of Ai? That account immediately follows the battle of Jericho. In Hebrew, "Ai"

means "dump." It was a small town and was supposed to be an easy win. But instead, it became an embarrassing loss due to Achan's sin of taking goods that were meant to be consecrated to the Lord.

One small phrase in this episode reveals how the men felt after they saw Achan punished by stoning for his greediness: "Joshua spent that night with the people." (Joshua 8:9)

They were scared.

What is discipleship, as our Lord Jesus asks us to model it? Matthew 28:18 holds the words of Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all the nations." Today, we are still trying to live up to Jesus Christ's charge to grow disciples in all nations.

Discipleship is journeying with, camping with, spending the night with those who are scared. As many IM global servants know all too well, discipleship is patiently teaching and re-teaching the same lesson. Discipleship is doing life-on-life.

As we answer the call to go, will you walk with us as we follow Christ?

By Sharon Koh, MDiv, MAT

“Do not be afraid . . . you have found favor with God.”
—Luke 1:30



13

short-term mission

• Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:30-33 •

International Volunteer Day
December 5

In the Gospels' account of Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph made the best of their divine calling and truly stepped out in faith, as nomads in a turbulent world. They held on to the prophetic message the angel had given them: "Do not be afraid . . . you have found favor with God." (Luke 1:30) That same phrase was repeated to the shepherds who would be the first visitors to Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. These shepherds were among the first to share the good news of the birth of Jesus, our Messiah.

"Fear not" can be our mantra in Short-Term Mission as we carry Jesus' light in many countries, serving by using our God-given talents in both calm and turbulent areas of the world. We engage with strangers with our eyes and ears open for collaboration. We engage with our palms open, extending the peace of Christ that has been given to us for others to receive. We engage as instruments of mercy and love in communities that need healing, mending, teaching, listening and partnering.

"Fear not" is an anchor for all of us doing cross-cultural ministry. The language of love, hope and mercy helps to break down the barriers of fear.

As we celebrate Emmanuel in our hearts and in our actions and words, let's pray and take a moment to remember a time in our life when a stranger, an angel of God, brought good news to us. Pause to remember the transformative ways this good news covers us and breaks the chains of fear.

May today's good news lessen our fears and anxieties and strengthen our desire to be God's ambassadors with gentleness, love and grace.

God's peace be in all that we do. Amen.

By Sandra Dorsainvil, MDiv

International Ministries, also known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, works cross-culturally to invite people to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to proclaim, through both word and deed, God's reign of justice, peace and abundant life for all creation.



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