

JOURNALS POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2014

Rising (out of bed!) To The Challenge!



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



GLOBAL

What a fabulous “birthday celebration” International Ministries had this summer! Celebrating 200 years as an organization—the longest-running Christian mission agency in the USA—was a giant moment in history! 1300 people were gathered at our “heart place”—the Green Lake Conference Center: our dear supporters, encouragers and pray-ers; church leaders/partners from more than 50 countries!; ALL the IM missionaries! It was exciting! It was fun! And I missed a big part of it... Read on...

The first week of celebrations was an “all-staff-gathering” of IM missionaries and home staff as together we enjoyed renewing deep friendships, worshiping, and visioning for the next decade—century!—of our life as IM. The second week began with the traditional flag-procession of all the countries of the world that we have touched. My tears of joy and thanksgiving were not the only ones in the big “tent” set up specially for the event, and I just felt to honored to be a part of the parade. The next day, I conducted two workshops on human trafficking—and by that evening, I was exhausted and dizzy, and so went to bed early. In the morning I woke up and turned over—and had to kick my roommate out of the bathroom so I could throw-up. One Grace of this time was that, indeed, all the missionaries were there—including all of our doctors! Dr. Bill Clemmer came to my bedside and diagnosed an “inner-ear virus”, and let me know that, yes, I would survive! Dr. Steve and Nancy James also reassured me, and all prayed healing prayers. I got The Best medical care possible!

That first day in bed, I felt miserable, but the next day was better—but I was still confined to bed. I couldn’t believe that I was stuck in bed while all of the hundreds of people who have supported and cared and prayed were only feet away. Oh, how could it be? You can imagine my frustration and sadness....

On the last morning of the Grand Celebration, I was feeling weak, but not nauseous. It took me 4 hours to shower....wash my hair....get dressed...put on my make-up....with a bed break in between each activity... But by 4:00 pm, I was ready to wobble down the hallway and appear at the rehearsal for the evening program. I had been given 5 minutes in the program to paint the history of IM’s very important involvement in the anti-trafficking movement in this world—and I was determined that this word would be shared! I practiced walking in a straight line across the stage, and was glad that I could grasp the strong podium to keep my balance while speaking! God had helped me to “Rise to the Challenge”!

I made it through! After the program, I got to see folks I’d missed talking with during the week, and some even stayed over for a day or 2, so I got a “second chance”. I’d been ordered grounded by the doctors—I couldn’t fly for 10 days (Inner ear issues and flying...no, no, no), and so had to sadly cancel a trip to Costa Rica for an ICAP/Latin America conference. But I was at Green Lake...a more “healing place” I don’t think I know. Brad Berglund’s “Rhythms of the Spirit” conference fed my soul during my grounding. God knew I needed this time of rest and spiritual nourishment. And it turned into a serendipitous, refreshment of body, mind and soul.

Below, I’ve posted the words I brought that last evening: I pray that they will inspire you to “Rise to the Challenge” and let you know how important YOUR part through IM has been in the global anti-human trafficking movement. During this time when we are taking the World Mission Offering, I pray that if you are not already, you will contribute your 1) prayers and 2) finances towards the support of God’s work through us!

With Great Gratitude,

Lauran

Presentation: World Mission Conference 200th Anniversary Celebration

July 25th, 2014

DO YOU KNOW???

Do you know that YOU have been a part of a huge movement of God's Spirit?

Do you KNOW that YOU have participated in one of the most significant movements against evil in this world?

Do you KNOW that YOUR energy, your prayers, your funds, your lives have saved thousands of children, thousands of young women and men?

International Ministries was THERE at the beginning of the modern-day movement against slavery, human trafficking and forced prostitution.

In 1986, I doubt that any of you had even HEARD the term "Human Trafficking". I know that I hadn't. But IM missionaries Paul and Elaine Lewis KNEW that girls were disappearing from the hills of northern Thailand and ending up in sexual slavery—deceived into thinking that they were taking jobs to support their families. They knew that the girls needed an education and vocational training. God gave them a vision—to begin a ministry they called "The New Life Center"—offering an education, vocational training and Christian education to young tribal women—to make sure that they DIDN'T have to go into prostitution to support their families.

In 1987, when I joined the movement as the first Director of the New Life Center, I knew of no other project of its kind. At that time, in 1987, we just didn't talk about human trafficking and prostitution in "nice" church places.

But God had BIG PLANS. God's Holy Spirit was moving,—and using good American Baptist folks to pray and volunteer and give their resources and pray some more. By 1992 God called Thelma Nambu into ministry with women in the bars and on the streets of Manila, Philippines and she began Samaritana. Jonathan Nambu fell in love with the beautiful Thelma and joined the ministry in 1993. Kim Brown began "The House of Love" for HIV+ mothers and their children—most of them infected in brothels.

In 1993, you may have been one to see the New Life Center choir when it came to the USA—it was an historic moment of awareness raising. People were hearing and responding to God's Call. The number of people who were beginning new ministries with women and children at risk and victims of human trafficking was growing. In 1991, God called Philip Smith and later Corenne into ministry in some of the most dangerous ghettos of the world—rescuing and restoring street children's lives in Brazil through "Hope Unlimited For Children".

As I watched the movement gain rapid momentum in many corners, I realized that the new projects needed resources, encouragement and networks. When God called Karen Smith into missionary service, we realized that she had the special gifts to direct the New Life Center, and I could then become a "Global Consultant", traveling the world, raising

awareness and encouraging new ministries. In 2002, Kit Ripley joined the movement to also use her artistic gifts at the New Life Center.

In the early part of this new millennium the movement was gaining great momentum as Annie Dieselberg founded NightLight in offering spiritual and economic alternatives to women in prostitution in Bangkok, and her husband Jeff joined the staff as Chaplain soon after.

Jill Lowery began working with the women in Congo through Mitendi Project.

And Mylinda Baits began doing awareness raising and prevention work in Costa Rica.

Debbie Kelsey had ministries with women in prostitution in Belgium and then Italy.

In Eastern Europe, Terry Myers helped to start "Daughters of Bulgaria", visiting women on the streets there.

Lori and Matt Mann felt called to minister to street children in Laos—offering shelter and education for them. The movement continues to gain momentum...

Deb Mulneix has joined Jonathan and Thelma in The Philippines, now,

Trish Hoefl works with the Chiang Rai branch of the New Life Center....

And Jeni Pedzinski is preparing to join the New Life Center staff soon....

It's an exponential growth of people all over the world who are Rising to the Challenge to share the Light of God's Love in the darkest corners of the world!!!

But there is still so much more to be done. Through the giving of your time, your finances, your talents, gifts and skills your very lives—I know that many of you will be Called to Rise to this Challenge! The world is waiting to KNOW the Good News of Jesus Christ, that rescues and heals and saves from the evil of destruction. I have confidence that we WILL Rise to the Challenge and participate in the history yet to be made!