

Missions

Papua New Guinea

Where Culture
and the Gospel Meet

Ireland
Love in Action

Costa Rica
Interview with
New Missionaries



THINKING IT THROUGH

BY DAN ROGERS

30 Days to Comply

It was a beautiful Tuesday morning at the beach—at least until the phone call. We were at the coast with our Latin coworkers in the middle of team encouragement meetings. I had just finished talking about the seriousness of understanding our call to serve the Lord and living in holiness.

Then my cell phone rang and I was informed that the fire department had stopped by the Bible institute back in Quito for a surprise inspection of the campus. Funny, I didn't even know there was a fire department that covered our area!

"He doesn't look happy, and he has a list of things we must comply with," said the Bible institute secretary.

I quickly prayed, "Father, he probably wants a bribe. I won't do it. Lord, you need to guide me."

"Please accept the instructions from the official," I said to the secretary. "We will deal with it when we get back to campus."

"But they want us to add another exit to the auditorium, change doors, add about 40 smoke detectors, and put in a centralized alarm system! And we have only 30 days to comply with it all," the secretary said.

"We will deal with it when we get back."

"Lord, did You *really* call me here to deal with this kind of stuff?" I prayed. "I want to teach people; I want to reach the next generation; I want Your truth and Word to create a bridge between the jungle community culture of the young people we are teaching and the postmodern age that is encroaching upon them and their communities. I don't need this kind of *stuff*!"

Then, in His perfect and persistent way, the Lord interrupted my thoughts and graciously reminded me how many times I had just said "I." You would think that after 20 years on the field I would have that "submit and humbly accepting" thing figured out and locked up.

Authentic, real-life submission and humility requires a daily dying to self, going back to the cross, back to my knees, realizing and living "my grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9) through all of life's stuff. It requires a keen awareness that everything has been approved by His grace to bring about two things: His glory and my betterment.

I am struck by God's timing in Joshua 5. After the people

had crossed the Jordan River and established camp in hostile territory, the Lord asked all the men to be circumcised. From a practical standpoint, this seems like really bad timing. For the duration of their recuperation, the entire population would be completely unguarded, humanly speaking, sitting next to the hostile, fortified city of Jericho. God's people needed to learn to trust in God alone, so He lovingly put things in their lives that forced them to be dependent upon Him.

Our security, provision, and guidance need to be completely dependent on our Lord. The problem is, we get comfortable doing it ourselves. We become complacent, depending on our "tried-and-true" abilities. This is

God lovingly puts stuff in our lives to wake us up to what is most important instead of what we are comfortable with.

why God lovingly puts stuff in our lives to wake us up to what is most important instead of what we are comfortable with.

And so we pray, we comply—even with fire department requirements—and God graciously provides again as He has done so many times in the past. The truly thrilling part of this process is watching how God starts providing after we act in faith. We trust Him and take steps that are in line with biblical principles and live as faithful ambassadors for Him. He then steps in, guides, directs, provides, and gives peace.

Lesson learned—again.

Yes, He calls us to this kind of stuff because we need this kind of stuff. If our goal is to be instruments that reflect real Christianity, we must learn to live Christ consistently in all the details and all the things that comes our way. Trust Him, be faithful to His will, and be amazed at how He provides.

Thank You, Lord, for all this kind of stuff. Thank You that You weren't thinking about Yourself when You went to the cross. Give me that same passion to serve in consistent holiness as You mold me in humility and faithfulness. ■

Dan Rogers serves in Ecuador.

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WHERE CULTURE AND THE GOSPEL MEET

Understanding the People of Papua New Guinea

BY REGGIE HOWARD

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a nation of stunning natural beauty, with forested mountains reaching more than 13,000 feet, fast-flowing rivers, breathtaking waterfalls, pristine beaches, living reefs, and countless islands. But the greatest riches of this nation are not its natural beauty. The people of PNG's tribes (nations), of which there are more than 800, are its greatest, most beautiful resource: loved by the Father, died for by the Son, and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. By relating three true events, we seek to lead you to better understand these people and encourage you to pray with clarity.

SCRIPTURE THROUGH YUNA EYES

Barely two months into my missionary service, I was the only foreigner among thousands of Yuna people. My assignment was to learn their language in order to facilitate the translation of the Old Testament. The only English spoken was at the nearby school. I was asked to give a Bible lesson on Cain and Abel to the children. I related the story and asked, "Why was Cain angry with his brother?"

They discussed it and came back with what was the obvious answer to them. "Cain was the older brother, but he was poor. His younger brother had all the wealth, so Cain was jealous and killed him." The well-educated church leader who brought me there agreed and defended their answer. I was confused.

In the early days, Papua New Guineans' knowledge was limited by how far their feet could take them. They only knew their own world. So biblical events were interpreted through their own worldview. To the Yuna people, Cain was obviously poor because he had to grow food and did not have livestock, which for the Yuna people means pigs. Abel had lots of "pigs," so he was clearly wealthy! This disparity of wealth and status stands out for every Yuna person who hears the story.

◀ **From top:** Papua New Guinea is a country of vast and diverse natural beauty; The people are proud of their history and culture; For both the younger and older generations, the culture influences their worldview and approach to Scripture.



THE PLANET JESUS VISITED

A couple of years later, I was involved in the early evangelism of three small tribes who lived a three-days' walk over a rugged mountain range to the south. Each day, people gathered in a house, and I told Bible stories through an interpreter. For the first few days, people listened politely but without much response. One day, I related the story of the woman at the well.

“DID JESUS COME TO OUR PLANET?”

I explained what a well is, something they knew nothing of as they have never been short of water. When I finished

the story, lively debate erupted, and I waited until there was a pause to ask the interpreter what was going on. He explained, “We are of two different opinions, and we don’t know what to think. Did Jesus come to our planet, or did He go to the moon or somewhere else?” Confused, I asked for clarification. He said, “Where Jesus lived, they had to dig in the ground to get water. That doesn’t sound like our earth, so it must be somewhere else, maybe one of the lights we see in the sky.”

I spent the next hour trying to convince them that indeed Jesus came to our world to save all of us. I explained that Israel was in a different part of our world and that people can travel there by airplane. They were not impressed. I said I had seen pictures of Israel and knew people who had traveled there and seen it with their own eyes. They discussed it more. They were still not convinced. I prayed silently, asking the Lord for help.



▲ Papua New Guinea's greatest asset is its people, many of whom are still unreached.

I remembered an Israeli student, Naphtali, at the Bible school who was from Bethlehem. When this was relayed to the people, I could see a change. The interpreter said, “Now we know that Jesus really did come to our earth in order to save us.” Why? “Because we know you, and you personally know someone from Jesus’s clan. So He could not have gone to another planet; He must have come here.” This was a major breakthrough that so easily could have been missed.

GOD’S TIMING

This next event took place 10 years later, in another part of the country among different people. Brethren missionaries started their work in the Lumi area of what is now Sandaun Province in the early 1950s. The Gospel was well received, and 40 years later, there were more than 50 assemblies in the district. My wife, Susan, and I were there to serve these assemblies. An obvious need was to improve the reading ability and study skills of the leaders. People in PNG work hard outside all day and enjoy it, but they find reading to be difficult work.

About 30 elders had come to Lumi for two weeks to improve their reading and Bible study skills. I led them through the basic steps of inductive Bible study: observation, interpretation, and application. Starting with observation, I had them find and write down every person and group of people, including divine and angelic beings, mentioned in the passage. This was a tough assignment for most of them, but with practice, we added more as the days progressed.

One morning, a man asked if he could address the group as he had something he needed to say. He was well-respected, perhaps the oldest in the group, and had worked with the early missionaries, so I agreed. He told us he needed to apologize to everyone, including me. I had no idea where he was coming from. He continued, “Yesterday you could probably see I was very upset, and I need to confess to all of you. I wasn’t angry with any of you; I was angry with God. You see, I have been with you every day, and what we are learning is so very important. But I am complaining to God as to why it took 40 years for this training to come. You are all young enough to learn, but I am an old man now, and it seems it is too late for me.”

I prayed silently, “Lord, help me. What am I going to say?” Then I said, “Thank you, Papa Afu, for being honest with us. I am not sure what to say, but let us consider a couple of things together. Things were different when the early missionaries were here.

No one knew how to read and write, so they focused on that. Look how many people can read now! Perhaps they tried, and people just weren't ready for it back then." There were nods of agreement. "It looks like this is God's time for these things to be learned. I want to encourage you, Papa Afu, not to give up. We still have a few more days together. Let's pray that the Lord will help you, and I know that everyone in this group will be glad to help you along. Let's see what the Lord does." Everyone seemed pleased with this answer, and we prayed together as a group.

In Western countries, we take so much for granted. Reading, writing, analytical skills, and objective reasoning are things we learn early and use throughout our lives. This is not true everywhere. It is of the utmost importance to communicate the Gospel in the forms and expressions that help people to understand it properly. For believers, like these men in Lumi, to grow and develop into ministry leaders, we may need to assist them with certain skills.

AN ONGOING TESTIMONY

What the Lord has done among these remote tribes is wonderful to behold. Nothing can hold the Lord back when people open their hearts to Him. The Yuna assemblies continue to visit those in the three small tribes, and families have opened their homes so that the young people can attend school. Among these tribes, there are assemblies in each little village. They have their own Bible school to train ministry leaders and hold Sunday schools and young people's groups. Praise the Lord!

The Yuna people have about 40 active assemblies and four Bible schools in operation. One of their men is translating the Old Testament into Yuna. We will soon have oral recordings of 11 Old Testament books available to anyone with a smartphone. Pray that having Scripture in their own heart-language will revive an interest in the Gospel.

The Lumi district assemblies and so many other places in PNG are calling out for help. There are approximately 450 assemblies and each has needs for the development of skills, leadership, and training. Please pray for the people of PNG. ■



Reggie and Susan Howard are commended from Des Moines Gospel Chapel, Des Moines, Washington, and Evergreen Bible Chapel, Federal Way, Washington.

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From top: PNG's rugged mountains make travel to rural communities somewhat challenging; Years after learning about Cain and Abel, the Yuna believers are thriving in their assembly; While the number of assemblies in PNG grows regularly, so does the need for training; Today, approximately 450 assemblies function in PNG, including the Wewak assembly.



Love in Action

Reaching Ireland through Christ's Example

BY COLIN & NATALIE BURNETT



*But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.
(Psalm 86:15)*

One of the challenges in reaching people with the Gospel is finding the balance between proclaiming the Word and meeting practical needs. Both are needed but not one at the expense of the other. We see this harmony exemplified in the Lord's life as He went about doing good.

A repeated phrase we find in the Gospels regarding Jesus's interaction with people is "He was moved with compassion for them." (Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 20:34; Mark 1:41, 6:34, 9:22; Luke 7:13) It is interesting to note that Jesus's compassion for the multitudes and individuals not only led Him to do something but also to touch them. There is something about a touch that communicates more than words ever can, especially in Jesus's day as many were sick or dead and were therefore unclean and untouchable. Some may not have had human contact in many years.

In our day, are we as believers moved with compassion as we see the lost around us? Are we willing to give that personal touch to some needy and, at times, undesirable soul? How humbling to see Jesus at work and realize the souls we see today are all souls He died for.

Sharing Christ through food

Over the years in Newcastle West, we have tried many different means of reaching out: door-to-door work, kids' clubs, community barbecues, a bookstall, movie nights, and so on. At this present time, we are a busy little fellowship with many opportunities to reach out to the local community. One of the main features of outreach to the community is a food bank. This work was the leading of Andrew and Gillian Shanks, our coworkers.

Street Life Food Bank began on September 22, 2017, in an effort to reach and connect with our local community. Since we



Although the assembly holds many outreaches, the food bank is their main one.

started, we have had 345 individuals register as either singles or families. Upon opening, we quickly saw the great need in our town and the surrounding rural areas. Food poverty affects many people through a variety of circumstances. The food bank gives us the means to invite people from all walks of life into our fellowship building, and many are willing to sit down over a cup of tea or coffee or a bowl of freshly made soup and talk. Some individuals are just lonely and like the company; others are in turmoil and really need to offload—addicts, women with unplanned pregnancies, people experiencing health scares and depression, the bereaved, and so the list goes on. As you can imagine, it is a great privilege to be invited into someone's life, but it can also be a heavy burden at times. Our ultimate goal

through this work is to share the Gospel. We have been encouraged to see a number of food bank attendees accept an invitation to our family service and other outreaches.

Alongside the food-bank work, we have recently started a monthly outreach in which we take a soup trailer out into town on a Friday evening. This gives us the opportunity to meet people and talk with them about the Lord. Through this, we hope to bring transformed life to the street.

From the work of the food bank, we also saw a need to meet people on a more personal level and at a less busy time. This began our coffee morning. Every Wednesday, we have coffee time from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This is a time for anyone to come in and enjoy some tea or coffee along with some fresh baked goods. We have the opportunity to sit with folks and have a good chat about their lives and bring the Gospel into the conversation. At present, attendance can range from one or two to 13. To accommodate this and the café time at the food bank, we

renovated our general-purpose room a little. Now, it looks more like a café setting, and folks seem to like the atmosphere.

Sharing Christ through friendship

Ireland started to receive Syrian refugees three years ago and has agreed to take in 5,000. Two and a half years ago, Newcastle West received five families. A woman from our fellowship teaches English as a second language, and through her we found out when the first three families were coming and were able to meet them in the first couple of days after they arrived. Christians were the first contacts these folks had in Newcastle West, which we were pleased with. From that initial contact, we began to develop a relationship with the families, despite depending heavily on Google Translate.

We were able to take the three families and their children to a nearby cave and play center. Then, through a donation



The food bank offers many items, from fresh produce to loaves of bread.



At Christmas, the food bank offers special goodies.



Visitors can get a hot drink and a listening ear at the café time.



The café's new renovations create a welcoming atmosphere.



The food bank ministry comes from the leading of the Shank family.

He has made His wonderful works to be remembered; The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
(Psalm 111:4)

from another worker's support, we were able to purchase new shoes for all the children. The men expressed a desire to meet to speak English, so we started a men's night. The gatherings were comprised of lots of coffee, some games, and everyday conversations. They began to ask what this place (our church) was and what we were, which opened the door for us to tell them about Jesus.

As any who have worked with Muslims will know, it is a long road in reaching them. These families have become dear friends to us, and they even come to help out at the food bank and are willing to help with practical needs also. All these families come to the fellowship from time to time.



Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12, ESV)

Sharing the work through prayer

As we labor on in Newcastle West, we value your continued prayer for the many opportunities we have in meeting people and sharing the Gospel with them. May we observe our Lord's example of being filled with graciousness and compassion in passages like Psalm 86:15 and Psalm 111:4, so that we learn to "put on" the meekness and kindness that God desires in His chosen ones (Colossians 3:12). In this way, we pray that we may touch the lives of those around us and reach many for Him. ■

Colin and Natalie Burnett are commended from W. Fifth Bible Chapel in Hamilton, Ontario.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Upcoming CMML Conferences

Visit CMML.us/events for more information for these and other conferences.



NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH NIGHT / September 20, 2019

(Middle school, high school, and college age)

Speaker: Micah Tuttle

Location: Shannon Hills Bible Chapel, Greensboro, North Carolina

NORTH CAROLINA REGIONAL CONFERENCE / September 21, 2019

Speakers: Micah Tuttle and Dan Rogers

Theme: Your Role in God's Plan

Location: Shannon Hills Bible Chapel, Greensboro, North Carolina

NEW JERSEY YOUTH NIGHT / November 8, 2019

(Middle school, high school, and college age)

Speaker: Alexander Strauch

Location: Woodside Chapel, Fanwood, New Jersey

49TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE / November 9, 2019

Speakers: Alexander Strauch and Karl Peterson

Theme: Equipping Every Generation

Location: Lincroft Bible Church, Lincroft, New Jersey

NORTHEAST 26 BELOW / January 17–19, 2020

(High school, college, and career to about age 26)

Speaker: Christian Ramirez

Theme: Break the Mold

Location: Camp-of-the-Woods, Speculator, New York

REACHING HIGHER / February 7–9, 2020

(Ages 20 to 39)

Speaker: Dr. Steve Price

Theme: The Church in the 21st Century

Location: CMML Guest Home, Wall Township, New Jersey

MIDWEST 26 BELOW / February 21–23, 2020

(High school, college, and career to about age 26)

Speaker: Jerry Mattix

Theme: Be a Disciple. Make a Disciple

Location: Hidden Acres Christian Center, Dayton, Iowa

NEW! SOUTHEAST 26 BELOW / March 13–15, 2020

(High school, college, and career to about age 26)

Speaker: Nate Bramsen

Theme: Moving Beyond Defeat

Location: Look Up Lodge, Travelers Rest, South Carolina

Home with the Lord

Gilbert Stewart

February 21, 1933 – September 9, 2018 • Missionary to Ireland

Richard Gilbert Stewart was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, into a godly home. His parents had both emigrated from Ireland and met in America. He was saved as a young boy of 10 years, which set the course for a life of love for Christ and service for Him. He started preaching early on and was concerned about others who were not saved. Gilbert spoke to his own brother Harold about the need for salvation, and he became Gilbert's first convert.

Gilbert's interest in preaching the Gospel grew, and after hearing reports of gospel work in Ireland, he was led to work for God on that island. In 1957, he made a visit to Ireland where he met many of his relatives and spent a month helping in outreach work in the southern region. He traveled back to the US with the anticipation of returning to the Emerald Isle. A chorus that stirred his heart was:

Ireland needs the Savior;
That land so green and fair
Is burdened with sin and with broken lives,
And few there are who care.
Souls are drifting downward,
Precious souls for whom Christ died.
O carry the message to Irish hearts
Of Jesus the crucified.

Gilbert met Esther Deyermond from Belfast at the New Year Pennsauken Conference. Their relationship developed through letter-writing until he came to Ireland in 1960. It was abundantly evident that this was of the Lord, for their love, companionship, support, and encouragement together in the work of the Lord could not have been greater.

In June 1960, at age 27, he was commended by the assembly in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, to the grace of God for gospel work in southern Ireland. He arrived in Cobh, County Cork, to bring the message of new life in Christ to the people of Ireland. Over the years, millions of Irish people had traveled from that port to make a new life in America, yet Gilbert was one of very few who made the journey in the opposite direction.

Gilbert and Esther were married in 1961 and were in happy fellowship with the believers in Cork. The Lord blessed them with two daughters, Priscilla and Caroline, and their home was always open for the Lord's people, the needy, and the lost. They were involved in children's meetings, Sunday school work, Postal Sunday School, and the distribution of Bibles, gospel literature, and calendars. Gilbert preached in tents, portable halls, mobile halls, community halls, individual homes, and many gospel halls, along with open-air street preaching for more than 50 years.

He labored consistently, usually in remote areas that had seen little gospel activity, and only eternity will reveal all that was accomplished in his life of faithful service. He labored with many brethren but, particularly, with brother Sam Patterson for more than 40 years. God blessed their efforts with the salvation of souls and the building up of the assemblies, especially in County Donegal.

Gilbert and Esther moved to Donegal in 1991 and enjoyed happy fellowship with the believers in Bridgetown. Gilbert was supportive of every effort to spread the Gospel at home and abroad. When his daughter and son-in-law, Priscilla and David McAllister, moved to Zambia in 1992, he traveled with Esther to visit and help in the Lord's work on at least seven occasions.

He loved his six grandchildren dearly and was interested in all their activities but, especially, in their spiritual well-being. Gilbert enjoyed family visits back to America often. The home-calling of Esther in January 2009 changed his life greatly. Over the past five years, his health declined. It was an honor and privilege for his daughters to care for him at home. On September 9, 2018, he entered into the presence of his Savior, whom he loved and served. He fought a good fight; he finished his course; he kept the faith.



Caroline Brown & Priscilla McAllister

Interview with Kory & Rebecca Crawford



New Missionaries Share about Daily Life

Commended from Nash Road Gospel Hall in Hamilton, Ontario, Kory and Rebecca serve in San Jose, Costa Rica. The Crawfords have a heart for children's ministries, as well as reaching out to people of all ages through visitation, Bible studies, and preaching. Pray that Kory and Rebecca would remain encouraged as they labor in an area without missionary coworkers. Pray also for them as they raise their two young sons, Matias (2) and Thomas (10 months), on the mission field.

What cultural behavior do you find interesting?

When compared to other countries within Central America, Costa Rica is a more developed and more affluent country. A byproduct of this, however, is that Costa Ricans work a significant amount to maintain a higher quality of life. This presents a number of challenges in regard to people, both Christians and non-Christians, having time available to attend meetings. While lower poverty is certainly a positive thing, the fight to maintain a certain level of affluence is noticeable, especially in the capital city of San Jose where we live.

How do you get around?

San Jose is a bustling capital city like many others. There are more than two million people living in the greater metropolitan area, which results in significant traffic at all times of the day but especially during morning and afternoon rush hours. Travel plans usually have to be made according to the time of day since a trip that would normally take 30 minutes without much traffic could take up to double or triple that time if it is during rush hour. San Jose is located in the middle of the country, but there are good highways to both the Nicaragua border to the north and the Panama border to the south. We have driven to Nicaragua a few times in order to renew our visas while we work on our residency paperwork.

What do you miss the most?

We greatly miss our family and friends back home in Canada. We miss the ease of getting in the car and driving to visit with family and for our sons to spend time with their cousins. We are grateful for our families' support, even

while they themselves are also making sacrifices with us being so far from them. We also miss the gospel heart and focus of our home assembly in Hamilton, Ontario. We miss our elders' spiritual leadership, guidance, and example that we often took for granted during our time there.

How do you relax?

We enjoy going out and doing things as a family at local parks or shopping malls where our boys can play and interact with other children. We highly value quality time as a family and focusing on raising our boys as we know this can easily become a neglected area with all the demands that come with missionary work.

What is challenging?

By far, the most challenging aspect of missionary work for us is working on our own. Activities such as door-to-door visiting and inviting, preaching, and conducting Bible studies can be difficult with no other support to rely on. Often times we find ourselves guilty of focusing on the work we could do if we had more help, instead of focusing on the work we should do with the current resources we have. However, we find strength and help from the One who has promised to go before us and enable us by His grace.

What is exciting?

We have always felt very passionate about children's work. We know how valuable it is to work with youth and to, from a young age, engrave in their souls the wonderful truths of the Gospel. We typically host children's meetings, which include singing, Bible stories, and verse memoriza-

While we may not often see immediate fruit from this work, it excites us to present the Gospel to these young souls.

tion, in local community centers. We have worked in areas where 60 to 70 kids have attended a Bible class and in other areas where two or three have attended. We try our best to follow the example of the Savior Who said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14) While we may not often see immediate fruit from this work, it excites us to present the Gospel to these young souls.

How can we pray for you?

Please pray for the Lord's guidance moving forward, for us to be directed in areas of work where we can be most effective. Please pray for the Lord to send more laborers into this part of the harvest field. ■



Above (from top): Children's meetings are an effective way to reach young Costa Ricans for Christ; Gospel outreach meetings attract people of all ages.

Below (L-R): The Crawfords seek to make the Lord known in the bustling city of San Jose (©iStockPhoto.com/mbrand85); Matias and Thomas Crawford enjoy playing with each other and meeting new friends in San Jose.

