

March 2026

# MISSIONS

**A Heart for Healthy  
Flocks in the  
United  
Kingdom**

**Being Light and Sharing  
Hope in Ecuador**

**Missionaries Describe Daily  
Life in the Philippines**





# THINKING IT THROUGH

BY DICK PAPWORTH

## Leave a Lasting Legacy

**P**ass on what you've learned! Discipling others shapes lives. Some years ago, the Holy Spirit impressed on me how blessed I had been as a young man to be taught the Scriptures and to witness the godly example of those older in the faith. Now, it was my turn. God was calling me to be a disciple and to disciple others.

### What is discipleship?

Discipleship is simply a relational process in which a more experienced Christian helps guide and support another person in his or her spiritual walk. It's not just about giving advice—it's about walking alongside someone who is learning to grow spiritually and live out his or her faith.

### The Scriptures teach it

Jesus spent most of His time teaching and training a small group of men, the disciples. After His resurrection, He told the disciples to teach others what they themselves had learned from Him: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19–20 ESV)

The apostle Paul instructed young Timothy similarly: "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:1–2 ESV)

Paul also instructed older women to teach younger women concerning their marriages, the raising of their children, and their character: "Older women . . . are to teach what is good, and so train the young women." (Titus 2:3–4 ESV)

### Real-life examples

By God's grace, one-on-one and group discipleship have been happening in the assembly where I serve. I have been encouraged to see younger men whom I have discipled grow spiritually.

Many years ago, one of our youth leaders began gathering our high schoolers in his home for a Bible study. These times eventually had a profound effect on many of the youth, including my own daughters, who are going on for the Lord and serving Him today.

One of our elders discipled and read through the Bible with a high schooler for two years. Today, that young man serves as an elder and discipled others.

A woman in our fellowship met regularly with a younger woman and taught her how to be a godly wife, train her children, and run a household.

### How to get started

Many Christians have never been discipled themselves and, therefore, may not know where to begin. Here are four simple suggestions:

1. *Learn to be a disciple.* We must be following Christ ourselves before we can effectively help others.
2. *Build relationships with people.* They are essential for getting to know others and their spiritual needs.
3. *Identify believers who desire to grow.* Spend most of your time with people who are responsive to God's Word, are humble and teachable, and desire to grow spiritually. Paul called them "faithful men" (2 Timothy 2:2).
4. *Offer to meet with them.* Ask those faithful men or women to begin meeting with you regularly. Many will be willing.

### Discern need

Because people have different needs and are at different levels of spiritual maturity, their need for discipleship will look different. As 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (ESV) says, "We urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." Some need admonishment. Some need encouragement. Some need practical help. All require patient teaching.

### What to do when you meet together

Trust that God will give you wisdom and that the Holy Spirit will move in the heart of the person you're discipling. Read, discuss, and apply Scripture together. The goal is to engage him or her with the meaning of the text and how to apply it to life.

Share from your heart and experience. Talk about your victories and be transparent about your failures. Pray for each other.

Discipling others is one way to leave a lasting legacy. ■

*Dick Papworth and his wife, Nita, missionaries to the Middle East, are commended from Lombard Gospel Chapel in Illinois.*

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# A Heart for Healthy Flocks

## Planting and Strengthening Local Churches in the UK

BY DR. PETER & MELANIE MEAD

When people think of ministry in the United Kingdom, they often picture ancient cathedrals, a storied Christian past, and a culture shaped by centuries of faith. The reality today is far more complex. The UK remains rich in Christian history, but it is also a needy mission field.

When our home assembly in Oregon commended us in 2004, we expected to help strengthen existing churches in the UK—England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland—and beyond. We felt called to teach and train leaders. Church planting was not part of the plan. Yet our wise God had other ideas!

In time, a difficult situation, and a subsequent series of conversations with other church leaders, including our commending elders, led us to pursue starting a new church in our town. Chippenham, located about an hour west of London, is a typical English market town. It has a population of about 40,000 people, and the majority are totally unchurched. But God blessed us with a small group of people leaning toward the idea of starting a new church here. Peter had trained some of them through a course called *Cor Deo*, which he was leading. Would God allow us to start a new church together?

### A new church in a changed landscape

God's answer was yes! Trinity Chippenham (TC) is now 12 years old, and helping establish it has become one of the greatest privileges of our ministry-related lives. Though we began as somewhat reluctant church planters, the journey—from early conversations to present opportunities and challenges—has been a genuine adventure. Starting a church from scratch stretched our faith, bringing profound joys and overwhelming seasons, tested

our endurance, and deepened our confidence in God's kindness.

The UK is no longer the country of Spurgeon or Lloyd-Jones. Over the past two generations, Christianity's public visibility and cultural influence have declined significantly. While people still come to faith, many former church buildings have been converted into private housing, car repair shops, or mosques. Christians are frequently marginalized or caricatured in the media. Government policies are increasingly antagonistic to Christianity, and the country seems to be drifting in some scary directions, as we see them, regarding morality and free speech.

These realities are sobering. And yet, there are significant reasons for gratitude. Compared to much of mainland Europe, the UK has a relatively strong church. In recent years, we have seen a renewed interest in Christianity and genuine growth in many local churches, including ours.

Trinity Chippenham began meeting on the first Sunday of 2014 with a small group of families. Just over a year later, the church recognized its elders. After four years, we outgrew our first rented facilities. Trinity Chippenham's numbers have continued climbing rapidly and slowed recently only because building space has become tight.

### Discovering spiritual gifts and serving willingly

A new church is, of course, far more than a Sunday gathering. Alongside preaching and worship, we had to navigate legal requirements, establish home groups, build youth and children's ministries, organize teams to set up and pack up rented venues each week, and manage countless other details. Planting a church actually involves starting multiple ministries at once.

Everyone in the church ends up serving wherever needed, often taking on many roles simultaneously. For the leaders, church planting demands constant renewal of energy and momentum, all while prayerfully shepherding people.

Over the years, God has been wonderfully kind, adding people to the church who have played vital roles in its growth. Alongside some of the original members who remain with us today, we have experienced great joy in seeing people come to faith, grow in their love for God, discover their gifts, and serve willingly.

Take Jill, for example. She would have called herself a typical atheist, skeptical that Christianity has any basis in reality. But, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she began exploring the evidence for God and faith and discovered that Christianity is true. Finding Jesus to be a life-changing Savior, she joined TC and now delights in being part of a spiritual family. Jill serves actively on the worship-music team and various planning teams while praying for her husband, who is still exploring faith.

Or consider Andriy, a Ukrainian who moved to Chippenham with his British wife and two young children to become part of TC. He had met Peter through a mentoring group, focused on preaching, that the European Leadership Forum organized. That connection blossomed into a strong friendship. Today, Andriy continues growing as a preacher. He not only serves at TC but also gains experience by preaching in a rural church nearby.

And then there's Tia, whose turbulent early years included spending time in prison as a teenager. As an adult, she began

reading the Bible one day while waiting during her daughter's dance class at a local church. The verses she read gripped her heart, and soon after, she joined TC. Over the years, Tia has often chatted with us at our dining table. She has grown spiritually and now serves in youth ministry, with a genuine heart for young people and world missions. Her story reminds us that strengthening churches is not just about programs—it's about investing in individuals who learn, grow, and then give to others.

### A permanent home for an active church

In TC's early days, we used tables to space out the chairs on a Sunday. We struggled to get more than a couple of life groups (gatherings for Bible study and fellowship) started. We had a handful of youth meeting in a living room and just four children in the Sunday school class.

So how is TC doing today? Sundays are busy and full. We currently have eight midweek life groups, a thriving youth ministry, and a growing children's work. We help many in our community through our Christians Against Poverty debt center. And we recently appointed two additional elders. At the same time, we have outgrown our rented space in a local school. We are prayerfully exploring the possibility of acquiring our own building.

Renting a government school for our meeting space offers no real security. Having our own building would give us a stable base from which to serve the church family and reach our community more effectively. Should we buy land and build or



**Top (L-R):** Trinity Chippenham has met in this school for the last eight years; The church has outgrown the space—no seats are empty; Local parents and kids attend TC's light party, an outreach that offers families an alternative to Halloween parties; Peter works with these believers in the Advanced Bible Teachers & Preachers Network; TC praises the Lord for new baptisms. **Bottom (L-R):** The Meads live in Chippenham, a midsize town in southwestern England; Peter and Melanie, pictured here with their children, two sons-in-law, and grandson, have served in the UK since 2004; TC reaches its community in many ways, including this fun family sports day; Peter and his coworker Mike host *The Biblical Preaching Podcast*; Peter greets two students he taught in Union School of Theology's online program.



purchase an existing property and convert it? We are seeking God's wisdom for the path forward—and His provision to make it possible. In the short term, the church will likely need to move to multiple services.

**A ministry with a local and international reach**

While planting and leading TC requires a great deal of time and energy, we continue to serve the broader church in the UK and beyond. In every opportunity, we aim to equip people to strengthen their local churches.

Peter leads Cor Deo intensive courses several times each year. He helps participants grow in their understanding of Scripture, theology, and spiritual formation so they can thrive in their walk with Jesus and serve their churches well. He also leads the Bible Teachers and Preachers Networks at the European Leadership Forum—an invaluable opportunity to promote sound, faithful preaching. The logic is simple: healthy preaching leads to healthy churches, and healthy churches reach nations. Additionally, Peter teaches preaching courses at Union School of Theology, hosts *The Biblical Preaching Podcast*, and writes books whenever time allows.

At the heart of all these ministries lies a deep conviction: the hope for the UK—and the world—is found in Jesus Christ and healthy local churches that faithfully proclaim the Gospel. When churches are strengthened, then disciples are formed, leaders are raised, and communities are reached. So we continue

giving our energies to strengthening local churches, including our own. We trust God to fulfill His promise to build His church. Every person who joins, grows, and serves—such as Jill, Andriy, and Tia—is a living testament to that promise. ■



*Dr. Peter and Melanie Mead are commended from Westside Bible Fellowship in Hillsboro, Oregon.*

**Prayer Requests:**

- Please pray for our relationships with the Lord, one another in marriage, our children, and our coworkers.
- Pray that Trinity Chippenham will continue to bear fruit evangelistically, establish new believers, and strengthen its core as we move toward multiple services.
- Pray for the believers' unsaved spouses and children. It would be so exciting to see many family members come to faith in Jesus in the coming months.
- Pray for wisdom and provision regarding a future building.
- Pray for discernment as we seek to invest our limited energies wisely, both locally and broadly.





# Be Light. Share Hope.

GOD TRANSFORMS LIVES IN BASTION, ECUADOR

BY JESSENIA ESPINOZA

“Be light. Share hope.” This simple yet powerful call shapes the ministry at Hope of Bastion School and Iglesia Cristiana Evangélica Bastion (ICEB), a local church, in Guayaquil, Ecuador. In Bastion—a community long marked by poverty, broken families, substance abuse, and violence—living out this mission is both profoundly challenging and deeply necessary. Yet, day after day, God is faithfully at work, bringing light into dark places and hope into lives that desperately need it.

## A community in need of Light

Nearly 30 years ago, a missionary couple sensed that God was leading them toward Bastion, an area that, at the time, was largely a squatter settlement. As they spent time there, two needs became clear: access to quality education and an opportunity for families to hear the Gospel. With faith and perseverance, the missionaries opened a small kindergarten classroom.

That single classroom became the seed of what is now Hope of Bastion School, which serves approximately 200 students from kindergarten through ninth grade. For many families, the school represents more than academics; it is a place of safety, consistency, and care. Within its walls, the teachers and staff not only teach the children math and reading but also remind them daily that they are seen, valued, and loved by God.

As the school grew, so did the desire for a community in which to worship God. ICEB was born alongside the school, first meeting in a modest house across the street. As attendance increased, the congregation moved into the school’s gym, which now serves as the church’s primary space. The original house continues to be used for Sunday school classes and small-group gatherings. It

remains an important hub for discipleship and fellowship.

Later, God opened the door for yet another extension of the ministry: El Faro Camp, a seaside center designed as a place for kids and youth camps and church retreats. Today, the school, church, and camp function together as a unified effort—different expressions of the same mission.

## Hope amid growing challenges

While Bastion has developed outwardly over the years, many of its deepest challenges have not disappeared; they have simply changed shape. In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, criminal activity throughout Ecuador has increased sharply, with Guayaquil becoming a focal point for violence tied to organized crime. Gangs are active in Bastion, and for many students and youths, the sounds of gunfire and conversations about robberies, extortion, or kidnappings are part of everyday life.

Families live with constant tension, and parents often keep their children indoors in an effort to protect them. The fear and uncertainty weigh heavily, especially on young people who are still forming their identities and values.

Yet, even in this darkness, God has allowed His work to continue. Through Hope of Bastion School and ICEB, students encounter the Gospel regularly—through Bible classes, weekly chapel services, youth group gatherings, and Sunday school. Many of these children come from non-Christian homes, but they receive Christian teaching almost daily. The seeds of truth are being faithfully sown in trust that God will bring growth in His time. “Let us not become weary in doing good,” Galatians 6:9 (NIV) reads, “for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”



**Top (page 6):** Hope of Bastion School shares the light of Christ with students like these. **Middle (page 7):** Due to his childhood on this street in Bastion, Raúl can closely relate to the teens. **Above (L–R):** The school’s third graders learn about angles; At ICEB, believers worship the Lord on a Sunday morning (Photo by Rebecca Ortega); A trip to El Faro Camp makes for a fun day; Raúl

## Life and ministry in Bastion

For the past 11 years, my husband, Raúl, and I have had the privilege of serving together in Bastion. I work in the school's sponsorship office, helping bridge the gap between sponsors and students by translating letters, creating videos, and offering sponsors a glimpse into the daily lives of the children they support. These connections matter deeply—both to the students, who feel known and encouraged, and to the sponsors, who walk alongside them from afar. Raúl serves as president of the school board. He helps strengthen leadership, improve organization, and guide the school in faithfully carrying out its mission with excellence and integrity.

But Saturdays belong to the youth group, one of the greatest joys of our ministry.

The young people who attend are dear to us. Many come from homes marked by instability, limited parental involvement, or deep hardship. For some, choosing to follow Jesus brings criticism or teasing from their own families. Yet, week after week, they keep showing up, eager to learn, belong, and grow in their faith.



Raúl understands their context deeply. He grew up in Bastion himself and knows firsthand how life-giving Christian friendships can be. When his own

family did not share his faith, his church community encouraged him to stay strong and walk faithfully with Christ.

Many of the youth we serve express similar feelings of being overlooked at home or lacking meaningful family support. These vulnerabilities can place them at greater risk of making harmful choices, including being drawn into gang activity. Because of this, we built the youth ministry around two essential relationships: a growing relationship with Christ and strong, supportive relationships with one another.

We desire to cultivate a community where faith and friendship naturally reinforce each other, offering young people a sense of belonging rooted in truth and love.

## Building faith one week at a time

Bible teaching is central to everything we do in the youth group. We are currently finishing up the second year of a chronological study of Scripture. Last year, we walked through the Old Testament, tracing God's promises and pointing toward Christ. This year, we are focusing on the life of Jesus—His teachings, His compassion, and His call to follow Him.

Each week, the youth memorize a verse connected to the lesson. Often, they split into teams and get creative with how they learn it: adding motions, writing songs, acting out passages, or playing games. One week, they memorized a well-known verse in English, to everyone's amusement and delight.

Alongside Scripture, there is joy. We play games, laugh often, and spend time together outside of regular meetings. We visit parks, head to El Faro Camp, or share meals. Around the table, we enjoy traditional Guayaquileño breakfasts, such as *bolón* (fried green-plantain balls) or *encebollado* (a fish stew with onions), while talking about life, faith, and family. These moments open conversations about what healthy Christian families can look like and are the first time many of the youth have been invited to imagine the kind of homes they hope to build someday.

## A growing desire for community—and more

As friendships deepened in the youth group and faith took root, something beautiful began to happen. A small group of teenagers started attending Sunday morning church on their own. No parents were pushing them. They were just 13-to-18-year-olds waking up early because they wanted to seek God together.

Their commitment inspired others, and now, a good-sized group attends regularly. After the service, they linger, sometimes snagging leftover Sunday school snacks or jamming together on the church's instruments. The church has become a second home to many of them, just as it was for Raúl years ago.



leads a Bible study; Like a family, the youth group celebrates a birthday.

Before long, many of these teens desired to serve in the church. The children's ministry always needs volunteers, so they stepped in with enthusiasm. Many of the children they now serve are also students at Hope of Bastion School. It has been a joy to see junior high students developing a heart for ministry and investing in the younger children they see at school during the week.

During school breaks, the same teens bring energy, creativity, and leadership to vacation Bible school. Their joy is contagious, and their willingness to serve has been an encouragement to the entire congregation.

And, now, another trend is emerging: the young people want their families to know Jesus too.

### Faith that multiplies

At family camp last summer, we witnessed evidence of God's multiplying work. Two sisters who had faithfully invited their mother to church over the years saw her baptized at camp. Another girl invited her mom, who had drifted away from her faith, and that mother recommitted her life to Christ. One teen brought her entire family to camp for the first time. They were among the most engaged families all weekend and have since begun attending church regularly.

We see this same multiplication among our youth leaders. Every one of them came through the youth group and felt called to help others follow Christ. They have genuine hearts for ministry and are always looking for ways to serve more.

Two youth leaders have even strengthened the bond between the school and church by joining the staff at Hope of Bastion School—one as the Christian education teacher and the other as a science teacher. They see their roles as an extension of their ministry, allowing them to walk closely with students and invite more youth to come on Saturdays. For Raúl and me, there is deep joy in seeing young people whom we've watched grow up now intentionally build up others.

### Light that continues to shine

As we look at what God has done in Bastion, we remember that light shines brightest in the darkest places. Seeds planted faithfully over many years are growing into faith, community, and new life. We are grateful for your prayers and partnership as we walk alongside the young people of Bastion, trusting that God, who began this good work, will carry it to completion. ■



*Jessenia and Raúl Espinoza are commended from Wallenstein Bible Chapel in Wallenstein, Ontario.*

**From top (L–R):** Students write letters to their sponsors; The youth group prays together; During vacation Bible school, the teens lead a song, complete with hand motions; Bastion is a community within Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city.



### How You Can Pray

God is at work in Bastion, and we are thankful to be involved. Yet significant hardships remain. Kids and youth live with the tension of violence and instability. Some grow spiritually for a time, only to drift away—often due to unhealthy relationships or the pull of criminal influences.

#### Please pray for

- protection over the church, school, and community;
- peace for Bastion, a community deeply affected by violence;
- encouragement and unity among the youth leaders;
- spiritual strength for the youth as they grow in their faith; and
- God's purposes to continue unfolding in the lives of these dear young people.

Thank you for standing with us as we seek to be light and share hope in Bastion.

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# Ask a Missionary?

The life of a refocused missionary is unique. Some refocused workers have returned to North America; others continue living in their country of service. Yet many remain actively engaged in the Lord's work. To understand their lives better, we asked our refocused missionaries to share about their experience.

**QUESTION:** Refocused missionaries, what aspect of your ministry requires the most time or attention? Please tell us what is involved.



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## SOUTH AFRICA (REFOCUSED) Paul & Jayne Carlson

We're in mentoring partnerships with those we trained in the Bible and in leadership over the years. This work now spans three continents and includes our commending assembly. Our partners ask us to help guide them through the ministry challenges they face. We spend 15–20 hours per week connecting with them, using the technology available to us. The Lord also brings us other local believers who are growing in their ministries and desire our input. We are blessed beyond what we deserve!

## SPECIAL AREAS (REFOCUSED) Roger Malstead

We are involved in an internet project that reaches into Arabic-speaking countries—about 24. We produced three films that respond to three of the main objections to Christianity that Muslims hold. The films do this respectfully but clearly; in fact, Islam is not mentioned at all.

A team of Christian Egyptians places our advertisements (in Arabic, of course) on social media and responds to all the likes a post receives. Sometimes, there are hundreds and even thousands, which means the team starts many conversations via messaging each month. Who knew God would use social media in this way! Please pray for the team of young Christians. I work mainly with the team leader to arrange the advertisements, decide which country to place them in, and discuss the financial workings.

Anyone may view our three films and their trailers for free by searching for Goosewing Productions on YouTube.

## COLOMBIA (REFOCUSED) William Loudon

I am involved in preaching, teaching, and assembly leadership. I also use my cell phone to encourage others. I devote part of my time to evangelism, using gospel tracts.

## JAPAN (REFOCUSED)

**Peter Clift**

Since we served in Japan for 48 years, we have lots of acquaintances. The 14-hour time zone gap makes communication by phone tricky, so email is a great help. Every Saturday evening (Sunday morning in Japan), we join a Japanese assembly—through the internet—for their worship and teaching services. What a privilege it is to stay in touch! We remain in contact with the believers who carry on the Japanese Emmaus Bible correspondence course ministry. We thank God for the believers who took over the ministries we worked with!

## KENYA (REFOCUSED)

**Peggy & Dick Clark**

We encourage others by postal mail. While our computer helps a lot with the preparation of our mailings, we are far from the cutting edge of technology. Our monthly mailing of encouragement includes about 160 recipients, and it requires a fair amount of work. Dick, known to many as Uncle Dick, regularly mails stuff to kids in the US and overseas. With a bundle of mail in our arms, we generally visit the small post office inside the neighborhood Ace Hardware store at least once a week.

## FRANCE (REFOCUSED)

**Wendy Beidleman**

My husband, Ed, and I are part of the team involved in the French text of William MacDonald's *Believer's Bible Commentary*. We're formatting it for the e-Sword software—a big project. This work will make the translation available and free to the French-speaking world!

## BOLIVIA (REFOCUSED)

**David & Ruth Sommer**

We thank the Lord that we can maintain contact with the believers in Bolivia, though only on Sunday evenings because of their work schedule and market day. We are studying the book of 1 Peter, using some Old Testament examples to help them better understand some of the areas Peter touches on. The life of Joseph has been a real help to the believers. Then, using WhatsApp, we try to call some of the believers during the week to see how they are doing.

On Wednesday afternoons, we go to a local church's prayer meeting and Bible study. A couple picks us up and brings us home. We have also been going to a Salt Shakers dinner (a meal and fellowship) once a month, and we want to show some videos of the Bolivian tribal work to the believers.

Because neither Ruth nor I (due to epilepsy) drives, we are sort of homebound. Once in a while, I speak in a supporting church. We listen to church services live on Sunday mornings and then on the Bible Broadcasting Network in the evenings. We depend on our continued support as we have no other income. God is faithful!

## PERU (REFOCUSED)

**Janette Hocking**

My three most time-consuming areas are counseling, prayer, and visitation. I invest the majority of my time in counseling nationals and workers in Peru through books (many that I take to Peru for distribution), online classes, visits with them, and keeping in contact, whether I can be in Peru or not. I do some Zoom classes and online video classes that require a bit of preparation, though I am a participant. I also share in some classes with friends in a local Bible study. I support some of the nationals in Bible schools and in small businesses that, in turn, help the local church in Peru. I enjoy being with my family, and some pressing needs keep me praying a lot. ■

**ASK YOUR QUESTIONS!** Visit [CMML.us/askamissionary](http://CMML.us/askamissionary) to submit your question—it might be selected for a future issue!

# Interview with Gerald & Lizzy DeFouw



## Missionaries Share about Daily Life

In March 2022, Gerald and Lizzy DeFouw left western Michigan for the southern Philippines. They went with commendation from Holland Gospel Chapel in Michigan and began serving in association with Ethnos360. Today, they manage Ethnos360's national language program in the Philippines; their work helps reach unreached people groups and involves evangelism and discipleship. Please pray for the DeFouw family, including Sybil (6), Willa (3), and Bentley (1), as they serve the Lord in the Philippines.

### What is your area of the Philippines like?

Our area is mountainous, but our ministry is based in town to help send missionary families to work with rural people groups. We live in a town, not a large city. People are very friendly and often open to talking about spiritual things.

### What is the weather like?

The climate here is tropical. We have a rainy and a dry season. Most of the year, the weather ranges from a high of 84 degrees Fahrenheit to a low of 75 degrees. However, during the three months of the dry season, the highs reach the upper 90s.

### How do you get around?

We have our own car, but we often use public transportation, which is mostly made up of two types of vehicles: a motorela, a motorcycle with an attached cab, can fit around eight people, whereas a multicab, an SUV-sized vehicle, can fit 16-plus people—but there is always room for one more!

### What foods do you eat?

Some of our favorite Filipino foods are *lechon paksiv* (roasted pork in soy sauce with bay leaves), mango float (frozen mango icebox cake), *lumpya* (similar to an egg roll), fresh coconut, and a variety of fresh tropical fruits. Of course, rice is a staple.

### What's your favorite cultural behavior or tradition?

We love the concept of *ninangs* or *ninongs* (the spelling depends on whether you're speaking about a woman or a man). These individuals are a bit like godparents, but they will take your children under their wing and help support

them throughout life. It is a very important role. It's even more important if the individuals are believers who put the responsibility toward the spiritual caretaking of the kids.

### How do you get to know people?

Life here is very relational, so you get to know people by spending time with them. We have an open-home policy, and with all the screen doors here in the tropics, people often drop by to have a snack or hang out. We love how friendly people are. Our local church was also a huge blessing in helping us make connections in our community.

### What languages are spoken in your area? Do you speak or are you learning any?

The local language is called Bisayan or Visayan. We have completed our time in language study. Our kids recently started some language classes.

### What does a typical day look like for you?

Our role focuses on two areas: First, we help new missionary families settle into town. Second, we manage the language and culture studies of our students (the missionaries). Once they learn the local language, they can then use it to learn a tribal language and, eventually, share Christ among unreached people groups and do Bible translation.

Typically, I homeschool the kids in the morning, and often, Gerald will file paperwork for students or sit in on classes. Often, our afternoons consist of class observations, meetings with our team or students, answering students' questions, planning meetings, preparing language kick-offs for our programs, or creating and editing resources to help the students.

A large part of our ministry involves working with the



Above (from left): The DeFouws invest much time in meeting with the language teachers; Gerald visits a Philippine community.

nationals (believers and unbelievers) who help teach the students. We help further train them for their job, do Bible studies with them, or lead workshops.

We also spend time preparing housing for new families, helping them set up their homes, and helping them acclimate to things around town. Our days depend on the needs of the students or new families, but these are a few of the things we do or manage as part of our role.

### What part of your work do you find particularly interesting?

We love working with recently arrived students and seeing them go from completely new and overwhelmed to thriving families. It's a joy to see them begin classes so they can learn to communicate with the people in their heart language and embrace life here.

### Do you have any personal hobbies that you use in your ministry?

Gerald is a great handyman. His knowledge is very helpful in communicating with carpenters as we prepare housing for new families. He is often someone people call to fix things that are broken in their houses.

We also really love hosting as a family—our kids included—and it feels almost strange to them if we don't have anyone over for a meal on a given day. Hospitality is a great way for us to pour into others and, especially, encourage the team here. I make lots of specialty cakes, too, for anniversaries, weddings, and other events.

### What do you like to do for fun?

Gerald and I love to work on projects together, including fixing things or making improvements around the house.

The kids love hiking, the park, the pool on a hot day, and our weekly family nights at home.

### What is challenging? What is exciting?

A challenge in our role involves the constant changes to our family's schedule to meet our team's needs. At times, with so many students starting and some feeling discouraged, balancing how to challenge, encourage, and help each family where they are in their journey can be difficult.

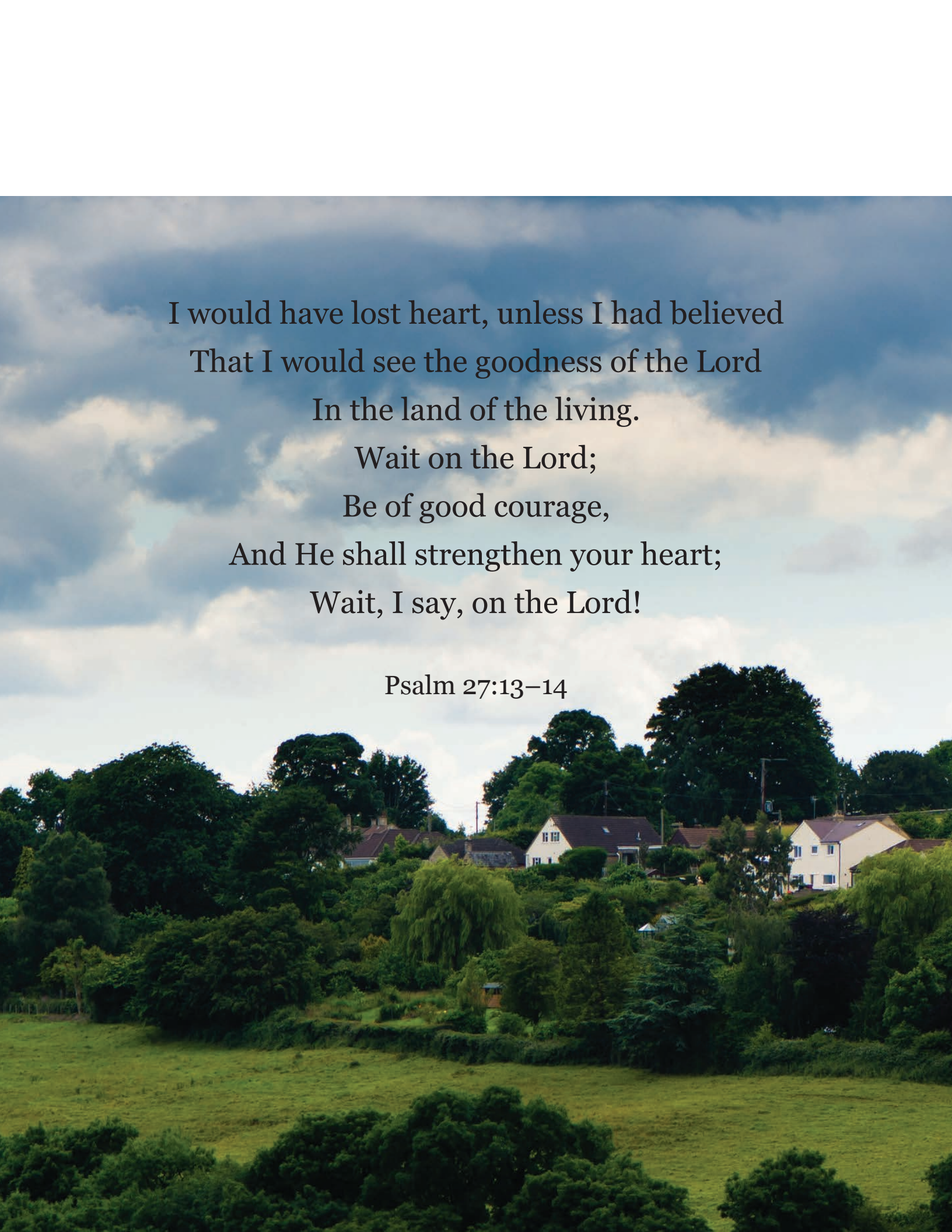
We absolutely love the privilege of seeing new missionaries settle in, study the language and culture, and eventually, move into a full-time ministry. All of our hearts long to see the least-reached people groups in the Philippines reached for Christ. Seeing students graduate from the language program and move into their ministries is a blessing and encouragement.

### Do you feel settled?

Yes, we do. This month, March, marks four years since we moved to the Philippines. Two of our four children were born here and, in some ways, are probably more Filipino than American. We love life here and feel settled in our ministry, life, and community.

### How can we pray for you?

Our family decided to get to the next phase of our language program now that we have a role here in town. We want to better serve the team and speak about deeper things in the heart language of the people. As a result, our schedule has been very full. Please pray for balance in our ministry responsibilities, family life, and language classes in this busy season, which will wrap up soon, Lord willing. ■



I would have lost heart, unless I had believed  
That I would see the goodness of the Lord  
In the land of the living.  
Wait on the Lord;  
Be of good courage,  
And He shall strengthen your heart;  
Wait, I say, on the Lord!

Psalm 27:13–14