

Bible Expositor and Illuminator

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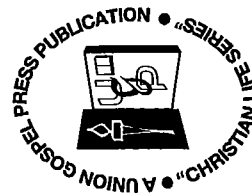
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Price **\$3.80** per quarter. Single subscription at **\$14.50** per year.
Canada, add **50¢** per year for postage and handling, or **\$15.00** per
year. Foreign countries, add **\$1.00** per year for postage and handling,
or **\$15.50**.

The BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR (USPS 054-480) is edited and published
quarterly for \$14.50 per year by The Incorporated Trustees of the Gospel Worker Society,
Union Gospel Press Division, 2000 Brookpark Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44109-5812. Period-
icals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BIBLE EX-
POSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR, P.O. Box 6059, Cleveland, Ohio 44101-1059.



World Missions

Galilee.

First, the church members are sen-
sitive to needs. With the influx of Jew-
ish immigrants, Christians in Berlin
provide a spiritual home for Jewish be-
lievers in Jesus. Of the eighty to one
hundred people who attend the church
every Shabbat, about 50 percent are
Jewish believers.

Second, the church takes the initia-
tive to help Jewish immigrants. To be-
gin with, members involve themselves
in an active and multifaceted outreach
to nonbelieving Jews. In addition, they
take the initiative to help new Jewish
converts grow in their newfound Chris-
tian faith.

Yuri, a trained engineer who emi-
grated from Moscow, is but one exam-
ple. Shortly after his arrival, Yuri ac-
cepted the Lord. He was soon directed
to Pastor Pikman's church, where he
not only learned German but also grew
in his faith. His family accepted Jesus
and was baptized. He entered Bible
college and hopes to become a full-
time missionary with Chosen People
Ministries so that he too can reach
Jews for Jesus.

Finally, these believers listen eagerly
to Jesus' word. As a church, they are
disciples who express the love of Je-
sus. They are not ashamed of the
gospel of Messiah, because it is the
power of God for the salvation of
everyone who believes—to the Jew
first and also to the Gentile (Rom.
1:16).

We should all be challenged by the
example of these German Christians.
We have been entrusted with the same
gospel that they have. May we be ea-
ger to seek out similarly ripe opportu-
nities to produce a bountiful harvest for
God.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV.

2 September 2001

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Every day someone somewhere asks, Is God there, and does He care? If God is not there, life is a hopeless free-for-all, and we are compelled to do the best we can in our own strength for ourselves, our families, and our friends. Thus, those with the most power have the greatest advantage. If God is there, finding Him and responding to Him is our most basic need. Why? Because power resides with Him, and everyone is dependent upon Him.

In the stilling of the storm, Matthew tells us that Jesus has power and that He cares for people whose lives are at risk. This straightforward fact is reassuring when catastrophes of nature strike as one did on 17 July 1998.

As a result of an undersea earthquake, seven villages in Aitape, Papua New Guinea, were swept away by a twenty-three foot tidal wave. (Situated just north of Australia, Papua New Guinea is the eastern part of the second largest island in the world. Its population is about 5 million people.) Initially the death toll stood at 1,600, with another 4,000 to 5,000 villagers missing. The final death toll was about 3,000.

When the massive wall of water struck, many of the victims died instantly. It came crashing down without warning. "Many of the dead were children and babies who were wrenched from their parents' arms or snatched from their parents by the walls of water" (*New Straits Times Press*, 8 August 1998).

The Schrock, veteran missionaries with Global Baptist Missions, reported how one family survived the disaster.

After he felt the earthquake, Peter

Marokiki (pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church of Arop Village) saw the sea shoot into the sky. He quickly got his family into his canoe and began to paddle toward the mainland. His wife had her baby in a sling around her neck and held on to her second youngest, Boaz, so tightly that she broke his ribs as the tons of water came crashing down around them. When they came to the surface, the baby was gone.

Cries were heard all across the lagoon. Flying metal roofing had dismembered people, and huge trees had smashed human bodies. The smell of blood brought sharks and crocodiles into a feeding frenzy. In the midst of the dead, Peter heard the cry of their baby—alive! In fact, the next day Peter discovered that all six of their children as well as his father and mother had survived.

As a result of this event, the Schrock and Peter had many opportunities to share the gospel with people who had a great willingness to listen—a willingness that had not existed before the tidal wave.

"Although we may not understand all of God's ways or His plan," said Harley Schrock, "it is helpful to remember who is in control of the forces of nature." A local newspaper declared that "the Lord will see us through this tragedy." Despite our situation, God is able and He cares!

Whatever personal storms you may be going through today, you can trust God to care for you in the midst of them. If you belong to Him, you have been bought with the price of the Son of God's own precious blood. Your life is in His hands. He will see you through.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

The healing of the man with a withered hand reveals Jesus' great compassion and love for others. Regardless of the intense scrutiny of religious leaders, the law of compassion and love demanded that Jesus heal on the Sabbath. Mark's emphasis is discipleship (like teacher, like disciple), and the exercise of compassion and love toward others is a fundamental attitude that we too are called to follow.

Love in Action reflects such an attitude. This independent and voluntary organization of Grace Brethren people works in concert to both fulfill the Great Commission and meet the needs of Grace Brethren nationals around the world (especially in Africa).

In 1995, several members of the Grace Brethren fellowship in the United States established a sewing center in Moundou, Chad, to equip and train Chadian pastors to sew. Chadian pastors who qualify receive treadle-operated sewing machines (new and used), along with cloth, thread, patterns, and kerosene lanterns for lighting.

In addition, the sewing center receives thirty dollars per apprentice. The money is split between the journeyman Elie Laokoura and apprentices. Since it is so difficult to make a living in Chad, Elie is paid for his time and energy spent training these men.

The two-year training under the watchful eye of Elie provides the men with a greater opportunity for employment after graduation from the sewing center. In the spring of 1999, three Grace Brethren apprentices graduated.

The sewing center has been so successful that government officials have

come to check it out. They even attended the graduation ceremonies for the first class. In fact, forty Grace Brethren Chadians lined up to fill the three available positions in the next training group beginning in the fall of 1999.

Perhaps you are wondering, as I did, about the quality of the work of these men. When ten of their dresses were sent to the Trotwood Grace Brethren Church (near Dayton, Ohio), they found immediate and eager acceptance in the African-American community. All were purchased on the spot.

In addition, a dress buyer from Dayton showed great interest in adding the dresses to her line. That interest resulted in an order. Subsequently, an order was placed at the sewing center for one hundred dresses.

Why is this program so successful? In part, surely, because it is an example of true Christian compassion, which does not simply give people things but provides them the opportunity to learn and improve their lives.

Love in Action became a reality because of a concerted and creative effort between missionaries on the field and stateside Christians. Like their teacher, they extend Christlike compassion and love to others. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Regardless of the intense scrutiny of those around us, we need to ask, What can I do to extend Christlike compassion and love to those across the street and around the world?

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

When Jesus entered the district of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15:21), the Canaanite woman's experience reads much like the opening line from the novel by Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*. It was the best and the worst of times. It was the best of times in that Jesus, whom she recognized to be the Messiah, had come to her hometown. It was the worst of times in that she was a Gentile and her daughter was demon-possessed. What would the Messiah have to do with her? Obviously, He had a great deal to do with her because of her faith in Him.

Present-day Cuban evangelicals are experiencing a comparable Dickensian existence. In some ways it is the best of times, as evidenced by Fidel Castro's governmental approval of an Evangelical Celebration.

Ever since Castro transformed Cuba into a socialist state (1959), most religious activities have been discouraged. However, the first-ever Evangelical Celebration permitted churches to import Bibles, receive humanitarian shipments of food and clothing, and even travel abroad. For example, Rodolfo Juarez traveled to the Philippines, where he lived while attending Asian Theological Seminary to prepare for a ministry in Cuba.

In addition, one-on-one evangelism was no longer punished by jail sentences. Alejandro Nieto (the thirty-eight-year-old pastor of a two-thousand member Cuban evangelical church) gave testimony to the fact that his church had been praying (since 1982) that five thousand people might be reached for the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1998, the church met its goal.

In addition, the recent religious freedom has made it less difficult for many to convert to Christianity. "Before," said Nieto, "the [political] party demanded that members be atheist... since then, many thousands of party members have come to Christ."

Nevertheless, it is also the worst of times for Cuban church leaders. They are prohibited from purchasing copiers and computers. In addition, "the state still views churches with suspicion, evidenced by spies who still infiltrate congregations looking for 'counter-revolutionary' speech or activity" (*World Pulse*, 7 May 1999).

Despite these challenges, Cuban Christians are on the move for Jesus. Prior to the 1990s, a conservative 5 percent of all Cubans were believers. At the time of this writing 10 percent are believers. There is no reason why this growth should not continue.

"God, in his divine goodness," said Nieto, "loves Cuba and is responding to our prayers and the churches around the world that are praying." "The Evangelical Celebration," Nieto said elsewhere, "is proof that there's more openness for evangelical activities."

As with many other regimes throughout history that have attempted to suppress the Christian faith, Cuba's efforts to restrict the gospel have failed. This is because the gospel is the very power of God.

As it was said of the Canaanite woman, may it also be said of the Christians in Cuba: "Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matt. 15:28). Please pray for Cuba's community of believers.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

family (father, mother, and six siblings).

CAM International, along with a dozen organizations, is "resurrecting" the town of Morolica. Four miles from old Morolica, New Morolica is being built for those who were left behind. A total of 313 houses, identical in design, are being built. Of the 313 houses, 50 are funded by the Samaritan's Purse and 50 by CAM. CAM is also constructing a new church building.

Recognizing that his work is now primarily evangelistic, Jose Gomez (pastor for twenty-five years of the CAM-related church in Morolica) reflected that "the believers listen more intently when I preach, and those that are not believers now listen to what I have to say about the Bible."

Carol Krause, a CAM missionary, also shared the message of Christ to those who had survived Hurricane Mitch. She observed how the children were the first ones to warm up to the message. "Soon" she said, "I had a group of children around me (including Sandra, the girl who lost her entire family) and was handing out tracts and explaining God's love in Christ."

CAM missionaries are disciples who are demonstrating and sharing that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. "We trust," said Carol, "that as this town takes on new life, its inhabitants will discover new life in Christ."

It is a hallmark distinction of Christianity to bring life from the dead. As we minister in our own various situations, we can expect the thrill of seeing this resurrection power at work.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

John's account of Lazarus, more than any other New Testament episode, captures the day-to-day human reality of coping with sickness and death. The termination of life is an event every person must face. Regardless of who we are, confronting death is the crisis above all crises.

It is a crisis for the one dying, and perhaps even more of a crisis for those left behind. Yet it is the day-to-day reality of being human. The Central American Mission (CAM) is helping people cope with death and destruction in Morolica.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch at the end of October 1998, an estimated 6,420 people were killed or missing and much of Honduras was in ruin. Morolica, a riverside community in southern Honduras, was not just demolished. It was entirely washed away. Not a single building was left intact.

"This is the worst natural disaster I've ever seen," said United States Air Force Captain Steve Smith. "I've done search-and-rescue missions in mountains. I've done fire fighting. But nothing like this. This is so widespread." When Smith arrived, "the people appeared as hungry as the animals rooting around in the smashed houses."

With tears in his eyes, Morolica's mayor, Carlos Alberto ("Beto") Espinal went straight to the television station in Tegucigalpa to plead for help. "I have no town," he said. "My people have nothing."

Before Hurricane Mitch struck Morolica, Sandra's (age thirteen) parents had given her permission to spend the night with friends in town. In a few hours, Sandra lost her entire

When we think of evangelism and missions, we often expect instantaneous results. The parable of the soils (Matt. 13:1-9) not only indicates the variety of responses to the word Jesus sows in His preaching; it also forces us to think of the patience of the farmer. The farmer prepares the ground, sows seed, waters the seed, and then waits for a crop. Producing a crop does not happen instantaneously. It is a process that occurs over time. Winning Muslims for Jesus Christ requires such patience.

A believer of this monotheistic religion is one who submits himself to Allah (Arabic for God). Besides the five pillars of Islam (recitation of the Muslim creed, ritual prayer five times a day, giving of alms to the needy, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and making the pilgrimage to Mecca), pious Muslims follow a code of ethical conduct that encourages generosity, fairness, chastity, honesty, and respect. Murder, cruelty, adultery, gambling, and usury are considered contrary to Islamic practice. Piety ensures a Muslim entrance into paradise.

With a population of over 65 million people (almost 100 percent of whom are Muslim), Turkey is a country that is extremely proud of its Islamic heritage. In fact, some Turks believe that to be Turkish is to be Muslim.

Nevertheless, in February 1999, a groundbreaking event occurred in Istanbul, Turkey. Luis Palau, an international evangelist from Argentina (sometimes called the Billy Graham of South America), was granted permission to hold an evangelistic outreach.

During his first meeting on 24 February, Luis Palau spoke to some 750 people. On another occasion, Palau

spoke to 125 business and professional leaders. Eighty-four indicated a first-time Christian commitment or requested a follow-up visit. On 27 February, the last night of his outreach; it was reported that Luis Palau preached to an overflow crowd of 850 people at the Gedikpasa Armenian Protestant Church in Istanbul.

Missionary Roger Malstead, who first visited Turkey in 1961 with Operation Mobilization, said Palau's mission was unique because public proclamation of the gospel "doesn't happen in Turkey."

"The believers here were amazed that people responded publicly to come forward and confess Christ," Palau reported. "This has been a learning experience for them—now they know how to do a public evangelistic event. Christians have been encouraged to work together. The time has come for mass evangelism to take place in Turkey."

In a country with a couple of thousand evangelical Christian church members, there is a great deal of work to be done for our Lord. Yet with the evangelistic appearances of Luis Palau, the ground has been prepared. Seeds have been sown, and others have been watering them. Some responses may call to mind the bad soils in Matthew 13, but let us pray for a good harvest.

The Apostle Paul taught that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). There are no walls it cannot penetrate, no borders it cannot cross, no ideas it cannot demolish, and no heart so hard it cannot soften—if God so wills it. The church can breach the very gates of hell in the power of Christ's gospel.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

"The question *Who is my neighbor?*" according to Darrell Bock (Osborne and Marshall, eds., *Luke, InterVarsity*), "is really an attempt to limit who one's neighbor might be." In essence, the lawyer was asking Jesus to endorse his concept of a "non-neighbor."

Some may define "neighbor" as someone who shares similar presuppositions (religious or otherwise), economic status, cultural background, color of skin, and such. "Non-neighbors" are those who are different. In contemporary terms, one manifestation of this thinking is racism. Jesus' reply, however, challenges disciples to be neighbors to those who are different and to those who are perceived as "bad." The International Union of Gospel Missions is such a mission.

As the successor to an organization titled the Rescue Mission Workers, the International Union of Gospel Missions (IUGM) was founded in 1913. The founders envisioned an international organization of urban missions, though only 4 percent of their member ministries are outside North America. In May of 2000 the IUGM voted to change its name to the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM).

The word "union" was popular in the early 1900s to express a relationship of common interest. That interest was to help the urban poor and share the gospel with them. (Groups like Scripture Union and Sunday School Union used the name "union" for the same purpose.)

One particular enterprise that has been quite successful is the New Castle (Pennsylvania) mission. For forty years Dick and Phyllis Marshall worked and transformed that particu-

lar neighborhood mission into a multiservice organization that serves men, women, families, and pregnant teenagers, operating out of a number of facilities.

There are things we too can do to be neighborly in our daily lives. On its Web site (www.agrm.org) the AGRM has provided a list of eight ways we can be a neighbor to the person we sometimes see on the street corner passing a tin cup or holding a Will-Work-for-Food sign: (1) Never give cash to a homeless person—buy him food if he is hungry. (2) Talk to the person with respect—besides being just neighborly, it gives the person an important boost in fighting the isolation, depression, and paranoia that many homeless people face. (3) Recognize that homeless people (and their problems) are not all the same—a person may be a battered woman, an addicted veteran, or someone who is lacking job skills, among other things. (4) Share God's love whenever you can—be a disciple and do what your Teacher (Jesus) would do. (5) Pray for the homeless—the street breaks many a person who then turns to God for help. (6) Take precautions for your own safety, because some are criminals and fugitives running from the law. Stay where other people can see you. (7) Encourage the homeless to get help through your local mission—and know its location. (8) Support your local mission—and not just with monetary support. Be a volunteer. To pretend that you do not see the homeless is to ignore your neighbor.

Do not try to limit who your neighbor is; expand your neighborhood through the love of Christ, which dwells in the hearts of believers.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

Prayer is one of the mechanisms of relationship that God gives to His children to keep in touch with Him. When we face life's challenges, prayer becomes extremely important. Such was the case for the Gregg family.

Herb and Linda Gregg had worked four years as missionary/teachers for The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) in Dagestan. (Dagestan is located north of the Caspian Sea near the southern Russian region of Chechnya.) Herb taught English to university students in Dagestan and coached youth basketball.

After basketball practice on 11 November 1998, Herb was suddenly separated from fellow missionaries, friends, and his family. He was kidnapped and held captive in Chechnya.

Herb was only one of hundreds of Russians and foreigners who had been kidnapped in and around Chechnya in recent years. Neither he nor his family nor Christian friends could do anything to remedy the situation. Right? Luke told us that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). For 229 days, therefore, the entire Gregg family prayed.

While Herb was held in captivity, believers around the world were also requested to pray that the Holy Spirit would provide him strength to stand as a witness before his captors and that his captors would free him soon.

When Herb finally arrived in Moscow as a freed man on 29 June 1999, we discovered that God had heard and answered our prayers. First, Herb never endured long periods of torture, though he was mishandled and verbally threatened.

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For over seven months, Herb was kept in a heated house, slept on a foam mat, and was switched back and forth between two rooms (one measuring six-by-nine feet and the other nine-by-twelve feet). Although he lost some forty pounds, he was provided macaroni and rice (vegetables, fruit, and meat were lacking).

Much of the experience of captivity was uneventful, but on 12 April 1999, kidnappers videotaped Herb as they cut off his right index finger and then had him ask for ransom to be freed. (Not to demean the loss of his finger, but we can thank the Lord that Herb is left-handed!)

Second, in answer to the persevering prayer, Herb was able to share his faith with his captors. When they asked whether he was afraid to die, Herb said, "No, but I don't want to die because I want to see my family again. But if I die, I know I'd go to heaven." Later, when an Arizona reporter asked what he wanted to say to his kidnappers after his release, Herb said, "That God really loves you."

Throughout the ordeal, the Greggs used prayer to keep in touch with God. When Linda heard of Herb's release, their daughter Amy said, "My mom screamed 'He's out,' and the whole house jumped and said, 'Praise God' and 'Thank you, Jesus.' We all immediately went to our knees and started bawling." Jesus' disciples, like the Gregg family, should always pray and never give up, especially when life moves in unexplained directions.

Remember to pray for missionaries concerning the dangers they face in their labors for Christ.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

21 October 2001

There exists today a unique ministry to Chicago gang members called Mission: USA. Since 1991, Glen and Jane Fitzjerrell have been ministering to Hispanic young people, mostly male, ranging from mid-teens to early twenties, who are gang members from the Latin Kings, 2SixBoyz, and Spanish Cobras.

Drug dealers, adulterers, and worse come to Glen's modest apartment in Chicago to hear him teach about God. Dubbed the Peacemaker, they study the Bible and learn about fellowship, discipleship, and worship.

Their philosophy is purely missions. "To think of ourselves," says Glen, "as close to a foreign mission is possible because it's a totally different culture, a totally different existence." The Fitzjerrells experimented with planting churches among gang members (called Holy Nation). They shifted to the Peacemaker concept, however, when their church plant met with some problems.

Regrettably, most financial support comes from secular groups rather than from churches. Several reasons have been given for this pattern of support: (1) Nonbelievers see something noble about the ministry; (2) Christians tend to believe gang members are beyond redemption and belong in prison; (3) Christians are ashamed by gang members' enthusiastic commitment to Christ.

It is tragic that such works of ministry cannot find more funding from Christians. Does this not give the unbelievers who fund these projects occasion to blaspheme God (cf. Rom. 2:24)?

According to Matthew 25:31-46, the eternal fate of people is deter-

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mined by how they respond to Jesus' followers, that is, His disciples—those who (missionaries or not) are charged with spreading the gospel and are to do so in the face of hunger, thirst, illness, and even the dangers of the street.

Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). True disciples evidence love and compassion toward one another regardless of their background.

As disciples of Jesus, Glen and Jane Fitzjerrell extend Christ's love and compassion to those who would appear to be unreachable, unlovable, and undeserving. Their efforts have earned them a hearing.

Rather than stand on a street corner preaching about sin and repentance, Glen and Jane establish relationships with gang members by visiting them in jail, by not looking on gang member's sins as more repugnant than those of the average churchgoer, and by inviting them into their home.

Men like Iggy (former member of the Spanish Cobras) and Jorge (former member of the 2SixBoyz) turn from one culture to another. They abandon their source of income—selling drugs—and enter the workforce with no social skills, no education, and no vocational skills. They reject the protection of their gang and endure a "violation out," in which gang members beat the outgoing member. They are Peacemakers—disciples of Jesus in process like you and me.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

28 October 2001

Whereas Matthew 5:1-10 are presented as general axioms ("they"), verses 11-16 are personalized for Jesus' followers ("you"). The directive "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matt. 5:16) was addressed to Jesus' disciples. Disciples of Jesus must show their "good works." Where do we see this today? One place is Indonesia, where the good works being done could be compared to glowing beams of light.

Indonesia—a country of over 216 million people and over 13,500 islands—is a vast nation of nations. Diversity permeates the nation from its overcrowded modern cities to its primitive tribal districts, from practitioners of ancient rituals and witchcraft to Western-style liberals, from nominal and radical Muslims and Hindus to nominal and radical Christians.

"Economic devastation, social anarchy, political upheaval, separatist instability, ethnic bloodletting and religious fighting," said Ming Haw Lim, "spell an unfolding tragedy of immense proportions for Indonesia" ("Indonesia at the Crossroads," *World Christian*, June 1999). It is a large nation in great need.

Reports like that, however, have moved disciples of Jesus from around the world to send more than \$70,000 to the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) Indonesia Crisis Relief fund. Granted, there is no simple solution to any of Indonesia's political, economic, and religious problems. Nevertheless, OMF executes a simple yet significant strategy: they show their good works.

"We have been able to help," said Jennie Hamlin, "about 40 trusted

Christian groups." The Christian groups buy food and give it to needy families. These good works are, according to Jennie, "changing perceptions of Christianity" (*Indonesianews*, April 1999).

In addition, those who oversee the Indonesia Crisis Relief fund also support several creative projects. About forty families have received a loan to start a small business such as selling food items or making and selling charcoal. Repayments are given to other families to start their own small businesses.

An orphanage in Banyuwangi is raising ducks to provide protein for the children and money to buy rice. Another orphanage in Beli teaches the older children to make bricks and thereby provides them with an income.

A Christian doctor in the capital city of Jakarta is providing free or low-cost medical care and a midday meal each day "from the Lord Jesus." Christine Zahnd (*Indonesianews*, April 1999) told how in another city her family made about thirty little presents consisting of a milk drink, some nutritious biscuits, and two short stories that show there is a loving God. On 25 December they toured Yogyakarta's streets and gave the little presents to the street children and the homeless.

The Indonesia Crisis Relief ministry is discipleship in action. Christine has asked that we too get involved and pray for the poor of Indonesia so that they may find, through this ministry, "THE ONLY TRUE PROVIDER."

God is your Provider. Consider providing for others in need.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

Love—what it is to be loved by God (perfection) and how God wishes one to love (so be perfect)—is central to Jesus' sermon in Matthew 5:38-48. Jesus' call to His disciples zeros in on our actions and attitudes toward others. Our thoughts and attitudes about people who are perceived as different, dangerous, or distrustful need to be couched in God's love. Jesus' form of love is radically different from our culture's view.

The kind of love that Jesus modeled is essential for those who work with Bayaka Pygmies. Pygmies are any human group whose adult males grow to less than fifty-nine inches in average height. The best-known Pygmy groups live in tropical Africa. One of these groups is the Bayaka Pygmies, who make their home in the Central African Republic.

Known primarily as seminomadic hunter-gatherers who move about the forest living in temporary camps, Bayaka Pygmies hunt, fish, and collect wild plant foods and insects. Despite their seemingly primitive lifestyle, the Pygmies tend to be feared by some in Central African society because of their fetish power.

A fetish is a material object (in this case leaves of trees and roots) believed to have magical powers. Both the Bayaka Pygmies and other people in the Central African Republic place great confidence in the power of the fetish.

"[There] is no real force or power in their leaves and trees," said Thomas Youfei, a Christian native of the Central African Republic, "but Satan has blinded their minds."

"The first missionaries," Thomas continued, "did not give much consid-

eration to the cultural context of fetishism, but it is a reality that needs to be addressed when presenting the gospel to the Bayaka Pygmies." In short, this means that missionaries are needed who truly understand the Bayaka Pygmy culture. Martin Kanganzo is such a missionary.

Martin, the first Bayaka Pygmy to graduate from a Bible institute, grew up near a village populated by tall Central Africans. In 1999, Martin, his wife, and his children moved into the rain forest interior of Mouale to train and disciple other Pygmy believers.

Within a few months, Mouale was transformed from a forest outpost to a village. It has been reported that Mouale has become a semipermanent home to some 350 to 400 Pygmies because of Martin's presence. His continual contact with Pygmy people allows him to model Christianity, mentor people, and mediate disputes. Martin thus has incredible opportunities to exemplify the perfect love of God.

It was reported that fifteen Pygmies walked three days to attend a Christian conference. They claimed Martin as their pastor and participated in every night of the conference with song. As a result, many Central African pastors and laypeople got excited about Pygmy ministry. Martin's Christlike, loving actions and attitudes have greatly impacted Central Africa for Jesus.

The love of God gives us the desire to reach out to those who need the gospel. This love is not arrogant or condescending; rather, it is patient and seeks to truly understand and bless those in need. God's love loves truly and sacrificially.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

If disciples are not to pursue material things (Matt. 6:19-24), how should we deal with our physical needs? Jesus' answer to this question is really fairly simple: Trust God! In the same way that God cares for His other creatures, He will care for us (vs. 25-34). Disciples around the world trust God regularly to meet their needs.

This is particularly true of the Lord's missionaries at seminaries located abroad that are committed to preparing nationals for ministry. Two strategic Central American seminaries are ESEPA Seminary and Central American Theological Seminary.

Central American Theological Seminary in Guatemala began in 1929 to train men and women for the Lord's service. Students come from all over the Spanish-speaking world to prepare for ministry. Graduates have gone out to five continents and serve in some twenty-eight countries. The seminary is a vital ministry in partnership with Central American Mission (CAM) International.

Paul Sywulka, president of the seminary, testified to his trust in God when he affirmed, "This is God's work; we [faculty and staff] want to always rely on Him, and as He responds to our needs, we want to thank Him."

ESEPA Seminary (School of Pastoral Studies) presently prepares some 450 students for ministry. In partnership with Latin American Mission (LAM), ESEPA is the largest seminary in Costa Rica. It contributes significantly to missionary outreach and theological development not only in Costa Rica but throughout all Latin America.

Gary Shogren, New Testament pro-

fessor at the seminary, recalled one of his favorite situations during the last weeks of fund-raising before returning to Costa Rica to teach.

During a yard sale, "I was taking a TV out to someone's car," Gary shared, "when I lost my balance and fell on my face—breaking my glasses, cutting my face, and hurting my knee. Two days later, we visited a church that had already promised us support."

"We arrived," said Gary, "about 30 minutes early for the evening service, and I limped to the lobby and was approached by the soundman. He asked me if I wanted prayer." Gary laughed, thinking the man was joking because he looked so beat-up. "No," he said, "I need to see the pastor."

The soundman, however, put Gary off. Later Gary learned that he had gone to the pastor to report that some homeless man was looking for him—probably for money, since he refused prayer.

When the pastor finally invited Gary up to the pulpit to give a greeting, he related the apparent fact that when he came in, someone had mistaken him for "a homeless guy, looking for money. But actually," he said, "I'm a missionary . . . that is, a homeless guy, looking for money."

Regardless of where we live, God promises to care for all His disciples. Our lives will fall into place and we will be effective in our mission when we seek first the kingdom of God.

(I hope that a homeless man who is looking for money would fare better if he came to your church! Such an event may well be God's test of a church's love for Him.)

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV

Matthew 7:12 is easy to memorize and readily applied to those whom we like and to those who treat us well. However, the Golden Rule is a call to exceptional love and mercy extended to those who hate us, to those who curse us, and to those who mistreat us. Such a response is a mark of a disciple and, especially when executed in tough situations, is an instant witness to others.

Just after midnight on 23 January 1999, a mob of some sixty frenetic attackers (thought to be associated with one of three militant Hindu fundamentalist groups) surrounded Graham Staines's jeep. The windows were broken out of the jeep, gasoline was poured on and ignited, and flames quickly enveloped the vehicle.

Although there was horrific screaming, the desperate pleas did not elicit sufficient help. As a result, Graham Staines, fifty-eight, along with his two sons, Phillip, ten, and Timothy, six, were burned alive. "Even in death," a native reporter wrote, "they were inseparable. Charred beyond recognition and reduced to fragile frames of ashes, the three bodies lay clinging to each other in what must have been a vain attempt to protect each other and escape the mob" (*India Today*). Why did this happen?

With the push for a Hindu motherland in 1999, violent acts against Christians were growing in India. Atrocities against believers ranged from gang rape to the exhumation of bodies from the grave to vandalism and complete destruction of churches. In one month, twenty-eight churches were destroyed in Gujarat, India.

Graham was working at the leprosy mission in the village of Mayurbhanj with the Evangelical Missionary Society when he and his sons were murdered. "The greatest legacy he leaves," said Russell Shubin, "is his deep love for India, unwavering endurance and faithfulness in service to a people deemed untouchable" (*Mission Frontiers*, March—April 1999). This deep love was also manifested in Gladys, Graham's wife of sixteen years.

Despite this heinous act of violence against her husband and her two boys, Gladys's response caught the attention of many in India when she exemplified the exceptional love and compassion of Jesus Christ spoken of in Matthew 7:12. She offered a clear and public statement of forgiveness to those who killed her husband and two children.

Responding to the statement, someone said, "People of all religious backgrounds have been stunned by Gladys's testimony. For many, this has been their first taste of true Christianity."

Although Graham, Phillip, and Timothy's work has ended, Gladys continues working at the leprosy mission. While it is difficult at times, her call to missions remains undaunted. Even more significant is her ability to honor her call as a disciple who obeys Jesus and follows the Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12.

When men, driven by evil desire, commit heinous acts, they often use the justification that their enemies deserved the punishment inflicted. Responding with forgiveness robs them of any such justification and shows the love of Christ.

—Herbert W. Bateman, IV