



# NEW LIFE NEWS

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## OUTREACH TO NAMORUPUS

By David and Sunshine Okken

A community of Karimojong live up in the mountains not too far from us. At 6:30 a.m. we drove to Tokora Health Center (about four miles from us) where we left the vehicle and began hiking. It was about a two hour hike to reach our final destination. In an effort to find the best venue for our ministry, some locals suggested we just use the church. Al and I were puzzled. "What church?" We reached an impressive, albeit humble building constructed with wooden poles and a grass roof on a clearing high up in the hills with a gorgeous view. We were told that "the pastor" was away for the day. When we asked who this pastor was, we were told he was associated with Emuron. Reverend Emuron is our friend in Namalu to whose congregation we regularly preach. I managed to reach him by phone to ask about this group. He told me he had no involvement with them, but they had likely used his name so that their group would be accepted as a legitimate church in the area. He told me of a Korean missionary who had also worked with them, and that they were very disorganized, needed help, and we should preach to them and help them plant a real church. We happen to know that missionary, Choi, a Korean Presbyterian. I knew they had spent some time in Karamoja in the past, but had no idea they had been in Namorupus. I had saved Choi's phone number and phoned him. The communication was a bit difficult as his English is not great, but he was happy to have us minister in the place he had been.

After wrestling with what to do, we decided it might be good to minister among this group, but first

we would need to ask this pastor about it. We decided it would be better to leave him a message informing him of our willingness to do this ministry. We began the long hike back. After about 2/3 of the journey, we decided to sit down for a rest in some shade. A Karimojong man also sat in the shade with us. We struck up a brief conversation with him as we shared with him some of the peanuts we were enjoying. After sitting there some time we learned the man was a believer. He was eager to show us his Karimojong New Testament as well as his English Bible. Finally, we discovered he was the very pastor whom we had missed on the top of the mountain. So we were able to speak with him in person, and he warmly welcomed us to come. An extra week of preparation will give him some time to mobilize (invite many in the community to come), and will likely give us better weather as the recent heavy rains seem to be moving on. Often events do not turn out at all as we plan because the Lord has planned something even better.

The following week did not begin on such a positive note, however. We arrived in Namorupus Monday morning to find very few people. We were told the pastor had gone to Namalu for the day. What had happened? He had seemed so eager to welcome us and had promised to invite many to come out for the event. We did some teaching to the few men, women and children who were there. They promised to inform the pastor we had been there, and as we had told him, would return the next day as well. We were told to come earlier Tuesday and the ministry had to be quick since the pastor

had plans to be away in the afternoon. A bit puzzled and discouraged, we hiked back down the mountain. We wondered if his warm welcome had been the typical Karimojong practice of hiding true feelings while being polite rather than an expression of genuine interest in our ministry. Nonetheless, we kept our promise. Tuesday morning we began hiking up the hill even earlier than the day before.

When we reached the church building, we were met by a man we had never seen before. To our great surprise, he informed us that he was the pastor, Lomer Joseph. It turns out the pastor we had met before was his associate and was pastor of a different church which had been planted by Joseph's church in another part of Namorupus! We wondered if that other pastor had waited in vain for us to arrive at his place on Monday.

Pastor Joseph had canceled his Tuesday plans and had arranged for half a dozen young men he was training for ministry to come and sit under our teaching to consider whether we were bringing good Biblical teaching. Rather than us teaching through our materials, we were happy to sit and participate as he taught through our gospel lesson. As he read through our booklet, we were impressed by his teaching ability. What thrilled us most was the way he had the men open up and examine every Scripture text that we cited. Pastor Joseph seemed pleased with our materials and welcomed us to partner with him to spread God's word throughout the area. We invited some of his men to come to our Saturday

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## MISSION HIGHLIGHT: ESCONDIDO

By Sherrene David

I recently had the privilege to sit down with Juan and Martha Arjona. I bombarded them with questions about the history of Mision Vida Nueva (MVN), their involvement with the city officials, their current vision, and prayer requests. Juan is a graduate of Westminster Seminary California, and had noticed there was no reformed, Spanish-speaking church in the area. When Juan was called in 2000, Hispanics made up around 37% of Escondido. Today, they comprise nearly 50% and are strong in the core area of the city. Juan used the word “polarization” to describe the demographics of the city. Escondido has its middle-high class non-Hispanic areas, but it also has low-income Hispanic communities, and the two rarely mingle. The gospel backed with solid doctrine was not being preached in the language common to many of the inhabitants of the city. So, instead of returning to Mexico, Juan and Martha realized their calling in Escondido.

The influence MVN has on the community is far beyond what Juan ever dreamed. Part of the polarization of Escondido is not from skin color or ethnicity, but rests in terms of “pro-immigrants” or “anti-immigrants.” Before 2008 the city council was anti-immigrant or anti-Hispanic in their policies. This caused much agitation, and since most of the anti-immigrants called themselves Christians, the Hispanic community associated the antagonism with Christianity. Many of the pro-immigrant activists were Hispanic parents, and their kids became distracted with the agitation and did poorly in school. The parents had poor English skills and were unable to help their children with schoolwork. The kids ended up dropping out and either searched for jobs or joined gangs. Working class jobs often require long hours outside of the town where their

families are located, time when the children are unsupervised and get into trouble. Because of the low income of these families, many people rent small spaces, and the overcrowding makes things even more difficult. The families unwillingly stay in the situation because they do not have an option to leave. Due to this downhill cycle in the Hispanic community, people are left with dysfunctional families, without jobs, education or hope.

It is in this context that MVN moved to the heart of the Hispanic community in Escondido. There is much unrest in the city as families continue to disintegrate and crime rises. The problem of inadequate education continues to plague the families as the parents are unable to teach their children, and children are unable to function at school. Martha asked one class what they wanted to do when they grew up. One student answered, “deal drugs because that is the easiest and quickest way to make money.” The needs of the kids and parents in this community are great from needing help with English, to proper food supplies, to decent jobs. The Hispanic community finds itself in desperate need of help from outside itself.

Sound familiar? It should. We

are all in desperate need of help from outside ourselves; help that can only come from a great Savior. God has put Juan and MVN in a unique place where he is able to not only preach the gospel, but also work as liaison with the city officials to help “reconstruct” the lives of Hispanics in Escondido. 🌟

*Next month: More on Juan's involvement with the city, what MVN is up to lately, what the Arjonas' hopes are for the near and far future of the church, and prayer requests/needs we could potentially fill.*



## A SERIOUS CONVERSATION

Submitted by Shane Ferree

The following conversation occurred during my Sunday school class on October 4. I was helping the kids with their art craft, and a conversation started between Rebecca and Analise. I had asked what they had done over the weekend. Analise informed me that Callum had come over, and they had played together. Rebecca looked at me and said that Analise and Callum were going to get married when they grew up, and Analise acknowledged that Rebecca was correct in what she said. The conversation then shifted between Rebecca and Analise, and I was out of it. Rebecca said, “But Analise, you know it’s illegal to marry your friends and cousins.” Analise thought for a second and responded with the correction, “No, it’s illegal to marry your brothers and cousins.” Then the two began to talk about other things. 🌟

# WORLD MISSIONS WEEK

By Sherrene David

“You look like you just got off the mission field!” Surprised to hear the little voice behind me, I turned and discovered a small boy, wide-eyed and curious about my traditional Indian outfit. I laughed. “No, I didn’t, but I hope to be there soon! In fact, you can pray for that.” He grinned and ran off, only to discover that I was following him to his preschool class to share with them about India. And would you believe it? That little group of preschoolers prayed for me and for India, about everything from little kids in India, to the lack of traffic signals, to elephants. But one thing they didn’t miss. They prayed that people in India would know Jesus and worship the true God alone.

From what I’ve heard, this bunch of preschoolers isn’t the only group that prayed hard for missionaries during New Life’s World Missions Week. Hopefully, World Missions Week was able to give you a first hand look at New Life’s missionaries: who they are, where they serve, how they serve, and how you (we) can pray for them more specifically and effectively. I hope that the missionaries we support have become more than names and faces on the missions wall, but have materialized into real people serving a real God in real places that need the gospel. I also hope that World Missions Week was successful at giving you an understanding of why we as a church support missions financially, and also how individuals give to missions at New Life, namely through our new method of Faith Promise giving. Finally, I hope World Missions Week has given you a renewed passion for the worship of God in all nations, among all peoples, along with a heart to pray fervently to that end.

I say these things went off successfully not only from my own observations, but also from talking with you about the week. Many of you spoke with me regarding your experiences.

The Dykstras’ prayer group had Dr. Wayne True visit, who was full of exciting stories and recruiting efforts for Peru. He was able to bridge the gap between life here in San Diego and life in Peru short-term, a useful connection for those of us who are unable to serve abroad for long amounts of time. Randy Dykstra mentioned that for him, Dr. True reinforced the importance of short-term teams participating with groups like CERT, noting the lasting benefits they have had for the people they serve.

Lisa and Dominic Mammina’s group also had Dr. True visit. She noted that their group learned that “you don’t have to be a full-time missionary, or even speak the native language well to make a difference for the Gospel in foreign lands.” What a blessing!

Denise and Brad Tidwell’s group

visited with the Calls, where they learned more about the culture of Mexicali as well as initiatives the church plant and BEAMM are working on to help discipleship efforts and community outreach. He noted that “everything was new and interesting as most all of us had never met the Calls or heard the details of their labor in the Lord.”

This is a small sampling of what different groups in our church discovered during Missions Week. I encourage you to find someone who attended a different midweek group and discuss your discoveries. And, even better, find any child who was here and let that child’s excitement spread to your own heart. May we all continue to pray for the nations, that they would worship the one true God alone, and for missionaries present and future. 🌱

## WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

*Words: Johann Lindemann, 1598, tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1858*

*Music: Giovanni G. Gastoldi, 1591 (Tune: “In Dir Ist Freude”)*

*Submitted by Diane Henderson*

These words, sung acappella by New Life’s choir this September, ministered to me after my mother’s homegoing.

In You is Gladness

In you is gladness amid all sadness,  
Jesus, sunshine of my heart.  
By you are given the gifts of heaven,  
You the true Redeemer art.  
Our hearts you waken, we’re not forsaken;  
Who trusts you surely has built securely and stands forever; Alleluia!  
Our hearts are pleading, your presence needing,  
Living or dying, on Christ relying now and forever; Alleluia!

If he is ours, we fear no powers -  
Not of sin or death or night.  
He knows our troubles, our pain and struggles;  
He upholds us by his might.  
Wherefore the story - tell of his glory  
With heart and voices; all heaven rejoices in him forever; Alleluia!  
We shout for gladness - away, all sadness!  
Love him and praise him and still shall raise him glad hymns forever; Alleluia! 🌱

*“A faith without some doubts is like a human body without antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience or tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic...Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own but their friends and neighbors.”—Timothy Keller*

## REPORT ON WOMEN'S RETREAT

By Katie Scott

What women's retreat could be better than listening to thought provoking talks by Rebecca Jones, enjoy wonderful meals and Christian fellowship, and relax in natural hot spring pools? This year's women's retreat was held at the Calvary Chapel Conference Center at Murrieta Hot Springs, a new location for New Life retreaters. Many ladies arrived Friday afternoon and enjoyed swimming, browsing the bookstore and visiting until dinner. After the evening session by Jones, various activities included going to bed, talking, relaxing in the hot spring pools until midnight or something in between.

The small group discussions after Jones' talks were encouraging and challenging. We had the opportunity to discuss practical applications of her messages, such as understanding our Christian womanhood, opening our mouths with the gospel, and knowing our audiences. We enjoyed times of prayer early Saturday morning and met in small groups before lunch.

The mealtimes were delightful. Not only was the food delicious and the service excellent, but each New Life table featured a box of questions which allowed us to get to know better the people at our table. I enjoyed talking and hearing about favorite childhood memories, something people don't know about us, favorite books, and so forth.

Of course, the women's retreat is not complete without the icebreaker game. I discovered you can learn quite a bit about people by learning what kind of drink they order at Starbucks, among other things. Thanks, Sherrene, for the icebreaker game! Other activities during the weekend included a craft, singing, game room, coffee shop, naps, quiet time and swimming. I think most of the women who attended would agree, however, that the highlight of this year's retreat was our speaker, Rebecca Jones. The overall retreat experience was a

time to get away, rest and rejuvenate, and be reminded of our great God who came down from heaven for us and yet is transcendent at the same time. ❀

## GOD'S ORCHESTRA

By Chloe Verdick

Life has been described as a roller coaster, fish in the sea, a joyride, a whirlwind, and much more. At the women's retreat, our speaker Rebecca Jones gave us another metaphor for life. Life is an orchestra playing a symphony.

We all have an irreplaceable role. Our transcendent, immanent God chose each of us to redeem, sanctify and then use to proclaim His story. He evangelized to us and then designated us as His mouth on earth. Rebecca noted (since she was speaking to a crowd of women) how God honors the role of women throughout history. Eve was the crowning glory of creation. Mary was Christ's only biological parent. Christ first appeared risen from the dead to women and told them to proclaim the truth to the disciples. As Christian women we have a unique role to play as God works today. No matter how small our part seems, it is imperative to the music in God's symphony.

We are watched. The world is our audience. As a part of God's family, we are all witnesses to His gospel. Whether we're at work, at home or running errands, the eyes of an unbelieving world, our families and an ever-present God are upon us. We are always on stage.

One aspect of Rebecca's talks that particularly struck me was her focus on being a witness in our everyday routines. We are all in different walks of life with varying exposure of opportunity for evangelism. It is too easy to see the normal as the empty and mundane. Rebecca encouraged us to be prepared to praise God's name in the daily routines. How do you answer

when someone praises you or your children? How do you treat the person in front of you in line at the grocery store or the co-worker two cubicles down? What do you say when someone asks how your day is going? She defined this type of behavior as "radical, positive obedience." We know how one person's behavior can affect an entire group, whether it is a family, a work team or a church congregation. In being dedicated to praising God in every word out of our mouths and in serving those around us, it is with "radical, positive obedience" that we act. Give outspoken praise to the Lord in all situations!

We were blessed to have Rebecca Jones back with us at the women's retreat. Not only did she stretch our minds and outlooks with theology and metaphor, but with her own life experiences. As the mother of many children, a long-time missionary in France, the wife of a seminary professor and evangelist in her own right, her stories were rich with the mysteries of God. She blessed us by sharing her wisdom and thoughts. We are all glad to be playing alongside her in God's orchestra. ❀

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meeting where we study the Scriptures with men we are training as village Bible study leaders.

There on top of the mountains under the tree on his compound we enjoyed some of the tastiest rice and posho (cooked ground maize) with chicken stew that we had ever had! (It seemed so anyway since by then we were famished.)

We had left our home at six a.m. and did not return until past five p.m. We were exhausted, but rejoicing in what the Lord had done and was doing on the mountain in Namorupus. And we are excited about the possibility of future ministry the Lord might have for us with our new friend and brother in that place. ❀