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GETTING REAL ABOUT MISSIONS WORK

by Elijah L.

Elijah L. currently serves on the board of World Christian Fellowship and is undergoing a career transition from law to education. In this sharing, Elijah reflects honestly about his experience of feeling despondent and defeated while serving God overseas and how this made him take a harder look at the meaning of suffering, of joy and the need for prayer.

Middle syndrome √ Several weeks ago, I shared with my church about my STM to East Asia this past summer. As I projected a picture of my English class of middle school boys and girls, I flippantly commented that it was difficult for two "middle-aged guys" to reach and teach boys and girls 1/3 of our age. After the service, a church elder approached me with a serious look on his face. He told me that he and several older church members took offense at me calling myself "middle-aged." I quickly apologized only to be interrupted when he laughed and said, "Nah, I'm just kidding. I thought it was funny."

I wonder why I regularly refer to myself as middle-aged since I'm in my late 30s, younger than those typically thought of as middle-aged. However, based on life expectancy charts, I'm probably smack dab in the middle of my life. But more than that, I feel like I am going through a midlife crisis of sorts. I am single, going through a career change from law to education, and am unsure of many things in my life including where God sees me in His global plan.

Missionary memories √ After a few WCCs (World Christian Conference), a Perspectives course, and my mother's prediction in the early 1990s that I would be a missionary, I decided to embark on a 6-month STM. I selected an organization that focused on least-reached people groups and asked for placement in one of two East Asian nations, one open and one closed. However, God closed the door to the open nation and opened the door to the closed one.



Corn and vegetable crops in Muslim village in East Asia



An English class of middle school students

In October 2005, I left for East Asia for the first time on a 6-month term to minister to ethnic Muslims. I taught English at a language institute and junior high school "by day" and by "night." I met with a young man on a weekly basis, led weekly English Corners, and shared meals in a Muslim section of a large city. I quickly realized the enormity of the work and the scarcity in the number of workers. I came back with the goal of encouraging more people to consider praying for and touching the least reached.

This past summer, I returned to East Asia for three weeks. While I visited a different city, I was working with the same ethnic group. I felt underprepared for the trip. I did not raise financial support because I had a surplus of funds. Because of this, I neglected to send out prayer letters and had only informally told a few friends of my trip.

Halfway through our English camp, I was in emotional and spiritual desolation. I did not think that I was effective at all with our students. Not only did I feel that my teaching was impotent, I was discouraged by my inability to relate with the students outside of class. The children willingly went with my co-teacher and me to the local museum, a large park, and to meals. However, anytime I tried to initiate conversations with the kids, it seemed like I was talking to a wall.

Impossible mission? √ I suppose this was to be expected since the students are 11- and 12-year-old children. As an adult, they probably thought that they had no business being on my level.

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"...we were never promised that it would be easy work and at times it would be downright discouraging. It dawned on me the cost of those saints that willingly sacrifice any hopes and dreams to follow the call of the Spirit to the ends of the earth."

GETTING REAL ABOUT MISSIONS WORK

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Intellectually, I knew all these things, but I could not help but still feel inadequate, depressed, and wondering why I came. I sent out a belated SOS email to my close friends back home begging for intercession. I did not feel much of a difference. By the end of the English camp I was totally discouraged and defeated. Meanwhile, all my teammates were over the moon about how God had blessed their interactions with their students. I didn't feel blessed. I didn't feel joyful.

Missions and meaning √ It seems like every time someone shares about their STM trip at our church, I hear something like the following: "I went with the intention and hope of blessing others. I have been given so much more than they have. Instead of me blessing them, I came back blessed." I certainly did not feel that way.

As I meditated on my great sense of discouragement, I started to remember my 6-month term in East Asia in 2005. I experienced times of difficulty, loneliness, trials, and defeat. Later, speaking with many other missionaries, I learned that they had struggled with similar issues. And I started to cry, not only because of my own struggles but also for those that are serving and finishing the task in the field. Yes, we all are willing to serve God and spread the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth. However, we were never promised that it would be easy work and at times it would be downright discouraging. It dawned on me the cost of those saints that willingly sacrifice any hopes and dreams to follow the call of the Spirit to the ends of the earth. Yes, serving God is hard.

Being real √ So when I gave my testimony in our service, I honestly shared all that I experienced. I had dozens of people come up and affirm my honesty. In fact, several people confessed that they felt very similar emotions and struggles on their STMs, but when they had shared their testimonies, I had heard the usual. I wondered aloud, "Why can't we be honest about our experiences?" Perhaps there's the pressure of producing fruit to justify continued financial support. Perhaps it's our pride to want to tell people things are going well (or well enough) and disregard the negative and the trials.

So yes, serving God is a tough job, a high calling. While I never felt physical suffering, I was and continue in an emotional and spiritual war with myself and the Enemy. Philippians 3:7-11 says that I should "rejoice in sharing Christ's sufferings for the sake of knowing Him more and being found in Him." However, there were times that I felt I was not suffer-



ing for Christ's sake. 1 Peter 1:6-9 says, "In this [referring to 'inheritance in heaven' (v. 4)] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; . . . and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

As I looked hard at those verses, I wanted to know if joy comes only when God's glory is revealed and I feel blessed. However, that was not how it worked in my life. Maybe that's why I did not have joy. There were times I questioned my own faith. As part of my makeup, I believe that if something goes right, all glory (and credit) goes to God and not for me. But if something goes wrong, well, it can't possibly be God's fault, right? So I end up putting the blame on myself. These feelings have persisted for much of my adult life but I hit an extremely rough patch during last summer.

As I continue to work through my own issues, the past summer has certainly given me a renewed passion for prayer. I have felt pushed to prayer because sometimes there is nowhere else to turn. When I read update letters from missionaries, I am encouraged by small victories: A neighbor agreeing to come over for dinner. A play date for a couple's young child. A brief opportunity to share a story or THE story. Finding western comforts that bring moments of happiness. God works in ways that are often overlooked. I need to look out for them.



"I wondered aloud, "Why can't we be honest about our experiences?" Perhaps there's the pressure of producing fruit to justify continued financial support. Perhaps it's our pride to want to tell people things are going well (or well enough) and disregard the negative and the trials."



World Christian Conference 2010 • 25th Anniversary

NOW

**Testify to the Nations
Anticipate the King**

Redwood Christian Park • February 12-15, 2010

We invite you in celebrating 25 years of prayer, sending, and equipping alumni for lifestyles centered on God's mission. Come join us February 12-15, 2010 at Redwood Christian Park for a weekend of encouragement and transformation through plenary sessions, workshops, ministry consultations, and networking. Visit wcfellowship.org/wcc/2010/ for information on speakers.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration Information – visit website for full details <http://www.wcfellowship.org/wcc/2010/>

General registration deadline: 1/29/10 11:59PM

Standard: \$248

Deluxe: \$298

Registration Fee includes:

- Lodging for 2/12/10, 2/13/10, and 2/14/10
- Meals from dinner on Friday, 2/12/10 through lunch on Monday, 2/15/10
- Conference program and materials

Spaces still available, register today!

WCC 2010 PLENARY SPEAKERS

Donna Dong has served in campus ministry for a total of 30 years with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship in Canada and the U.S.A. Since January of 2002, she has served as the National Director for Multiethnic/Multicultural Ministry for Inter-Varsity Canada. In the late 1970's, after her return from studying at the Discipleship Training Centre in Singapore, Donna returned to her San Francisco roots and was involved with a group of Chinese Christian student leaders in a monthly World Christian prayer meeting. Their sponsorship of a missions conference with Dave Bryant became a part of the spiritual beginnings that led to World Christian Conference.



John Lo is the lead pastor at Epicentre, a 6-year-old church planting church in Pasadena, CA focused on raising up and sending church planters to the nations. Prior to this, John was the pastor of youth/young adults at First Evangelical Church, Glendale, CA which sent him to plant Epicentre. John first got involved in WCC as an initial planning member in 1983-1984, and has since been involved in various aspects of the movement. John, his wife Evelyn (an Emergency Room Physician) and 13-year-old son Joshua live in Glendale, CA.

Wayne has worked in a range of settings from the secular marketplace to local vocational ministry to the mobilization of field workers for Asia. Wayne and his family currently live in East Asia with a focus on influencing emerging leaders in the urban centers. While working in missional businesses, they are able to live out their faith in the marketplace, involved in leadership development, and engage in life-on-life mentoring. Wayne has been involved with WCF in the past 20 years in many different roles.

WCC 25TH ANNIVERSARY: CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



Now accepting world Christian testimony article submissions and congratulatory ads for WCC 25th Anniversary commemorative booklet!

Help us celebrate WCC's 25th Anniversary by testifying to how WCC, a WCF prayer group, or the WCF community at large impacted your personal world Christian journey by submitting an article for the commemorative 25th Anniversary booklet. You can also purchase a "Happy Birthday to WCC" or congratulatory advertisement on behalf of an organization, individual, or group of individuals.

Extended deadline for testimony submissions: Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Extended deadline to purchase ad space: Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Please contact Viji@wcfellowship.org for details and submission guidelines

WCC REGISTRATION SYSTEM PROGRAMMER WANTED

WCC desires to recruit an individual who is committed to the vision of WCF, willing to serve at WCC 2010 and 2011, and has the professional technical competence and experience detailed below. This person will be trained in the coding of the current registration database system, and will be relied on at WCC 2010 to run and troubleshoot this system. Ideally this person will also be responsible for developing the registration system for future conferences.



Photo: Gregory Szarkiewicz, freedigitalphotos.com

Requirements: A web-application software developer with a strong background in object oriented programming, including expertise in:

- OO Design and Programming using J2EE or .NET (experience with Struts or JSF and Hibernate, or with ASP.NET and NHibernate a plus)
- Experience with LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP) programming and administration
- Experience with XHTML and CSS scripting
- Experience with GIT a plus
- Experience with ER Diagramming Tools for MySQL Data Modeling a plus

Please refer any qualified and interested individuals to admin@wcfellowship.org.

Help us fill in the gaps of WCC history!

We need your help to compile WCC/WCF archival history. If you have old conference handbooks or information (AB/PC/EC servants, plenary speakers, etc.) related to any WCC from 1985-2000, please contact davids@wcfellowship.org.

PASTOR'S DAY PASS: MESSAGE FROM WCC CONFERENCE CHAIR

by Teresa C.

Pastor's Day Pass

Pastors can attend WCC on Saturday February 13, 2010 for only \$30 (includes meals and access to conference events). email estherw@wcfellowship.

Greetings to Pastors and Church Ministers!

As an organization, World Christian Fellowship (WCF) values the local church and its leaders who shepherd their flocks so faithfully. We believe the Great Commission (Mt 28: 18-20) is for all believers and this cannot be accomplished alone. We count it a privilege and a joy to have opportunities to partner with local churches to reach the lost and disciple nations, whether that's just in our own backyards or halfway around the world.

For a second year at World Christian Conference (WCC) 2010, we are happy to offer a special time when we welcome pastors to come and see what the Lord has been doing in WCC and WCF and to share in some of their members'

experiences to bring back to their local congregations. It is our hope that we may come alongside shepherds of local flocks during this strategic and challenging time in our world. We want to team together to bring hope through our message of salvation to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the world.

We know your time is valuable, so for those who have signed up to join the special one day event for pastors and church ministers at WCC, we are looking forward to meeting you. We hope that you will be able to experience the worship, teachings, workshops, and a time to meet with various WCF leadership. We hope to get better acquainted with each other and learn how WCF might serve your congregation's needs to reach the lost.

For those who won't be able to join us at WCC this year, we want to extend a general invitation of partnership. At WCF, we want to complement and enhance your ministries and so we welcome any opportunity in the future to build a relationship with you. Contact us at info@wcfellowship.org



PRAYER: THE FUEL OF THE MOVEMENT

REGIONAL WORLD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PRAYER GROUPS

The prayer groups listed below meet monthly. For more information e-mail prayer@wcfellowship.org

•Seattle (Tukwila, WA)

Contact: Seattle-prayer@wcfellowship.org

•L.A. (Temple City, CA)

Contact: LA-prayer@wcfellowship.org

•Mid-peninsula NorCal (San Mateo, CA)

Contact: midpeninsula-prayer@wcfellowship.org

•S.F. Monthly Missions Meeting

(San Francisco, CA)

Contact: SF-prayer@wcfellowship.org

•East/South Bay NorCal (Fremont, CA)

Contact: SouthBay-prayer@wcfellowship.org

•South Bay NorCal

(Mountain View, CA)

sbay-mtview-prayer@wcfellowship.org

“Let these prayers of the saints be sweet smelling incense to Your heart” – Matt Redman



BROKENNESS HELPS OPTOMETRIST SEE JESUS MORE CLEARLY

by Liz L.

Liz L. has served on both the WCC planning and executive committees for two years. She is a 2nd generation Korean-American born in Los Angeles. Liz lived in Northern California for nine years while attending college and optometry school, and then returned to L.A. two years ago. Her passion in life is to walk alongside Jesus in praying for sight for the blind, comfort for those who mourn, and hope for all the spiritually and physically poor. In this article Liz shares about her World Christian journey.



Time with family

Isaiah 43:1a, "But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you..." While growing up, my family had a typical practice. Let's take 1988, 6 a.m. on a normal day of elementary school. The day had not begun, but I was awakened by the sound of my mom singing a hymn in the family room. Running out of patience, her singing turned into an urgent ringing bell for me to get up. So I rolled out of bed and reluctantly joined in our daily family service.

Today, as an adult, I recall that from an early age my parents always taught me that reading God's word was a priority. It was with my family that I had first read through the Bible. Though God was the center of our family, I gradually somehow made my family the center of my world. Before long, I relied more and more on the stability of my family and focused on working hard towards the college dream for career (a.k.a. financial) success.

It was during this time that God intervened. In my transition from high school to college, my world came crashing down as I observed the spiritual, mental, and physical breakdown within those closest to my heart. Those who had comprised my fortress of peace and happiness were now full of pain, and I became lost and scared. In this very place of recognizing that my family was broken and that I was a sinner contributing to this brokenness, God's hand of mercy and grace saved me.

Isaiah 43:1b, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine...when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you." I found myself leaning upon what my parents introduced to me: God's

word. Through the book of Psalms, God led me to a place with Him alone, where I started to build my trust and hope only in Him.

In the middle of this crisis, I launched into college where again I returned to my belief that I could live focused solely on myself and my career. After a few short months of trying to make the rough transition into college, I realized that I was unsatisfied and lonely.

Once again by His grace, I confessed that I needed to make God my priority and I joined a college fellowship where God started His marvelous work of healing in my heart. In this season of healing and growth in identity, God whispered again and again,

Isaiah 43:3-4, "I am the Lord, your God...[and] you are precious and honored in my sight, and...I love you."

In this fellowship, I reveled in all-consuming worship of my Abba Father, who continued to reveal His all-consuming love and continued to heal me of the consequences of my sin as He reshaped my boundaries and identity.

As I learned more of God's character, the Lord opened my eyes to see that the poor actually live among and within us. I was once taught that the poor are those who live on the fringes of life and death, spiritually, mentally, physically or economically. His heart is so broken for His impoverished children that He came to be with us, experience our pain, and deliver us from our poverty.

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College friends

"Those who had comprised my fortress of peace and happiness were now full of pain, and I became lost and scared. In this very place of recognizing that my family was broken and that I was a sinner contributing to this brokenness, God's hand of mercy and grace saved me."

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear WCF Community,

Unexpectedly, the past 2+ years of editing and laying out this newsletter have been a labor of love for me. The project fell into my hands when I agreed to put together the November 2007 issue. Since then, our small team has had the modest goal of trying to publish at least two World Christian testimonies each month and our publication has slowly developed over time. I shared with the WCF board of directors that it seemed that God would provide just enough manpower, articles, and content each month for us to publish.

In the beginning, people would give me a quizzical look when I mentioned the newsletter. Now, I even get comments from people that they *look forward* to reading it every month. Special thanks to copy editor Lillian L., operations guy David S., and prayer warrior Jackie W. who have all had a significant hand in making this publication happen.

I invite you to write us about any comments or reflections you might have about the articles you read, and will post some of these letters in future issues.

Lastly, some of you who know me personally are already aware that I have an ongoing struggle with painful chronic repetitive strain injuries that are exacerbated by keyboarding and mousing. So, as much as I dislike it, I am forced to consider pausing the newsletter temporarily after the upcoming February issue (hopefully not!) until God can provide more newsletter team members, especially a graphic layout person. So if you know anyone who believes in the vision of *Voices of the Movement* (see the last page of this issue for our purpose statement) and loves to play around with text boxes and graphics, please send them my way! I am also looking for a managing editor and other staff contributors. E-mail me at estherw@wcfellowship.org

Best wishes to all for a blessed new year!

Yours for God's glory,

Esther W.

BROKENNESS HELPS OPTOMETRIST SEE JESUS MORE CLEARLY



Short-term missions trip to India

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I found myself longing to see how God was working around the world and was surprised to see that even in the darkest places, God placed rays of faith, love, and the hope of resurrection. As I traveled around the world or simply crossed the street, the beauty of His heart and love for the poor blew me away over and over again. I found myself filled with a joyful

expectation of God's powerful, encompassing love and falling deeper in love with Jesus.

How excited I was to learn that the skill of optometry enabled me to join Him in restoring the gift of sight to His children! Practicing optometry in L.A. is different in many ways from practicing in India, Nicaragua, and Mexico, but essentially, it is the same: When I allow Jesus to be the center of my being and ask Him to touch the poverty within my patient and myself, we both experience His love and His beauty becomes clearer.

Song of Songs 8:5, "Who is this coming up from the desert leaning on her lover?" My walk with Jesus continues in the company of many wonderful spiritual brothers and sisters. One community that has blessed me in the past five years is World Christian Fellowship (WCF). Through WCF, I find brothers and sisters drawn to the heart of God for the world. World Christian Conference is a place where annually I lay all down before my King and focus on His beautiful face and will for us to walk with Him in the greatest Commission.



"How excited I was to learn that the skill of optometry enabled me to join Him in restoring the gift of sight to His children! Practicing optometry in L.A. is different in many ways from practicing in India, Nicaragua, and Mexico, but essentially, it is the same: When I allow Jesus to be the center of my being and ask Him to touch the poverty within my patient and myself, we both experience His love and His beauty becomes clearer."

SEMINAR COORDINATORS

Vision and purposes ■ The purposes of the World Christian Fellowship (WCF) include equipping, activating, networking, and partnering with individual Asian-American World Christians and those who identify closely with the Asian-American worldview, and their churches. To this aim, WCF hopes to host more regional one-day seminars with relevant workshop content throughout the year, not just at the annual World Christian Conference (WCC).

Seminar coordinators wanted ■ WCF is looking for regional seminar coordinators in both Northern and Southern California. If you are looking for an opportunity to serve God through the WCF movement and have gifts and talents in the areas of event planning, marketing, and networking please contact us at info@wcfellowship.org.



GRANT WRITER AND ACCOUNTANT

Vision and purposes ▲ World Christian Fellowship (WCF) is committed to fiduciary standards that are above reproach and continuously strive to develop and improve the organization's financial and financial resource systems.

Accountant and grant writer: help wanted ▲ If God has gifted you with experience and talent in the area of accounting/finance or in research/grant writing AND you believe in the vision of WCF of mobilizing more Asian-American Christians for God's global purposes, please consider serving in one of these two areas of need. If you are interested in serving as an accountant or grant writer for WCF, please contact info@wcfellowship.org



WCF PURPOSES

The purposes of **World Christian Fellowship (WCF)** are to challenge and empower individual Christians and churches to:

- **Equip** committed Asian-American World Christians and World Christians who closely identify with the Asian-American worldview who are active disciples and evangelists for the nations, both in local and overseas ministry.
- **Activate** these individuals and churches to the nations through prayer, training, guidance, and support.
- **Facilitate** teamwork and networking among individuals, churches, and other organizations with a World Christian vision.
- **Partner** with other organizations and networks with complementary objectives so that we as World Christians can unite towards the goal of building up the universal body of Christ.



DONATIONS



Donations ► If you would like to make a charitable contribution, please send checks payable to *World Christian Fellowship* and mail to P.O. Box 256, Mountain View, CA, 94042-0256. Make sure you include a valid address so that we can send you a tax-deductible receipt.

Amazon.com affiliate link ► If you already do some of your shopping at **Amazon.com**, you can help WCF receive a small percentage back by **clicking through our affiliate link** at wcfellowship.org/contact.html and making a purchase during the same session.



Voices of the Movement, the monthly online publication of WCF, serves to inspire and motivate the World Christian community through articles contributed by fellow World Christians. In its third year of publication, Voices of the Movement, is also an archive of stories that document God's work through Asian-American World Christians and those who closely identify with the Asian-American worldview in the growth of His Kingdom on earth.

World Christian Fellowship
P.O. Box 256, Mountain View, CA, 94042-0256
www.wcfellowship.org | newsletter@wcfellowship.org

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