



**GREATER**

**THINGS**

FINDING OURSELVES IN  
GOD'S EPIC PLAN

**15-DAY**

DEVOTIONAL

BRIAN NEWMAN & BRIAN RICE

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We are grateful for the incredible staff members of Living Word Community Church, who are committed to the growth and maturity of every person in this community.

It takes a team to produce a resource like this. Special thanks go to Kendall Potter, Lisa Long, and Michelle Perez. Kendall kept this project on track and coordinated our team's efforts, Lisa edited each and every word with great focus, and Michelle created the design for this devotional.

THIS DEVOTIONAL GUIDE IS DEDICATED TO:

*Pastor Steve Almquist*

*Founding Pastor of Living Word Community Church*

*For over 40 years, Pastor Steve has helped our church discover  
and live into God's heart for the world.*

&

*The many global ministers Living Word has  
supported through the years.*

*Your faith, hope, love, and sacrificial service on behalf of the  
Great Commission inspires us.*

*We are grateful to have a part in your ministry.*

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WAYS TO GIVE

# PREFACE

## NOT WHAT I HAD EXPECTED

I was one of the least likely people to be interested in God's global plan or to be a part of it. Growing up, the only time I traveled out of the U.S.A. was on a vacation to Montreal, Canada. I rarely and barely made it out of York during my growing up years.

In my first year of following Jesus, I read the book *Shadow of the Almighty: The Life and Times of Jim Elliot*. Jim was one of four missionaries martyred by the Auca Indians of Ecuador in 1956. His widow Elizabeth wrote Jim's story. While I had zero interest in being martyred for my faith, I was mesmerized by the passion and intensity of Jim's life. These words of Jim hit me and have stayed with me for 45 years: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." He was referring to Jesus' teaching in Luke 9:23-25.

So the seeds of my interest in missions were planted early. In 1978, I found Living Word Community Church and met Pastor Steve Almquist, its founding pastor. Steve had a HUGE heart for missions and he nurtured my interest. He guided me to pursue seminary education as I prepared to go overseas and teach the Bible. After graduation, God led me in a different direction and I came on staff at Living Word.

Living Word was a greenhouse for missions and my interest grew. Pastor Steve led a team on our first India trip in 1985. Becky and I went along and I was hooked for life. As the years went by, I went on many trips, usually to train pastors and missionaries. I visited the missionaries Living Word supported. I provided leadership to our missions program at Living Word. We planned the annual missions conferences, prayed for our missionaries, raised money to support missions, and helped prepare people to serve as missionaries. Living Word was a greenhouse for missions and God was turning up the temperature.

Over time, I learned that missions is central to the Bible. I met missional leaders, read books on missions, and went on trips. I was doing what Jim Collins described as "turning the flywheel" for missions. I kept doing good things that fueled the flame of commitment to missions.

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**The gospel does not change, but the strategic ways we advance God's purposes do change.**

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I was also privileged to have certain gifts (Ephesians 2:10) that were useful in advancing global missions. I met and partnered with strategic people who opened the doors to training global leaders. Together with Brian Newman and my wife Becky, we started Leadership ConneXtions International to provide resources to leaders working in challenging parts of the world.

And a few years ago, when Pastor Steve stepped down from his role, I became the lead pastor of Living Word. One of my core questions as lead pastor is simply, “How do we continue to advance the missional purposes of God through Living Word?” The world of missions has changed dramatically since my first trip in 1985. The world is constantly changing, but the needs remain. The gospel does not change, but the strategic ways we advance God’s purposes do change. I work with a wonderful team to discern the new things God is doing.

## I INVITE YOU TO JOIN ME IN THIS NEW SEASON OF MISSIONS AT LIVING WORD

- Read the Bible with missional eyes and ears to see and hear our missional God.
- Learn as much as you can about what God is doing in the world.
- Go on a short-term mission trip (especially if you have never been on one).
- Pray for missions and missionaries.
- Give to our *Greater Things* budget. This is how we support people and projects around the world. Your contributions make a great difference and keep God’s work advancing.
- Above all, take every blessing you receive and learn how to pay it forward as a blessing to others.



Pastor Brian R. Rice

**Pastor Brian Rice**

**LEAD PASTOR**  
LIVING WORD COMMUNITY CHURCH

# INTRODUCTION

## FINDING OURSELVES IN GOD'S EPIC PLAN

*“To get where you want to go, the first question you always have to answer is ‘Where am I?’ ... We only find out where we are when we find out where He is. We only find ourselves... when we find Him.”*

—Ann Voskamp

**T**he greatest stories in the world are the struggles between good and evil, when good ultimately triumphs and the world is made right again. All of us want to play a part in those stories—and we do!

Think of some of the classics—the *Star Wars* saga, *Braveheart*, Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *Hidden Figures*, and many others. We get caught up in the suspense and drama, we cheer for William Wallace and Frodo in their epic and unlikely roles as heroes. When the underdog is just about to be defeated, something shifts in the narrative and the tide turns. We experience HOPE ... and ultimately celebration that good overcomes evil!

The reason we want good to triumph over evil and why we love the “good guys” is because it is grounded in the biblical narrative. Every great story takes its inspiration from the epic tale that begins in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1) and ends in a city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22).

## USING THIS DEVOTIONAL

This Mission Devotional is designed to help you enter, again and again, into God’s epic plan for humankind! Over a two-week period you will engage with God’s Word around four themes:

- I. The God Who Pursues
- II. The People God Calls
- III. The Work We Are Called To
- IV. God’s Vision Fulfilled

Each devotional entry will provide a key point and one or two biblical texts to reflect on. We will share perspectives, insights, and questions on these Bible verses.

We will also ask you to consider how God may be challenging you in this season to be involved in his mission in new and expanding ways. Whether you have been involved with God’s missional activity for a month, or for 40 years since the beginning of Living Word, there are always new horizons that God is calling us to individually and as a community.

We worship a great and awesome God, who has made himself known fully through Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul must have had this in mind when he wrote, “God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us” (Ephesians 3:20, MSG).

May you receive God’s grace and abundance as you engage with this devotional guide.

In Christ,



**Pastor Brian Newman**



# God's Epic Plan

*And God said, "Let there be" . . . and it was . . . and God saw that it was good.* –GENESIS 1 & 2

**R**ead Genesis chapters 1 and 2 to see the start of God's epic plan. It is the **MOST** epic plan ever! EPIC is a great word.

Epic - particularly impressive or remarkable

Epic - heroic or grand in scale and magnitude

Epic - long and covering an extended period of time (i.e., like ALL of time)

Years ago, a speaker who came to Living Word said, "Missions is in every chapter of the Bible." He was right. Missions is everywhere. It is in the first two chapters of Genesis. It is also there in the final two chapters of Revelation (the final book of the Bible). If you have time, read through those last two chapters. Spoiler alert: If you thought it was good in Genesis 1 and 2, "You ain't seen nothin' yet."

And speaking of definitions, how about MISSION?

Mission - an important assignment carried out

Mission - a vocation, a calling, a strongly felt ambition, a purpose

Mission - an institution involved in a long-term assignment

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**His mission is to create a world bursting with life.**

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God's epic plan is a missional plan because God is a missional God. God's mission starts in Genesis 1 and 2. God's mission is life. His mission is to create a world bursting with life. His mission is to create a place of flourishing. Genesis 1 and 2 is the story of a missional God creating a flourishing world. At the epicenter of that new creation, God creates people designed for that world. Seven times God says, "Let there be..." and it is. And when it is, God says, "Oh, this is so very good!" The creation of humanity is the pinnacle of a very good creation.

In John 3:16 we read, "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son Jesus..." Jesus is at the center of God's epic mission. To go deeper on this, read Colossians 1:15-17 to see how central Jesus is in God's creation. Pay attention to God's motive. It is LOVE. Love is always the motivation for a missional God. Love is why God the Father sent God the Son. Love is why God the Son came to planet earth. It was love that motivated creation.

God didn't HAVE to create a world of flourishing, or the people who would enjoy that world, but God did so because God is love. God's epic mission is motivated by love. Love acts. It is what love does. Mission acts. It is what

mission does. An epic mission means epic love in action. That's what our missional God does.

The epic mission starts very good, then, in Genesis 3, it goes tragically wrong. Sin enters the good world God created. Sin infiltrates the very good people God created. Sin means brokenness. Sin means flourishing becomes very hard and impossibly hard. Therefore, the missional God must do something about what has gone wrong. What will God do? The entire Bible tells us the answer in the form of the greatest story ever told.

It's a missional story of restoring, renewing, reforming, and redeeming a fallen world to a place of flourishing. To renew the world, God starts with renewing people—renewing you. You are God's mission. Reclaiming you in love is God's mission in action. He is searching after you. When he gets hold of you, you will find out just how much epic love can do. And we'll clue you in: It's good, VERY good.



## MISSIO DEI

**Missio Dei** is Latin for the “Mission of God.” The phrase refers to the very nature of God as the Creator who is on mission to redeem the world.

The Missio Dei finds its greatest expression in the person of Jesus Christ.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Be still, and know God is a missional God. Be still, and know your missional God has an epic love for the world. Be still, and know that you are on the receiving end of such love.

Be still, and know God's epic love is changing you inside and out. Be still, and know that as epic love changes you, it pulls you into God's ongoing mission. God has a plan. You are part of that plan. It is a missional plan. May you hear God whisper, “And it is very, very good.”

# God Never Gives Up

*And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” –GENESIS 9:12-13*

**G**od’s mission and purposes are never thwarted. He does not give up on his creation, even through rebellion and unbelief.

The story of Noah and the great flood is a monumental part of the story God tells about his redemption of the world. Genesis 6 through 9 presents the grave state of the world, represented by the infamous Sodom and Gomorrah and their complete decadence. God, as the Holy and Pure One, is intent on destroying evil and sin, so he sends a flood to destroy the earth.

We are told, “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God” (Genesis 6:9). In God’s sovereignty, he tells Noah to build an ark so that he and his family will be saved. The great flood will destroy every living creature on planet earth except for the people and animals on the ark.

Noah obeys God, builds the ark, and loads his family and the variety of animals on it. And then they wait 7 days—until God sends the flood waters, nonstop, for 40 days. And the earth’s inhabitants are destroyed.

Consider for a few moments how offensive and hurtful sin must be to God. He has gone to the most extreme measures to blot out sin in the world. He continues to do that today, in the person of Jesus Christ, who came to live and die and be raised to life because of our sin.

After the flood, God makes a covenant with Noah, and with all humankind. God says, “I won’t wipe humanity off the face of the earth again. I will always preserve you.” In other words, God will do what he has to for his creation to flourish. We learn later in Scripture that God makes a more specific covenant, with Abram, to not only preserve but to actively bless him so he will bless others.

The Noahic covenant is a universal promise and commitment by God. It is the earliest statement by God that hints at his coming Kingdom in the world. And he calls us to announce that Kingdom.



## Chris Martin

### GUATEMALA

Missions has become one of those thin places for me. I encounter God when I go on trips. I remember hearing God’s voice on a trail in Guatemala telling me, “Now you’re walking in my footsteps.” The experience was connected to the semester I spent searching for him in the Middle East.

I’ve learned that God can use anyone. My missions career started by offering to carry heavy things for others. Through the years I’ve moved into a leadership role and have put together many teams. I have seen God use all kinds of people in ways they would never expect.

I love watching God work in and through people. I love the way he changes people’s lives who serve as well as those we serve. And I am grateful for the global perspective

I have now. My experiences in missions help me put the problems I face at home in a different light. I am blessed. I am grateful.

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**I have seen God use all kinds of people in ways they would never expect.**

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**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | The story of Noah is told in Genesis chapters 6 through 9. It is a lengthy passage. You may be familiar with the story overall, however, there are many twists and turns in the story that we often overlook or simply do not know.

Spend time today reading the entire story of Noah. Reflect on it and highlight words, phrases, and sentences that speak to you about God’s mission in the world.

# God Shows Up

*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.” –ISAIAH 42:1*

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. –JOHN 1:14*

**G**od’s pursuit of humankind is centered in the person of Jesus Christ—most especially in his incarnation in space and time.

We celebrate Christmas each year, sometimes getting caught up in the presents and visits to family and friends. And yet the meaning of Christmas is so profound, so overwhelming, that it is impossible to make too much of it.

Christmas is “Christ with us,” the moment in history when the God of the universe became a human being in the form of the most vulnerable amongst us—a baby!

God’s presence with us is the core of all missions. If God is not with us, leading us and encouraging us, our work will be in vain. God’s presence gives us vision, empowers us to action, and strengthens our resolve.

Pope Benedict XVI put it this way: “Jesus, the Word incarnate, is always the center of our announcement, the point of reference for our evangelizing mission and for its methodology, because He is the human face of God, who wishes to meet all men and women so as to bring them into communion with Him, in His love.”

What is the message that Christians have to offer to the world around us? Our message is that God is with us, that he has come close in the person of Jesus Christ. God has not forgotten or overlooked. God has shown up in and through Jesus!

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | Christmas only comes once per year—*Emmanuel*, which means “God with us.” We are called to live each day, each month, as if Christmas comes all the time. That’s because Jesus is with us through the Holy Spirit.

Today ask Jesus to make his presence known to you. Ask him to direct your steps in your mission to neighbors, colleagues, friends, family, and strangers.

## Kelly Warren

### GUATEMALA

On a family construction trip to Guatemala I was the only one who didn't have family along. Prior to the trip, I had suffered several major losses. By the time the trip began I was steeped in depression. I kept asking God to keep my mind present on the experience, but it wasn't working.



When we landed, we boarded a bus for our hotel. A few hours into the ride, traffic came to a stop. There was an accident on one of the switchback roads. It would be hours until the bus would make it up the mountain, but the hotel was just several miles away.

We decided to hike it! The high altitudes and steep hills were no joke. Some had to stay behind, but I continued with a few others. My legs, chest, and lungs felt like they were on fire, but I kept going. My depression had no choice but to take a backseat. God brought me into the present!

I can't describe how amazing it felt once we made it to the top. Looking at the stars, I knew God had heard my prayer and gave me what I needed in a way I never expected. It didn't take long for me to connect with the team and feel their emotional support.

## MISSIONAL

**Missional** is a recent term used in churches and mission agencies, articulated by writers such as Alan Hirsh. Missional refers to "a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world." In the Christian world, many mission agencies were developed to meet specific needs in particular places, but the word took on a global focus. Mission was done "over there" and a missionary was someone who went "over there" to work. Missional refers to a committed way of thinking and living so as to engage the world with the person of Jesus.

# Blessed to be a Blessing

*The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” –GENESIS 12:1-3*

**H**umans were originally wired to be helpful. To help a person is to make life better for them. How a person helps someone depends on his or her gifts, talents, and resources. Why am I so confident that you were originally helpful? Because God is a Helper, and we are made in his image. That means we are helpers as well. Now, with sin in the world we aren’t nearly as good at helping others as we were meant to be. And sometimes, instead of helping others, we hurt them.

One of the names for God is *Jehovah-Ezer*, which means the Lord Our Helper or the Lord Our Provider. God’s mission as a Helper is to provide for the needs of others. The word *blessing* describes the help God provides. Blessing has several meanings. One is to give divine favor or benefits. To bless also means God provides you with spiritual resources you didn’t have.

Help. Provision. Blessing. Resources. The epic mission of God is to get what he has to the world that is in need of help. God’s epic plan is to bless the entire world, every nation, all peoples everywhere. No exceptions. No exemptions. God intends to provide his resources to everyone who needs them.

How will God bless the nations? Does God simply wave his hand over the world and blessings fall down like rain? Hmmmm. Well, in a sense he does, and theologians refer to this as common grace, or the gifts God gives to the whole world (James 1:17; Matthew 5:45).

God has, however, another way of blessing those in need of blessing. God does it through people. God uses people as conduits to pass on his gifts. This is so clear in the story of Abram, who is later renamed Abraham. In Genesis 12:1-3 God tells Abram, “I will bless you ... and you will be a blessing ... and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

In other words, God gives us his gifts of life, love, grace, joy, hope, mercy, and so on. Then, through us, those gifts are passed on to others. It is God’s epic strategy to bless you first and then to use you to be a blessing to others. If you have ever seen the movie *Pay it Forward*, that is the principle. God works through you to help others. With God’s help, you “bless it forward” to help others.

## WORLD CHRISTIAN

A **World Christian** is a person with a vision for the entire world. He or she is attentive to what is happening in the world and prays for the world.

A World Christian keeps up to date on the work of missions and projects supported by the church and others. And he or she is invested financially in missions work.

Often, a World Christian will build relationships with missionaries and stay connected with them.



**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | It is always worthwhile to count your blessings. The old children's song says, "Count them one by one." Take a few minutes, or more, and count your blessings. How has God helped you? What has God provided for you? What assets do you have? It will help if you write them down on paper or make a list on your computer.

Look around. Who needs some help? Who could benefit from some of the resources and assets you have? Who are the people closest to you that you can help have a better life? How are you doing with this local missional assignment?

Now, how can you help others who are at far-off places on planet earth? Think about how Living Word is helping them. How can you help us help others?

# God's New Community

*You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. —1 PETER 2:9*

There are many community groups, clubs, and organizations in our culture —civic groups such as Rotary or the Lions Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, trade groups, sports clubs, religious groups ... the list continues.

The Church is a distinct and unique entity. Its organizing principle is something called “grace.” It exists for people who are not its members, and it is called to great commitment as well as sacrifice for the good of others.

The Bible uses several descriptive phrases for the Church:

**A royal priesthood:** A reference back to the Old Testament when the priests (Levites) served the Israelites to provide for worship of God. For the believer today, we are called to be “priests,” to be messengers of God’s coming Kingdom.

**A holy nation:** Israel was called to be a holy nation (although the people usually failed at it!), a light to the other nations so these other nations would know and love and serve the living God. This nation is “holy,” which means it is set apart by God and for his purposes in the world.

**God’s special possession:** The Church is God’s treasure. The Church is called the bride of Christ. It is called the body of Christ. In other words, there is a deep intimacy between God and his Church.

Read Ephesians 5:21–28. Now focus on verse 27 and the phrase, “to present her (the Church) to himself as a radiant Church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” Reflect on the reality that Jesus himself is making the Church “radiant,” that it is being made “holy and blameless” by him.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | Do you “attend” church? Do you “go” to church? That is often what we say in our culture. The Bible speaks about the Church in a very different manner. We ARE the Church—the body of Christ, the bride of Christ.

How are you an active part of the Church? What part do you play and will you play? If you are already an active, participating member of a church, ask God how he wants you to grow and serve in even greater ways.

## Alyssa Feeser

### LEBANON

I attended a Discipleship Training School in Sligo, Ireland. While I was there, we had classes on everything from spiritual gifts to relationships to apologetics. My team did local outreach with after-school clubs and youth groups. We prayed for God's will about our outreach location, and felt called to Lebanon in the Middle East.



Our experience was not what we expected. It was scary bus rides and being stuck in our apartment for a week because of political conflict. But man, is our God good! We were so protected, and even in my most broken moments I could feel how right it was for us to be there.

My team ran a Learning Center for Syrian refugee children. We hardly spoke the language, but helped at an after-school program and took buses for 5+ hours a day. The supernatural peace and strength God granted will forever be a humbling experience in my life. Getting to love those kids and experience their world opened my eyes wide to just how much Jesus cares for all people. The sacrifice and vulnerability I experienced on each part of the trip broke my heart and rebuilt it with an even bigger capacity to love for God's purposes.

## ISLAM

**Islam** is the second largest religion in the world. More than 1.5 billion people are Muslims worldwide. While the center of the Muslim world is Saudi Arabia and the Middle East, the largest concentrations of Muslims are in Indonesia, Pakistan, and India.

The Islamic world is the most unreached religious group and often the most challenging to serve. However, since the so-called "Arab Spring" began in 2011, some countries in North Africa and the Middle East have become far more receptive to the gospel than at any time in recent history!

# Man's Reluctance, God's Insistence

*The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. —JONAH 1:1-3*

**Read the book of Jonah first.** (It is only four short chapters.)

**A**lmost everyone knows a bit or a lot about the story of Jonah. God tells Jonah to go preach to a broken and sinful city (Nineveh). Jonah refuses and runs away. He is then swallowed by a huge fish, repents, listens to God, and preaches to the Ninevites, who in turn repent. And then Jonah complains to God that God was "unfairly" merciful!

What a story, right?!

Jonah reflects something deep in our hearts—our reluctance to step out in faith as messengers of God's grace. And isn't this all the more true when we are called to bring the message to our enemies? Our hearts are divided. We want God's mercy for ourselves and our loved ones, and we think God should ignore people who have rebelled against his way.

The problem is that we have ALL rebelled against God. We are all Ninevites in a sense and we are ALL desperate for the grace and mercy of God.

If God has been so gracious to reach out and rescue you from sin and brokenness, why would he not seek to be gracious and merciful to your neighbor or your colleague?

God's insistence on fulfilling his mission to all peoples always overtakes our reluctance to carry out that mission. He does not give up on us as his messengers, but he will not be slowed down at the times when we drag our feet in mission.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | This is a deeper reflection time today. Consider how you may be reluctant, resistant, or receptive to God's call at the moment.

- If you are reluctant, can you identify what is holding you back?
- If you are receptive, what are the next steps of faith that God is calling you to?

Who are the Ninevites in your life? Those are the people who are very far from God, who appear beyond hope (but they are not!). Pray for these people today. Pray for them by name if you know them well.



## Ryan Lewis

ECUADOR

I spent seven days in Ecuador partnering with Ibero-American Ministries to inspire Ecuadorians to plant 100 churches in the next 30 years—an ambitious undertaking! I was invited to lead worship for the conference. Even though it was out of my comfort zone, I was thrilled at the opportunity, to live out my calling in another culture.

The leaders of the conference were so full of life, hope, and fire for the Lord! The Ecuadorians were more serious, and I could tell from their demeanor that serving the Lord came at a great cost of energy to them (the third-world economy forced them to work hard jobs in addition to ministry).

I was so impacted by the chance to worship with my brothers and sisters in Christ on another side of the globe. The times of worship were so beautiful and inspiring, and hearing the people of God sing out so passionately in their native Spanish was absolutely incredible. I led a familiar worship song in English that they knew in Spanish, and when we came to the chorus, I shouted “This is amazing grace!” and the 100 voices singing “Gracia sublime es!” were louder than my own voice into a microphone! I will never forget those hour-long sessions of worship with our Ecuadorian family in Christ.

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**Even though it was out of my comfort zone, I was thrilled at the opportunity...**

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# GREATER THINGS WORLD MAP



## Hub—A missional center with these characteristics:

- National leadership on site
- A network of collaborative organizations
- In need of spiritual, leadership, and missional resources
- Shared values of friendship, faith, partnership, and mutuality
- Demonstrated financial integrity
- Living Word people regularly involved on site



## Ministries that Living Word supports

Guatemala

York, PA, USA

Netherlands

Cuba

Argentina/Chile

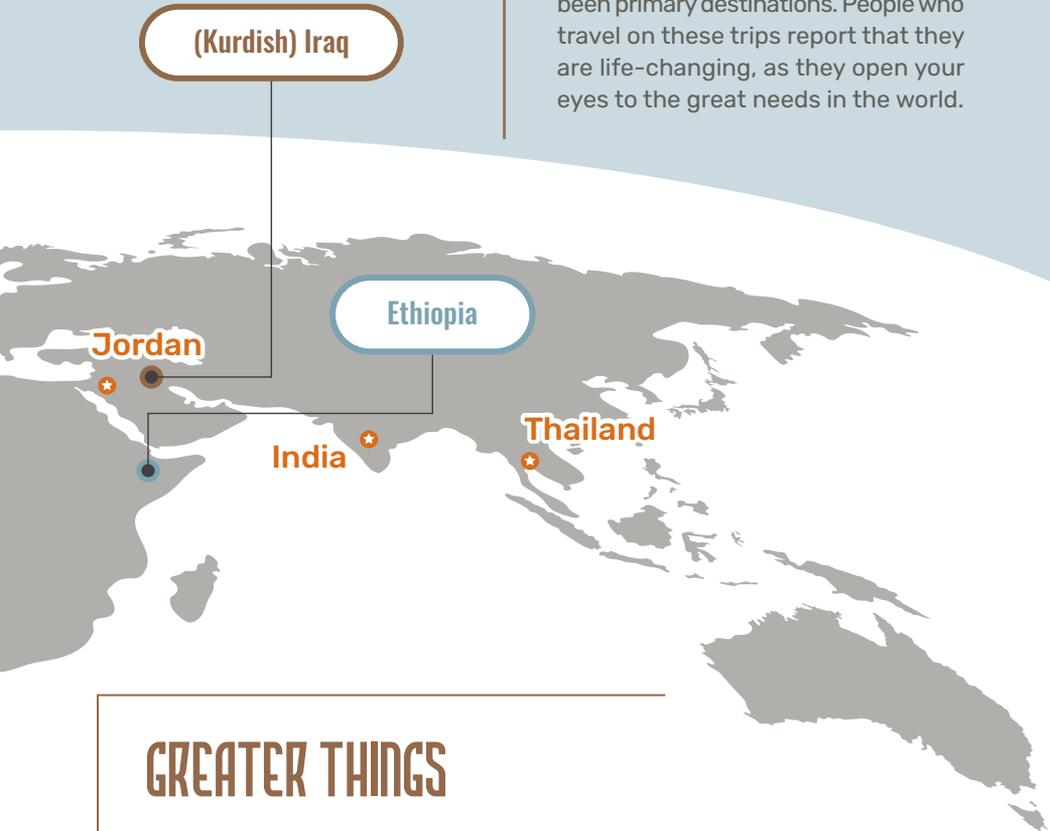
Paraguay

## CHURCH PLANTING

**Church Planting** has been a high value in missions at Living Word. We want to see churches started and young churches strengthened. One of our primary investments is to train pastoral leaders.

## MISSION TRIPS

Living Word has been on more short-term **Mission Trips** than we can count. More than 1,000 people have gone on these trips. In the early years, we took many people to India. In more recent years, Ethiopia and Guatemala have been primary destinations. People who travel on these trips report that they are life-changing, as they open your eyes to the great needs in the world.



## GREATER THINGS

**Greater Things (Faith Promise)** is Living Word's commitment to financially support global ministry. During our annual missions conference, we raise money to support missionaries and projects around the world.

We ask people to pray about the amount of money God would have them contribute to missions and to make a pledge for the year.

With these commitments we set a budget to support our missional friends around the world. Today we usually refer to this as giving to the *Greater Things*.

# God's Great Commission to Us

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." –MATTHEW 28:18-20*

Famous last words are often the most important words of a person's life. Harriet Tubman's last words were, "I go to prepare a place for you."

President John Quincy Adams' last words were, "This is the last of earth. I am content."

John Newton (writer of the hymn *Amazing Grace*) is purported to have said: "I am still in the land of the dying; I shall be in the land of the living soon."

Among the last words that Jesus speaks is a command: "Go and make disciples of all nations." These are among the most important and instructive words Jesus gives to his followers. There are three keys here:

## 1. We are "sent ones."

We are commanded to go, to get out of our comfort zones, and to get into the comfort zones of other people. We are to meet people where they are, not where we are.

## 2. We are to "make disciples."

In the time of Jesus, a disciple was a student of his rabbi and was fully devoted to that rabbi. We are to communicate the gospel in such a way as to invite people to become students (or apprentices) of the rabbi Jesus.

## 3. And we are to go to "all nations."

The Greek for this phrase is *ta ethne*, or all people groups. Jesus' command to make disciples includes everyone—every language group, every skin color, every cultural background, every place geographically. No one is to be excluded from this Great Commission!



## Ed Nelson

### ETHIOPIA

As a follower of Jesus, I take the Great Commission seriously. It tells me to serve others locally, regionally, and globally. I am a medical doctor, which means that medical missions is a wonderful opportunity for me to share the love and compassion of Jesus in tangible ways.

Over the years, I have learned a powerful lesson: It is simply that we are “blessed to be a blessing.” I am energized and blessed to be able to share the gifts the Lord has given me by tending to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of other people.

I enjoy the challenges, adventure, fellowship, work, and rewards that the Lord provides through my involvement in medical missions. I love the people I have met and with whom I am able to work. Missions has become a major focus and devotion of my life. It has changed me and shaped me as a physician, father, husband, and friend.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | How do you see yourself as a “sent one”? Ask God to show you where he wants you to go. It does not have to be halfway around the world. It could be in your local area, the inner city, or another place.

Is there a culture or people group or location that God has called you to? Are you burdened for a group that you have interacted with or already served in some way? If so, pray and ask God how he wants you to continue to serve or to serve in a greater capacity.

# Ministering to the Whole Person

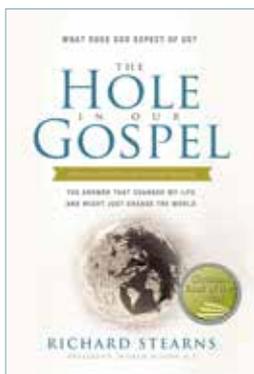
*Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.* –JAMES 1:27

ALSO READ: ISAIAH 58 & MATTHEW 25:31–46

Have you ever read a chapter in the Bible that hits you like a sledgehammer? Isaiah 58 is one of God’s spiritual sledgehammers. Like all of God’s sledgehammers, it is a sledgehammer with promise and hope. God never simply breaks us down. When he does break something, it is to rebuild it. Read Isaiah 58:12 and you will see the rebuilding God intends.

Isaiah 58 is one of the places where God gives a needed corrective. We have a tendency to reduce God’s wide plan and narrow it to the parts we like. Then we dig in and defend our partial understanding of God’s plan. One person says God’s plan is evangelism. Another says it is discipleship. Or church planting. Or training leaders. Or teaching children. Or this. Or that. God’s epic mission is big and deep and wide. It is both evangelism and compassion. It is both church planting and feeding the hungry.

In his book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, Richard Stearns talks about our tendency to think and act in either-or ways. When we do this, there is a hole in the gospel. Something is missing. Jesus doesn’t want a hole in his gospel. He wants there to be completeness.



Living Word believes this. We work with global partners who are doing holistic ministry. Peace and justice, evangelism and mercy, helping the spiritually empty and the physically hungry, it’s just what we do because that is what Jesus did. Jesus had serious words of warning for those who neglected the work of care, compassion, and justice (Matthew 25:31-46).

In the mid-1980s Living Word began a partnership with Bethel Agricultural Fellowship in South India. Bethel means “the house of God.” Bethel was doing the whole gospel. They had a Bible institute, a church, an agricultural institute, orphanages, a hospital, and a vocational rehabilitation program. They sent out teams of young people to teach, preach, counsel, cast out demons, and heal the sick. They did it all. And we loved working with them.

We have a similar relationship with our friends in Ethiopia. Whether it is Ethiopian Outreach Ministry (EOM) or Project Adopt A Village (PAAV), or the churches in Sendafa and Dire Dawa, our partners are living out the whole ministry of Jesus. We love to be a part of their work.

And now, we are partnering with a new organization in the Kurdish region of Iraq. N2N (Neighbors to Nations) is ministering to Kurdish families, widows, orphans, and refugees.

The whole gospel to the whole person is core to how we do missions here in York and with our strategic partners around the world.

## HOLISTIC MISSION

**Holistic Mission** refers to our support of evangelism and church planting ALONG WITH ministries of compassion and relief for those who are broken and hurting. In many places, we provide substantial medical resources to these partners.

We have been privileged to have global partnerships with key organizations that are doing holistic mission. Our partnership in Ethiopia is especially fruitful because of this holistic component.



**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | Pay attention to either-or tendencies you may have. Jesus wants you to be equally comfortable sharing your faith in an evangelistic conversation and serving basic needs of the poor. Seek to be both-and. If you are weaker in one, give that weakness some additional time and energy.

Connect with the missional Seasons of Service year-round program we have at Living Word. Check it out on our website. We work strategically with many local organizations who are giving those “cups of cold water” in the name of Jesus to those who are thirsty.

Go on a mission trip to one of our partner locations and discover a whole gospel and what such a gospel is able to do.

# The Greater Things

*“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” –JOHN 14:12*

**T**he Greater Things of God are more amazing than we ever imagine. We must continually choose to be an active part in these things.

Take 5 minutes and read John chapter 14 in its entirety to understand the larger context of Jesus’ statement here. It is a rich passage wherein Jesus gives his final instructions to his disciples before he is crucified.

For a generation now, Living Word has been deeply invested in local and global mission work. From Ethiopia to Guatemala to India and many other locations, Living Word’s impact around the world has been great. People’s lives have been changed for eternity.

God’s promise continues to be that he will do even greater things through regular people in the Church! What an incredible promise.

These greater things are not only miracles and supernatural activity, they also include:

- Serving behind the scenes
- Providing for the financial needs of someone going on a mission trip
- Being part of a team that sorts and processes items at a local food bank

We must expand our thinking about these greater things. Surely they include God healing people, churches being started in unreached contexts, and God providing in other miraculous ways. But these greater things also include the quiet, the humble, and the ways we reach out to people that nobody notices.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | Ask God to show you the greater things in your life today, especially new things he may want you to step into in order to serve others.

Here are questions to ask yourself and to pray about:

1. What are two or three of the greatest needs you see, either locally or globally?
2. How is your heart moved to be part of meeting these needs? (i.e., what do you care deeply about?)
3. What abilities, talents, and gifts do you have that may help meet these needs?
4. Who can you speak with to pursue this?



## Providence (Age 9)

### GUATEMALA

Global missions is important to me because lots of kids around the world have nothing and when missions teams arrive the kids are happy. God tells us to serve others whether they are Christians or not.

One lesson I learned is that you can be a missionary anywhere. We were in a village and our team was working on building a church. There was only one pastor in the village. Not a lot of the people in the village were coming out to meet with us, but when I started walking, 23 little kids followed me to where we did a Vacation Bible School. Twenty of those kids accepted Christ.

My mother says, “This experience shows there is no language or cultural barrier between children. God used a 9-year-old child on that trip to lead Guatemalan children to hear the story of salvation.”

## UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP

An **Unreached People Group** is an ethnic group that doesn't have enough Christians to reach the rest of the nation. Christianity is minimally present in the group. There are 17,104 people groups in the world and 7,164 are unreached. There are 3.1 billion people living in those unreached groups!

From the earliest days of our interest in missions, Living Word was committed to reaching unreached people groups. For many reasons, it was the unreached people groups in parts of the Islamic world that were on our heart. We have supported strategic missional workers in some of the hardest to reach regions of the world.

# Your Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” –ACTS 1:8*

A word has been created recently that captures how we live today: Glocal. We live each day in a locale (our home town) and yet the entire world is within reach of our fingertips because of advanced technology. Some 2,000 years ago, God gave the new Church a vision for this Glocal ministry—go to your Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria ... to the ends of the earth.

The disciples were gathered in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus’ resurrection. Jerusalem was the center of the universe for every first-century Jewish person, just as the places we live today are the centers of our lives. Our Jerusalems are the first place of ministry, in our everyday encounters with neighbors and local shops and coworkers.

In the time of Jesus, Judea was the large area around Jerusalem where Jewish communities (the suburbs!) were started. Judea represents our suburban and rural areas, where life is different than in the city. People have a different pace of life, different values. And they relate to spirituality and faith differently.

Samaria represented the distant places, where most of us never venture. In John 4, Jesus purposely goes to Samaria and encounters a woman at the well. It was a cross-cultural interaction between a Jew and a Samaritan (and between a man and a woman, which was unheard of in Jesus’ time).

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | What is your “Jerusalem”? How are you relating to your neighbors, colleagues, and people you are in close proximity to?

What is your “Judea”? How are you seeking to relate to people from a different socio-economic situation? Or people in the inner city if you live in the suburbs? Is there a ministry that God might be calling you to?

And what is your “Samaria”? Is there a part of the world or a people group you are drawn to or a mission trip you should go on in the near future?



## Nancy Nagib

### GUATEMALA

On my first trip to Guatemala I was overwhelmed by people who visited the medical clinic and showed me scars all over their bodies. They were fearful and anxious because of recent guerrilla wars. Some walked barefoot for miles for medical care. Many were dealing with depression. Alcohol was a huge problem. I remember thinking, there's not much I can offer, so I'll offer to pray for them. How wonderful to be able to pray for healing from the Almighty Physician!

On another trip, I walked into a dental clinic room and panicked when I saw a young woman slumped over in her chair. She was having a reaction to the medications being used to pull her tooth. Because there were no oxygen tanks, we had her breathe into a paper bag and she felt better. The next day she came back because she wanted to serve with us. I was humbled by the fact that she returned to work in our clinic!

These stories are the reason my heart has remained in Guatemala since 2005. I am committed to missions not only because it is my passion, but because it is the purpose God gave me. Global missions has become part of our focus as a family and a huge part of our prayer life.

# Equipped for Mission

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. -EPHESIANS 2:10*

ALSO READ: MATTHEW 4:18-22

Look at 2 Peter 1:3: “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life ...” A godly life is a life like God’s life. Because God is holy, good, and loving, a godly life is holy, good, and loving. God is missional. So, a godly life includes missional service to others. God is a blessing to the world and the people of God are “blessed to be a blessing.” God has given you everything you need to have a missional presence in the world.



Ephesians 2:10 is about meaning and purpose: “For we are God’s handiwork (masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” To be missional is to have meaning and purpose in life. The meaning of life is to be in relationship with God as his children, friends, and partners. Our purpose in life is to do what we have been created to do.

God has designed you for good works and God has created you with capacities to do those good works, but you have those capacities in “seed” form. They are planted in you, but often underdeveloped. They must be nurtured so they grow strong and you bear much fruit that lasts (John 15:8, 16).

Years ago I had a conversation with a young man who felt called to evangelize in a country where it was difficult to get access, hard to be a Christian, and harder still to share your faith. I asked some questions to find out more about his strengths and experiences.

“So, how many people have you led to Christ this past year?”

Silence. “Uh ... no one, I guess.”

“Oh,” I said. “Well, how many evangelistic conversations do you have on a regular basis with non-Christians?”

More silence and no response.

“How often do you pray for non-Christians that they might come to know Jesus and do you pray that God would use you for that?”

“Well, now and then,” he said without much confidence.

“So, why do you think you can do something in a different country, in a challenging culture, that you don’t know, when you aren’t doing that already where you are?”

I don’t know whether this man had the right seeds planted in him to do the work he thought God was calling him to do. I do know that if the abilities were planted, they had never been developed. When Jesus called his first disciples to follow him, he called them to a life of being taught, trained, and sent out to put into practice what they learned from Jesus. They returned for feedback and support. They went out again. Vocational training is always in session when you walk with Jesus. You have possibilities that need to be developed (Matthew 4:18–22).

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**Vocational training is always in session when you walk with Jesus.**

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That is why Living Word is here. We want to help you grow and go as far as possible in having a fruitful life as a missional friend of Jesus. We can help you identify your gifts and provide opportunities to begin using them here and now. We will also pray and discern with you if Jesus wants to use you in another location. But first, let’s be sure he is using you right here and right now.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | We all need to grow in our ability to have spiritual conversations with non-Christians. Keep an eye open for the next time we offer our three-week course *Life Shared*.

Take the *Group Dynamix* training and learn how to lead a small group.

Go online and take the *StrengthsFinder 2.0* test. It is enormously helpful in identifying your major strengths and it will be enlightening.

What gifts do you have that you are using to serve others? How can you use your gifts even more? The more you exercise your strengths, the stronger you get.

# The Brightest Lights

*"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* –MATTHEW 5:14-16

ALSO READ: 1 JOHN 1:1-5

Light is a primary metaphor in the Bible to describe the nature of God and the acts of God in the world. "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3). "The city (the New Jerusalem) does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp ... They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light" (Revelation 21:23; 22:5). The Bible begins with the creation of light in the darkness and the Bible ends with the beauty and brilliance of light forever.

God is light (1 John 1:5). Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:4, 5, 9; 8:12). When we have Jesus, we have that light in us (John 8:12; 1 John 1:5-7). Paul tells us we were once of the darkness but now we are light in the Lord and are to live as children of the light (Ephesians 5:8-15).

Jesus says it most simply: "You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). By the way, be sure to notice the salt of the earth metaphor in Matthew 5:13. Light and salt go together.

So, what does it all mean and what does it have to do with mission?

Light always has a dual meaning. It means what is true and what is good. Light is belief and light is action. Light is truth in action. When we let our light shine, it means we share the truth of Jesus and we live the goodness of Jesus in the presence of others. We do this in places of darkness (i.e., where there is no truth or goodness).

We don't hide truth or goodness. Today there is a good deal of pressure to keep quiet, to keep your faith to yourself. Jesus says do not cover up the light. Together we are like a city on a hill whose light is a beacon of hope to those living in darkness. The birth story of Jesus reminds us that the Savior will "shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the path of peace" (Luke 1:79). We are called to let the light of truth and goodness shine in the darkness.



## Erin Becker

### ETHIOPIA

On a mission trip last year, I met Zeldanesh. As the only believer in the area, she had to hide her faith for many years. Zeldanesh shared the struggles in her life, but her beautiful smile never left her face. She told us the story of how she got HIV/AIDS. She went to the doctor because of a lump on her breast, however, when

examining her, the doctor used a needle that was infected with HIV/AIDS. I remember getting chills as the room grew quiet. There was something completely heart-wrenching in her sad smile.

I started thinking about how drastically her life was altered and I began to weep, imagining how I would feel in her place. As our visit came to a close, I realized something beautiful. Zeldanesh had shared challenging moments about her life with the biggest, brightest smile on her face because she was full of hope. She knew her story didn't end because of a diagnosis. Zeldanesh knew the doctor was not the author of her story. She knew God was in control.

I often thank God for introducing me to Zeldanesh. Hearing her story, witnessing her unwavering hope, and seeing her beautiful smile has encouraged me to seek God more in every situation of my own life.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | What are the situations where it is hardest for you to let the light of Christ shine? And who are the people with whom you find it hard to have your Christianity on display? Why are these occasions and these people so challenging for “light shining” by you?

How did you let your light shine this week? What was the result?

In the week ahead, who is one person or what is one situation where light shining will make a difference? What will you do to let your light shine then and there?

Pray that you would preach the truth of the good news (it is news) and live the goodness of the good news (it is very good).

# Jesus Tears Down Walls

READ: EPHESIANS 2:11-15

Walls protect. They keep people out who we do not want inside. There is an English expression that says, “High fences make good neighbors.” This is a prevailing worldview today.

Jerusalem, the City of Peace, was a walled city for many years. Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the walls of the city. Walls serve a purpose in society—they provide safety and security. But walls are also defensive structures. They close us off from the world. Sometimes these walls are physical structures and at other times they are psychological barriers.

While these have their purposes in our lives, the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus tears down walls. It is a major part of his mission on earth. And in the greatest news yet, at the end of time when Jesus returns, there will be NO walls between God and humanity and between ourselves and other humans.

The fiercest rivals, the most bitter enemies, will have the “dividing walls of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14) torn down between them by Jesus. In the first century, that meant that Jews and Gentiles could have genuine, deep relationships with each other, between families, between friends. How? Because of Jesus—his death to pay for sin and his resurrection, which blew apart the emotional and psychological walls between Jews and Gentiles who otherwise did not associate with each other.

But there are specific conditions for this to happen.

First, we must each be brought near to God by the blood of Christ. That is, Jesus’ blood poured out on a cross. We must embrace this truth over and over again in life.

Second, Jesus makes enemies into friends as he removes these walls between us. Enemies become friends when they are in proximity to each other. We cannot overcome being enemies at a distance. The walls of separation have to come down. That’s what Jesus is doing in his Kingdom.

Third, once walls come down we are called to be repairers of the world (*tikkum olam* in Hebrew). If Jesus is our Peace (Ephesians 2:14), he empowers us to bring his peace—to be peacemakers in our missional endeavors. There is no higher calling for a follower of Christ and for his Church.



## Kim Rudisill

### ETHIOPIA

I have been on mission trips to Ethiopia 15 times. Why do I keep going on these trips? Because I love working with the children in the schools. I've come to know many of them and their families. It has been a joy to watch them grow as the years go by. I've seen them go to college, graduate, and find jobs. Sometimes the relationships become really close.

Because holistic ministry is central to the work in Ethiopia, I've been involved in home visits to AIDS patients. We love them, help them fix up their homes, and talk about Christ's love for them. Some of the people we visited have already come to faith in Christ, so I have the chance to encourage them in their faith and pray with them.

The team friendships that are made are wonderful and the cultural experiences are always eye-opening. Back in York, I pray for the precious people of Sendafa every day. My heart has grown along with my faith as I see how God is working in the lives of these people.

**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | Are there “walls of hostility” that have built up in your heart toward a group of people? What can you pray to ask God to tear down that wall?

Is there something you can do this week that would reflect the wall coming down? Is there a person you need to reach out to? Is there a word of affirmation you need to give? Is there a commitment you need to make to become involved in a missional way? Ask Jesus to show you.

# Ripples of Impact

*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. –EPHESIANS 3:20-21*

BY PASTOR BRIAN NEWMAN

**Y**ou never know the impact you will have in God's Kingdom. We don't see the beginning from the end, but God always does!

In the early 2000s, I was invited to visit Living Word to speak on missions. I was living in Europe with my family, where we served as missionaries for almost 20 years. I came to Living Word and found a church alive and caught up with missions! It was such an encouraging time for me as I learned of the impact the church was having in places such as India, Ethiopia, and beyond.

A few years later, Living Word began making financial investments in our ministry, *The Isaac-Ishmael Initiative*. One of the outreach ministries we had started was in a North African country. (I won't mention the name due to security concerns.) Living Word provided financial resources for us to purchase hundreds of Bibles for Muslim leaders in the country, which we gave to them on mission trips to the country.

I traveled to this North African country four times as part of a "Dialog for Peace" between Christian and Muslim leaders. It was one of the first of its kind anywhere in the Muslim world. More than 25 Muslim clerics from around the country met for three days with a group of Christians to talk about Jesus, the gospel, and how to build bridges.

As I returned year after year, I watched God change their hearts. I was amazed to see that a number of these leaders were becoming followers of Jesus! They were quiet about their faith due to serious threats they might encounter, but their faith was genuine, deep, and growing. Along with a number of other Christians, we spent many hours discipling these new believers as they embraced a new identity in Christ.

Today in that country there is a growing underground Church movement, in large part because these leaders have begun house communities. It's a



small movement, but it is growing and people's lives are being changed for eternity!

In the past three years, the doors have closed for Christians to visit this country. The “Dialog for Peace” has been suspended for the time being. And so we wait, we pray, we listen for the Holy Spirit's leading.

The ministry in this North African country happened because Living Word made a Kingdom investment more than 15 years ago. The church planted seeds of faith in soil that has sprouted new growth. Living Word was faithful to God's call to sow seeds widely, and now in the Sahara Desert of North Africa they are beginning to bloom!

## WORLD RELIGIONS

There are many, many **World Religions**. Three of them—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—are known as Abrahamic faiths because their spiritual father is Abram/Abraham in the Bible.

The other main world religions are Hinduism (900 million people), Buddhism (400 million people), and traditional religions in Africa and China.

The largest group is Christians (approximately 2 billion people). Second is Islam (1.5 to 1.7 billion people). There are 14 million Jewish people worldwide.

# Your Place in God's Epic Plan

*After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do." -ACTS 13:22*

Rebecca Pippert wrote a book called *A Heart Like His*. She was referring to King David and the passage in Acts 13:22 where God says David is "a man after my own heart." Why does God describe David's heart like that? Because "he (David) will do everything I want him to do." If that is how we get a heart after God and a heart like God's, then we must be missional followers of Jesus. Missions is at the heart of God. And in one way or another, God is sending us all on a mission.

The entire Bible is God's Word to us. As we read God's Word with a prayerful and open heart, the Holy Spirit takes the words on the page and whispers to us, nudges us, prompts us, and we begin to feel something resonating within. It is the secret, hidden, mysterious, but vital communication of God's heart to our heart, God's will addressing our will, God's truth renewing our minds. We feel a tug and pull. We sense an invitation. Sometimes it comes more powerfully as a summons. Occasionally, it seems we just got our marching orders.

We believe you have been hearing from God throughout this devotional booklet. As you have read the Scriptures, pondered the reflections, read the personal stories, and engaged in practice and prayer, God has been speaking to you.

On this final day, we want you to do what the devotional authors of the past have called an Examen. That word sounds like "examine" and it is just that. It is a time of spiritual examination. You look back over the last two weeks and you get a big picture of what you have been sensing and learning, what you have been hearing and discerning.

It is obvious that God has been speaking to you about his missional plan, because that is his grand purpose. Salvation, redemption, the good news of Jesus, the healing and repair of the world, all this is God's epic missional story. It did not end with the Bible, it accelerated through 2,000 years and carries on today.



## Rena Prowell

### MISSION TRIP TRAVELER

I am committed to global missions because my heart breaks for those who are suffering and treated unjustly. While you can find many people like that right where we live, the sheer numbers rise dramatically in so many global locations.

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One of the powerful lessons God taught me about global missions is that I now know I have a heart for others who are hurting or in need. I have been so humbled. I always feel I receive so much more than I give. I go to give but I am the one who is most blessed by what the people I meet give to me.

There are many reasons why I go on mission trips, but my first priority is to help spread the Good News of the gospel to all people to glorify God. If I am able to help others be impacted by the love and grace of God, then I am grateful.

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My life and my heart are forever changed by the blessing and opportunity to go on mission trips. During my first trip I knew God had given me a heart for missions. I continue to listen for God's prompts for my future trips!

**I continue  
to listen for  
God's prompts  
for my future  
trips!**

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**PRAYER & PRACTICE** | So, what have you heard from God? What are the next steps of invitation? How can you move deeper into the heart of God for the world? How will you be a part of Living Word's commitment to the purposes of God?

Ask these questions prayerfully as you flip back through the booklet. Jot down your most important thoughts on the following pages.





## Ways to Give

### ONLINE

Go to [LWCCyork.com/give](http://LWCCyork.com/give) and click on the Give Online button to set up your recurring gift. Select *Greater Things* from the “Fund” drop-down menu.

### TEXT-TO-GIVE

Using your mobile phone, text LWCC to 888111 and tap the link in the response message to go to our online giving site. Select *Greater Things* from the “Fund” drop-down menu.

### LWCC MOBILE APP

Tap either the Giving Tile or the Give Tab to set up your recurring gift using either a credit card, debit card, or your bank account for payment. Select *Greater Things* from the “Fund” drop-down menu.

### ONLINE BILL PAY

If your bank offers this option, you can establish recurring payments to LWCC. Note *Greater Things* or *GT* in the memo. Your bank will automatically mail checks to LWCC.

### SUNDAY MORNING

Place a check or cash in the offering basket during a worship service. Note *Greater Things* or *GT* in the check’s memo or on an envelope for your cash.

### MAIL A CHECK TO LWCC

Make check payable to LWCC, note *Greater Things* or *GT* in the memo, and send to:

Living Word Community Church  
ATTN: Accounting  
2530 Cape Horn Rd  
Red Lion, PA 17356

### EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFTS

Ask your employer whether they have a program in place to match your giving to LWCC.

### OTHER GIVING OPTIONS

- Qualified charitable distributions
- Asset-based gifts

# Give to the Greater Things

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to learn more about  
these and other giving  
options.



[LWCCyork.com/Give](http://LWCCyork.com/Give)