

July 2021

# MISSIONS

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to France**

Carving Out a  
Future in **Senegal**

Interview with  
MKs in **Mexico**

Hurricane  
Relief Efforts  
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# THINKING IT THROUGH

BY NEALE GOETSCH

## Learning to Pray the Father's Will

Recently, as I prepared a series of Bible studies on prayer, I found my heart and attitude toward approaching the Father deeply challenged. It started when I read John 12, where several Greeks asked Philip for an introduction to Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Jesus's response to their request shook me up. He didn't focus on expanding opportunities; instead, He said, "My soul is troubled."<sup>2</sup> Jesus's earlier declaration, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," was about to be displayed at Calvary.<sup>3</sup> His death weighed heavily on His heart. While it was the reason He had come, it was not the ultimate purpose of the cross. God's purpose, and the Son's longing, was that the cross would bring glory to the Father as many sons, those from all nations, are themselves brought to glory.<sup>4</sup> Our Savior repeated that preeminent longing in many of His prayers, and it determined the requests that came from His heart and mouth. I'm learning that my prayers must also begin with God Himself—His glory, not my needs, circumstances, or desires.

Every day must begin with a fresh commitment to seek Him and His glory.

I'm not suggesting that every prayer must start with a recitation of who God is and what He is like, but every day must begin with a fresh commitment to seek Him and His glory. Sometimes, an urgent cry like Peter's in Matthew 14:30—"Lord, save me!"—is all we have time for. But during longer prayers of request and intercession, it's good for us to consider why we are asking for something. Is it just for us or for God's glory? If Jesus questioned what he should say, as in John 12:27, we must do the same.

John encourages us: "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."<sup>5</sup> Of course, Jesus knew His Father's will and what would bring Him glory. But how can we know that, when we pray, we are praying according to His will? "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" Paul asked, adding, "Even so no one knows [comprehends] the things of God except the Spirit of God."<sup>6</sup> What joy it is to have God's own Spirit as our Helper in prayer!<sup>7</sup>

Prayer is a two-way conversation with God, who has revealed Himself, His will, and His purposes and promises in His Word. Our part is to respond to what God already said. Our prayers take the form of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, personal petition, and intercession. We have an opportunity to respond every time we open the Bible and throughout the day as God's Spirit brings His Word to our minds.

An interesting example of prayerful response occurs in Matthew 11. Addressing the unbelief of those who saw His "mighty works," Jesus interrupts Himself to answer His Father, thanking Him for His work in the hearts of the childlike.<sup>8</sup> Talking to someone His listeners couldn't see may have seemed strange to them, but Jesus is the ultimate example of what it means to "pray without ceasing" and to allow the Word to "dwell in [us] richly in all wisdom."<sup>9</sup> May God's Spirit similarly interrupt our thoughts throughout each day.

David's response to all God had done and promised was, "Do as You have said."<sup>10</sup> We know we are praying in God's will when we remind Him of His promises. And what better way to pray for ourselves, for missionaries, and for those to whom we minister than to use the words of prayers we find in the Bible?<sup>11</sup>

"Lord, teach us to pray."<sup>12</sup> ■

*Neale Goetsch serves in Other Overseas Service.*

<sup>1</sup> Vv. 20–21. <sup>2</sup> John 12:27. <sup>3</sup> John 3:16. <sup>4</sup> Hebrews 2:10. <sup>5</sup> 1 John 5:14,15. <sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:11. <sup>7</sup> Romans 8:14–17. <sup>8</sup> Matthew 11:25–26; note: the Greek word *αποκρινομαι* is correctly translated "answered." <sup>9</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 3:16. <sup>10</sup> 2 Samuel 7:25. <sup>11</sup> E.g., Ephesians 1:15–23; 3:14–21; Colossians 1:9–14. <sup>12</sup> Luke 11:1.

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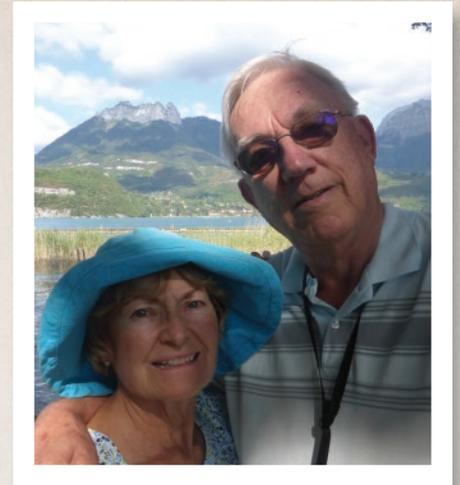
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# FROM PAKISTAN TO FRANCE

## A Family's History of Faith

BY MAUREEN CROW



In 1950, Gordon and Eileen Williamson set sail for Pakistan on a new adventure: to be witnesses for Christ among the millions of Muslims living in this Islamic country. However, it would not be my parents' first Pakistani experience. During World War II, the British army posted my father to Karachi as an officer. Undoubtedly, that firsthand glimpse of Islam and its failure to transform lives contributed to their desire to return as witnesses for Christ.

When my parents, my three young sisters, and I arrived in the port city of Karachi, the capital at the time, accommodations were difficult to find on our limited support. We ended

“We never went hungry, and God always provided.”

up living in old army barracks, which leaked horribly during the monsoon rains and where rats visited at night. Throughout the Pakistani years, my parents' financial support remained rather meager, so we often ate just bread and jam at night after our hot meal at midday. However, we never went hungry, and God always provided.

Despite such inconveniences, we could attend the international school, where English was spoken and which held high

standards. My parents did their best to provide a happy life for us, and many Saturdays, we packed a picnic lunch and big sun hats and took off to the beach, where temperatures could easily surpass 100 degrees.

### MINISTRY IN KARACHI

Neither of my parents had much formal Bible training before becoming missionaries. My father had worked as a ship's purser, and my mother had worked as a secretary. However, they studied the Bible extensively, and my father learned to speak Hindi and Urdu fluently. (As young, single missionaries before the war, both had worked in India).

Their continual sacrifices for other people evidenced their love for Christ. Also living in a simple room in the barracks that we called home was a former Muslim who had lost his wife and family after trusting Christ. Often, our mother would share food with him since he was poor.

My father spent hours in the local bazaar sharing the Gospel with shopkeepers and passersby, and he spent one day per week at the docks of this heavily trafficked port city. He distributed Christian literature, including booklets containing the Gospels and Bibles. Through these efforts, several Muslim men and navy personnel trusted Christ. After prayers, tears, and much effort, my parents started an assembly, but it was a challenging ministry due to a few people's efforts to take control.

**Above (from left):** Maureen's parents, Gordon and Eileen Williamson (seated), married in India; As teens, Maureen and her sisters were involved in youth group ministries; In 2020, Colin and Maureen attended the European Christian Workers' Conference, where they first met 12 years prior.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN YEARS

After five years in Pakistan, we returned to the States in 1955. My two older sisters—I am the third sibling of the four—would soon need higher education, and Pakistan would not have been a suitable environment, being Muslim and male-dominated. We spent three happy years stateside. However, my parents were anxious to continue their ministry among Hindus and Muslims. After doing some research, my father learned of assembly work in South Africa among these people groups, and in 1958, we set sail for Durban, a city on the east coast of that country.



My parents quickly integrated into the ministry and started working in the two small Indian assemblies. Besides teaching and preaching the Gospel, they visited and encouraged believers in their homes and held several children's clubs outside or in believers' homes. As my parents did in Pakistan, they opened our home to people from different strata of society, including nurses in training, university students, and visiting missionaries.

Additionally, my father would send gospel records and portable players, which Gospel Recordings (known today as Global Recordings Network) supplied, to several African countries. Often, he received letters from the recipients saying that they had been converted as they listened. In 1968, at the age of 65, my father succumbed to a fatal heart attack, but my mother continued in the ministry until she returned to the US in 1973.

By this time, my two older sisters were married to fine Christian men. Paul Logan and Lois, my second sister, served the Lord in Zambia for many years. Even after Paul went home to be with the Lord, Lois continued her ministry in Zambia until she retired to the US (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 5, refocused). Two of their daughters, Martha Logan (MPH Day 4) and Joy Beer (MPH Day 3), serve as missionaries in Zambia today.

“I began praying that God would open a door for me to witness for Him.”

## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

After my mom retired from her service in South Africa and we returned to the US, I taught in a Christian high school outside Philadelphia for many years. However, I knew that I wouldn't spend the rest of my life teaching. My students had constant exposure to God's Word whereas so many people in the world had never heard the Gospel. After my mom went home to heaven, I began praying that God would open a door for me to witness for Him elsewhere.

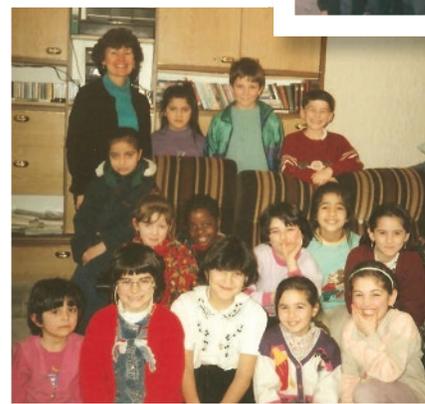
In 1992, I arrived in Strasbourg, France, with a small team to work among immigrants and refugees, many of whom were Muslims. Strasbourg is located in eastern France on the German border and is home to the European Parliament, which attracts people from many different countries.

## THE STRASBOURG LIGHTHOUSE

With help from the assembly our team attended, we opened a center in a high-crime area of Strasbourg. We named it the Lighthouse, and it became a venue for women's Bible studies, English classes, fun evenings for young people, and debates between an imam and a local Christian well versed in the Quran.

Over the years, the Lord moved hearts and brought people to Himself, not just through the Lighthouse but also through other forms of witness.

One testimony stands out: One day, I met a refugee in the center of town who was trying to sell local newspapers to earn a few cents. He was wearing a heavy sweater and perspiring in the warm weather. When I asked why he was thus clad, he said



**Far left:** One ministry Maureen and her sisters helped with was Durban Seaside Services, which reached vacationing children on the Durban beachfront.

**Above:** Among its many ministries, the Lighthouse hosted women's Bible studies, which Maureen (left) helped lead.

**Left:** Over the years, Maureen worked with many children who attended the kids' club at the Lighthouse.

he had no choice since he had no other clothes. I also asked how his paper sales were going. He said that, some days, he sells no papers and, other days, one or two but that he receives only a dime for each one. Moved by the Holy Spirit, I said, "Ayus, there is Someone who can help you sell more papers. His name is Jesus, and I'm going to pray that He will help you increase your sales."



When I returned a week later, bringing with me several light-weight shirts from men in my church, his face was beaming. He told me that he had sold an average of four or five papers per day—something that had not happened before. When I explained the message of salvation to him, he believed immediately, and to this day, he has not turned back. He is passionate about sharing his faith; when he visited his family in Nigeria, which he had fled for political reasons, he led all his Muslim uncles to Christ.

I am still in contact with Ayus and visit him and his family when I go to Strasbourg. He married a sweet Nigerian woman who professed Christ as her Savior in my living room.

## MONTPELLIER, ON THE MEDITERRANEAN

In 2008, I attended the European Christian Workers' Conference, which is an annual retreat, held in the lovely French Alps, for English-speaking assembly missionaries serving in Europe.



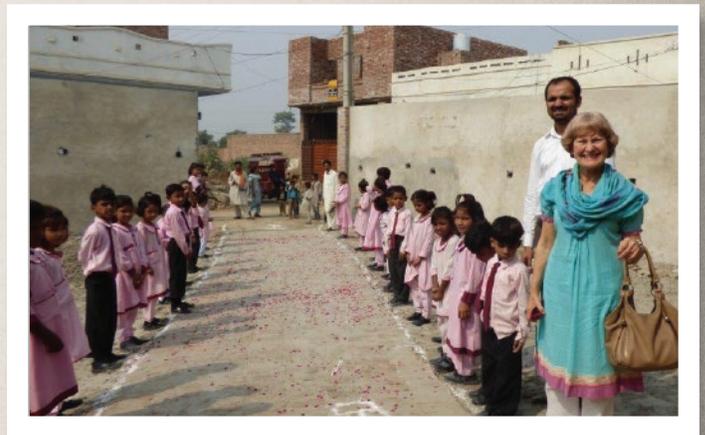
There, I met Colin Crow. I did not know then that, in less than two years, Colin would become my husband. After a fairytale romance, we married in Strasbourg in 2010,

and soon after, I moved to Montpellier, in southern France, where we live today.

Like other parts of France, many immigrants and refugees who need the Lord live here. So, soon after I arrived at the church in Montpellier, I and a few other people started an evangelistic team, Aime Ton Prochain. We would spend many Saturdays in the large public square, chatting with interested people and distributing literature. Today, young people in France will often readily talk about spiritual subjects. (Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to pause these activities, but we hope to resume them soon.)

Over this past year, we have had contact with several Afghans as well as a Nigerian Christian refugee, Seyi, and her children, who were forced to flee their country. Now, Seyi and her family live in a tiny basement apartment in our village, thanks to the kindness of a Christian neighbor who doesn't charge them rent. This fall, Seyi hopes to obtain her residence permit, which will enable her to acquire government help and, perhaps, a bigger place to live with her three children. These are just some of the people whom the Lord has placed in our path.

When I reflect on my parents' story, I see the Lord's hand in preparing the way for my work today. Europe teems with refugees and immigrants, most of whom need Him. Colin and I enjoy practicing hospitality and reaching out to minority groups, and for us, it is a joy to impact lives for His kingdom. ■



**Left (from top):** Young people gather for an evening of fellowship at the Lighthouse; Maureen serves with an evangelistic team, Aime Ton Prochain ("love your neighbor"), in Montpellier. **Above:** In 2017, Maureen returned to Pakistan for the first time since 1955, visiting a school for the children of Christians who cannot afford public schools.



*Maureen and Colin Crow are commended from St. Clair Bible Chapel in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania; Malvern Bible Chapel in Malvern, Pennsylvania; and England.*



# CARVING OUT A FUTURE IN SENEGAL

A Trade School Teaches Skills  
and Proclaims Christ's Love

BY HERMA BODE

In 1976, when my husband, Gerhard, and I stepped off the Marseille–Dakar ocean liner into Senegal with our children and Volkswagen van in tow, we expected to explore the whole of West Africa to see where God wanted us. Little did we know that we were already there. In the intervening years, Senegal became our home. I can scarcely believe more than 40 years have passed since then.

Senegal gained independence in the 1960s and is a peaceful, democratic country; it is one of the few on this continent that hasn't suffered a coup d'état. Situated on the coast, Senegal is located just below the Sahara, and its capital, Dakar, lies on Africa's westernmost point. The country is about the size of South Dakota. Although 96 percent of the population is Muslim, religious freedom is tolerated; three percent are Roman Catholic, with the remaining portion being evangelical. Of the 27 languages spoken, Wolof is the most prominent.

When we first arrived, we partnered with our colleagues, Dr. Eric and Eithne Church, who were commended from an Irish assembly in the early 1960s. Their life's work was translating the New Testament into Wolof, the first edition of which was published in 1987. Since then, the New Testament has been revised and has gone through two additional printings. Today, it is used in Wolof communities around the world. The Old Testament translation is close to being completed, so soon, we will have the entire Bible in Wolof.

During our years in Dakar, when our children were young and attending grade school, Gerhard and I were involved in mainly church planting. When Eric and Eithne Church returned to England in 1990, God provided a way for us to move to Malika, 15 miles up the coast, to continue ministry there. Today, the Dakar assembly we worked with thrives in the hands of Senegalese believers.

## TEACHING TRADES

Gerhard and I have four children: Dany, Becky, Naomi, and Josh. Having grown up in Senegal, our children know the languages and consider Senegal their home. In 1996, the Lord took Gerhard home to heaven.

Dany, who is talented like his dad was, desired to start a vocational school for the young men he grew up with. Eighteen years ago, he and his wife, Nadine, started a workshop on our property in Malika, teaching trades through an apprentice system for Muslims and Christians alike. The school started with two departments: a drum-building shop and a welding atelier. It has since expanded to encompass mechanics, auto bodywork, furniture building, fine woodworking, textiles, and the building of musical instruments. Besides a trade, students learn basic reading and bookkeeping skills, all of which help them support their families. Here are a few of the men's stories:

## Jugena

Jugena grew up in an animistic household. Bored with school, he left at an early age to roam with a gang in Dakar's dump. Serving the two million inhabitants of Dakar, this enormous dump has an entire community living within its sprawl. One day, the young Jugena showed up at my kids' club. At first, he attended sporadically, but eventually, he joined our Sunday morning meetings and was ultimately incorporated into the workshop as an apprentice welder.

Jugena loved the Lord but could not read. One day, a missionary placed an order with him: a Bible verse written in metal on an iron plaque. Since he was illiterate, forming each piece of metal into a letter with the right shape and proportion was an enormous frustration. Countless times, Jugena thought he had the verse right, only to be sent back to the drawing board. Though humbling, the experience sparked in him the desire to learn to read the Bible for himself.

Thus motivated, he began joining me at the kitchen table. By God's grace, and with the Wolof New Testament as our textbook, I taught him to read. Those times led to great conversations. Often, Jugena told me, "I would love to have a wife like you!" The remark was charming and funny, and believe it or not, God gave him a wife, Joanna, who is a Dutch missionary from Holland (I, too, am Dutch)! Today, he continues his ministry in the welding business, having just left the nest of our school and passed on the baton of running our welding department to his two apprentices.

## Jibby

Jibby was born in a Wolof fishing village, in a community that practices animism under a veneer of Islam. One of 18 children, Jibby first heard the good news from a group of health-care volunteers who were doing a three-month outreach in his village. When Jibby completed grade school, his father told him it was the end of his schooling since they had no money for books. Armed with what education he had, Jibby started reading the Bible in Wolof. He soon became a believer in the Lord Jesus and discarded all of his amulets, which the Senegalese wear for protection from evil spirits. Because of Jibby's faith, his family rejects him, but he helps them as much as he can.

Jibby came to our shop to learn a trade. He began with building drums and then moved on to sewing. With Jibby at the helm, our textile department grew to incorporate several young men. One of them is Modu, whose skills have so improved over the years that he now fulfills overseas orders. Another is Ernest, a history student. The proceeds of his work go toward supporting his parents and continuing his studies. Jibby has progressed from sewing to helping me manage the property and our many visitors, which is a relentless job. He has become my extremely capable general manager and right-hand man.



**Opposite page:** Jibby learned to build drums and sew at the trade school.

**This page (from top):** The Bodes' children grew up in Senegal and still consider it their home; Herma chats with auto shop students; Jugena, pictured with his wife, Joanna, ministers in the welding business.

## Abdoulaye

Abdoulaye grew up in the parcel of land neighboring our compound, so our families have a long-standing relationship. He is very musical and, currently, is the head of our school's fine woodworking department. He plays and builds numerous instruments, including *koras* (African harps that are Senegal's national instrument), which showcase his craftsmanship and attention to detail. Since there is much musical talent here, we are building a music studio so that our Senegalese friends can record their own compositions. The original *djembe* (African drum) department has been passed along from Aziz to his apprentice, Gilbert, and it is still going strong. Aziz now runs a successful surf camp in Dakar.

## Labath

Labath is gifted with his hands, and he is building a pirogue with Dany. When we took the boat on a test run up the coast, it was a proud moment for Labath and the other men in the shop. Captivated by the idea of connecting the ancient with the modern, they partnered with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Vanderbilt University to design a motor that runs on a biofuel engine and a traditional sail. To reenact the 14th-century transatlantic crossing that the Malian emperor and explorer Abubakari attempted, Dany plans to sail to Brazil in the boat Labath built.<sup>1</sup>

## BUILDING TOGETHER

The latest addition to our vocational school is an auto body and mechanic's shop, which buzzes around the clock. Most Senegalese men are interested in cars and consider themselves mechanics, so half the village passes through on any given day, providing opportunities for us to witness to them.

Women are also a significant part of our ministry. I have had the chance to teach many women to read. I have a constant stream of volunteers and visitors from diverse backgrounds and parts of the world. My open home and dinner table are a great mission field.

We are here to build a community with our fellow Senegalese. Musicians, artisans, mechanics, carpenters, students, laypeople, and visitors from overseas work side by side on our property. We build, eat, and play together every day and carve out a future full of hope. It is a triumph for the Lord Jesus! May our lives as Christians be a witness and an invitation to know the One who loves us so much and gave His life for each of us. ■



*Herma Bode is commended from Southside Bible Chapel in Colorado Springs, Colorado.*

*Originally published by Echoes International's Mission Magazine, March 2021. Used with permission.*



**Clockwise from left:** Herma and her friends prepare a meal for compound guests; Herma visits the mechanic's shop, helping with its many daily visitors; Like Jugena, many children meet the Bodes through the Wednesday kids' club; After building a pirogue, Labath and several helpers launch it off the Senegalese coast.

<sup>1</sup> Joan Baxter, "Africa's 'Greatest Explorer,'" *BBC News*, *BBC*, 13 December 2000, [News.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/africa/1068950.stm](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-1068950.stm).

# MK CORNER

Missions Magazine Chats with Missionary Kids

## INTERVIEW WITH THE PILLETTE SIBLINGS Mexico, Day 17

BY SARAH DUNLAP

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, I hopped on a Zoom call with Kylah, Lydia, Micah, and Ellia Pillette. I joined from my office in Wall, New Jersey, and they joined from their home in Pátzcuaro, Mexico. As I asked Kylah, Lydia, Micah, and Ellia questions, I got to know the fun-loving siblings and caught a glimpse of their life in Pátzcuaro. Mexico is “home” to the Pillette children, who have spent most of their lives there and know Spanish well. Still, living apart from extended family and making local friends are challenges for them. Please pray for Kylah, Lydia, Micah, and Ellia as they continue their home schooling, supporting their parents’ ministries, and simply growing up.

### Tell me about where you live in Mexico. What are your house and the area like?

**Micah and Kylah:** Well . . . [all laugh]

**Micah:** We live in Mexico—Pátzcuaro.

**Lydia:** We have a huge yard.

**Micah:** We’re 7,500 feet up. We have mountains right in front of us and in the back of us. Well, we live in the mountains.

**Lydia:** We have chickens! We get 10, or sometimes 11, eggs a day.

**Micah:** And we have five gardens. Actually, now, we have six, including a flower garden. We grow tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, . . .

**Lydia:** Basil,

**Micah:** Beets,

**Ellia:** Cilantro,

**Lydia:** Chives and onions,

**Ellia:** Tea,

**Micah:** Limes.

### When someone asks you where you’re from, do you say Mexico or the US?

**Micah:** We say from the US; we say we’re from Oregon.

**Kylah:** When I’m here and they ask me, I say from Mexico because I’ve never lived in the US.



Micah (9), Lydia (11), Ellia (5), and Kylah (13) with their parents, Cabe and Christine.

### Is your area of Mexico hot or cold?

**Kylah:** It’s normal. It’s always the same—70s and 80s.

**Micah:** And, right now, it’s super hot, in the 90s or 100s.

### Do you speak any languages besides English?

**Micah:** Spanish!

**Kylah:** Yes.

**Micah:** We learned all the words when we go to church and everybody talks to us. We never had Spanish classes.

### Do you go to school, or are you home-schooled? What grades are you in?

**Micah:** Home-schooled. I’m in third grade.

**Lydia:** I’m in fifth grade and some sixth grade—mainly sixth grade.

**Ellia:** I don’t know what grade I’m in.

[**Christine:** You’re in first grade.]

**Ellia:** Yeah.

**Kylah:** And I’m in seventh.

### What are your favorite subjects?

**Kylah:** Bits of grammar.

**Lydia:** Mine is spelling.

**Micah:** Mine is geography. Ellia’s is math.

**Ellia:** No, handwriting.

### Tell me about your friends in Mexico. What do you like to do together?

**Kylah:** For a long time that we lived here, there were no kids in our neighborhood, so we didn’t really have any friends, but now, there are a couple of kids who moved in.

**Lydia:** Sometimes, we bring each other stuff that we would like. Our neighbor makes homemade tortillas, and we bring her muffins sometimes.

**Micah:** We normally play with our church friends. We get to play with them at church.

### What else do you do for fun?

**Kylah:** We play sports. We play soccer, baseball, badminton, Slammo, volleyball.

**Lydia:** Capture the flag too. We have a field where we make tepees with sticks.

**Kylah:** I make earrings, and I sell them.

**Lydia:** And I help.

**Micah:** My favorite thing to do is draw!

**Lydia:** We do music and play the piano, ukulele—

**Micah:** A little bit of mandolin.

### What are your favorite foods from Mexico?

**Lydia:** We love tacos, *pozole*, *corundas*, and . . . basically everything.

**Micah:** Pozoles, they're these little beans, sort of—

**Kylah:** Corn and meat in a stew.

**Micah:** It's like with water, and it can be all these colors, like red or green.

**Kylah:** You eat it with lettuce—

**Lydia:** And lime and onions. It's good.

**Micah:** Yeah, it comes with cream and *tostadas*—they're really, really, really hard tortillas. Like, they're crispy [makes a chomping noise].

### Any foods you don't like?

**Micah:** Oh!

**Lydia:** *Menudo*. Menudo is cow's stomach, and it's really yucky!

**Micah:** Well, we've never tried it.

[Christine: His parents have tried it!]

**Ellia:** Sushi and mushrooms!

### What do you like about living in Mexico and being an MK?

**Micah:** Oh, so many things!

**Lydia:** Kids are so much more open [here] than in the United States.

**Micah:** Like they're not shy. I'm actually really shy. Americans are shy.

**Kylah:** One thing I like about being a missionary is that we get to serve the Lord, and we get to live and tell people about the Lord.

### Is anything about being MKs in Mexico difficult?

**Micah:** No, not really! Well, there are a couple things, like how to say words that you mean, but you can't get there, so you say an English word, but you meant the Spanish word.

**Lydia:** My mom's family lives in Texas, so we have no cousins, no grandpas, no uncles here.

### Do you have any prayer requests?

**Lydia:** For the neighbors because they're not Christians. There's a guy in our church named Fernando, and he has cancer. There are lots of people who have died this year and last year.

**Micah:** Because of COVID-19. ■



Clockwise from top: Coloring with friends; Picking fresh corn; Playing with friends at church.

## Learn about Mexico!

- ▶ Mexico is roughly three times the size of Texas.
- ▶ Mexican peoples have 297 languages, but Spanish is the official language.
- ▶ The leading religion is Roman Catholicism.
- ▶ Currently, 45 MKs from Mexico are listed in the *Missionary Prayer Handbook*.
- ▶ Vanilla, one of the world's most popular aromas and flavors, originated in Mexico.



# Tragedy Hits Honduras

## GOD'S PEOPLE RESPOND TO HURRICANES ETA AND

BY ANONYMOUS

The year 2020 will be remembered as a unique time in world history. It was the year filled with worldwide quarantines, mass riots, heated politics, new terminology like *social distancing*, and Zoom meetings. In the United States, we faced shortages of meat, cleaning supplies, and bathroom tissue; unemployment; and for some, the loss of loved ones. Yet, compared with many places around the world, we suffered little materially. We enjoyed paid furloughs, extended unemployment benefits, stimulus packages for small businesses and individuals, and the best health-care system on the planet.

In much of Africa, Asia, and Central and South America, people were not as privileged. In many of these places, there was and is little, if any, government assistance. Under normal conditions, most live from week to week, earning only enough to maintain a simple lifestyle—just staying alive has been their chief concern. During this time, many saints around North America and Europe responded to cries for help with funds for food, medical supplies, and other necessities.

### THE DISASTERS

In November 2020, just when things were starting to get back to normal and many were returning to work, major tragedy struck yet again as two powerful hurricanes swept across Central America. On November 3, Hurricane Eta ripped through

the region. This Category 4 storm arrived with torrential rains and powerful winds of up to 150 miles per hour, causing widespread destruction across northern Honduras.<sup>1</sup> During its slow three-day trek across Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala, Eta downgraded to a tropical storm and then to a tropical depression. Heavy rains in much of Honduras caused river levels to rise, producing flooding and landslides across the northern part of the country. After Hurricane Mitch in 1998, Eta was the strongest storm to impact the region.<sup>2</sup>

Two weeks later, on November 18, Hurricane Iota clobbered northern Honduras, following almost the same path as Hurricane Eta. Rainfall from the two hurricanes totaled between 15 and 25 inches for much of Honduras. Still reeling from Eta, many of the communities in the departments of Puerto Cortés, Yoro, Atlántida, Santa Barbara, Olancho, and Colón were most heavily affected, which made cleanup, reconstruction, and distribution of food and humanitarian aid virtually impossible and further worsened the situation.

It was reported that the storms isolated nearly 370,000 people and more than 100 people died as a result of flooding. Thousands of houses were completely submerged in water and mud, resulting in the loss of belongings, and most of the homes adjacent to the Chamelecón River were destroyed. The flooding damaged more than 900 roads and destroyed 62 bridges.<sup>3</sup>



Above (L-R): A major street near the international airport in San Pedro Sula is filled with mud and debris weeks after the flooding subsided; In places like La Lima, the cleanup is difficult and slow.



## THE RESPONSE

Yet again, believers in other parts of the world quickly responded. Believers in the United States, Canada, and Germany, in particular, sent funds to purchase essential items like food, clothing, beds, and kitchen utensils. Since these initial needs were met, financial contributions have continued to flow into the region, and many believers' houses are being repaired or rebuilt. Many Honduran Christians devote weeks of their time to help in the reconstruction, working free of charge. Yet some people are still living in temporary situations—with family, in fellow believers' homes, and even in schools.

Months after the hurricanes hit, many bridges are still out, and various roads are unrepaired. Some people only recently returned to their homes after cleaning up the mud (up to four-foot deep in some), one wheelbarrow load at a time. Due to the wonderful, Christlike spirit of the believers, the harmony they have in working together, and several gifted people to direct the work, they are able to build simple two- or three-bedroom homes in two weeks or less for \$5,000–\$10,000.

Financial support from CMML and MSC Canada, through their disaster relief funds, and from many local assemblies and individuals have made it possible to rebuild homes and purchase the material needed to finish the remaining construction work. The believers in Honduras have expressed that they are overwhelmed by the love and generosity of you who provided so abundantly for saints unknown to you on this side of glory. Words cannot express the gratitude they feel nor the joy your bigheartedness and liberality has brought into their lives as you lay up treasures in heaven.

Unless the Lord returns for His Bride soon, these disasters were not the last ones we will see take place either close to home or in a faraway country. May the Lord continue to move in the hearts and lives of His people to lay aside freely and give generously to help meet the needs of our fellow saints. ■



<sup>1</sup> Sevil Omer, "2020 Hurricane Eta: Facts and How to Help," *World Vision*, 9 November 2020, [WorldVision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2020-hurricane-eta-facts](https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2020-hurricane-eta-facts). <sup>2</sup> Omer, "2020 Hurricane Eta." <sup>3</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "Operation Update No. 2: Honduras / Hurricane Eta & Iota," *ReliefWeb*, OCHA, 21 January 2021, [ReliefWeb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MDR43007OU2HON.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MDR43007OU2HON.pdf).

**From top (L–R):** Many face the loss of their house and everything it contained; The powerful floodwaters swept away more than 60 bridges; Church elder Fredi Rios (right) uses one of his hardware store's trucks to help commended worker Eliseo Lopez (left) transport relief materials; The mudline on this house in Jardines de la Sierra, Colón, marks the floodwaters' height; Fredi Rios (second from left) provides construction material from his hardware store virtually at cost and delivers it to fellow believers for free; Volunteers rebuild a house in Jardines de la Sierra, where there is no electrical power for miles; Eliseo Lopez oversees all the rebuilding: designing the layouts, organizing the crews, purchasing the material, and supervising the construction.

# HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS SUPPORT THE GOSPEL

BY MARK & BRENDA BACHERT

Last November, Hurricanes Eta and Iota hit Nicaragua and Honduras two weeks apart, and the two storms followed almost the same path. The destruction of so many people's lives was devastating. The hurricanes affected Honduras most, including an area of the country with several assemblies and many Christians.

Through generous donations from many individuals and assemblies, we have been able to help those in need. We have distributed the funds through the local leadership of several believers. This support has enabled gospel halls to be repaired; homes for believers who lost everything to be built; and beds, fridges, and stoves to be purchased for many in need. We praise God that we believe the overwhelming need has been met.

Here in Nicaragua, Bible calendars and food provisions were sent up the river three times to the Bosawás Rainforest, where Aaron, a young man who attends the assembly in Managua, is from. Several years ago, we visited this extremely isolated area of the country and shared the Gospel. We pray that, through the aid, many people may open their hearts to the Gospel. We visited this area in June and preached Christ in several of the communities. ■



Mark and Brenda Bachert are commended from Clinton Gospel Hall in Clinton, Ontario, and River Road Gospel Hall in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

Top (L-R): Several men rebuild a house; Sharing the Gospel with his community, Aaron distributes a stack of calendars. Bottom (L-R): A family receives a mattress; In Honduras, a woman is thankful for a new stove.

## Missionary Kids Education Assistance Fund

BY PHILIP C. PARSONS



One of the many challenges facing missionary families is the cost of educating their children. To alleviate part of that burden, CMML maintains the Missionary Kids Educational Assistance Fund (MKEAF), which provides missionary families with financial assistance.

The fund began in 1968 with a legacy, which came from the Cameron sisters, who were schoolteachers. Through the years, gifts from the Lord's people perpetuated MKEAF. The account is revolving: funds on hand are distributed, and then, gifts received from individuals and assemblies replenish the fund. Each year, missionaries report their children's annual education cost, and for the 2020–2021 school year, they reported a total need of approximately \$158,088. MKEAF was able to provide

more than \$142,286 to assist 46 missionary families, with 106 children benefiting from those gifts.

For 53 years, MKEAF has been a wonderful provision for missionary families. From around the world, the appreciation from missionaries resonates. One missionary wrote, "We praise God for the hearts of those moved to pray and give and share the burden of educational expenses. It is a real help and blessing and very much appreciated."

The original \$50,000, although expended long ago, still blesses families. Education costs are rising and so must our commitment to provide for missionaries' children through MKEAF. We pray the Lord will continue to burden hearts to meet this important need. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) ■