

July 2025

MISSIONS

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a dark t-shirt, in a swimming pool. She has her eyes closed and her hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture. A man with grey hair, wearing a dark patterned shirt, is behind her, his hands resting on her shoulders, also with his eyes closed. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and a blue structure, possibly a pool deck or building.

Philippines
A Tapestry of
Spiritual Gifts
in Action

United States
Mentoring the
Next Generation
of Missionaries

Japan
An Interview
with MKs



THINKING IT THROUGH

BY ROB SULLIVAN

The Lord and His Intimates

The Garden of Gethsemane is the backdrop for one of the most important events recorded within the Gospels. It has been said that, in the place of a garden, the first Adam lost his bout with a serpent, whereas the second Adam won His. The Garden of Gethsemane also provides a setting where both the full humanity and full deity of the Messiah are on display:

Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch." (Mark 14:32–34)

Yet there is something else evident in the text. For some reason, the Lord differentiates and separates Peter and the two sons of Zebedee from the other disciples. Why? This is not the only time recorded in Scripture where the Lord does so. Consider Mark 5:35–38:

While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

Again, the Lord separates Peter, James, and John from the rest. We see this once more on the Mount of Transfiguration:

Now, after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And

behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. (Matthew 17:1–3)

The text says the Lord Jesus takes these three "by themselves" up the mountain. Why not take all 12 for such a momentous event? Does the Lord like Peter, James, and John more than the others?

We know God doesn't play favorites and is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11 KJV). Yet, while the Lord doesn't have favorites, He does have His intimates.¹

While the Lord doesn't have favorites, He does have His intimates.

Peter, James, and John respond to the Lord in a way that is different from others, even the rest of the disciples. And the way they approach the Lord brings about closer intimacy

and fellowship with Him.

Peter is criticized, and rightly so, for denying the Lord three times on the night of His betrayal. But at least Peter was there, just outside where the Lord was being held during the initial trials. None of the others, save for John, even dared to show up. As far as John is concerned, he is the only one of the disciples who appears during the crucifixion the next day. And James is the first of these disciples who will give his life for the Lord (Acts 12:2).

The other eight disciples (apart from Judas) will give their lives for the Lord Jesus Christ, both in the living and the dying, and will turn the world upside down for Him. Yet there is something different about Jesus's relationship with Peter, James, and John. They cannot get enough of the Lord. Their love seems to be something more.

Indeed, the Lord has His intimates. These three have a special, close longing for the Lord that separates them from even the finest of people. That is something we all ought to aspire to. Don't you want to be one of those who are so close to the Lord that you can hear and be part of the longings of His heart? ■

Rob Sullivan, CMML president

¹ Although several preachers have shared this idea over the years, I first heard it from William MacDonald. See, for example, *Believer's Bible Commentary*, edited by Art Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2016), 1189.

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COVER PHOTO: Baptism in Cuatro, Philippines—Photo courtesy of Emil and Doreen Kwick



A TAPESTRY OF *Gifts in Action*

Serving Together for the Gospel in Cuatro, Philippines

BY EMIL & DOREEN KVICK

Over the past 10 years of residing in the Philippines, we have witnessed the Lord faithfully orchestrating the arrival of individuals from diverse backgrounds and nations and uniquely gifted to contribute to the mission of reaching Cuatro, an impoverished community in Cainta, Rizal, and its surrounding communities. In different seasons and through various challenges, many of the ministries in Cuatro were birthed out of necessity—needs that arose organically from within the community. Time and again, God brought the right people with the right gifts at precisely the right moment. Whether educators, health care workers, builders, or youth mentors, every person has played a vital role in the unfolding story of transformation.

This story is more than just a series of timely interventions; it is a vivid demonstration of the unity and diversity within the body of Christ. As described in 1 Corinthians 12:12–27, the body is made up of many parts with distinct functions, yet all work together for a common purpose. Just as the human body relies on each part to function well, so these ministries have flourished through the interconnectedness and collaboration of believers.

We are continually amazed by the way the Lord weaves people together for His purposes.

Each individual, offering his or her unique skills and spiritual gifts in obedience to God's call, has helped shape a ministry that is both resilient and responsive. No role has been insignificant; from administrative work behind the scenes to hands-on service in the field, all these contributions have been essential to the health and growth of the mission in Cuatro.

The beauty of this collective effort lies not only in its function but also in its fruit. As the body of Christ has come together in unity, empowered by the Spirit, what began as a small and focused outreach has expanded into a multifaceted ministry.

Today, its impact extends beyond individual lives to entire families and communities, offering not only practical support but also the life-giving message of the Gospel.

We are continually amazed by the way the Lord weaves people together for His purposes, reminding us that while our roles differ, we are united in one Spirit, serving one mission, and following one Savior.

Growth rooted in partnership

This kingdom work, however, began long before our arrival. The early seeds of ministry were sown through simple yet powerful acts of compassion: abandoned and orphaned children were welcomed into a children's home, and mothers unable to afford prenatal care found support through a free birthing center, which has experienced remarkable growth in both capacity and impact.



What began with one midwife and a handful of volunteers has now become a professional, mission-driven health care hub. Led by head midwife Rona, the team includes four additional midwives, three office staff, a registered nurse, two doctors, and several missionaries—18 staff in total. The clinic now supports approximately 30 births each month, primarily among women with limited access to quality medical care.

Yet the clinic offers more than just health care. It's a place

From top: The students and staff at Faith Academy enjoy this view over the capital, Manila; New Faith Family Children's Home helps orphaned and abandoned children.

where spiritual seeds are sown. Through morning devotions, Bible distribution, and prayerful care, many women encounter Christ's love in transformative ways. Supported by a local pastor and a team of volunteers, a family ministry outreach has become a bridge to deeper spiritual engagement for many families. We ask for your continued prayers—for the women, the children, and the faith that is taking root through this vital ministry.



Education and holistic development

From its beginning of caring for children and new mothers, the ministry steadily grew to include education through the establishment of Cuatro Christian School, which now serves over 500 students from prekindergarten through 12th grade.

As the school expanded, so did its vision for holistic development. Emil launched one program that introduced a woodworking class for 9th- and 10th-grade male students. This hands-on learning space quickly became more than just a technical course—it grew into a platform for mentorship and discipleship. Morning devotions around the workbench, often shared over bananas, foster a deep sense of belonging and purpose.



For many of these young men—most from single-parent households and financially struggling backgrounds—this environment offers practical skills and spiritual formation. Their projects range from pencil cases and percussion boxes to full-sized desks and beds crafted from recycled pallet wood.



Simultaneously, the Lord opened doors beyond Cuatro. Doreen joined the faculty at nearby Faith Academy as a missionary high school mathematics teacher. Founded in 1957, Faith Academy serves the children of missionaries, local pastors, and business professionals. With around 500 students and a diverse team of 100 educators from around the world, the school reflects a rich mosaic of cultural and spiritual backgrounds.



Its demographic has evolved: Filipino students now make up 39 percent of the student body, and Chinese enrollment has increased to 13 percent due to recent restrictions in China. Faith Academy not only offers academic excellence but also nurtures students to think biblically, celebrate cultural diversity, and live with a missions focus.

The academy's proximity—just under two miles, or three kilometers, from Cuatro—has made collaboration natural and effective. Students from Faith Academy serve in the community with children's programs and partner with Cuatro Christian School for community outreach and disaster response. These joint efforts, especially in the aftermath of typhoons and floods, provide real-life opportunities for young people to embody the love and compassion of Christ in service.



Left (from top, L-R): Over 30 babies are born every month at Hope Alive Birthing Clinic; Doreen (right) enjoys a moment with head midwife Rona; This student is proud of his handmade project from Emil's woodworking class; Pastor Bong, who works with Emil, snaps a photo of Emil helping two young men practice woodworking skills. **Right (from top, L-R):** Faith Academy students work on math problems; A team works on the back of Cuatro Christian School, which remains under construction; Cuatro Christian School also serves as a meeting place for a local church; Mrs. D. Aranas (center, in white) serves as director of Cuatro Christian School.

A generation on fire

While education and health care have been critical pillars, ministry to youth remains one of the most dynamic aspects of the work in Cuatro. Youth Lab emerged during the COVID-19 lockdown, a season marked by disconnection and uncertainty. Soon, over 700 young people were meeting weekly to hear God's Word, worship, and find hope.

From this gathering, small discipleship groups were formed, offering spiritual guidance and fellowship at a time when many people felt isolated. These groups nurtured friendships, answered tough questions about faith, and helped young people form personal relationships with God.

As life returned to normal and in-person routines resumed, participation decreased due to school and work obligations. Still, a faithful core remains, and today, Youth Lab consistently ministers to about 100 youths each week. The focus is now on those aged 16 to 25—a life stage filled with possibility, identity-forming questions, and a hunger for purpose.



Each week, young people from various church backgrounds, as well as those still seeking truth, come together to grow in community and deepen their understanding of the Gospel.

Under the leadership of two Filipino believers, Youth Lab has become a vibrant space for discipleship, leadership development, and spiritual formation. The young adults are not only being poured into; they are also stepping up to lead.

Would you join us in prayer for these young hearts? Pray they will be rooted in the Word, empowered by the Spirit, and bold in their witness. May they live lives marked by conviction, compassion, and commitment to Christ.

Living among the people we serve

After much prayer and discussion, we felt led to live among those we serve and relocated to the Cuatro community earlier this year. Living in Cuatro has given us a front-row seat to the daily realities our neighbors face: limited access to health care, education, and basic resources. It has also allowed us to be present in ways that programs alone cannot replicate. Trust is earned through consistency, empathy, and shared experience. Over time, relationships will be deepened as neighbors and friends.

This presence has opened the door to deeper discipleship and, hopefully, lasting impact. We've learned that the most meaningful ministry flows not from programs or planning but vulnerability, faithfulness, and a heart that says, "I'm with you."

Living and serving in Cuatro has reshaped our understanding of missions. What began as an effort to help others has become a journey of mutual transformation. We have seen firsthand the power of the body of Christ—diverse, interconnected, and united in purpose. When each part offers its gifts in obedience, the church becomes a radiant expression of God's kingdom.

As we reflect on these past 10 years, we are filled with gratitude for the people God has brought into our lives, the stories of redemption we've witnessed, and the community that has shaped and sustained us. We remain hopeful and prayerful for what lies ahead, and we invite you to join us—in prayer, in partnership, and perhaps even in person. Together, as many parts of one body, we can continue to bring the hope of the Gospel to Cuatro and beyond. ■



Emil and Doreen Kvick are commended from Marineview Chapel in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Left: Youth from Cuatro attend Youth Lab. **Right (from top, L-R):** The Cuatro community, which includes this street, is now both ministry and home for Emil and Doreen; A crowd gathers for the special occasion of a baptism; Emil baptizes a young person; Kids from the Cuatro area hang out.

Wearing Out for the Gospel

THE LORD USES A REFOCUSED
MISSIONARY TO PREPARE
THE NEXT GENERATION

BY SHARON FLEMING



“We shouldn’t be retired, we should be retreaded,” Bert Banzhaf used to tell his wife, Jo. Bert is with the Lord now, but Jo, 92, is well “retreaded.” The Lord has given her a dynamic ministry mentoring younger believers interested in pursuing missions.

Years ago, Jo and her first husband supported missionaries, including Bert and Bonna Banzhaf in Africa. After Jo’s husband and Bert’s wife passed away, she eventually married Bert and joined him in South Africa for 12 years before his health forced them back to the States. Those years gave her an understanding of what is needed to be effective on the mission field.

Now one of CMML’s refocused missionaries, Jo remains enthusiastic about missions. A few years ago, the church Jo attends, Littleton Bible Chapel in Colorado, formed a commendation committee to work with 12 college-and-career-aged people interested in missions. Jo jumped at the chance to mentor several and has worked with five officially and four unofficially. I recently heard about Jo’s ministry and wanted to know more, so I gave her a call. As we chatted, I saw how the Lord can build up the next generation of missionaries through those who have gone before them.

Getting to the heart of the matter

Jo told me she meets with the mentees in person, “with lots of texting in between,” she laughed. And, of course, there’s lots of prayer involved. They discuss everything from preparation for ministry to adjusting to a new culture and ministry.

I asked Jo to name the most important quality for a prospective missionary. After a long pause, she asked with a laugh, “Is that a trick question?” Then, she said, “I want to know their relationship with the Lord. Are they truly saved and walking closely with Him?” Next, “What is the source of their interest in missions? It needs to be the Lord moving in their lives without any other motivation.” In each conversation, Jo and the mentees explore the ways God is leading, and she encourages them to make His will theirs.

Dealing with challenges now

Jo firmly believes that forgiveness is an important topic every prospective missionary must deal with. “If they have unresolved problems with others here,” she explained, “those will follow them to their field of service.” So, over thousands of hours, Jo and the young

people work through those feelings. Sometimes, family issues or bitterness comes to light.

Thankfully, the Lord has taught Jo to use wise, calm counsel and a little humor to defuse some seemingly impossible situations. Once a woman was weeping about the difficulty of resolving an issue. Jo asked her, "How do you eat a blue elephant?" The woman stopped crying and looked at Jo questioningly. Jo answered, "One bite at a time—and that's how we're going to deal with this."

“SHE LOOKS TO SCRIPTURE FOR WISDOM TO HELP EACH ONE PREPARE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR THE MISSION FIELD.”

Taking practical steps forward

Jo has used several personality and spiritual gift tests to help the mentees understand themselves and know what kind of ministry would suit them best. She also studies them and their needs and then looks to Scripture for wisdom to help each one prepare as much as possible for the mission field.

The ability to fit into other cultures, which includes learning to speak the language, is another absolute necessity. Jo suggests the prospective missionaries study beforehand as much as they can—learn what offends and what is expected. "And," Jo told me, "Never, *never* say, 'In America, we do this.'"

Besides talking and praying with the prospective missionaries, Jo tries to involve them in evangelism. "If they aren't doing it here," she said, "they won't do it when they get to the field."

¹ Jo emphasized that she doesn't believe in the legend.

One woman likes to bake, so Jo asked her to make hot cross buns for Easter to serve at the secular retirement community where Jo lives. The two women placed the buns on a table in the dining room with two signs: one with the legend behind the buns and the other with the true gospel message.¹ Today, this woman lives with her husband in an immigrant neighborhood and uses her baking to get to know her neighbors.

Picking up the baton

Jo encourages these prospective missionaries, who have become her surrogate grandchildren, and they are picking up the baton she can no longer carry—the most encouraging thing anyone could do for her, she said. Some will soon move to the field, while others are serving in new life phases, but Jo continues unofficially mentoring four. Pray that the Lord will equip the believers still preparing, allow the outgoing missionaries to enter their countries, and grant Jo wisdom and understanding.

Although Jo is blind in the right side of both eyes due to a stroke and has glaucoma, she keeps going with the Lord's help. "You don't lose your gift," she said, "but you do what you are physically able. There's always something you can do. My body is doing exactly what God designed it to do—wear out. I want to do it gracefully." ■

Sharon Fleming, commended from Hillview Bible Chapel in California, serves on CMML's missionary care team.



Jo Banzhaf is commended from Crossroads Community Church in Framingham, Massachusetts.

Praying for Refocused Missionaries

When missionaries retire from service on the foreign mission field, their passion for serving Christ doesn't change. Simply put, a missionary never stops being a missionary. That's why, when preparing the 2006 *Missionary Prayer Handbook*, CMML chose to replace the term *retired* with *refocused*.

Many people question what refocused ministries entail. The 117 refocused missionaries listed in the 2025 MPH have differing talents, circumstances, and outreaches, but they all point others to Christ. Some translate gospel-focused materials and teach Bible classes online or in person. Others hold Bible studies and write devotional messages. Many stay in contact with the Christians in their former country of service and spread awareness about the conditions and needs there. Most support missions through prayer, and some even mentor prospective missionaries.

As refocused missionaries continue living for Christ, they need our prayers. Using the MPH, you can pray for them daily. May we encourage them as they have, so faithfully and for so long, encouraged others.

Scan the QR code to learn more about refocused ministries in the September/October 2021 issue.



Ask a Missionary?

Missions work around the world is unique—different from what friends and family at home encounter day to day. So, to learn about life on the field while getting to know our missionaries better, we asked them to share their firsthand experience or advice.

QUESTION: Have you learned to cook the cuisine of the country or people group you serve in? If so, tell us about your favorite dish to prepare.

OTHER OVERSEAS SERVICE

Melli Johnson



The main dish we enjoy in Burundi (and I make often because it's Ken's favorite meal) is beans and rice. The first time I cooked it was after an organization had donated huge bags of lentils and I had been asked to cook a big meal for visitors.

I browned minced garlic and chopped onions, green peppers, and carrots. Then, I added the "beans"—lentils in this case—that had been soaking overnight. I added raw peanuts (they help the body absorb the protein in beans, especially needed in children suffering from kwashiorkor, or severe protein deficiency). I let that simmer together as I cooked the rice.

It tasted delicious, but one woman asked rather loudly, "Did you drain the beans after soaking them?" I said, "No, was I supposed to?" She smiled and said it's good to drain them and to make sure you remove small stones. Yikes! I hoped no one bit into any grit or pebbles!

PERU

Mindy Ramirez



In our part of Peru, a daily staple is rice. In fact, some say if they haven't eaten rice that day, they haven't eaten! I have learned to prepare it the way they do—with oil, garlic, and salt—but I am always nervous when I have Peruvians over.

I have also learned to make some of the dishes that go with rice, including different ways to prepare chicken, beef, pork, and fish, though I have never cooked guinea pig (a traditional food). My favorite dish to prepare is *arroz tapado*, which is ground beef with spices, olives, raisins, and hard-boiled egg that goes with rice. And you can't forget the fried plantain on the side!

BRAZIL

Jeanne Lipsi



Yes, I have learned, and my favorite dish is *feijoada*! It's a black bean stew with all parts of the pork floating around: ear, foot, ribs, etc. It's delicious! The history of this dish dates back to when Brazil was being colonized by the Portuguese and there was slavery. The owners wanted the "noble" parts of the pork, and the slaves could keep the rest. Hence, *feijoada* was invented! You eat it with white rice, sliced kale, diced oranges, and *farofa* (grated manioc). You can add some hot peppers if you like it spicy. If you come to Brazil, you must try *feijoada*!

CMML MISSIONARY CARE

Sharon Fleming



When serving on the mission field, we lived in Peru for eight years before moving to Colombia for 16 years. We truly loved Peruvian cuisine, which is a fusion of several cultures, including Chinese. Our favorite dish is *lomo saltado*, stir-fried tenderloin. It is a tender cut of beef stir-fried with onions, garlic, scallions, a spicy Peruvian pepper, soy sauce, tomato, and cilantro. Our family likes to make it a little saucier by adding cornstarch and water. It is served with rice and french fries!

PARAGUAY

Rosemary Konkol



At Easter, almost everyone bakes and shares a bread called *chipa*. It's made from manioc flour, cornmeal, and cheese. Few follow recipes, having learned from their mothers or grandmothers. It is traditional to offer your *chipa* to anyone who comes to visit, so many people know how others make it. I am more of a cups-and-tablespoons-type baker, but I learned a recipe that turns out really good. I feel very happy when nationals say, "She makes really good *chipa*."

PHILIPPINES

Jerry Uy



Tau yew bah, a Taiwanese-cuisine pork dish I learned in the Philippines, was always served by Auntie Nene at her home after our Saturday night Bible study. It became my No. 1 favorite through the years. Friends often request the recipe whenever I cook it for gatherings. Auntie Nene died this year at 96. She was my oldest convert.

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ASK YOUR QUESTIONS! Visit [CMML.us/askamissionary](https://cmml.us/askamissionary) to submit your question—it might be selected for a future issue!

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