

MAY | JUNE 2016

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For Richer, For Poorer

Madagascar's culture of generosity hides the idolization of wealth.



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FOR HER.



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For Richer, For Poorer

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Becky Thomton

Editor in Chief

Becky, John and little Zachary are expecting Baby #2 in late September.



ANDRE BOHRER

FOR YEARS, I BALKED at the whole “parenting” thing. I just didn’t think I was cut out for it. I thought it would be more work than I could handle, that it would expose all my weaknesses, and that my life would crumble under the weight.

Then our son, Zachary, was born in November 2014, and surprise! It was more than I could handle. It did expose all my weaknesses. And for a little while, it felt like life had crumbled.

This tiny human was a precious gift, but so much work. I had no idea how to find a new normal. But eventually, probably around the time Zachary started sleeping through the night (hallelujah!), life did start to get manageable again. I embraced routine like never before, and my husband, John, and I settled into new, very full, very busy lives.

So when I read Rachel Streich’s article about the dangers of hurried families (“Help for the Hurried” starting on page 26), I wondered where we fell on the spectrum of being “too busy.”

We have adjusted to new demands of life, but I don’t want to sacrifice things that we still value. How about you? Are you letting regular tasks get in the way of having an eternal influence? Do you continually evaluate your schedule and ask the Lord to guide you in your choices?

One encouraging thing for John and me is the small-group Bible study we host in our home each week. Making dinner for a group adds a little work to our full week, but we know community is essential, and with a little one who goes to bed early, our only option is to host it ourselves. Yet the blessing we get from the group far outweighs the cost.

That’s my encouragement to you today. As you look at your activities, consider what God might be calling you to give up, but also what new things He

might be asking you to invest in.

Whatever your day looks like, I pray you’re walking with Him. Turn the page for more encouragement in your journey with God. ●

CONSIDER WHAT GOD MIGHT BE CALLING YOU TO GIVE UP, BUT ALSO WHAT NEW THINGS HE MIGHT BE ASKING YOU TO INVEST IN.

Becky

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Steve Douglass

President, Campus Crusade for Christ/Cru



GUY GERARD

Five Tips For Building Effective Partnerships

I have been involved with quite a few partnerships in ministry. Some have succeeded tremendously. Others have not done as well. Maybe you are contemplating working together with other Christians on a project. If so, here are five tips from my experience that might help your effort:

Common Outcomes

Different people and organizations have different callings from God. But they can work together well if they can agree on outcomes that are mutually beneficial. For example, Christian humanitarian aid organizations often team up with evangelism and discipleship ministries because they agree on the outcome of ministering to people.

Complementary Contributions

Not only can callings be diverse, but so can strengths. Some ministries, for example, are very effective in using the Internet to expose large numbers of people to the gospel. A local church is more likely to be good at assimilating new converts into fellowship and following up. Those different contributions complement one another in advancing the kingdom of God.

Unselfish Humility

Where differences exist, so can comparisons. Considering ourselves better than others and looking down on others is sin. Philippians 2:3 says, "In humility value others above yourselves" (New International Version).

Improved Fruitfulness

The ultimate value of most partnerships among ministries is to increase fruitfulness to advance the kingdom of God. Usually ministries and churches can accomplish more together than they can separately. For example, ministries can team up to share expertise and expenses to seek to keep the doors open when opposition to Christian efforts arises.

Commitment to Action

There is a big difference between just talking about something and taking effective action. Partnership projects should have a purpose toward which all of the partners commit to be involved. For example, in July 2000 a group of several hundred missions leaders met to discuss the fact that many unreached people groups had no one even trying to reach them. God helped us realize that we needed to commit to take dramatic action. That week, the Table 71 partnership was formed and, by God's grace, has seen absolutely remarkable results.

As you contemplate entering into partnership with others to accomplish God's purpose, be sure to forge the alliance in ways that make it well worth your time and that of others. God is very pleased when His children work together in unity—especially when they do it well! ●

Yours in Christ,

Steve Douglass

God is very pleased when His children work together in unity—especially when they do it well!

EXERCISE YOUR FAITH & REACH THE WORLD



Fuel your ministry!



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Will you pray daily for the fulfillment of the Great Commission?

The body of Christ has prayed faithfully for generations that God would fulfill the Great Commission. We invite you to join a specific prayer initiative, *Pray2020*, asking God to raise up 10 million Christ-centered multiplying disciples by 2020 so that everyone might know someone who truly follows Jesus.

A GOOD TIME TO BEGIN:

Set a reminder alarm to pray daily at 20:20 (8:20 p.m.) Pray the words of Matthew 9:37-38, and pray, “Lord, **MOLD** our hearts to be one with Your heart. **MULTIPLY** our lives through others. **MOBILIZE** laborers through prayer and ministry efforts.”



#pray2020

pray2020.org

cru

cru.org

PRAY 2020

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.’” — Matthew 9:37-38

STORYLINES

“

God put you on the journey of life. You are not here by chance or accident; you are here because God put you here.”

—BILLY GRAHAM

Krakow, Poland

The interior of St. Mary's Church, on the city's main square and originally built in the 13th century, appears in the 1993 film *Schindler's List*.

Photograph by
Guy Gerrard



Who Are the Most Hated?



CLAUDIA DEWALD

As I tucked my 7-year-old son into bed, he asked me a question, “Who are the most hated people?”

I’d just given him a scenario: “If you had two airplane tickets that you could give to anyone in the world, who would you give them to?” Living in Florida, I was expecting him to say he’d give his tickets to his two cousins in Tennessee.

His response threw me. “Who are the most hated people?” he asked back. I fumbled around for an answer, saying that there are many people who are hated overseas.

“I’d give my tickets to them,” he said. “Imagine how they must feel.”

Walking downstairs, I couldn’t help but think about the refugee

crisis. I’d just learned from Mark Gaither about the Yazidi refugees fleeing Iraq. Mark works with Global Aid Network®, the humanitarian aid ministry of Cru. The Yazidis, often hated by both Christians and Muslims for their syncretic belief system, meet my son’s criteria.

In 2014, around 200,000 Yazidis were displaced by ISIS, and 50,000 fled to the Sinjar Mountains, where they faced massacre. In 2015, the same week as the Paris attacks, Kurdish forces found mass graves in the town of Sinjar. All told, the United Nations confirms that 5,000 men had been executed, and 7,000 women and children captured.

“As of now, the Yazidis are caught in limbo,” Mark says. “No home to return to, and no one to take them in.”

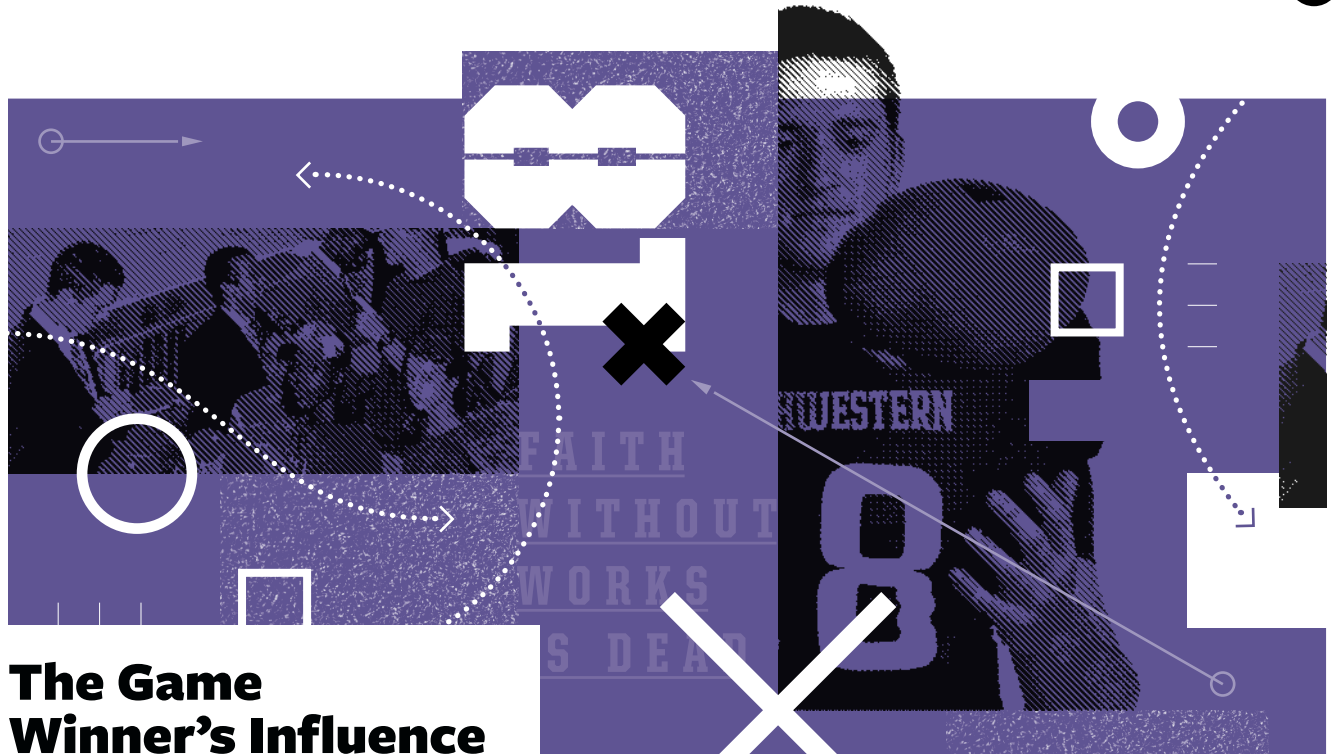
Cru staff members and the church in Turkey requested aid for the Yazidis, and GAIN® was able to respond to meet a host of immediate needs.

Through partnerships in the Middle East, GAIN gives vital aid to refugees in Iraq, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Christian Arabs facilitate distribution.

In a six-month period in 2015, GAIN provided:

- Meals for 267,360 refugees
- Housing—36 tents and 4,120 tarps—to shelter the homeless
- Blankets to keep 3,000 people warm
- Clothing for 8,074 people, and shoes for 3,951 people who had none
- Mobility for the disabled with 202 wheelchairs, 173 walkers, 21 PET® carts, 209 pairs of crutches and 57 canes

My 7-year-old would approve. ●



The Game Winner's Influence

MATT PAMER

In the 2015 football season opener for the Northwestern Wildcats, quarterback Clayton Thorson helped orchestrate a 16-6 win over the Stanford Cardinal with a 42-yard touchdown run. After the game, Clayton spoke about his faith and signed autographs as part of a Faith and Family Day post-game event.

The 6-foot-4-inch redshirt freshman was one of nine current players who

attended the event in partnership with the university and Athletes in Action, Cru's sports ministry. AIA distributed player testimony cards—each card had a photo of a player on the front and his faith story on the back.

Clayton's faith story includes a Scripture verse from James 2: "Faith without works is dead." Clayton wrote, "This verse became real to me in high school and again in college, when I had to decide again which path I was going to go down."

Faith and Family Nights have been another effective way to communicate the gospel on campuses across the U.S. Northwestern's basketball team participated in one such event.

AIA staff member Jamie Borchik serves at Northwestern. "Our heart is to see athletic influencers transformed into Christ-exalting leaders for a lifetime," he says.

To learn about hosting a Faith and Family Night at a school near you, visit athletesinaction.org. ●

Six Minutes to Faith

By Emilie Vinson

The film follows a woman who leaves on a long journey without saying goodbye to the man she loves. She begins to fear he has given up on her, never knowing he is fiercely pursuing her and never far behind. Ultimately, the film illustrates the Christian perspective on how God relentlessly pursues all of us with His love. ●

IN AUSTRALIA, staff members with Student Life (as Cru is known there) decided to try something new. They created a six-minute film, *The Parting Gift*, available through a smartphone app of the same name, hoping to more effectively engage students on college campuses in spiritual discussions.

1,173 number of times *The Parting Gift* app was downloaded last year

769 number of times the message of Jesus has been shared because of the app

6 number of countries where people have used the app

395 number of times people have requested more information about Jesus because of the app

44 number of people who accepted Christ on the spot after watching the video

For more information, search your app store for *The Parting Gift* and download the free app.

Jesus Or My Family?



JOSHUA KUMUNDA

When Tariku became a Christian in Ethiopia, he was quickly faced with a difficult choice.



“Tariku, I give you a choice between Jesus and family. Choose.”

“Dad, I choose Jesus.”

Thirteen-year-old Tariku Fufa had just heard about Jesus from his older brother and was choosing to follow Him.

“For the first time, I knew Someone who could love me,” he says. “That’s the moment I gave my life to Christ.”

Tariku’s excitement over his new faith was short-lived, as he soon found himself having to choose between his earthly father and his heavenly one.

Tariku’s decision was costly. “My dad beat me up,” he says. “My siblings cheered him on, saying, ‘Dad, do it. Kill him.’ He cut my face. There are scars still.”

Thrown out of his home that night, Tariku was forced to survive alone on the streets of Begi, Ethiopia, for the next six years.

“Life was very hard,” he says.

Tariku suffered with asthma, and had an attack while working in a kitchen one day. In what he believed were the last moments of his life, Tariku heard the Lord speak.

“I heard the quiet voice of the Lord flowing down into my heart,” he says. “Not a real sound, but I could hear it inside. God said, *Tariku, My son, don’t cry. You are not without help.*”

Tariku felt God say he would be healed

from his asthma and spend the rest of his life spreading the gospel.

But first, God wanted to use Tariku to minister to his family. After six years of separation, Tariku's father showed up at his school.

"Is this the real Tariku, or a ghost?" his father said.

"Dad, remember six years ago, when you kicked me out of your home?" Tariku asked. "You abandoned me, rejected me, left me for dead. But Jesus became my dad. Jesus became my mom, my sister, my brother. Jesus became everything I needed."

As his dad cried and asked for Tariku's forgiveness, Tariku embraced him.

"He said, 'Son, I love you,'" Tariku remembers. "That was the sweetest moment of my life."

Tariku's father invited him home. When his siblings saw Tariku alive, they gave their lives to Christ. The people in his hometown marveled over what had happened in his family, saying, "Jesus of Tariku is Lord indeed."

Just as God had spoken over his life years before, Tariku began taking the good news of Jesus to the world. He now works for Cru as the director for student-led movements in Southern and Eastern Africa. What began as a ministry to his family has turned into a ministry to Africans in 23 countries. ●

TARIKU WAS FORCED TO SURVIVE ALONE ON THE STREETS OF BEGI, ETHIOPIA, FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS.



KAI GIBBONS

Christ Before Culture

LAURA BIRD WANTED TO EXPERIENCE campus life at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, but, like most of the school's 900 other Native American students, she lived at home and commuted to campus.

She's an example of why Ethan Chavis works with Nations, a Cru movement of Native American students and faculty.

As a member of the Lumbee tribe himself, Ethan (above, in plaid shirt) desires to reach students like Laura for Christ, but he's faced several challenges. Since commuters are less likely to stay on the campus when classes are over for the day, Ethan and his wife, Josyln, have opened their home, inviting students to a weekly dinner and Bible study. This has provided a natural and safe atmosphere for 10 to 15 students to enjoy fellowship and spiritual growth.

Another more surprising challenge for Ethan in building a spiritual movement is that the area also has a long Christian heritage, unusual for a largely Native American population.

Many students, like Laura, have grown up going to church, but few have been challenged to live out their faith and share it with others. Ethan helps students see how they can put their faith into action, growing in fellowship and reaching other students.

"When I think about Nations," says Laura, "I think a lot about culture. It's easy to take pride in saying 'I'm a Lumbee,' but Nations has done a great job of helping us see that our identity is found first in Christ. Culture is awesome as long as we keep Christ in the forefront."

It's the love of Christ that compels Ethan to face the challenges, the love of Christ that is bringing students to Himself and toward each other in Nations on this campus. ●

AS THE BEAUTY OF GOD’S UNFAILING PROMISES BLOSSOMED FROM ANDREW’S WORDS, NASEEF BEGAN TO BELIEVE.

sophomore: “You can do better, Naseef. God has a plan for you. Put Him first.”

Struggling with uncertainty, Naseef (on left) tried putting more effort into his studies. Meeting with some success, he then joined the track and field and wrestling teams, and began to participate in programs designed to help first-generation collegians.

By the end of high school, he earned a 4.0 GPA and gained admission into Boston’s Bentley University.

“I felt welcomed at Bentley, but wondered if I could make it in this predominantly white school,” Naseef said.

About that time, Cru intern Andrew Nilson met Naseef in the Bentley student center. Andrew (on right) asked him if he knew the gospel.

Andrew cautioned that this was a life-altering decision.

“I’d prayed, but never read the Bible,” says Naseef. “Now I realized why Jesus died on the cross: so I could be forgiven for what I did.”

His new life began one evening when the two ate at Chipotle and then went to the Cru student meeting together.

Naseef credits God with recent academic improvement, citing rising test scores in math and government:

“I explain to my friends how God is growing me, and that it happens in small steps, especially when you’re in rough situations.” ●



BENJAMIN PIERCE

Why Naseef Left His Gang

AWAKENED BY SCREAMS, 13-year-old Naseef McCray grabbed a baseball bat, halting the knife-wielding boyfriend from further hurting his mother.

With the boyfriend in jail, the situation eased. Naseef’s mom promised a Disney trip to Naseef and his brothers. However, weeks of anticipation turned to resentment when she used the money to spring her boyfriend from jail.

Broken promises jumbled with distorted values sent Naseef searching for stability. He found it by joining a gang.

“You don’t want to go down this path, Naseef,” said Mr. Vamvakide, one of his teachers. The words disturbed the high school

GUY GERRARD

The Quiet Orchid

A flower that wouldn't bloom taught me a surprising lesson about the way God works.



Orchids are enchanting flowers. When the orchid in my living room refused to produce new white blooms for many months,

I considered throwing it in the trash and starting over. Its spindly stems seemed to stubbornly withhold beauty from me.

Yet as long as it seemed to be alive, I continued to water it instead of throwing it away.

One day I saw a change on the stems. Sprouting buds! At last the orchid was blooming again. I thought, *Finally. I won't*

feel silly for having this orchid around, since it'll once again have beautiful flowers. But instead of blooms, they were leaves where flowers should be. *How ridiculous. What kind of funny orchid is this?* I asked myself. I decided even though I'd never seen an orchid do that, at least it was still growing, and I waited.

Today I noticed the new leaves were shooting out roots of their own. It turns out my orchid was quietly, patiently creating three new plants! *Well, what do you know?* I thought. I had no idea orchids multiplied like that.

As I thought about it more, I remembered the poem *God Moves in a Mysterious Way* by William Cowper. He writes,

“His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding every hour;
the bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flower.”

Showing me the multiplied fulfillment of what I'd been waiting for, God reminded me that His purpose in full bloom is more amazing than I'd likely expect—whether I see it in this lifetime or not. ●

A photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a river flows with several white swans. A dirt bank with some debris and tires is on the left. A mud-brick house with a corrugated metal roof stands on the bank. In the middle ground, a person is riding a bull in a field. The background shows a hillside with a village and communication towers under a cloudy sky.

FOR
Richer,
FOR
Poorer



*Madagascar's
culture of
generosity
hides the
idolization of
wealth.*

**Tattered, too-big coats.
Missing toenails or
teeth. Bare feet.**

Single file, pew by pew, they walk as music plays, dropping their offerings into red plates sitting at the front of a village church in Madagascar.

They don't have much. Some carry only change. But they give, every one of them.

Zacharie Andrianarivosoa visits this village often. He's worked in Madagascar with JESUS Film®, a ministry of Cru, since 2002. He doesn't have to teach the people here to be generous, or even to attend church. These are already rich pieces of their culture.

But 92 percent of Malagasy people live on less than \$2 a day, and while generous, most believe that money will solve their problems—poor education, health care and living conditions, to name a few.

Their hearts aren't necessarily tied to material things, but they are tied to the burning desire for them. They'll go

BY
MARY LEIGH KEITH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
GUY GERRARD



“It seems that Malagasy people are religious, but they’re not Christ-followers. They’ve heard of Jesus, but are afraid to trust Him. They don’t know what Christ truly gives, so they put their faith in what they see.”

— RENÉ
RASOLONJANAHARY





With no college education, Zacharie Andrianarivosoa (left) struggled with low self-esteem until his leaders began encouraging him. He now speaks confidently and is furthering his education. Vendors sell food and other goods in Antananarivo's street markets (below and opposite page, bottom).



to church, pray to spirits of the dead, or practice witchcraft if they believe it might bring wealth, healing or anything worthwhile from above.

“It seems that Malagasy people are religious, but they’re not Christ-followers,” says René Rasolonjanahary, the Global Church Movement coordinator for Cru in Madagascar. “They’ve heard of Jesus, but are afraid to trust Him. They don’t know what Christ truly gives, so they put their faith in what they see.”

So far, *JESUS*, a movie about the life of Christ based on the Gospel of Luke, has been translated into 11 of the 18 languages in Madagascar. Zacharie spends his time in the villages around Antananarivo, Madagascar’s capital, showing the film and trying to talk about Jesus with villagers.

It’s common to see hundreds of people receive Christ at *JESUS* film showings or express interest in having a relationship with God.

Unfortunately, it doesn’t always stick.

“People do not have perseverance in following Christ,” Zacharie says.

Some people make decisions for Christ less because they realize their need for a Savior and desire a relationship with Him, and more for what they believe He might give them. When their circumstances don’t change, people quickly abandon Jesus and move on to the next trick.

It’s one of Zacharie’s biggest barriers to ministry.

He doesn’t have to teach people to be generous or go to church. He has to teach them that Jesus is the only true Savior.

Zacharie walks up a steep, winding staircase to the upper room of a village home and sits down with a young couple.

“*Salama tompoko*,” he says, shaking hands and smiling as he greets them in Malagasy.

Outside, afternoon sun shines on green and brown land stretching for miles, dotted with grass-roofed huts and skinny, black cattle.

Zacharie says a prayer and then asks the couple if they believe Jesus died and rose again. They nod earnestly.

He’s seen this family at the nearby village church. But Zacharie knows they are not true Christ-followers. He knows they



Lemurs are native to Madagascar's beautiful rainforests (left). Cattle-drawn wagons transport straw, used for roofs in the villages (right). Zacharie studies the Bible with villagers who recently indicated decisions to trust Christ at a JESUS film showing (opposite page, bottom).



take offerings to a nearby white house with a red roof, to the spirit of a former Malagasy queen.

And he knows that when they're sick, they, along with many of their neighbors, take a short walk down the potholed road to visit the witch doctor. The nearest place to receive real medical care is five kilometers away, and costly.

Zacharie pulls a small booklet out of his brown leather satchel. It explains the gospel using Scripture, diagrams and real-life examples. He reads John 14:6 aloud, about how Christ is the only way to God. His voice is still hoarse from a full day of ministry in a different village a few days ago. Zacharie is usually soft-spoken, but not when he's talking about Jesus.

Known for being shy and reserved, Zacharie received Christ on the final night of a five-day Billy Graham conference, but only after the preacher reassured those attending that they didn't have to leave their seats to do so.

Shortly after becoming a Christian, Zacharie had a vision of a tomb. When he realized that everyone in his family who didn't know Christ would end up in that tomb, his fervor to tell people about Jesus began.

Zacharie holds a page of the gospel booklet in front of the couple. They watch as a breeze blows through the open windows and gently ruffles the paper.

"You can't see the wind," Zacharie says, demonstrating the concept of faith. "But you believe it's there."

He shows the couple a diagram depicting two types of people. One has Christ in




continued on page 22



**He doesn't
have to teach
people to be
generous or
go to church.
He has to
teach them
that Jesus is
the only true
Savior.**



A photograph of a man with a weathered face, wearing a blue flat cap and a grey button-down shirt over a green collared shirt. He is looking directly at the camera from a window opening in a wall made of reddish-brown bricks and cracked mud plaster. The window is framed by dark wood, and a wooden shutter is partially open to his left. The lighting is natural, highlighting the textures of the wall and the man's features.

The typical village home has two levels, comprised of brick with thatched roofing. A woman sells fabric on a street in Antananarivo, Madagascar's capital (opposite page).



About Madagascar

ISLAND

The fourth-largest island in the world, Madagascar lies in the Indian Ocean off of Africa's southeastern coast.

MALAGASY

Along with French, this is the primary language of Madagascar's 23 million people.

HISTORY

France controlled Madagascar in the late 1800s, but Indonesians and Africans first arrived 2,000 years ago. June 26, 1960, is celebrated as its independence day.

VANILLA

About 75 percent of the world's supply grows here. Other exports include coffee and cloves.

LEMURS

Native to Madagascar, these animals have tails longer than their bodies, spending most of their lives in trees.



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his life, the other doesn't.

"The person without Christ may have a Bible or even go to church," Zacharie says carefully. "But he has no peace."

More than a mile away, amid roaming chickens and barefoot children running through dirt and animal feces, sits the village church the couple attends.

"This area has a reputation of being dark," says Velo Rabefirena, the 35-year-old church pastor.

Zacharie tries to connect with pastors like Velo, who share his desire to teach people how to have a relationship with Christ

and talk about Him with others. Zacharie and Velo have been telling villagers about Jesus together for over seven years.

"I see two lives," Velo says. "One is poor; the other can afford to buy whatever he wants. You bring to them Christ and you say, Christ is really the answer to your life. You hear people say that Christ is the solution, but you've not tried it. Why? I keep telling them: Try and you will see.

"We hope they'll get rid of these idols and receive Christ," he says. "That's our dream."

Zacharie himself knows the temptation to chase wealth instead of God. He turned

down the initial offer to work with the JESUS Film ministry because of the low salary.

"I had to weigh in my mind, *God or money?*" Zacharie says.

When he finally decided to work with the film, "Every disturbance in my mind stopped," he says. "I had happiness in my heart."

Today, Zacharie lives in a white-walled home with his wife, Ando; their four small children; his mother-in-law; and Ando's two sisters. Ando's salary as a teacher helps provide for their family, but Zacharie



Fenitra (below, left) trusted Christ as she helped Zacharie show the film JESUS (right). She's learning how to grow spiritually and wants to be a missionary. Wagons, bicycles (below) and walking are the most common forms of transportation on potholed village roads.



must raise all of his own financial support. He travels almost every weekend. He has no car, so he goes by bus, bicycle, boat or foot. Zacharie and his team of 25 disciples—friends and pastors he's training to do ministry and grow in their faith—don't have much. They can't build a new well or school, or offer medical care. They can't change people's circumstances. But they can offer the most important thing. And they do.

Back in the upper room, the young couple tells Zacharie they'd like to have Christ inside their lives. He reminds them that they receive Christ by faith, and then leads them in prayer. Zacharie excitedly tells the couple what is now true of them.

"Christ is in your life now," he says. "When you go to the market, where is He? When you go to get water from the well, where is He? If you are rich, where is He? If you are poor, where is He? He's in your heart; your sins are forgiven. You are a son of God; I am a son of God. We are siblings."

Zacharie writes the couple's prayer



Zacharie enjoys making pizza (left) and baking cakes with his family. At a village prayer group, Zacharie encourages his disciples (below), many of whom have walked several miles to learn more about Jesus.

What Do You Worship?

YOU LIKELY DON'T visit a witch doctor when a strange bump appears on your leg. But you might spend hours worrying and perusing WebMD.

Americans typically don't worship ancestral spirits. But we can let work consume us, believing that success or wealth will make us happy.

It's easy to look at people in developing countries, simultaneously feeling sorry for them and assuming we have nothing in common.

But just like the people of Madagascar, we're constantly tempted to chase after other things. Especially when Christ doesn't feel like enough. Unfortunately, our idols are like broken cisterns, never satisfying for long.

If we come alongside Africans in humility, we find we have more in common than we expect. And if we're wise, we learn from them.

Because Jesus is trying to teach us all the same lesson: He loves us. And He's the only true Savior. ●



requests in a small notebook and asks if they'd like to begin hosting a prayer group in their home. They agree. Zacharie believes they have truly understood today that Christ is the only way to God, and he encourages them to share what they've learned with others.

Later, the film *JESUS* is shown near the village church. It's too far and dangerous to return home at night, so Zacharie sleeps in the church with his disciples.

For dinner, they share a big bowl of Malagasy rice. And the next day, before their work begins again, they sit together on rickety, wooden church pews and make a different kind of offering.

"There is no blessing for us, but Jesus," they cry in Malagasy, voices melodizing and gradually swelling to fullness.

No instruments. No offering baskets. Just words God has written on their hearts. And Zacharie hopes these will remain. ●



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Help for the Hurried

*Find family time in
day-to-day life.*

BY
RACHEL
STREICH

ILLUSTRATION
BY MUTI

MY MOM PROMPTLY pulled up to the middle school parking lot in her minivan before the bell rang. Instead of waiting there to pick me up after a long day, she came inside. She headed to the gym, where folded-up bleachers and a waxy floor gave evidence that the expansive, partitioned room was indeed part of a gymnasium instead of a library. She began filling metal carts with books. The annual book fair kept her working for the next five hours.

As pre-teens wandered about and browsed the books, my mom turned to another mother devoting the rest of the evening to this task: “Why in the world am I doing this?”

The rhetorical question escaped from her burdened mind. Although my mom didn’t know why she had chosen to add another activity to her schedule, she stayed as busy the remaining days that week.

The day rarely ended when she picked me up after working her part-time hours as a receptionist and sales reporter for a printing company.

Our family kept little room for free time, apart from daily dinners and yearly vacations. We even filled dinnertime with conversation about our to-do lists for the next homework assignment, the upcoming garage sale or the Sunday school lesson.

In this constant state of hurriedness, my family passed by the importance of rest. We looked like countless other American families. But families who mistake a busy life for a happy one miss the opportunity to display the power of resting well.



Missing relationships for a full schedule

While each activity might be good, together they become too much when they're distractions from spending time with children or friends.

In his book *Little House on the Freeway*, Tim Kimmel describes "seven marks of a hurried family." The seven signs can apply to individuals as well. An inability to relax and a lack of meaningful relationships start his list. He says, "Their schedule doesn't allow them much time to cultivate close friendships."

We're meant to live in fellowship with believers and in gospel-centered relationships with non-believers. Those who don't know Christ can't see the gospel at work in us if we neglect to form strong relationships with them because we're so busy. Instead, they see people devoted to their to-do lists and less concerned about family and friends.

Martha, whom Jesus lovingly corrected

in Luke 10:41-42, showed these characteristics. He said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed."

When we're in relationship with Jesus, the one we need, we can love God and others well. Better for the world to see this than a pretty facade masking tired eyes that see no rest.

Missing boundaries for pleasing people

The inability to relax often comes from saying "yes" to too many things. When the word "no" isn't in someone's vocabulary, he or she can become the "suffering servant," number four on Tim Kimmel's list.

Suffering servants, people-pleasers who always "come to the rescue," need affirmation to feel valuable. They agree to anything anyone asks them to do.

Giving of our time and talents is biblical, but we're also meant to have boundaries.

We can show others we care, yet only say "yes" to particular requests. For example, when New Year's Eve came around, my family deferred hosting a party with friends every other year to focus more on time together and less on preparing the house.

Families can intentionally keep their schedule less than jam-packed, so they don't experience great pressure. As others see this lack of constant activity, they see people who aren't defined by what they do, but whose focuses are on the Lord.

Missing present joy for future building

In becoming less busy, families can take the opportunity to live in the present. Society often overemphasizes success and tells us that in order to give kids a good life and future, parents need to be "world-class overachievers," as Tim Kimmel describes in his seventh mark of a hurried family. They chase the dream of a better life down the road.

In the moment, children desire time with their parents playing basketball or working through a tough math problem. These activities can become priorities, with joy found in the day-to-day.

As families set aside time to rest together, their focus dims on the temporary things they can work toward. They steward what is in front of them. This also gives a picture of thankfulness to God for what He has given.

Catching a break for rest

Evaluating our busy schedules gives us the chance to see what's most important. When we bring our to-do lists before the Lord Jesus, we can follow His example of resting, and reconnecting with God and with others. Then we truly demonstrate the significance of rest.

At the end of a day making phone calls and doing homework, my mom and I sat on the couch in our entryway and chatted as *The Parent Trap* played on our TV.

We didn't ask ourselves why.

More than the planned events at my school, we valued time to stop and enjoy life. It was a moment to breathe. ●

To learn all seven of Tim Kimmel's marks of a hurried family, see Cru.org/seven-marks.

G E A R R E

F O R

F R

D

**Offering
hope
to the
world's
top
cyclists**

BY
PHILIP LONG

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
TOM MILLS

E E D O M



B

BLOOD SEEPED INTO ASPHALT.

The hairpin had no warning. At 45 miles per hour, Todd Henriksen saw the turn too late, slid across his lane, and slammed into an oncoming Ford Explorer. Now he lay with 12 fractures in his spine, waiting to die.

This is the perilous world of professional road cycling. For nearly two centuries, people have been enamored with the bicycle. This elegant machine converts 90 percent of a rider's legs' kinetic energy into motion. As any kid will attest, a bike begs to be raced.

Todd began racing at age 12. That was also the year he prayed and trusted Christ. At his age he had no way of knowing that such a wonderful sport could also dehumanize an individual.

Professional cyclists train for hours on end in all sorts of conditions, focusing on turning their bodies into machines to win races. The pressures of this cyclical, isolated life have led many racers to gain an edge illegally. Cue Lance Armstrong.

By age 19 Todd ranked among the top

five cyclists in the country and had several corporate sponsors. Yet with teammates skeptical to faith, races on Sundays and a life of travel, it was difficult to live out his faith. "The more success I experienced, the less I cared about my faith," he says, "Over time I became more selfish and egotistical." He didn't know a single Christian in the sport and was suffering. At age 20, he hit the SUV.

Todd didn't die from the multiple fractures in his spine, yet he had to relearn to



walk. Nine months later, Todd began racing again.

At the 2007 U.S. National Criterium Championships, Todd couldn't stop wrecking. In his second wreck of three, he broke his bicycle. Throwing it against a barricade, he screamed and cursed in rage.

Then Todd recognized a family just past the barricade. The father was a Christian and one of Todd's fans. Overwhelmed with shame, Todd's heart broke.

"I so often took my gift and threw it

back in God's face," he says. "But God didn't give up on me and had so much more for me."

Two months later, Todd prayed, as was his habit, before he re-signed a contract with his sponsors. He said it was like praying to a brick wall. Yet as he prayed this time, he clearly felt God didn't want him to re-sign. "It became clear to me that I wasn't the same person anymore," says Todd, "Over time I allowed the sport to take me down a road away from God, and

Cyclists climb Libby Hill's 30 percent incline in Richmond, Virginia (above). Todd Henriksen (at right, opposite page) prays with Chad Haga, a 27-year-old Texan who spends most of the year in Spain.

Greg Daniel (right) participates in Todd's online Bible study and aims to compete in the 2017 Tour de France. Todd mentors pro cyclists, using online tools (opposite page, top). Rain threatened the women's elite road race, which Great Britain won (opposite page, bottom).



God was asking me to walk down another.”

With this clarity, Todd felt torn: “I couldn’t get [this decision] off my mind. It was haunting me.” With no work experience other than cycle racing, it felt like God asked him to lay down his whole world. He turned down the contract, and “bawled my eyes out.”

Todd prayed, “All right, God. I’m trying to follow You, maybe for the first time, first time in a long time, I guess. You’ve got to show up.”

Minutes later, Todd’s phone rang and a friend offered him a job at a school fundraising company called Booster, which was run by Christians. Todd took the job and was buoyed by Christian community.

Around this time, Brad Bartz with Athletes In Action, Cru’s ministry to athletes, reached out to Todd. Brad went on

to mentor Todd from a distance. For four years, using Skype, they studied the Bible, and discussed life and how to reach those in the sport of cycling.

Today, Todd does what Brad did for him, mentoring and engaging professional cyclists spread throughout the U.S. and Europe. For Todd this means a lot of time on the computer, phone and social media.

He sets up online Bible studies and helps pros get involved in various ministries. He also seeks out cyclists who aren’t believers, inviting them to attend a strenuous altitude camp in Boulder, Colorado, or join with him in Hope Sports house-building projects in Rosarito, Mexico.

Todd stubbornly blows on the embers of Christian community within the cycling world.

Outside the U.S., road cycling takes on



an entirely different dimension, a wild one. It might include topping the 6,273-foot peak of Mont Ventoux in the Tour de France, or descending at speeds up to 70 mph. Chad Haga, a Texan in one of Todd's Bible studies, recently competed in the Tour of Lombardy in Italy, a grueling 152 miles through the foothills of the Alps.

Today, the world has descended on Richmond, Virginia, for the UCI Road World Championships, which, besides the Tour de France, is one of the most anticipated races of the year.

The first day finds the start area awash with color. Men in tights with zany colors gather toward a big, black



platform under a 20-square-foot awning, from which they'll descend into a "short," 30-mile team time trial.

It's only practice, not as important as the official race the next day. The riders relax and smile as an official shows them a steel girder that's about head-high. He assures them it won't be there tomorrow.

Todd mingles with the riders as they warm up. He's accompanied by his wife, Tabitha, and 1-year-old Logan. Brad and his wife, Adrienne, and 3-month-old Herschel attend as well. Together they serve as AIA's ministry to professional cyclists. All have

developed relationships within the sport, yet Todd's professional racing experience gives him extra credibility. He works to show his friends that their purpose goes beyond that of winning a race.

"If you get sick or crash, you start to realize you aren't in control of your performance," Todd says. "If your fulfillment is found in your performance and your results, it won't last. That's where faith comes in. Where's your identity? Is it in how good you are? Or is it in something totally unchanging, something totally foundational?"

Freed from performance in an ulti-

mate sense, a Christian cyclist's identity is formed by freedom to worship as he or she trains, races and engages with others.

Todd mourns that he didn't approach cycling this way and often forgot God's protection over his life. He doesn't want cyclists to forget where their gift comes from.

Ben King, a Richmond local favorite and friend of Todd's, says, "My identity as being loved by God first and as an athlete second has allowed me to deal with the pressure and disappointment that accompany a sport where you're only as good as your last race. It has allowed me to approach cycling





A Viking-garbed fan cheers Norway's team at the world championships (left).

Todd (opposite page, left) talks with Gavin Mannion, who joined him on a home-building project in Mexico. Todd, with his wife, Tabitha, and son, Logan, pray with their friend Alison "Action" Jackson (bottom).



as an act of worship, pouring my whole self into it as in any other vocation.”

Back in the start area, Todd's 1-year-old is enticed by the colors on Team Jelly Belly's uniforms and the sounds of cogs clicking, and attempts to scramble under the barricade. Tabitha snags him just in time.

Like a good parent, God's there for Todd.

Brad and Todd include their families in ministry partially because they offer a tangible reminder to the pro cyclists of what matters in life. At a restaurant in Richmond, Brad's little Herschel starts fussing. He takes Herschel, who buries his face deep in Brad's chest and goes right to sleep. Brad remarks, "They remind you of what really matters."

When professional cyclists' identities are cemented in the love of a heavenly Father, it's game on. Their tires hit the asphalt at pace. They race free and full-tilt, holding nothing back. ●

***"IT HAS ALLOWED
ME TO APPROACH
CYCLING AS AN
ACT OF WORSHIP,
POURING MY WHOLE
SELF INTO IT AS IN ANY
OTHER VOCATION."*** — BEN KING



DISTAN



HOW

DO I

RESPOND

WHEN

GOD

SEEMS

FAR

AWAY?

G O D

BY
EMILIE VINSON

**Two years ago,
my relationship
with God felt
intimate.**

Six months later, I went through major upheaval, mostly connected to my job. My team experienced changes in leadership over the course of 18 months.

At the beginning, I worked hard to be honest with God about how I felt rather than pretending I was fine. As I prayed, I communicated my emotions. I was angry. I hated the daily ambiguity. I felt scared, exhausted, and on many days like I was losing my mind. But I couldn't really understand why.

God's silence shocked me.

My prayers gradually shifted from, "This is how I feel" to "Can You please fix this?"

More silence.

My prayers slowly changed again. "This is killing me," I'd cry into my pillow most nights. "Can You at least show me You're present in this pain? Because if I know You're here, I can keep going."

Nothing. Not *I'm with you*, not *I have*

ILLUSTRATION BY
ASHLEY WALTON

a plan, not I love you. Just nothing. God's promises in Scripture to never leave me felt hollow, as if they'd been written to a mass of people, but were no longer intended for me.

I knew prayer could be a road back to intimacy with Him, but it also became a piercing, daily reminder of how distant I felt He was.

So after 12 months of apparent silence from God, I basically stopped praying.

For the first time in my life, there were days when I longed to leave my faith. Choosing isolation sounded less painful than committing my life to Someone I couldn't trust.

But every time I thought seriously about walking away, I got stuck on the same truth: the cross.

While I regularly questioned God's goodness, His care and His presence, I knew one thing He said was unequivocally true: "For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

As long as that's true of me—and it will always be true—there's nowhere else to go. And so the cross became a tether.

A Christian counselor helped me piece together different elements of my story and understand how my current situation exposed unresolved pain.

While I appreciated understanding why I hurt so badly, especially when my pain often didn't make sense to other people, God's apparent silence still hurt.

My workplace eventually began to stabilize. The ambiguity ended. The dust started to settle. I longed for the closeness to God I'd once experienced, but had no idea how to soften my heart toward Him.

I began to wonder how to pray from this place. How do I pray when I'm struggling, not with whether God exists, but with whether He is trustworthy?

I KNEW PRAYER COULD BE A ROAD BACK TO BUT IT ALSO BECAME A PIERCING,

DAILY REMINDER OF HOW



DISTANT I FELT HE WAS.

HOW DO I PRAY WHEN I'M STRUGGLING, NOT WITH WHETHER GOD EXISTS,



BUT WITH WHETHER HE IS TRUSTWORTHY?

Pray from the rubble

I am writing from the rubble of a once-thriving relationship with God. He remains silent most of the time, and I would often rather stay angry with Him than talk to Him.

But on days when I *am* able to pray, I pray from this place. Kneeling in the dirt, coughing from the still-settling dust, with broken blocks of concrete piled around me.

You do not find tidy, perfect prayers in the rubble.

Here you find raw, burning prayers. Here you find questions, honesty, tears—the stuff of real relationships.

And here you find Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane before His death, sweating drops of blood and begging God, "Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me." God chose not to, and Jesus went to the cross. But not before He prayed from the rubble of the anguish He was experiencing.

Let others in

My past experiences make opening up to and relying on other people very difficult. Vulnerability feels dangerous, and I'd often rather be alone in pain than risk letting others in. I prayed for God's presence primarily so I didn't need other people.

But God didn't design me to function as an island. As the pain grew and He felt further and further away, I had no choice but to risk letting others into my brokenness.

Some days, that means crying on someone else's shoulder. Other days, it means letting them stand in the rubble with me, praying for me, when I can't pray for myself.

INTIMACY WITH HIM,

Remember the tether

The cross felt like a tether to me. Because of this truth, that I have sinned and Jesus died to redeem me, I felt chained to God, no matter how badly I wanted to walk away.

A friend suggested I look at this picture from another perspective. If I am tethered to God, then He is also tethered to me. He went through this painful season with me.

I've spent months angry with Him over His silence. But He might have known that without it, I'd never learn to have the deep relationships He designed me for.

God's commitment to my growth in this season felt to me like abandonment. But Scripture says He keeps my tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8), which means He had to be close enough to see them. He stayed nearby; I just couldn't tell.

A time to rebuild

And so, we're left with the tether: the cross. And if we're left with the cross, we're also left with the image of Jesus in Gethsemane on His knees, crying out to His Father, who chooses to remain silent during the darkest and most horrific hours of His Son's life.

The silence doesn't change Jesus' resolve. His trust in His Father was unshakable. He went to the cross, and He died.

And still God was silent.

The silence lasted three agonizing days. But when God acted, He forever changed the course of the world. Death no longer had the final say. We no longer had to live separated from God.

If I'm honest, there are days when I still feel separated, and I cry for Him to tell me where He is. But because of His silence, I know the foundation of my faith is the truth of the cross, not my feelings. I know I am able to persevere through painful seasons.

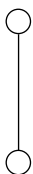
Because of Jesus' prayer and the Father's silence that night in Gethsemane, I am comforted knowing I serve a God who understands what rubble feels like. And I'm hoping that the rest will come in time. ●



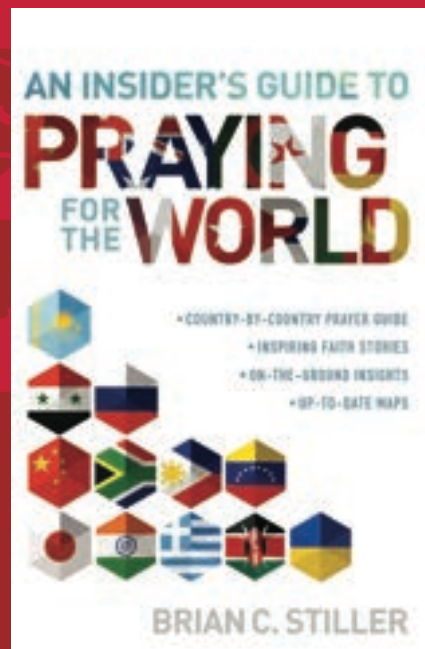
IF I AM
TETHERED
TO GOD,



THEN



HE IS ALSO
TETHERED
TO ME. ●



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/// Global Church Movements



Of the world’s 7 billion people, about 5 billion have no relationship with Jesus. Many have no access to the gospel.

Since its start in 2010, the Global Church Movements ministry of Cru has worked alongside churches and believers to change that. GCM’s Keith Seabourn says leaders in churches are trained to do what Cru does best, evangelism and discipleship. “Within the course of a year, they plant a new church and identify at least two multipliers,” Keith says.

Demeke, an evangelist in Dubti, Ethiopia, attended GCM training, where he learned to tell his faith story and to listen well. His community of friends and family was a starting point for his ministry.

Demeke has expanded his ministry to six communities in the Afar Region of Ethiopia, a region made up of nomads who have no contact with a church; 334 people have come to faith and are

connected to church communities.

“My focus is starting groups in new places, then equipping leaders. It is the leader’s responsibility to help others,” Demeke says.

“We are motivating people with the idea that God cares so deeply about the lost that He would like to use them to reach the 5 billion who don’t yet know Jesus,” says Keith. ● By Rachel Ferchak

113

number of countries in which GCM is active

400

number of hours of training required for each participant

559,814

number of churches and faith communities planted

PRAYER POINTS

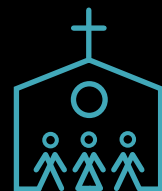


GCM and JESUS Film®

launched a multiplying church movement in Guinea-Bissau. The new ministry is fragile. Pray for leaders as they provide guidance.



Pray that thousands of trainees around the world will have a passion for reaching the lost. Pray for wisdom as they choose key volunteers.



Pray that 5 million new churches and faith communities will start by 2020.

GUY GERRARD



TWO FRIENDS GRADUATE.

One starts a business. The other starts a church.

One day, they both die and go to heaven....

In heaven, God says to one of them, “Well done, my good and faithful servant. You used the resources I gave you to move my Kingdom forward. Thousands of people have come to know Christ because of the sacrifices you made, and because of the way you chose to use the gifts I entrusted to you.”

Then God turns to the other and says ... *exactly the same words.*

You don't have to be a minister to hear those words, “**Well done.**”

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“

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MANIFOLD
ARE YOUR
WORKS! IN
WISDOM HAVE
YOU MADE
THEM ALL;
THE EARTH
IS FULL
OF YOUR
CREATURES.”

—Psalm 104:24