

Tri-M GLOBAL

J O U R N A L



SPRING 2021 Issue

The Crazy Life Called Missions



Visit us on the Web

CONTENT



02

I Saw The Dead Come
To Life

05

You Are Never Too Old to do
Something Really Dumb!

07

Missions in the Background

13

I Think You Are Not Hearing Properly

15

My Top 10 (Mostly) Humorous Lessons
From Overseas Mission Trips

18

Caught off Guard

I saw the dead come to life. Here is how it happened...

In February 2020, my wife, family, and I moved back from Costa Rica to the United States. We did so to administrate Tri-M better. Saying goodbye to friends and colleagues was not an easy thing to do. There were many relationships that we knew were coming to a close. One of those relationships was with my friend, Max. I met Max while working with a Search and Rescue team in Costa Rica. Max, his wife, and his kids had moved to Costa Rica from California a few years after we did it. We would get together at least once a month, hanging out, grilling, and just enjoying our time together. Max and his wife did not know Christ but were very open to talking about Him, our ministry, and all of the challenges of traveling around the world to teach. When we left Costa Rica, we were pretty sure that it was going to be the end of that relationship. One year later, God had a different plan.

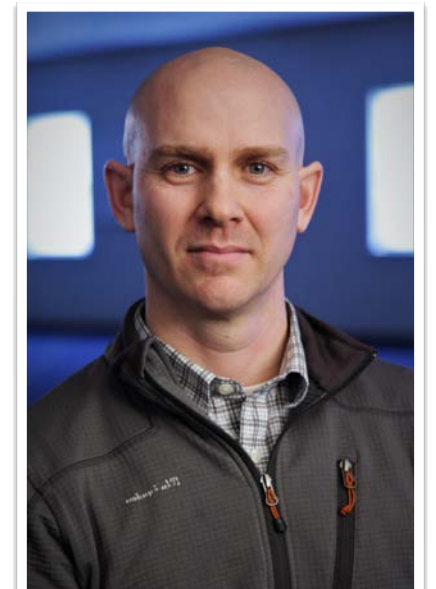
In March 2021, I found myself back in Costa Rica teaching a module. On my first day back in Costa Rica, I received a text from Max. It said, "Are you in the country?". I told him that I was, but I was teaching a module in the north and would be there all week. He asked if I'd be free to have a conversation sometime the next day. I said I would. We scheduled our meeting for 9 AM. At 7 AM the following day, I received another text from Max asking me if I was up and available to talk. Over the next hour, Max and I talked a lot about what was going on in his life. Towards the end of our conversation, Max has decided that he needed to know Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord.

Colossians 2:13 says, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (English Standard Version). I saw a dead man come to life. God still does miracles today.

In this issue of the Tri-M Journal, we will look at several stories from the mission field. These are serious, humorous, amazing stories, and all of them show us a little bit more about God. My prayer is that through this issue, you will be encouraged, challenged, and amazed at all that God uses to teach each of us.

Enjoy!

Jonathan D. McGinnis
Tri-M Global, Director



You Are Never Too Old to do Something Really Dumb!

By: Dr. Dana Arledge

My temptation when asked to write an article concerning the crazy life called missions was to take a pass since I have never been a bonified missionary. However, after thinking for a few minutes, a few stories came to mind when we visited missionaries. Here is one of them.

My wife and I were visiting a missionary pilot and his wife in Alaska. This was our first trip to the state, and it was as beautiful as can be imagined. My friend asked me if I wanted to fly in his plane with him about 60 miles north to visit a friend of his, to which I immediately agreed. Leaving our wives at his house, we drove to the nearby airport, climbed aboard his single-engine Cessna, and took off.

Before leaving, he told our wives we would be buzzing the house, so they should look for us. Their home was situated on the side of a hill just across the street from a bay. As we made our approach to the house, we were about 500 feet above the water, which put us almost level with the front window of their home.

Our wives were outside waving at us. As I waved back, the hillside came up fast and furious at us. Fortunately, my pilot friend was very experienced and pulled up in time to avoid what could have put a terrible dent in our day. As we cleared the treetops, he said, “I just goofed up big time.”



We made it to our destination, visited with some other missionaries, and decided to take a walk to a nearby waterfall. We were both armed. My pilot friend carried a 45 on his hip, while I had a 9mm, which he told me would be about as effective as a cap gun if we came across a momma grizzly and her cub. Fortunately, our trip to and back from the falls was spectacular and uneventful.

Before beginning our return flight, we walked into a small restaurant to grab a bite to eat. As we sat down, my friend laid his 45 on the table, and I followed suit. For a moment, I felt Clint Eastwood just daring someone to “make my day.” It was great!

As I think back on everything that took place that day, I could have flown into the side of a mountain, been eaten by a grizzly, or been shot by someone who didn’t like Clint Eastwood.

We often think of missionaries as always conducting bible studies, counseling troubled couples, and working with church leaders. In our minds, they are special people who have received an extra special call from God to do things we could or would never do. In truth, they are just like the rest of us mere mortals, though few of us can take airplane rides at a moment’s notice. While I may not be qualified to describe everyday missionary life, I can say that visiting a missionary can be exhilarating. It also helps bring them back down to earth,

*Dr. Dana Arledge
Adjunct Professor
Cornerstone University*



Missions in the Background

By: Dr. Chris Pilet

In Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the Background People began their days early while darkness and coal fire still blanketed the city. Blinking away the ice from their eyelashes, they shouldered their canvas bags and shuffled along the snow-covered paths from the ger (tent) districts to the city proper. As the dawn arrived, they slinked through the city, their eyes focused on the ground in search of unbroken bottles or crushed soda cans.

These Background People were creatures of habit, most making the same rounds regardless of day or weather. They pried up manholes here and searched the depths. They checked the dumpsters behind restaurants. They rummaged through the garbage room at the apartment buildings. A can here, a broken belt, a rag from the twelfth district, a broken piece of pottery from the sixth district. It all went in their bag. Everything was useful.

Our apartment had seven entrances. Each entrance had three doors. The door to the right, the one at the top of the three concrete steps, led to the stairwell and the elevator. The other two doors opened into the garbage room.

The mechanics of waste disposal at that time were simple. A long tube stretched from the garbage room on the first floor to another small room at the top of the building. Each floor had access to this tube through a small metal door. Residents pushed their garbage into the chute, and it fell to the room below. Then, about once a week, a truck pulled to the curb, some men shoveled the garbage into the back of the truck, and the truck drove off to the outskirts where it dumped its load.

The doors to the garbage rooms were rarely locked. Most days, the garbage spelled out of the rooms onto the sidewalks. Though this appeared unseemly, it was actually a form of charity. It provided the Background People the opportunity to sift the garbage and find what they needed.

At our entrance, the rounds usually began around five AM. They started with the creak of the metal door. A few minutes would pass, and the door would clang shut. If we looked out our window, we would see a dark figure readjusting the bag on her shoulder, wiping the dirt from her face, and walking to the next garbage room. She would pull open the doors there and disappear into the darkness.

Five minutes would pass, we would hear the creak again. Another one of the Background People had entered the garbage room. Ten minutes later, again. Another Background Person. And so the day began. The rummaging of our trash continued until 10 or 11 each night.

Background People are not invisible. We see them, no matter where we live, in Mongolia or the United States. We are subconsciously aware of their presence. But somehow, amid our busyness, we fail to notice them. They seem a part of the scenery, a part of life. Oh, certainly, once, we noticed them, but now? After years of living, how easy it is to be indifferent. And then God grabs our heads and turns them, forcing us to observe what we have seen but have not noticed.

I stepped out of our entrance one morning and hurried to the car. The blast of cold air took my breath away. I took a great scope of air and started coughing—coal smoke. The smoke filled the air like a heavy Pacific Northwest fog.

Hopping in the car, I turned the key and waited for the glow plugs to do their job. And while I waited, I glanced toward the garbage room. As usual, garbage was scattered all over the sidewalk. What a mess! I shook my head and wondered why Mongolians wanted to live amid the trash.

Just then, a bag of garbage flew onto the sidewalk. Someone was throwing the trash out of the room. Another bag rolled out. It broke, and the rubbish fell out. My family's garbage. It was the garbage we had thrown into the room. Then another bag tumbled out of the room.

A filthy, scraggly man walked out of the garbage room. As he did, he stomped on the bags of garbage and broke them open. Then he kicked them around until the contents were



spread out across the sidewalk. Rotting bits of food, moldy crusts of bread, coffee grinds, and soup cans; used tissues, plastic wrappers, and banana peels. I shook my head. This was why the entrance to our apartment building was always such a mess.

The car started, and I turned on the defroster. As it began to clear the windows, I got a better look at the man. He was lightly dressed in spite of the cold. He had boots on, but they had holes, and he wore a leather bag on his back. He was wearing a dirty knit cap pulled low over his eyes, and ice dangled from his mustache. And instead of a coat, he was wearing a vest. That was strange, I thought. And then I realized that he did not need a coat. He had no arms.

Just then, our jujuur stepped out. It is her responsibility to guard the entrance and keep the sidewalk as clean as possible. She noticed the man leaving the garbage in the mess he had created, and then she called to him and walked toward him. I wondered what she would do. I suspected she would scold him. Maybe even yell at him.

They talked quietly for a moment, and then she walked with him back to the garbage room. Then, as he waited, she found a few cans he had missed, picked them up, and put them into his backpack. He thanked her and walked on to the next garbage room. Our jujuur swept the garbage back into the garbage room and closed the doors, and then she went back inside the entrance.

Humbled, I pulled away from the curb and drove to the store where I was to do our shopping. I parked and pushed my way past the vendors and pickpockets into the building. As I entered, I heard a flute. A street musician was playing in the corner. And as a former street musician, I tried to make a point of giving a small donation -- if the person was making decent music. I made my way over to the corner from where the music was coming. This music was pretty good. I pushed past a group of people and found myself five feet from the musician. Again, I was humbled. What was the Lord trying to teach me?

The flute player had no legs and only one hand. He was propped in a rickety wheelchair and was holding the flute to his mouth with his one good hand. He was using the other "hand," a stump, as a finger on the flute. And the music was good. I listened for a moment, gave my donation, and left to do my shopping.

Ten minutes later, I again pushed past the vendors and pickpockets and carried my groceries to the car. As I left the building, I noticed out of my peripheral vision, a man start moving toward me. I hurried my steps and avoided looking. The man quickened his pace. I quickly unlocked the car and loaded the groceries. Closing the door, I turned and came face-to-face with the man.

I recognized him. He was a regular—a professional beggar. Ice clung to his mustache, and his face was streaked with dirt. He lowered his head and gave the universal sign of hunger: sorrowful eyes, a hand on the stomach, and the other hand cupped and outstretched. "I'm hungry," he said. "Money, please."

Shaking my head and muttering, "no," I pushed around him. He followed me as I got into the driver's seat. As I turned the key and waited for the glow plugs, he pressed his hand against the window. "Please, please." And as I pulled away, he stood behind, watching the car leave, with his hand still outstretched. As soon as I turned the corner, I felt guilty that I had not given him something.

I drove home and sank onto our couch, depressed. I told Nicole the things I'd seen that day. "Sometimes I just want to go back to the States," I said. "Every day here, we are faced with these things. Every day, we see someone searching through the trash for a scrap of food. Every day, people beg us to give them a dollar for food. We give one person a little something, and then we turn around, and another person asks for money." I pondered a moment, and then I said it again. "Yes, sometimes I just want to go home. That never happened back home. Well, at least, not every day."

Background People. "Doing missions" forces us to come face-to-face with Background People.

We, humans, expend a great deal of energy trying to control our backgrounds. In my case, I selfishly hoped that, by changing my geographical background, I could eliminate some of the uncomfortable elements that were part of living in Mongolia at that time. But was that God's answer? God solution?

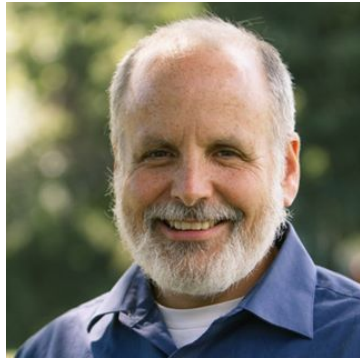
My struggles with these issues have been lifelong, and I still battle with the temptation to retreat into isolation and comfort. So I assure you that I am speaking only as one who is still seeking to put Christ's love into action. But two things, I think, are obvious.

First, with Christ, people are never Background. All people are Foreground People. Perhaps one of the great challenges of the Gospel is to transform our own mental Background-Foreground dichotomy into an All-Foreground mentality. Only as we become aware of others in the multiplicity of their needs are we able to minister with the love of God in Christ.

Second, with Christ, people are never inevitably poor, weak, or dead. In Him, the poor can become rich, the weak can become strong, and the dead can come alive. We who are believers are called to recognize the potential of others in Him. And to act accordingly.

As I have considered these things, I have become convinced that the problem that needs addressing most is my own. I have allowed myself to slip in and out of indifference. I have had to confess to that indifference and to ask the Lord to open my eyes, to see others as He sees them. I have to ask Him to change the foreground of my mind and not the background of my environment.

I am grateful to serve as a 'missionary' for many reasons, but this is certainly a big reason. Service – overseas and in the States – has brought me to my knees over and over again, to confess my pride and my need for God's grace in Christ. And it has brought me back to my feet to proclaim the power of the Gospel to rescue and redeem fallen men like me.



*Dr. Christian Pilet
ABWE International
Tri-M Missionary*

I Think You Are Not Hearing Properly

By: Mrs. Cheryl Boisvert

The Tanzanian believers were amazed! To think a secular—and popular—Zulu singer from South Africa would be singing openly about what is so dear to the heart of Christians around the world: "Mama Jamila, Jesus is bringing redemption!"

They liked the sound of the song as well, so it quickly was adopted for use during worship times in the church. They sang with joy and enthusiasm.

Then a visiting Pastor--a Zulu man from South Africa—came to join them and participate in an outreach from the church. When they began to sing the popular song with gusto, he thought with confusion, "What is this?"

After the service, they were talking about the song which was born in the visitor's country, and again the Tanzanians told him how very much they enjoyed the song. The visiting Pastor said, "I think you are not hearing properly...the song says 'Mama Jamila, bring me the African beer.'"

All were so surprised at the error from mispronunciation and had a good laugh. May I also say that they eliminated it from their list of worship music?

It's a funny story, but I wonder how much our culture affects our interpretation of what we THINK the Bible is saying to us.

Do we impose our perceptions of culture on ourselves and others as we explain what the Bible has to say? For instance, 1 Timothy 2:9 tells women to dress modestly. In African villages, that means an ankle-length dress. In Korea, it means a tunic and trousers. Our culture influences us to answer questions like this from our perspective. Last week, I asked women of Arusha, TZ, "What would you call 'a blessing' in your life." One VERY poor woman said, "The Love of Jesus for me." Another said, "To be able to go to God directly in prayer." Based on many testimonies that I have heard and given over the years, I wonder if the average American answer to that question might be more along the lines of material provisions. Our culture influences us to re-define words and judge others we don't understand. Maybe it is because as we go from the Bible to application, we just '...are not hearing properly.'



Mrs. Cheryl Boisvert
Tri-M Missionary

MY TOP 10 (MOSTLY) HUMOROUS LESSONS FROM OVERSEAS MISSION TRIPS

By: Dr. Bill Abernathy

It has been my joy to travel on short-term mission trips many times. Most of those times, I've been teaching national pastors and leaders, but I usually learn more about God and myself than I ever teach them. However, in this article, I want to share my top 10 lessons that are mostly humorous – at least viewed from a distance in time and locale!

#10 When buying bottled water for cleaning contact lenses, make sure it's not carbonated. Learn how to say "no gas" in whatever language is local. If you don't have contacts, you may want to apply this lesson for brushing teeth.

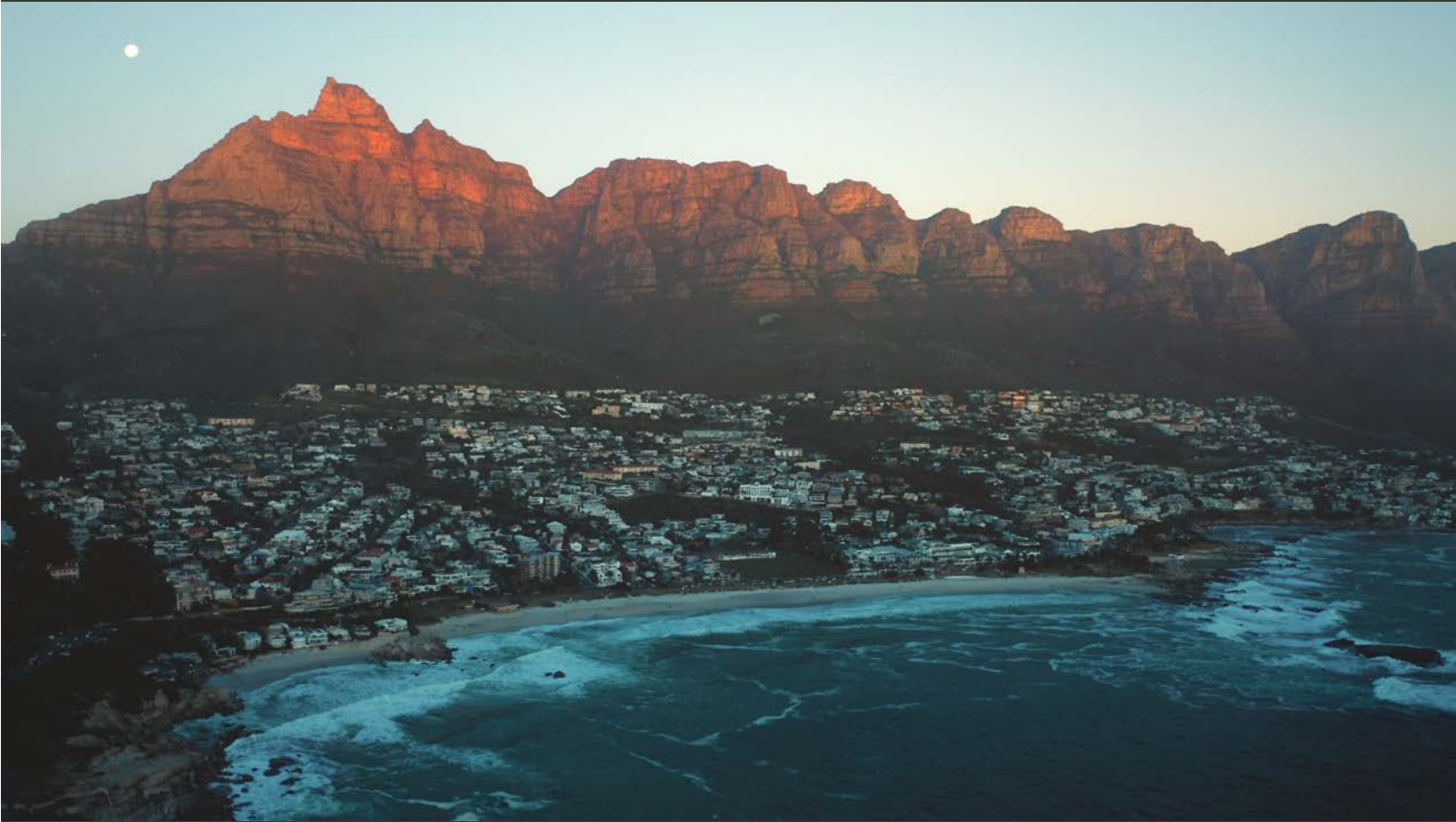
#9 If you are teaching a group of pastors and others are teaching too, and if there's only 1 outhouse for everyone's use, take that hike while someone else is teaching, not on break times.

#8 Most other countries have much prettier money than we do, but it may take a lot of it to buy something.

#7 Just because there are fixtures in the shower doesn't necessarily mean water comes out of them. The trash can of water in the shower is for dipping and pouring over your head. If it's cold outside, it just means you'll move faster! (#pouringcoldwaterovermyselfishard).

- #6 McDonalds still fries their cherry pies in many other countries of the world. Fried is so much better than baked.
- #5 Other countries’ concept of “personal space” is very different from our American thinking. Just ride trains in most countries or a jeepney in the Philippines, and you will learn this lesson well.
- #4 Make sure you have a street address for where you will be staying in your host country – even if the country you are visiting has addresses like “the 3rd house down from where the bread store used to be until it burned down.” Immigration wants something on their form, anything.
- #3 “On time? What’s on time? We’ll start when they arrive.” Flexibility is crucial on any mission trip. Plans WILL change, and our concept of time is very different than that in most (non-western) countries.
- #2 If the residents of the country urgently tell you, “You don’t want to eat that!” You don’t – even if they are eating it.
- #1 Singing familiar songs in English while brothers and sisters sing in their language is a little taste of heaven and always a highlight of the trip for me. (The only humorous aspect of this may be your singing, but who am I to judge?).

Pastor Bill Abernathy
Lead Pastor
Berean Baptist Church



Caught Off Guard

By: Dr. Doug Boisvert

Being drawn to Christ at 21 years old, there still are some pre-salvation old habits that pop up occasionally. Not all are temptations to sin. Those are quickly identified and often overcome through the Holy Spirit's conviction and oversight, PTL. However, some are at times can become awkward, especially for a missionary!

We were having a wonderful spirit-directed teaching module in Mongolia. It was filled with great teaching times full of appropriate interaction among me, the other American Adjunct teachers, and Godly Church Leaders digging into the Word of God. There was amazing heartfelt worship in song before every teaching session led by different Mongolian Church Leaders studying with us. The main instrument used was the guitar that was excellently used to compliment the singing of many original Mongolian worship songs. Even though we could not speak Mongolian, the Americans were able to sense the worshipful atmosphere during the singing that prepared us well for the study of each lesson.

During a long, well-deserved break for the students, I found myself alone in the room with one of the guitars available. I am not a very accomplished guitar player, but I enjoy plucking out a few things occasionally. Thinking all were outside relaxing during the break, I picked up the guitar to just strum a few tunes. It was a bit out of tune. I began tuning each string. The only thing about that was when I first learned to tune a guitar as an unsaved teenager, the only successful method I could use to get it in proper tune was by picking one particular song. It came back to me "naturally," and I was not paying attention until one of the primary Mongolian musicians of the group and one of the American adjunct teachers entered behind me and was listening. The Mongolian brother immediately

clapped his hands and expressed in his limited English that he was excited to hear me play and asked me to sing the song out loud for him. It was then that I most likely grew a bit red checked in embarrassment and tried unsuccessfully to talk my Mongolian brother out of me singing the song for him that came so quickly back to my fingers. The problem was the song was from my pre-saved teen days that was not one that leads anyone to worship or righteousness. The American had a sly smile on his face and obviously had recognized the song from his pre-salvation days.

My Mongolian brother looked so excited to identify with me singing an American song for him with the guitar. I did not want to shun my Mongolian brother's request, so I announced that I had heard the words of Amazing Grace sung to the original tune. The fellow American teacher laughed as I began to sing Amazing Grace to the tune of "House of the Rising Sun." It worked perfectly, and the Mongolian brother even knew a few of the words to the first verse and sang with me as I picked out the tune. I thought that would be it until the Manger of the Guest Complex where we were, came in and listened with a big smile.

She clapped and asked if we could sing to her entire staff that was serving us that week. I was flabbergasted. We quickly suggested that the Mongolians could do a better job of sharing the Gospel through song if they sang in Mongolian for the staff of 16 that was being gathered. Praise Jesus that we could drag in 5 other Mongolians and pass the guitar to our Mongolian brother. I was delighted to see our Mongolian brothers immediately jump in and sing very purposeful songs that shared the truths of the Gospel of Christ and His grace. They even sang a Mongolian version of Amazing Grace to a slightly different tune than our traditional version since that seemed to spark this impromptu gathering. As soon as a few songs were sung and without missing a beat, one of the Mongolian Pastors started preaching a clear Gospel presentation explaining the truths they had just sung, so none of the staff would miss the message. Then he gave an invitation to trust in Jesus to the group ranging from college students to an old Mongolian cowboy. With eyes closed, everyone

raised their hands to believe in Christ's invitation to be born again. Well, all except the Manager who was hanging in the back of the room.

I was surprised at the response and asked one of the Mongolian Pastors if they actually wanted to trust in Jesus' salvation. He simply answered, "yes, of course." But I asked, do they understand the invitation? He just held his finger up to his lips and gestured to wait. Sure enough, the one preaching rehearsed the full Gospel again and sought to clarify the invitation. At that point, the staff listening all stood on their feet and voiced almost simultaneously YES! The group of Pastors began taking names and addresses down to be sure to put each one in touch with believers near where they lived or University they would be returning to after finishing their seasonal position there at the guest house. Other Pastors coming back into the building joined in, talking to each one about their decision and what is next for them to walk with the LORD.

All this began by being caught in a rather embarrassing situation. God used that Ungodly tune as His occasion for that entire staff to hear and respond to the Gospel message. I am so thankful for the readiness of my Mongolian brothers, who, without hesitation, recognize and jump into a God-ordained opportunity!

It was apparent the remaining week that something had changed in those individuals. The college staff members did not worry about looking cool before us but sought out the Mongolians to talk more about their newfound faith in Jesus. Even the old Cowboy had a smile and eagerness to learn more about his Creator and Savior. Up until then, he did not talk to anybody except to complain about the food or weather. He shared even his horses he cared for at the complex seemed to notice a difference in him and were easier to handle with his new nature. The Manager said she now has new wonderful staff. When asked about her need for Christ, she was resistant to talk. But the staff said they would keep sharing with her the "facts of new life that she is seeing in them." I cannot tune a guitar ever again without reflecting on God's amazing Grace!



*Dr. Douglas Boisvert
Tri-M E. African Director; and TRI-M Asia*

Tri-MGlobal.org



Tri-M is committed to assisting national pastors and other spiritual leaders to be better able to reach their own people by TEACHING, EQUIPPING, and STRENGTHENING them, especially in areas of limited accessibility to traditional missions and wherever there is a critical need for true biblical teaching.

Did you know?

- Tri-M is serving in over 20 countries around the world?
- Tri-M is serving in Eastern Europe, Central and South Asia, Africa and Central America
- Tri-M has been around since the early 90's and held its first module in Romania
- Tri-M has a website @ www.tri-mglobal.org
- Tri-M is always looking for new missionaries, auxiliary teachers and partners in ministry

Copyright © 2021 by Tri-M Global
All rights Reserved
www.tri-mglobal.org