

# MESSAGE

Vol 67 | Issue 2 | 2019

abwe<sup>®</sup>  
INTERNATIONAL

THE CREATIVE ACCESS EDITION

**RESTRICTED**



## Persecution & Prejudice

Let's be honest. Phrases like “restricted access” and “creative-access ministry” are “missionary speak” for the very serious task of doing evangelism and discipleship in places where it could cost you your life.

These ministries have always come with inherent risk—requiring every missionary serving in these contexts to wisely count the cost.

This issue of *Message* looks at the ways our ABWE teammates do ministry in creative-access fields, and how we're empowering believers in North America to examine the biases or fears which shape how we will—or won't—reach those in our communities who are different from us.

Beyond the safety of our borders, ABWE has many missionaries who are reaching people in places that are hostile to Christianity. In some places, we are arrested and accused of being spies. In others, we overcome complicated political and legal hurdles to reside in unreached countries. In rarer cases, we weep as both missionaries and new converts die for the sake the gospel.

As you read this issue on persecution and prejudice, pray for those living in countries that are hostile to the gospel. Pray for the workers who are there risking their lives to serve faithfully. Pray for the persecuted church and new converts who face severe repercussions for following Christ.

Thank you for partnering with ABWE as we reach the lost for Christ in places with the greatest risk and the greatest reward.

 | ABWE President



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### WHO IS THE ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM (ABWE)?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. We are dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 1,000 ABWE missionaries are working to advance God's work in more than 70 countries by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith, and serving the world with love.

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## FEATURES



14

### Beyond the Veil

Many American churches do not realize the ripe harvest field growing just outside their doors, as those seeking refuge or asylum within our country's borders struggle with finding a place to call home.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 4 CONNECTIONS:

Stories and updates from around the ABWE world

### 12 LEGACIES: Laura Kuykendall

Honoring missionaries who have faithfully served for 35 years

### 26 VISUALS:

A closer look at the persecuted church in 2019

### 28 FIELDNOTES: A Beautiful World

Reflecting on an ABWE missionary family's first week on the field in a restricted-access country

### 30 FOCAL POINTS: 5 Ways to Encourage Missionaries in Restricted-Access Countries

Understanding how to interact with missionaries who live in high risk areas

### 31 SPOTLIGHT: A Change in Perspective

How ABWE works to minister to Muslims in a variety of contexts

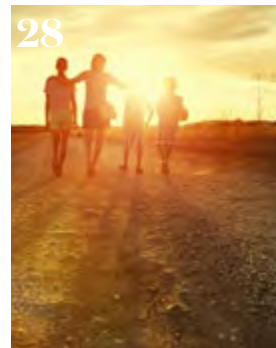
23

### Her Name was Mai Tai Sing

Following the tragic martyrdom of his wife, a young husband continues to seek discipleship from the team at Memorial Christian Hospital.



28



31



**ON THE COVER:**

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## ONLINE

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## AUSTRALIA

# Every Reason to Fail

There were many reasons why the *Changed Gospel Night* was destined to fail at Logos—a small, two-year-old church plant led by Pastor Rob and Angie Ayoub, and ABWE missionaries, Steve and Sue Mayo.

First, the event was on a Friday night in a Muslim stronghold—and Friday is their day of worship. Second, the devastating Christchurch mosque shooting that left 50 people dead in March already had the neighborhood on edge.

There wasn't going to be anything extraordinary about the program, either. It was just three testimonies, a

couple of hymns, and a sermon. The venue was a century-old church building with no air conditioning, a poor sound system, straight-backed wooden pews, and a carpark that could only fit 10 vehicles.

And yet, invitations were sent. A social media blitz reached thousands. Street preaching the night before directed locals to the event. The team at Logos prayed for 150 attendees, “but we would have been happy with 100,” Steve said.

Their expectations were not only met—they were exceeded. Nearly 200

people came to the event, with at least a quarter of those in attendance being unbelievers. Steve said the response to the straightforward gospel appeal that night was so positive, the team started planning a similar event in August.

One person wrote after the event: “Thank you all for such an amazing night. Our family and friends felt very welcomed. They enjoyed the service. They couldn't get over the sermon.” ■



*Steve and Sue Mayo and their family have served as church-planting missionaries in Australia since 1997.*

*“WE SERVE A MERCIFUL  
GOD. PRAY THAT GOD  
WOULD CONTINUE  
REACHING PEOPLE FOR  
CHRIST THROUGH THESE  
EVENTS.”*

— STEVE MAYO —



#### FRANCE — JOEL & JENNIFER RINDERKNECHT

The Rinderknechts' ministry saw four baptisms earlier this year, and another three in March. ■



#### JAPAN — NORMAN & SUSAN SMITH

Business is booming at the coffee shop outreach that opened in Minami Aso in January. ■



#### PERU — STEPHANIE & ANDY PACE

The second phase of La Molina Christian Schools was completed in March, on time and under budget. The Paces welcomed more than 300 new students (March 26) for the 2019 school year. ■



#### PERU — NEW LIFE PRENATAL CENTER

The New Life Prenatal Center celebrated 20 years this March.

In the past 20 years, New Life had:

- 28,091 appointments
- 23,008 biblical counseling sessions
- 8,647 prenatal check-ups
- 2,356 professions of faith



#### NICARAGUA — NICARAGUA MINISTRY CENTER

The ABWE Ministry Center continues to struggle and needs your help! The socio-political crisis in Nicaragua that began in April 2018 continues to greatly affect the country's economy. Many events, groups, and mission teams have been canceled. The center depends almost solely on revenue from these events, as it does not have another consistent source of income. The team continues to seek financial support for the center to keep it running and reestablish vital ministries.

**2017:** Over 20,000 visitors | Almost 8,000 campers | Over 1,000 kids accepted Christ

**2018:** High volume until crisis in April forced the center to shut down

**2019:** Operating with a skeleton staff in January | Church Planters Institute is running | Nearly 300 kids attended four youth leadership camps so far.

Groups have begun to return, but the center has lost the funding for its camp ministry and the thousands of campers who come each year. ■

*“PRAY THAT THE MINISTRY CENTER CAN RECOVER FROM THIS CRISIS AND THAT THEIR NUMBERS WILL GROW TO PREVIOUS LEVELS. PRAY FOR WISDOM WHILE THEY WAIT.”*

**-SCOTT RUSSELL-**



HAITI

## Highway Robbery

*Pop! Pop! It sounded like a toy gun—like the kind with a cork on the end.*

But the noise that ABWE medical missionary Jack Sorg heard that day in Haiti was not from a toy. It was a real gun, fired from men in a real battle up the hill just behind them.

“I was on a survey trip in Haiti with Ismael Dora, a dear friend of mine, to scope out several possible future ministries,” Jack said. He and his team had landed in-country the same day barricades were going up for a major protest against the government. They figured the demonstrations would probably end in a day or two—but the morning of the fourth day rolled around, and with it came the news that the protesters had no plans of stopping.

To make matters worse, the situation was escalating.

“Ismael’s brother heard we were in town and visited—with much difficulty. After lunch, he left [to return home], but an hour later called to say that he was at the police station.” He had just

been robbed at gunpoint by four men—thieves who had set up a fake protest barricade. When people stopped to negotiate with them about driving around it, they would brandish their guns and rob them.

Jack’s team was scheduled to leave that day. Ismael’s brother had called to warn the team about the barricade because it stood between them and the airport.

“We prayed steadily about what to do. By faith, we called the airlines and changed our tickets for later that afternoon,” Jack said. Their hosts found a local man to drive them to the airport—someone who they said might know the men at the barricade and could successfully negotiate their way through. Still praying, Jack and his team climbed into his car.

The extra time spent in trying to find this man turned out to be crucial,” Jack said. “Just minutes before we arrived at



*Jack Sorg*

the fake barricade, the police had shown up. From behind a telephone, one policeman motioned for us to stop about a quarter of a mile up the road. I could hear the sound of gunfire coming down from high up on the hill next to us as police chased the robbers over the crest.”

The policeman eventually stepped out from behind the pole and began casually walking down the road away from the team. Assuming that meant it was safe to proceed, the team’s driver cautiously headed towards the barricade. When he did not meet any resistance, he drove into the ditch around it and then sped on down the road.

“Our trip to the airport was the fastest that I had ever had,” Jack said, “as our driver matched the horn with the accelerator.” ■



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CZECH REPUBLIC

## How to Save a Life

Renata and Tadeas were faithful attendees of Steve and Cari Wendel’s church in the Czech Republic. The mother-and-son pair had a unique story that would become a life-saving testimony for another family caught in the same predicament.

When Renata discovered that she would give birth to a baby with Down Syndrome, she refused her doctor’s advice to abort.

“In the Czech Republic, you just don’t see [people who are] developmentally handicapped in public,” Steve said. “Any baby with Down Syndrome, or one of various other health conditions, is by default aborted. Those that are born are hidden away in state-run institutions at an early age.”

As a result of her refusal, Renata’s husband left her.

Soon after Tadeas was born, Renata closed her reputable psychology

practice and began working at a resource center for special needs children. This kept her from having to institutionalize Tadeas—she could be with him throughout the day instead.

“Tadeas is now a young man who brings great joy and enthusiasm to our worship services,” Steve said. When he isn’t joining the worship team playing his cajon, he is enthusiastically singing and smiling and moving to the music. And Steve said it is always a blessing to see the young man eagerly approaching to receive Steve’s cheerful greeting and fist bump.

One day, a young couple approached Renata at her tram stop and told her, “You don’t know us, but we just wanted to tell you thank you.”

The couple recounted how they had been pregnant with a child who the prenatal tests determined would be born with Down Syndrome. The

doctor encouraged them to schedule an abortion as soon as possible. They were devastated by the news.

On the way home from their appointment, they noticed Renata and Tadeas with them on the tram. In fact, they had ridden the tram with Renata and Tadeas frequently on their commute, and they noted how joyful and happy Tadeas seemed, as well as the special relationship that he and his mother shared.

“After seeing you and your son, and how happy you seemed, we decided that we could do that, too,” they told Renata.

***“WE LOVE OUR SON VERY MUCH, AND WE’RE GLAD WE DIDN’T ABORT HIM.” ■***



## PHILIPPINES — PHIL & BARB KLUMPP

Earlier this year, Phil and Barb Klumpp were able to visit the daughter churches of Grace Baptist Church, the first church they planted in Cebu. At least three of those churches have graduated to independent plants and are now starting their own church plants. ■



## SPAIN — RICH & CINDY BROWN

The Evangelical Baptist church of Alcalá de Henares has seen significant signs of numerical and spiritual growth in the past year—an average of 45 believers attend Sunday service. The church now has two worship teams, several trained men have stepped up to help preach and teach, monthly offerings have risen significantly, and several weekday Bible studies have been started. ■



## PERU, (AMAZON) — ANDY & DIANE LARGE

While ministering in villages along the Amazon of Peru, along with Tom and Erna Hyde from the San Juan del Sur church in Nicaragua, the Larges witnessed four men, four boys, one woman, and many children accept Christ. ■



## CANADA — VERMILYEAS & BILLINGTONS

Credo Baptist Church in Quebec, planted under the leadership of the Billington and Vermilyea families, is now planting a new church.

ABWE has been involved in church-planting ministries in the Quebec City region since 1996. ■

## 24-HOUR DEMO

*Whether you're just starting to get curious about missions, or you've already embraced your call to the nations, 24-Hour DEMO is a great way to start your journey. Join us!*

October 24-25, 2019

October 25-26, 2019

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October 14-15, 2019

## GOOD SOIL EVANGELISM & DISCIPLESHIP (GSE&D) BASIC

*The Good Soil Basic Seminar equips you to share God's story of redemption chronologically, so that people will clearly understand, sincerely embrace, and firmly hold on to the gospel.*

October 14-15, 2019

## GSE&D TRAINER CERTIFICATION

October 16, 2019

## MOVING BEYOND LECTURE

*Become a creative facilitator of interactive training. Discover a seven-step process for designing training sessions that consistently engage participants.*

October 17-18, 2019

**LEARNMORE** at [abwe.org/training](http://abwe.org/training)



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#### MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT — 4 CHRIST FILMS

Since coming to faith, Yusef\*, a former Shiite-Muslim-turned-evangelist, had been using radio, satellite television, and social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook Live to broadcast the message of truth into hard-to-reach, majority-Muslim areas.

Then God planted a dream in his heart to go to Israel and harness the power of technology to bring the Muslim population along with him.

“He wanted to film [sermons] at the historical biblical locations,” said Phil Flowers, ABWE missionary to Bulgaria and a long-time friend of Yusef. “It’s not really something that’s been done in some of the [14] languages he speaks.”

*“WE KNOW OF MULTIPLE MUSLIMS WHO HAVE ACCEPTED CHRIST BECAUSE OF THESE VIDEOS.”*

— PHIL FLOWERS —



*4 Christ Films is a collaborative project assisting national partners and other ministry colleagues with evangelism and teaching efforts by filming on-site gospel films at biblical locations like the Sea of Galilee. (above)*

Because Phil had previously lived in Israel and knew the area well, he could help organize the film project and scout the locations. Phil called on ABWE missionary to Romania, Chris Guess, to help with the media and technology.

Phil and Chris's sending churches—Denbigh Baptist Church, VA, and Shadow Mountain Community Church, CA—funded the project and paid to fly the two men and Phil's father out to meet Yusef in Israel.

Over the next eight days, the team filmed a total of 43 evangelistic sermons, ranging from 15 minutes to an hour, at several famous biblical sites.

Yusef has been editing and airing the videos on his hour-long satellite TV show,

which focuses on ministry to Muslims. He began uploading the videos to YouTube and Facebook in March. By May, nearly 70 Muslims had reported coming to saving faith through the videos, and the calls were still coming in.

Most of the videos were filmed in Dari and Urdu, the main languages of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Yusef also plans to dub the videos in Pashto (Iran), Hindu, and other languages.

Lord-willing, Phil said, the team will be taking the project to Greece next year to film more sermons in cities like Philippi, Thessaloníki, Corinth, and Athens.

Phil's hope is that as word of the project spreads, the team will continue to

bring more national partners on board who can teach sermons in their own languages for future videos.

Phil and his Bulgarian pastor are already planning to start a similar ministry, filming videos from Israel in Bulgarian.

"So spread the word," Phil said. "We have a unique opportunity to reach people in places that we had no way of reaching 20 years ago." ■

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**LEARNMORE** about how you can support this ministry by emailing [4christfilms@abwe.cc](mailto:4christfilms@abwe.cc)



# Laura Kuykendall

**CANDIDATE CLASS:** 1981

**COUNTRY SERVED IN:** South Asia

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**1981**  
Attended ABWE's  
Candidate Class



**1986**  
Served in the East Asia  
Literature Division



**1989**  
Began working in an  
English-speaking AWANA program



Departed for  
language school  
**1984**



Began working in a Bangla-speaking  
AWANA program  
**1989**

**Q: How did God first call you to missions?**

**A:** During my younger years, I committed my life to serving the Lord, and said I would do whatever he led me to do. I was teaching in a Christian school at the time, and challenged the junior class to pray about their future—where to study, what to study, what to do, etc. Then the Lord spoke to my heart to do the same and sent several missionaries to speak at my church. Through conversations with them, I found direction to move ahead and see where the Lord would lead me.

**Q: What is the best part of being a missionary?**

**A:** The joy of serving the Lord. I think the best part of being a long-term missionary in one place is to see the children grow up and apply the teachings they have learned and serve the Lord faithfully.

**Q: What moment had the biggest impact on your ministry?**

**A:** One morning, I was sitting in morning devotions—by this point I had been [on the field] for 33 years. The leader was a young

lady whom I had taught as a child. During her sharing, I saw that God had greatly taught her, and she was able to share the word of God in depth. It was such a blessing to know that the next generation was growing up to be able to carry the load of teaching and sharing.

**Q: What is your favorite memory from the field?**

**A:** It is hard to narrow it down to one favorite memory, but I would say the relationships with people. The Lord allowed me to work with many different [South Asians]. As years went by, they would move away, or contact would become limited. But when the Lord would allow our paths to cross again, it was a great joy to see how he had been using their life to serve him.

**Q: What advice would you give to a new missionary or someone considering missions?**

**A:** Learn about people groups around the world and how to minister to people in various religions. Start talking to people with ethnic backgrounds different from your own, and eating food from different cultures. Learn how

and why they celebrate holidays different than yours. Explore the dynamics of their family and community life. See how you might enjoy living in those various situations.

Then, learn a skill that would allow you entrance into another country (medical, technical, education, etc).

And when possible, visit other countries, either in travel or on mission's trips organized by your local church or university.

Most importantly, study God's Word so you can quickly hold conversations on biblical topics—whether about salvation, theology, or general Bible knowledge.

*A defining statement in Laura's life would be, "I am privileged to participate in foreign missions." And ABWE is privileged that she chose to serve with us. ■*

**LEARNHOW** you can start building your own legacy of faithfulness [abwe.org/go](https://abwe.org/go)

**MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS****1990**

Trained East Asians to do many tasks in the Literature Division

**2002**

Began teaching math at William Carrey Academy



Appointed Field Treasurer

**1999**

Had to return to the US for health issues before returning back to the field early the next year

**2016**



By NAOMI HARWARD



# Beyond the Veil

“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.”

— Deuteronomy 10:18 —

• ABWE MUSLIM MINISTRY •

The Iranian man was in tears. In his flight from the war-torn country he had once called home, the UN divided his family, sending them to Australia and him to the US.

Alone.

But in a land where many run for refuge, this man found none within his new community.

“I don’t want to be here,” he said through his tears. “I ran away from [being a prisoner] in my home country, and ended up feeling like I’m in an even bigger jail.”

In 2017, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey of Americans’ attitudes toward members of nine different religious groups, asking each participant to rate these groups on a “feelings thermometer” ranging from 0 (most negative) to 100 (most positive). The results were sobering.

“Overall, Americans gave Muslims an average rating of 48 degrees,” they reported.



“People say to me, ‘I don’t speak their language; I don’t know how to minister to them. It’s actually very simple: just think about what you can do for someone who has nothing.’”

— PAUL HANNAH —





# Beyond the Veil



The negative view of Muslims and other internationals has decreased slightly in the last five years, according to Pew, but many North Americans are still hesitant to engage this vast and rapidly expanding population.

“Instead of embracing these people and realizing this is an opportunity to share the gospel, we can sometimes be resistant towards them,” said Doug Martin, Executive Director of ABWE North America. “We can forget to be Christians first, and Americans second.”

Fortunately, more North American churches are attempting to set aside bias and reach out.

## BUT HOW?

“People say to me, ‘I don’t speak their language; I don’t know how to minister to them,’” explains Paul Hanna, an ABWE missionary working with Arabic churches in Pennsylvania. “It’s actually very simple: Just think about what you can do for someone who has nothing.”

Paul would know. Several years before joining ABWE, he experienced his own displacement. Paul had come to the United States

in 2010 from Syria to study at a Bible college in Ohio. But he had no intention of staying in the US long-term.

“The plan was to study here and then go back to help my father—a Syrian pastor—plant churches in Syria.”

God had other plans.

When the Syrian Civil War erupted in 2011, Paul was required as a Syrian citizen to fight—but every time he attempted to submit his papers allowing him to return to his country, they were rejected.

He tried for three years. Eventually, the Syrian government blacklisted Paul with the threat of imprisonment if he ever attempts to go home.

Unable to return to Syria after graduation, Paul reached out to a Syrian-American pastor who was struggling to manage three new church plants in central Pennsylvania on his own.

Paul offered his services, helping to recruit and train more laborers to support the fledgling churches.

During this time, the churches were working with the US State Department and other local ministries to provide food, clothing, and other essentials to internationals—immigrants, refugees, and others who are seeking asylum or trying to establish themselves in a new country.

For many, “they’re completely starting over,” Paul said.

The profound loneliness of fleeing persecution in their homeland to seek refuge in a country, which then suspects you of trying to usurp its culture, can be unbearable, Paul said. “They say, ‘I am here running away from a war, looking for opportunities, and my own community is not welcoming me.’”

Paul’s ministry focuses on connecting these people with American churches and individuals—not only to help the international migrants, but also to encourage more churches to step out of their comfort zones.

“There aren’t a lot of people working with internationals, and those who are don’t always know how to most effectively minister to their needs,” Paul said.

Encouraging churches to intentionally reach out and connect with more internationals is a great starting point, he continued. From there, they can begin to build deeper relationships either through ministry, or by simply inviting their new guests to do life with them. »

# Beyond the Veil



## HEART, MIND & SOUL

Recognizing the gap between desire and knowledge, ABWE created the “Heart, Mind & Soul: Muslims” seminar for North American churches.

The seminar helps participants understand the attitudes between Muslims and Christians (the heart), and explore shared truths (the mind) so that they can cultivate a relationship of love and humility (the soul) to open doors for gospel conversations.

“It’s all about grace and truth relationships,” said Doug Martin, founder of the Heart, Mind & Soul seminars.

## ORIGINS OF HEART, MIND & SOUL

As a youth pastor serving in Eastern Europe, Doug saw that the church wasn’t effective in reaching the variety of people groups around them.

“I joked about writing a book,” he said, “about churches reaching people groups who are geographically close, but culturally far away.”

Upon leaving the mission field to serve as ABWE’s Executive Director of North America,

Doug started brainstorming—not a book, but a training to equip churches for more impactful ministry.

In 2013, the first Heart, Mind & Soul seminar was launched with a focus on teaching people how to engage in relational evangelism with those from a culture or mindset far different from their own.

“People have so many questions that it’s hard for them to respond to the gospel until they fully understand it,” Doug said. “And we’re often so focused on giving the entire gospel presentation that we’re not having gospel conversations, where we can dialogue and help them understand the message better.”

American Christians especially have become so conditioned to present the gospel to unbelievers in a “one-and-done” manner, Doug said, that they have forgotten about the relational aspect of speaking truth into people’s lives.

Being relational, however, is exactly what the Christian community must focus on when reaching out to Muslims and other internationals—many of whom come from cultures centered around relationships and community, he explains.

“As those relationships mature and deepen, more opportunities to discuss deeper spiritual matters will surface. Questions will

be asked—they will want clarity about certain aspects of the gospel that are hard to understand.”

## WHAT CAN BELIEVERS DO?

So, what can a believer do? Both Paul and Doug agree on the first steps.

“Do not wait for them to come to you,” Paul said.

Jesus never waited for people to come to him, Doug said. “Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery—when everyone else avoided and condemned them, he went to them.”

“Donate household goods to them. Take them grocery shopping,” Paul suggests. “Talk to them—talking to them will help them learn English. Invite them to take part in your culture.”

Paul specifically recalled one couple who ministered to an international family by using Google translate to explain tasks like making doctor’s appointments. “What may seem like the simplest tasks to us, may be much more difficult to a family who is here just starting out.”

That’s exactly what believers did for Paul when he found himself living alone in the US without his family.

“The believers [around me] adopted me and made me feel like I had a family here,” he said. »



“JESUS DID NOT WAIT  
FOR PEOPLE TO  
COME TO HIM...”





Having those “unofficial families” was huge in helping Paul adjust to his new home, and plays a vital role in helping families feel welcome in their new country.

In stepping out and intentionally reaching out to serve those who are from different cultures, churches can open the door for more gospel-centered conversations.

“When someone knows your heart, and that you genuinely care about them, then what you have to say about [their life or religion] is taken as an act of love, not criticism,” Doug said.

“Do not wait for them to come to you,” Paul urged again. “They are working hard to learn. Americans and believers should take the second step to reach out to them and bring them in.”

### OVERCOMING OUR BARRIERS

Beyond reaching out to foreigners in our communities, ABWE leaders say other important ways to reach Muslims are to support those who are going to creative-access countries, and consider serving there yourself.

We sometimes hear from North American Christians: “Why would you send people there? They are our enemies!” said Jeff and Jodi D., ABWE Executive Directors to the Middle East and North Africa. “It is as if these people don’t deserve to hear the gospel.”

They believe this is mainly a result in the ways that US media portrays the Middle East, and focuses on only “the bad things.”

“It is a struggle to have family and friends freaking out and telling you to come home, when daily ministry can already be so challenging,” Jodi said. Those daily struggles don’t often look like violence or death threats—but can be as simple as living with the duplicity of integrity and protection.

Jodi recalls instances of missionary kids standing in customs lines, confused by the question “Why are you here?”, turning back to mom and dad with a look that asks, “What do we say?” knowing that their purpose is ‘secret’ but that they shouldn’t lie either.

Some missionaries are very open about who they are and what they are doing, Jodi said, while

others have gone as far as to use fake names on their missionary application with ABWE. Once on the field, some serving in restricted-access locations will only meet in secret and will not even disclose the organization they serve with, because compromised information could mean serious physical persecution.

But with about 24 percent of the global population being Muslim, there is far greater reason to learn how to live and love these people—both abroad and at home, Jeff said.

“There are 35 cities with over 1 million Muslims that have no evangelical churches and no church planting teams in those locations,” he says. “I’ve heard it said that if every Christian shared the gospel with every unbeliever they knew, and all those people became Christians, there would still be 3 billion unreached people in the world.” •

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



**PRAY** for the persecuted church and that new converts establish local churches in restricted-access countries.



**HOST** a Heart, Mind & Soul Seminar at your church. Learn more at [abwe.org/heartmindsoul](http://abwe.org/heartmindsoul)



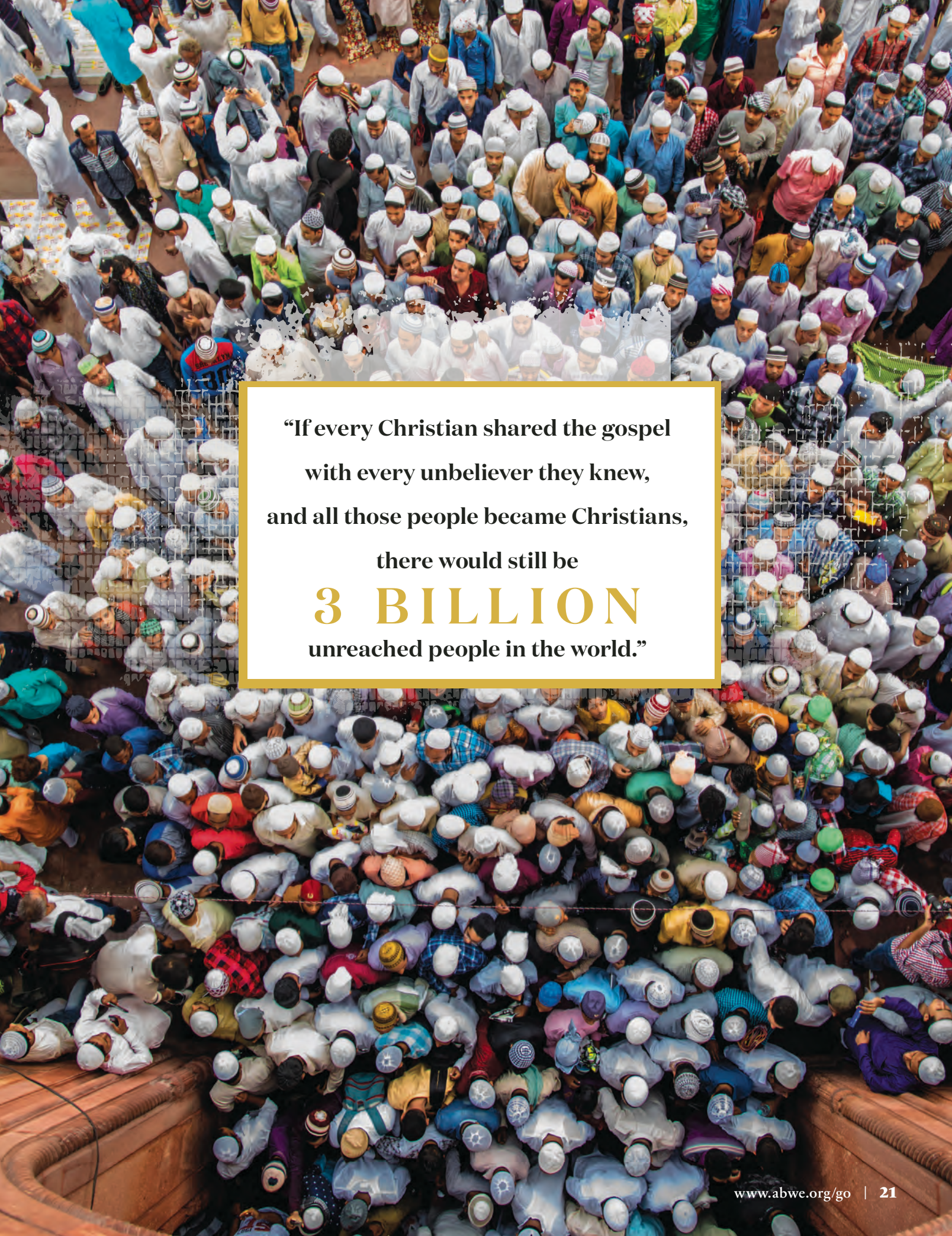
**EXTEND** cultural mercy and kindness to refugees and immigrants. Look for ways that you can connect with them.



**SUPPORT** restricted-access missionaries through finances and prayer. Learn more at [abwe.org/give](http://abwe.org/give)



**SERVE** as a missionary in a creative-access location. There are many refugees in these countries too.



“If every Christian shared the gospel  
with every unbeliever they knew,  
and all those people became Christians,  
there would still be  
**3 BILLION**  
unreached people in the world.”



EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is a continuation of Ma Sing story in "Praying for Restoration", featured in the previous issue (Vol 67 No. 1)*  
*\*Her name has been protected.*



## HER NAME WAS

*Mai Tai Sing\**

She arrived at the doors of Memorial Christian Hospital septic and near death, after a grueling two-day journey with her life hanging on the line. Despite her grim condition, the hospital staff fought desperately to save her life, unsure at the time of what had caused the infections filling the center of her chest—more often than not, a guaranteed death sentence.

(They would discover later it was an infection caused by a fish bone that had torn her esophagus weeks earlier).

Over the next six weeks, she would slowly, yet surely, begin to recover. She and her husband would also come to saving faith after seeing the truth lived out through the hospital staff and her caretakers during her six-week stay at the hospital, and they would bring the medical team to share that same truth with their village.

Even though the truth was not welcome in their village, the young couple continued to seek it out, visiting the hospital to learn more and grow, and persistently bringing the truth back to the closed ears of their fellow villagers.

**But in March, the tragic news arrived...**



### Her name was Mai Tai Sing.

“Buddhism is often described as a peaceful religion opposed to killing even an insect,” said one of the NGO doctors at the hospital who had helped treat Mai Sing. “But in reality, there are radical religious zealots who will stop at nothing in the name of their religion. Take Myanmar and the Rohingya crisis as a prime example.”

Because of their stand for the truth, Mai Sing and her husband and two young children were forced to live in a 15-by-15-foot elevated bamboo hut just outside the village.

**“No one wanted anything to do with them. She and her husband were hungry for God’s Word, but their community was not.”**

Still, the couple begged the hospital team to come tell the truth in their village. The visit was cordial, the doctor recalled, and several of Mai Sing’s family came to hear the truth—but it was also made clear that the team was not welcome to return to the village. Mai Sing and her husband made several trips back to the hospital in the following months, however—only partially because of Mai Sing’s follow-up appointments.

“They were hungry for more of [the] Word,” the doctor said, “and at each visit devoured what [was] shared with them.” The doctor said he and his coworkers provided resources in their native language, both written and audio transcripts.

“They were very excited and growing in their faith.”

But then, in the midst of this great joy, tragedy struck.

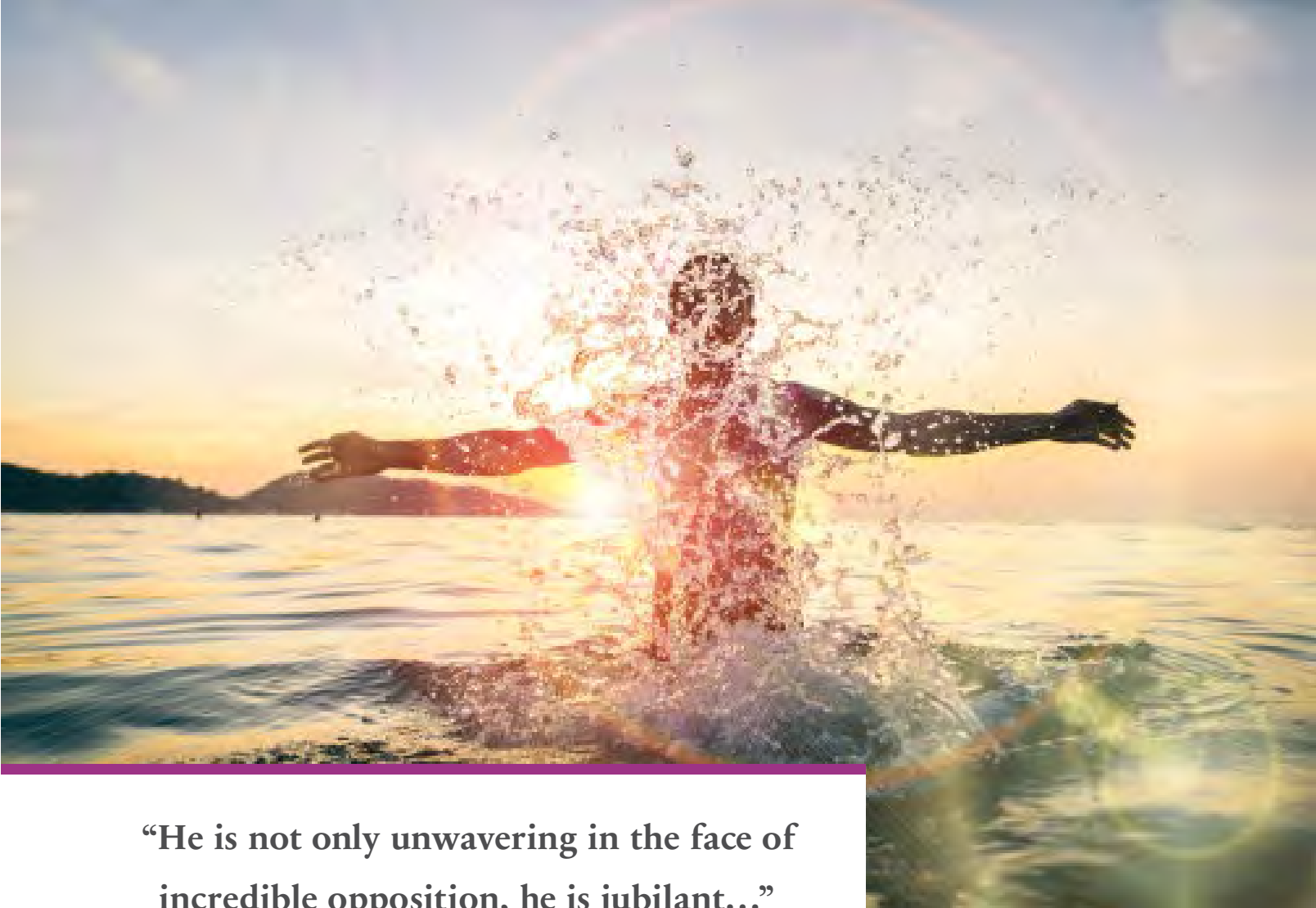
The night of March 14, 2019, Mai Sing had just finished eating when she suddenly began foaming at the mouth and collapsed. Within minutes, she was dead. Her poisoning came after many threats towards her and her family and much pressure to return to Buddhism.

“She has entered her peace, where disease and pain are no more,” the doctor wrote later. “She was a child of the living King of kings. She was a life lived to its end, who endured persecution and remained faithful even to death. She has entered her reward with the words ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’ We will meet her again one day, wearing the white robe of the martyrs singing praises to her Lord and Savior.”

But Mai Sing’s story doesn’t end with her death. The hope she found lives on through her husband as he stands in the face of persecution from their village.

“This man lost his wife and his father in the same day,” said Jan G., wife of Harry G., ABWE Executive Director of South Asia. “Yet, he continues to live in the village which killed them.

And he has hope.”



## “He is not only unwavering in the face of incredible opposition, he is jubilant...”

Rather than handing her body over to the village to be buried through Buddhist rituals, Mai Tai Sing's husband dug his wife's grave himself. “I didn't know what to do,” he told the missionaries. “So I just said a prayer, and then I buried her.”

When Buddhists began pressuring him into handing their young son over to the monastery, he pleaded with the hospital team to find a Christian family for his son to live with, so that the boy could be raised safely and in a Godly home. Their youngest child—a daughter—still lives with him in the village.

Though illiterate, the husband kept returning to the hospital for training seminars, learning the Scripture and how to teach Scripture to others through audio

recordings. Recently, he was baptized—along with nine other local men—at one of the hospital's training conferences.

“He is not only unwavering in the face of incredible opposition,” Jan said. “He is jubilant, and hungry, asking to be fed and willing to help people come and tell his village—despite the persecution.” •

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*Revelation 6:9-11: “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer...”*

# Persecution in Perspective

245 MILLION

CHRISTIANS EXPERIENCED PERSECUTION IN 2019  
COMPARED WITH 215 MILLION IN 2018

14%↑

*1 IN 9: Christians worldwide experienced high levels of persecution*

*4,136: Christians killed for faith-related reasons*

*2,625: Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced & imprisoned*

*1,266: Churches attacked*

**& THE NUMBERS ARE RISING.**



**11 CHRISTIANS ON AVERAGE ARE KILLED  
EVERY DAY FOR THEIR FAITH.**

YET THERE IS HOPE.

WE ARE PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN;  
STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED.

## DID YOU KNOW?

ALTHOUGH THE GLOBAL CHURCH CONTINUES TO GROW  
DESPITE EXTREME PERSECUTION, THERE ARE STILL MILLIONS  
WITHOUT ACCESS TO THE GOSPEL.

**3 BILLION:** *People who have never been reached with the gospel*

**195 MILLION:** *People in the 10/40 Window do not have access  
to the Bible*

**149 MILLION:** *Chinese cannot access a Bible in their language*

**458 THOUSAND:** *Villages in India with no church-planting efforts*

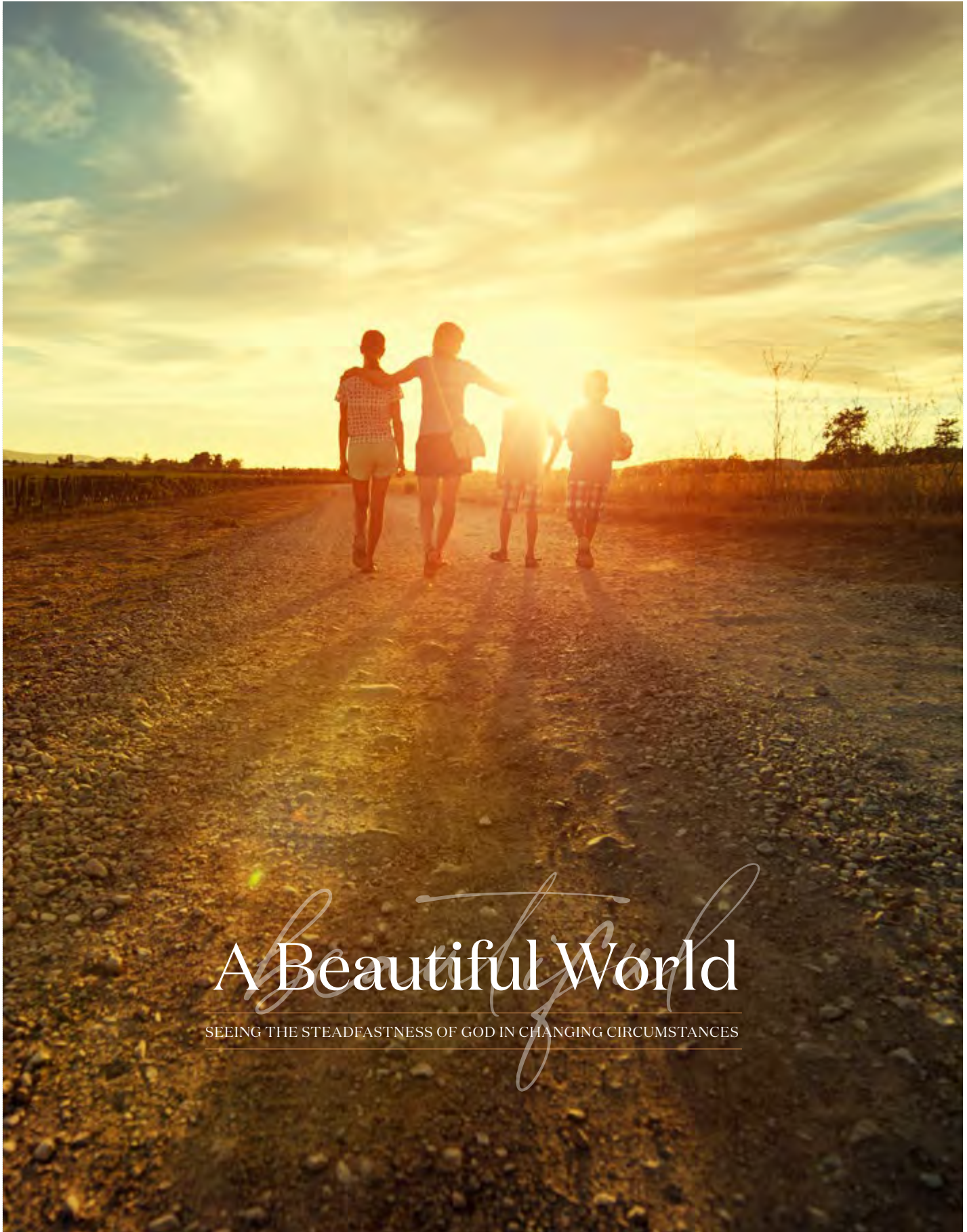
## WE ARE WORKING TO CHANGE THIS.

ABWE'S WORK IN CREATIVE ACCESS COUNTRIES:

*Because of the religions and restrictive governments found in these  
regions of the world, ABWE works in many different ways to enter  
into the lives of the people living here and bring them the life-saving  
message of hope. We do this through:*

- *Local church ministries*
- *Medical care*
- *Education*
- *Teaching English*
- *Small businesses*
- *Sports ministry*
- *Strategic partnerships*

**PRAY FOR THE 106 ABWE MISSIONARIES SERVING IN 18 COUNTRIES  
WHO RISK IT ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL.**



# A Beautiful World

SEEING THE STEADFASTNESS OF GOD IN CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

**T**he anticipation for newness is always exhilarating. With eagerness we await many new adventures in life, as a child might wait for Christmas morning. Our family's move to a new country was no less exhilarating.

But with this newness also comes doubt. Fear. Worry. It can drown out the reminders of our constant and loving Father who guides us every step of the way.

One such reminder came from my son the other day. Looking beyond the horizon of our busyness, my son noticed the sunset and exclaimed, "Look! Isn't it a beautiful world?"

We had only been in the country for a week, and it was difficult to imagine that so much had changed in those few days.

Only a week before, our family was packing suitcases and saying our farewells to loved ones. Now, we are trying different foods, learning another language, and attempting to make our new home in this place where God has called us. Everything around us is unfamiliar—the heat, the sounds, the smells, the words, the faces. It makes us cherish the familiar all the more.

We covet the daily messages and video calls from the other side of the world. We continue our favorite tradition of holding family dance parties in the living room! We are constantly presented with the reality of our changing and uncertain circumstances in light of the steadfast and faithful God that we serve. We are reminded that, though our circumstances may change, our God does not.

We pray regularly together and ask God to help us find new things to love, and to help us be brave as we are faced with these new and uncertain experiences. For us as parents, that can mean learning to drive on the

opposite side of the road, or ask for a glass of water in a restaurant. For our children, it can mean making friends with other children who don't speak the same language.

Even in the short time that we have been here, God has shown us faithfulness in seemingly small but powerful ways. Issues that would never bother us at home, like finding dinner, are seemingly insurmountable at times.

**“Issues that would  
never bother  
us at home, like  
finding dinner,  
are seemingly  
insurmountable  
at times.”**

Our three-year-old son loves mac ‘n’ cheese. But just as we arrived at a local stand that served it, we realized the stand had closed. With our son in tears, we took a moment to pray together before we began a new search for dinner. To our happiness, the Lord provided through some delicious cheese-filled naan that, after a big, brave bite, brought a giant smile to our son's face.

What a sweet grace that God gave our boy something so simple that his heart desired so much in that moment. We have had so many opportunities to teach and be taught about the One who is always unchanging and to see and feel so tangibly how much he loves his children, even in the small things. ■

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17*



*This is an excerpt from the prayer letter of a missionary family after recently arriving in a restricted-access country.*

*ABWE has 106 missionaries serving in 18 restricted access countries. Pray for them.*



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## 5 Ways to Encourage a Missionary in a Restricted-Access Country

HARRY G. | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH ASIA

### *What is a restricted access country?*

Many missionaries are free to discuss their locations, circumstances, and work with friends and family back home. They can share details about the country where they serve and ask for prayer regarding the specifics of their ministry. Missionaries in restricted-access countries, however, have a unique set of circumstances that make it difficult for us to communicate with and encourage them.

Restricted-access countries often have high numbers of unreached people groups, and the governments are wary of western missionaries. They are watched closely and their communication with friends and family is often monitored. Information shared on social media or other sources could result in an order to leave the country.

Restricted-access countries do not issue visas for missionaries, making it more difficult for them to live and work there. Many missionaries obtain visas through their work in compassion and healthcare ministries, education, and community service. Others run their own businesses and organizations.

These extra stresses engender isolation and spiritual oppression and increase the missionaries' need for reminders that God has them in that special spot. They covet more from us as God's people to encourage them forward.

Here are five ways you can encourage missionaries in restricted-access countries, despite the communication barriers between you.

**1. Get To Know Them.** Get their prayer updates and read their letters. Know the struggles they are facing.

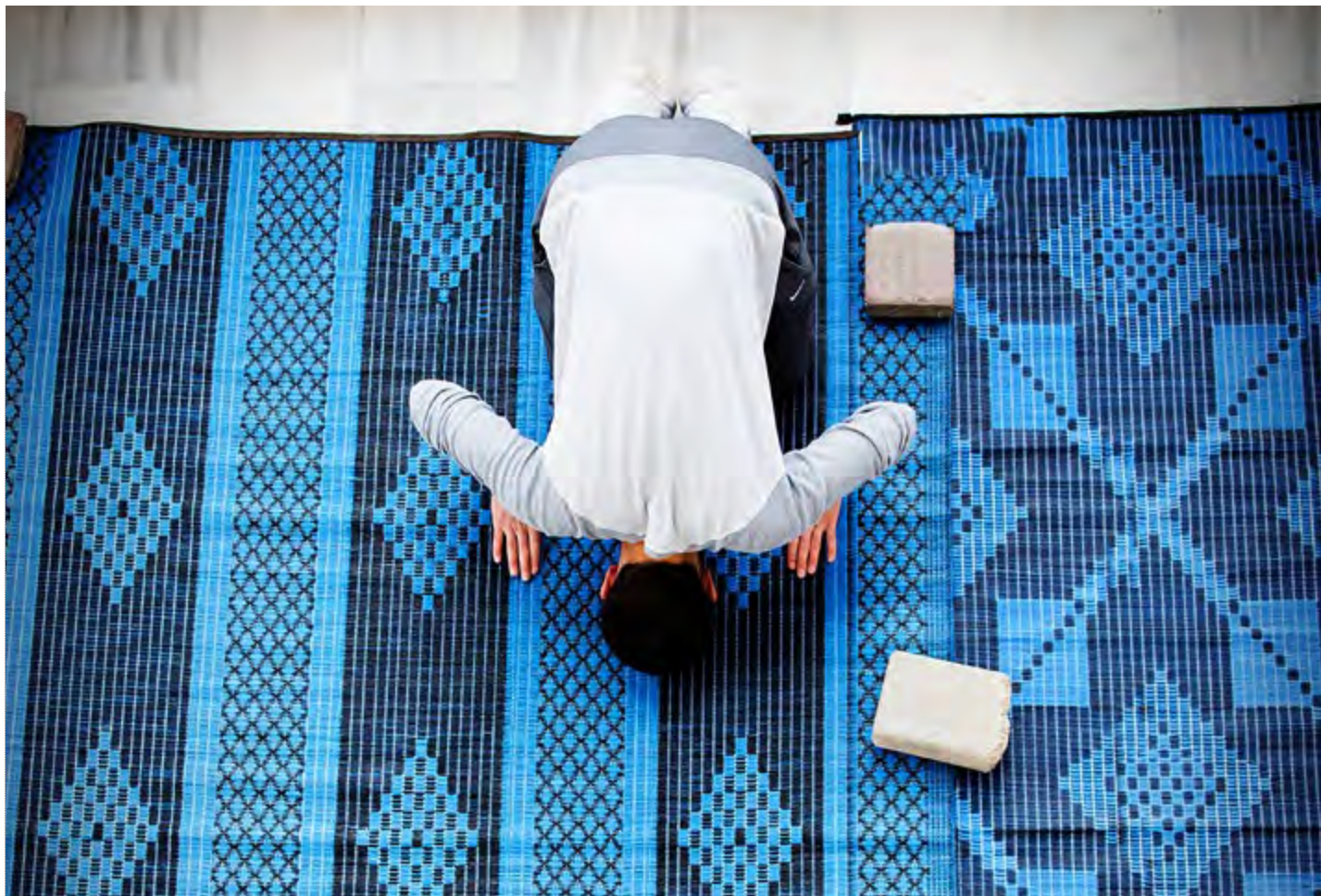
**2. Respect The Restrictions.** Find out what email address, communications app, or special restricted social media site is safe for them. And find out what words you cannot say in your communications with them.

**3. Communicate and Encourage.** Missionaries need reminded of the gospel, too. Encourage them with the promises of God throughout scripture, and let them know you are thinking about them. Remind them that they are missed, loved, and prayed over.

**4. Really Pray.** Missionaries in restricted-access countries face spiritual oppression every day, and they can be discouraged and tempted to doubt the goodness of their purpose. Pray for them, and pray often. Ask God to comfort them with his protection, restore them with his love, and guide them with his word.

### **5. Ask Them How You Can Help**

Find out what specific needs you and your church might help the missionary meet. Whether that is collecting supplies, raising funds, or offering business advice—participating in their work enables you to support the missionaries and further God's work there. ■



## A Change in Perspective

The majority of people living in countries with large Muslim populations are just as concerned about the radical acts of ISIS as the Western nations, according to a recent study from Pew Research Center. Yet, because of the misconceptions surrounding their religion and their home countries, the majority of Muslims who have moved to the US have said that, in recent years, being a Muslim in the States has gotten harder due to the

overwhelmingly cold and negative view their American neighbors often harbor towards them.

Through resources like ABWE North America's Heart, Mind & Soul seminars, ESL ministries, and various missionaries with a passion for cross-cultural ministry, ABWE is striving to break down the barriers and shine the light of the truth to cultures very different from our own. ■



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About the Photographer | KORRINA DUKE, THE BALKANS

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*Korinna Duke is a wife and foster mom living in east Texas, where she works as a freelance photographer, social media coordinator and website designer. She has had the opportunity to use her photography on three different Storytellers Abroad missions trips with ABWE, including to a Muslim-majority country.*



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