



MISSION SOUTH PACIFIC
SHARING THE MESSAGE... TRAINING THE MESSENGERS



Newsletter 2009 -- No. 4

Greetings in the name of our Lord. We hope that each of you and your family had a blest Thanksgiving and pray your Christmas holiday will be filled with joy and laughter. May God grant you hope and great blessing in the New Year.

ON THE FAMILY FRONT

We have some good news and some not-so-good news. First the good news: Brenda's health has rebounded in amazing ways! She still has times of feeling lousy and her energy comes and goes but she feels much better over all. The main challenge is not to overdo things when she is energized. Your prayers are appreciated more than we can say.

Now for the not-so-good news: my parents are not doing well. Aging, though a natural process most of us will experience, is tough on everyone involved. My brother, sister-in-law and I moved Mom and Dad from Brownwood to a skilled nursing unit in Abilene



while Dad recovered from his hip fracture. As soon as he was able to do some walking, we moved them to an assisted living facility. Very quickly Dad began having difficulties. We made two runs to the emergency room (an all-night ordeal), once for abdominal pain and the second time for congestive

heart failure. After several days in the hospital he returned to assisted living for one day. It immediately became obvious he would need to be in skilled nursing where he now remains. He never feels very well and is somewhat confused and disoriented. He tires easily and spends most of his time dozing. The doctors say he has gall stones and is operating on about one third of his heart.

Mom is suffering from some kind of progressive dementia which is markedly worse under stress. She is disoriented most of the time. Her short-term memory is very sketchy and she forgets names and directions. She has a hard time putting thoughts into words. She remains in assisted living and has to be looked after rather closely. We try to make sure she eats enough and gets to visit Dad several times daily. This is a daunting task as those of you with aging parents are well aware.

Sunset International Bible School has been very understanding and kind by allowing me to teach my remaining classes for this term via the internet so I can be close by for Mom and Dad. It is not the ideal setup but it has been workable so far. In all of these situations your prayers are coveted and valued.

Listen, Can We Talk?

We have a number of faithful long-term supporters for which we are *very* grateful. Nevertheless, we are about \$ 2,000 short of what we need monthly to *survive*, much less do the work we have committed to do. Is it worth it? We'll report, you decide.

Please take a moment to read the interview with one of my students, Ryan Bunge, and some of the remarks under "Comments from Readers." If, after you read these items, you believe what we are doing is valuable and should continue, *please help make it possible*. Your gift could make a huge difference...especially a *monthly* gift.

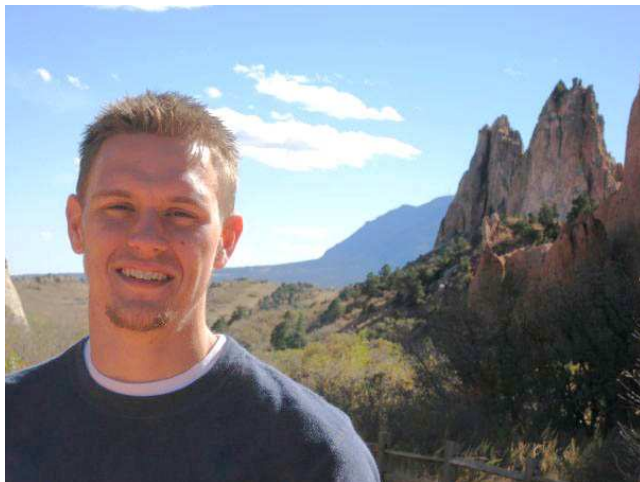
Precious souls in Asia and the South Pacific are languishing without hope of

eternal life. It is up to us to bring them good news of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Obviously, this cannot happen unless we do two things: (1) train and send more mission teams and (2) train more men and women in the region to preach and teach the gospel. *That is what we are all about!* To make this happen is our mission but we must have your **partnership** *financially* and *spiritually*. **Please consider a monthly gift of \$50 or more to sustain us in this work.**

We are also in need of travel funds right now to make a much-needed trip to Australia. Remember, in the U.S., your contributions are tax-deductible.

Interview with Ryan Bunge



Ryan Bunge is one of my students in the School of Missions and part of the Scotland team. He grew up in Northwestern Houston. He left home and entered the military when he was nineteen and served for eight years. Ryan is a twin and his father was a twin also. He has two brothers. He is single. He

became a Christian after his first deployment to Afghanistan.

How did you become a Christian?

"We used this tiny Island called Diego Garcia for re-supply and staging. There were two Christians on the island, a Navy medic and an Air Force Intelligence officer. We were there for a couple of weeks and they asked me to go to church. Previous to that I had been searching for a long time. Having been eight months in Afghanistan I'd seen a lot of ugliness and warfare. I saw a lot of people killed. This brings you so close to life and death that all of the sudden, trivial matters seem really trivial. It sobered me to the reality about how important it is to save people. So they found me at the right time. I'm convinced it was divine providence in the first degree because a year before I would have said, 'Why would I do that?' Instead, I said, 'You got it. That sounds great about now.'

So I showed up and there were just those two. I was fascinated because I had asked questions before but these were the first people who could back up their answers. That alone really appealed to me. I need book, chapter and verse.

At first I didn't accept what they said...I thought they were nice but a little crazy. They took a big risk because the Air Force guy turned to me and said, "I love you, man. I want you to be part of this kingdom." Now military guys don't talk this way to each other. If you want to express something you buy them a beer. It made me uncomfortable and it's amazing that I went back. He said it every time I met with them. As much as anything else, it's what broke my wall down.

Why did you come to SIBI?

"In 2005 I met an Air Force guy in Japan, Evan Weiss (SIBI '08). He had been converted in the military in Iceland. I had only been a Christian for about a year and a half and already wanted to teach classes in apologetics, my most passionate area of study. He said, 'I'm about to get out of the military and go be a preacher. You should go to a place called Sunset.'

I said, 'That's fine but I'm in the military for life.' He said, 'You really ought to consider coming to Sunset.' Well, he convinced me to get out and go to Sunset. It's the best decision I ever made. I wish I had done it sooner."

What made you decide to be a missionary?

"After living in other countries and seeing the need, I just knew I wouldn't fit in an established congregation that wasn't

missional. People are dying! This is for real! There really is a war going on and there's a front line to it. I have the choice to go or to sit back and say, 'I wish someone would do something about that.' I have no interest in being anything other than a frontline soldier, *ever*. We're talking about life and death situations...put me there! Get me in the front of it...that's where I want to be."

Why did you choose Scotland?

"I was praying about it and I knew I wanted to be in European missions. I have a real heart for the emptiness in Europe. My good friend and Sunset classmate, Robin Vick, had been asking me to join his Scotland team. He called me again and, after a three-hour conversation, I knew I was joining that team."

"People say, 'Well, that's an unreceptive place,' and it just makes me want to go more. When I hear of a place that's difficult I say, 'Get me over there!' If no one goes, it will stay unreceptive."

How do you feel about your time in the School of Missions?

"It has far exceeded my expectations. It has been especially helpful regarding team development and strategy. There's been so much preparation. I wouldn't advise anyone to go to the mission field without going through the School of Missions. You're going to have so much more of an arsenal at your disposal. It's been magnificent."

Ryan is an extremely disciplined, focused and committed young man. He is knowledgeable and eager for action. I highly recommend him to potential supporters.

Comments from Readers

Dwight,

Your video presentation of the work and opportunities in the Muslim world was informative and inspiring. I have sent it to all of my supporting elderships.

Your passion for church planting in preaching the Gospel is evident and greatly appreciated. I delight with the thought that young men and women at Sunset are being touched with your zeal for the Lord and your commitment to the Kingdom cause.

Truman Scott

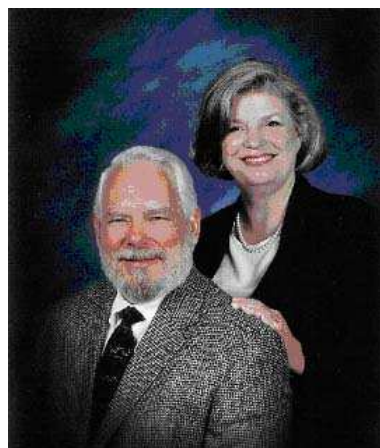
Dwight,

I just wanted to thank you so much for your classes on culture during my AIM time in Lubbock. They have been immensely helpful during my time here. They do not completely take away culture shock, but I feel as if I was much more prepared for detecting it as and when it came (and still comes). They have also helped me work better with non-Americans on my team, helping me recognize that other cultures are not better or worse than my own, but simply different. God bless and keep on preaching the Word and equipping men and women of God to change the world for the sake of Christ and his gospel.

AIMing for Christ,

John McCoy

Gary Ford, a former student of mine, is serving as a youth minister in Illinois. We just wanted to share his very affirming letter with you, my partners. He was recently speaking with an evangelist (in the true sense of the word) in Tennessee on a mission trip on which he led his teens. He writes,



Somewhere in my conversation with him I began to tell him about how there are many people who influenced me greatly in my walk with Christ. But, when it comes to me being a disciple who makes more disciples, who then in turn go and make more disciples themselves, I told him that there is one man who has influenced me far more than any other -and that man is you Dwight. After I had told him that and told him about your style of teaching, how we would meet at J&B's Coffee for class to actually practice some of what we were learning, (he) really wanted to get in touch with you - I think to talk about some of his thoughts for his book (which he is writing with Alan Hirsch). I hope that you are doing well. Know that you and wife are in my constant prayers. And remember that you are bearing fruit all

over the globe -and even here now in Illinois.

We are sharing this with you hoping you will feel as honored as we do. As our partner, you make these moments possible.

**With love and appreciation,
 Dwight and Brenda Whitsett**