

BCMWorld

An Inside Look at BCM Global Ministries



God's Church Still Stands...



Worship service after earthquake



Milestone Church Damage



Earthquake destruction

God's Church Still Stands in Earthquake-Shaken Nepal

By: Jeanette Windle

"It was Saturday, April 25th, and our believers were all gathered in church for the 11 a.m. worship service," describes Rev. Robbin Vaidhya, BCM Nepal director and pastor of Milestone Church in Kathmandu. (Since Sunday is a work-day in Nepal, Christians typically hold services on Saturday, the designated "weekend".) "We were singing hymns and offering praise when we felt a shaking. We kept singing, but as the shaking continued, believers began leaving the hall one by one. I emerged last with a group of teenagers. By then I sensed great danger. When I came out, I saw plastered walls cracked open and windows exploding from their frames with great sound. We all fell to the ground, praying. The shaking continued for fifty-six seconds before it finally finished."

By the time the congregation was able to rise to its feet, it was to a scene of utter devastation. Mud-brick and cinder-block homes were piles of rubble. Mountain slopes had given way, burying homes below. News reports would soon confirm that an earthquake of 7.8 on the Richter scale had shaken Nepal, its epicenter just 85 miles east of Kathmandu. Within less than a minute, thousands were dead and upwards of a hundred thousand homes

destroyed across much of Nepal.

The BCM Nepal congregation on top of a ridge outside Kathmandu offered thanksgiving that every member had escaped to safety outdoors. Over coming days, reports filtered in from each of BCM Nepal's eight full-time



BCM Church prior to the earthquakes, see front cover for the same church after

missionaries and five additional volunteer church planters. Miraculously, not a single church family had suffered injury during the quake. But many had lost their homes, and the irreparable damage to the Milestone church structure itself was a devastating blow. Above all, because its original construction had been such a miracle.

When Rev. Robbin Vaidhya had knelt in a rice paddy with BCM president Marty Windle and other ministry leaders in late 2007 to dedicate land for BCM Nepal's first church building, it had seemed an unlikely dream. Nepal was the world's only remaining Hindu monarchy, preaching of any other faith against the law. Then came the miracle. Within a year, the monarchy had fallen, giving way to a secular republic and freedom of religion. By 2009, Milestone Church stood completed atop a hilly ridge looking out over the valley of Kathmandu (See [From Rice Paddy to Light on a Hill, BCM World, Summer 2010](#)).

Now all that remained of that beautiful vision was broken walls and crumbled plaster. The entrance piazza overlooking the valley had literally broken away and tumbled down the mountainside. But Robbin Vaidhya would be the first to proclaim that a church is not its building, but its people. Despite their own losses, the BCM Nepal church body began immediately to reach out to their hard-hit neighbors. A large open-air tent structure was pieced together, and neighboring villagers joined believers sleeping under its shelter. A communal kitchen was set up to share food. Church services resumed under the tent.



BCM Milestone Temporary Shelter

The nightmare was not over with the initial quake. Over following days, hundreds of aftershocks shook Nepal, making any return indoors too dangerous. In response, tent cities cobbled from any materials available sprang up across Nepal. Even these offered scant safety, especially when storms rumbled in. By Sunday evening, May 3rd, the Milestone congregation and their neighbors had been sheltering under canvas for over a week when a thunderstorm opened floodgates overhead. Robbin Vaidhya shares:

"We tried to protect our tent, but it was very hard. Then I remembered the word of God when Jesus rebuked the storm on the Sea of Galilee. With faith, I called together our believers and encouraged them to pray, rebuking the storm in the name of Jesus. After five minutes, the storm calmed, and we saw the moon emerge."

That next Friday, May 8th, Robbin was awakened in the middle of the night. Kneeling to pour out his heart in prayer, he heard a distinct message from the Holy Spirit. "God told me we needed to move from this tent to a safer place."

When dawn came, Robbin sought out a still-standing house and bartered a rental agreement. Before the Saturday morning church service, all essential belongings had been moved in-doors. He was heading to church when God again spoke to his heart, warning that nightfall would bring a heavy storm. Robbin shared the warning with the other believers. By evening, the entire congregation had found shelter. They had also visited neighbors in their tent settlements, alerting them to take cover. While some



BCM Nepal director Robbin Vaidhya in damaged BCM church

responded, others laughed at the idea of a warning from God. At 8 p.m., the rains and wind began. By morning, the area was flooded and tents ripped apart, but those who'd heeded Robbin's warning were dry and safe.

"What a witness this was among non-Christians," Robbin testifies, "that our God can protect His followers."

To be a witness of God's love to their non-Christian neighbors has been the goal of BCM Nepal's church body since this crisis began. Robbin Vaidhya offers praise to God for one particular modern technological development that has contributed to that goal. Despite intermittent electricity, residual battery in the BCM Nepal computer system allowed contact with the outside world through FaceBook. Robbin expresses BCM Nepal's heartfelt thankfulness for the outpouring of concern and prayers from the BCM ministry family around the globe that have let them know they are not alone or forgotten. Within days, donations for relief funds began arriving as well from BCM ministry partners and church families.

Aid that the BCM Nepal believers have shared from the beginning with less fortunate neighbors. To date, they have distributed tents, rice and other food items, blankets, and more to hundreds of needy families. In response, they have seen one great blessing emerge from this crisis.

"Before the earthquake, we faced many obstacles and persecution from our neighbors," Robbin explains. "Now they all show positive feelings about our church because we helped them in a bad situation and showed our love and care for them. Praise God for all this."

Three weeks after the initial April 26th earthquake, life in Nepal was settling down to a new normal of tent cities, relief organizations, and the beginnings of reconstruction efforts. Then on May 12th, a second major earthquake hit, measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale. This time the death toll topped 8000 with countless more missing and an estimated half million Nepalese families left homeless, making this now the deadliest natural disaster in Nepal's history.

Both the Nepalese and the BCM Nepal ministry family are facing an uncertain future. Aftershocks continue to shake the ground. To add urgency, Nepal's monsoon season is approaching with millions currently stranded outdoors without adequate shelter. An



Left top to bottom: Tent City-Nepal; BCM Nepal director Robbin Vaidhya

Right top to bottom: Nepal Earthquake Damage; Holding W



inadequate stream of aid is only just beginning to trickle into outlying towns and villages. Reconstruction will be a long, hard process.

But BCM Nepal believers have no reservations as to where to start. Robbin Vaidhya writes on behalf of his church family: “We are facing, of course, great difficulties. We have no idea what to do about ourselves. But one thing we know. We need to be helpful to each other. And we must continue sharing our love with our neighbors.”

In a recent tent service, Robbin preached appropriately on Hebrews 12:25-28, a passage that speaks of God shaking the earth and heavens until only that which cannot be shaken will remain. The final verse (12:28) sums up BCM Nepal’s own commitment regardless what else this crisis may hold for them: “*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.*”

In practical terms, immediate goals for Milestone Church are to erect a more substantial temporary structure made of iron supports and corrugated tin on a nearby field they have been able to rent. Their hope is to have it built before rainy season begins in a few weeks so that it can also be used as sleeping quarters for those still lacking shelter.

A second goal is to help erect temporary living structures for displaced families, also of corrugated tin. In other areas of Nepal, BCM church structures have survived the earthquake, but in one district alone, over 90% of church families have lost their homes. Ongoing needs include food and medical supplies, blankets and warm clothing. The rebuilding of Milestone Church itself is a long-term goal.

“Please do not forget us here in Nepal,” pleads Robbin Vaidhya.

May this be our challenge as new media stories crowd out the ongoing desperation in Nepal. In its earthquake-shaken landscape, God’s church is one constant that remains standing and unshaken. Pray with the BCM Nepal family and the body of Christ across Nepal that in this tragedy they may continue to be a witness of God’s love to their community in need.

To donate to the BCM Nepal Relief and Reconstruction Fund, [Click Here](#) or contact giving@bcmintl.org.



Robbin Vaidhya distributing aid; Shila Vaidhya distributing aid



ORDINARY PEOPLE CALLED TO SERVE EXTRAORDINARILY

By: R. Paul Padmaker, BCM India Executive Director

More than two hundred BCM India missionaries and pastors gathered together November 13-16, 2014, at Ebenezer Prayer Centre, a BCM camp and retreat complex in Kareemguda Village, in the suburbs of Secunderabad, India, for four days of commemoration, celebration and training. The theme of the conference was *"Raise and Build"* from Nehemiah 2:20, its stated purpose *"to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:12)."*



BCM India pastors conference Nov 14

Held every four years, the conference brings BCM ministry leaders together from across the entire subcontinent of India. The conference began November 13th with an inauguration program attended by such

international visitors as Rev. Joe Dukes, Vice President of Personnel, BCM International, Rev. Susiri Liyanage, BCM Asia Regional Director, along with Chairman of the BCM India Board Rev. K. Jayawanth Samuel and other board members. A key note address by BCM India Executive Director Mr. R. Paul Padmaker highlighted the growth and development of BCM ministries over the past forty years under leadership of the late Rev. Dr. Vararuchi Dalavai (see commemorative article [*Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant*](#), BCM World, January, 2014).

The keynote address challenged BCM pastors and missionaries through the life of Nehemiah, a great example because of his faith and commitment to God and burden for his people in Jerusalem. Traveling to Jerusalem, Nehemiah rallied his people to "raise and build" Jerusalem's broken-down walls in a record time of fifty-two days. Nehemiah accomplished this impossible task with the guidance of the Lord. The challenge to pastors and missionaries attending the conference was that we are all very ordinary people, but we have been chosen by God to serve His people. God would like to do extraordinary things through our lives. We need to have a concern for the people in our churches, societies and communities so that we may reach them with the love of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the conference, resource personnel Rev. Matthew Mill and Dr. Howard McNeil from the



USA and Rev. John Peter and Rev. Vernon Govender from South Africa conducted workshop sessions on such topics as church planting, discipleship, holiness, faithfulness and stewardship. Rev. Joe Duke spoke on BCM Core values. The messages were both Spirit-filled and practical for ministry, and the pastors in attendance found them not only a great learning experience but encouragement for their ministry. Daily devotions were conducted by BCM Asia regional director Rev. Susiri Liyanage, board chairman Rev. K. Jayawanth Samuel and Dr. K. John Wesley.

COMMEMORATING A GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT:

On November 15, a very special program celebrated the life of Rev. Dr. Vararuchi F. Dalavai, who served BCM International for forty years in various capacities such as missionary, National coordinator of BCM India, and Senior Executive Vice President of BCM International. In commemoration, Ebenezer Centre's main auditorium has been named as "Dr. Vararuchi F. Dalavai Memorial Hall". Mrs. Veronica Dalavai participated in the unveiling of the dedicatory plaque. Rev. Joe Dukes, Rev. Susiri Liyanage, Rev. John Peter, Rev. John Wesley, Mr. M. B. Ranjit, Mr. Sunil Zephaniah along with senior pastors and Christian leaders from the Twin Cities (Hyderabad and neighboring Secunderabad) shared tributes to Dr. Dalavai. BCM India Executive Director Mr. Paul Padmaker then gave a presentation on Dr. Dalavai's life

and testimony, followed by a challenge to pastors and missionaries from God's Word by Rev. Menno Joel, senior pastor of Bethlehem Mennonite Brethren Church in Malakpet, Hyderabad.



Dedication of Hall-Mrs. Dalavai

PASTORAL ORDINATION:

Before the conference even started, twenty-five attendees had arrived several days early at Ebenezer Prayer Center to attend ordination classes November 10-12, 2014. These were pastors who have already been working with BCM India for more than ten years in remote villages across north and south India (*see sidebar to meet some of BCM India's newest ordained ministry leaders*). Rev. Matthew Mills, Dr. Howard McNeil, Rev. John Peter and Rev. Susiri Liyanage conducted ordination classes on effective prayer life, pitfalls of

BUILDING GOD'S C

ministry, doctrinal matters, practical shepherding, eternal security, homiletics, perseverance in the ministry, pastoral qualifications and servant leadership. Then each



Commissioning New BCM Pastors

ordination candidate was interviewed personally before being approved for the ordinations.

The ordination service itself, held Sunday, November 16, 2014, was attended by 220 BCM India pastors and missionaries along with many guests and dignitaries from the USA, Sri Lanka, and South Africa. The Sunday worship service was conducted by Rev. K. Jaywanth Samuel and assisted by Rev. K. E. Joseph and Rev. S. Isaac. Rev. Joe Dukes, Vice President of Personnel, BCM International, from the USA gave a challenging message for the ordination candidates on the topics of humility and exaltation from Philippians 2:1-10 and II Timothy 2:1-10. His message motivated BCM pastors to be prepared to face challenges in ministry, to be faithful to God and to continue the work of expansion of God's Kingdom.

Rev. Matthew Mills and Dr. Howard McNeil carried out the ordinations for each of the twenty-five candidates. The senior pastors present laid hands on the ordination candidates, praying for God's blessing and direction on their lives and ministry. Then Rev. Joe Dukes along with Rev. Susiri Liyanage and chairman of the BCM India board Rev. K. Jaywanth Samuel laid their hands on Mr. R. Paul Padmaker, confirming him as Executive Director for BCM India. BCM India missionaries who had completed twenty years or more of faithful ministry were also awarded certificates by Mr. Paul Padmaker and Rev. Joe Dukes.

The 2014 BCM India Pastors Conference concluded with a closing prayer and benediction by BCM

BCM India missionaries and pastors minister to 451 congregations and 1044 believer groups scattered across 13 states in South and North India. Through their combined ministry during the year 2014, 30,658 people accepted Christ as Savior and 3,182 received baptism. More than 170,000 children were reached through Bible clubs, Christian education classes, VBS, camps, and other children's outreach. **Below, meet some of BCM India's newest ministry appointees, ordained November 16, 2014 at Ebenezer Prayer Centre.**



Rev. S. Prasad Receiving Ordination

Rev. Sunil Munda, Jarkhand State, North India: Thirty-nine years old from a remote village in Jharkhand state, Rev. Sunil Munda was born into a Hindu family but accepted Jesus Christ as Savior in 1994 and was baptized in 1995. One night as he was praying, he recognized that God was calling him to ministry. Rev. Munda was recommended by a BCM pastor in Jharkhand for BCM India's Church Planters Training (CPT) program. After completing his BCM Bible Training, he started ministry in Bagiyabera village about 45 kilometers from his home. He now has about 40 people attending his church and is also actively involved in evangelistic outreach, ministering in six remote villages. These are in areas with no proper transportation, so he must travel through jungle where he often comes across wild animals. Rev. Sunil Munda is married to Babita, and they have been blessed with 4 children.

Rev. Chitrasenn Pradhan, Orissa State, Central-East India: Rev. Pradhan has been involved in BCM ministry for ten years. He is the pastor of a BCM Church in Dongamala village and is being greatly used by God among unreached people. Since

CHURCH IN INDIA

his ordination he has already started two new fellowships. In one recent incident, a man very hostile to Christians named Syamala Sudan assaulted Rev. Chitrasenn in the town market place, slapping him in the face. Relatives and friends of Rev. Chitrasen handed Sudan over to the police, but Rev. Chitrasen refused to lodge any complaint, instead forgiving him. Through Rev. Chitrasen's forgiveness, God spoke to Syamala Sudhan, and he accepted Jesus as his personal Savior. Sudhan is now planning on baptism.

Rev. K. Sudhakar, Karnataka State, South India: Graduate of BCM India's Church Planter Training program (CPT), Rev. Sudhakar has been associated with BCM since 2000. He is the pastor of a BCM Church in Kurugudem and oversees two more churches in other villages. He is married to Mercy and they have been blessed with two sons.

Rev. S. Prasad, Andhra Pradesh State, South India: Rev. S. Prasad has a Master of Divinity and is the pastor of a BCM church in Raidurgam. He oversees two more churches in other villages and does evangelism outreach and ministry with believer groups in 11 other villages. A gifted linguist, Rev. Prasad was one of the translators both for the ordination classes and the pastors conference in November, 2014. He is married to Sharmila, and they have been blessed with a daughter.

Rev. K. Devanad, Maharastra, South India: Rev. K. Devanand has been associated with BCM since 2008. He completed BCM India's Bible training program and is the pastor of the BCM church in Chamorshi village. He also ministers in Gospel teaching and evangelism in 17 other villages. He is married to Sangeetha and has two daughters and one son.



BCM Church Chamorshi

South Africa Director Rev. John Peter. A special thanks to the BCM India Church Development team headed by Rev. K. E. Joseph, Coordinator North India, and Rev. S. Isaac, Coordinator South India, for their wonderful efforts in organizing such a successful conference and also to the BCM India regional supervisors and pastors for their participation and prayers. All the participants returned to their respective places of ministry richly blessed with a renewed strength to carry out the work of God's Kingdom.

R. PAUL PADMAKER grew up in a Christian family. His father was an Engineer with Indian Railways. He accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior at age of 17. After completing a post graduate degree in commerce, he served in the head office of the Church of North India in Mumbai. From there, he worked successively for the Methodist Church, India, in Hyderabad as an Area Auditor, then as CEO and Director of a Christian NGO, *Word & Deed India*, implementing such programs as education, health, employment, relief and rehabilitation for orphans, victims of leprosy, HIV, TB, as well as natural disasters, unemployed youth and other underprivileged people groups. He also served as Project Director for *Project 511*, an NGO that serves underprivileged children in Government schools. He joined the BCM India board in 2006, serving as the Secretary of the Board from June 2007 to Feb. 2015. He has been serving as BCM India Executive Director since September, 2013.



Paul Padmaker Family



Libreville, Gabon

FROM AN EMAIL TO GABON'S CHILDREN

By: Jeanette Windle with Olga Zaitseva and Pat Black

It started with an email.

BCM missionaries and ISMT Master Trainers Olga Zaitseva from Russia and Pat Black from the USA had conducted teacher training courses in **Africa before. They'd taught together in Nigeria where more than 1500 children's ministry leaders had completed BCM's teacher training curriculum** *In Step With The Master Teacher* (see [Because Children Really Do Matter](#), BCM World, Spring 2011). Pat Black had recently co-taught a training event in Malawi with BCM South Africa missionary Pat Govender. There more than three hundred had completed the ISMT course with 38 taking the additional *Train The Trainer* (TTT), which prepares **regional children's ministry leadership to conduct ISMT training throughout their own country.**

But BCM personnel had never visited Gabon before. A small equatorial country on the coast of West Africa, Gabon has enjoyed an atypical level of political stability for the region since its independence in 1960 from French colonial rule. In consequence, it has one of the strongest economies and highest living standards in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of its 1.5 million inhabitants consider themselves Christian. A strong heritage of evangelical missions has led to numerous national church denominations—Christian & Missionary Alliance, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal and others.

But despite an active and growing evangelical church, one notable lack has only recently begun to receive attention from church **leadership. Over 35% of Gabon's population is**



Gabon Church's— ISMT Site





ISMT Session with Olga-Gabon

under fifteen years of age (a comparable demographic in the USA is 21.6% and only 15.4% **within European Union nations**). **But children’s ministry is considered among the lowest of priorities.** One Gabonese pastor recently shared how after becoming a Christian he began working with **Sunday school children. He continued children’s outreach** while attending seminary until one day his pastor asked him why he was wasting his time teaching children. He should be focusing on being a pastor. **So he followed his pastor’s advice and abandoned children’s ministry—at least until April, 2015.**

It was a Gabonese couple with a deep burden for children who brought BCM to Gabon. Gilbert and Flores Essone hold secular jobs—Gilbert with the government and Flores as an educator. But Gilbert has also taken seminary training and is an elder in a Christian & Missionary Alliance Church. His wife **directs the church children’s ministry. They have five children of their own.** Their passion to reach children with the Gospel led Gilbert and Flores to found a teacher training center where several local pastors **offer courses on Bible and children’s ministry.**



Gilbert and Flores Essone

As in much of West Africa, French is Gabon’s official language, and it was an internet link to BCM ministry in France (see [Centre Sept: A Beacon of Service, BCM World, Fall, 2007](#)) by which Gilbert Essone first learned of BCM’s own emphasis on **children’s ministry training.** In 2010, Gilbert sent an email to BCM France missionaries Chuck and Cathy Powers, pleading for BCM to send a French-speaking trainer to Gabon. At that time, there were neither funds nor French-speaking Master Trainers with experience in Africa available for such a trip. But Gilbert was persistent, returning again and again with his request.

In 2014, Olga Zaitseva, who had by now three trips to Nigeria under her belt and was fluent in French (along with Russian, Ukrainian, and



Pat Black teaching with Translator Dimitri

English!), agreed to make the trip if a teaching partner could be found. Pat Black, who had taught with Olga in Nigeria, did not speak French (the official language in Nigeria and Malawi is English, consequence of British colonial rule), but agreed to come along if a translator could be found.

A translator had not yet been confirmed when in faith Olga Zaitseva and Pat Black flew into **Libreville, Gabon’s capital, on April 22, 2015.** But when they finally met their hosts—Gilbert Essone along with C&MA pastor Hippolyte and Scripture Union representative Clemence—the two BCM missionaries were introduced to a tall, thin young man named Dimitri, an English student who had **agreed to be Pat’s translator for the next two weeks.**

The next two weeks were filled with both challenges and blessings. The weather was extremely hot for Russia and USA-born Olga and

Pat, upwards of 34 Celsius (94 Fahrenheit) with no air-conditioning available. But threatened rainy season storms held off, permitting them to reach all their scheduled meetings over the red-clay unpaved roads. Olga and Pat battled illness as well as heat, but God gave strength to teach anyway. Due to unreliable local transportation, both students and **translator often filtered in an hour after the day's** teaching was scheduled to start. But they did arrive faithfully for each session.



Ntoum Church-ISMT Training Site

“We learned all about WAIT, as the locals call it,” Olga Zaitseva jokes. “West Africa International Time.”

In all, the two BCM missionaries conducted four ISMT training events with about 70 students attending. **The first was held at Gilbert and Flores’** training center in Owendo, a suburb of Libreville, a second training at a church in Ntoum, a town some forty kilometers from Libreville. An additional unplanned training was added one weekend at a small church in an outlying area of Libreville with 15 in attendance on Saturday morning and the entire church body of 120+ showing up to attend on Sunday. In the Sunday morning church service, Olga and Pat shared on the importance of children and challenged church members to invest in their children.

Throughout the two weeks, it was exciting to see attitudes changing as Olga and Pat taught about **the value of children’s ministry—above all, the “4-14 Window”,** that period between ages 4-14 when more than eighty percent of all Christians come to know Jesus as Savior. One pastor-evangelist who took the ISMT training shared afterwards, “In

Libreville, sometimes children come to see me, and I will sing a song with them. But I soon become tired of them and send them away. Now I see that children are important in the ministry that God gave me. **God wants me to take His love to them.”**

Another assistant pastor added on the final **day of training, “Yesterday the Lord showed us the** place of children in the heart of God. Children are valuable to God. We must not put children in the last place. We understand that the Lord gives new **life to children as much as to adults.”**

Beyond the ISMT training events, several mornings were devoted to a *Train The Trainer* course with four key Gabonese ministry leaders, a top priority so that further ISMT training could continue once the BCM missionaries left Gabon. Among the new TTT graduates was Pastor Aristide, who had once been advised not to waste his time teaching children.

The final ISMT training scheduled in Libreville itself brought fresh challenges. The unexpected death of a top political opposition leader had precipitated riots in Libreville, and prudence dictated cancelling the training there. But after prayer and discussion, the decision was made to go ahead with the training. Despite some unrest in the city, all three days of training passed smoothly without incident.

When Olga Zaitseva and Pat Black flew out of Libreville May 4, 2015, they left behind four new Lead Trainers (TTT graduates) with an action plan already formulated. Future goals are to begin the first Gabonese-led ISMT training within two months **with a training event in each of Gabon’s nine** provinces by the end of 12 months. A follow-up BCM Train The Trainer event has been tentatively scheduled for 2017.



Youngest ISMT Students Practice Teaching

Setting Captives Free at BCM's Camp Sankanac

By Sierra Guent

The Civil War had not yet begun when a family of escaped slaves moved into a stone farmstead in Spring City, Pennsylvania, donated to them by fellow abolitionists, the Bertolets. After escaping slavery themselves, the Massey family went on to risk their own freedom and that of their six children to provide a haven for other refugees as part of the Underground Railroad. This network of secret routes and safe houses had been developed to help slaves escape north to free states or Canada. The Massey farmstead provided one such way-station, hiding slaves in their root cellar, barn, or fields.

Today that farmstead is the site of Camp Sankanac's Outdoor Education Program, its focus no longer rescuing human slaves from earthly masters, but offering eternal freedom from the bondage of sin through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Founded in 1941, Camp Sankanac was the first permanent camp facility of [Bible Centered Ministries International](#), originally the Bible Club Movement (*see link for details*). Camp Sankanac runs day camps, overnight camps, retreats, a horse camp, educational opportunities, and more. The eight-week summer program is divided between boys' camps (first four weeks) and girls' camps (next four weeks).



Masseys

Each camp lasts for seven days and adheres to a particular fun theme. Some of last year's themes include Mission Impossible, Army/Navy, Time Warp, and Wet 'n' Wild. A pool, pond and stream—French Creek—that runs through the property offer campers various water activities. A paintball course adds to the fun. But reaching children with God's love is the most important focus of each week. Last summer over fifty children accepted Christ as their Savior during the youth summer camps.

Camp Sankanac's Outdoor Education Program (OEP) is open year-round to homeschoolers and school groups as well as summer campers. OEP



offers lessons on the Underground Railroad, creation vs. evolution in Camp Sankanac's Creation Science Museum, a raptor program, and hands-on learning about nature around Camp Sankanac's beautiful wooded campus.

The original Massey homestead serves as a focal point for OEP. The farmhouse is part of an educational tour while the Massey barn houses the program's Underground Railroad exhibit and Creation Museum. The Underground Railroad exhibit is on the barn's ground floor and includes various posters, items from the slavery era, and reading material. Hanging from a peg are two necklaces that numbered slaves as property of the Black Labor Supply. Two wooden yokes that once restrained slaves rest against the wall.



Camper Experiencing Slave Yoke

While children learn stories of the courageous Massey family and escaped slaves, Camp Sankanac director Josh Brackbill asks questions to get them thinking about the importance of humility and equality. "Do these evils all start with pride? Viewing oneself as superior to another? The prime example in the Bible is that of Pharaoh and the captive Israelites. Why did Pharaoh do it?"

Brackbill also references the two slave yokes sitting against the wall, paralleling the yoke of slavery to spiritual bondage and the freedom our souls can experience. A Bible verse Brackbill shares is Galatians 5:1 where the apostle Paul says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

After walking through the Underground Railroad exhibit, visitors move to the second floor of the barn which holds the Creation museum. Along with many posters are museum grade artifacts, National Geographic magazines, dinosaur busts, and countless information on the topic of creation versus evolution, Noah's flood, dinosaurs, fossils, and more.

Children enjoy learning that dinosaurs could be found in the Bible, such as in the book of Job, chapter 40 where God describes a behemoth whose "bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like bars of iron." Of the leviathan, Job 21:40 says, "Smoke pours from its nostrils as from a boiling pot over burning reeds." Could this be a fire-breathing dinosaur?

Among the pictures is one of the Grand Canyon's various layers, which evolutionists say developed over millions of year. Could the Flood have caused the various layers? Camp Sankanac believes in a literal six day creation. They teach the logistics of the Noahic Flood and fitting the animals onto the ark.

"It is really cool when you see the light bulb switch on in the kid's head," says Josh Brackbill. His main challenge to visiting children is to accept what God has said, not man. He gives several examples of evolution theories and fossils that supposedly proved these theories, but were later proven to be a hoax. Josh Brackbill teaches his listeners to think critically of the books they read and the movies they watch. Even sermons should be compared with the Bible, not necessarily skeptically but critically.

A finishing touch of Camp Sankanac's outstanding Outdoor Education Program is the raptor program, typically offered every two years. This program is directed by Jonathan Wood, who shares openly of his past as a convicted felon for smuggling exotic bird eggs. While in prison, Wood came to know Jesus Christ. He made a commitment that if God would get him out of jail, Wood would serve Him. Once freed, he kept his promise to God.



Raptor Program Pic

Jonathan Wood rehabilitates birds, trains falcons, and teaches many people about his birds. While teaching about birds, he also gives his testimony of salvation through Jesus Christ. Wood and his birds have been invited to participate in various shows and stunts throughout the world.

All in all, Camp Sankanac is rich in resources, enjoyment, and learning. However, they

are also always in need of counselors, lifeguards, day camp staff, and support staff during the summer. If you are interested in helping their ministry check out their website at campsankanac.org. And if you are not interested in volunteering, consider attending with a group of children. The Outdoor Education Program is an enjoyable and exciting way for all ages to learn important truths.



Top left to right: CS skit time girls; CS Bible drill
Bottom: CS campfire time



Conference Group Shot-JP Front Left

PREACHING A RISEN SAVIOR EVEN IN THE MIDST OF BULLETS

By: Jeanette Windle

The shooting began before dawn on April 2, 2015. Both Christian and Muslim students at Garissa University in eastern Kenya about 200 kilometers north of the Somali border had risen by 5a.m. to attend pre-class prayer meetings. A half-hour later, gunmen from the Somali-based Islamic militant group Al-Shabaab burst through the gates, killing campus guards and taking more than 700 students captive. The gunmen swept across campus, demanding of students if they were Muslim or Christian. Muslims were permitted to leave. Those who admitted to being Christians were executed on the spot. By the time Kenyan security forces retook control of campus, 147 people were dead, another 79 injured.

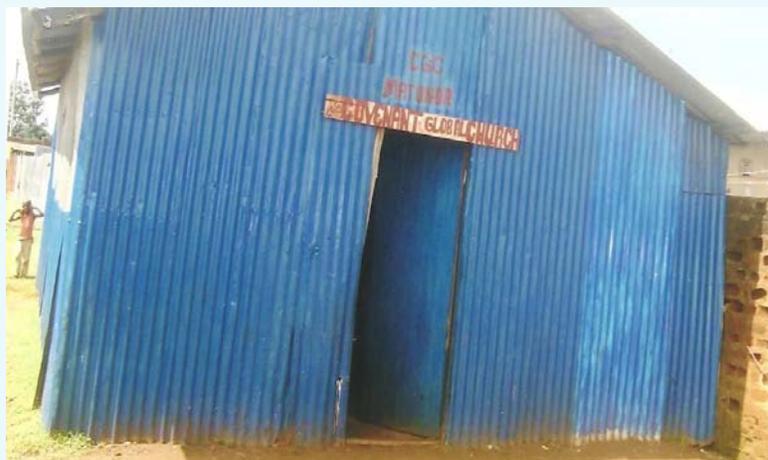
Dr. Josphat Yego, BCM missionary in Kenya and director of Developmentia, speaks of the attack: "We thank God that the Christians were not ashamed of our Lord, but stood firm and said, 'Yes, we are Christians.' Most of those shot first were members of the Christian Union attending daily prayers and devotions that started 5.00am. When asked whether they were Muslims or Christians, they boldly identified themselves as Christians even after some students who claimed to be Muslims were allowed to leave and those identifying themselves as Christians were being shot at close range. And so they were killed for standing for Christ. Pray for the parents and relatives of those killed. Pray for us here in Kenya for wisdom on how to counsel [grieving family members] and to be firm in preaching Christ the risen Savior in all seasons

even in the midst of the bullets. Let us pray too for our Muslim brothers because Christ died for them too, and we must reach them with the Gospel."

This was not the first or worst attack Kenyan Christians have faced from Islamic militants in recent years from the US embassy bombing in 1998 that left 200 dead to the Nairobi mall massacre in 2013, attacks on churches in various parts of the country, as well as dozens of smaller-scale bombings and shootings in marketplaces, restaurants, or the open streets.

It was against that background and with regional security on high alert that Rev. John Peter, BCM Africa director, and BCM missionary Rev. Vernon Govender boarded a plane for Kenya just three weeks after the Garissa attack. The reason was an invitation to conduct pastor training in a rural area of western Kenya.

"We were asked so many times, 'Do you



Kenya church-site pastors conference

guys think it's safe to go?" Rev. John Peters shares. "But we believed this was God's time for us, so we went. And God was with us all the way."

As has often been the case with new BCM ministry opportunities, the invitation to teach pastors in the Eldoret region of western Kenya, came through a prior BCM contact. Master Trainer and BCM South Africa missionary Pat Govender had been in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi in November, 2014, to spearhead an *In Step With the Master Trainer* children's ministry trainer event (see [ISMT Comes to Kenya, BCM World, Spring 2011](#)). Among the new Kenyan ISMT trainers was Ruth Muthami, a ministry leader with Biblica (formerly the International Bible Society). Together, Pat and Ruth accepted an invitation from another trainee to teach an ISMT event in Eldoret, a regional capital of about 300,000 near the Ugandan border, in February, 2015. More than 70 pastors and children's ministry leaders attended the ISMT course. It was the first such training event in the region, and the response was enthusiastic.



ISMT inside church, Kenya

"We've had many pastors and evangelists come and preach," expressed one local pastor. "But no one has ever come and trained people for children's ministry."

The church leadership begged Pat to return to offer additional training to regional pastors. Feeling that male leadership would be better suited to meet that need, Pat passed the

invitation instead to BCM Africa director, Rev. John Peter, an experienced conference speaker and Bible teacher.



Pat-Ruth arriving ISMT children's event

So on April 24th, 2015, Rev. John Peter along with BCM Africa assistant director Rev. Vernon Govender, arrived in Kenya. The pastors conference was actually scheduled to be held in a town called Matunda, some distance inland from the regional capital of Eldoret. Despite the high security alert, the two BCM ministry leaders found the Kenyan countryside peaceful and beautiful with churches everywhere and complete freedom to preach the Gospel, the Kenyan people themselves warm and friendly.

Still, church leaders warned John and Vernon, "One must always be prepared for a surprise attack."

No further attacks came during the week Revs. John Peter and Vernon Govender spent in Kenya. About seventy ministry leaders attended the pastors conference. Among topics covered were qualifications of Christian leaders, godly marriage, stewardship, tithing and more. In addition, Revs. John and Vernon spoke at a ladies conference being held the same week and preached in several area churches.

While Revs. John and Vernon found a great dearth of biblical training among many attendees, they also experienced a deep hunger for God's Word and burden to reach their communities with the Gospel.

"We learned the problems they face are the same as the ones we face in our country,"

states Rev. Peters. "Among these are the scourges of HIV/AIDS, poverty and unemployment. In addition, fear of sudden terrorist attacks is always before them."

Two attendees especially impacted Revs. John and Vernon. One was a local doctor who took a week off from his own practice to volunteer as their driver during John and Vernon's time in Kenya. A former Muslim known since his conversion to Christianity as Dr. Leon, he gives a powerful testimony of God's grace within his community, and his desire to serve God was very evident.

Another highlight was meeting Pastor Geoffry, who was an earlier graduate from Pat Govender's training courses. He has planted six churches in western Kenya and three more across the border in Kenya and is actively putting Pat's training into practice, holding ISMT courses that have already prepared many more new children's ministry leaders in his area.

By the time John Peter and Vernon Govender headed back to the airport on May 1st, church leadership was begging them to stay just one more week. "This training has blessed and empowered our relationship with God . . . it has uplifted us from one step to another . . . it has helped us as pastors to work together . . . we need you again!" were just some of the comments from participants.



John Peter-Dr. Leon

Plans are already underway for John and Vernon's return to hold an expanded pastoral leadership training, not only in Kenya, but across the border in Uganda. BCM Africa director Rev. John Peter sums up, "I can foresee a bright and big future for extension in this region, not just of BCM, but most importantly, for the Kingdom of our Saviour the Lord Jesus and HIS Glory alone."



Conference Group Shot-JP Front Left

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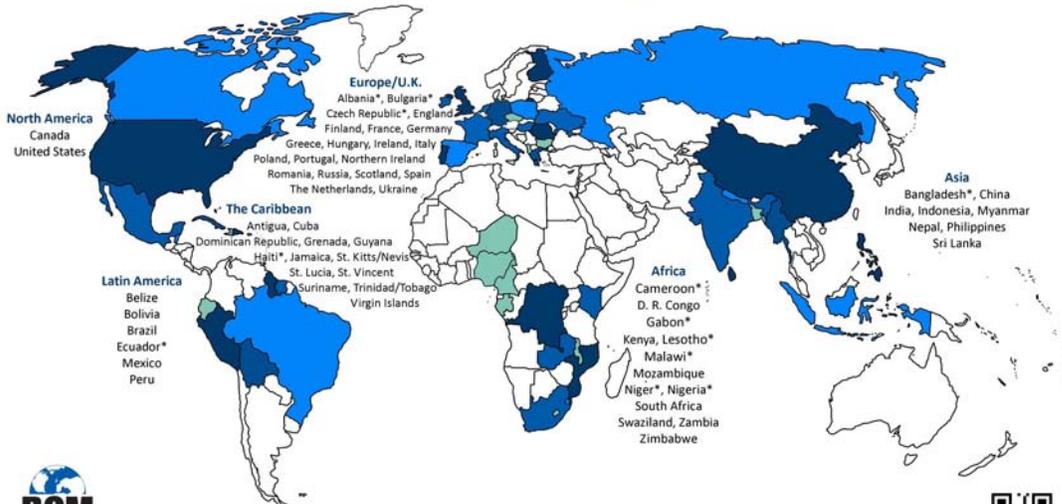
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The country is laden with crimes against Christians and yet joy spills over as meals are prepared for a local Pastoral Conference. Learn more about BCM's Ministry in Kenya on page 16.

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BCM International is a global Bible-Centered Ministry dedicated to making disciples of all age groups for the Lord Jesus Christ through evangelism, teaching, and training so that churches are established and The Church strengthened.

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