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# KICKED OUT

IT FELT LIKE  
EVERYTHING  
HAD BEEN TAKEN  
FROM US.

BY: ANDREW SHAUGHNESSY

# KICKED OUT

THE PERSONAL TOLL OF  
MISSIONARY EXPULSION

Just before his world came crashing down, things were going quite well for Tom Kirkwood.\* Over the eight years that the MTW missionary and his family had served in the Middle East, he and his team had planted a thriving church and started two successful business

a leadership consulting business and a coffee roastery. People were coming to Christ, being baptized, disciplined, and raised up as new leaders. On the Sunday before he was deported, the church plant particularized, graduating to a full-fledged church—a monumental milestone four and a half years in the making.

“I thought everything was great,” said Tom. “The Lord was really confirming the work that we put in and then all of a sudden, this happened.”

In recent years, the country in which Tom and his family lived and worked for nearly a decade had begun cracking down on Christian missionaries, revoking visas and kicking westerners out in droves.

Because he operated legitimate, tax-paying businesses and was in the country on a business visa, he was relatively safe—for a while.

When the government investigated Tom, examining his taxes, companies, and activities, they said all was OK at first. But when they discovered that his business partner was a local Christian leader, they immediately suspected the Kirkwoods of missionary activity. When they questioned Tom, asking him point blank if he was a missionary, he told them, “We’re actively

involved in our church.” That, in and of itself, was not illegal. But the authorities weren’t satisfied.

“They came to our house when I wasn’t around and interrogated my wife and kids,” said Tom. “They went to my neighbors and asked if we were evangelizing them.”

Tom cooperated with the authorities—he was a legitimate businessman after all, and his documents were all in order. Then, just as suddenly as the questioning had begun, everything went quiet. The authorities backed off, and Tom assumed all was well.

Weeks later, the Kirkwoods were trying to re-enter the country after a visit to the U.S., and Tom was stopped at the border. His wife and daughters were allowed back in the country, but Tom was deported to Cyprus.

“They came to our house when I wasn’t around and interrogated my wife and kids.”

“It was absolutely devastating for our family,” said Tom. “The initial shock of it, seeing my kids scream and cry, being pulled away from me while I’m being sent to another part of the airport to leave the country—that was really dramatic.”

Immediately, Tom challenged his deportation in court, hiring a lawyer to represent him in absentia. To Tom’s surprise, the judge did not immediately rule against his case, but the final judgment carried enough weight that it was postponed. The Kirkwoods

\*Names and locations have been changed for security reasons.

would have to wait more than six months to hear their fate. In the meantime, they were forced to leave the country.

Six weeks later, Tom was allowed to briefly return to pack up his family's things and wrap up their affairs. Then, leaving behind their home of eight years—the place of their calling, their business, their church, their friends, their life—the Kirkwoods flew to America. They had no car, no house, just suitcases in their hands and pits in their stomachs.

“It felt like everything had been taken from us,” said Tom.

“Dozens of our workers have been forced to leave the countries where they have served, ministered, and built their lives.”

#### THE TOLL IT TAKES

From the Middle East to South Asia, East Asia to North Africa, autocratic or religious fundamentalist-fueled governments are closing churches, jailing pastors, and booting missionaries at a rate not seen in decades. And MTW's missionaries have not been spared. Dozens of our workers have been forced to leave the countries where they have served, ministered, and built their lives.

From a big-picture, strategic perspective, this accelerating pattern of missionary expulsion is simultaneously disturbing and motivating. We mourn persecution and the blows sustained by the Church. But when it becomes difficult or dangerous to bring the hope of the gospel to closed countries, the Church is

forced to innovate and seek out creative solutions. But there is another side to the story of missionary expulsion that we too often forget: the personal, human toll on the missionaries and families involved.

For the missionary families kicked out of closed countries, the process of being forced to leave—often quite suddenly—can be traumatic and profoundly painful. They aren't just dispassionately transferring from a temporary work assignment; they are leaving the neighborhood that has become their home, the school where their children have learned and grown, the place where they have built their lives—sometimes for decades. They are leaving their friends, relationships, and long-term community. Importantly, they are also leaving a work to which they have felt called by God and for which they and their supporters have sacrificed enormously.

It's confusing at best; at worst, crushing.

For some missionaries, having all these things snatched away in a moment can trigger a breaking point: many sink into depression, doubt their calling, question God's goodness and purposes. When you listen to enough of these stories from multiple missions organizations, you hear it all: marriages falling apart, faith lost, despair transforming to addiction. Yet you also hear stories of God's faithfulness, of growth, and of learning to trust and love God's sovereignty more fully than ever before.

#### WAITING, LEARNING, GROWING

Back in the U.S., the Kirkwoods felt out of place. Having lived overseas for nearly a decade, they don't own or rent a house in America, so they had nowhere to live. As they waited and hoped for news from the courts in the Middle East, they shifted from house to house, up and down the West Coast: a few weeks with Tom's brother here, a few weeks with a family friend there, a month with his grandparents.

“We just kind of wandered and waited because we didn't know what to do,” said Tom. “We didn't know if we were going back soon or never going back.”

For three months, Tom sank into a deep depression. Most days he wouldn't even get out of bed, consumed by despair, self-loathing, anger, confusion.

“I felt like God was taking me for a ride,” he said.

Tom's family missed their home, too. Many evenings, his kids would cry and ask questions like, “If God loves us, why would He do this? We were there to serve Him.”

Eventually, the Kirkwoods landed in California—moving into a house provided by a supporting church. The kids, who had by this point missed an entire semester of school, were able to dive back into their studies, and the family began to settle into a new routine.

In February, much to Tom's surprise, the court ruled in his favor, declaring that he had not broken any law. Technically, the Kirkwoods should now be allowed to return to the Middle East, but the government has still not issued him a new visa.

“That might be another court battle,” said Tom. “It's not over yet by any means.”

For now, the Kirkwoods wait, and pray, and learn. Helped by some good friends who are pastors in the PCA, Tom emerged from his depression. He keeps himself busy by working on another graduate degree and doing church-planting training. His heart is still in the Middle East, but God has used this experience to break him down and build him up again, better than before.

“My struggle with heart idolatry has been around finding meaning in ministry success,” Tom explained. “I was in a place where the church was really succeeding and the ministry was really going well. I took a lot of joy at that success and I worked really hard because I didn't want it to fail. I had a big fear of failure. And when I got kicked out it felt like failure, like death. I think one of the gracious things that God was doing was showing me that I didn't need that church to know that I was loved by Him. I didn't need to have that success to know that I was doing what He called me to do. ... You don't really realize that Jesus is all you need until He's literally all that you have.”

“Our calling isn't dependent on a location,” he added. “We're still called to be God's salt and light in this world. We're still called to use our gifts for His glory. It doesn't matter where you are. I think it took this process for me to really understand that.” [n](#)

# 1%

## Are your members answering the call?

If your church has committed to the 1% Challenge, you may have members who are ready to learn more. We have resources to guide next steps:

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Visit [mtw.org/nextsteps](http://mtw.org/nextsteps) for info and resources.

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REVELATION 7:9-10

**diversifi**

*imago Dei*

[mtw.org/serve](http://mtw.org/serve)



# Grow as a Global Ministry Leader

HUNGRY TO MAKE AN IMPACT? MTW IS FORGING THE CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS LEADERS OF THE FUTURE.



As MTW prayerfully looks to grow in numbers and in kingdom impact, it is clear that we will need more and more leaders in our organization.

We aim to build them.

“We have both a great need and a great opportunity to develop leadership for the future,” said MTW Director of Member Care and Development Brian Deringer. “A lot of our leadership at MTW is of an older generation that’s coming close to retirement. But there is a strong will within the organization to develop new leaders for the future.”

So MTW is building several professional development pipelines to identify, foster, and equip grace-driven visionaries from the beginning to the end of their careers.

## JUST STARTING OUT: MENTORED INTERNSHIPS

Millennials and Gen Z are the future of the church and of missions, and we want to set them up for success. That’s why we’ve begun the Path 270 internship program, for 20- to 26-year-olds considering careers as long-term missionaries.

With Path 270, interns will travel the globe together, spending three months in Europe, three in Asia, and three in a cross-cultural setting in America—gaining valuable ministry experience and perspective in dramatically different contexts. Along the way, they’ll be mentored by missionaries who understand the complexities of the cultures that surround them.

“That 20 to 26 age range is such a pivotal time in so many people’s lives,” said MTW Senior Director of U.S. Operations Kendra Jeffreys. “We have so many young people who come to us trying to figure out, ‘How did God make me? What are the gifts that He’s given me?’ ... We want this internship to be a structured path to a deeper relationship with the Lord, to understanding more about themselves, other cultures, and their role in advancing God’s kingdom.”

## MID-CAREER: CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

For both missionaries in the field and stateside staff, MTW is creating a professional development pipeline, personalized to each and every employee.

“The idea is simple,” said Cartee Bales, MTW’s senior director of field operations. “Each member of MTW will have a development path and then will have training opportunities along that path. ... At the same time, we aim to identify people who have leadership gifts and skills that can be developed earlier in their career, so that when there is an opportunity for them to step into leadership and use those gifts, they are ready to do that.”

According to Bales, these professional development paths won’t be ready for a few years yet, but MTW’s current leadership is actively building out the program.

From the moment a new MTW employee is on-boarded they will set short- and long-term professional goals, then plan out what experiences, trainings, or certifications they will need to get there. If, along the way, God changes a person’s desired plan, they can pivot to a different path and take advantage of training and coaching there instead.

## LEADERS FOR THE LONG-HAUL: IDENTIFY EARLY, TRAIN CONTINUOUSLY

MTW’s push to boost leadership development stems in large part from the 1% Challenge. Over the last several years, MTW has challenged PCA churches to pray that God would raise up 1% of their congregations to serve as new cross-cultural

joined MTW, the assumption was that to be in leadership you’d better sit in the trenches for five to six years before we set you free. I would like to move much more quickly.”

In Europe, Stoddard and his team have built out two separate leadership development tracks. The first, required for all

first-year team leaders in Europe, involves intensive assessment followed by individualized coaching that addresses their relationship with God, understanding themselves and their relationship to others, along with practical leadership skills development. The second track, offered to all other missionaries in Europe, provides continuous education and professional development on topics such as principles of healthy church planting.

Though Stoddard’s team in Europe has a head start, MTW as a whole is building up a similar continuous leadership assessment and training program. Even now, field leadership is engaged in a 360-degree review and mentoring follow-up program aimed at analyzing strengths and weaknesses

and training each leader to serve their team well.

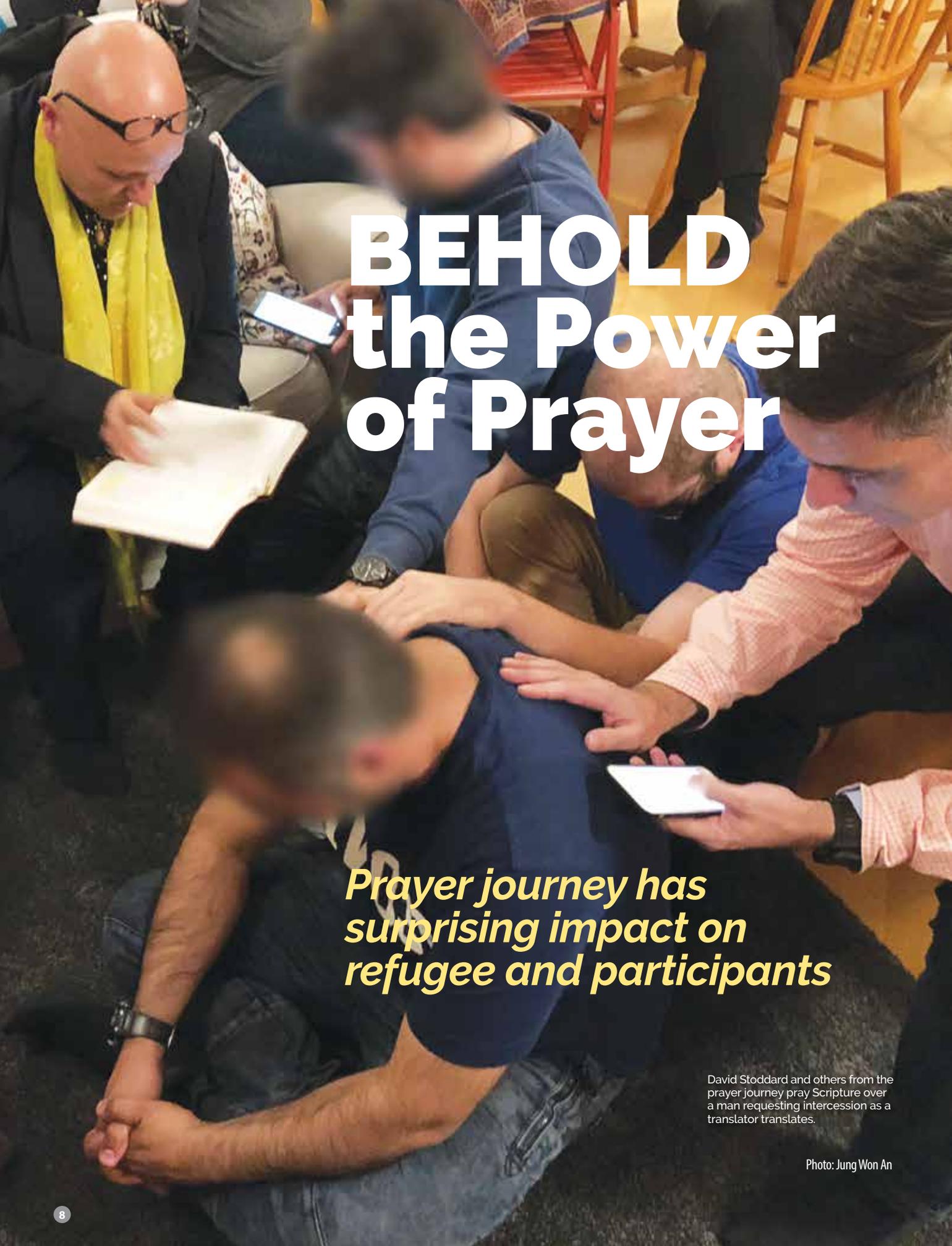
For aspiring leaders who want to deepen their skills, now is a great time to join MTW. “If you are a potential leader, we are looking for you,” said Stoddard. “We want to equip, empower, and set you free.” [n](#)

“We aim to identify people who have leadership gifts and skills that can be developed earlier in their career.”

missionaries over the next 10 years. If God answered that prayer, and if those missionaries serve with MTW, it would mean 2,877 new missionaries deployed across the globe.

“That new missionary force will be built on the backs of team leaders, and we need to begin preparing in faith,” said MTW missionary David Stoddard, who serves as the international director for MTW’s missionaries in Europe. “Back when I

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# BEHOLD the Power of Prayer

*Prayer journey has surprising impact on refugee and participants*

David Stoddard and others from the prayer journey pray Scripture over a man requesting intercession as a translator translates.

Photo: Jung Won An

*God is using the prayers of His people to open doors for ministry through prayer-focused vision trips. Missionary Eowyn Stoddard shares the impact of a recent prayer journey to Germany.*

Ensure about how an MTW short-term team could serve the refugees with whom we had contact, we decided a “safe” thing to do would be for the team to spend some time praying with and for their needs. We had told our displaced friends that our American brothers and sisters were only coming to pray. They were part of a prayer-focused vision trip that serves MTW missionaries and their work through the ministry of prayer. Half the time is spent teaching about prayer, and the other half is spent going to different sites and practicing what they have learned about prayer.

We made sure the refugees understood there would be no material aid, no long-term relationships, and a language barrier that might be difficult to overcome. However, we also told them that even if the Americans prayed for them in English, God would still understand, even if they didn’t.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE ERUPTS

On the night set aside for this gathering, a handful of refugees came. We enjoyed food and fellowship together and then divided up into prayer groups. The refugees in each group briefly shared their stories before we prayed.

One of the refugee ladies in our group was new and shared that she had been struggling with anxiety and physical pain. The American prayer team ladies gathered around, placed their hands on her, and started to pray in the name of Jesus. Suddenly, the woman started to writhe, as if she were in agony. Her chest heaved upward, and she fell backward into someone’s lap. Her eyes rolled back into her head and she was groaning.

The American ladies in our group were clearly shocked and out of their depth, but continued praying for her. They read Scripture, sang simple praise songs over her, and reassured her of God’s love. They prayed against whatever evil was assaulting this poor woman. In the middle of this, I felt a strong sense from the Holy Spirit that a man needed to pray over her. Why? I could not say, but I called my husband over who was in another group. As he started to pray over her, the woman exclaimed, “I was

raped when I was five.” The enemy had clearly been using this old, festering wound to tear apart her life.

We started to pray for God’s healing and protection from the evil one. Eventually, she became quiet, turned over from her back to her knees, and stretched her arms out on the floor in front of her with her head down on the ground in an obvious posture of worship. All she could say was “Isa, Isa, Isa,” which means Jesus in Farsi. Then suddenly, she sat up, clearly relieved, and exclaimed: “I feel so light; I feel at peace!” The following Sunday the woman came to church to let us know that since our prayers for her, she had had no more anxiety or physical pain.

## THE POWER BEHIND THE PRAYER

This was certainly not what the team might have expected they would be doing! But you never know what will happen when the power of God is unleashed through prayer. The ladies on this short-term team were no experts in how to deliver people from satanic oppression. They were simply regular Christians who courageously followed God’s call to go pray in a foreign country and God answered in an unusual, yet amazing way.

When we call on Him, evil flees.

The clear lesson the prayer team learned that night is that God loves to listen to His children pray for His kingdom to come, His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. When we call on Him, evil flees. It cannot stand before Jesus and His sovereign power.

This story reminds me of the message of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. Aslan, the rightful lion King, is on the move and winter is melting before him. Events like this point us to the truth that the ultimate deliverance of this groaning creation is guaranteed. The coming of spring is sure because it is tied to our sovereign King’s person, power, and presence. We have a God who, like Aslan, is on the move and He will not stop until all His purposes are accomplished. Until then, He loves for us to pray for Him to bring on the spring! [📖](#)

Eowyn Stoddard serves with MTW in Berlin, Germany. | Join us on an upcoming prayer-focused vision trip! Visit [mtw.org/visiontrips](http://mtw.org/visiontrips).



# An Incremental Journey

## John and Julie Bowles' path from MTW interns to long-term missionaries

It was 2010, and John and Julie Bowles were at a crossroads. John had been working full time as a graphic designer in Atlanta, Julie had just graduated from a master's program, and they were ready for a new adventure. As they prayed through what God might have next for them, they began to consider cross-cultural missions.

"This is a country that's less than 1% Christian," John explained. "There are so few churches. ... And the culture isn't hostile to the gospel. The door is open and the need is there, so why not go?"

All along their journey, John and Julie were mentored by Tim and Rhianna Mills. The veteran MTW missionaries gave the Bowles a picture of missionary life that was less dramatic than what they had imagined, but also much more sustainable.

"I think everybody has this crazy picture in their head of what missionary life is like," said John. "You know, living in the slums, ministering like Mother Teresa, suffering. ... But with the team in Bangkok, during the day you'd be sweating it out, but then at night you'd go back home and have a casserole."

The Mills were clearly making disciples and impacting their community through the church, but they were also doing life well.

"We could do this," the Bowles thought.

### MISSIONS ... WITH A TWIST

When their internship concluded, John and Julie came back to the U.S. They went back to work, had their first child, and returned to their normal, American life. But they couldn't shake the call to missions.

"We didn't really know where we wanted to go," said John. "But we wanted to see what a missionary's life was like, so we called MTW."

Taking into account their personalities, interests, and goals, MTW matched the Bowles to a two-month mentored internship in Bangkok, Thailand. There, the couple dove headfirst into the team's work with a church plant: youth outreach, college ministry, and in their words, "a little bit of everything."

Over the course of their summer in Bangkok, John and Julie fell in love with Thailand. They loved the people, the food, the way they could relax and laugh even in this new, complex culture. Simultaneously, God impressed on their hearts Thailand's deep need for the gospel.

Within a year, they had applied to serve through MTW's two-year program with MTW Bangkok, but with a twist on the traditional model for missions. Though they still raise financial and prayer support from churches in the U.S., John works full time as a graphic designer for a secular Thai design firm in Bangkok. His salary offsets the total amount of money they need to raise, and his job offers countless opportunities for evangelism and building organic relationships with his non-Christian colleagues.

"We're part of the church plant that MTW is starting in Bangkok, but in a very similar way to how someone may be part of a church plant in the U.S.," John explained. "Maybe you serve in different capacities like teaching Sunday school or leading a Bible study, maybe you serve in a leadership role, but you're not actively involved in the strategizing and day-to-day workings of the church. But you live and work in your city. You have relationships in that city, and you invite your friends and networks to church. You're intentional about it."

For John, those relationships come most often at work. For Julie, those connections often form with their neighbors or through

## They returned to their normal, American life. But they couldn't shake the call to missions.

parenting groups at their kids' school. She describes their role as that of a bridge between the church and the activities or organizations they're naturally involved in.

"A lot of the people at our church are young professionals," John said. "Bangkok is a massive city and it pulls people from all around the world—Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia—to work for international offices. Our [Thai] pastor is encouraging more people to just come and work in Bangkok and be part of the church."

### THE INVITATION IS ALWAYS THERE

John and Julie's journey to becoming career missionaries wasn't rooted in a single dramatic moment or a lifelong calling. Rather, it was a slow, step-by-step process of following the Spirit's leading in faith. They served first as interns, then made a two-year commitment. When their daughter was born in Thailand, they extended to a third year. By the close of year three, they decided to officially transition to long-term missionary service.



"There were no light bulb moments or lightning bolts for us," said Julie. "Just baby steps."

"Over the course of our lives, God has encouraged us to go into missions in different ways—through different people, experiences, seasons of life," John explained. "Those moments, those relationships, were pushing us toward something. I think God used them all to prepare us to go."

"The invitation to go is always there," he added. "It's basically just whether or not you want to accept it. ... You've got the green light, but it's up to you to go." [▶](#)

Ready to get a taste of missions through a vision trip, a mentored internship, or mission trip? Or maybe you're ready to go longer-term. We have lots of ways to serve. Visit [mtw.org/serve](http://mtw.org/serve).



# VIEW FROM THE CHURCH

## Costa Rica, 2.0

CAHABA PARK PCA RETURNS ON MISSION

Digging sidewalks and mixing concrete in the mornings, then visiting homes in the

afternoons certainly caused me, a 54-year-old attorney

from Alabama, to question why I was in Costa Rica on a missions trip. But as the week progressed, it became very clear.

BY: JEFF BRUMLOW

“When did you see God move this week?” Jana asked at the Thursday night debriefing. Rodney and Jana Davila are



Trenches dug in preparation for the sidewalk

MTW missionaries in Costa Rica. The question immediately brought back so many faces and places where God’s master hand was displayed.

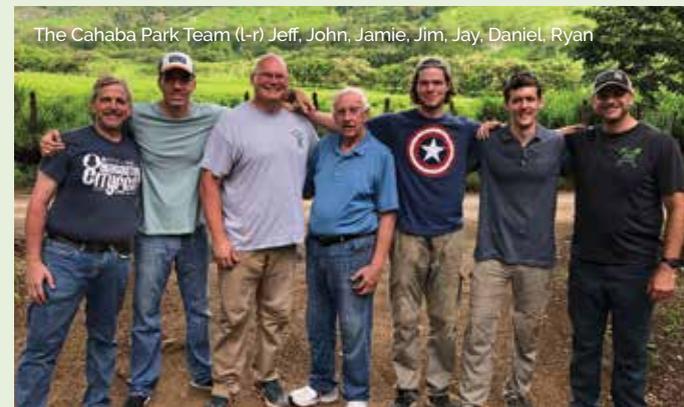
My mind first turned to a young man we met last year. He had been in and out of rehab both before and after we left last summer. Told he would not be in town, we were surprised when he showed up at our Sunday evening welcome dinner in Costa de Pajaros asking for prayer. He had to report to court Monday morning to be tried for stealing some things while on drugs, and was facing two to six years in prison. We were able to pray for him. He returned the next night to say he had pled guilty,

Jeff Brumlow is a member of Cahaba Park PCA in Birmingham, Alabama.

but the judge suspended the sentence and ordered him to do 10 months of community service.

I also thought of one of our day workers. A strong 40-year-old man, he showed up to help us Tuesday morning. He lived at the first home we visited on Monday but was not there because of some legal issues. We watched him come to faith in Christ Thursday morning.

My mind then went to the former pastor of the church where we worked. He had lost his son to cancer a few years back and had left the church. Carl, one of our team members from last



The Cahaba Park Team (l-r) Jeff, John, Jamie, Jim, Jay, Daniel, Ryan

year, had gone through a similar loss and met with him and counseled him over the last year. When we visited the former pastor’s house on Wednesday afternoon, he shared his struggles and how God is bringing him back. God brought the only storm we had that week to keep us at his house to pray and fellowship with him for an hour.

So many other faces God brought to mind: Rodney and Jana, Moises and Maribel, Miguel and Ingrid, Gerald and Geraldo, Alejandro, Pedro, Jorge—all taught us God’s grace and providence, brotherly love, and that God can use a 54-year-old attorney from Alabama for His kingdom’s work and teach him something in the process. He knit seven men from Alabama together and then united them with the hearts of His people in Costa Rica. When did we see God move that week? He moved all week long. [n](#)



# VIEW FROM THE FIELD

## Broken Beauty

FINDING THE GOSPEL IN JAPANESE CULTURE

In my first journal entry from my arts internship in Japan, I wrote, *“I will admit, there’s already a part of me that feels lonely and disengaged. That seems to be common here. I want to fight this tendency. I want to see the ways God is working, the ways that His creation is already evident. Lord, show me the ways you are already here.”*

Now, months later, I want to share what God has shown me:

### UNDERSTANDING BEAUTY

What is beauty? What does it really mean? Something flawless? Awe-inspiring?

What if there is beauty in that which is *not* perfect? In that which was broken and made new?

In Japan, an art form called *kintsugi* is popular. It’s the practice of repairing broken pottery with gold-dusted lacquer, highlighting the broken places. The golden cracks reveal the breakage and repair as a part of the story surrounding the object—making it something of value to exhibit rather than disguise.

### PEOPLE, THIS IS THE GOSPEL!

In his forthcoming book, *The Broken Leaf* (WIPF & Stock 2020), artist and MTW missionary Roger Lowther writes that kintsugi “displays the Gospel [in our lives], where the glory of God is revealed in fragile and broken vessels. The glory of our lives and bodies, our value and our beauty, comes from Christ displayed in our weaknesses—in our cracks.”

Roger points out that God works as the craftsman and Jesus as the lacquer, spilling into and holding together all of our broken pieces, creating something even more valuable than before.

Beauty within brokenness is a hidden yet essential feature of Japanese art, literature, gardening, poetry, and more. Even tea, such an integral part of Japanese culture, is made up of hot water and *broken* leaves. It is the very brokenness of the tea leaves that creates the aroma, and taste, and healing that tea brings. These

broken tea leaves point to Jesus, broken that the world might be filled with the aroma and flavor of the gospel. Japan is less than 1% Christian. At first glance, it seems as though God is silent here. But the blueprints of God’s handiwork have been

BY: KATY FREEMAN



An example of the kintsugi art form

traced in Japanese culture from the very beginning.

This beauty within brokenness—a very Japanese concept—is also a core message of the gospel. Though they did not know it, God planted this divine truth deep within a culture where very few have accepted Christ. Roger writes, “God is not new to Japan. He was here before the first missionary ever set foot here.”

God is here now, and he’s working in the hearts of these people to reveal the full truth of Jesus’ brokenness that restores our wholeness in Him. [n](#)



Katy in Tokyo

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1600 North Brown Road  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
(678) 823-0004  
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# photo feature



Ababayehu and her daughter walking to their neighborhood near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Several times per week Ababayehu walks two hours round trip to the MTW church in the Suki neighborhood. Because of the community she has helped to gather, MTW hopes to start a new church in her neighborhood.

Photo: Claire Rodger

## FROM THE COORDINATOR

# Facing Spiritual Attack

God has richly blessed MTW's kingdom-building work across the globe, and we rejoice and thank God for the great works He has done and is doing.

At the same time—I don't think it is coincidental—we are experiencing what I believe is spiritual attack. We have had an unusual number of emergency medical evacuations, surgeries, and trips to the ER among our missionaries, staff, and even CMTW members in just the past few months. Painfully, too, we have also had missionaries expelled from their countries of service in the past few years.

Sometimes our missionaries have been forced to leave by a repressive or hostile government refusing to grant or renew their visas. Other times, they have been evacuated due to political unrest, war, or other active dangers. These expulsions have accelerated, corresponding with a rising tide of nationalism across the globe. I consider this, too, a spiritual attack.

What then must we do—as MTW, as the Church, and as individual Christians?

**1. We must be creative.** Even when a foreign government makes it illegal or difficult to openly serve as a missionary, the Great Commission remains and we are still called to go. There is a growing need for businessmen, artists, and professionals of all sorts to take jobs or set up businesses in “closed countries.” Integrated into a country's economy and workforce, they have a legitimate means of getting and staying in, and an incredible platform from which to minister and share the love of Christ.

**2. We must be flexible.** When missionaries with years of hard-won language skills and cultural experience are forced to leave their country of service, they often return to the United States unsure of how to use these skills and questioning what has become of their calling. Can the church and PCA ministries stand ready to continue supporting these missionaries and help place them in new positions where their skill sets and passions can be put to work? For example, a missionary with a decade of experience in South Asia could be wonderfully effective serving in an American church plant located in a diverse neighborhood heavily populated by South Asian immigrants.

**3. We must honor their sacrifice.** A number of our missionaries who had been expelled from their countries of service described the process as “a death.” As is related in this issue's cover story, “Kicked Out,” this process of being torn away from friends and calling can be devastating. We cannot downplay or gloss over this trauma. These missionaries have faithfully followed the Great Commission to the ends of the earth, and returned with honorable wounds, earned in service to the King. Honor them. Listen to them. Serve and empower them.

**4. We must have courage.** In the face of persecution, trials, and tribulations, our call remains clear. Challenged, we must rise—not from our own strength, cunning, or works, but through Christ for Christ alone.

In all of this, we can still trust God's sovereignty—and rejoice. His kingdom is coming. I trust you'll see that in all of the stories we tell in this issue. [n](#)



Dr. Lloyd Kim

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lloyd Kim".

inside



KICKED OUT



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PLAN



BEHOLD THE POWER OF PRAYER