

# Fieldnotes

stories of the gospel transforming lives

vol. 4



## **Fieldnotes, Volume 4**

Stories of the gospel transforming lives

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# Acknowledgments

This fourth volume of *Fieldnotes* is once again the result of the combined efforts of many. The stories have been gathered from all over the world, written down and then published here so that people world-over can be encouraged by what God continues to do through his Word and faithful ambassadors. We are grateful for each and every person who had a part to play in the stories and publication of this book.

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# Foreword

In this edition of *Fieldnotes*, you will read stories from people from many walks of life who had the privilege of sharing the good news of the gospel with family, friends, neighbors and even strangers.

Perhaps, as you read these stories, you will wonder if you could ever have enough faith and boldness to talk to someone about spiritual things. Let me encourage you with these words from Jesus:

*He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. (Luke 10:2 NIV)*

It is amazing what happens when we pray according to this Scripture. Somehow the Lord opens doors, prepares our hearts and sends us out in answer to this prayer.

We can be like Jonah, the reluctant witness, not wanting to be the person God would use to share a warning with the people of Nineveh. Or we can be like the Apostle Paul, who, after many years of ministry, still asked others to pray for him:

*Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (Ephesians 6:19, 20 NIV)*

Even after being such a bold witness for many years, the apostle asked for prayer that the Lord would give him the

words to say! He did not claim to have all of the answers. Like us, he was depending on the Spirit of God to help him when the opportunity came to speak.

We also notice that the apostle prayed for boldness—that he would speak fearlessly, as he should. Do you experience fear? A lack of confidence in your ability to communicate? A fear of rejection? You are not alone. As a missionary from India once said, “There is no testimony, unless first there is a test!”

I trust that in some way these stories will encourage and inspire each of us to pray for the lost, and to prayerfully consider how God might use us to reach out to someone with this good news.

Russ Smyth  
Director  
GoodSeed International



## Note to readers

The following are true-life stories as told to GoodSeed staff. These testimonies were first published on the GoodSeed blog. This anthology contains a mix of stories about people giving away one of our resources or someone guiding a friend through the gospel message.

All names are pseudonyms. Places and locations are as reported, but some details have been redacted for privacy reasons.





# Any sign of religious belief was a sign of weakness

If you met Adrien today, you would never guess that just a few short years ago, he was an atheist who battled inner loneliness and emptiness. All you will see is a fulfilled father and husband, who is now a missionary along with his family. How did this transformation occur?

Adrien grew up in Quebec, going to church on Christmas and Easter, but it was more by obligation than by choice. Early in his teenage years, he completely rejected the idea of God and came to despise religion. He turned to science for an explanation of the world and for the purpose of life.

“I was an atheist and I was strong about it. Religious people were fools in my eyes.”

After he finished his education, he joined the military. During his basic training, he became friends with Roy, a guy in his platoon. They ended up getting stationed on the same base. At this point in his life, Adrien had everything the world had to offer—a good job and lots of money. However, he was lonely and empty inside.

But then, a few years later, Roy came back from a six-month assignment and couldn't seem to stop talking about Jesus

and God and church. He had become a Christian through the testimony of his uncle and now wanted to tell Adrien all about it. But Adrien wanted none of it. He was cold and distant with Roy, who quickly realized that he had to go easy on Adrien. Because Roy was sensitive towards Adrien, they managed to retain their friendship.

**“I was an atheist and I was strong about it. Religious people were fools in my eyes.”** “After all, he was one of the only friends I had,” Adrien says. “Over time, he would share some of his experiences with God, with the church, his struggles and his joys. From time to time, he would bring me a tract he found at church about God vs. evolution and things like that. I don’t think I ever read them.”

One day, however, Roy showed up in Adrien’s room with a book for Adrien to read. “He told me there was no pressure, but he had read this book and it was one of the main reasons he came to Christ.” It was *L’Homme sur le chemin d’Emmaüs*, the French version of *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*.

Adrien goes on to say, “I don’t remember what I told him, but I took the book more out of kindness than willingness. However, I’m a curious guy by nature and so I started to take a peek at it. Perhaps it would help me better understand all of Roy’s craziness.”

His interest was immediately grabbed by the book’s first pages. “To this day, I still remember the preface of the author, stating that this book is an objective summary of the Bible and not

his own subjective opinion or belief. He stated that he was very careful not to impart his own view, but to simply relate the Bible. He also said that at the beginning of each chapter were references to biblical passages and if we weren't sure on the validity of the chapter, that we were free to look for ourselves. I still remember that this statement had a big impact on my decision to read the book. I had no interest in someone else's 'beliefs,' but an objective retelling of the Bible sounded intriguing."

So Adrien started to read *L'Homme sur le chemin d'Emmaüs*. He found it very engaging. Here were people and events in the Bible he didn't recall hearing about before, despite the fact that he had grown up around religion. It took Adrien about two weeks to finish the book.

"I still remember finishing the book and telling myself, 'This is all very interesting. I wonder if the Bible really says that.'"

He returned the book to Roy, who was startled to discover that Adrien had actually read it all the way through. He had given the book to others and none of them had read it yet. Could it be that his atheist friend was actually more interested than he let on?

**"I had no interest in someone else's 'beliefs,' but an objective retelling of the Bible sounded intriguing."**

But Adrien wasn't about to open up. "I didn't want to talk about it with my friend, so we didn't. But in the back of my mind, there was always this curiosity about what the Bible really says ... I needed a French Bible. But I was not going

to ask Roy if he had one. You need to understand that I was a very proud man. Any sign of religious belief was to me a sign of weakness. Therefore, I allowed myself to look into it, but only privately.”

Finally, six months later, Adrien was able to buy a French Bible for himself. As soon as he got home from the bookstore, he sat down and started to read. “I remembered that there was an Old and a New Testament. I also remembered that the church had given me a New Testament ... I figured that if they only gave me a New Testament, then it must have been more important than the Old. So I located the book of Matthew and I started reading.”

**“I was devouring the Bible, amazed to discover this Jesus ...”** For an avowed atheist who had dismissed religion, what happened next took even him by surprise: “I was devouring the Bible, amazed to discover this Jesus, of whom I had no recollection of anyone telling me about in the past.” He couldn’t put the Bible down!

But then Adrien hit something of a roadblock. “As I was reading the Gospels, there were many things I didn’t understand, such as the Sabbath or this Law thing. So, I figured I would go back and start from the beginning. I read through the historical books all the way to Chronicles. This gave me a better understanding of the things described in the New Testament.”

All this time, he told no one about his secret reading. But as time went on, Adrien found himself feeling more and more miserable. He now believed that there was a God, and he had discovered

that this God was his creator and owner. He was a holy God, who had a standard of perfection that Adrien couldn't meet.

"I used to sin and it wouldn't bother me. Now when I sinned, I knew it was wrong but was unable to stop in my own strength. I was reading all those promises of peace and joy, but had none of that."

Then one day, Adrien observed Roy and another Christian talking together. Watching them interact, he realized that they had what he wanted. "I could see in their lives something I didn't have.

Somehow, I knew they had something that enabled them to live a Christian life, but didn't know what it was. I only knew that it was what I needed."

**"I could see  
in their lives  
something I  
didn't have ... I  
knew that it was  
what I needed."**

That night, Adrien went home and acknowledged his need of the God he had resisted for so many years and put his trust in Jesus for salvation. "There was no vision, no angels, no feelings," Adrien says. "Just a simple, genuine prayer before going to bed."

Adrien continues, "When I woke up the next morning, I had a new conviction. I took a garbage bag and threw out all the wrong stuff I had. I went to my friend and publicly acknowledged Christ to him. A few weeks later, I started attending church and never returned to my life of sin." He was now a child of God.

For Roy, it may have seemed pointless and discouraging at times when Adrien rebuffed his evangelistic efforts. But in the end, his gentle and caring persistence won out. What a

joy it must have been to hear Adrien tell him of his newfound faith in Christ!

This seemingly hardened atheist is now a happily married man who is raising four beautiful daughters to follow Jesus. Adrien would have never guessed that he and his family would now be serving as missionaries in Central America. His search for truth had brought him to an unexpected and yet welcome conclusion. His primary desire now is to follow and serve Jesus.

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**Psalm 67:1-2 NIV**

*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us—so that your ways may be known on the earth, your salvation among all nations.*

---





# Seeing the Spirit at work is extraordinary!

Have you ever prayed for months and years for the salvation of a particular person? Sometimes it's easy to become discouraged and wonder if it's any use.

Carole was an older woman and an unbeliever. However, she had a sister and a daughter who had been praying faithfully for her salvation for a long time. Would the time ever come when their loved one believed the good news of the gospel?

One day Lily approached Carole, offering to do a Bible study with her. The book they would read together was called *By This Name*, and it would give Carole a clear understanding of the Bible's message. Carole agreed.

The two women met once a week for 15 weeks. Lily related, "It was such an extraordinary experience to see the work of the Holy Spirit before my very eyes."

At the end of their last study together, it was clear that Carole understood the message of salvation. However, she seemed uncertain about whether it was meant for her personally. As she and Lily discussed the Bible's message, the truth finally

dawned on her and Carole was overcome with tears. “It was a very intense moment,” Lily shared.

Now, Carole has been baptized and attends a local church. Her one unbelieving daughter has since understood the gospel for herself and has also trusted Jesus as her Saviour!

Truly, the prayers of Carole’s sister and daughter were effective and they are so glad they persevered in praying for their loved one.

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**Psalm 69:13 NIV**

*But I pray to you, LORD, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.*

---



## The right key

It was one of those days that are irrevocably engraved on his memory, and the small details remain vivid to this day. He can still remember the fresh autumn air on his face, and walking across the field with his two children. It was a warm fall day, a beautiful Sunday ... until the mobile phone began to ring in his pocket:

"Tomasz, please come home!" The voice of his wife sounded strange.

"Has something happened?"

"Just come home, please! Immediately!"

When Tomasz looked into his wife's face a short time later, he knew something terrible had happened.

"Please call your parents in Poland. Let them tell you. It's about your brother."

A despair spread over Tomasz when he heard about the house fire. Then came the crushing realization that his brother had likely died in the flames.

Any remnant of hope was crushed when, a few days later, the police identified his brother as a victim of the fire. In a moment, a life had been extinguished. The life of his only brother.

Until then, Tomasz had lived a traditionally religious life. He knew that God was the supreme authority in a person's life. Accordingly, he endeavoured to be a man of good deeds. He prayed, revered the saints and visited the church—all in an effort to please God. But the sudden death of his brother highlighted the transient nature of life. Tomasz felt a yearning to change the way he was living.

**Tomasz felt a yearning to change the way he was living.**

He was burdened by thoughts of his own eternal destiny. Even more difficult was the horror of the thought of where his brother was. Tomasz had been taught that people would have to pay for their sins after death by years of torment and pain, after which they could gain eventual entrance into Heaven. He had also been told that he could help shorten his brother's suffering by his own good works and prayers.

Tomasz's prayers became more frequent, longer, and more intense. Thoughts of his brother were an immense burden, driven by a conviction that he was now responsible not only for his own eternal destiny, but also for his brother's.

One day a friend made him an invitation: "Tomasz, if you want to know more about God, I can tell you where you can learn what separates you from God. I'm part of a group that reads together a book that explains the God of the Bible and his plan for our lives. Why don't you come?"

When Tomasz arrived at the study, the group had already begun. He entered and found a vacant seat. "I would like to get to know God," he shared briefly.

At first, Tomasz attended the course irregularly. But when the course finished and a new one began, both Tomasz and his wife began to attend faithfully.

Every evening as a group, they went through the book *Der Fremde* (the German translation of *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*) and read many passages from the Bible. As they did so, Tomasz's view of God began to change. Tomasz listened to the 15 lessons with great interest and, by degrees, began to understand who Jesus Christ really was.

Tomasz continued to attend his church, clinging to the traditions he'd been taught from a young age. He continued to offer prayers in order to save the soul of his deceased brother. He took a pilgrimage to a holy place in Poland.

Behind the consecrated altar at the holy location, he went back and forth on his knees for a long time, trying to come to peace. His wife gazed at him with sadness. She had come to understand the truth about Jesus. Her heart ached as she saw Tomasz kneeling and praying in despair.

Back in Germany, Tomasz's wife prayed for her husband. She knew that only God could reveal to him that Jesus was the answer to his struggles. She met for prayer with other women.

Then the miracle happened. In the midst of his prayers for his brother and surrounded by noisy machinery at his workplace, Tomasz began to understand that Jesus Christ is the only door to eternal life. His bewildered heart cried out softly, "Lord, show me the way to you."

**... only God  
could reveal to  
him that Jesus  
was the answer  
to his struggles.**

God did show Tomasz the way. Gradually, Tomasz understood that the way to Jesus Christ did not involve the veneration of

**“You have it, the key that opens the next door!”** relics. So he removed the consecrated water and statues from his house. But doubt and fear remained in his heart. Was this the right way?

So Tomasz prayed again, asking God to remove the confusion from his heart and show him the way to peace with him.

The Lord used a unique situation to answer Tomasz’s prayer the next day. He had been mowing his lawn and after he finished, a bright piece of paper in the grass caught his attention. It was attached to a now-deflated balloon. Picking up the paper, Tomasz read:

**“You have it, the key that opens the next door!”**

Tomasz learned later that the wind had blown the balloon a distance of 100 km, after which it landed in his back yard. The words on the paper had been the motto of a recent school graduation ceremony in a neighbouring city. On this day, it became his motto as well.

Tomasz said that for him “the key” was faith and belief in the truth.

He held the paper in his hands for a long time. He thought back over those 15 lessons and about what he had learned about Jesus’ work on the cross. These lessons had given him the key he needed. He already had it. He just needed to use it. All he needed to do was believe in what Jesus had done for him on the cross.

Back in his house, Tomasz consciously and now without any doubt, chose the only true Door, Jesus Christ. He accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ by faith. An incomprehensible freedom filled him. He did not have to contribute anything to his salvation. All he had to do was to step through this one Door. Finally, Tomasz was free.

The grief surrounding the death of his brother was still a source of pain. Tomasz realized that, just as he could not have saved his brother from the deadly house fire, so he could not save him from an eternity separated from God. This was a painful realization.

But now he knew what he could do. A new passion flared up in him. Tomasz began to tell people around him about God's salvation through Jesus—the true Door to life. He desires that his life become a key to help others open the door to salvation.

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**John 10:9 ESV**

*I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*

---







# The gospel at your workplace

What does it look like to be an ambassador for Christ? Does it mean speaking in front of thousands of people in a crowded auditorium? Or does it mean blazing a trail through a jungle to make contact with a primitive tribe? While both of those scenarios are definitely ways in which God uses his children to reach the world with his gospel, often our calling is much more ordinary. Often it is right in our daily workplaces that we have the greatest opportunity to share the life and truth of Jesus. Take Jack. You might think his job inconsequential—he worked in building maintenance at an independent living facility. But somehow Jack attracted the attention of his manager, who took note he was a Christian and appreciated his consistent testimony in the workplace. As a result, he asked Jack if he would offer a Bible study to the residents who might like to attend.

Jack was more than happy to do so and began offering studies. At first there were only a few attendees, but that changed after Jack invited a local pastor to start teaching a chronological Bible study based on *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. The

room quickly filled up with attendees eager to learn the main theme of the Bible.

“The lights really came on for them and they started buying their own books and attending services at our church too,” Jack says. “One long-term resident exclaimed several times that the Bible study was the best thing that ever happened at his facility. Many were the thanks and encouragements to keep the study going.”

Another attendee wrote Jack and the pastor a note: “We need you to keep coming and teach us the Bible. We didn’t know the Bible until you started teaching us!”

**... the Bible study was the best thing that ever happened at his facility.** Nearly the entire group came to believe and joyfully accept that the Old Testament’s Promised Deliverer was Jesus Christ—their Creator, Owner and Saviour who gave himself as their perfect sacrifice and substitute.

“I’ve since moved away,” Jack says, “But the pastor keeps the study going and tells me that the group now attending his church from the Bible study continues to grow!”

Jack likes to reference Ephesians 6:5-8 when he talks about these opportunities he has had in his workplaces:

*Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not*

*to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. (ESV)*

“We’ve encountered other ministry opportunities in other places of employment, albeit not so profound, without overt attempts,” Jack shares. “How? By giving an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay for starters. And then by applying a sincere, godly work ethic with a smile and a good attitude, and praying for coworkers and taking the Lord at his Word by working as unto him for his rewards.”

Jack goes on to say, “If it’s just a job, you’re not really living and you’re certainly not serving! Read Ephesians 6:5-8 and believe, apply and live it. It is no secret what God can do!”

Never underestimate the power of obedience. The testimony of our lives can open many doors to share the gospel with our coworkers and other people around us. Take new courage as you enter another day of work. Serve Jesus in the normal and ordinary tasks of your day and be ready to share his good news when the opportunities come.

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## **2 Corinthians 2:14 ESV**

*But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.*

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## From a muddy pond to pure, life-giving water

Many people, these days, seem to borrow religious ideas from a variety of sources. Claude was one such individual.

In his mid-fifties, Claude was very religious. While he identified himself with a traditional church, he had gleaned so much of his thinking from other religions that his views were very muddled and hardly representative of his own church's belief system.

He had become especially interested in the Eastern practices of yoga, chakra, astral voyage and so forth, as well as in the occult. His driving desire was to find that which was true. So his search continued.

A naturally curious individual, Claude was happy to learn more about religion when given the opportunity to study the Bible. He and Henri began their sessions, reading *By This Name* together and progressing through the Bible's message in a way that was organized and clear.

They were about two-thirds of the way through the book when Claude arrived for their session with an announcement. Not

wanting to wait any longer to finish the story of salvation, he'd gone ahead and finished the book. He announced to Henri: "It is finished, once and for all ... I am saved, justified. Jesus did it all!"

The Holy Spirit had done a remarkable work in the man's life and had opened his eyes to many of the lies he'd been

**"It is finished,  
once and for all  
... I am saved,  
justified. Jesus  
did it all!"**

pursuing. While Henri was thrilled with Claude's salvation, the two men decided to finish studying the book together.

The Lord used their continued study of the truths of the Bible to do some housekeeping in Claude's life. The study helped clear up some of the false teachings associated with the occult in which he'd been immersed.

Claude continues to walk with the Lord. He appreciated so much the way *By This Name* communicated the Bible's message that he bought several copies and gave them away to individuals in his life. He loves to share the good news of salvation and help others to find the truth that he spent so many years seeking.

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**Isaiah 55:6 NKJV**

*Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*

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# Spotlight on the Farsi translation

The Farsi (or Iranian Persian) translation of *All that the Prophets have Spoken* was released in late 2016. Since then, GoodSeed has received a number of encouraging stories from our own staff about those who are using the materials. We've collected a few short stories below:



Franz and I just had a friend visiting ... He showed us pictures of the first Iranian *All that the Prophets have Spoken* study with a room full of men. The amazing thing is that Rashad is leading it. I went through *The Lamb* in English with Rashad and he trusted Christ last summer.

Our friend says that Rashad reads to the others and they are already in lesson four. He teaches in a very dynamic way and it thrills us to hear that.

There are a lot of Afghan people who also want to hear, but they are also afraid because they have someone in their

community who keeps reporting to the homeland and it can be dangerous for their relatives who are still there.

Recently there was a meeting of Farsi speakers from different cities and the GoodSeed materials were also introduced. God is at work and we are thrilled at how he is using everyone who is willing and obedient.



An Iranian brother who visited us is really excited about the Farsi *All the Prophets* book. He started five different Bible study groups in different locations and wants to have many more books. Most or all of the people are refugees and we are praising the Lord, that *he* is leading in these things.



A year or two ago, I went through *The Lamb* with a Persian Armenian man who had a Muslim background. His wife still holds to the Muslim faith. At that time, he understood and believed.

Now he is not only teaching a large group through the Persian *All the Prophets*, but is also using the internet to share the good news. He offers online courses for those wishing to learn German and 40,000 have signed up. To them, he offers a Bible course over the internet and 4,000 people signed up for that course. The ebook is a huge blessing for this purpose.



Praise the Lord. He works in amazing ways and does more than we ever expected!

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**Colossians 1:6 NIV**

*In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.*

---





# I now know there's more to life

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## KENT'S STORY

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**K**ent was raised in a small town in the heartland of the United States. Growing up, he went to church most weeks, attended the local Vacation Bible School each summer and was generally a good church boy.

As a teenager, he got a part-time job which often required him to work on the weekends. His church attendance fell off till he only darkened the doors for an occasional Easter or Christmas service.

For the next 15 years or so, Kent found himself chasing the next promotion, the next pay raise, the next pursuit, too busy to spend much time thinking about spiritual matters.

But then something happened that became a turning point in Kent's life. A question was raised by his grandfather in the midst of a seemingly mundane conversation. Kent's grandmother had passed away not long before, so Kent was checking in with his grandpa, chatting about the usual things: hunting, fishing, gardening, cars. But then Kent's grandpa got real quiet and turned to him, "Do you think I'll go to Heaven when I die?"

Just picturing the scene still brings a rush of emotion for Kent. At the time, the question completely stunned him, as he had never discussed religious matters with his grandpa before. “I wasn’t really sure how to answer the question,” he shares, “but it is a conversation I’ve thought about literally every day since then.”

About a year went by and Kent began to notice his outlook was changing. He felt like something was missing in his

**He felt like  
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life. He felt like he wasn’t sure where he was going or what he was doing.

Finally, the questions piled up to the point that he felt like he needed to talk to someone. He had noticed that his company manager, who had become a close friend, had a Bible sitting on his desk. So, one day he found himself standing in his manager’s office, asking his boss if he had a few minutes to talk.

The manager glanced up and said he was pretty busy, but after a short pause asked, “What is it you want to talk about?” Kent told him he wanted to talk about his church if he had time at some point. Without hesitation, the man stood up and said, “I always have time to talk about my church.”

The two men headed down the hall to the lunchroom, where they sat and talked for two hours about the manager’s church and his testimony. In the end, he invited Kent to go to church with him. Kent accepted the invitation and began attending church with him and his family.

Several months later, Kent and his girlfriend, Ashley, purchased a home in a different town. As they considered what to do

about attending church, they decided they should find another church closer to their new home.

Not long after, as Ashley was getting her hair done, the hairdresser suggested they try visiting her church. The couple appreciated the invitation, but never got around to going. Then, when Ashley was due for another hair appointment, the hairstylist extended the invitation once again. This time, Kent and Ashley determined they'd give the church a try.

The next Sunday, the couple approached the large building. Even before entering, other attendees greeted them warmly. Kent and Ashley left the service a little early, since Ashley wasn't feeling well. On their way out, one of the pastors stopped them and expressed his appreciation for their attendance and invited them back again. Those few simple words of thanks really struck the couple. It was this show of genuine friendliness that prompted them to come back again and eventually settle into the life of the church.

When Kent and Ashley became engaged, one of the pastors offered to do pre-marital counselling, to which they agreed. As part of the counselling, the couple went through *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*.

Kent said, "It was like nothing else I had experienced in the past. There were a lot of concepts that were discussed that I thought I'd understood, that I actually had no clue what was actually happening."

**"It was like nothing else I had experienced in the past."**

Then one Wednesday evening, as the couple met with the pastor, everything clicked together for Kent. "I finally understood

what Jesus Christ did for us and how that impacts our lives. That night I remember laying in bed, thinking about the conversation I'd had previously with my grandpa. I would answer his question to me with a question of my own."

"I would ask him if he truly believes that Christ died for us on the cross and rose on the third day and gave us his righteousness. And if he believes that, then yes, I'd definitely agree that he'd be going to Heaven."

Since trusting Christ as his Saviour, life has changed quite a bit for Kent. Previously, he shared how he had been living for himself, focused on doing only what seemed right for himself and his family. But now as a believer, Kent says, "I now know there's significantly more to life. I've been trying to impact others and help them find the joy in Christ that I have found since being saved."

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### **Philippians 3:8-9 NIV**

*What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord... that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.*

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# Everything finally made sense!

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## ASHLEY'S STORY

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Ashley's story is all too familiar to many these days. She grew up in an abusive household, her father absent from her birth and her mother a frequent drug user. At seven, she moved in with her grandmother. Occasionally, she would be taken to church as she grew up. She remembers praying fervently for her parents and brothers to be reunited into a normal family. "I wanted so badly to be like my friends, with their normal households. When that didn't happen, I lost interest in praying," she shares.

At 16, Ashley had a friend who was going through Confirmation classes at church. When she asked Ashley to join her, Ashley accepted. As part of the requirements, she was told she had to be baptized. Consequently she was baptized, thinking that it would be her "ticket to Heaven."

However shortly after, Ashley quit attending church and began heading down a very different path of rebellion. It wasn't until she was 20 that she began going to church again.

At the time, this particular church had the practice each Sunday of extending an invitation to the congregants to be

saved. Every week, Ashley's heart would begin racing, as she felt her need for salvation, but she never responded. Instead, she thought that, because she had attended church regularly and because she'd been baptized and said an occasional prayer, she was already a good Christian. She now admits that she was simply too proud to publicly acknowledge

**"I had no concept of what a relationship with God really meant."** her need. So she didn't. She simply continued with her sporadic church attendance and avoided the altar calls.

A few years later, Ashley met Kent. They began going to church regularly, but for them, their spirituality simply consisted of attending services on Sundays and saying grace before mealtimes. "That was it," Ashley says. "I still had no concept of what a relationship with God really meant."

After the couple moved to a different town, they began to look for a new church home. While getting her hair done one evening, the hairdresser invited Ashley to try out her church.

Ashley shares, "I just wasn't in a good place at the time. We visited the church, but towards the end of the service I began having an anxiety attack. We got up to leave but before we could get out the door, one of the pastors stopped us and thanked us for coming. That meant a lot to me and my husband. I had been to many churches before but never before met a pastor. So we continued to go back."

When one of the pastors offered pre-marital counselling upon their engagement, the couple agreed. As part of their sessions, he took them through *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*.



One night, everything clicked for Ashley. “I’d heard so many times before that Jesus had died for us—for our sins, but before it just felt like words. It didn’t make sense before now. Now, reading through *The Stranger*, everything clicked—everything finally made sense.”

“I realized that he [died] for us, for me, so that I could be forgiven for my sins and have his righteousness in return. That was huge for me. The darkness that I had carried around all my life as a result of all the things that had happened to me and that I had done—I felt all that lifted. That was huge, because I’ve lived with that my whole life.”

**“The darkness I had carried around all my life ... I felt all that lifted.”**

Ashley continued, “This has made such a difference in my home, in my marriage, in my day-to-day living. I finally have the answer: to be living in Christ, rather than doing everything by my own will and creating more problems for myself. It doesn’t mean life is always perfect today. I still have problems, as we all do. But I’m able to see them differently now because of this.”

What started out as an obligation to go to church on Sunday mornings has now become the highlight of Ashley’s week. “I crave going to church on Sunday mornings, to growth group on Sunday nights, Wednesday nights, just having interaction with church members throughout the week. Praying isn’t just saying grace around the dinner table anymore; it’s so much more than that. I’m thrilled to get into the Bible more and learn more. I know that I’m just at the beginning of a new journey and I couldn’t be more thrilled.”

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**Zephaniah 3:17 NKJV**

*The LORD your God in your midst,  
The Mighty One, will save;  
He will rejoice over you with gladness,  
He will quiet you with His love,  
He will rejoice over you with singing."*

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## Even children can do this

Giving away a book is simple. So simple that even children can do it! Robert sent us the following story of his own children's excitement about sharing the gospel with others:

The kids love trains. So we decided to take them on a train ride downtown. We encouraged seven-year-old Daniel to take some GoodSeed books along to give to people on the train. One of the ladies he asked took the book, but we could tell right away she was uncomfortable with it. It wasn't long before she tossed the book a few seats down from her. We prayed together with the kids that someone would come take the book who needed it. A few stops later, another lady sat down, picked up the book and started intently reading it. She was about 10 pages into it before we got off at our next stop! Daniel is learning how easy it is to give the gospel to others.

A few weeks later, we took another train ride for Aaron's birthday and took more books along to give away to people. Daniel said, "We need more books! Look at all these people that might not know Jesus!"

Five-year-old Aaron even built up the courage to give a book to a young mother. We left a copy of *The Story that Matters* on a table in the public gardens and prayed someone would pick this book up. Sure enough, just ten seconds later, we were blessed to see a man sit down at the table and begin reading it.

We are praying that the recipients of these books would come to learn the Good News and place their trust in Jesus.

We are excited to see how God is using our children to reach others for him, even at such a young age. Their love and concern for others who don't know Jesus is so neat to see and a challenge to us as adults to not be afraid to give away the gospel.

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**Matthew 21:15-16 NIV**

*But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things [Jesus] did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.*

*"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise'?"*

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## We need to convey more of the gospel story

Derek was just a young associate pastor starting his first job at a church when he crossed paths with Nick. Derek's zeal for sharing the gospel had led him to hand out numerous tracts and speak to many people about God's love in sending Jesus to earth to die for them. His presentation of the gospel generally started with the cross. But with Nick, Derek suddenly found himself needing to shift gears in his approach. Here was a guy who literally knew nothing about the Bible. Nick didn't even know the difference between Jesus and Moses!

It was at this point that Derek realised that he would be unable to simply tell Nick about the cross and expect Nick to understand the gospel sufficiently to put his faith in Christ. So, as the two young men began meeting together for lunches at a restaurant, Derek began telling Nick the story of the Bible, starting in Genesis. As they progressed, Derek used napkins to draw illustrations of key concepts and events of the Old Testament.

"After several weeks we finally arrived at Jesus," Derek later wrote. "The Sunday following our final meeting, Nick came

to my office after church because he was ready to trust Christ. I'll never forget seeing him drop to his knees, confess his sin, and claim Christ as his sufficient substitute. When he stood up he looked me in the eyes and said, 'The robes of Jesus' righteousness have just been placed around my shoulders.'

"I remember being so shocked at his level of knowledge. Here was a young guy who just a few weeks previous could not tell you anything about God, Jesus or the Bible; but who

now could give one of the best testimonies of the gospel that I had ever heard."

**"We needed to ... start back in Genesis in order to give people context for the important truths of the gospel."**

That was fourteen years ago. Derek continues to pastor and share the gospel, but what he observed in Nick transformed his approach to evangelism. He realised that Nick wasn't an isolated case. He was just one of the many biblically illiterate people who have no context for the story of Jesus Christ.

We no longer live in a Christianized culture. People simply do not know who the God of the Bible is, let alone the repercussions of personal sin and the importance of Jesus Christ and his work on the cross.

Derek says, "This experience with Nick convinced me that we needed to do evangelism differently. We needed to convey more of the story—to start back in Genesis in order to give people context for the important truths of the gospel."

It was during that same period of time that Derek was introduced to *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. He was amazed to see that there was a tool that utilized the same methodology that he had employed with Nick—telling the gospel story from creation to Christ. It was at this point that Derek’s church began to promote the use of *The Stranger* for leading people to Christ.

Derek says, “The type of testimony I heard from Nick has now been repeated over and over and over again with the people who have completed *The Stranger* studies.”

How exciting to hear again of the power of the gospel in the lives of those who hear and understand it.

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**Hebrews 10:23-25 NIV**

*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

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# A school assignment turns into a time of rejoicing

Peter and Louise Johnson have lived in the same neighbourhood for almost two decades. And right next door to them has always been the same older couple, Bill and Mary Robinson. Over the years, the neighbourly relationship between the two couples has developed into a deep friendship. In many ways, they consider each other just like family.

The Johnsons knew from early on that their friends were not believers. Over time, Bill and Mary revealed that while they had grown up in ultra-religious homes, at some point they'd left church life due to "the bitter taste that had been left in their mouths." Though this experience was now part of their history, the Robinsons maintained the "good works for Heaven" mentality that they'd been steeped in. The Johnsons longed to see these dear ones come to know the Saviour.

When Mary had a heart attack years before, the Johnsons had taken the opportunity to share the gospel. However, they quickly realized that while a seed may have been planted, nothing had changed regarding the Robinson's views on the Bible.

What was obvious to Peter and Louise, however, was that their friends were searching. Bill was a big reader and often his books were of a religious nature relating somehow to Jesus or the Bible. Usually they were books off the New York Times Best Sellers list and not necessarily biblically sound, but he seemed to have maintained an interest in spiritual things, despite his aversion to church.

Then, during a grad party for the Johnson's son, Bill brought over a book that purported to explore the life of Jesus. He wanted to know what Peter and Louise thought about it.

It was Louise who took on the task to read through the book and prepare a little critique. In the process, she cross-referenced page numbers in the book to some Scripture verses so he could see for himself what the Bible actually had to say. She also took the opportunity to weave in the gospel, hopeful that this would finally create a desire in the

**What was obvious, however, was that their friends were searching.**

Robinsons to dig further into the Bible.

Later, when Louise returned the book, the opportunity never came for a follow-up discussion regarding the Bible's true message. Instead, she was able to give Bill another book—*The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*—and told him that she thought he'd really like the book. Upon leaving the house, Louise chose to give them some time and space before she would ask what they thought.

Several months went by. Early one morning, just as Peter and Louise were getting up, one of their children ran into

their bedroom to tell them that a sheriff's deputy had just arrived at the Robinson house and was carrying in a defibrillator.

Shooting a quick prayer to God, Louise threw on some clothes and ran next door, arriving just as the ambulance pulled up. Thankfully, Mary was alert but having trouble breathing—the defibrillator was there just in case. The doctors were able to address the issue and Mary mended fairly quickly over the next few weeks.

When the initial emergency happened, Louise had quickly e-mailed a prayer partner and asked her to pray for several specific things. The first was for their friends' salvation; the second was for some physical relief for Mary. The final request was for another opportunity to speak with the neighbours about the gospel.

Some weeks later, the Johnsons' daughter, Deborah, came home with an assignment for one of her college courses. She was required to share the gospel with at least five people—two of which had to be neighbours. So, in short order, she was standing in front of the door of their dear friends, ringing the doorbell.

When she explained her assignment, the older couple graciously welcomed her in and they all took seats in the living room. Deborah pulled out a sheet of paper and began to draw out a bridge illustration, similar to the one found in many gospel materials. She opened her Bible and asked Bill to read aloud Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9.

**A sheriff's deputy had just arrived at the Robinson house and was carrying in a defibrillator.**

When Bill finished reading the last passage, he commented, “You know, a lot of people think they have to work their way to Heaven. I used to think that for a long time, but now I don’t.” Then, pointing to the bridge illustration, he said, “I believe this instead!” He was very emphatic about it. Though Mary was much more reserved, she said that she, too, believed what Deborah had just presented.

Bill then shared that he’d read twice through the entire *Stranger on the Road to Emmaus* and absolutely loved it. He said Mary wanted to read it, too, but they thought they’d better get the book back to the Johnsons since they’d had it so long. Deborah assured him that it was theirs to keep. This prompted an excited response. Mary expressed how thankful she was that she would also be able to read the book, though

**I used to think that  
for a long time,  
but now I don’t... I  
believe this instead!**

she felt she’d need her husband to help her understand it. Bill quickly spoke up, assuring his wife that he would read through it with her. Deborah listened as Bill repeatedly expressed his

appreciation for the clear gospel presented in *The Stranger*. Every time he read it, he said, he gained more understanding.

It was a thrilling day in the Johnson household as they celebrated this wonderful landmark in their long friendship with the Robinsons. Louise’s excitement leapt off the page as she wrote to us, making liberal use of the caps lock key: “I CAN’T TELL YOU HOW THROUGH THE ROOF WE ALL ARE WITH JOY AND THANKFULNESS! WE PRAISE GOD

WITH ALL THAT IS IN US! I don't know whether to cry or do cartwheels!" Deborah's college assignment had turned into a time of rejoicing for both families.

Like Deborah, we've all been "assigned" the work of telling those around us about our wonderful Saviour. There are so many opportunities surrounding us, whether it is in the workplace, with family, out in public or with our neighbours. Who have you spoken to lately?

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### **2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV**

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.*

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# Lonely international student finds hope in the gospel

Chunhua's knowledge of the Bible was spotty at best. As a little child in China, she remembered her mother talking about Christianity, but she had no grasp of what it meant to have a relationship with God. This all changed when she came to Canada as an international student.

The experience of living in a foreign country was one she had looked forward to for years. But when the excitement and novelty wore off, Chunhua found adjusting to the new culture and language difficult. She was lonely, having never been away from her parents before.

It was at this critical juncture of her life that she met a group of exuberant Christian young people who ran a ministry on campus for people like her. They were about bringing college students together in meaningful and supportive friendships, all the while introducing them to the message of the Bible. As part of their get-togethers, they would show the videobook of *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*, and they invited Chunhua to join them.

At first, Chunhua hesitated to commit, but the friendliness and sincerity of her new friends finally won her over. She started watching the DVD series together with other international students. She loved what she learned.

Chunhua discovered that, as a result of what Jesus did on the cross, she could have a relationship with God as her kind and good Father. This meant everything to this young girl living alone in a foreign country.

She shared after: "I have been able to establish a more solid understanding about the Bible and Christian belief. The DVD filled the gaps in my knowledge framework about the Bible and helped make sense to me of how the world operates."

Speaking of the video sessions, she says, "Without it, there would have been no possibility for me to start seeking Christ and establish my own belief." Now, as a result of the welcoming friendship of her Christian friends and their faithful witness, she understands and believes the gospel.

What a testimony to the great opportunity we have to reach into the lives of international students and immigrants!

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### **1 John 3:1 NIV**

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

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# Spotlight on Germany


We often receive little tidbits of news out of Germany from our staff there. There are many “studies” happening around the country through multiple churches. The studies are essentially the German version of a Worldview Rethink course. Exciting things are happening, so here are a few short stories to give you a glimpse of the much bigger picture.



Yesterday I got a phone call from a man who started studies two years ago using *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. Just before Christmas, they finished another study and two couples got saved. (The two couples represented three different ethnicities—Russian, German and Sri Lankan—and three different religious backgrounds. Praise the Lord for His saving work!)

The man who called me will soon begin another two new studies: one in his church and one in a new church plant. I met with him yesterday and some others and helped them

see how they can continue with discipleship. An interesting thing they do is that after the lesson they always hand out *The Stranger* book lessons in an audio file format to each participant so that they can listen to it at home. Praise the Lord for new life!




Anja was taught through a Worldview Rethink course, along with her husband, Alvin, several years ago. Since then, she and Alvin have faithfully led numerous Bible studies using GoodSeed materials. At times, they've had up to a dozen in each course.

Anja sent the following testimony: "It is amazing what we experience here. I am experiencing this as a great privilege, that I can hold these courses for three years now. Afterwards, we are following up with discipleship. That is so wonderful! Women are getting saved and want to be baptized. Also two men from Alvin's course are now believers. That is so beautiful to see."

Anja and Alvin got started with teaching Bible studies when she invited ladies whose children attended the local Christian school, but weren't believers themselves. Since then, each time she finishes with a group, those within the group ask to bring their friends to learn about the Bible and a new group is born.

Praise the Lord for Anja and Alvin's faithful teaching of God's Word!



Darek, a European GoodSeed staff member, sent us an update about a woman who became a believer in one of his first studies.

Darek shared, “She is now already doing discipleship with a whole group of ladies, who all came to faith in our *Stranger* studies. Most of them are alone in their families who believe.”

Darek shared how this group of women occasionally does fundraisers to support other ministries. Recently, the group gave a generous gift to the local GoodSeed office.

Accompanying that gift was a letter which expressed: “We are full of joy that we have given that money to GoodSeed. After all, all of us met our loving Father with the help of the Bible courses of Franz and Darek. We now enjoy our right to be children of God and so we said to ourselves: ‘We want from time to time to say a little “Thank You” to those people who lovingly brought us on the right path.’”



In church today, I sat with new believers and was so full of joy seeing them serve [by raising funds for missions]. Then I realized that one of the new believing ladies brought her husband for the first time to church. He has a sister who found the Lord in our course one year ago. They had brought yet another of his sisters and her husband and children to church.

A few minutes later, I saw another lady who came to know Christ in the Slavic study. She was there with her husband, too.

A little while later, I saw Tadeas. He is now in the discipleship course. His wife left him two years ago and he fell into a deep hole. Alcohol, drugs, women, he lost his job, debts... God touched him at his lowest moment and he broke down and cried for help. His sister told him about our course and he came and his life turns around daily. Amazing to watch.

I went to my seat and was so thankful that the Lord gives us strength to do this work.



I just came home from our little discipleship group. Today Geneva told us that she has understood and believed in Jesus and trusts him as her Saviour. We are so thrilled.

She has gone through *The Stranger* study in a neighbouring church. Because they don't have the capacity to do a discipleship group, I offered to my friend to send them to us if they would like to.

This young lady has had a very hard life. She grew up with alcoholic parents, who were also deaf and dumb. Her mother died of alcohol early in her life. Her dad married again to a woman who also couldn't speak or hear. Then her father died of alcohol and a little later, the other woman died also.

Anyway, Geneva heard of the Bible course and went through it, but had a lot of fears and doubts and questions. The first time she came to our discipleship group, it just happened that the other participants couldn't come. So we talked for

two hours that night about the first course and basically summarized the whole message and shared the gospel with her again. She said today that when she went home that night, she couldn't stop thinking about it. It had become so clear to her and so she trusted in Jesus.

When I heard her life story, I couldn't help but feel deep compassion. We had the privilege to share about the one who makes all things new. *And he did!* Wonderful grace of Jesus! I praise him for that.

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**2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV**

*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*

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## Reaching out to an unbelieving housemate

**K**aoru learned about the upcoming Bible study at a local church. The elder explained that the course would be good for everyone: experienced Christians, new Christians, non-Christians and Christians who wanted to share the good news with their friends.

Her thoughts turned immediately to Bronwyn, her housemate. *Yes, I want to learn how to share the gospel with her,* her heart sang. So, Kaoru signed up for the course and dutifully attended it.

The course used the book *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. During the course, one leader read the commentary, while the second leader read the Scripture verses. They also showed video clips that helped explain the Bible's story. This way, the leaders explained, those attending the course were already practicing the teaching style so the participants could also lead a study on their own.

Kaoru had been in Australia only a short time on a working holiday visa. Searching for a place to rent, she ended up as housemates with Bronwyn, a local. As a believer, Kaoru also sought a local church where she could worship God with

other believers. “It’s pretty rare in Japan to be brought up in a Christian home,” she explains, “but I am from a Christian family and I myself have been a Christian for 15 years.”

When she completed the study, Kaoru wondered how she would go about sharing the gospel with Bronwyn. She didn’t think she could read the book aloud—her level of English wasn’t good enough. Moreover, she realized that Bronwyn wasn’t much of a reader. *How do I do this?*, she mused for a while.

Kaoru explored the GoodSeed website for ideas and was delighted to find the “Learn about the Bible” course which was essentially *The Stranger* videobook put online, free for anyone to watch and learn.

She invited Bronwyn to watch the video series together and that’s what they’ve been doing. Kaoru wrote to us: “I

**Kaoru wondered  
how she would  
go about sharing  
the gospel  
with Bronwyn.**

would appreciate if you prayed for us, especially for her to believe in Jesus as her Saviour.”

The Joshua Project estimates that only 2.2% of Japanese are professing Christians. As Kaoru shared, believers

in Christ are “pretty rare.” Yet here she was, one of the few Christians from her country, living overseas and taking the opportunity to cross culture and language barriers to reach others with the good news about Jesus Christ. May we all be encouraged by Kaoru’s example.



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**2 Corinthians 5:19-20 NIV**

*And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

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# Jesus has changed my life!

CODY'S STORY

Cody grew up in a house where God didn't really exist. He had great parents who taught him things like "don't cheat, don't lie, don't steal, show respect to others, respect your elders ..." However, the family never went to church. The name of God was never spoken. Though Cody endeavoured to live a respectable life, he was ignorant of the true Source of right and wrong.

Then Cody met Julia. It didn't take long before the two were married, and shortly after, Julia started a new job. She came home the first day and talked about how great everyone was at her new workplace. One person's name seemed to stand out in particular. Her name was Liz and, "Wow! She is so nice!" were Julia's words.

Liz began mentoring Julia at work and, after a while, wanted to get a small group together with Cody, Julia and a few others. The purpose would be to study the Bible. Cody's instant response was an adamant "No!"

Time went on but whenever Julia talked to her husband about the opportunity, he was still resistant to the idea. When she

asked why, Cody told her, “I don’t need to go to a Bible study or growth group or attend a church to have a relationship with God.” Looking back, Cody calls that “the biggest cop-out lie” he’s ever told!

Their back-and-forth continued for a while but finally, Cody gave in. He remembers the first time they joined the small group in Liz’s home.

“It was awesome. That first night, no one pressured me. I didn’t feel uncomfortable; everyone was really nice. We

**“I don’t need to go to a Bible study or attend church to have a relationship with God!”** had dinner and talked. They slowly eased me into the study, which was great.”

That night when Cody and Julia left, he turned to Julia and said, “Yeah, I can see myself doing this. Let’s do it.” So, they continued to meet.

The young couple even went to church with Liz and her husband a few times, but as Cody puts it, he “wasn’t really ‘feeling it’.” Even so, he found himself becoming hungry to know more.

One day, Liz texted Julia and invited them to try a different church they’d just learned about. Julia was hesitant. Her church background was in a very formal setting and this one would be quite different. Cody wasn’t sure either, but in the end, they both agreed to give it a try.

Cody told Julia, “Alright, we’re going to go. But I don’t want to sit in front. We’ll sit in back.”

Cody's hopes were quickly dashed as they entered the church, as apparently everyone had that same idea that day. When the two couples walked in, there was nothing available except in the front.

The pastor had been doing a series on fishermen in the Bible. Cody was quickly engrossed. "He hooked me," he smiles, "He had me on pins and needles." Cody looked over at Julia and saw she had her notepad out, quickly writing down notes.

"We were learning. It was awesome," says Cody. "We left and we agreed to go back the following week... I will never forget that sermon. The pastor spoke about how Peter denied he knew Jesus. He acted out the part of Peter as he spoke. The pastor moved through the days surrounding Jesus' death on the cross. He had me."

As Cody left that day, he turned to Julia and said, "This is our church. I'm learning. I like it."

Cody and Julia attended for another month, then signed up for the "Starting Point" class, designed to ground new attendees in the gospel. "We read the book *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. I thought I wouldn't be able to comprehend it, but that book is great. It makes it so easy to understand the Bible. It takes you on a journey."

**"I thought I wouldn't be able to comprehend it, but that book is great... It takes you on a journey."**

Cody shares how two graphics in the book particularly impacted him. One was a picture of a cross, bridging the chasm that exists between God and mankind. He also describes

a graphic that expresses how Jesus paid our debt of sin. “There’s nothing you can do and that really hit home. There is nothing—no good favours, helping this person, helping that one—nothing I do is going to make up the ultimate sacrifice.”

When the study finished, Cody found himself sitting alone at home. “I was sitting there, thinking about how Jesus has changed my life. Just in a short amount of time.”

**“Jesus has brought so much joy into my life and so much love.”** As he reflects on the year and a half that have passed since he became a believer, he makes a personal observation about himself, “I have noticed my heart has softened so much in the last year and a half. I used to not really care too much, but now I’m a big teddy bear. [Jesus] has brought so much joy into my life and so much love. I’m a better husband now than I was a year ago. I absolutely adore my wife. I love her more than anything besides Jesus.”

In wrapping up his testimony, Cody recalls something his pastor said recently. “Our pastor was talking about people being so caught up and worried... Then he stopped and looked and said, ‘The tomb is empty. The rest is just small stuff.’”

He continues, “I know now that Jesus is the Christ and he died for me and my sins. I am so thankful and there is nothing I can do to add to that.”

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**Ephesians 3:16-19 NIV**

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

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# Moving from a religion to a relationship

JULIA'S STORY

Julia grew up in a broken home where her father was verbally abusive. Her mother worked overtime to make up for his lack, trying to play the roles of both mother and father. She worked hard, tirelessly. And with the help of Julia's grandmother, she made sure that Julia and her brother were involved in church. They went to church every Sunday. They were baptized as babies, had their First Communion and went through Confirmation. Religion became a big part of Julia's youth. She found that she developed a "list mentality" when it came to religion--she knew there were things she had to do to check off a list that existed out there somewhere.

She explains, "I didn't necessarily understand the purpose of everything. I was just doing it because it was the norm."

While her experiences at church heavily influenced her upbringing, they also provided a stark contradiction to what she endured at home. Her father functioned almost constantly in a drug-induced haze. Her mother simply put up with it.

Julia found the situation both angering and embarrassing. "I put a lot of time and effort into excelling at academics and sports in

order to overcome the shame I felt about my home life. I cared too much about what other people thought, and so I threw myself into things that made me look better on the outside.”

Her commitment to school and sports left little time for religion. “I’ve always believed in God, but I never poured enough time into learning about it. I just did the things I needed to do to be a good church-going person.”

**“I just did the things I needed to do to be a good church-going person.”**

It wasn’t until a few years after Julia married her husband, Cody, that religion began to enter her life again.

One day, Julia was starting a new job and the discussion turned to how she needed a mentor to finish a Master’s degree she was pursuing. A woman standing nearby overheard the conversation and came over to offer herself as a mentor. Her name was Liz. Little did Julia know that their meetings would blossom into faith-based conversations.

“I didn’t know at the time that it was something I actually needed. Instead of an education mentor, it turned into a faith mentor,” Julia recalls.

It wasn’t long before Liz opened up her home to Julia and Cody and a few others to discuss religion. “At the time, I thought it was something I should do for Cody’s sake, as I was looking to the future. I wanted to have a family that went to church on Sundays and that sort of thing.” Since Cody had never attended church, Julia felt it was a prime opportunity for him to learn a little about God.

“I thought it was a situation where Cody needed to be introduced to God. I felt I already knew God and didn’t need to learn, but that he did.”

Julia sees two distinct turning points in her journey to Christ. The first was when Liz and her husband asked the young couple to visit a new church in the area with them. “We were a little hesitant. It was definitely out of our comfort zone. I was used to [a very different church environment] and Cody had never been to church. But I was glad we did go.”

Both Julia and Cody look back on that day as a great experience. They left church wanting more, hungry for the truth. After attending a few weeks, they signed up for a “Starting Point” class, designed to ground new attendees in the basics of the gospel and God’s Word. That became the second turning point for Julia.

**“That was when I realized what it meant to be a believer.”**

During that class, the pastor took the group through *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*. “That was when I realized what it meant to be a believer. That’s when I realized it wasn’t my good works that were going to get me into Heaven.”

There came a point in the study where Julia realized that in all her rush to push religion onto Cody, there was actually a need in her own life for a relationship with God that she’d never had. “I thought I had it, but I didn’t. This was actually my opportunity to open my eyes.” Julia came to realize “that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, that Jesus died on the cross and that he shed his blood for our sins. That relationship

component was the most important thing I needed to realize. Nothing that I can do on this earth is going to add to the sacrifice that Jesus made.”

Through *The Stranger* study and with the help of Julia’s pastor, the young couple opened up to God. “We found Christ together,” Julia states simply.

Since then, the couple has continued at the church, growing and rejoicing in their newfound faith and enjoying fellowship with other believers. Tears well up in Julia’s eyes with these words, “My heart belongs here. I could just scream with joy that Cody and I found a church. A year ago, I never thought we would be here, but here we are.”

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**Galatians 3:26-27 NIV**

*So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

---



# You don't have to be a rocket scientist to do this!

When Barry called the GoodSeed office to order resources, he asked if he could pop in for a visit. "I want to share with you what I've been doing since the TERM Seminar," he said.

A short time later, he dropped by at lunch time. He had driven for over two hours but was eager to tell his story. Barry was a busy businessman, but he also had a big heart for evangelism. He had been looking for a simple way to share the gospel, but struggled to find the time to train himself to be an effective teacher. However, after attending TERM, he realized that the Dynamic Leading-Reading-Modelling method that had been taught was something he could do.

"The first impact [of the seminar] was how it helped me. I've been a Christian for many years but never had seen it put together like this. The whole concept of atonement, the tabernacle, Adam and Eve, the covering, all coming together is remarkable," Barry shared with the GoodSeed staff around the lunch table.

He went on to say that, as he sat through the three days of TERM, his level of enthusiasm grew. He saw how easy it was

to lead a group with the leader's guide and after the seminar wrapped up, he asked to buy the curriculum.

Unfortunately at that time, the *By This Name* leader's guide had not yet gone to press. So he waited. And waited. In the

meantime, he bought copies of *By This Name* to give to others. When his first case of books arrived at his doorstep, he pulled them out of the box and started handing them out. He ran out before long. When he called to order more books, it happened that

our proof copy of the *By This Name* leader's guide had just arrived that day. When he learned that there was a physical copy in the office he asked, "Can I buy that one?"

Our office staff sold him the one copy we had. When he received it, Barry wasted no time in organizing groups to teach.

His first group was in the home of a couple. Though they were very elderly, they were just babes in the Lord. Barry used the leader's guide while the husband and wife had the books and workbooks. They said to him, "This has come exactly at the right time in our lives when we have questions." Between the weekly group sessions, the couple faithfully re-read the sections that Barry had taught and did the workbook questions. From their answers, Barry could gauge how well they were tracking along in the study.

"They finally understood the difference between a sinner and a helpless sinner," he told us.

As the study went along, Greg, another elderly believer, joined the couple. He watched how Barry led because he wanted to lead a group, too. He saw how Barry read the commentary in the book while the couple read the Scripture verses. What Barry had learned at TERM, he was modelling for Greg.

While this first group was ongoing, Barry started another study, this time in a nursing home. One of the participants was Steven. He was a young man who, in state of depression, had tried to kill himself but failed. Now he was a paraplegic, confined to a wheelchair. Though he had been a violent, hostile man, when he became a believer his life changed a lot. Still, his knowledge of God was very limited and he was eager to learn through Barry's study. Joining Steven was Lizzie, a lady also in a wheelchair. As Barry made his way through the book, he came to the fact that everyone was a helpless sinner.

**Barry told them,  
"Just wait, there's  
good news coming!"**

Steven lamented, "We're all sunk." Lizzie added, "That is terrible news!"

Barry told them, "Just wait, there's good news coming!"

In the past, he might have rushed to explain what Jesus did on the cross, but now he knew better than to jump ahead in the narrative. He would be patient, follow the course of the book, and let the Holy Spirit do the work in Steven's and Lizzie's hearts.

As if those two groups didn't keep him busy enough, Barry's pastor asked if he could lead an adult Sunday school class

through Worldview Rethink. Barry reluctantly agreed—not because he didn’t want to, but he was concerned about the time constraints of a Sunday morning class. But he did his best and there were an average of 20 adults who attended each week. What was interesting was that five of them attended the study with their own copies of the leader’s guide, as each

**“...I don’t have to be anyone special. I can just show up and ... lead a group.”**

one of them had a desire to lead their own groups in the future. Simply by watching Barry teach, they easily learned how to take the material and teach their own groups. This is multiplication at its best!

Three different groups with three very different groups of people. This was keeping Barry very busy, but he was thrilled at these opportunities to share the good news.

As the GoodSeed staff ate their lunches, Barry shared, “I’d have to say that you don’t have to be a rocket scientist in evangelism to be able to do this!”

He pointed at the *By This Name* leader’s guide. “With this, I feel that I don’t have to be anyone special. I can just show up and read and lead a group.”

Barry’s testimony was a big encouragement for us. The curriculum was created for ordinary believers with a desire to share the gospel of Jesus Christ but who were struggling to find a way that was simple, doable, and most importantly, accurate. We are thankful to God for Barry and that he has found the Worldview Rethink curriculum so helpful. It is our



prayer that God will continue to use him, not only to share the good news, but to train others to lead as well.

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**Proverbs 11:30 NKJV**

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.*

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# From street beggar to Bible school hallways

If you met Chris today, you'd see a clean-cut, good-looking fellow. He's an intelligent man with a great ability to communicate. However, the man today bears little resemblance to the Chris you might have encountered a couple years ago.

Chris grew up as a city boy. His parents weren't believers. When he was just a toddler, his father left home due to addiction struggles. From a young age, Chris battled with feelings of being abandoned and unwanted. He felt like a total misfit wherever he was.

In middle school, Chris began to search for a sense of identity. He tried hanging out with different groups until he found a crowd with which he felt comfortable. With his new friends, he began experimenting with alcohol and drugs. The first time he got drunk, he remembers how it provided an escape. He liked the feeling, and so pursued the diversion from life's problems.

As Chris moved into high school, he began trying new substances at every opportunity. Whenever he ran into another stress in life, he turned to drugs and alcohol to cope.

Of course, there were consequences. His grades suffered. His relationship with his mother and step-father faltered. His general demeanour and attitude took a turn for the worse.

Out of high school, he continued what he knew best. By the time he was in his mid-20s, though he was working hard and lived on his own, he was no more mature. He had a party

**“[The longing] was insatiable.** lifestyle and doggedly pursued any and everything he could find to try to fill the emptiness in his life.

**I could never fill that void.”** However, those external trappings never met the need of his heart. “[The longing] was insatiable. I could never fill that void. So I used drugs and alcohol to mask it,” he shares.

Then Chris received a shock. He learned that his girlfriend was pregnant. He knew he wasn’t ready. But, the couple agreed that they would go ahead and have the baby and raise their child together. Chris figured it would be a good chance for him to grow up and find a purpose in life—something to push and drive him. He felt that if he could have the “white picket fence, house and minivan,” the void would be filled and he wouldn’t have to rely on his old habits anymore.

While his intentions were sincere, it didn’t take long for him to realize he was in over his head.

Chris recalls well when his daughter was born. “It was the best day ever!” But by the time she was six months old, he began to feel the full weight of the responsibility for this little life.

By then it was winter. Heat and electricity were being cut

because he hadn't been paying the bills. It wasn't that he didn't have the finances. He was working and had a good income. But that money had gone to drugs and booze and there wasn't much left over for the necessities of life.

Chris' girlfriend could see he was slipping and that he still had too many problems to be a suitable father. She asked him to go to a treatment centre.

Thus began a cycle of halfhearted attempts to leave his lifestyle behind. While he desired to change for the sake of his family, he loved the euphoria that the drugs and alcohol gave him and he couldn't resist the pull.

Between various attempts to get his life together, he pursued even more risky behaviour.

Finally, he hit a new low when he lost his job. His car was repossessed and he struggled to merely survive. His expensive

drug habit required hundreds of dollars a week. In desperation, he agreed to the suggestion of an acquaintance: beg by the side of the road.

His friend promised that it was a way he could make lots of money quickly and he soon found that his friend was right. But, as Chris puts it, "People say, 'Easy money comes at a high cost,' and that was true for me."

He goes on, "Panhandling scraped away the last little will I had to live. It took my dignity. It brought me very low."

**... he desired to change for the sake of his family, but he loved the feeling drugs and alcohol gave him ...**

Because Chris was begging in the same city where he grew up, word began to get around. People that he knew—family, high school friends, teachers, former co-workers—all knew the new lows to which he'd fallen. He'd become a big source of embarrassment for his family.

**“My entire life I’d been digging myself into a hole.”** It was almost Christmas when things began to change. “During my entire life I’d been digging myself into a hole. I’d just been digging and digging and digging.” As Chris put it, “When you live that lifestyle for so long, you start doing things that are far outside of your moral compass, but it seems normal because everyone else around you is doing it.”

Chris began to gain a sense of how low he'd come. It was December 21, 2015. “On that day, I finally hit a rock and that Rock is the new foundation that I’m now building my life on. That Rock is God.”

That day, the mother of his daughter made a point of locating Chris. He was by the highway again. As she approached, Chris’ heart dropped. She was holding up her cell phone towards him and speaking candidly, “Do you want to see what you look like right now? Do you want to see how low you’ve come? Do you want me to show your daughter this video when she’s attending your funeral? You need to go get help!”

Then came the words that made all the difference: “I’m offering you my hand in grace and mercy for you to have a chance to go get some help.”

Reluctantly, Chris agreed to pursue help once again. Looking back, he believes that God used his former girlfriend as an instrument to accomplish what the Lord wanted to do in this needy life. Chris says, "Other than my daughter, there was no one else on earth I would have listened to. I truly believe God knew that."

Chris immediately went to a nearby detox centre. It was a place he could safely go and withdraw from his substance abuse while being medically supervised.

Shortly after Chris arrived, another young man was dropped off. This young man had grown up in a good Christian home. As the mother was about to leave, she handed her son a book and said, "Son, I really think you should read this while you're in here."

After just a couple hours, the two men began talking and sharing stories. The young man told Chris about the book his mom had given him. Chris asked to see it, so the young man retrieved the book and handed it to him. "Why don't you just keep it for a few days and read it?"

... he began to gain a sense of how low he'd actually fallen.

Chris did just that and began to read the book, *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*.

At the time, Chris was completely ignorant of Christianity and the Bible. What little he knew, he had gleaned from Hollywood.

As Chris worked through the book, he says it "so easily and plainly explained the major events in the Bible. It used illustrations and charts and pictures. It really opened my eyes

as to why Jesus Christ died on the cross. It showed me very clearly that Jesus had bridged the gap between myself and God and that I was a helpless sinner without him.

He continues, "I'm not a huge reader by any means, especially because of the kind of life that I came from, but I just couldn't put the book down."

The following week, he was invited to go to church. By then, he was almost done with the book. As he sat in the pew that morning, he felt as though the pastor was speaking directly to him.

**"It really opened my eyes as to why Jesus Christ died on the cross."**

He became very emotional and started to cry. Afterward, upon the invitation of the pastor, Chris went up to speak to the pastor and elders who then prayed for him.

"At that point," Chris says, "I no longer doubted who had paid my sin-debt. Right then, Jesus became my Saviour. I had no doubt in my mind about what he did for me."

Later, as he walked out of the church, he realized he had a bounce in his step. "That void in my stomach—in my soul—that I'd had my whole life was filled. To tell you the truth, I kind of felt high," Chris says with a wry grin.

Since then, Chris has joined a church and been baptized. Godly Christian men have surrounded him and guided him as new believer.

More recently, Chris began attending Bible school. Initially, his response to the idea of Bible school was skepticism—he



was 31, had a daughter and had no money. But one mentor encouraged him: "Anything is possible with Christ."

At the time of this writing, Chris is completing his first year of Bible school. He now lives a life of dignity and respect. As he looks to the future, he hopes to gain his family back. And as he considers his past, he envisions using the lessons of his past to help other similarly troubled young people.

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**Isaiah 41:17 ESV**

*When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none,  
and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will  
answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them.*

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## 20th anniversary of *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*

It's amazing the sort of impact one book can have. Twenty years ago, in 1997, the book *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus* was published. At the time, author John R. Cross and the men working with him had no idea that it would be the catalyst for a global ministry and how many people would come to faith in Christ through it. It was just one book with a simple message: a straightforward, systematic presentation of the gospel from creation to the cross.

The writing of *The Stranger* was drawn from decades of missionary experience of those working among tribal people in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. These tribes, previously unevangelised and ignorant of the Bible's message, responded well to a chronological presentation of the gospel. So well, in fact, that whole villages were putting their faith in Christ, without the age-old problems of syncretism and "rice Christians." When the Bible was presented from creation to Christ, it made profound sense. The people would understand and believe. Lives were transformed.

But was it only tribal groups who responded so well to the creation-to-Christ method? What about the Western world?

As John and his colleagues interacted with people back home in North America and around the world, they realized that some of these people were just as ignorant of the Bible as the tribal people. They knew nothing about God. They didn't understand who Jesus was and why he came. We live, for the most part, in a post-Christian culture.



*The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus* was, in a sense, an experiment. It was a book that used the same method that had proven so effective with tribal groups—a chronological approach to explaining the gospel—except this time for the Western world. It was designed so that it could be given away or used to guide people to a clear understanding of the Bible. But would it be relevant and effective?

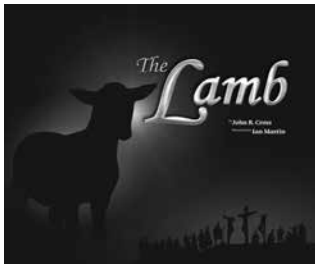
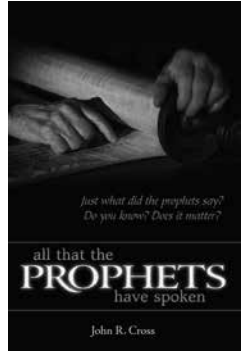
Within weeks of *The Stranger's* release, requests came from all over the world: “Can we have a German translation? Or how about French? Do you have an audiobook version?”

Suddenly the corner of a basement wasn't big enough to handle the demands. Just a few men and their wives could not handle the requests for translation and world distribution. Thus, GoodSeed International was formed.

In the last 20 years, GoodSeed has grown to be an international ministry with six offices around the world and over 60 full-time staff, volunteers and representatives. We now have audio and video resources, as well as a comprehensive curriculum. The books and studies are being used in

homes, churches, kids clubs, VBS, camps, prison ministries, community outreaches, rehab programs, and Bible colleges. We have books translated and published in 26 different languages, with dozens of others in different stages of translation and checking.

*The Stranger* is no longer our only, or even primary, resource. In 2001, *All that the Prophets have Spoken* was



published to address those with an Islamic worldview. That same year, *The Lamb*, our book for children, was released. In 2007, *By This Name* was published to address the Eastern, post-modern worldview, which includes those from an atheistic

or agnostic background. And then in 2009 and 2014 respectively, our mass distribution titles *What are Christmas and Easter All About?* and *The Story That Matters* were published.

Each of these books follows the same structure as *The Stranger*. All are chronological, systematic presentations of the gospel, tailored carefully for the different worldviews, backgrounds and belief systems of the individual reader.



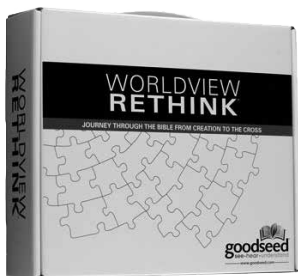
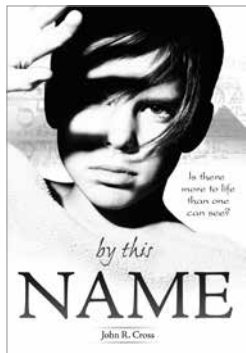
Hundreds of Scripture verses are incorporated into each book and over 1,500 Scripture verses are in *By This Name* alone. This way, the reader is constantly interacting with the Bible and getting direct exposure to its life-giving message.

Our TERM Seminars® (training in evangelism and discipleship) are held yearly across Canada and the United States. Hundreds of participants have had the opportunity to be strengthened in their faith and given tools, training and courage for their evangelistic efforts. We have partnered with churches to equip missionaries, ministry leaders and laypeople for outreach and discipleship.

We receive weekly, sometimes daily, stories and testimonies of how people from all around the world have come to faith in Christ through reading the books or being guided through the Worldview Rethink courses. And it is not only unbelievers who have been impacted. Christians too

have been strengthened in their understanding and faith by going through GoodSeed's resources.

And the story is far from over. New frontiers of partnerships and opportunities are opening on many fronts—with multiple language groups in India, with



the First Nations people of Canada, among others. Wisdom is needed as we determine how and where to channel our resources. Your ongoing prayers mean everything to us as we seek to make a clear gospel known.

Twenty years. Yes, it is amazing the sort of impact one book can have. But ultimately, it isn't the book at all. It also isn't any of us—writers, teachers, staff, volunteers or those who give and guide through the materials. The impact and power lies in the gospel itself. It is that which changes lives. It is God who is doing the work, bringing people to understanding and faith. We just have the privilege of participating in bringing him glory.

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**Romans 1:16 ESV**

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

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# About GoodSeed

GoodSeed® is a not-for-profit organization that exists to clearly explain the message of the Bible in as many languages as we can. We invite you to contact us if you are interested in ongoing projects or translations.

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## I have a story to tell...

At GoodSeed, we believe God saves and transforms people's lives as they clearly understand and believe the gospel.

Every day we receive stories from believers, skeptics, scholars, and newcomers alike who were invited by someone to take a journey through the storyline of Scripture. The Holy Spirit brought new realizations of God's holiness, sin's devastation, Jesus's amazing provision, and how trusting God changes everything.

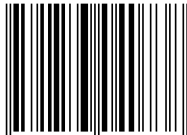
The words of Paul still ring true,

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..."

*(Romans 1:16)*

As you read Fieldnotes, praise God for how He continues to save and transform people by His power, for His glory!

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