

The Climbing Way

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF CLIMBING FOR CHRIST

VOLUME 22 /AUTUMN 2011



Rainbow over Tacadang: Fulfilling promises. (Photo by Arlene Bolante)

A heart for mountain people

By Ace Concordia, Climbing For Christ Philippines

“Let’s go home!”

These were the words I forcefully said to my best friend Jhun Hacbang in the midst of my physical weakness and discouragement on the very first exploratory climb to Tacadang in the mountains of Kibungan. I did not want to take another step forward; my courage had already left me. I was on the border of desperation and defeat. Only when my friend Jhun said: “Just a little bit more, bro, we’re almost home,” did I find new

resolve to continue. The thought of returning to my family and the normalcy of my life was the cold water I needed to push me on. To date it is still the most difficult climb I have known in the history of C4C Philippines.

I have made eight climbs to the mountains of Kibungan, and have tackled more challenging routes, but

I sometimes look back to that first climb and wonder: why it was the most difficult?

Philippines

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We are sent to mountainous areas of the world to deliver the Gospel where other missionaries cannot or will not go.

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Members of Climbing For Christ agree that we are called to:

- Bring praise, honor and glory to God — the Creator of all things, including the mountains we love — and to our Redeemer, His beloved Son.
- Inspire believers to achieve greater spiritual and physical heights in this world.
- Introduce the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, to those living in or visiting mountainous areas who don't know Him personally in a new, exciting and everlasting way.

To join Climbing For Christ, visit www.climbingforchrist.org/Default.aspx?tabid=146

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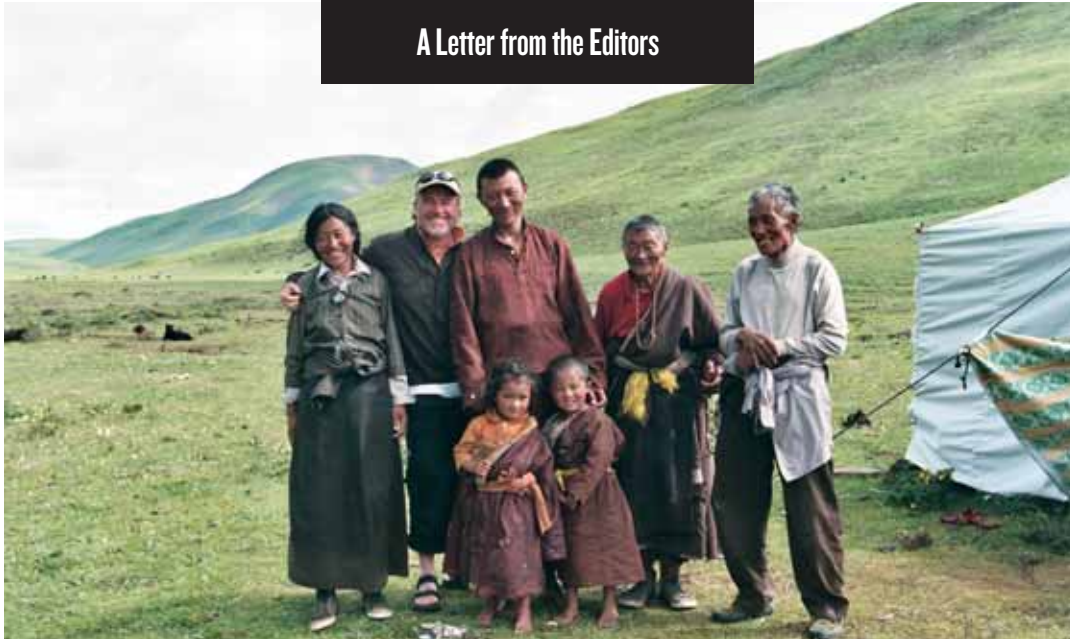
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"Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does."

— 1 Chronicles 16:24 (NLT)



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Gary Fallesen with a nomadic family in the middle of somewhere.

Finding lost sheep

By Elaine and Gary Fallesen
Climbing For Christ

The cost seems great. About \$3,000 USD per person to fly, drive and trek to an ends-of-the-earth location where no other missionary is working. Multiply that times three for the number of North Americans making this journey. Then add the monthly support provided to a national serving as our missionary there. That's roughly \$15,000 USD this year for one mission.

Plus the invaluable time each person is giving.

All of this to reach a place where one or two souls might be inching toward salvation?

It sometimes gives us pause to think: Is it worth it? [Read Brandy Everts' story "Only God makes things grow" on page 4 for one such testimony.]

Jesus told His disciples a parable, which was recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. "What do you think?" Jesus says in Matthew 18:12-13. "If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off."

In Luke 15:3-7, our Lord says: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

God has made it very clear that each and every soul is important to Him. At what price? The greatest. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for one and all.

Climbing For Christ should be willing to give ALL for ONE. Not to mention to give our all for The One — our Creator, Sustainer, Sender. The One we glorify.

In "A View," written for *The Climbing Way* (Volume 6, Winter 2006-2007) after Mission: Haiti 2006, Gary mused: "One person can make a difference in another person's life. But only if we heed the Spirit's leading and answer the call. It is not us, after all, who make the difference. This is not about the power of one. This is about the power of the One and Only."

Or as the Christian rock band Jars of Clay sang in "Call My Name":

"When I hear you call my name
"Send me to the edge of the earth
"Show me what a life is worth
"When I hear you call my name."

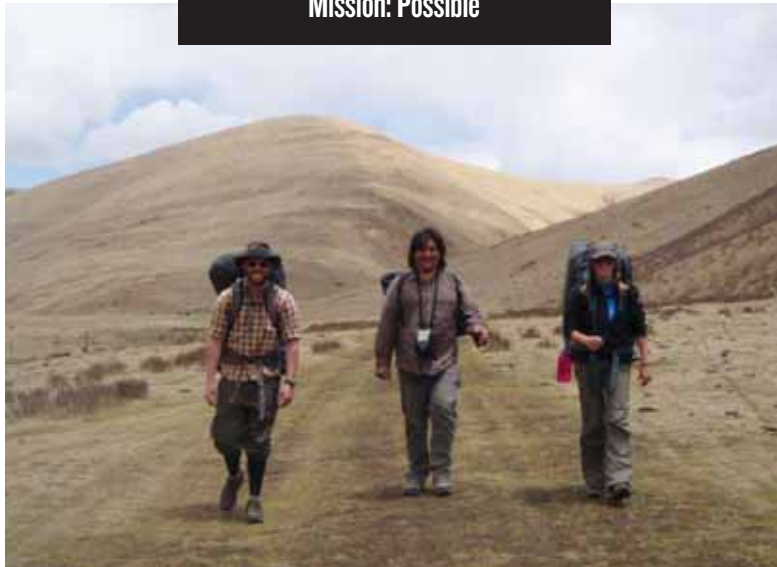
God calls us. He sends us. We go to the ends of the earth, where we find lost sheep. There are millions of them out there. They are wandering

from the Philippines to Peru [see our stories on Mission: Philippines and Mission: Peru on pages 1 and 10, respectively]. Some follow Islam [see "A growing opportunity" by Climbing For Christ spiritual coordinator Jordan Rowley on page 16].

There is no way to put a price tag on one sheep. Not in money or time. Jesus gave His all. Followers of Christ — climbing or not — should be willing to do the same. †

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Mike Wall, left, and Brandy Everts trek into a high-altitude valley with our indigenous missionary “Frank.” (Photo by Rachel Beckham-Wall)

‘Only God makes things grow’

By Brandy Everts, Climbing For Christ Canada

With great expectation, our dedicated team of four anxiously awaited the end of the grueling five days of travel from our homes to our destination in the valley. How would God reveal His glory to these nomadic people? How would He build on the previous trips to this area? What had He done in their hearts since we had been there last?

We were entering the unknown and trusting that God would again provide and protect. Mission: Possible 6 was about to unfold.

Even though many of our team members already had relationships with our friends in the valley, we were struck with the frustration of not being able to speak their dialect. Are we going to make a difference here when our cultures are worlds apart? We can't share our hearts when we can't speak the language. It is such a long, long way to get here, is it worth it? Should we just send our money and support our missionary? Maybe that would be a better use of our resources. Lord, we surrender our all.

When we arrived in the valley and set up camp for the first few nights, we watched our crippled monk friend walk down the hill and cross the river with his niece and nephew. When visiting with the family our team was encouraged, as it was evident that our friend's health was improving. His limp was less prominent and his speech, which was only grunts in the past, had graduated to obvious efforts of word formation.

The family still longs to see the crippled monk fully healed. His disgruntled father expressed that he was less than impressed with the higher Buddhist monks because they could not heal his son.

Before leaving the valley our team longed for an opportunity to lay hands and pray for Jesus to totally restore this crippled monk's health. Unfortunately, rumors were being spread that “we had come to convert the family,” and certain members of the family did not feel comfortable with us praying for our friend. So we had to honor the situation and step back, allowing for God's future timing.

We began to notice an encouraging change as we moved further into the valley. During a 7½-hour hike of 20 kilometers (more than 12 miles) at an elevation of 14,000 to 15,000 feet, we began to be stopped by people who were going about their daily duties. Some were en route to the nearest town on their motor bikes to sell caterpillars, roots that are in high demand as a natural medicine throughout that part of the world. Others were families going to gather caterpillars in the hills. Still others were children and their families inviting us in for tea and a rest before carrying on our journey.

The scenario was consistent with every group of people that would stop and talk to us. Every group would ask “Frank,” the English name we call our translator: “Where are you going? What are you doing here?” Then they would tell us that they remembered us from previous trips.

Continued on page 5



A nomadic home. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

Frank would joke around with us and say, “Everyone remembers you — you are like superstars here!”

We would think: “Maybe Jesus Christ Superstars. Without Him, we are nothing.”

We found it interesting how many people remembered us, when we couldn’t remember them.

In our devotion time, we again discussed whether it was important for Climbing For Christ to continue making these trips. Or would it be better for us to use our resources to support Frank, because he knows the language and the culture and seems so much more effective?

God continued to speak to us, showing us that it is important for us to just show up and that He will do the work.

“So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.”
– 1 Corinthians 3:7 (NIV)

We unanimously agreed that we would continue to be obedient to His calling in this valley. Not only is our presence a testimony to Jesus and His faithful love as we continue to return to the area, but it is also an encouragement to Frank that he is not alone out on the battlefield.

In this large nomadic valley — with families spread widely — it was interesting to discover that their primitive, but very effective communication system included Frank’s passionate sharing of the Gospel and the love of Christ. As questions were asked, and Frank answered, the subsequent months would buzz with communication throughout the valley, as this nomadic peoples group would ponder and talk amongst each other about this foreign God and how He is different from the Dalai Lama.

When arriving at another local friend’s house, we were welcomed with open arms as excited children ran around, not able to contain their feelings as they once

again saw their unexpected visitors. The next day we played with the children while Frank and our friend went to find caterpillars.

When they returned, Frank was ecstatic and wanted to talk to us right away. Our nomadic friend proclaimed that “Jesus Christ is real and that He does not want to follow Tibetan Buddhism anymore!”

He said that he had listened to the radio that we had given him in 2009, enabling him to listen to a Christian program broadcast from a neighboring country. He then read the Bible as

well as the discipleship package that we had prepared for him and others in the valley. With these tools he had made a decision: “Yes, Jesus Christ is real!”

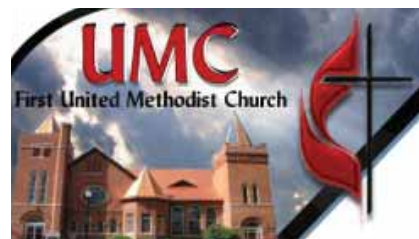
He continued to tell Frank that due to the

persecution of Christians, he was concerned for the safety of his eight children and all his grandchildren. Frank was able to encourage him as he shared his own similar testimony about how he also was ostracized from his family and village, but because he knew that the Gospel was true, he was willing to put it all in the hands of Jesus.

This was affirmation that we should continue to go back to the valley. We will continue to visit our nomadic friends, explore more of the valley, and spread the Truth of His love for this unreached people group. We are planning Mission: Possible 7. †

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

– Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)



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Climbing For Christ Philippines coordinator Ace Concordia makes friends with children in Tacadang. (Photo by Rodel O. Talde)

I realize that it wasn't the terrain or the bad weather that wore me down. Nor was it the distance or the danger. During that time in 2008, C4C Philippines was a ministry being born. The president of Climbing For Christ, Gary Fallesen, was coming from the United States to visit and see our mission fields. The problem was we didn't have one.

With the help of friends from another mission organization I came to know of a remote village in the mountains of Kibungan called Tacadang. Very few went there they told us, even most locals of Kibungan's town proper have never been there.

So a two-man exploratory team consisting of Jhun and I set off to find this place. We had done what we could to prepare for the climb: packed our gear, cooked our meals, and hired a guide. But on the first

day of reaching Tacadang, after an almost 12-hour climb, I was convinced I would never return there. I even doubted if I would continue on as a member of C4C. I felt unqualified in all aspects to become part of C4C. Soaking wet, tired, and discouraged, I was telling myself that I couldn't do this. Maybe I was the wrong person for this great challenge.

As I think about that day now, I realize that I hadn't done all the right preparations to be part of Climbing For Christ. We will always fall short no matter how ready we think we are for the task, because only God can prepare someone for the task that He himself has set. On our own we will never be ready for the tasks He has placed before us. Only He knows what's needed to accomplish the mission. He knew that despite my

Continued on page 7

Mission: Philippines 2012



Entering Les-eng. (Photo by Rodel O. Talde)

We invite you to help C4C Philippines to fulfill its promise of returning to bring the light and love of Jesus Christ to the people of Kibungan, a mountainous municipality in the province of Benguet on the northern island of Luzon.

Join us in 2012 as we prepare for **three mission climbs** to the remote villages of Dalipey, Tacadang, Les-eng, and Badeo.

- **Dalipey (Feb. 8-13, 2012)**
- **Tacadang and Les-eng (June 7-14, 2012)**
- **Badeo (Oct. 5-8, 2012)**

Estimated cost: US\$75 per person in-country. This does not include airfare to/from Manila, Philippines and a financial gift to support the work of Mission: Philippines in Kibungan.

E-mail info@ClimbingForChrist.org to request a mission application.

skills, my heart was not ready. I was not prepared to accept the great responsibility and calling to be Climbing For Christ. He knew this.

The climb was difficult because I was climbing with the wrong heart. That is why He had to break me down. He had to make the climb difficult to crush my heart. That way He could give me a new one.

After trekking out of Tacadang, I struggled with the thought of returning. I didn't want to go back. But a week later I opened my wallet to discover small pieces of paper that suddenly reminded me of the people of Tacadang. The pieces of paper were given to me by shy women who wrote down a request for us to bring basic school supplies to help their children in the event we decided to return. At that moment I was totally broken. God showed me my own selfishness, my cowardice, and my lack of faith. I had finally stopped wrestling with God.

I have learned that when God changes your heart, that is the beginning of the change of your life. But He often has to break down our old heart first — the heart that desires nothing but to gratify itself — to become a heart that longs only to serve others.

He has given me a new heart; one that calls Kibungan home, and its people my brethren. It is a heart that becomes restless and eager to return to the mountains of Kibungan.

To be broken down is not easy. It is the most trying time in a Christian's life. But it is also the turning point for every Christian. He changed a heart that only beat for me into a heart for the people of the mountains. †



Mission: Philippines ministers in Kibungan, which is found to the northeast of Baguio on the northern Philippine island of Luzon.

“Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

– Psalm 51:9-11 (NIV)





The rice fields of Les-eng, above (photographed by Kolbel Acquiapat); towering waterfalls, below left (photographed by Ace Concordia), and the Climbing For Christ Philippines mission team jumping for joy in Tacadang (photographed by Rodel O. Talde).



Philippines

Climbing For Christ has continued to fulfill its promise to the people of Kibungan through eight mission climbs. More than anything, we fulfill our promises because we see that God fulfills His promises to us.

God has given His commitment by sacrificing His son. What He needs are those who will commit to Him and His mission.





Handing out school supplies to children, left (photo by Rodel O. Talde), and doing medical checkups (photo by Kolbel Acquiapat) are two of the ways physical needs are met.

“But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’...”

— Matthew 5:34-37 (NIV)

Backpacking through Kibungan. (Photo by Ace Concordia)





Peru

Showing up and watching Him work

By Gary Fallesen
Climbing For Christ president

Justin Rowley offers the Word of God to a man in the village of Cajapampa. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

Justin Rowley spoke to his church family after returning from our inaugural Mission: Peru in May. He thanked them for their prayers. “There was no opposition and every step was ordained due largely to prayers from the home front,” he said.

We had been covered in a commissioning prayer by my pastor, Larry Stojkovic, who shared these words from Acts 28:31: *“Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

We went from village to village in the Cordillera Blanca mountains of central Peru preaching and teaching. With no obstacles, answering divine appointments set for us by the One who did the sending.

“I kept finding myself being broken over and over for each individual we had the privilege of ministering to,” recalled Jordan Rowley, Climbing For Christ’s spiritual coordinator. “My heart was touched by God in a new way.”

Two brothers (Justin and Jordan Rowley) along with a son and his father (Jesse Fallesen and me) traveled from Rochester, NY, USA to Huaraz, Peru to connect with the rest of our team. They included the men who would be named co-coordinators of Climbing For Christ Peru at the end of this trip, evangelist Jaime Servat and mountain guide Edwin Milla.

Blood relations were brought together with brothers in Christ; all of us washed by the blood of the Savior, Jesus Christ, Whom we desire to share.

“Everything went real well,” Jesse Fallesen said. “It was a special team; special because it was more like

a family. It allowed us to be comfortable with each other and made it easier to cope with the unknown of every day.”

Mission: Peru was a survey mission, which is always an entry way into new territory. Surveys — like most

missions into the mountains — usually are met with great spiritual opposition. The mountains are the enemy’s stronghold because, often times, there is only darkness in the mountains. Few go there in the name of Jesus Christ.

But in Peru our team was greeted with pleasant surprises. We realized there is much work to be done in these villages (and beyond), but the harvest is ripe. The

church is alive and growing in the Cordillera Blanca. The light of Jesus is shining.

Seeing this taught Jordan “mainly to show up and watch Him, allow Him to work.”

Continued on page 11

Helping Hands

Please support the work God is doing through Climbing For Christ in the mountains of Peru with prayer and financial support. Send donations to Climbing For Christ at P.O. Box 16290, Rochester, NY 14616-0290 USA.

To view a video about Mission: Peru and Alison visit <http://www.climbingforchrist.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3006>



Trekking toward Nevado Huascarán, the highest mountain in Peru. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)



Jesse Fallesen with Alison, a 9-year-old girl from the village of Chalhua who befriended our mission team. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

Our team showed up in Chalhua, a dirt-poor village located at 11,900 feet (3,625 meters), during the second week of the mission. We were introduced to a pastor whose church is outgrowing her house. She showed us a field next door. It had been plowed as if waiting to be planted. But there were no plans to grow vegetables — only the opportunity to build a church.

We set out from this place to evangelize the village. To see what God would do.

We divided into two groups and set out in opposite directions. Jesse recalls what happened next:

“When we were evangelizing in one of the villages we were walking through, we stumbled across someone’s house. We were walking with some kids and they stopped for a minute. We met a girl named Alison. Right away we knew we had a special connection with this girl.

“Her grandmother came out (of their house) and gave us some beans and was feeding us. We were sharing with her. We ended up giving (Alison) a New Testament in Spanish and some tracts.

“After we left her house we felt like we should introduce the rest of the team, so we brought Jordan and Justin back over. Jaime was translating for us. We were able to communicate some more and learn about who she was and about her family. It really touched our hearts. We definitely broke down for that little girl. She hasn’t seen her mother in a few years — we’re trying to get them reunited. It was real special meeting her.

“God definitely put her in our path. I don’t know when the last time I cried was, but this was definitely a good sob for me.”

Alison was a 9-year-old in the care of her maternal grandparents, a Christian grandmother and an alcoholic grandfather. Her mother, Taina, had been hospitalized for epilepsy treatment three years

earlier in the distant capital of Lima. Alison had not seen her since.

After Taina was hospitalized, Alison was deserted by her father.

Shortly after our short-term team returned to the States, Jaime went to Lima to locate Alison’s mother. We discovered that she was no longer in the hospital, but working on a farm about one hour north of Lima near Huaral City. Alison’s mother was supposed to be on an outpatient treatment for her epilepsy. However, we learned, she could not afford to continue treatments.

Jaime began to work on making arrangements to reunite this family. We then learned that Alison’s father had died, possibly from alcoholism, in a suburb of Lima.

This news was shared with Jaime when he went back to Chalhua in July. Alison’s grandmother had just been told.

“I went out of the house to pray and Alison appeared (some distance) away from me,” Jaime said. “I called to her and she came running, so happy. She told

me, ‘Brother Jaime, you are my daddy,’ and she invited me to lunch with her family.

“I was teaching her about Jesus the Lord. It was a special time to see Alison with much hunger for Him.”

We continue to pray that God will use us to feed that hunger — in young Alison and in many others living in the mountain villages of Peru’s Cordillera Blanca. We ask that we would be able to do so without hindrance. We have seen this prayer answered before. As Justin Rowley told his church family, “Everything (about Mission: Peru) came together

seamlessly and I had a peace about it.” †



The mission team went into the Cordillera Blanca range of the Western Andes near the peak Nevado Huascarán, located on the map.

Catholic churches often dominate squares in dirt-poor villages in the Cordillera Blanca. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)



'God loves a cheerful giver'

The Board of Directors and staff of Climbing For Christ thank those who have answered the call to financially support His ministry. In 2010, C4C received US\$159,392 to do His work.

We know that "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). We also know "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:34).

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy to instruct the church "to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

It is our prayer that many of our brothers and sisters in Christ will realize that God wants them to give back some of what He has given them for His purpose. Climbing For Christ serves His purposes at the ends of the earth. The following have recognized this and for that we are eternally grateful.

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From Him, through Him, for Him

Climbing For Christ founding president Gary Fallesen welcomed the Board of Directors to the eighth ANNUAL MEETING on Aug. 13 in suburban Chicago, IL, USA by referencing **Proverbs 16:9** – “*In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.*”

He then quoted Pastor David Platt’s inspiring book *Radical*: “Yes, we work, we plan, we organize, and we create, but we do it all while we fast, while we pray, and while we constantly confess our need for the provision of God.”

The ANNUAL MEETING began with a time of prayer and worship, inviting God to have His way. Spiritual coordinator and worship leader Jordan Rowley led everyone in songs of praise.

Jordan shared a devotion that focused on Matthew 14:14 – how Jesus was moved with compassion, not only spiritually and emotionally, but physically as well, taking action to heal the sick. He also cited Acts 1:8, one of C4C’s theme verses, and Matthew 25:35-40, as our calls to action.

The board then viewed the new C4C promotional DVD that Jordan produced – “God Glorifying, Christ Centered, Spirit Driven.” [The video can be seen online at <http://www.climbingforchrist.org/Default.aspx?tabid=120>.]

This opening to the ANNUAL MEETING set the tone for the board’s time together, giving thanks for what He had done and planning with great expectation for what He will do through His ministry of Climbing For Christ.

Gary was re-elected president and Elaine Fallesen (vice president) and Mary Lindsay (secretary) also were re-elected to three-term teams as officers. All three were voted in unanimously.

The rest of the board consists of: Stan Phillips (treasurer), Ace Concordia (at-large member and the coordinator of C4C Philippines), Derek Fullerton (at-large), Kevin Kimble (at-large), and Isaac Will (at-large). All members of the board were in attendance.

Gary led board members in two growth exercises, gleaned from Pastor Bill Hybels at the Global Leadership Summit attended by board and staff the previous two days at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, IL, USA. These exercises were:

- **A life-cycle diagram**, which was used to measure the acceleration, “booming,” de-acceleration or “tanking” of each mission project. Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru, Mission: Possible, Tanzania and Turkey were viewed as accelerating, while Malawi, Nepal and the Philippines were booming. Haiti was de-accelerating and a discussion ensued about ways to keep this, our oldest project, from “tanking.”
- **The re-examination of the “core” of Climbing For Christ.** What are the five words or phrases that define the mission of His ministry? 1. GO/proclaim Christ; 2. “Ends of the earth”; 3. Desperation; 4. Educate/equip/transform; 5. “To God’s glory!”

The board then reviewed last year’s 1-3-5-10-year projections and wrote a new set of goals, which we pray are God’s dreams for the ministry.

1-3-5-10 Years

ONE YEAR (in the next year)

- Web site redesign unveiled.
- C4C Canada and C4C Philippines will be incorporated.
- “A constant challenge of fundraising coupled with ‘timely’ financial miracles showing us God is alive, well and interested in us and C4C.”
- Two more C4C churches will be built.
- Two new “vitaly alive” and active chapters will emerge in the United States.
- Membership will increase 20 percent (about 290 new members).
- There will be about 150 days a year of short-term mission work.

THREE YEARS (2014)

- Three or four full-time staff members. Not necessarily all in North America.
- Missionaries to Tanzania and Haiti will be in place.
- Our presence will be established in three-to-five new countries.
- Four young people will be sent to Bible schools.
- More churches being built.
- About 280 days a year of short-term mission work.
- “One ‘new’ work will be realized that none of us can even imagine – undeniably a ‘wow, only Jesus could have birthed this!’”

FIVE YEARS (2016)

- Staff will include a medical professional, a pastor, and a former CEO of a business (perhaps in the position of full-time development director).
- There will be at least one short-term mission every month of the year, including more ministry opportunities in Europe and Asia.
- Three new churches a year will be built.
- Six young people will be sent to Bible schools.

TEN YEARS (2021)

- More than 10,000 members worldwide.
- Eight full-time staff members.
- “?” (In other words, “Only God knows!”)

Everything about Climbing For Christ is designed to glorify God. To emphasize this point, Gary shared Pastor Louie Giglio’s teaching “God’s Passion For God’s Glory.” Among the many Scriptures that are the life verses for this ministry is **Romans 11:36** – “*For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.*”

The ANNUAL MEETING then turned to a discussion of finances. Treasurer Stan reported the 2011 figures through seven months and Gary projected the rest of the year before presenting the 2012 budget. A budget of \$277,385 was approved for 2012.

The Board then closed in prayer, thankful to the Lord for gathering us in Chicago — for instruction in being better leaders for His glory, and for His direction, provision and protection in our lives and in the work He has set before Climbing For Christ. “*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*”

– **John 15:5 (NIV) †**



Mosques dominating the skyline in Istanbul, Turkey. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

Now more than ever, those whom we need to be ready to share our faith with could very well be followers of Islam. To be prepared to be a good ambassador to our Muslim neighbors, we should have a basic understanding of some of the differences between Islam and Christianity. This is especially true today, when we are living in an age in which most people seem to want to focus only on what we have in common.

To highlight three of the most significant differences, let's look at one of the best known Scriptures that captures the heart of the Christian – John 3:16.

“For God so loved the world...”

The incredible love of God is something that sets Christianity apart from Islam. Allah, the god of Islam, is said to love. However according to the Qur'an, Allah loves only those who love him, not the whole world. Also, there is never any mention in the Qur'an of Muslims being instructed to love non-Muslims. In contrast, according to the Bible, God loves the whole world. In fact, Jesus said in Luke 6:32, *“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.”* God's love is so complete and perfect that He loves all of His creation, including those who don't love Him. The Lord instructs His followers to do the same. In addition, in Romans 5:8, we're told that *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* That is a love like no other!

“...that He gave His only begotten Son...”

Around the world, the mention of the name Jesus brings many different thoughts and feelings. Muslims revere and respect their version of Jesus as one of the greatest prophets, second only to Mohammed. Although Islam teaches some truths about Jesus, like His virgin birth, many miracles, and sinless life, Muslims are exposed to many false teachings as well. For example, Islam teaches that Jesus was not crucified for the sins of mankind. The Qur'an teaches that one's "salvation" will be determined solely on the judgment of Allah. Therefore, there is no need for a sacrifice. The Qur'an also teaches that Jesus is not the Son of God. In fact, for a Muslim to attribute

any partner or human characteristic (like that of a father or son) to Allah is a great sin called known as “shirk.” As Christians however, we know that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life! The essence of Christianity is Jesus, the Son of God, being our perfect and sinless sacrifice, so that we could be saved and adopted as the sons and daughters of the living God.

“...that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

One additional (and immensely important) way that true Christianity is different from Islam (and all other religions) is that believers are saved by faith. Muslims believe that when they are judged by Allah, their good deeds will be weighed against their bad deeds and Allah may decide to show mercy if he wills. In other words, Islam is a works-based religion where performing specific rites and fulfilling certain rules is taught to increase one's likelihood of being granted entrance to paradise. Jesus said in John 6:29, *“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”* God knows that no one could ever live a good enough, pure enough, holy enough life to be considered blameless before God, because ALL have sinned and fallen short of His glory. So our gracious Lord did all of that work for us, and tells us through His word that if we will just put our faith in the name of Jesus, we will be saved.

If we're to be prepared for this growing opportunity of witnessing to Muslims, we must begin on our knees. There are so many challenges that will stand in the way of our Muslim neighbors coming to Christ; we certainly don't want to create any unnecessary obstacles. So, be in prayer!

PRAY that you will be a gentle and loving witness. After all, God's Word says that it's His kindness that leads to repentance.

PRAY for the softening of Muslims' hearts. Many may be hardened by a lifetime of adhering to a strict religion. However, many others may be dissatisfied with the impersonal god of Islam.

PRAY for an open door to share the truth. In His sovereign authority, only the Lord can provide the perfect circumstances, so wait for His timing.

In addition to being prayerful, be ready to share the wonderful Good News as the Lord leads you. Be patient, too; it may take many conversations (and prayers) to see any fruit. Also, be sensitive to current Muslim perspectives. We certainly don't want to compromise on the Truth. But we also don't want to create any unnecessary stumbling blocks for our Muslim neighbors, so stick to the essentials of our faith.

If global trends continue, our opportunity to witness to Muslims will only continue to increase. But whoever the Lord places in our paths (or places our paths through the midst of), may we follow our Lord's example in humbly and passionately sharing God's truth in love. May we seek to be Christ-like in all that we say and do, all to the glory of God! †

Preaching the Gospel to all creation

By Gary Fallesen
Climbing For Christ president

Haseeb Masih (left to right) speaks at a Pakistan Independence Day prayer service, prays for blessings on sewing machines at a women's center, and prays with the poor at a poverty assistance gathering. (Photos provided by Haseeb Masih)



"Independence Day is celebrated in Pakistan on 14 August each year. It commemorates the partition of India into two parts: India (mainly Hindu) and Pakistan (mainly Muslim), which was itself divided into two wings — East Pakistan and West Pakistan.

"Save Pakistan Ministries arranged an Independence Day celebration with church congregations, where we have invited Muslim leaders also to come and join us."

Haseeb Masih, a Climbing For Christ member from Pakistan who wrote those words, has boldly witnessed to the lost and the least in his country. He is the founder of Save Pakistan, which this year can count the following among the blessings it has offered:

- The distribution of food and Urdu Bibles to 16 widows and 25 orphans in January.
- Bible Schools for children.
- A well-attended Easter Celebration Program for widows and orphans.
- An open-air crusade attended by about 1,500 people in May.
- Annual Leadership Seminar, where about 200 pastors, evangelists, elders, and church leaders were trained.
- The opening of the Hope Sewing Center for poor women and girls. ("We select the name because we want to give them Hope for a bright future in their life," Haseeb said.)
- "Basic necessities" — food, clothing, educational and medical care — for children of poor families.
- Prayer and assistance for many among the 200,000 affected by flooding in August.

Amidst all of this, Haseeb has and will continue to work with his Muslim friends and neighbors. "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right," it says in James 2:8.

Haseeb Masih is doing right.

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic. It is nearly 96 percent

Muslim. Open Doors ministry ranked Pakistan as the 11th worst place on the planet for Christian persecution in 2011. But it is possible to carry out evangelistic activities, distribute Gospel literature, and start house churches, according to Youth With A Mission.

Despite the notoriety of birthing terrorism and being a haven for fanatical Muslims, not all Pakistani people are to be feared.

"It's true that sometimes we also face lots of problems from Muslims, but all Muslims are not the same," Haseeb said. "Some are very kind-hearted and they are nice people."

Haseeb invites Muslims to worship with the church on "special occasions — and they always come and join us." He did so again on Pakistan's Independence Day. "We had prayer for the peace of Pakistan together," he said. "And I was thankful to Jesus Christ, who always works through Save Pakistan Ministries."

Haseeb does not preach Chrislam. The 24-year-old evangelist is a lifelong Christian who is sold out for Jesus.

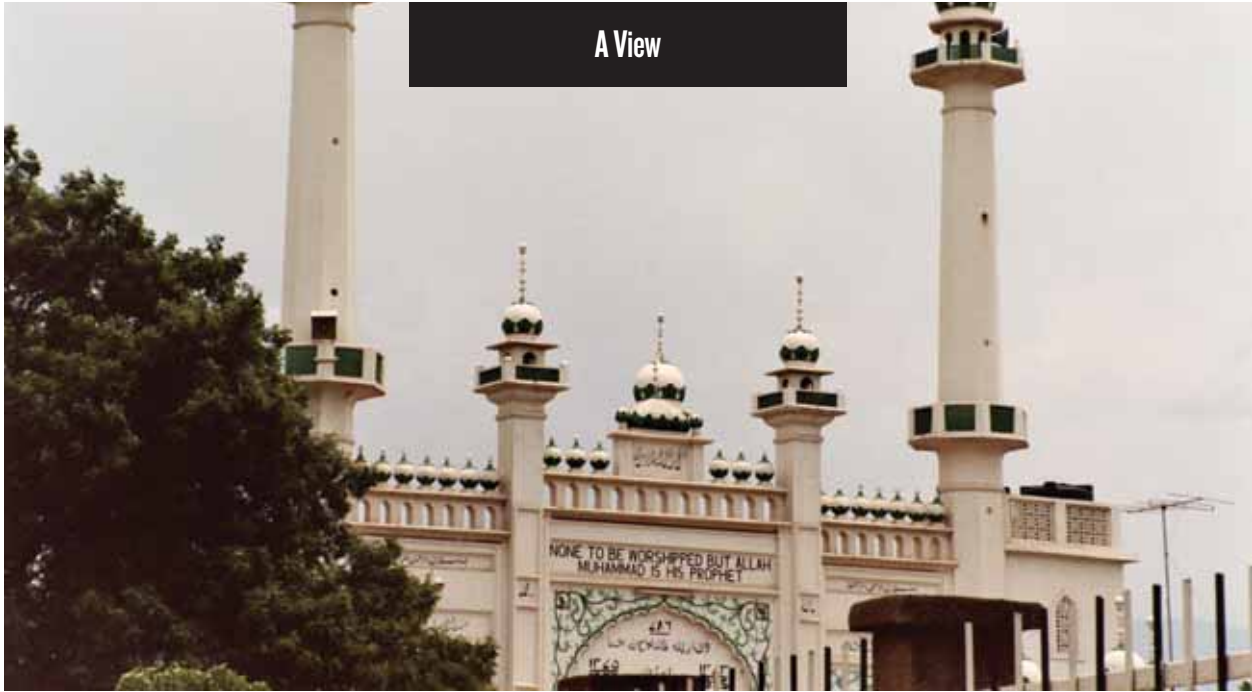
His favorite Scripture verse is Mark 16:15 ("He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation'"). "This verse inspires me to reach out to the most needy and thirsty people all over Pakistan," Haseeb said.

He shared this special "God moment": "When I gave the message of God for the first time among 100 people, I was not knowing what to deliver. But when I went to the pulpit, the Lord has done a great work through me and people were blessed."

When asked about climbing, Haseeb said, "I just don't want to climb, but I want to reach out there (in the mountains)."

"Climbing For Christ means to me (that) it is hard work and nobody wants to climb to preach the Gospel. That's the reason thousands of people are not yet reached by the Word of God.

"When I came to know (about the) Climbing For Christ ministry, I felt that it is very necessary and a great work for God to reach unreached people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. I have a vision to reach out climbing with you." †



A large mosque in Moshi, Tanzania serves as a distraction to many trekkers who come to East Africa to climb Kilimanjaro. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

A growing opportunity

Sharing Our Faith with Muslims

By Jordan Rowley,
Climbing For Christ spiritual coordinator

Right before our eyes, the Muslim population is increasing in number, influence, and even location all around the world. Currently some modest statistics determine that 20 percent of the world population follows the religion of Islam. That means that one out of every five people on this planet is of Muslim heritage. According to the United Nations, Islam (now the world's second-largest religion) has an annual growth rate of 6.4 percent. This is compared to the 1.4-percent annual growth rate of Christianity, which remains the world's largest religion.

In fact, many nations have seen the Muslim population more than double in the last 20 years.

So what does all of this mean?

It means that we have a growing opportunity to witness to our Muslim neighbors. As Peter wrote in his first epistle, *"always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you."* In other words, as Christians, we should be knowledgeable about our own beliefs as well as the beliefs of those around us so that we can be good ambassadors of Jesus!

Continued on page 14



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