

The Climbing Way

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For the sake of the Gospel BY GARY FALLESEN

The Mission

“I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.” – 1 Corinthians 9:22b (ESV)

We haul personal biases in our backpacks along with our Bibles, toothbrushes, and extra pairs of socks. It is human nature.

David J. Bosch is a South African theologian who authored what brother Werner Mischke calls the “magnum opus” of mission, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Bosch argued: “It’s part of human nature to think ethnocentrically – to be unaware of one’s own cultural or theological bias.”

Example #1: What is your concept of time?

If you live in the U.S. or Canada, you are probably monochronic. You see time as “a commodity and a limited resource to be carefully stewarded,” Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert write in *Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions* (the small-group study accompanying their book *When Helping Hurts*).

If you live in the Majority World – in Africa, Asia or Latin America – you are polychronic. Corbett and Fikkert say polychronic people view time as almost limitless. “Efficiency and punctuality are not high priorities, because there is always more time to get things done.”

If you’ve ever stood on a corner in a foreign country at 2 p.m. waiting for that 10 a.m. rendezvous with a local you know this to be true. And you are a monochronic person.

When a time-is-of-the-essence person enters a place where there is no such thing as wasted time, problems arise. Immediately. Or, as we like to say, in a New York minute.

Both sides of the timepiece can become quickly frustrated. One side finds itself having its patience tested, while the other can’t figure out what the rush is. There needs to be an understanding reached sooner rather than later, and I suggest that the adjustment must be made (as much as possible) by Mr. or Mrs. Monochronic if they are in a polychronic place.



“V” is for Kurdish. Female members of the Mission: Ararat 2015 team mix with their hosts in a village in eastern Turkey on the night in June when Kurds were elected for the first time to Turkey’s parliament. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

Example #2: What is your definition of “self”?

Americans, Canadians, most “Westerners” are individualistic. An individualist believes in freedom of choice. He or she climbs corporate and social ladders. Individualists make friends and break up with friends. A person from this culture would, in the words of the famous United States Army slogan, strive to “Be All You Can Be.”

The Majority World (Africa, Asia, Latin America) is collectivist. They are people who “identify themselves primarily as a member of a group, typically a family, role in society, or geographic area,” Corbett and Fikkert write. “In these cultures, success comes from knowing one’s role in the group and fulfilling that role well. As a result, there are pre-set obligations, roles, and pathways placed on group members by others, especially leaders.”

For an individualist to enter a collectivistic culture and not understand the expectations on the people there is a grave mistake. It could lead to mission **un**accomplished.

CARRY-ON BAGGAGE

Werner Mischke writes in *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World*: “Western-educated Christians must find better ways to communicate

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Climbing For Christ

The primary purpose of Climbing For Christ is to GO and deliver the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the mountains of the world, where other missionaries cannot or will not go.

Mission Statement

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.

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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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THE CLIMBING WAY

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FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL CONT.

the expansive, transforming truths of the Gospel of Christ without having to carry the Western baggage with which they are so comfortable.”

The great missionary Paul is our mentor in this endeavor.

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote: *“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).*

Paul is telling us that he adapted his teachings to reach the culture of those he was visiting.

He was always delivering the Good News of Jesus Christ. He did not change the message – *“that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)*. Paul was as Christ centered as you get. He once was blind, and then he could see better than most could ever hope.

He recognized that evangelism was not a one-size-fits-all teaching.

Different strokes are needed for different folks. Especially when we are doing cross-cultural ministry.

One approach is to explore the honor/shame dynamic, particularly among people in African and Asian cultures.

Werner bases his teaching in *The Global Gospel* on the honor/shame dynamic that is common in the Majority World (and foreign to our Western sensibilities) to encourage our application of Bible-based honor/shame values in the work we have been blessed with by God. Having spent about one year of the past 8½ years of my life among these cultures I know that much of what Werner is proposing is worth a try.

The bottom line: we know the Holy Spirit is doing the work. But what if we made the God of the Bible, the God Whose Son we follow to the ends of the earth, more understandable to those living with honor and shame?

WHAT IS HONOR? WHAT IS SHAME?

Very simply, here are the definitions Mischke applies:

- **HONOR** is “the worth or value of persons both in their eyes and in the eyes of their village, neighborhood, or society. The critical item is the public nature of respect and reputation.”



Sharing a meal: Americans, Kurds and Turks dining together on the floor of a Kurdish home. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

- **SHAME** is “the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging” ... “the fear of disconnection.”

African theologian Andrew Mbuvi puts it this way: “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”

In the West, as I mentioned before, we are about “self”: self-service, self-centeredness, self-sacrifice, self-deprecation, self-satisfaction. It’s all about “me.” In cultures in Africa and Asia, the “concept of ‘self’ is established primarily by one’s family and community. This is called the *dyadic personality*, and is completely different from the individualistic personality by which Westerners view the world. ... such a person [seeing life in terms of honor] would always see himself or herself through the eyes of others.”

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11-32**) is viewed as the quintessential teaching on honor and shame. The “basic message of the Parable of the Prodigal Son,” Mischke says, offers the solution to the problem of guilt and condemnation from God *and* the covering of our shame and the restoration of our honor before God. Werner has written “The Father’s Love Booklet,” which is a wonderful resource.

Let’s start here: the Parable of the Prodigal Son is an entry point for the teaching of the Gospel.

A second option is the concern for honor and shame found in 1 Peter.

Mischke wrote, “*It may be summed up by Peter’s declaration ‘So the honor is for you who believe’ (2:7), which is made in the context of a quotation from Isaiah 28:16:*

“For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’ (1 Peter 2:6-7).”

To develop a better gameplan for future mission work in the Majority World, Climbing For Christ has formed a Global Gospel Team. We are sharing divinely inspired ideas to produce strategies that – it is our prayer – will equip Evangelic Expeditions with more tools to unpack in the mountains where others cannot or will not go.

May the baggage we carry be more like those we seek to reach for the sake of the Gospel. †

Gary Fallesen is the founding president of Climbing For Christ. He has led more than 40 Evangelic Expeditions to more than a dozen countries.

BACKSTORY

In April, I attended a North American roundtable on Islam for ministry leaders working in Muslim countries. This roundtable (an annual event) is the product of a coalition of ministries seeking to engage unengaged Muslim people groups.

As one participant says: “The term ‘unengaged’ is the most offensive missionary terminology. It is offensive to the LORD of hosts. It is offensive to Christ Himself. It is offensive to the Holy Spirit. It is offensive to the church. It is offensive to the missionary community.”

- 54 percent of Muslim people groups in the world are **unengaged**.
- 40 percent of Buddhist people groups in the world are **unengaged**.
- 30 percent of Hindu people groups in the world are **unengaged**.

“**Unengaged**” means there is *no long-term-resident, in-their-language, church-planting witness among a people group*.

This coalition of ministries we have joined is led by a Climbing For Christ member who serves in Africa. That C4C member had invited me to the roundtable for many years and our schedule finally permitted it this year. It was God’s timing.

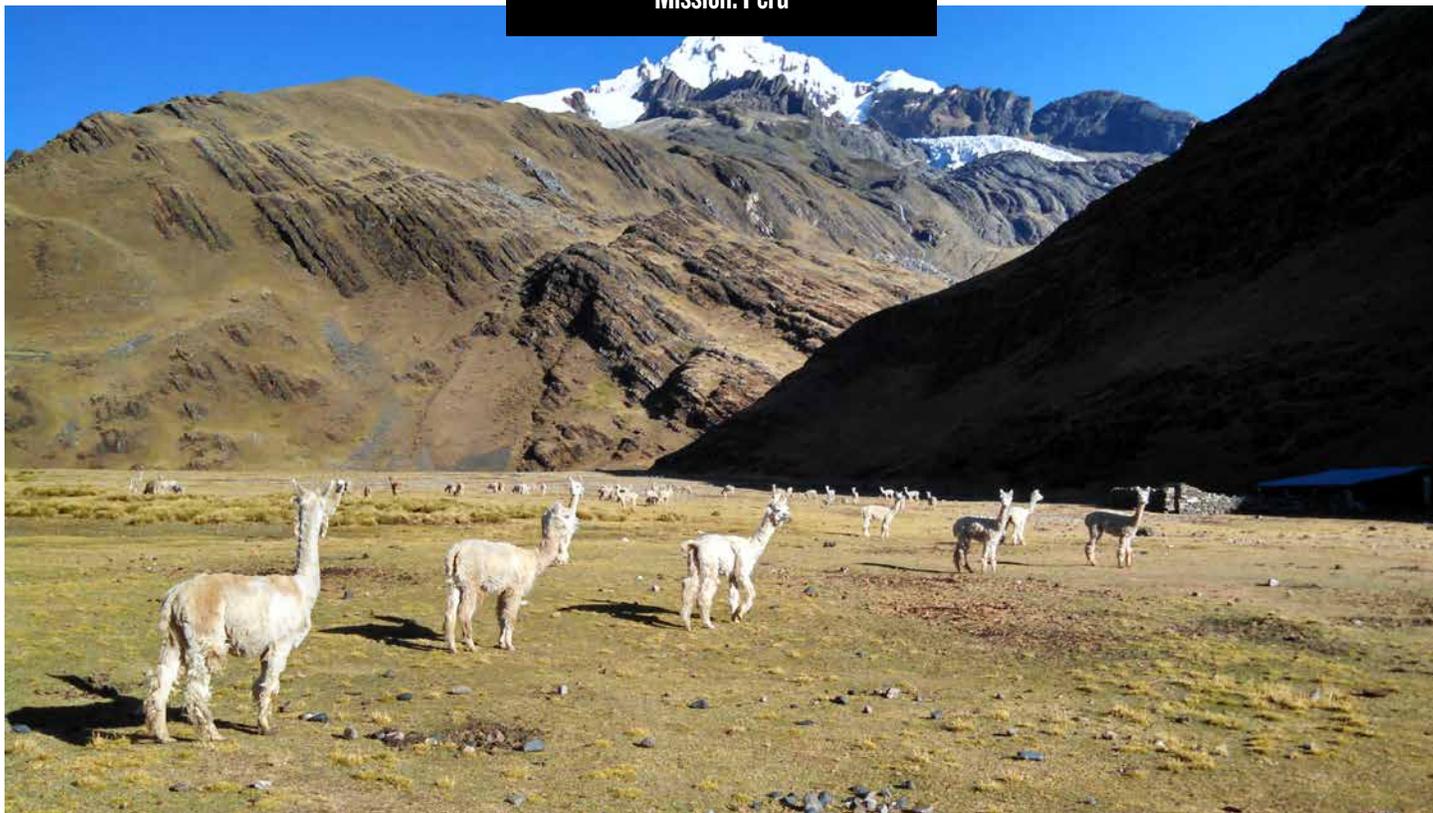
I met Werner Mischke at the event. From the “it’s-a-small-world-but-I-wouldn’t-want-to-paint it” department: Werner graduated from high school with my wife and I graduated from high school with Werner’s cousin. He is the executive vice president and director of training ministries for Mission ONE, a ministry that trains and mobilizes the church by focusing on cross-cultural partnerships to engage the unreached and serve the poor and oppressed. Werner, who shared a roundtable with me for 2½ days, was selling his book *The Global Gospel: Achieving Missional Impact in Our Multicultural World*. I bought a copy.

“This isn’t something you’ll read in two weeks,” he warned. Three months later, I finished *The Global Gospel*. But I wasn’t done; this was only a starting point.

God has been revealing more and more of what I need to learn about ministering to Muslim people, in particular, as He leads us deeper and deeper into nations found in the 10/40 window, including Morocco, Turkey, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, China, and the Philippines.

In October, I will be attending another roundtable overseas. This gathering will be international. It’s another step in the process as we continue to grow and GO in His direction.

– GARY FALLESEN



Good News – if it gets there in time

BY JORDAN ROWLEY

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation! It is God's plan for rescuing this sin-stained world from the wages of sin: death. It is the Good News. It is great news, in fact!

Yet, as Carl F.H. Henry, the first editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today* once said: "The Gospel is only good news if it gets there in time."

Think about that! If the world's only message of true hope and everlasting life arrives one minute too late, then it essentially becomes a message that could have saved a soul. But it's too late.

In a sense, it sadly becomes the *could-have-been* Good News.

Throughout Mission: Peru 2015, we saw so many instances in which people hadn't ever heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, they *hadn't even heard* of Jesus Christ Himself! According to The CIA World Factbook, Peru is a nation comprised of about 94 percent Christians (81 percent of whom are Roman Catholic with an additional 12.5 percent Evangelical). In light of the fact that Peru has so many Christians, even if only in the most general sense, how can there

possibly be people who haven't heard of Jesus? The answer, as we learned during our time trekking deep into the Cordillera Blanca Range of the Peruvian Andes, is that there are many areas so rugged and so remote (taking days to trek to) that countless souls have simply never heard! And perhaps a second part to that answer would be the fact that there seems to be few who are willing and/or able to reach these remote places.



Mission: Peru team treks deep into the Cordillera Blanca mountains. (Photo by Rachel Wall)

The familiar passage from **Romans 10:14** puts it so clearly: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”

We praise God that during Mission: Peru 2015, many did in fact hear the Gospel for the first time. Many did in fact hear of Jesus for the first time. And many did in fact receive Him as their Savior and Lord!

God sent a team of five Americans (Kevin Atkinson, Larry DeMejo, Michael and Rachel Wall, and me) on a mission with Peruvians Jaime Servat and Edwin Milla to reach those who had not heard. We often met them only a handful at a time.

I love that about God. He not only has a heart for the multitudes (see **John 3:16**), but He cares for the individual as well – even counting the very hairs on our heads (see **Matthew 10:30**). During this mission, we were once again blessed to see God’s heart for the few lost sheep, as we trekked for hours and even days to reach one small village or one small family at a time. Often these people seemed to be waiting for us.

In fact, whether they knew it or not, they *were* waiting for us. God had sovereignly crossed our paths because He wanted them to receive the Good News in time – because “*the Gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.*” †

Jordan Rowley has participated in and led Mission: Peru the past five years – since the inaugural expedition to that South American nation in 2011.



Magmo (second from right), his wife Nieves (right) and their daughters Nora and Yamet joined the team for dinner. They left with the Bread of Life. All four put their trust in Jesus. (Photo by Michael Wall)



Frederica (and her daughter Gloria, not pictured) prayed with Edwin Milla, left, and Jaime Servat to receive Jesus. Three others in their village also were saved. (Photo by Jordan Rowley)



Epifania (seated) and her daughter Dalila never heard about Jesus until Edwin shared the Good News with them. They asked Jesus into their hearts along with Epifania’s sons (not pictured) Humberto, Frederico, Ainer and Nau. (Photo by Jordan Rowley)

The Word says: pray, give, go BY LARRY DEMEJO



Larry DeMejo, center, in prayer as Peruvian missionary Jaime Servat prays with Gloria, a new believer in the Cordillera Blanca. (Photo by Jordan Rowley)

Climbing for Christ's unique mission is to reach the unreached in hard-to-reach places to the ends of the earth, according to **Acts 13:47** (*"For so the Lord has commanded us: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth"*).

C4Cs guiding principles are mission, not mountains; people, not peaks; and service, not summits. Their goal is to share the Gospel with those who are difficult to reach due to their geographic location. Members and supporters are urged to **"PRAY, GIVE and GO."**

Praying, giving and going are not only C4Cs mandates. They are the mandates of every follower of Jesus Christ.

Scripture instructs us to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17), and "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

I believe the key element of my mission trip to Peru in July was prayer. This was my first mission trip with Climbing For Christ. Without prayer that mission would not have been possible. Clearly, it was God Who made that mission trip happen.

As with earlier C4C missions, three aspects of prayer were critical to our Peru mission:

1. Personal prayer;
2. Prayer in Peru;
3. Prayer back home.

For example, someone back home might be praying for us, while at the same time our trekking team in Peru would be praying for the salvation or healing of a needy individual, as that individual would be praying for his or her own need.

When I first thought about it, I didn't know how I, personally, could reach the soul of a Peruvian native

who didn't speak my language. Then I realized that I could reach him or her through my personal prayer, coupled with the prayers of my brothers and sisters in Peru and back home. All were praying to our same LORD for the same reason. WOW! That is why all our prayer warriors back home were right there with us in Peru, in the heat of the battle for souls! We are so grateful for their prayers.

When it comes to giving, God's Word reminds us that *"he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver"* (**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**).

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself promised to accompany us while urging us to GO! *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen"* (**Matthew 28:19**).

So, as Christians, we are commanded by our Lord in His Word to pray, give and go. He is our perfect example of praying, giving and going. This is why I support Climbing For Christ and why you, who are Christians, should also. †

Larry DeMejo lives in Rochester, NY with his wife Deb. Larry was one of five U.S. members on Mission: Peru 2015. Larry and Deb are C4C prayer warriors and regularly give financially.

SUPPORT C4C

As a 501(c)3 non-profit ministry, U.S. donations are tax-deductible. Please consider sending a one-time gift or becoming a monthly contributor to Climbing For Christ. Send it to Climbing For Christ, P.O. Box 16290, Rochester, NY 14616-0290 USA. Or give via PayPal at <http://www.climbingforchrist.org/Contact/Donate.aspx>.

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A VIEW CONT.

Voting was not optional in Turkey this year for the Kurdish people. Eligible voters were required to vote in person in their villages on Election Day or face a fine. This delayed the families from moving their herds up Mount Ararat for the summer. And a longer winter had left Ararat inaccessible up high. We learned the day before our arrival at the foot of the 16,854-foot (5,137-meter) mountain that no Base Camp had even been established yet for the tourist trekking season.

As our plan seemed to crumble before my eyes, God went to work implementing His Plan A.

A PICTURE'S WORTH

We'd brought photos from last year's mission. We showed them to people, working like detectives to locate the villages and homes of our Kurdish friends. Not only were we able to reconnect with all the faces in the photos, we met extended family members and were introduced to two new families. During many of our visits we were able to spend time with the children and reviewed the salvation message of the Gospel bracelets we'd created together in their tents the previous year.

God gave us another opportunity to pray for the healing of a young man, Tanner, who has been wheelchair-bound since taking a fall on the mountain while shepherding his flock. God also brought us back to a woman who suffers from a severe facial rash and who declared she would do anything to find relief. We have been working to deliver the medicine that will heal her, and pray that as a result she will come to know the Great Physician who healed her.

HE ONCE WAS BLINDED; MAY HE SEE

The Lord had also set the stage for a moment that gave us God bumps. Muslims believe that Allah speaks to them through visions and dreams. Our constant prayer for all of our Kurdish friends is that our Lord would do just that – speak to them through dreams that open their eyes and hearts to Christ, and through them realize Jesus is the One True God.

This year marked our third visit to a blind man who lost his sight decades ago from heat stroke suffered as a sheep herder. This year, he knew we'd be coming.

He'd had a dream about it. In the dream, Gary knocked on his door and held photos in his hand.

We were earlier than he expected this time, but we did show up with photos in hand; photos of his family from last year. Through our Kurdish translator Gary told him he had come because Jesus had sent him. The man replied, yes, he knew that. Gary also told him that he believed he would have more dreams about Jesus. The man said he understood, and he asked us to pray for him. It was a breakthrough moment.



Cemile, a woman we have visited the past two summers, asked for medical help with a skin condition. She said she would do "anything" to be healed. We asked our interpreter if she really meant anything. He told her, "You know Jesus sent them?" She said yes. We are praying for her healing and trying to provide medical assistance. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

A LITTLE PROGRESS

Climbing For Christ mission teams approach each mission knowing that while we plan the journey to our best capability, it's God Who will orchestrate it and He may have a change in plans waiting for us. We only need to remain flexible to change course as He directs us.

The Lord has sent us to Turkey and put these beautiful people in our path. When the opportunity is right we share this with our Kurdish friends and take the next step in a long-term teaching process – all the while praying that the Spirit works in their hearts.

We will continue to build on a foundation that began when we first went to Ararat in 2010 and have returned to the past three years.

As the Joshua Project, a ministry that monitors global work among people groups, says of the Kurds: "The Islamic faith is extremely hard to influence with the Gospel. Although a number of missions' agencies are focusing on the [Kurds] of Iraq and Turkey, very little progress has been made among them.

"The Kurds have followed Islam for many years ... there are few known believers."

Not yet, anyway. We trust in the One sending us, repeatedly, to eastern Turkey. We know, as the author of Hebrews wrote, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (**Hebrews 11:1**). Or, as 2015 team member Jessica Jones observed, "God is moving in Turkey."

We may not be able to see it. But He's there among a people living desperately in darkness. †

Elaine Fallesen, a part-time staff member who lives C4C full-time, has been to Turkey on the past two Mission: Ararat expeditions.



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A View

Not seeing is believing

BY ELAINE FALLESEN

I think one of the greatest things about heaven – after being with Jesus, of course – will be to see how Gospel seeds we planted produced fruit we never saw during our lifetimes.

Mission: Ararat 2015 became that kind of mission for our Climbing For Christ team – one with few humanly visible results and in which we pray seeds of faith were planted for future growth and fruition through the Holy Spirit.

“Plan A” for team members Charlotte Crain, Jessica Jones, and Elaine and Gary Fallesen, was to share more about Jesus the Good Shepherd with the semi-nomadic Kurdish families we’ve come to know on Mount Ararat. We were returning to the Kurdish tents scattered across the rocky mountain’s slopes to continue building relationships and have a deeper dialogue with our friends about Jesus their Savior.

But our plan was quickly dashed by two obstacles we hadn’t planned on when we arrived in early June: a national election, and snow.



Tanner, with family members, has been wheelchair bound since falling from a horse while herding sheep up Mount Ararat behind his home. (Photo by Gary Fallesen)

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