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HEARTBEAT

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Free Methodist World Missions makes disciples by mobilizing the global church and empowering international leaders to establish transformational churches.



HEARTBEAT

JUNE 2024

Seeing God's Hand of Love
Essential Sometimes Boring Work
Give Me the Bible

Photo: Kevin Austin



Seeing God's *Hand of Love* Hidden in the Shadows

By Rev. Dr. Kevin Austin, Founder and Director of the Set Free Movement

Mark Heard sings about God's "strong hand of love hidden in the shadows." One of the joys of growing old is looking back and seeing God's hand of love in the shadows, the places where you did not see Him working. I had a joyful surprise like this in Cambodia last September.

My history with Cambodia is long. I have been traveling there for more than 25 years. It is where I had my first mission experience. Daniel, Cambodia's gifted and godly superintendent, was my translator during my first teaching experience there in 1999. He was 18 years old at the time. I remember playing with the kids at the ICCM House of Love in Prek Thei. Philip, now Cambodia's ICCM coordinator, was then just 7.

Ephesians 3:21 ends with "To Him, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations. Amen." When I read this verse, I

think about these young people I have had the privilege to know, giving and receiving insights, love and blessings.

Fast forward to September 2023: I was in Cambodia, partnering with the national church in providing theological education on biblical justice and compassion. Before the trip, Superintendent Daniel and ICCM Director Philip told me I should consider hiring a young woman, Sokleap, to lead Set Free work in Cambodia.

When I met Sokleap, I was instantly impressed. She is educated, experienced, competent, passionate and has great ideas. I fasted and prayed and started the process of hiring her.

Once, during our multiday conversations, she asked, "Do you remember me?" I did not. During one of my previous visits, she had been a college

student. On my way to the airport, I happened to meet her in passing and gave her all my extra Cambodian money. Little did I know she had been praying for a financial miracle. I had no clue. It made no difference to me, but God's strong hand of love was moving in the shadows to provide for her.

Now Sokleap leads Set Free work in Cambodia, caring for the broken, meeting real needs, and offering hope and healing. She is in the rising generation of leaders. God is on the move in Cambodia. Churches are being planted, and mercy is being extended to the margins. You can be part of this work. Find out more by visiting setfreemovement.com.

Listen to Mark Heard's excellent song, "Strong Hand of Love" here: youtube.com/watch?v=XJGMuiH2cXc



Photos: Kevin Austin

Essential *Sometimes* Boring Work

By Rev. Dr. Kevin Austin, Founder and Director of the Set Free Movement

Most of us love a good action movie. We love the adrenaline rush, the good guys winning over impossible odds, justice winning the day. Last summer, “The Sound of Freedom” was released, and the conversation about human trafficking was supercharged. It was an adrenaline rush. It woke people up. That’s all good, but it is only part of the picture.

Most freedom work is done out of the spotlight, and a lot of it is not exciting. There is no adrenaline rush when booking flights, arriving in a dark hotel room after midnight, and crunching numbers for a grant application. It is hard to stay awake in some meetings.

But without the essential sometimes boring work, the exciting things don’t happen. Without administrative tasks, safe houses are not built, foster youth aren’t served, and children won’t be repatriated. What the Set Free Movement does is about something other than the rush. Transformation takes time, innovative work and patience.

Just recently, one of our leaders in Kenya, Yvonne, completed her master’s degree. Her education involved a lot of steady persistence in studying and attending lectures. She is now better equipped to mentor girls in the slums, conduct training and strategize toward more impactful work.

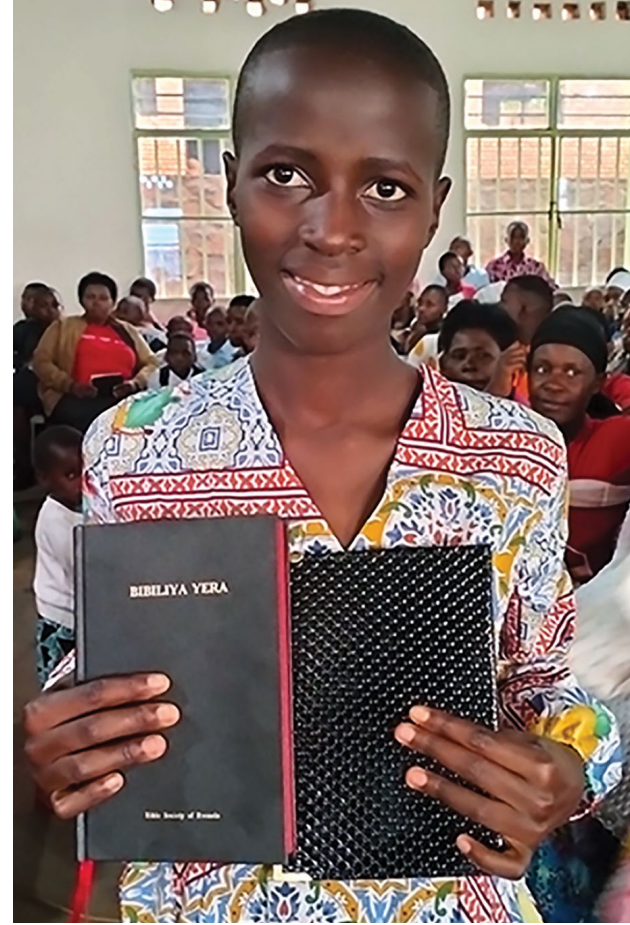
Our Spring Arbor, MI, team worked for more than 10 years before the idea of a safe home for street youth became a plan. It was long, hard, patient, frustrating work. It wasn’t exciting some of the time.

Scripture teaches us about these rhythms. The actions of evangelism, justice work and church planting are balanced with spiritual disciplines of prayer, silence and contemplation. Remember, two of the gifts of the Spirit are patience and self-control.

Set Free leaders like Yvonne and our team in Spring Arbor lean into the long view, forgoing the need to be continually emotionally charged. Their work is incarnational and sacrificial. The result is fundamental transformation, and long-term change is happening.

Our big challenge is that some people only want to support exciting things. Often, essential work isn’t initially successful or doesn’t provide an emotional rush. Sometimes, stories cannot be told.

All our missionaries, national leaders and Set Free leaders engage in essential, sometimes boring, sometimes successful, often frustrating and challenging, yet valuable and sacrificial work. Please think about how you can encourage, pray for and financially support God’s work through these servants who are sacrificing much to advance the mission of Jesus.



Give Me the Bible

By Ephaste Niyigena, ICCM Rwanda National Coordinator

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalms 119:105).

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word" (Psalms 119:9).

I received some wonderful gifts that warmed my heart when I was an ICCM sponsored child (1980-94). The most precious was a Bible and songbook. The inside label on the first pages had my sponsors' names: Alice and Charles.

After 12 years of serving ICCM Rwanda, I decided that providing our children with a Bible and a songbook is evangelistically important. We encourage our children to read it, as the good news about our salvation through Jesus Christ, Who died for us on the cross, is described in the Bible.

It was delightful for the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda to have the ICCM Global Director Alma and her husband, the Rev. Brent Thompson, partner with us in this great event of delivering Bibles and songbooks to our children in 2023. I am thankful that each one of our

children was able to meet this noble couple and sense the Lord's love through their lovely hugs and open, blessed hands, on behalf of all our 962 sponsors who support Rwandan children.

We began the distribution in September at the close of an ICCM retreat for Mbabe teenagers who are attending boarding or day high schools. At the retreat, we focused on how God rejoices in our trustworthiness. In addition to notebooks, uniforms, shoes, Sunday clothes, tuition, shared lunch, sports activities and learning tours being regularly provided to our children, we believe the Bible and songbook are the greatest resource for our children as they grow and face various environmental influences.

I pass on love and sincere thanks to all who enable us to serve God's children.

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JUNE PRAYER GUIDE

01 > Saturday | Missionary Kids

Pray for Benjamin, Carmen, Jakin, Jonathan, Malachi, Risa and Sam. These children of our missionary team have recently graduated. Pray the Lord will guide them as they transition to new places and opportunities.

02 > Sunday | Latin America

The VISA program in Latin America has grown significantly this past year, with more than double the number of teams projected to serve in 2024. Please pray for wisdom for Shane Jewell and three volunteers in the U.S. as they help VISA teams with preparations, work in-country, and debrief as they return home. **Birthdays: Shane Jewell**

03 > Monday | Eswatini

Pray for discipleship and training of nationals to expand the Free Methodist Church in Eswatini.

04 > Tuesday | Middle East

Pray for peace in this region. Ask the Father to strengthen His people and bless His people with peace (Psalms 29:11).

05 > Wednesday | Asia / Taiwan

Asia: Pray for newly appointed U.S.-based partners Joshua and Elizabeth Opena as they join the FMWM Asia team, helping provide support and development in Asia.

Birthdays: Elizabeth Opena (U.S.-Based Partner)

Taiwan: Pray for those actively sharing love, hope and faith with migrant workers, international students and new immigrants from Creative Access-IA. Pray many will come to know Jesus. **Birthdays: Susan**

06 > Thursday | Argentina

The Lord has called Jonathan Mogollón to live on mission and plant a church in Mendoza, a key city bordering the country of Chile. Ask the Lord to give him wisdom and provide for his needs.

07 > Saturday | ICCM

The Greening Project at the Linda Stryker Academy in the Democratic Republic of Congo helps educate students about environmental conservation and nurture a love for nature. Students have now planted more than 100 trees within the school compound. Pray these students will learn to love the Creator as well.

08 > Friday | Creative Access-P

As this nation's political and social situation continues to be tenuous, pray the power of the gospel will transform lives and communities.

09 > Sunday | Japan

Pray the Lord will raise young leaders who are called to share the gospel in Japan. Also, join Gene and Minori Hall in praying for their two young adult children living in the U.S. – Mika and Iwa. **Birthdays: Gene Hall**

10 > Monday | São Tomé and Príncipe

In January, the FMC in São Tomé celebrated its fifth anniversary. They have now purchased land to build a church, a community development center and a kindergarten. Pray for the resources needed to complete these buildings.

Birthdays: Jacione Souza (International Missionary)

11 > Tuesday | Jordan

Pray that current religious freedoms in Jordan will remain and God's work in this part of the Middle East will not be thwarted.

12 > Wednesday | Europe

Pray for good health, strength and renewal for Area Director Josh Fajardo. Join him in praying for new ministry opportunities across the continent and wisdom for leadership. **Birthdays: Josh Fajardo**

13 > Thursday | Burundi

The General Conference in Burundi is June 13-16. Pray the Holy Spirit will guide decision-making and give a renewed vision for evangelism and discipleship.

14 > Friday | Dominican Republic

Pray for this general conference as they minister in a nearby creative access country and respond to the needs of people from their neighbor, Haiti.

15 > Saturday | Global

Please pray for our volunteer pastoral care couples as they serve our missionaries – Scott and Natasha Edinger (Africa), Mark and Judi Morrison (Asia), Todd and Deann Miller (Europe), and Guy and Betsy Crawford (Latin America). Pray they know when and how to care for the most critical needs. **Birthdays: Art Brown (U.S.-Based Partner)**

16 > Sunday | Albania

Algent Bregu, a local barber in Korce, loves outdoor activities and has a heart for sharing the gospel. Pray for him to have increasing opportunities to share the gospel as he organizes outdoor activities for groups of children, youth and adults through the Korce Adventure Center.

Birthday: Algent Bregu (Affiliate Missionary)

17 > Monday | Greece

Pray for Maria Long as she ministers to new groups of female refugees, including Ukrainian women. Ask the Lord to give her wisdom and understanding in building strong relationships and initiating spiritual conversations.

Birthday: Maria Long

18 > Tuesday | Australia

Pray for networking and church planting among a growing number of immigrant groups in key cities like Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

19 > Wednesday | Bolivia

Pray for Teresa Saravia, who leads this mission district, and for her sister, Tania Saravia, who has assumed a new role in promoting church planting in Bolivia.

20 > Thursday | Ivory Coast

Pray for God's provision of resources to build several churches and a ministry headquarters building for the FMC work in Ivory Coast.

21 > Friday | Hungary

Pray for the FMC in Győr, Hungary, led by Sylvia Nyiri, as they serve and minister through English-language worship services, Bible studies, a university student group, and ministry to the poor and orphans in their community.

22 > Saturday | Rwanda / South Korea

Rwanda: As the Nzungizes spend a few months in the U.S., pray the Lord will give them meaningful time with extended family and renew them in every way as they prepare to return to Rwanda later this year.

Birthday: Rachel Nzungize

South Korea: Pray for Trevor as he meets and disciples many who have come to this country to escape persecution in their home country.

Birthday: Trevor Foley (Affiliate Missionary)

23 > Sunday | Set Free Movement

Statistics indicate there are now more than 110 million refugees in the world. Pray for Set Free teams worldwide as they interact with, educate and work to protect these who are vulnerable and often without hope.

24 > Monday | Middle East

As many people in the region face fear and uncertainty, pray the Holy Spirit will give believers opportunities to offer the hope of Jesus Christ, even to those in positions of power and authority.

25 > Tuesday | Cambodia

The Cambodian FMC has a vision to see 336 churches planted by 2030. Pray the Lord will continue to give them boldness, faithfulness and fruitfulness as they proclaim the good news.

26 > Wednesday | Scandinavia

Pray for developing churches in Norway, Denmark and Finland. Ask the Father to help these groups be salt and light in their communities.

27 > Thursday | Africa

FMWM-Africa has opened new work in six West African countries in the last 10 years. Pray the Lord will call skilled administrators, teachers, pastors and community development leaders to live and serve in this region.

28 > Friday | Fiji

Give thanks for the FMC in Fiji. Pray the Lord will continue to pour out His Spirit upon the church, multiplying faith communities and calling faithful men and women to serve Him.

29 > Saturday | Colombia

Pray for the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in multiplying disciples and leaders in the newest "fields" where Thad Roller is assisting in establishing ministry, including the city of Cali and the region of Guajira in Colombia and in Panama. **Birthday: Thad Roller**

30 > Sunday | 360 Mission District

Pavones and Puerto Viejo are surfing destinations in the southern region of Costa Rica, close to the Panamanian border. In both places, the New Age and indigenous belief systems are strong. Pray for the Leons as they seek to come alongside leaders in these communities to share the gospel.

Birthday: Dennis Leon

*"It is possible to move men,
through God, by prayer alone."*

– Hudson Taylor