

October, November,
December 2014

Horizons



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**Reggie
Hundley**

**Editor,
HORIZONS
and
Executive
Director,
Mission
Services
Association**

We welcome your letters to the editor. Letters no longer than one typewritten page are more likely to be published. Include your name and address on all correspondence. Only signed letters can be printed. Letters may be edited for the sake of length and clarity.

If We Want a GREAT Missions Program, We Must Take Our Shoes Off! (Part 1)

The account of Moses and the “burning bush” in Exodus 1-4 is familiar to all *Horizons* readers. Someone has probably already wondered aloud, “How does this have any application to a congregational missions program?” The question is valid, because improper interpretation and application of scripture can create any number of issues.

God was on the verge of unveiling His grand plan to bring freedom from the slavery of the brick pits of Egypt to the people of Israel. The plan would eventually lead them into the land that had been promised. In the recorded events, God invited Moses to play a role of God’s choice in this grand drama. Similarly, God has unveiled His plan to bring freedom from the slavery of sin to all of mankind through His Son Jesus. Like Moses, God has invited His church to play a role in this grand drama. Thus, we may carefully enter this story discovering how the church may best prepare itself to fulfill its role of God’s sovereign assignment.

Removal of one’s shoes upon entering a home is a sign of respect. The visitor is acknowledging they have entered the home of another, and they are avoiding bringing filth to it. This tradition was particularly appropriate in the age of Moses, and for centuries afterward. Travel was primitive and filthy, as was the footwear of the period. Thus, God was reminding Moses that he was now standing “in God’s house” which was indeed “holy ground.” This was no casual encounter. It was a meeting of God’s choice. It occurred in God’s timing of world events and in God’s timing of Moses’ life. Moses was standing on God’s ground and he needed to remove his shoes out of respect, and it would also remind him that God was in control!

Horizons

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It would be healthy for us to find a way to “remove our shoes” when it comes to world missions, because we have entered God’s house! The plan of salvation was written by God! Surely, no man would have dreamed up a plan where God’s anointed Savior would hang on a cross between two thieves. The impact of God’s drama is of His sovereign design. No human would conceive a plan that makes every tribe, tongue and nation of equal importance and worth! For centuries, humans have used religion as a call to war. Only God could unleash the power of His love to make man in His image.

If we truly want to have a great missions program, we need great humility. So many questions arise in a discussion of world missions. What are we going to do? Where are we going to send our money? How do we separate all the requests we have and arrange them in priority? What will we do about the roles of mutual accountability between supported ministry and supporting congregation? All these and more are vital to the process. Before we think, discuss, or act we must remind ourselves we are in God’s house standing on holy ground. You think about that!



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2014

November 13-16

International Conference on Missions

Columbus, Ohio

Theme: Vertical

Contact information: David Empson

317-539-4231 / david@theicom.org

November 14-16

Eastern Christian Conference

Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Theme: Sent

2014 President: Don Hamilton

Contact information: Eastern Christian Conference

410-836-6102 / info@easterncc.com

www.easterncc.com

2015

June 23-26

North American Christian Convention

Duke Energy Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

Theme: We Speak

2015 President: Mike Baker

Contact information: North American Christian Convention

513-772-9970 / www.gotonacc.org

Morning Glory Story

by Lori Pinney Nij, Director

Morning Glory Christian Academy

is a fully accredited private Christian school located in San Raymundo, Guatemala.



Part of the outreach of New Iberian Mission Association and directed by long term missionaries Eugenio and Lori Nij, Morning Glory is a very unique place. No one comes to Morning Glory without falling in love with the school and the happy children that study there.

In 2001 Lori Pinney Nij accepted the challenge set before her by the New Iberian Mission board to take charge of the small educational project that had been started by Carlos and Pati Cojón. Located on the mission property, the school consisted of two very run down classrooms and some broken down benches and tables. With little else than faith and some cheap green paint, Morning Glory Christian Academy began. In 2003 Morning Glory received government certification as a fully accredited pre primary and primary school. The next years saw phenomenal growth, and Morning Glory now is home to almost six hundred students, thirty five employees,

eighteen large and functional classrooms, a fully functioning computer lab with 22 computers, a library, three playgrounds, a multi-sport playing field, administrative offices and a large music room. The original old classrooms functioned this year as the classroom for dance class. In 2012 Morning Glory was invited to participate in a pilot program to stimulate excellence in education in Guatemala. Morning Glory was one of 32 schools to receive a five years certificate of Accreditation for Excellence in Education.

Dedicated to our mission statement: "Morning Glory seeks to educate the community through relationships to cultivate Biblical Integrity, responsibility and confidence."

*Dedicated to our mission statement:
“Morning Glory seeks to educate the community through relationships to cultivate Biblical Integrity, responsibility and confidence.”*



Accounting teacher with student



Student and teacher

We are focused on growing through example and teaching Christ-centered citizens of Guatemala. Morning Glory has become a place of influence and respect in the community of San Raymundo.

Determined to teach life lessons, not just ABCs, general director

Miss Lori Nij strives to know personally each child and family represented at Morning Glory. Taking to heart the wise counsel of, “preach at all times and when necessary use words,” Biblical principles are the basis and foundation of everything taught and exemplified. Teaching life lessons of responsibility, consequences, Christian brotherhood, love, compassion, grace and forgiveness, Morning Glory students learn to become the hands, the feet and the heart of Jesus Christ in their community.

When hurricane Agatha totally destroyed a village near San Raymundo, the students, parents and teachers of Morning Glory were the first to arrive with bot-

tled water, clothes, food and aid for the hurting community. Seeing the need, a long term project was formed and, with the help of IDES, Morning Glory was able to contribute in a large way with the rebuilding of the community over the following two months. Students, teachers and parents





Pre-primary student

not only donated goods, but shared with their time and labor, shoveling mud, cleaning, painting and cleaning up the destruction. We were able to build a small house for a blind man and perhaps one of the most significant events was an afternoon of fun with Christian clowns, piñatas, games, Bible stories, songs and refreshment for the children of the village.

Just last month a young man in the public school in our village broke his arm and needed surgery. His family was unable to pay and the Morning Glory students stepped in. Giving from their savings and personal funds, the students were able to raise the necessary funds so that the young man could receive the treatment necessary.

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**At Morning Glory one of our most important Core Values is EXCELLENCE.**

We strive to teach our students that God deserves our best in whatever we choose to do. If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well. The theme of excellence

flows through everything we do. Our children are known for winning every competition they enter. Whether it be dance, soccer, volleyball, academics or band, Morning Glory students shine. We set our bar of expectation very high and encourage our students to constantly do better. This builds the confidence and self esteem of our students, who for the most part come from poverty. In 2012 and 2013 the Morning Glory Marching Band and Glory dancers won First Place in a prestigious band completion in Guatemala City. This year our music program has added an orchestra



*Preschool child in class*





*Students in folkloric dance meet first place city wide*



*Part of the band*

the Beautiful” and “Amazing Grace” among other arrangements.



with instruments that we have won, parents have bought with great sacrifice, and friends have donated. The children are learning to read music and play complicated arrangements. They have amazed American groups with a beautiful rendition of “America

**We believe with our whole heart that lives are changed through RELATIONSHIPS.** Our most effective teaching is relational, and our leadership is committed to modeling Christian principles so that everyone may see our example and honor God because of our actions. It is very important to us that each visitor, each short term worker, each intern that visits Morning Glory establish long term relationships with our students and staff. It is through these friendships and relationships that the love of Christ is modeled again and again and lives are changed. Each child, each parent, each person that



*Morning Glory orchestra*

comes through Morning Glory becomes part of our Story.

~~~~~  
Morning Glory believes that personal RESPONSIBILITY is the key to growth and maturity into the completion of an individual's potential. We teach

our students that they are not “victims of circumstance or poverty.” They are children of the King and as such they are responsible for their own future and with hard work and perseverance, they can overcome whatever circumstance they were born into. We require them to take responsibility for their actions and reactions from a very young age.

~~~~~  
**We believe firmly in the scripture teaching that “as a man thinks in His heart so he is” and therein our Core Value of CONFIDENCE.** Morning Glory seeks to provide activities that allow children to explore their God-given gifts and refine their skills, teaching them that their circumstances, physical attributes or even economic status do not define them. As a result, our children believe in God, believe in His power in their lives and themselves, and are equipped to seek out their own future free of labels and self-doubt.

~~~~~  
Finally we teach BIBLICAL INTEGRITY. We believe that God's Word is “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in all righteousness” (I Tim. 3:16) for all people of all cultures. Morning Glory uses the Bible to



More from the dance competition

determine what is correct and desirable in the lives of our students. We also encourage our parents to establish Biblical principles in their economy and home lives. We encourage our parents to discipline with love, to raise their children in responsibility, and to be faithful to the word of God in their homes and lives. We have watched our families prosper and grow over the last fourteen years as they put in practice the principles set out in the Word of God.

Morning Glory is a very special place and we are uniquely blessed to be able to host short term groups. Our school year, which goes from January through October, is perfect for



Teacher and secondary girls



Allie Borders, 2014 mission assistant, saying goodbye

groups of young people on summer vacation who wish to spend a week or so getting to know our students and serve in Guatemala. We

share our campus with the hospital built by the Medical Surgical Association of San Raymundo of which Eugenio and Lori Nij are founding members. This hospital opens during the year to host international medical, surgical teams who serve the community of San Raymundo. As part of the hospital complex, a large dorm facility was built and furnished. During the year when there are no medical teams here, Morning Glory has the use of this facility to house short term groups. In addition to this facility, we also rent a large guesthouse in town that is used for housing guests, interns and overflow groups. This facility makes an ideal place for junior high and high school groups because it is located within the walled school compound making it a safe, enclosed place to have a positive mission experience. It also lowers the overhead costs for groups since we own our own housing and do not have to rent expensive hotel rooms or camp facilities. There are many opportunities for different types of services, including working and evangelizing in the local church and villages, holding leadership training seminars with the local pastors and leaders, retreats with



Part of the faculty and staff with Miss Lori

the secondary students at Morning Glory, Vacation Bible Schools for Morning Glory students or children in the surrounding villages, and never ending work and maintenance projects.

Our school year also makes Morning Glory Christian School an ideal place for college students interested in missions, teaching, or cross cultural studies to fulfill their internship requirements. Each summer we have any number of interns who help with classes, with short term groups, and with the church in Sacsuy ministered to by Eugenio Nij. Lori Nij especially enjoys mentoring young women who are looking to find their

place in the Kingdom of God. These young men and women are forever part of the Morning Glory Story.

In 2012, Morning Glory began to partner with CASAS POR CRISTO in San Raymundo. Eugenio is the president of the local pastors committee and Lori Nij provides housing, food and transportation for all the Casas' groups. This summer alone over forty houses were built for families in the community, and the gospel was shared with countless people.

The Morning Glory Story is a story about grace, miracles and the provision of God in our lives and ministry. God has been faithful and has walked with us and blessed us through the years. We face challenges like never before. It is urgent that we build three large classrooms by January of 2015 in order to expand to the high school level. We are fully approved by the ministry of education. We only lack classroom space and budget to go forward. Each year Morning Glory turns away hundreds of potential students for lack of funds and space. We are trusting in God and His people to make this happen.

We invite you to visit our website, and our Facebook page to learn more about us.

www.morningglorychristianacademy.net

You will find vital information about child sponsorship, short term groups and internships there. We invite you to come and be part of the MORNING GLORY STORY.



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SEMINAR ON ISLAM

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Don Tingle
Executive Director



Chuck Phillips
Strategic Field
Coordinator



Pakistani
Co-worker

Donald S. Tingle is the author of

Islam & Christianity, a booklet published by InterVarsity Press. Over 90,000 copies in print in English, plus editions in several other languages

Handbook on Islam for Christians Serving in the United States Armed Forces. A pocket-size question and answer booklet used by chaplains and troops in conflict zones

Studies in Faith: a series of lessons on the basics of faith for Muslims using the Qur'an and the Bible. Written especially for Crimean Tatar Muslims. Published in Russian.

28 Days with Matthew: a series of short thoughts on the life of Jesus. This book was written with Muslims in mind to help them understand the gospel. Published in English, Albanian and Somali

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT



Still Doing Something for Haiti that Will Last

by **Cameron Mayhill**
Director of Development

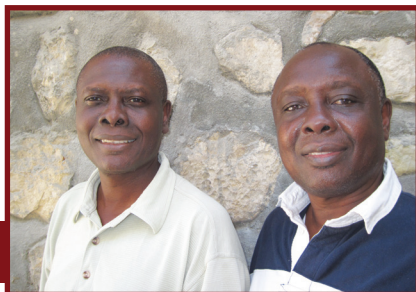
Haitian Christian Outreach is an incredible story of partnerships that have been changing Haiti for God's kingdom over the past 30 years.

It all began as RoRo and Gerard Eustache were led to Christ and discipled by Stephen Prophete and Leon Dorleans through Haitian Christian Mission. Soon after, Millersburg Christian Church in Ohio was prompted to do something for Haiti that would last. In response to this, they brought RoRo and his wife Eline to the U.S. to study at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO. Upon graduation, they returned to Haiti, and in April 1985, a new church was born in the heart of the Delmas District of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The partners in this new work could only dream of what these seeds of faith would someday produce.

Church planting is hard. And the first

months in Delmas were difficult. RoRo and Eline slept on cardboard as they laid the foundation for Emmanuel Christian Church (ECC). This church became the foundation for all of the ministries of HCO.

RoRo's brother, Gerard, joined them after completing his undergraduate studies at Cincinnati Bible College (now Cincinnati Christian University) in 1988. ECC was meeting in a small home on Delmas 24, but it didn't take long for the attendance to exceed the capacity of the building. To accommodate the crowds, the church blocked the streets and put speakers outside the building so



Gerard and Roro Eustache → → → →

that those standing in the streets could hear the Gospel proclaimed.

Along the way, new partners joined HCO and the Eustaches, including a number of Holmes County, Ohio churches. Mac Burberry and Stephen Collins, two men who have served the mission in a variety of capacities, joined the work of HCO in 1989 and 1990, respectively. To meet the needs of the growing ministry, RoRo and Gerard returned to the states to further their education. Both were Missionaries in Residence at Lincoln Christian University and earned their M.A. degrees from Lincoln Christian Seminary in the mid-90s. Soon churches from Michigan, Kentucky, Illinois, and Indiana joined the expanding network of partners. Two international ministries, FAME and

IDES, became major partners in providing materials, equipment and training, and HCO has forged partnerships with other Haitian ministries along the way as well.

With the anointing of the Holy Spirit, all of these partnerships have produced much fruit. The work of Haitian Christian Outreach now stretches from the Arbonite region through Port-au-Prince to the far southeastern parts of Haiti. And today HCO is making plans to celebrate its 30th Anniversary at ICOM in Columbus, OH.

Through four major areas of ministry, Haitian Christian Outreach is partnering with Haitian Christians to transform a culture for Christ.



Church Planting

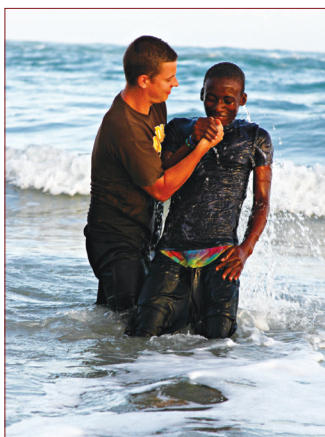
Church planting remains the heart of the ministry. HCO has planted a total of nine churches since the birth of the first one in the heart of Port-au-Prince, and this fall marked the launch of their 10th plant in the community of Belle Anse, Haiti. They have also established a church camp and leadership development center in Peredo, Haiti.

RoRo says, “We will plant a new church every

two years, leap frogging toward the Dominican border.” But it doesn’t stop there. Pastor Matthew Jacob leads Emmanuel Christian Church of Droulliard (near Citi Soliel). He reports that they have planted two new churches in the last three years in addition to the planned work of the mission.

Executive Director Mac Burberry says, “We believe that disciples make dis-

ciples and churches plant churches. We are praying for a church planting movement to break out in Haiti that will do exceedingly and abundantly far beyond what we can imagine. We want to see Haitian Christians take up the responsibility for discipling Haiti. We pray for a day in our lifetime when church planting will be fully-funded and planned by other Haitian churches.”



Children



Less than 50% of primary school-age children are enrolled in school, and 60% of those will drop out before completing 6th grade. More than half live in extreme poverty (less than \$1 per day), and another 27% are considered poor (living on less than \$2 per day). Through schools in six locations, HCO is providing quality education and nutritional support for more than 2,000 children in Pre-K through High School.

HCO has been the winner of the Laurent Award from the Ministry of Education for the last 10 years. Emmanuel Christian School students score higher on the 6th grade and 12th grade national exams than any others in their district, and HCO graduates more than 98% of the children enrolled in their schools. Their 'Every Child' program provides opportunity for partners to invest in the children of Haiti for \$12 per month.



Healthcare

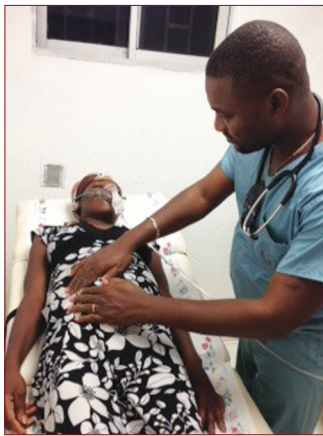
HCO has been involved in providing healthcare in Haiti since 1996. In December 2013, HCO opened Peredo Community Hospital. This 7,000 square ft. facility, constructed since the 2010 earthquake, provides primary care, lab, OB/delivery, pharmacy, and pediatric care for the region. It is fully staffed by Haitian healthcare professionals.

“Our goal is to equip and empower Haitian

healthcare professionals to provide top-quality care to the people of Haiti in the name of Christ. We bring U.S.-trained healthcare professionals to Haiti to equip Haitian nationals in new skill sets and provide continuing medical education,” says Mac.

HCO is currently constructing Phase II of the hospital that includes two surgical suites and a full OB and delivery unit. RoRo was recently award-

ed the Riland Medal, by the New York Institute of Technology for innovation and excellence in Global Health. HCO’s healthcare partners include FAME, Teaching to Transform, Chosen Mission Project, Midmark, and numerous physicians and other healthcare workers who come to Haiti to train our staff in the latest procedures and skills.



Community Development

Roughly 75% of Haitians are unemployed. Recognizing the need to equip and empower adults to sustain ministry in Haiti and provide for their families, HCO provides adult education and economic development projects.

- **Adult Education**—Through Community Health Evangelism (CHE), HCO equips and empowers Haitian believers to evangelize, equip, and empower their community. CHE is a multifaceted approach to Christian ministry that addresses the needs of the whole person—physical, spiritual, emotional, and social. It is not a funding strategy, but rather a training strategy. HCO also provides classes in business math, reading, and English for adults.

- **Economic Development**—Currently HCO empowers families and individuals to make a living through our poultry program that provides families with training, cages, feed and chickens to produce eggs for income. Also, HCO has recently opened up a Compressed Earth Block (CEB) plant that employs 20 Haitian men. This new building technology produces a block that is 92% dirt and is 62% stronger than concrete. Constructing with this block is much more cost effective, provides for the use of readily available indigenous materials, and produces a building that meets Class IV Earthquake standards.

HCO is evangelizing, equipping, empowering and encouraging Haitian Christians as they transform their culture for Christ. RoRo and Gerard provide dynamic leadership, training and direction for their staff. U.S. Christians provide funding, training, spiritual support, and encouragement for a ministry that is reproducing itself.

For more information, visit their website at www.haitianchristian.org or contact Cameron Mayhill, Director of Development, at cameron@haitianchristian.org or Mac Burberry, Executive Director, at mac@haitianchristian.org.



special feature

► The following article is reprinted by permission from the author. It first appeared in the Summer 2014 issue of Commonwealth International University's *News & Views*. The author emphasized that, even though some things may have changed since the article was initially written, a lot of the feelings recorded have not. ◀

IN THE MIDST OF THE CURRENT CRISIS IN CRIMEA:

Thoughts and Feelings of CIU Faculty and Staff

by Shannon Haynie

CIU professor of English and Biblical Literature



I am the latest addition to the faculty and staff at CIU (formerly Crimean-American College). I have been in Simferopol, Crimea, since October 2004. Previously, I was working with Pioneer Bible Translators, assisting with a Bible translation project for the Crimean Tatar people, a minority Muslim people group on this peninsula. As my responsibilities with PBT were drawing to a close last year, I started to volunteer some time to help CIU in teaching Conversational English in Spring 2013. Last fall I was able to give the majority of my focus to CIU and am teaching more classes: Beginner's English and Biblical Literature, and in April I began teaching Life of Christ.

I have known about Commonwealth International University since its beginning, when Dr. Keith Keeran visited churches in the U.S. to share the vision. At that time, my path did not take me down the CIU road, but to my delight, it has wound back around after all these years, so that now I can take part in this mission that has become a bright light in the darkness of the old Soviet Union.

During my nine plus years in Crimea, I have come to know some of the staff and former students and have built relationships with them. I have seen firsthand the quality graduates that CIU has produced.

So now I consider it a great privilege that I finally get to be a part of

this mission, and I am working with some amazing people. In fact, for this issue of *News & Views*, I would like to update you on these colleagues. I especially want you to understand some of what they are experiencing as they share their hearts about what is going on in their beloved Crimea. Times are tough and uncertain, and even scary. The peninsula of Crimea has changed hands, and in order to continue living here, people must make some huge changes and decisions. These changes affect the nationals' emotions, finances, citizenship and sometimes safety, among other things.

Two of our colleagues, Yevgeny and his wife Katrina, are leaving Crimea to move to Ukraine. But we still believe that God has CIU here for such a time as this. We are praying for His leading for how we can be used. There is a great turning to God right now in Crimea that cannot be ignored. Please join us in prayer that God would show us what His mission is in this new Crimea.

Natalka

Natalka has been working for CIU since 2008 and is in charge of the Impact Program and our campus ministry program. She is also a dedicated member of the faculty. She has just begun a class for students on Revelation. Once a month she and I try to plan an event for the students



CIU Continues Unabated Under Russian Rule

Trusting God in the midst of political chaos and national uncertainty

-- those who attend classes as well as those who live in the "house on the Hill" -- which is what the CIU Center for Biblical Studies and our home for resident students is affectionately called.

Natalka is originally from Western Ukraine and is a true Ukrainian to the core. To see what has been happening to her beloved country has been causing her deep pain. She has never considered herself a political activist, but since the events on Maidan in Kyiv began last November, she has gotten involved.

One of the ways that she is making her voice heard is by meeting



with other believers to pray early every morning in a local park. The first time they met to pray was at Lenin Square, where they had a run-in with Russian supporters. Between 100-150 pro-Russian activists were spread all over the square, so the prayer group stood inconspicuously off to the side.

After they prayed, a grandma came up and interrogated them about what they were doing and why. They tried to kindly witness to her, and she left. A little later, the pro-Russian crowd began to shout an extremist name at an innocent mother, who was just walking by, holding her toddler's hand. When this started, the grandma turned the Russian group's focus on the prayer group and shouted, "Here are more provocateurs, Jehovah's Witnesses, American spies!" The Christians tried to peacefully defend themselves, but when the crowd became more aggressive, they decided to meet in the park next to the government building from then on to pray. No one has bothered them there. Nataalka says, "We pray and pray and pray, and it helps us to survive."

Nataalka is registered in Western Ukraine. Under Ukrainian law, she was able to move freely around the country to work and live, but now she is considered a foreigner in Crimea. She could be deported at some point; it all depends on the new laws.

But all is not depressing for Nataalka. One day several years ago, she was standing on Maidan in Kyiv during a

big event where lots of people were gathered. As she stood in the crowd, she had a strong feeling that all of Ukraine would pray there one day. That was more than 10 years ago. At that time she couldn't imagine that it could become reality, but it has happened recently. Nataalka says, "During the events (on Maidan), so many people were involved and were so well-organized, that I felt that the Holy Spirit was there and was working. There was a point when the people got on their knees and prayed, and I was sure it was God causing them to pray. That's unusual when so many people want to pray to God and are willing to be patient, willing to help each other, and it all happened on Maidan. The reason they gathered was to protest against corruption and for the freedom of Ukraine -- good things. So I support Crimea remaining with Ukraine. This is something that can only be done by God in his grace."

Vika

Vika has been working for CIU since 2010 as a personal secretary for CIU's President, Dr. Georges P. Carillet. Besides assisting



him with his personal business, she helps at the Center with interpreting at public places, paying public utilities and assisting Nastya in finding needed information pertaining to the operation of CIU and its Center for Biblical Studies. She has also helped Zhenya Ustinovich prepare his courses and Olya check her students' papers and to develop materials for study. As Vika says, "We work as a team; if someone needs help, we help each other and fill in for each other when it's needed." When the Center's programs grow and we have more possibilities, then she hopes to have more communication with students and more paperwork.

Vika is a Crimean Tatar, and she was willing to give me her viewpoints about the Russian occupation in Crimea. With all the changes taking place here so quickly, many Crimean Tatars are afraid. In 1944 they experienced a horrific deportation under Stalin, and some are afraid something similar could happen again. They are afraid they won't have as many rights and freedoms as they had under Ukraine. In Crimea they had their own schools, a TV channel, the use of a government building, and parliamentary representation, but now they are afraid they will lose it all.

Vika is a graduate of Commonwealth International University. While a student and even now working for CIU, she has felt spoiled by the American feelings of freedom that

the college provided on campus. They were taught to be free and to make their own choices. She says, "I was born in 1989 at the end of the Soviet Union, and raised independently in Ukraine. So it is hard to accept that I will have another country as my nation." Not only are there new citizenship requirements, but currently is also new. Everything is changing and not for the better. Life under Russian rule is much more difficult.

Vika pointed out the irony that if you have a Ukrainian flag and speak the Ukrainian language in Crimea now, you are considered a nationalist (extremist). But if you do the same in Russian, you are called patriotic. The feeling is that Crimea is reverting back to communist times, under an authoritarian government leader. Yet, the Russians here are so hopeful for a better future under Russia. So far that isn't working for anyone, including the pro-Russian community.

OLYA

Olya, another graduate of both CIU and Kentucky Christian University's School of Graduate Studies, has been a teacher of English and



Bible since 2009. She is now providing important administrative support as CIU's academic dean.

As with the others I interviewed, the occupation of Crimea was a shock to Olya. Every day on the news she hears new surprises and more bad news, which is depressing and exhausting emotionally. "I don't know what the future holds," Olya says. "I want to hope that things will get better, but in my mind, I don't think so, because of all the difficulties. I've sunk into moments of depression where people needed to comfort me. I don't know when it'll get better." She has private students what she teaches, so she feels she will be able to weather the storm, but she worries about her friends who may lose their jobs. If you don't accept the Russian passport (citizenship), you won't be able to legally work in Crimea.

Before the invasion, everything was peaceful and people worked together. Now there is division among peoples -- Russian kids bully Ukrainian and Tatar kids, telling them to leave school. One of Olya's friends is a teacher and her class originally had twenty-two students, but so many families have evacuated that now she has about six kids left in her class.

There is, however, a bright side. Right now there's a great opportunity for believers to minister and God will be working through those Christians that are going to stay. Olya is confident that we can continue to

grow this ministry and that more and greater opportunities will emerge for CIU.

Our faith partners, the Union of Christian Students (a group of state university students), may be forced to evacuate. If so, CIU will be the only ministry working with students in Crimea -- those who turn a blind eye to Russia and its deceits, and those who want to know the truth. Jesus is the only truth that can set people free and as we reach out to seek those longing for hope and the truth of the gospel the number of Christians will multiply just as in the First Century.

Nastya

Nastya has worked at CIU since 2007, and her major roles are office manager and chief administrator for the "House on the Hill". She also works in office finances, and administers TOEFL exams. She too is a graduate of Commonwealth International University, and has a heart for orphans. One of the main orphanages was closed last year, so she's been volunteering in the last remaining one -- Gagarin -- the Central Orphanage. She and her friends have



a social center there where they visit with the girls once a week and have discussion, tea time, craft time, and sometimes outings with the girls, including movies and picnics when they are allowed.

On Referendum Sunday, March 16, the girls' orphanage was going to be used as a polling center for the big vote. Military people were going to be standing guard, and Nastya and the volunteers worried about how the girls would handle all this activity and the chance of fights breaking out on their campus. To protect the girls, the orphanage director sent all the orphans she could to their relatives, but twenty girls from the orphanage that are true orphans without any parent, were left. They would have had to be locked in their rooms for the whole day. So Nastya arranged to bring them

to the Center for a day and night. They turned it into a fun time for the girls, watching movies, eating food, and talking.

When asked about the Russian occupation, Nastya said that at first she struggled with everything happening to Crimea. She didn't want the Russians to take control of Crimea. She has participated in meetings and protests and other pro-Ukraine projects, but unfortunately, she says it didn't help. Now she feels like she's given up. She's a little depressed that Russia won Crimea, but she doesn't plan to evacuate, because her parents and relatives are here, and she can't leave them. As long as it is safe, meaning no war, she will continue living and working here as long as there is work to do at CIU.



Keith P. Keeran, PhD
Founder of Commonwealth
International University,
Simferopol, Crimea (now part
of the Russian Federation)

“Your prayers are very important to us! Over 22 years have been invested in this work, and while difficult at times, many lives have been transformed. God has many people in Ukraine that have not yet heard the gospel and turned their hearts heavenward, but today they are looking for something more secure and hopeful. They are not finding it in the political social systems. Government has failed them. We must not be guilty of the same travesty. We need you to stand with us now like never before.”



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