

February 2021



Coming Up: The Edmondson Matching Challenge

Each year from March through May we issue a challenge to our friends and partners. We have wonderful supporters who make significant donations each year with the challenge that other partners match what they have given. Your generosity has made this annual effort a success. Your giving has enabled us to travel and train more groups of leaders in other countries and helped Eileen to travel and train with me. This year's challenge officially begins on March 1. However, we have already received an initial matching challenge gift of \$7500. We need your help. As countries lower their travel barriers over the next few months, we want to take full advantage of every opportunity. However, in the post-covid world, travel is more expensive than ever. This is due to a reduced number of available flights, fewer direct flights, testing, and quarantining requirements, etc. All of this makes us grateful in advance to God and to you for your faithful financial partnership with us.

In His Grip



Spiritual Warfare in Myanmar and Beyond

Recently I taught an online class for students in Myitkyana, Myanmar (Burma). My subject was Spiritual Warfare. We talked about the schemes of the evil one and how to overcome them by prayer, by believing what God has promised, and by maintaining our spiritual disciplines in a growing relationship with the Savior. Now, the subject has taken on new significance in the aftermath of a military coup that has thrown all of Myanmar into chaos. Our classes are on hold there as most internet connectivity has been cut off. We do not know how churches and other Christian ministries are affected beyond the loss of communication with one another. Protests are building there. Myanmar is not the only place where our students are facing spiritual warfare. In India, promoting the persecution of Christians has become government



policy. In Nepal, our partner Dilli Ram is experiencing "double jeopardy" as he is retried on the same bogus charges for which he was recently acquitted. In Rwanda, many of the churches have been closed for more than a year through bureaucratic foot-dragging in spite of extensive Covid-19 mitigation efforts in those congregations. Our colleagues at Global Training Network could relate dozens of other examples from all over the world. Today, there is more persecution of Christians around the globe than at any time in all of church history. These are indeed days of spiritual warfare. It is important that we meet these spiritual attacks with the mighty spiritual weapons wielded only through prayer. We march forward in victory when we march on our knees. It is time to make war on the floor. 

The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus!

When I think of the love of Jesus for His people, I always recall an ancient hymn which begins: "Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus; vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!" I am drawn to these words. They suggest wonder at love beyond comprehension. Our puny minds can never fully grasp the love of an infinite God and Savior so committed to his erring children that



He would and did die for them. Unfortunately, what we find difficult to understand, we also find difficult to accept or believe. Ever since Adam and Eve decided that they had a right to know all that God knows, human beings have exhibited a stubborn resistance to believing in anything bigger than our own understanding. Oh, on one level, we can affirm that God's love for us is infinite. Yet, on a deeper, more personal level, we have difficulty believing that such love could possibly be real enough to apply to "me." Dr. Paul Madson, the president of Global Training Network, recently penned an article in which he stated his opinion that "most Christians do not truly believe that God loves them with an *inexhaustible, everlasting, gracious love.*" I agree. However, there is something ridiculous and even arrogant about our doubt. How can we ever wrap our finite minds around anything infinite? If God is indeed God, there are, *by necessity*, things

The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus! *(Cont'd)*

about His nature that we can never fully comprehend, including His infinite commitment to each of us. Our inability to fully grasp God's love does not *in any way* prove that love untrue or unreal; yet, because we cannot fully understand it, we exhibit this strange, reflexive tendency toward disbelief. We find it hard to humble ourselves and accept that God is indeed God, infinite in grace and lavish in love, while I am indeed...not. I am a mere human being, fallen and weak, with a desperate need for the grace and love that an infinitely loving *and real* God desperately desires to give.

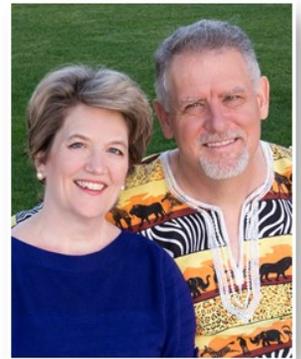
The good news is that although we cannot fully understand God's love, we can still believe and experience that love. Eileen

and I plan to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary this summer. After 4 decades I *still* do not fully understand her, yet I do know her *very* well. At times Eileen also finds *me* incomprehensible (possibly she's over-thinking), yet she knows me better than any other human being on the planet. It is possible to have a fulfilling and indeed priceless relationship without fully understanding another person. Indeed, the mystery creates the challenge and opportunity for the growth necessary in any healthy relationship. It also creates a lot of the fun. More importantly, it provides an important spiritual lesson! God designed marriage to be a picture of our relationship with Him. (Ephesians 5:32)



While God is infinite and we can therefore never know everything about Him, we can never-the-less know Him. By the same token, while God's love for us is infinite and we can, therefore, never know everything about it, we can never-the-less know and experience His love. The Apostle Paul prayed for just this sort of personal understanding of God's love in the lives of Christians: *"so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.* (Ephesians 3:17-19)

If you want this kind of depth in your relationship to God, you must realize your own limits and His lack of them. Surrender the hunger to fully understand. Have the courage to simply say, "I believe!" You will find your eyes opened in a whole new way. A spiritual light will dawn in your soul leading you toward greater intimacy with the Savior. The writer of that ancient hymn concluded his thoughts about the deep and incomprehensible love of Jesus by exclaiming, "and it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee!"



Our Praises and Prayer Requests



- Praise God for expanded training in Rwanda in 2021.
- Praise God for good health. Eileen and I have recovered from Covid 19.

- Praise God for good giving in January.
- Please pray for travel restrictions to be lifted in the countries we serve.
- Please pray that the GTN leadership gathering in Mid-February will be productive.
- Please pray for the health and safety of students in Nepal, Rwanda, Malawi, Philippines and Myanmar.
- Please pray that ministry in Myanmar may continue in spite of the military coup there.
- Please pray that we will be an encouragement to our many partners during these days.

Our Itinerary



- Feb 7:** Valley Baptist Church, Yuma
- Feb 19-22:** GTN Leadership Gathering (Virtual)
- Feb 28:** Grace Baptist Church, Chino Valley
- March 15-19:** International Zoom training
- May:** Rwanda Ministry (tentative)

Ministry Partnership

Your financial partnership is essential as we carry out our God given ministry. Please follow the instructions below or on the enclosed response card (US mail version).

"Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account... And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:17, 19)

You may give online at:

www.globaltrainingnetwork.org

Just click on "Give," then scroll down until you can click on our picture. A new page will appear with an online giving form.



Support also accepted at:

Global Training Network
PO Box 6507
Peoria, AZ 85385

(Please include a note indicating that your gift is preferred for the Edmondsons #435.)

Please call GTN at 623-217-3867 if you need any assistance.

Come visit us at

www.inhisgripionline.org

