

August, 2016  
Newsletter

FaithLife Ministries  
"Equipping Church Leaders Globally for 15 Years"



## God Bless America?



I am blessed to have been born in The United States of America and to have enjoyed the benefits of a free society. My mother came to America from England in 1922 with her family to seek a better life. My father is 4th generation American whose great grandfather came to the USA from Germany for the same reason. My parents both served in the Army during WWII and after they got married worked hard to give me the kind of life they and their ancestors had left their homelands for. I have been able to go to college, build a career, earn a good income, raise a family, and own a home. But more importantly, I have been able to practice my faith openly, speak freely, vote my conscience, and live peacefully.

I had these blessings because of those who established this nation on Judeo-Christian values, those who fought for this nation to protect those values, and those who served this nation to ensure those values. Because of them, and our nation's respect for God and His Word, we had prospered and become a nation that people from every other nation dreamed of coming to. God had indeed blessed America.

But over the past 50 years our nation has turned away from God. It has rejected His Word and Truth and sought to eliminate Him from our society. The evidence for this is clearly apparent with the growth of American citizens with no faith at all(25%), the steady decline in church attendance, the normalization of fornication and homosexual behavior, the legalization of gay marriage, the removal of references to God from the public arena, the verbal and legal persecution of Christians who practice their faith, and the ongoing push to secularize America.

**If America has turned away from God, will God bless America?** Scripture is clear that God cannot bless those who have turned away from Him. God says in **2 Chronicles 7:14** that **"If my people, who are called by my name, will humbles themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and will heal their land."** God will not bless open disobedience to His Word. **Proverbs 14:34** says that **"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."** And **Psalm 33:12** says **"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."** Obviously, if our nation does not recognize God then it will not be blessed. God still blesses those Americans who seek and obey Him. But He cannot bless a nation that has cast Him aside and refuses to honor Him.

Consequently, I can no longer say or sing the song **"God Bless America"** because I cannot ask God to bless a nation that is against Him and does not honor Him. However, I will still ask God to bless those Americans who do and pray for those who don't to repent and seek His forgiveness so they can be blessed as well.

I also pray that the day will come when I can sing **"God Bless America"** once again.

## Argentina MCL #2 Training Conference June 28 - July 1st, Quilmes

Barry & Samuel Quispiroca from Cusco, Peru traveled to Quilmes, Argentina (near Buenos Aires) to conduct a **Management for Church Leaders Volume #2** training **June 28th - July 1st**. We trained 140 pastors and church leaders from the Church



of God in Argentina over 4 nights on a variety of additional topics relating to leading and managing a church including communication skills, building community, managing small groups, managing change and decision making. (*I taught the MCL Volume #1 there in 2011.*)

The material was very well received and we had great discussions, especially about small groups and managing change. Many attendees thanked us personally and said they benefited greatly from what we taught. One of the participants, **Miriam Ocampo de Fererria**, said that *"the conference was an incredible experience and we helped her look at new ways and thinking for her life and ministry."* We praise God for using us in this special way. To God alone be the glory!

## Vietnam MCL Training Conference August 15-16th Ho Chi Min City & August 17-18th, Hanoi

Barry and Ron Bracali traveled to **Ho Chi Min City** and **Hanoi, Vietnam** August 11-22nd to train a total of 69 pastors, church leaders and Christian business men and women on our **Management for Church Leaders (MCL)** training. The training was well received and the participants were very engaged in what we taught in both locations. We also heard many positive comments about the training. One pastor from Ho Chi Min City taught our training the very next day to his own group of leaders. Our host in Vietnam, **Joshua Nguyen of Marketplace Ministries**, has also joined our MCL Global Trainer Network and has plans to teach it to others in the near future. We praise and thank God for the opportunity to train Christian leaders in this communist country!



## Vietnam: Time Heals

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ... a time to kill and a time to heal."*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1, 3*

As a child growing up in the 1960's Vietnam was not a place a young man wanted to go. Vietnam meant war, killing, brutality, and death. For those of us who lived through those years we have painful memories and differing attitudes about the war. It was not a very peaceful time in America either. This was the first time that a war was broadcast live on the evening news. People saw what war was like and we did not like it at all. And so Vietnam became synonymous with the ugliness of war.

But that was 50 years ago and time has a way of changing everything. So when I was given the opportunity to go to Vietnam to train, I was both excited and somewhat fearful of what I might experience. Do the Vietnamese still resent America and its involvement in the war? Are they bitter about the lives of loved ones who died in the war? Are their political leaders still hard-line communists?

As the Bible says in **Ecclesiastes 3:3**, there is a time to heal. Walking through the streets of Hanoi I could not help but feel the warmth and friendliness of the Vietnamese people. The sight of American businesses there like McDonald's, Burger King, Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts give testimony to the healing that has taken place. And Saigon was as modern as any city I have ever been in, with stores, restaurants and businesses similar to most major cities in America. And I felt at ease and humbled at how this nation survived a terrible war and has emerged with a growing economy and welcoming spirit.

I also had the opportunity to visit two museums, their war history museum and the Hoa Lo prison ("Hanoi Hilton" where American POW's were held), where they document the war. While their perspective on the war was much different than ours, it was nonetheless presented in a matter of fact way with no animosity. The Vietnamese had healed from that war and were now moving forward.

I am so glad I went to Vietnam. It is a beautiful country with warm and hospitable people who have put the past behind them. I can now put the Vietnam war and the past behind me as well.

And for that I thank God, who alone has the power to heal all wounds. I pray that the people of Vietnam will all one day come to know Jesus as well.



## Global MCL Training

Our global network of 52 trainers continue to go out and teach our **Management for Church Leaders** training material to others at a strong pace. In June, July & August there were 27 MCL trainings that took place, including one in **Isiolo, Kenya** (see photo) by **Pastor Gordon Onyango** in August. He taught our material to 54 leaders, 36 of whom were pastors. There were also MCL trainings held in Uganda, India, Nepal, Gabon, the Congo, Nigeria, Ghana and Tanzania. A total of **1,149** pastors and church leaders were trained over these 3 months! The trainings in **Gabon** and the **Congo** were also new nations for our training! Thus far our network has trained over 4,200 leaders this year and we expect to surpass 5,000 leaders fairly soon. We have also added new MCL Trainers in Vietnam and Pakistan, bringing our total to 54 Trainers! Praise God!



## Global Pastoral Trainers Conference

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the **GProCongress** global gathering of pastoral trainers in **Bangkok, Thailand June 15th - 22nd**. This conference was attended by over 3,000 pastoral trainers from 120 nations. We were all gathered to connect to one another and commit to training on average 25 pastors per year for the next 4 years. That's a total of 300,000 pastors worldwide! **Pastor Gideon Nair**, our MCL Trainer in **India**, also attended with me. We thoroughly enjoyed the daily devotions, plenary talks on healthy and unhealthy



pastors, churches and societies, and worshiping daily with our brothers and sisters from around the globe. What an awesome privilege that was to get a glimpse of what heaven will be like when we all gather from every nation & tongue to worship Jesus!

I was able to connect with pastoral trainers from 13 new nations for our ministry as well! I am looking forward to following up with each of them and hopefully scheduling some MCL training in their nations in the years to come.

I also met a few people whom I have met in the past on various trips, including pastors from India & Nigeria. I also was able to meet our host for our recent trip to Vietnam, Joshua Nguyen, who was also attending.

Gideon and I were blessed to be able to be there and encouraged in our ministries of training more pastors for the Kingdom! To God be the glory!

## No Doubt About It!

**"Stop doubting and believe!"**  
**John 20:27**

I have heard some Christians say that they have doubts when it comes to their faith. They say they don't understand why God does what He does or doesn't do, or that some things from His Word just don't make any sense to them in our world anymore. But is it OK for Christians to say they have doubts about God, Jesus, or the Bible's truth?

I strongly believe that the answer to that question is NO! The Christian faith is predicated on the existence of God, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that the Bible is God's Word and Truth. When a person publicly or privately declares that they acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God and place their trust and faith in Him alone for salvation, they are stating that they believe these things to be true. So a person cannot call themselves a Christian if they are no longer sure who God is, what Jesus did on the cross, or that God's Word is His truth.

We are told by Jesus to believe and have faith. When Peter got out of the boat and started walking to Jesus on the water he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink. Jesus reached out his hand and caught him and said to him, **"you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)** Jesus also confronted doubt in the person of Thomas, one of his disciples. He said to Thomas when he doubted to **"stop doubting and believe" (John 20:27)**. He went even further by declaring that unlike Thomas and the disciples, **"blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!" (John 20:29)**

I think many Christians who say they have doubts really mean that they don't understand God's Word or His ways and struggle to reconcile that with their daily lives. That's not doubt, that's just our lack of understanding of Him because He says **"My ways are higher than your ways." (Isaiah 55:9)**. We don't know what God knows. That's why the Bible says in **Proverbs 2:6** that **"the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding."** Additionally, **Proverbs 3:5** says we should **"trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding."** That means that must put our trust in God and His Word and not doubt Him or His truth. To doubt Him is to deny Him. Furthermore, **James 1:6-8** says that we as Christians must **"believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."**

The absolute essence of the Christian faith is to wholeheartedly believe and trust in God, His Son, and His Word. That's where the Christian faith begins. We must be confident in these truths and not doubt them!

So let's encourage one another in our faith because **there's no doubt about it!**

## Our 2016 Schedule

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Purpose/Host</u>
Feb 8-10	Phnom Phen, Cambodia	MCL Training - <i>Vanarith Chhim, Cambodia Lutheran Church</i>
Apr 11-15	Montevideo, Uruguay	MCL Training - <i>Pastor Julio Amarillo, Uruguay Church of God</i>
May 5-6	Jerusalem, Israel	MCL Training - <i>Jonathan Miles, Shevet Achim</i>
June 15-22	Bangkok, Thailand	<b>Global Proclamation Congress for Pastoral Trainers</b>
Jun 28-30	Quilmes, Argentina	MCL Training - <i>Pastor Jorge Rivero, Argentina Church of God</i>
Aug 15-16	Ho Chi Min, Vietnam	MCL Training - <i>Joshua Nguyen, Marketplace Ministries</i>
Aug 18-19	Hanoi, Vietnam	MCL Training - <i>Joshua Nguyen, Marketplace Ministries</i>
Oct 17-18	Tallin, Estonia	MCL Training - <i>Pastor Ove Sander, Estonia Lutheran Church</i>
Nov 5	Cumming, GA	<b>FLM Board of Directors Meeting</b>

### News & Notes:



- We are developing a new video for our ministry that we plan to release in October.
- Barry made 13 new contacts for our MCL training at the conference in Bangkok.
- We added 2 new MCL Trainers to our network in August from **Vietnam & Pakistan**.
- We have been invited to train in **Costa Rica in January** and **Senegal in August** of 2017.
- Barry & Kim celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on August 7th.
- Our annual board of directors meeting will take place on Saturday, November 5th.

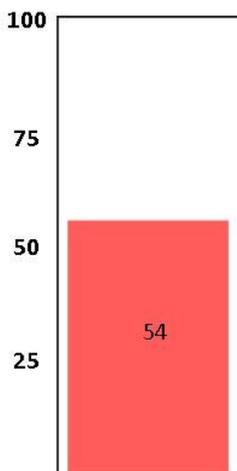
### Prayer Requests



- For healing of **Pastor Joseph Senoga Richard**, one of our MCL Trainers in **Uganda**, who is in hospital battling malaria.
- Pray for **Ruth Wheigar**, the wife of MCL Trainer **Moses Wheigar** in **Liberia**, who is battling complications from diabetes.
- Pray for the people of **Nepal** who are suffering from flooding and landslides, and for the Christians there who are responding to their needs.
- Pray for God's wisdom as we make our 2017 travel and training plans.
- Thanksgiving for what God has provided financially through our annual fundraising appeal this year.
- For God's wisdom and direction for Barry as he writes a new book on our management training and develops a Trainer's manual for our MCL Volume #2 training.

### Reaching the Nations

Our vision is to reach 100 nations with our training. Here is our current progress:



*Thank you for your prayers & support!*

*Barry & Kim*

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