



# THE VISIONARY

DECEMBER 2014

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## ON SHEPHERDS & THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CHRISTMAS

*by Doug Lucas, Founder and President, Team Expansion*

Back in New Testament days, shepherds were considered bottom-dwellers: poor, unskilled, uneducated, and maybe even dishonest, unreliable and unsavory. They weren't even allowed to testify in court. And when Sabbath day came, they had to stay with the sheep - so they had a reputation of always skipping church. Baaaaaad people.

So why were they the first to receive the angelic announcement about the first Christmas? Could God be trying to tell us something here? That the birth of the King of the ages brings hope for all mankind, even poor, outcast shepherds, who smell like sheep and campfire smoke? Researchers say that 90% of the world's poorest people live in the parts of the world in which the gospel message has not yet been told. What's wrong with this picture?

While serving in the USSR in the ear-

ly nineties, I remember watching Tatar shepherds on the Crimean Peninsula. It feels somehow redeeming to realize that Team Expansion Bible translators are hard at work completing the very first Crimean Tatar translation of the Bible in all of human history. Many of our Tatar friends were poor and suffering. But now, they will be rich in God's eyes, as they read in their own language about that first



Christmas for the very first time. Let's join hands to make sure this is the last Christmas ever without a Crimean Tatar Bible.

Pray that the Crimean Tatar translation is completed on time next September. Join me in giving thanks for the fact that Emerald Hills is training a new generation of workers like these to make a world of difference this Christmas and beyond. Thank you for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now!

## FIELD HIGHLIGHT *East Africa*

*by workers serving in East Africa*

In October, the students came again for classes. We had the opportunity to teach through the book of Matthew. I enjoy the teaching and even more the interaction with the students. Each of the young men went to life groups within the community as well as made hospital visits with us to pray for the sick.

As we continue these classes, it seems we are always tweaking and trying new things in order to role model how to live in the Kingdom. The students were initially quite opposed to participating in some of the practical outreaches we do here. However, the excitement was almost palpable as they experienced the community in life groups and prayed for hurting and lonely people laying in hospital beds.

The small Bible school program we get to run here is less about training "pastors" than it is teaching men to live a life devoted to following and obeying Jesus in all aspects of life. These men come from many different walks of life, tribes and even different denominations. The group includes farmers, a policeman, teachers, students, Baptist, Anglican, Church of Christ, married, single, engaged and so on. We are so thankful to work with these students. We pray that God will raise up some of these guys to 'go' not only to their own people but to people and tribes who have not heard about Jesus yet.

# CHANGED LIVES: *Mongolia* by workers serving in Mongolia

After five years of planting and watering God's word, several people confessed their faith in Christ and plans were made for a river baptism. We'd need to dam up the river to provide a pool for immersion.

During the previous evening though, locals began to say that if there was a baptism, the river spirits would be angry and the stream would dry up. Others said that since evil spirits come and go from the underworld through creek beds that it would invite trouble to enter the water. Many countryside people do not bathe or swim in the rivers because of this belief. Consequently, people began to back out of their decision to be baptized.

Our team stayed down at the river and prayed while the spiritual battle raged in the village. Then we heard that everyone was going to a meeting at the headman's house to decide what to do. While we were praying, we looked up and over the hill the people started to come and quietly sat down. After reading some scripture, we asked who was ready to follow Jesus. One by one FIVE stepped into the river, each one confessing Jesus as Lord and testifying that they had no other gods or idols in their hearts or in their homes! Later, 28 more came to faith!

## EVENTS

### UPCOMING EVENTS AT EMERALD HILLS

JANUARY 5-16

LAUNCH Training for missionary candidates

JANUARY 19-23

Kairos mission course

JANUARY 26-27

Kairos Facilitator Training

## PRAY WITH US

- Praise God for His blessings on Team Expansion's work around the world during 2014. All the stats are not in, but be assured that many formerly unreached people were baptized, churches were started, and the attendance in churches worldwide grew. God is good! May His Name be made famous throughout the whole earth.
- Planning has begun for an April prayer retreat, entitled Unleashed: Extraordinary Prayer for the Harvest, to be hosted at Emerald Hills, April 17-18. Pray that this retreat will make an impact on God's Kingdom and on the 50 people who will attend.
- Pray that God will provide for the current facility at Emerald Hills to be completely paid off and for the next phase of development to be funded in order to provide housing, training, and missionary kid space.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

November 2014

International Services	
Balance 11-01-14	\$139,789.69
Receipts	\$31,333.13
Expenses	\$34,388.85
Balance 11-30-14	\$136,733.97
*Balance owed to First Cap Bank: \$1.16 million, \$280,035.10 in Maintenance Endowment	
<b>RECEIPTS</b>	International Services
Andover Christian Church	800.00
Application Fee	165.00
Center Pointe Christian Church	375.00
Church of the Savior	250.00
Coastal Community Christian Church	300.00
College Heights Christian Church	100.00
College Park Church	600.00
Crossroads Bible Church	150.00
Fern Creek Christian Church	400.00
First christian Church, Johnson City	1,100.00
First Christian Church, Sullivan	300.00
GoodShop	8.04
Hikes Point Christian	52.00
Indian Creek Christian Church, Indianapol	620.00
Individuals	7,948.14
Lake Eufaula Christian Church	343.00
Northwest Christian Church	200.00
Western Hills Church of Christ	1,000.00
Wilmington Church of Christ	250.00
Woodcrest Church	200.00
Team Expansion (Workers, 129)	16,171.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31,333.13</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	International Services
<b>EDUCATION</b>	
220-Conferences/Classes	\$800.00
230-Team Building	\$1,366.32
<b>POSTAGE</b>	
550-In the States	\$579.32
<b>OFFICE</b>	
640-Facility/Utilities	18,933.65
650-Supplies in the States	1,507.25
660-Mission Phone	855.75
661-Email	2,682.59
670-Secretaries/Assistants	2,322.38
680-Accounting/Financial Management	35.00
690-Payroll Taxes	963.60
<b>PROMOTION/REPRESENTATION</b>	
710-For More Recruits	\$3,615.20
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
920-Banking Fees	\$727.85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$34,388.85</b>