



ON EARTH  
AS IT IS IN  
HEAVEN MATTHEW  
6:10

## WHEN JESUS RETURNS, WE WANT TO BE IN THE TRENCHES

By Bill Clemmer, M.D., IM Missionary in Health and Wellness

When I contemplate my response to God's calling, I often think of Matthew 21. Speaking to his disciples, Jesus tells a parable of two brothers whose father asked them to do some work in the family vineyard. One said, "Sure, I'll go"—but never went. The other said, "No way"—but eventually did as his father had asked.

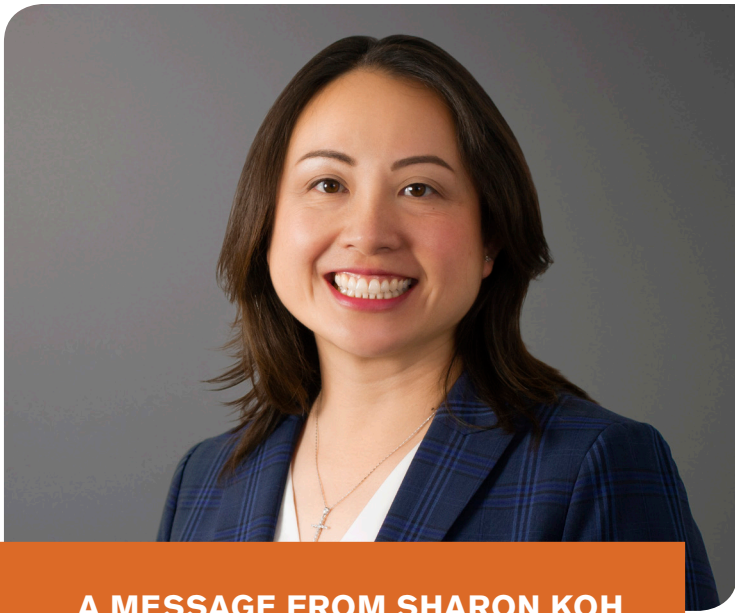
My typical response to God's calling would fit right into this story. Eager to please my heavenly Father, I answer, "Yes, I will go!" But when the initial excitement fades, my head gets in the way of my heart. I rationalize, "The timing's not right. I need to

be better prepared. I'll go after I finish this one thing." Usually, like the second brother, I do eventually go, but not always on schedule, sometimes reluctantly and often with timid, halting progress.

While serving in the Peace Corps in West Africa at age 22, I had a strong sense that God was calling me to serve in Africa as a missionary doctor, and I immediately answered "Yes!" and took steps to follow through on that calling. Seven years later, having completed medical school and my residency, I had the skills necessary to fulfill that call. But along the way, I had

*Continued on pages 4-5*





## A MESSAGE FROM SHARON KOH

Dear Friend,

This spring, as we rejoiced in the celebration of Resurrection Sunday, what stood out to me was how Jesus moved toward the cross with such resolution. His life and ministry exuded a focused purpose, even though the unwavering path that he followed led inevitably to suffering and death before the promised resurrection.

When Jesus was found in the temple as a boy, his explanation was, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49, NIV)

When others objected to his determination to continue on the path that would see him killed, Jesus rebuked them, saying, “Get behind me, Satan!” (Mark 8:33, NIV)

And, at the darkest moment of his life, when he quavered in the face of imminent betrayal, torture, death and painful separation from the Father, although he begged God, “Take this cup from me,” still he concluded, “Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (Mark 14:36, NIV)

Christ, God incarnate, was driven by the divine calling on his life. He had come to the world to fulfill a specific purpose, and although it required great sacrifice, he fulfilled this purpose with perfect faithfulness.

Today, each one of Jesus’ followers is called to fulfill a part of God’s plan. In the pages that follow, you will read stories of some of those who have answered God’s call through global mission service, living in cross-cultural settings, investing in other disciples of Christ and making their dreams, skills and abilities available to God for God’s mission.

Thank you for praying for and investing in IM and our global servants. Your prayer and financial investment in our global servants and projects is a response to God’s call into mission.

Are you wondering if God’s call on your life might be leading you to cross-cultural mission work? If so, please join us at our Hear the Call retreat this August. (See the back cover for details.)

I pray that the stories you’ll find in the following pages will inspire you in your pursuit of God’s plan, until it is on earth as it is in heaven.

“When Jesus was found in the temple as a boy, his explanation was, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?””

Luke 2:49, NIV

In Christ,

Sharon Koh  
Executive Director / CEO

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“ ..it was the biggest leap of faith I've ever made. ”



## BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED.

*By Carmella Jones, IM missionary in Hungary*

**M**any missionaries begin the road to full-time ministry based upon their career choices. For me, it was nursing. I grew up wanting to be a nurse, and with my gifts of compassion, nurture and an aptitude for sciences, it seemed like a good fit.

That was the easy part. The transition from nursing to international mission, on the other hand, was the biggest leap of faith I've ever made.

It all started with a mission trip. After two weeks in Guyana, South America, without running water or indoor plumbing, I was thrilled to be going home. At the same time, however, I began to sense God calling me to give more than the two weeks of mission service. And that concerned me.

As God's calling became increasingly clear, I started some serious bargaining. I was happy with my life and work, and I wanted that to be enough! But one morning during my prayer

time, I read in Romans 11:29 that “God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses.” (GNT) In that moment, I began to examine my fears. I asked God to move me beyond my doubts to obedience. The Lord brought to my mind previous times when he guided me through what seemed to be insurmountable tasks. As I surrendered to God's calling, the floodgates of peace were opened . . . and the hard work began.

I realized very quickly that saying “yes” did not mean that I was ready. I entered into a new season of preparation and study as I worked with IM to complete trainings, the application process and building a network of supportive partners.

When I set out to become a nurse, I had no idea that this path would lead to full-time mission service. But today, as I look back, I can clearly see how God was moving in each season of my life to prepare me for the work he is doing through me today in Hungary.



## WHEN JESUS RETURNS, WE WANT TO BE IN THE TRENCHES *CONTINUED*

*By Bill Clemmer, M.D.,  
IM Missionary in Health and Wellness*

gotten married, had children, gone into private practice to pay off school debt and purchased a house. Not wanting to pull up my roots, I suggested to God that the responsible thing to do was to save for my children's college educations, pay off my mortgage, get practical experience and then go to Africa.

One day, my wife, Ann, and I were traveling in upstate Vermont when, quite unexpectedly, our train stopped dead in its tracks. In the isolation of the moment, God led us to pray about the calling I had heard years earlier. By the time that train started to move again, we had told God, "Yes, we will go." Six months later, we set out with three young children and a fourth on the way.

We remained in Africa for seven years before returning to the United States for our first furlough. At that point, the last thing I wanted to do was go back and keep serving. I was still haunted by the memory of war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which had torn me away from Ann and the children and kept us apart for 11 long months. Surely we had done enough; someone else could take a turn.

But after a year of visiting churches and sharing stories of God's faithfulness and provision, I couldn't shake that nagging call. I returned to the D.R. Congo on schedule, albeit reluctantly and with "conditions" that I shared only with God.

Over the next decade, the constant fighting in the D.R. Congo grew to engulf much of central Africa, claiming an estimated 1.2 million lives in what would become known as "Africa's World War." When Ann and I completed our assignment in this conflict-riddled region, we moved on to South Sudan, where yet another prolonged and violent civil war was coming to a head with the ethnic massacre of hundreds of thousands.





Today, we are living on the Congo-Uganda border, in the epicenter of Africa's second largest and deadliest outbreak of Ebola. I continue to contemplate our calling. Now that we are in our mid-sixties, our children ask, "Isn't it time for you to come home?" The simple answer is, "Not yet. We still feel called to serve."

I am reminded of a gifted evangelist and educator whom Ann and I met recently as he was on his way home. His home, a town of half a million persons, has been under attack from rebel militias for the past several years. Armed elements infiltrate the town at night, raping, pillaging, murdering and burning homes. A United Nations force has been unable to prevent these horrific attacks. So we were surprised to see that the evangelist had a spark in his eyes as he talked about returning.

We asked him, "What's your hurry? Why are you so eager to get back to a place that so many other people are fleeing?"

"You see," he said, "Jesus is coming back soon, and when he returns, I want him to find me laboring in the field he assigned to me. I want to be where I am supposed to be—in the trenches—when Jesus returns!"

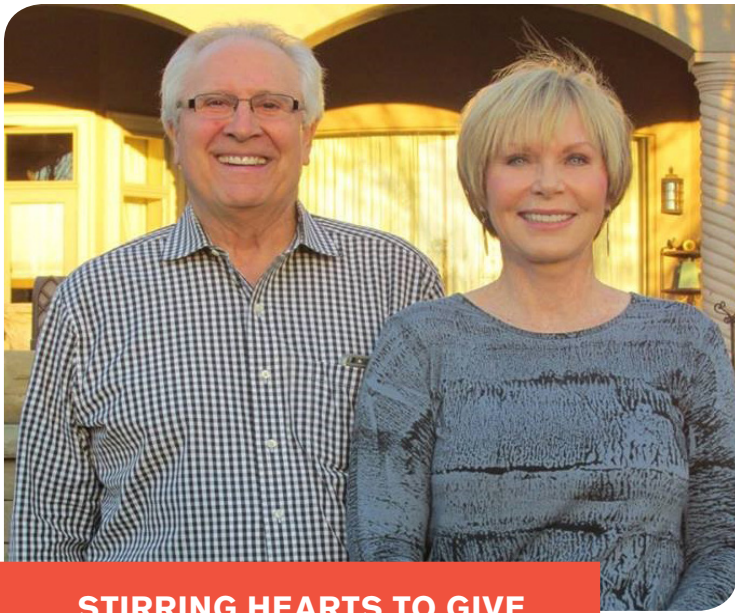
“Jesus is coming back soon, and when he returns, I want him to find me laboring in the field he assigned to me. I want to be where I am supposed to be—in the trenches—when Jesus returns!”

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*Lonny Bruce retired from the crude oil production and exploration industry after 40 years. Laura and Lonny have one daughter, two grandchildren and one great granddaughter.*

missionaries Mylinda and Gary Baits, who were serving in Costa Rica at the time, offered to break the sad news to us in person. I was overwhelmed with the depth of support we received from Mylinda and Gary during this difficult time. It was so ironic. We had travelled to Costa Rica to offer our support to them, but the tables turned, and they were ready and willing to support us. Supporting missionaries was what got us interested in IM in the first place, and now we give to the General Fund as well. Giving to the General Fund is important because it addresses urgent needs that we might not even know about. It also supports missionaries who may be underfunded.

## STIRRING HEARTS TO GIVE

Laura and Lonny Bruce, who hail from McPherson, Kansas, have been associated with International Ministries since 1999 when Lonny accepted a call to serve on the General Board of American Baptist Churches USA. We asked Lonny why he and Laura have been so committed to supporting the work of IM for all these years, and this is what he told us:

Back in the late 90s, the pastor of our church, First Baptist Church of McPherson, recommended that I volunteer to serve on the IM Board. Well, that began a relationship with IM that just keeps getting deeper and more satisfying as the years go on.

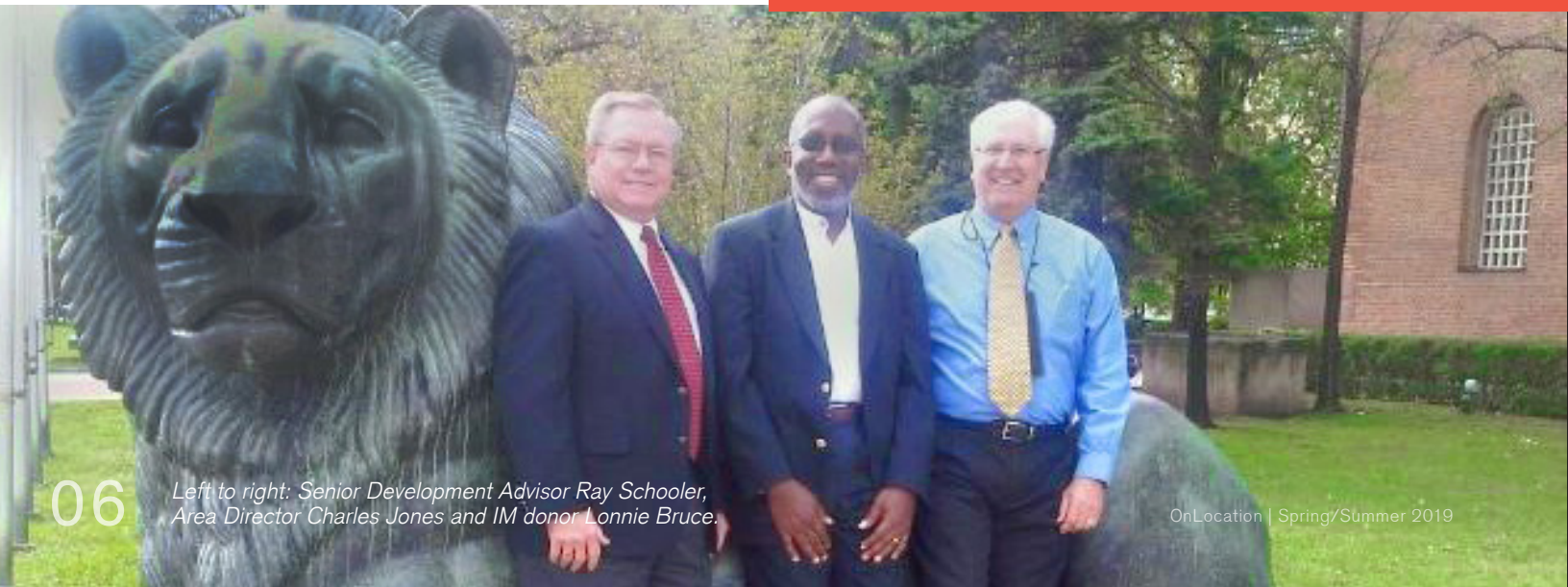
We love building relationships with the missionaries. I've visited missionaries in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bulgaria, Cuba and Thailand. Laura has also visited Costa Rica, the Ukraine and Cuba. The missionaries loved the visits, and some of them have stayed with us in our home as well. I recommend that everyone get to know the missionaries they support.

I was especially deeply touched by our missionaries when my dad died suddenly while we were visiting Costa Rica. Our family in the States was ready to contact us by email, but IM

“ Giving to the General Fund is important because it addresses urgent needs that we might not even know about. ”

We who live in the U.S. are very lucky. We are free to worship as we wish. Many in the world are not so fortunate. Laura and I are grateful that we can carry our Christian faith to all the corners of the earth through our travels and our giving. Wherever we go, we see people's amazing enthusiasm and gratitude for our IM global servants. It is really rewarding to be a small part of these ministries.

**If you wish to learn more about giving opportunities, or you have questions on how IM can fulfill your wishes for a future gift, please call Zofia Dripps, associate executive director for Mission Advancement at 610-768-2311.**



06 *Left to right: Senior Development Advisor Ray Schooler, Area Director Charles Jones and IM donor Lonnie Bruce.*



## A TURN-AROUND CALL, SOCKS AND A MANTEL

By the Rev. Sharon Buttry, IM global consultant for Community Transformation

### Philip's Call

Philip Kakangulu was adrift in life. A young man with no clear plans for the future, he didn't know what God wanted him to do with his life. He eventually decided to join the Ugandan army, but days before he was going to enlist, he heard about a peace training conference in neighboring Kenya. Something about this event stirred Philip's heart, and his decision to attend would change his life forever.

### Peace Socks

As International Ministries global consultants, my husband, Dan, and I were leading the ten-day Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers in Kenya with participants from eight African countries. Philip impressed us with his sharp mind and deep engagement. We could see that his soul resonated with what he was learning. By the end of the event, he had joined with other participants to form the Pan African Peace Network to encourage and support each other in their ongoing work of peace.

At the closing meeting, Dan shared the story of how God called him to bring extra socks on a trip to Liberia, where he had the unexpected opportunity to give them to a man whose feet were covered in sores from walking to church every week without socks.<sup>1</sup> Later, as Dan struggled with the strange meaning of this encounter, God spoke clearly, "You are the socks." Just as socks cover and protect our feet, God's people are called to cover the wounds of the hurting world.

As he told the story, Dan handed out socks that had been donated by an American Baptist congregation that had heard the same story at a World Mission Conference. Philip took his pair of "peace socks" as a personal call. When he returned home after the training, he began to do long-distance runs to raise funds for human rights in Uganda, and during every run he wears these socks. He also wears them whenever he leads a peace workshop. So far, he has taught in Kenya, Burundi, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania and the Ivory Coast as well as his native Uganda.

### "Aiden's Mantle"

In November 2018, Dan and I returned to Kenya to lead another training event. Philip was again with us—this time as a co-facilitator. While we were there, Dan gave Philip something that had been very important to him in his own calling: "Aiden's Mantle."

When Dan first entered ministry with IM in 2003, the pastor of his mission partnership team, Frank McAuley, gave him "Aidan's Mantle." Aidan was a Celtic Christian saint and missionary, and "Aiden's Mantle" was a poem about the missionary calling, especially the call to serve those who live at the margins of society.

By the time that Dan and I joined Philip as co-leaders of a peacemaker training event, our former trainee had already answered the call to mission service. He had mentored many Christian peacemakers and many who would themselves become teachers of peace. Dan handed down to him the story of "Aiden's Mantle" and a framed copy of the poem as a reminder of God's call, challenging Philip to prepare for the day when he would likewise pass the mantle to one of his own mentees.

Then we prayed for Philip and his peacemaking ministry in the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit. As has happened across the generations of history, the older one must decrease so that the younger one can move into their fullness of contribution for the Reign of God. Already we are rejoicing in the incredible fruit of Philip's ministry, and his ministry to come as he has begun the process of joining IM as an endorsed IM global servant. The future is as bright as the promises of God!

1. This story is recounted in Dan's book "We Are the Socks."

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# hear the call

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**For more information, contact the Rev. Dr. Rodney Ragwan, director of Mission Mobilization, at [ragwan@internationalministries.org](mailto:ragwan@internationalministries.org) or 610-768-2374.**

