

# HARVEST USA

A NEWSLETTER OF WORD INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES USA

## God Sent Us to Africa

Excerpts from "Please Don't Send Me to Africa" by Scott Wesley Brown

"Please don't send me to Africa  
 I don't think I've got what it takes  
 I'm just a man, I'm not a Tarzan  
 Don't like lions, gorillas or snakes  
 I'll serve you here in suburbia  
 In my comfortable middle class life  
 But please don't send me out into the bush  
 Where the natives are restless at night  
 I'll see that the money is gathered  
 I'll see that the money is sent  
 I'll wash and stack the communion cups  
 I'll tithe eleven percent  
 I'll volunteer for the nursery  
 I'll go on the youth group retreat  
 I'll usher, I'll deacon, I'll go door to door  
 Just let me keep warming this seat"

My wife and I have heard this song from way back in Manila days but we listened to it again because I was going to Africa after being there just 6 months prior. This trip in February almost did not pan out because of the beginnings of the Covid 19 pandemic.

My first trip to Kenya (sometime in the 2005) was quite memorable. Of course I was invited by Bishop Harun Kimani of the Pentecostal Revival Church. I traveled by myself and it was a time when the outskirts of Nairobi were still in its "primitive" stages. There was dust everywhere and the potholes could literally swallow a car. it was like the roads were bombed out or eroded and it sure felt like a crazy jalopy ride as we travelled to and from the church. At that time we travelled for the most part on public transport (Called Matatus)and visited many churches including the formerly infamous Semi-Nomadic Massai Tribe near the border of Tanzania. Why formerly infamous? They used to kill missionaries as well as eat people.

We also traveled to as far as Eldoret and ministered to a church also under Bishop Harun's network of churches. Sometime after this visit to Eldoret, I saw on CNN how the tribal war between the Tutsi and the Hutus was re-ignited. I saw the very place where I preached while watching the news on CNN. It was sad to see how an ancient rift between these two tribes continue to play out even though most of them are Christians. Whatever they have now is an uneasy truce.

Through the years, we have developed a partnership with Bishop Harun and the trust was borne out of the fact that Bishop Harun Kimani and Pastor Aggrey Juma used to attend WIN LA while they were completing their MDivs in Los Angeles.

## God Sent Us to Africa

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This is why with our partnership, WIN LA was able to assist Bishop Harun to purchase land built and two church buildings in the outskirts of Nairobi in the Kasarani district.

Through the years, our partnership has produced:

A main Church building in Kasarani and another building in Mwiki under Pastor Donato Njeru

Several Church Planting sites around Kenya

A Bible School for Pastors and key workers (under WIN LA Covering)

A Children's School

Church Planting in Uganda

### A Pre-Pandemic Visit

Last February 2020 as the Corona Virus was starting to wreak havoc, Dr. Ferdie Melendres and I went back to Kenya to begin the Pastoral Biblical Training course to further equip the Pastors.

Just last August 2019, Dr. Ferdie Melendres, Lyndon Aldaba and I were in Kenya. Dr. Ferdie met with the Kenyan pastors and they all agreed to sign up for a Biblical Training Course.

To fulfill our arrangement, we went back last February 2020 to start the Old Testament Survey class. For one whole week, we spent 7 to 8 hours a day exploring the Old Testament. Pastor Ferdie and I tag teamed teaching for the duration of the week and we successfully completed the study.

The Kenyan Pastors eagerly await the next class. To be able to sustain their education, the Kenyan pastors requested for laptops that they can use for future group online studies. This way they don't have to travel far and neither would we have to. We were blessed when WIN LA members and WIN New York assisted in raising the needed funds. We were able to buy 5 brand new HP Laptops plus two used ones were donated.

Two weeks after the Kenya visit my wife and I were headed out once again to Dubai for the WIN International Board Meeting which was not cancelled in spite of the Covid 19 crisis. We were able to bring the 7 laptops and left them in Dubai for future pick up by Bishop Harun (when Airline travel ban will have been lifted).

Truly, now we can say that WIN is operating in the African continent.

To God be the glory!

Dr. Ferdie Melendres, Bishop Harry Kimani & Pastor Chito Cordero



*Pastor Chito Cordero,  
WIN International Missions Director,  
Senior Pastor, WIN Los Angeles, CA*



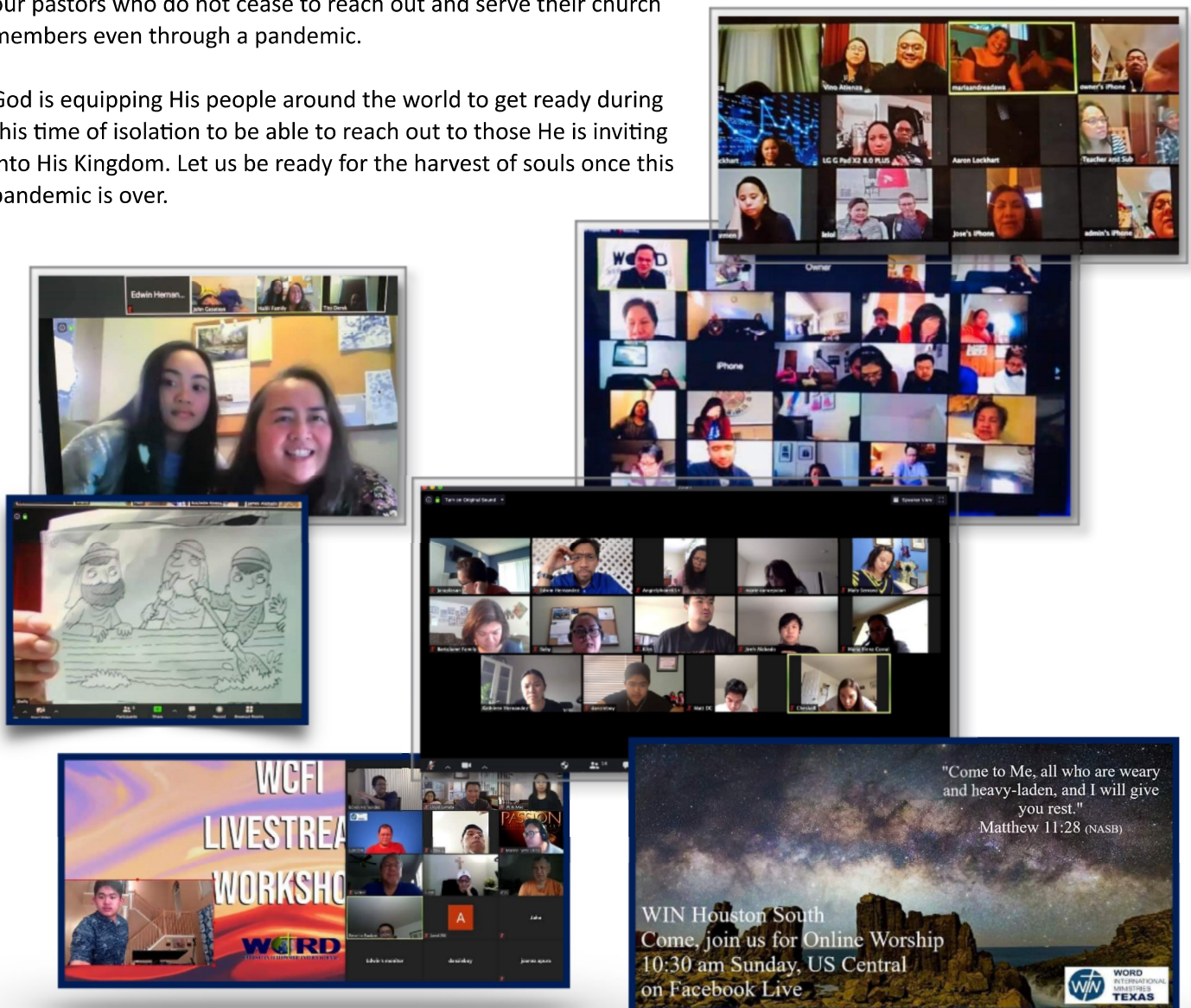
# AROUND THE US REGION

## Saturating Social Media with The Gospel

Due to COVID 19 pandemic in the US and abroad, majority of our churches in the US have taken to the social media to continue to spread the Word of God. Home isolation nor a pandemic can deter meeting, fellowshiping and learning. Thanks to the availability of technology, the preaching of the Gospel at Sunday Worship services, Children's church, Bible studies and teaching sessions are heard in the homes of church members; through the medium of Facebook, Zoom and Skype.

Churches are registering an increase in viewership. One church registered 1,000 views. Requests for Bible studies have also increased. We are thankful to the Lord for our pastors who do not cease to reach out and serve their church members even through a pandemic.

God is equipping His people around the world to get ready during this time of isolation to be able to reach out to those He is inviting into His Kingdom. Let us be ready for the harvest of souls once this pandemic is over.



## Around the US Region

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### WIN Eagle Rock

Local Church Serves the Needs of Its Community

WIN Eagle Rock in collaboration with the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank continues to serve the poor of Southern California by following social distancing, wearing face masks and using hand sanitizers. Part of the mission of the church is to know the needs of the community. Due to the enormous demand, food distribution is now done on a weekly basis. Please pray for the protection of Pastor Robert Hernal and the church volunteers.



### WIN Minnesota

#### Church Planting in the State of Minnesota

Church planting efforts are being made through the efforts of Pastor Erick and Dina Alix in St. Paul, Minnesota. They continue to strengthen the ministry through Bible studies that are scheduled throughout the week. If you have family and friends in this part of Minnesota, please contact Pastor Erick so he can get in touch with them. Let us pray for the growth of this ministry as they reach out to potential church members.





# The **WORD** on the **STREET**



## Lessons Learned on “Livestreaming Church”

On more than one occasion I read this in the headline: *“Unprecedented Times”*...and I agree, these are unprecedented times indeed! I don’t know of any individual that has been through anything like this global pandemic before. And this common challenge involves the church and affects almost every area of church life. Yes, we collectively grieve the loss of many of our activities and gatherings. **Yet, I am amazed at how many churches** (including WIN churches in the USA!) **have adopted a very positive attitude towards this** – even looking at this as a great opportunity for the Gospel and the advancement of our cause as followers of Christ!

One *“obstacle-turned-opportunity”* was the livestreaming of Sunday Services and connecting through Zoom bible studies and small group gatherings! What was once a ministry on the “sidebar” has taken “center stage” in what and how we do church! Here are some particular lessons I’ve learned given this collective challenge:

### **1. Encouragement over Entertainment**

There’s always that strong temptation to impress an audience. Sadly, many pastors bought into this **“celebrity culture”** (a narcissistic drive fueled by social media!) and the emphasis has been on entertaining the viewer! I’m reminded that our members daily scour the internet – not just for entertainment (because there are literally millions of options that are far more entertaining than their pastor!) – but looking for real DEEP ENCOURAGEMENT! Let’s make sure that our online gatherings are venues that the Holy Spirit uses as occasions for deep encouragement and edification and not performances for amusement.

### **2. Connection over Curriculum**

Cloud meetings and video-conferencing are technological wonders allowing the flow of information and the exchange of ideas at such a rapid pace and scope that it’s a game-changer in education! You know what has not changed?... the desire within our members for DEEP CONNECTION. *“High tech still demands HIGH TOUCH”* a futurist once said. The kind of personal connection that these technological advances facilitate are amazing! I realized that our members long for these times of connection. Sometimes, our noble desire to get through our lesson plans and our training curricula actually turn these refreshing connection times into dry, rigid classrooms. I discovered that the **best practices** for Zoom bible studies involve a kind of learning that facilitates and enhances personal connections... Members on a similar journey of biblical discovery while interacting on lessons and principles that they pick up along the way! The lesson that would’ve taken 3 sessions stretch out to 6 or 7 sessions because we are giving time and space for precious personal connections among members who can’t gather together yet.

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Pastor Vino B. Atienza,  
Senior Pastor, WIN Seattle/Tacoma, WA





## Faith In Crisis

Crisis in faith could happen with many followers of Jesus Christ for some reasons. The believers came to a point at which they feel they could no longer serve God, they lost their passion and motivation, and all promises from the Bible are unreliable. They began questioning their church, the brethren in Christ, including their own faith and salvation. These days, we seem to think that the whole world is in crisis from coronavirus. This is an uncertain time when all people worldwide feel anxious and uncomfortable. Many are wondering if this is the crisis that begins the end of the age. In any case, the situation will be changed because life is an ongoing series of changes and revisions. However, many who undergo this crisis may be tempted to turn away from all they believe in. In the book of Psalms, a similar situation happened to the psalmist so that he begins to question his faith and salvation with his God. "My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation and Your righteous word" (Psalm 119:23). He complained that he doesn't see good reasons why bad things happen in his life. He understood that there is no unrighteousness in God's word, yet those righteous promises had not been realized in his life.

Faith became a common word today. Many Christians use the word "faith" as a way to indicate how deep and spiritual they are. We quoted verses from the Bible and yet, when we make decisions that will determine whether we go on to be involved with God or not, we misplaced the "faith" that we claimed and put trust in ourselves. Faith is a belief system, something that we acquire from the Bible, things that we heard (Rom 10:17). It is not ours, it is from God. But trust is another thing, an action out of faith. Trust takes things a step further, a willful act that God will do what He promises. If we can't translate the word of God in reality, we don't trust His word, though we heard them. When we begin to experience a crossroad in life, and the things we believe in bring us down, we are facing a crisis of faith.

In several cases, the sudden death of a love one, a betrayal of a brother in the Lord, a broken relationship, a loss of a job, a business bankruptcy, an exam failure, and other similar instances may cause a person to question whether God is even paying attention. When we believe that we deserve the thing to happen but did not happen, we begin to set ourselves up for frustration. If we expect a promotion but someone has been promoted instead of us, it's an open space for discouragement. If we pray for our sick love one that he or she "should" be healed, we are putting God in a situation that He owes it to us to conform to our expectations. If this is the kind of understanding and demonstration of faith that we have, there is an assumption that we know more than God does. In this pandemic crisis, if all of us, including pastors and spiritual leaders shall not be diligent to be on guard, many members may end up in a series of emotional blows that will lead to a faith in crisis. It is important to identify what went through to better understand the nature of frustration and recognize where the real wound lies.

Most of God's servants in the past had experience a crisis of faith as they walked with God on their journey. Jeremiah experienced such a crisis when he can't understand why evil men prospered in Judah. "Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why do dishonest people succeed?" (Jeremiah 12:1). Elijah was so afraid when Jezebel threatened to kill him so that he went to Beersheba asking God to take his life. "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4). Jonah refused to follow the word of the Lord to proclaim repentance to the people of Nineveh because these wicked people deserved death instead of forgiveness. As a result, "It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry" (Jonah 4:1). Here are famous servants of God struggling with depression and starting to lose the vision of why they were serving God. I know that I am not exempt from this danger, in fact it happened to me once on my spiritual journey.

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## Faith In Crisis

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But through that crisis of faith experience, I've learned to be more on guard unto myself, my eyes are wide open, my ears became more sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and my relationship with the Lord became even closer and more intimate.

In the story of the fiery serpent in the book of Numbers 21:4-9, faith is seen in action. Israel spoke against God because the people became very discouraged on their journey. Consequently, God sent a fiery serpent among them, bit the people, and many died. Then Moses interceded for them and the Lord commanded him to make a serpent made of brass and put it upon a pole in the sight of the people. It shall be that everyone who is bitten and looks upon it shall live. In the New Testament, Jesus tells His hearers that men may be saved by believing to Him. Incidentally, He uses the fiery serpent story in the book of Numbers. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14-15). Here we notice that "look" and believe" were synonymous terms. While Israel looked by their eyes, they also believed by their hearts. It's a non-stop looking and believing even amid upheavals and difficulties. As A.W. Tozer wrote in his book *The Pursuit of God*, "Faith is not a once-done act, but a continuous gaze of the heart at the triune God."

Sometimes, the way we respond to hurt or frustration is negative, as if it is the end of all things, without knowing that it is an open door to a new beginning. At one point, a crisis of faith is necessary because it tears down our carnality and childish attitude about God. Faith in crisis also helps us discover who God really is, and who we are in His eyes. At the same time, it levels up our faith that we are willing to follow Him no matter what the costs may be. So, overcoming a crisis of faith requires total surrender to the will of God. Allowing God to give us direction on how our lives should go. When doubts arise, repent, because this is the doorway to freedom. Lay down our hearts bare before God, pour out our souls, and surrender anew to His will for our victory.

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## Lessons Learned

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### 3. Listening over Lecturing

I am used to preaching and teaching... I try my best to prepare for it... that's what I do. But, instead of simply delivering a lecture or doling out information, my challenge is to pose reflective questions that allow people to think through, say, a passage of Scripture and see how that relates to them by LISTENING... yes, listening to them! Facilitating a discussion and drawing out real life answers from them in place of a lecture. *Like preaching, listening is a skill – it needs practice, it needs training... listening requires discipline!* Again, best practices of doing online bible studies require preparation into the kinds of interactive questions that evoke answers from members who want to express, vent or reflect on truth and reality. The challenge is to turn those expressions into inspiring moments of learning.

There will be more we will learn in the coming months due to this period of extended 'stay-at-home' orders and online church gatherings . *I'm just glad that God's Grace is sufficient for us and that His power is made perfect in our weakness.* May we all remain hopeful and optimistic about the future as we struggle through this until we get into a new rhythm, a "new normal"... still, with His Grace.

When you call on me, I will answer, I will be with you in trouble, I will rescue and honor you. I will reward you with a long life and give you my salvation.

~ Psalm 91: 14 - 16

# In Times of Crisis



*Pastor Mark Briones  
WIN USA National Youth & Young Adults Coordinator  
District Overseer, Southern California*

We are living in unusual, uncertain, unprecedented times, sheltered in our homes, children being homeschooled with online classes. Adults working remotely from home. We are practicing social distancing, wearing masks, washing our hands frequently, having online church services, online bible studies and meetings and the list goes on.

How do we get through this season?

There are 3 things we need to do in times of crisis:

**1. We must pray without ceasing** – 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you. It's all about shifting our thought process and turning everyday moments into prayer. When we don't have the words or feeling like we are saying the prayer over and over, ask the Holy Spirit to help you. He is our intercessor who cries out for us.

Pray for your leaders in your community, state, and country. These are difficult days and they all need wisdom and prayer.

Pray for your pastors and leaders in your church for guidance and direction.

Pray for our front liners who serve in a variety of ways, for good health to be upon them and their families

Pray for your family and friends going through difficult times.

Pray that scientists will find a good vaccine for this virus.

**“Prayer is the Christian’s greatest weapon” – Billy Graham**

## **2. We must trust and obey the Word of God**

We read in 1 Kings 17: 1-6 about Elijah who was a man of faith and prayer. He was God’s spokesperson during a time of great spiritual darkness. Elijah listened and obeyed God’s word and direction. Elijah knew that as he obeyed God, God himself would take care of him.

Psalms 33:18-21 says, “The Lord watches over those who obey him, those who trust in His constant love. He saves them from death; He keeps them alive in times of famine. We put our hope in the Lord; He is our protector and our help. We are glad because of him; we trust in His holy name.”

Proverbs 30:5 says also “Every word of God proves true, He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.”

Elijah was a man of faith and obedience; Obedience is crucial to receiving the provision of God.

## **3. We must depend on God’s provisions and timing**

Although Elijah was in desolate Kerith Ravine, he lacked nothing. God commanded the ravens to feed Elijah, he received his meal little by little, one meal at a time. God is sovereign and He will choose whatever He wants to accomplish His purposes, our job is to submit to His will.

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## In Times of Crisis

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Missionary Hudson Taylor had complete trust in God's faithfulness. In his journal he wrote: Our heavenly Father is a very experienced One. He knows very well that His children wake up with a good appetite every morning... He sustained 3 million Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years. We do not expect He will send 3 million missionaries to China; but if He did, He would have ample means to sustain them all...

**Depend on it; God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.**

In Psalm 34:10 we read, "The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." In Philippians 4:19 Paul tells us, "My God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Friends, be of good courage we know that God is still in control, He is Sovereign, our Way maker, Miracle worker, Promise Keeper and a light in the darkness. He will see us through this season of crisis to a season of victory!

## God Sent Us to Africa

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## Congratulations Sis. Ching!



Cecilia (Ching) Lansang, Europe SOH Coordinator, received a call from Burgemeester (Mayor) Jan van Zanen of Utrecht, The Netherlands on April 24, 2020 informing her that she was given a royal award as Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau (Knight in the Order of the House of Orange) by King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands for exceptional service in serving the community for 20 years as a volunteer.

Ching stated, "This is also an honor and an award to our WIN - NL churches, Word International Ministries and Stichting Bayanihan (a foundation helping women in need) where I served as a volunteer and for the Seeds of Hope ministry's feeding and education program to the poor children in the Philippines. To God be all the honor, glory and praise for this award."

Ching retired as senior pastor of the Word International Ministries - the Netherlands in 2017 and is currently serving as the European coordinator of the Seeds of Hope ministry and supporter of the Seafarers Ministry in NL.



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The Lord is my light and my salvation - so why should I be afraid? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble.

~ Psalm 27: 1