

Burkey Beacon

Ministry in Macedonia

March 15, 2018



Dear Friend, As I wrote, Adam, Lauren, and Seth were on their way to attend our Campus Ministry's outreach which is called an "Effective Study Seminar". We pray that there will be many students who will attend to learn how they can more effectively study and as they do, they will hear Biblical principles and testimonies from the instructors. During this weekend seminar, these new students will begin friendships with our staff and students that we pray will develop into life changing relationships. The students create personal development plans that allow our staff and students opportunities to meet with them again in order to continue their relationship and share the good news of Jesus. Our staff and students have just finished a week long training to be able to teach these seminars themselves next time.



Successful Hand-Off

Adam was able to hand over his remaining responsibilities of Operation Director and Financial Manager to the two staff men who will carry those roles into the future! We are so thankful that the Lord has provided competent men who are willing and able to continue these very important service roles. Adam still is filling in throughout this semester as both men and their wives are traveling to the U.S. to strengthen and encourage their ministry partner teams. Once they return in late April and May, Adam will pass on a few more responsibilities. Otherwise, we will be busy selling our things, packing up what remains, and making sure we and our children all say our good-byes well. Our flights are booked for June 26th! **We are moving back to the United States in June!** It promises to be a very hard and emotional Spring, but the Lord has been gracious to clearly give us a direction to look forward to!

What is Next?

In Cru terms, our method is "Win, Build, and Send." But we don't just send others, in this case we are being sent.

Over the past year and a half, Adam and I have been experiencing a stirring in our hearts that the Lord was ready to move us on from Macedonia. We love the people and ministry here, but the Lord has gifted Adam to be more a pioneer. Like you can see Paul doing on his missionary journeys in Acts, sharing the good news, starting spiritual movements, spending time with them to help build them in sound doctrine and practice, and then appointing elders and moving on to do that again and again. We realize that Paul might have spent at most a few years in any one location and we have been here 14. Yet when Adam is working in his strengths and gifting, he is more of a pioneer.

We have seen God raise up many competent full time Macedonian staff, who were leaders volunteering in the student movement. And the Lord continues to raise up new ones every year! Many of our staff now have over 10 years experience. The Lord prepared these Macedonians to lead, and they are leading every team now. It has been neat to see how He has orchestrated all of this in His time and it has given us great confidence to move on. You might remember that our goal here was to work ourselves out of a job. So, what does God have next for us?

After 24 years on staff, imagining Adam and I were arrows, a good illustration for what we most need now is a place to be sharpened, precisely aimed, and shot out again. The best place for us to do that is an 11 month developmental and service program at Cru Headquarters in Orlando, Florida, called "**Lake Hart Stint.**" Part of our workweek during this program will be to serve on a team in a role they need. But the amazing part of our workweek will be organized so that the national leadership of Cru build into us, mentor us, care for us, help us process our previous ministry, and prepare us for a strong and stable future. They have MK2MK groups in Orlando to help minister to our kids as they re-enter a culture that they call their own but have never experienced day-in and day-out. We believe the Lord is directing us there to grow in our emotional and spiritual health, as we transition and grieve the life and relationships we will leave behind here in Macedonia before we jump right into our next area of ministry.

For too long, we have known that Adam was filling needs in Macedonia (which he was happy to do) but was not exactly working out of his strengths. As we have thought and prayed about what the Lord may have for us **after Lake Hart Stint in Orlando**, we have really sought His wisdom about how He has wired us and what unique strengths we see He has given us to use for the advancement of His kingdom. We have identified that Adam is a **pioneer**. He loves to go where no ministry currently is and see how God is working. He loves to see how the Lord can use him to find, equip, and connect people in whom God is already at work to have an impact for His Kingdom right where they are. Adam is also gifted with being a great **recruiter!** If He is passionate about something, He shares that joy with others and is able to convince many to come along and experience it for themselves. He has great belief, which helps others who have doubts or concerns, to trust God for big things and take those steps of faith. My love and passion is to **mentor** and encourage younger women in their life and walk with the Lord. I can do that anywhere there are women, but Adam's gifts are more unique. We also desire to live **closer to family** again. We were holding that desire loosely because we were not sure how Adam's giftings of pioneering and recruiting would be of use back in Ohio, since **we still wanted to be involved internationally**. Well, God knows our thoughts & our desires & reminded us of His omniscience & sovereignty once again while we were attending our Area Staff Conference in January.

An Unexpected Conversation (this is a really good story about our future role—please read it) 😊

With no two seats free for us to sit and eat our dinner among 800 Eastern European staff and their children, we were at a loss to know where we could eat our meal. I received a tap on my shoulder and turned toward a man asking if we were in need of seats. I said we were, and he invited us to join him and his wife. We noticed they were Americans but we didn't know who they were. They told us their names, Roy and Joi Christians, and that they worked with this ministry called **“International School Project”** that is a ministry of Cru. They shared that it is a ministry that builds spiritual movements of High School and Elementary **teachers** throughout the world, training them, equipping them, and encouraging them to have an impact for Christ among other teachers and also their students. These two were extremely excited about this ministry as they continued to recount story after story of what God was doing through this ministry all over the world. It sounded like they had the potential to make a big impact.

Without hardly taking a breath, Joi transitioned into sharing the needs that they have as a ministry. She was looking at us intently and said, “But you know what we need? We need people who will **pioneer** this ministry into new countries and we need **recruiters** who will bring teams of volunteers with them to help train these teachers!” They didn't even know that we were in transition. I looked at Adam with a look of surprise and busted out laughing! They didn't stop there. Roy pipes in and says, “We also need **mentors** who will mentor these teachers.” Adam points to me and says, “That is my wife!” Roy was overjoyed and says, “Great, because most teachers are women!” The conversation continued and knowing friends of ours from Ohio who work with ISP, we said, “Ok, we know Jim and Jan Sylvester live in Ohio. If we decide to join you, would we be able to live in Ohio too?” They responded with a resounding yes saying, “You could be on Jim and Jan's team!” Another amazing aspect of this conversation was concerning another couple we highly respect and who actually recruited us to come Macedonia. Roy asked if we knew them and we said yes! We actually had a fleeting thought that if the Lord didn't give us any direction after our year in Florida that we would join them in ministry because where they serve now is very exotic. It was our joke, but nothing we had thought seriously about yet. Well, Roy mentions their names and asks if we knew them. It turns out that they are now, returning to the states, and joining ISP! We couldn't believe it! Lastly, before Roy and Joi left for a meeting they were hosting, they had said that we could be over any countries we desired. Adam happened to ask them, “What if we requested Thailand?” At the mention of that country, Joi slammed her hands down and Roy slapped his head with his hands asking immediately, “Why did you just say Thailand?” Adam responded by saying that we were just there last summer and that there are over 26 million people there that don't know a thing about Jesus! They informed us that ISP had just trained 800 teachers there, and that they also recently had a training of teachers in Myanmar, and a project happening in Cambodia and that they needed someone to work in that area. They couldn't believe of all countries, that Adam mentioned Thailand!

It was a wild conversation! God was kind to us by showing us that he knows and cares for us. He easily just sat us down next to strangers and invited us to a ministry role that satisfies all our seemingly conflicting desires in one place. We have been researching, but believe this could be our next assignment. **Please pray for us as we consider it.**

Thank you so much for your partnership! Adam & Amy

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