



CHRISTIANS EMPOWERING
ORGANIZATIONS MINISTRIES INC.

SEEKING A BLESSING FOR 2016

There is the most amazing story found in Zechariah 7 where the most spiritual people were seeking God's blessing and direction for the future. God honoured their request and spoke to them and asked them to do four things and they would experience His Blessings. Do you want to know the four things God asked them to do?

The first thing was to make sure 'justice' was practiced. From God's perspective this always meant 'restorative justice' not 'punitive wrath'. It also meant no 'legal games'.

The second thing was to practice kindness and compassion to one-another. That sounds like the 'golden rule' towards community happiness. Just think of what our communities would be like if we did this. Does not sound too bad of a request.

The third thing was not to oppress the widow, the orphan, the stranger or the poor in their midst. This too sounds reasonable. In fact, how do we help these categories of people. Should this not be a natural tendency of our hearts.

The fourth was not to plan evil things against our neighbours—this seems like a sensible request for a harmonious community. God is wanting the best for them.

So how do you think these spiritual people responded? It says they responded in four ways: they refused to listen, they turned their backs on God, they put their hands over their ears, and they made their hearts hard to the things God told them. They rather continue playing church with their religious rituals then the practical requests God had made.

So what do you think were the consequences? God tells them that because they would not listen to Him then He will no longer listen to them. He will also scatter them as a nation. The sad thing is that because of their actions the pleasant land that they lived in will become desolate. All this came true.

ARE YOU SEEKING HIS BLESSING FOR 2016

If you are seeking His blessing then it begins with obeying the things He has already told us to do. He has already blessed us with every imaginable blessing but to experience it we need to live in obedience and in close relationship to Him. If you are looking for direction Proverbs 3:5,6 reminds us..."*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not upon your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.*" As we make Him the object of all our goals everything else falls into place. As the gospels tell us "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you*".

Is this how you are seeking His blessing? What are you seeking for? Can I join you in this search and we know that our Father wants to flood us with His blessing. My prayer for you is found in Ephesians 3:10-21 which was Paul's prayer for the Ephesians—what an amazing prayer. The way it ends is marvelous—Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever amen. Wow!

The CEO Team pray you have a 'Spirit-filled' New Year and that our Father will grant you the desires that He has placed in your heart.

CHRISTMAS HEALTH SCARE

I could hear what people were saying but could not open my eyes or mouth to speak. Three days after a successful right knee replacement on December 1, Dr. Terry Lewis was rushed back into hospital with a fever of 38.7C indicating an infection. This triggered a domino affect causing his pulse to increase to 196 and his temp to exceed 39C. Electric shock treatment was used along with antibiotics to try and stabilize him. For a few days things seem to be working when he was hit with a massive gout attack on every joint of his body. The pain went beyond description and he was on the equivalent of 250 mg plus of morphine a day just to make things bearable. He lay flat on his back for more than two weeks unable even to hold a cell phone. He was released from hospital December 29 in a fairly weak condition and is slowly recovering at home.

Stories from the hospital bed: December is the month that Terry needs to be out fund-raising for those year-end contributions but instead he was in hospital the entire month. Often a third of an entire year's budget is raised in this month and Terry could do nothing. The most that has ever been raised in this last month in the past 35 years is about \$35,000. However, guess what God did. God raised over \$160,000 in the final month of December—that is what God did—that is the only possible explanation. Because of this literally thousands of people will be able to be helped. Do I hear a Praise the Lord out there!

Let me tell you one more story. Terry is a Christmas enthusiast—he loves all the traditions—the Christmas decorations, the carols—both sacred and secular—just the whole ambiance of Christmas. Stuck in a hospital bed without even an outside window for three weeks looking at the ceiling and walls without any music or decorations was not the way he would choose to spend Christmas. But the FATHER knowing his child's love for the traditions of Christmas moved upon the heart of a worship leader, Markus Deutsch, Terry had not seen for a couple of years to take his guitar and go visit Terry in the hospital. He told Terry that he had heard he was in the hospital and God put it on his heart to come sing him some carols—so he pulled out his guitar and 'Silent Night' never sounded so beautiful. Terry knew it was the Father 'loving on him' and the tears streamed down in 'radiant streams' of love.

THANKING GOD FOR 2015

Before I start listing these praise reports let me indicate that this maybe God fulfilling a promise to me more than a decade ago which I did not understand then. Do you know how you read scripture and how sometimes passages stand out to you in a special way? I asked God for a 'word from Him' on May 16, 2001 as I was sitting on the swimming dock of Bird River Bible Camp, I was led to Zechariah 9:11-12...there is more there than I will share but the portion I want you to consider is *"This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you."* I was at a very low point in my life at the time—full of remorse and repentance over personal failures and this is what God declared to me that day. But it was not just a one-time event. In June of the same year He gave me Isaiah 61:7, *"Instead of your shame you will have a double portion...therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs."* These were intense spiritual experiences...my Bible has the note in it...."Lord what are you saying to me?" I believe I may be experiencing this double portion as I see hundreds coming to know Him and pastors equipped and empowered in extraordinary ways. I have seen the ministry grow from two countries to ten with some amazing individuals joining God's team. I stand in awe of what God is doing.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

Early **January** still finds me wrapping up a "Couples Mission Trip" in **Cuba**. We sent Brian James off to Honduras to work with Ernesto Pinto and work was continuing in other countries. I found myself back in Cuba on **March 1** training 150 leaders followed by an evangelistic campaign in Havana.

The next morning I flew out of Havana to **San Pedro, Honduras** stopping in Panama City, Panama and San Jose, Costa Rica. It was 94F when I landed in Honduras. Ernesto and Marina were our gracious hosts. Here, in one of the most dangerous areas in the world, we did several men's conferences with tremendous response. In the picture at the bottom of this page Brian is standing with Felix. Felix is now a pastor but he used to be part of a gang. Because of his pact with the devil he would actually cut off the ears and fingers of those he killed and eat them. As I preached on one of the characteristics of a changed life, tears poured down the face of this transformed child of God. Ernesto works with pastors like Felix and helps them plant churches.

In one of the churches in Northern Honduras that Ernesto arranged we had several soldiers attend along with their commanding officers. Several heavily armed soldiers stood guard around the church. After the service one of the soldiers shared his struggles and thanked me for what I had said.

From here we drove into Guatemala and were escorted by an armed driver into **Guatemala** City where we were graciously hosted by a couple who have served God in this country all of their lives. They have an excellent ministry in several countries. Ernesto has been teaming up with them to train pastors for the past decade. Our host had been kidnapped on a couple of times and we were in a very heavily guarded facility. Wherever we went they supplied us with an armed guard. The first night of the retreat more than 30 pastors and wives responded to an invitation to deal with their hidden sins and move towards 'real' freedom that Christ offers. The whole conference was intense and practical when it came to the sessions Ernesto and I were able to share with them. I did not know if I would ever get another chance to speak to these wonderful leaders and God allowed me to pour out all that He had poured in. It was an amazing God-filled time.

Shifting focus to **Haiti** and the **Dominican Republic** we had some major concerns. The Dominicans were expelling 200,000 Haitians from their country back to Haiti even though some of these Haitians were third generation Dominicans. It was a racist policy. Sending these families back into a country that was torn apart by civil strife and poverty was a form of certain genocide.



Alix Jean-Paul began to scramble all our resources to try and in our meager way some of these overwhelming challenges. With the help of donors and our Haitian leaders and people we were able to supply fresh running water in a border community to help both locals and migrants. Even the Voodoo priest was so delighted, he accepted Christ and influenced the community to support the Christian and the first service was held on our recently purchased land with over 100 in attendance.

Vacation Bible Camps in Haiti are always a highlight and this year there were 11 camps and over 1300 people were fed both food and the Word with many children coming to know the Lord.

Then there is our school in the Dominican where we are teaching over 60 Haitian students and feeding them and their parents. We are also paying for the rent of the building and paying the salaries of five teachers. As I lay on the hospital bed in December I was heavily concerned that we had no more money to continue to support the school in the new year. In the last two weeks of the year a man came into my hospital room and told me that God put it upon his heart to contribute \$11,000 for the school. That would take us up to the end of the school year. Praise God!

Then in **June**, back in **Cuba** there were 38 pastor couples that met for a Marriage Conference and the renewing of their vows. It was an amazing conference and leadership was indeed empowered. These sessions were led by Grant and Roberta Kurian along with local pastors.

Back into **Central America** Marina



Pinto continues her work with single mothers as she tries to provide training for them so they can be equipped with a 'trade' by which they can support their families. This is very difficult because these moms have to work to feed their families. So flexibility is required to accommodate these challenges. She also is involved in helping close to 400 children receive one meal a day. There are various feeding stations where this takes place both in Honduras and Guatemala. This is challenging work in one of the most dangerous places on earth. Much prayer is required. Presently Marina is short about \$800 per month for her support. This is an



extremely important ministry and I encourage you to prayerfully consider supporting her monthly.

Shifting to **Togo, Africa** the blind are continuing to be given sight through the surgery being done through association with Sight.org. Not only that but spiritual sight is also being given and in one case 65 people gave their lives to the Lord and these were mainly Muslims. There have been entire villages that have given their lives to Jesus. There was also the first graduates from agricultural training who successfully fulfilled their practical sessions. Lewis and Naomi Swann head up that ministry.

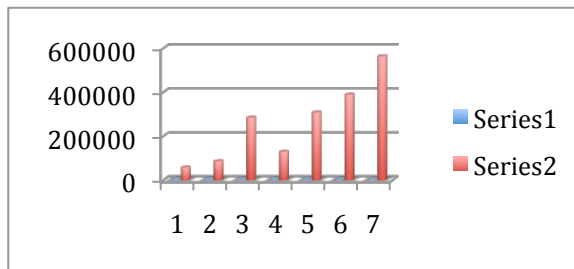
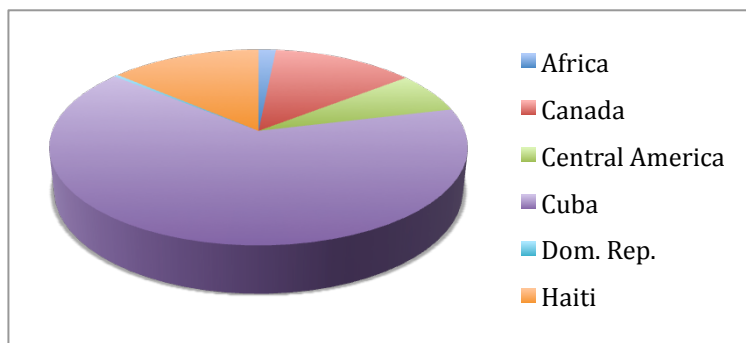
In **October**, we have an Annual Men's Mission Trip that is a real highlight for men who have become 'regulars' every fall. Some of these men have found ministries they never anticipated to be involved in and God is doing amazing things through

them. While I have been sick, one of them has become my hands and feet, eyes and ears in Cuba and is doing an excellent job over there right now as I write. You may want to join them on a trip this fall. I promise you—you will NOT return the same person. God has a way of impacting individual lives like I have never seen before.

In **November**, I was back in **Cuba** with Berhanu Ayano, an Ethiopian that dropped into my office on a Tuesday and was with me in Cuba on Thursday. A couple of highlights from that trip included a "Feed a Village" where a mom came to me and shared how she had cried that morning because there was no food to feed her family and no money to buy food. Now they came to church and had a meal and were leaving with enough food for two weeks. I was able to share that her Heavenly Father had brought me all the way from Canada to her remote and poverty-stricken village to tell her that He loves her and will provide for her as she depends upon Him. I live for these moments. The second highlight of that trip was delivering the message of Jonah in Havana and the response to the call to ministry was astounding as many young people responded along with those who were seeking salvation. It has been years since I have seen that many young men and women sense God's calling on their lives to be in ministry. I strongly discourage people from coming forward unless they are sure that this is not just an emotional moment but that they really sense that it is the Holy Spirit speaking to them.

On **December 1** I went into surgery and spent the rest of the month in the hospital. The highlight for me was that pastors throughout Cuba were praying. Some churches did 24 hour fasting and praying around the clock. Total churches in Cuba were fasting and praying—always calling to see how I was doing. I am overwhelmed by their love. Churches and pastors in Central America were praying. Friends in North America were praying. Surely, I have received more than a double portion and my joy is abounding as my cup overflows...God is so good...and all His people said...Amen! I have witnessed more people come to know the Lord through this ministry in the past 5 years than the previous 30 years....God is doubling the portion in so many ways. Look what He is doing in finances.

C.E.O. FINANCIAL REPORT 2015 INCOME OF \$563,000



The only explanation for the above growth is GOD—no human explanation is reasonable. The "Pie Graph" illustrates the designated and expended funds according to regions. As you can see Cuba takes the 'lion's share' and is where we are seeing unbelievable results in the growth of God's kingdom. The second chart shows the income growth of C.E.O. over the past seven years. The earliest year is 2009 when the income was \$57,700 and the next year was \$85,800. I am not sure what caused the dip in 2012—otherwise there was and is a steady growth. Our Newsletter goes out to less than 300 people and we continue to struggle to get our website up and running. So what other explanation can there be but that God is blessing this ministry. There was an increase of \$174,000 over last year's income—that is a 45% increase—that is amazing—that is GOD. God has used YOU to cause these results and we are thankful for each of you and your generous and sacrificial gifts—may God bless you accordingly. *We still need tens of thousands more to deal with the pressing needs in Haiti—please continue to pray and give as God leads.*

C.E.O. OPENS NEW MINISTRY TO IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA



Immigrants from Slavic countries, from Ethiopia or Eritrea now are able to attend a Bible Study and Discipleship class. C.E.O. is happy to announce that Berhanu Ayano is joining the team. Berhanu is Ethiopian by birth. He moved to Croatia and later to the Ukraine before moving to Canada twelve years ago. Berhanu and his wife Iryna, live in Winnipeg and have three boys—Adriel (18), Nathan (14), and Lemuel (11). He comes to us with a vast array of training and

experience. Among the many achievements he has includes a Master's degree in Theology. He is a Bible teacher, preacher, and evangelist. He is trained in 'conflict resolution', 'project management', and in several other areas. He has served in several capacities with various organization including hospitals, government and Christian. Currently, Berhanu is teaching three cell groups, one in Slavic, one for Eritreans and one for Ethiopians. He speaks five languages. He is raising his own financial support through C.E.O. that provides a tax-deductible receipt for donors that wish to support his ministry. As support grows Berhanu hopes to conduct evangelistic campaigns in Ethiopia.

AUTOMATIC WITHDRAWALS

In each mailing we insert a small green and white response card that allows you to designate where you want your contribution to go.

It also allows you to indicate if this is a one-time gift or a monthly gift that you would like to make. Some do it monthly by cheque or credit card and some gain air miles on their cards.

This frees you from doing this on a regular basis and it enables us to plan more accurately. For instance: we support more than 200 pastors monthly because of this process. We would like to provide for children in the same way.

At the beginning of this New Year please pray about this and see what God would direct you to do. All designated funds are used accordingly. Thank you for your prayerful support.

Join us... Winter Couples Mission Trip to Cuba
Due to Health Issues rescheduled to End of February

Flying out of Winnipeg at 9 a.m. to the Iberostar Tainos
Cost: \$1900/person (tax-deductible).
Includes an overnight in Havana, all in-land transportation,
off resort meals and ministry events like 'Feed a Village'.



Our main purpose is to provide an atmosphere that allows you to experience God in a fresh new way. Secondly, allow you to enjoy and fall in love with your Cuban brothers and sisters. Thirdly, if God puts these people on your heart we provide opportunity for you to get further involved in meaningful ministry with them. You will experience our "Feed-a-Village" ministry in which we often see many come to know the Lord. You will experience vibrant worship in Cuban churches. Some of the best food is found off the resorts. You will get to tour Havana by horse and carriage and see some of the historical sites in this old pirate raided city. You will get two solid days off just to enjoy the beaches and sites of Cuba.

WE ARE A TEAM...
Empowering Ministries
to ...

Reach the Lost, *Revive* the weak, *Rescue* the fallen,
Restore the broken,
Reconcile the offended,
Release the Discipled

PRAYING FORWARD IN 2016

I would like to thank you for all your prayer support and encouragement. For both Elizabeth and I the year of 2015 has been challenging with our health. She had a malignant tumor removed and we praise God that all the latest tests and x-rays indicate that she is totally clear of cancer. I not only had both knees replaced this year but as was mentioned there were some major complications. Your prayers have sustained us in the past year and we covet those prayers for 2016. There is so much work to be done and the "fields are white unto harvest" but the labourers are few....pray therefore that the Lord will send more labourers into the field" ...that is my prayer...will you join me?

