

Numbers, A Story, Prayer Requests, and Recommendations

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(Photo above by David Bruerd)



(Photo above of Phil, Heidi, and son Connor)

When I (Scott) was in 6th grade I met a kid named Phil Goss at school and we became good friends. Eventually, **he accepted Christ** and sometimes came to church with our family. After 6th grade, his mom re-married and they moved.

After a few exchanges of correspondence, we lost touch. I never forgot Phil and often prayed for him because I knew his family members were not believers. After the invention of the internet, I tried for YEARS to find him, to no avail.

A few months ago (in November), I received this message (via Facebook) from Phil Christensen (his new name after his mom remarried):

Did you go to Lauderdale Lakes Middle School in the middle of the 1970's?

Phil informed me that, although he had fallen away from the Lord for some time, when he was in high school (through Young Life) he came back to following Jesus. He still has the Bible (The Way, Living Translation) that I gave him well over 40 years ago, and still has a drawing of Jesus my dad did for him.

He is married to a Christian and has a 22-year-old son who loves Jesus. He has taken several missions trips and helped build homes for the poor. He is a leader in their church and leads a Christian motorcycle club ministry.

I had the huge privilege of being able to visit Phil a few weeks ago because he lives in Seattle, only 3 1/2 hours away! What an encouragement it was to hear him recount his memory of us meeting, of my efforts to reach out to him, of our family's witness to him, and of how the seeds that were planted then have grabbed root and continue to grow and bear fruit! It was such a joy to get to know him and his wife, his church and friends! He and his wife will come down to visit us in February!

(As an added bit of trivia, Phil finished middle school in Bothell, Washington and knew my wife's cousins!)

PRAYER REQUESTS...

1. The planning committee for the Palau Rockwood Festival this summer is meeting for the first time this week. Please pray for **UNITY of vision** and **UNITY of relationship** for this group made up of representatives from different churches in Rockwood.

On the evening of February 19th, we will have our SECOND Annual Rockwood United Worship event. Please pray that churches will participate in this collaborative opportunity, that we will focus on what (Who) unites us, and that it will deepen our

2. Churches which previously had nothing to do with each other (i.e, Catholics and Pentecostals, Gringos and Hispanics, Baptists and everyone else) are **STARTING to worship together, serve together, fellowship together** and even discuss possible mergers! Pray this **continues and GROWS**.

3. An **inter-church prayer group** which has been meeting for 5 months to pray for Rockwood is currently **multiplying** to the next generation of prayer groups. **Pray for unity and reproduction**.

4. Some very white churches in Rockwood are starting to catch the **vision for multicultural congregations**. **Pray that TRUE multicultural churches will grow, with multicultural LEADERSHIP**.

For "Numbers People"

We don't do "numbers" very much in our updates. Here are some you might find interesting. Of course, if you are reading this, **YOU are NOT** reflected in the "negative" aspect of these numbers, and we **GREATLY APPRECIATE YOU** *reading our updates, praying, giving, and being a part of what God is doing here*. We are only wanting to inform and ask you to pray (and/or perhaps help us mobilize others to join our support team).

* In the last **7** months of **2013**, the average percentage of people who OPENED our email updates was **41%**

* In the last **7** months of 2016, the average percentage of people who OPENED our email updates was **30.5%**

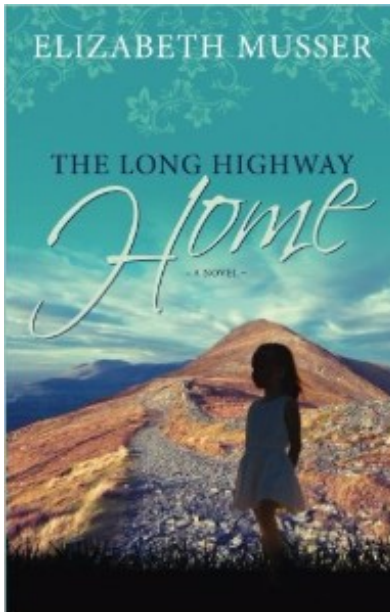
* Since **2013** (when we returned to the U.S.) over **600** people have "unsubscribed" from our mailing list

* Since September **2012**, when we announced we would be returning to the U.S. in the summer of **2013** to continue in ministry, we have LOST (for a *variety* of legitimate reasons) over **\$3000** in monthly support

* In that same period of time, we have gained (through new supporters or through long-termers increasing their investments) **\$780** in monthly support

* We have **4** people on our team here (**2** married women, **1** married man, and **1** unmarried woman)

* There are about **40** (mostly small) churches in our community of focus (Rockwood). There are about **35,000** people who live in Rockwood, Oregon's poorest, youngest, and most diverse community.

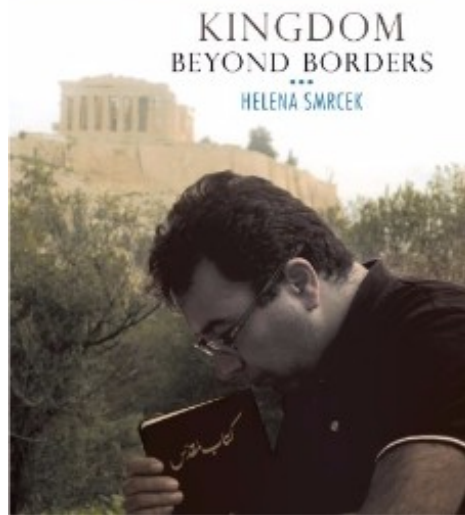


2 SIGNIFICANT book recommendations...

1. Elisabeth Musser is a **best-selling author** (and friend, and fellow ITeams missionary). She wrote a book called "**The Long Highway Home**" which is currently a best-seller in Europe. It is a fictional story largely based on the reality of true refugee journeys and the ministry in Austria we helped start almost 30 years ago (**The Oasis...**<http://oasis.iteams.org/>). We **HIGHLY** recommend it! You can read more about it (and two sample chapters) at: <http://www.elizabethmusser.com/>

2. Most of you have read, or have read about, "**Kingdom Beyond Borders**". Authored by Helena Smrcek (who came to Christ as a 16-year-old Czechoslovakian refugee from through our ministry in Austria back in 1988). Written in a devotional format with 31 chapters, with **true testimonies of refugees who had their lives transformed by Jesus in our Athens ministry**. GREAT book which reminds us what GOD is doing among people from "closed" (mostly Islamic) countries! All proceeds go to ITeams refugee ministries. **Kindle price: \$3.99**
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0061HAGHS/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Promo video our son Cody made when he was quite a bit younger:
<https://vimeo.com/31503133>



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** Family/Ministry Website (www.imccracken.net/)

** Ellie's Blog(<http://elliebomccracken.blogspot.com/>)

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