The Greatest Story Ever Told!

To whom also he shewed himself ALIVE after his passion by many infallible proofs, being SEEN OF THEM forty days (Acts 1:3).

When I was seven, I walked two miles over a dirt road to a small country church known as Wesley Chapel. The church had a wonderful Sunday school teacher, Annie Holcomb, and was served by a part-time preacher who appeared every other Sunday. Even at seven years of age, there was something inside of me reaching out for more.

A neighbor farmer had encouraged me to attend the local Baptist church. There, I heard at a youth meeting the pastor's wife speak of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. All of these events were working together in my heart.

That Sunday will be forever embedded in my mind when a young minister was invited to lead the morning service. I was in my early teens.

That morning the striking young preacher preached with conviction and power. Again, I felt the moving in my heart that had tugged at me throughout my young years. With a moving challenge, the preacher gave a Gospel appeal. My whole life it seemed hung in the balance. I raised my hand for prayer and at that moment, I was redeemed—God moved into my life.

When I walked out of that church building that morning, the grass was greener, the sky was bluer, and the song of the birds was sweeter. A Living God changes everything. In my later teens, I surrendered to preach under the vibrant ministry of Gene Payne at Hardison Baptist, another country church. I praise the Lord for those whom God used to challenge me along the way in those younger years of my life.

Since those days of long ago, across the world we have seen people bowing down to idols, worshipping nature, praying to graves of departed loved ones, and DEAD GODS—that cannot hear or feel or know. The God I met that morning was a LIVING GOD.

The disciples seeing JESUS ALIVE...after the cross...CHANGED EVERYTHING!

Realizing this fantastic truth is the key to understanding the New Testament. Jesus appeared at least 12 times to different group sizes, ranging from just one person to 500 people. He appeared on a country road, on a mountainside, by the sea, and in two upper rooms.

He instructed his disciples that they were to preach the Gospel “among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). He instructed them to tell what they had witnessed—that they had SEEN. “And ye are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24:48).

“Witnesses”—They are not lawyers or prosecutors.

“Witnesses”—A witness tells what he knows, what he has witnessed.

His living presence...was the fire that burned across the landscape of the New Testament world.

The disciples were fueled by the greatest story ever told—Jesus Christ was ALIVE! Dear Reader, do YOU know that story? That story is changing the world. Has it changed YOU? Have YOU felt the touch of a LIVING God?

If not, right at this moment, right where you are, reach out to Him, and you will find a hand reaching back...to make you part of the...

GREATEST STORY—EVER TOLD!!!

Contact Information for James Ray
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The Cover

*The Disciples Peter and John Running to the Sepulcher on the Morning of the Resurrection*, Public domain, c. 1898 (oil on canvas by Eugène Burnand (1850–1921)

The artist, Eugène Burnand was a little known Swiss painter. He captured the moment and the expression of Peter and John running to the tomb. Look closely at their expressions and you will discover the expressions of a headstrong, outspoken and often impulsive Peter and of a gentle and rational John. The artist, without doubt, had absorbed himself in the Scripture to be able to so aptly capture the emotions and personality of Peter. Also, although the painting has not achieved the public acclaim of a Manet, Renoir, or Rembrandt, this painting has been described by some as “The Greatest Easter Painting Ever Made.” Study the face of Peter, the oldest disciple, and the face of John, the youngest disciple. John, the youngest disciple was the only one bold enough to stay by the cross during the horrible crucifixion. Peter, the oldest, was intimidated by the crowd in the courtyard to deny Jesus, eventually (according to tradition) requested crucifixion upside down because he deemed himself unworthy to be crucified as was his Lord.
Their world consisted of a parcel of dried, scrubby dirt onto which they had built their homes. "Home" only amounted to a hovel thrown together from palm leaf mats hung onto a few worm-eaten sticks stuck in the ground. Around this hovered a number of sheep or goats—the source of any livelihood. Their lives were stories of hardship and struggles for sheer survival. Etched in their faces were deep lines and furrows put there by years of lashing sand and heat.

The people of the Niger would live and die only to be buried at the end under the sand and rock without much notice. When in time the blowing dust would obscure their graves into the unforgiving landscape, no one passing by would even glance at the spot where they had been laid.

Their bleak tents were cheered only by a battery radio—a prized possession. It was only a few years past when the sun came up on one of their desolate days when
they heard a different sound floating across the dry landscape over the radio waves. They heard for the first time the voice of the missionary proclaiming a message of hope and redemption. Amazing! Beyond their life of struggles and hardships, there was a place called Heaven.

When death came, it would not be the end but the beginning—all because God Who made the desert and the world had sent His Son. In addition to this was the promise that God loved them and would come to live in their hearts and tents now. This God was unlike any other. The pagan gods who held the people in bondage for centuries never claimed to dwell with them or to love them. Those gods were hard taskmasters who only demanded works and tedious servitude. Jesus, God’s Son, and God Himself would be their Friend and Companion every moment of their lives and beyond.

The humble people of the Niger would never see kings’ palaces but they could see the King Himself if they would believe. Yes, the blowing sands might cover their unmarked graves, but the Creator God would engrave their names in the eternal book of Heaven. True—future tent dwellers might never know that they had ever lived but the Creator Himself would say, I know thee by name (Exodus 33:17). I have loved thee with an everlasting love...with lovingkindness have I drawn thee (Jeremiah 31:3).

That first broadcast marked a milestone in Missionaries David and Donna Edens’ 30-year ministry in the Niger. For the first time he could spread the Good News to everyone who would listen—30 years of living in a place where few others would ever go—30 years of enduring un-speakable loneliness—30 years of suffering malaria and desert related sicknesses—30 years of breathing dust and withstanding intense heat—

From the desert to the Jordan—**ISA** is His Name, The One Who lives within their tents and fills their hearts with praise. In Honduras He is **JESÚS**, Lord Emmanuel. From simple mountain villages you can hear the chapel bell. From the Black Sea to the Red Sea, **ESUS** is His Name. In Asia they know **YAYSOO** hears every word they pray.
30 years of work in translating the Bible into a written language for the people that time forgot and yet, 30 years of joyfully walking with God and never looking back.

David and Donna were like the little lad’s lunch. When given to Jesus, it would be first broken, then blessed, and finally spread among thousands.

The iron grip of pagan religion would not release its slaves willingly. In fact, few at first would be freed. False religious teachers ranted and raved on the radio against the new religion and reprimanded all who would dare to listen. Many, if not most of the inhabitants of the Niger, would not be able to break the shackles that had held them so long. However, for the first time they would know that there was a choice—that there was a better way. The really great harvest might be generations away but the seed planted would germinate.

That future harvest could be illustrated with the story of Mohammed. This convert broke the bands of Islam to receive Christ. He stood resolutely when family and friends tried to intimidate him into going back to Islam. He stated to the missionary, “I am like a wild boar. Once the wild boar takes off in a direction, it never looks back. That is the way I feel about the old Islamic ways I used to follow.”

Here and there the message would fall on ready hearts such as Mohammed and penetrate the darkness for earnest seekers of light. Here and there God would gather His gems from the desert floor—gems priceless and eternal, each gem worth more in value than a thousand worlds.

The people of the Niger, the people that time forgot but the people that

...Eternity Remembered!

(This article was first printed in THE NATIONS MAGAZINE Volume 3, No. 2.)
Bicester, England Report

Pastor Ken Punter

We have so far distributed 8,000 of the 10,000 New Testaments to houses all over Bicester. Many have called to say, “Thank You” and many of these have commented positively on the professional presentation of these New Testaments. I would estimate that for every negative comment we have had four or five good responses. One man (his name is Tim) called me to say he is really pleased with his Bicester Edition New Testament and would like to hear more about our church. This man seems to be in search of truth. A team of faithful workers, Mirela, Brian, Trevor, Ross, Daniel, Janet, and Christian have been out on the streets every week since early March 2021 distributing these Bibles. Other team members, Yusdi and Jessica, donated their garage space for storage. Our aim is to complete the distribution by the end of July. There are about 40,000 people living in Bicester. Our prayer is that many of those will read the Word of God this year and that many will give their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

At Bicester Baptist Church we sense that the time of the end is near. This has been a timely project, helping our people to become more prayerful and missions minded as we see the great day of Christ’s return approaching. Thanks to those who have sacrificed and given so that our church can have this blessed experience.

GOAL: To place the Word of God in every town, every street, and every home where participating missionaries/church planters are working

We are grateful for churches and friends who are partnering with us to provide Bibles for the United Kingdom. No gift is too small. Please use the enclosed envelope and write #1261 on your check.

THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE MINISTRY
For information contact DR. JAMES RAY, 423-802-5198
BIMI • PO Box 9 • Harrison, Tennessee 37341
There was no electricity or running water. Our only contact with the outside world came through a small short wave radio and the mission airplane that came once a month. We had moved deep into the Amazon after working in the cities of Venezuela as missionaries for some months.

The contrast was striking—from working in the city to working deep in the jungle. God gave us a wonderful opportunity to live in the village of Chajurâna.

We lived in an Indian’s house when we first arrived in the village. It would take us nearly six months to get just the shell of our new home built. Our first few months were very difficult. My wife, son, and a daughter all came down with malaria. The hardships were very new to us and I began to wonder if we were wise to be in the village with so few modern amenities. Quite a few people had said things such as “Why go there?” or “Is it really necessary?” Our phrase when things went wrong was “It is God’s will for us to be here, so…”

After a few months, one of the Christians in the village invited me to accompany him to another village up river where he had family. When we got there, I was left alone to wander the village while my friend went to visit his family. No one in the village would come near me since I was a stranger. I could not speak their language even if they did come close. I began to ask myself, “What am I doing here?” It seemed sort of useless. But God had other plans.

Finally, a young girl came walking up to me—surprising to say the least. She spoke to me. A friend from Chajurâna translated for me. “Are you a missionary?” she asked. Surprised by the nature of the question, I said, “Yes, I am.” She then asked, “Are you a Gospel missionary or a Catholic missionary?” I said, “I am a Gospel-preaching missionary.” She said, “Follow me, my grandmother wants to talk to you.” We followed her into a little grass hut where we found a very old and frail grandmother. The older woman proceeded to ask me the same questions.

“Are you a missionary?”
“Yes, I am.”
As I answered her inquiries, I felt that I was in a play of some kind that had a director who was overseeing it all. “Are you a Gospel-preaching missionary?”
“Yes, I am.”
Once the grandmother had settled on who and what I was, she began to tell me her story.

I am from Brazil. I know that I will be dying soon so I came here to see some of my family that I had not seen in years so that I might say goodbye. I saw you out there and I had to know who you were. When I was a little girl, a missionary visited our village once and taught many things. He did not speak our language very well and I was young so I do not remember much of what he said, but this is what I do remember: the missionary said there was once a man who was also God and that man loved me and died for me.

HE KNEW HERS.

Then gazing at me with serious and earnest eyes, she asked me, “Do you know that story?” With tears in my eyes, I answered, “Yes, I do.”

“Could you tell me why he died for me and could you tell me his name?” I replied, “Yes, I can. His name is Jesus.”

I told her over the next hour the story of Christ and why He came and died and rose again. She became my sister in Christ that day. I got back into the canoe and went back to our village. Two weeks later she died, went to heaven, and saw the One who loved her enough to die for her and she knew His name and...
Rangoon appeared through the clouds as the jumbo jet began its descent. What immediately caught our attention was the golden spires attempting to reach heavenward, one much more glittering, massive, higher than all the others—the awesome and ancient Shwedagon Pagoda with its 60 tons of gold.

Nearly two hundred years ago, young Adoniram Judson stood on the deck of a lopsided old vessel and saw through the depressing view of muddy banks and straggling huts the same glittering spire towering over the huddled filth below. Ann Judson lay on a pallet on deck under an awning (their makeshift “cabin”), too weak from having given birth to a stillborn baby to even raise up and peer over the wooden railing.

This also was my first visit to this exotic city in the mysterious and isolated land of Burma. That first sight which greeted the Judsons’ eyes some two hundred years earlier had been vastly different, and yet, strangely alike. Now there were millions of people, multitudes of cars, buses, and bicycles.

Today, there are more than two million believers in Myanmar (Burma) and countless lives which have been transformed in the intervening two centuries. Ann and Adoniram Judson became household words in 19th century America. Hundreds of babies became their namesakes.

One thing has not changed since Judson first looked upon this scene—the people and their need of Christ. The pagoda still stands just as it stood in 1813. There is, however, a difference in Burma since that day in 1813 in July when the Judsons sailed into the Rangoon harbor. In 1813 there was not a Christian Burmese in the entire land! And that day marked the beginning of an epoch in Christian missions as two courageous and heroic young Americans helped to change the history of a nation.
Judson impacted missions outreach worldwide. Through the years those same Baptists fractured into many independent entities. Today, those different Baptist groups, many of them holding the same basic tenets, are in danger of forgetting their heritage and are failing to pass on their priceless mission legacy.

I grew up in China. My parents were Baptist missionaries in the Central China Province of Kiangsu. When we had to return to America at the beginning of World War II, I was three, understood English, but spoke only Chinese.

I grew up feeling like there was a special link with Ann Judson. My maternal grandmother, born in 1868, was named for her—Ann Judson Fogle. I was given that special middle name from my grandmother. I felt Ann Judson belonged to the family. We want our children's children to know, love, and appreciate their mission heritage. That heritage goes back to China and beyond that to Burma. In 1999, I went to Burma for the first time. My husband, Bob, and I taught in a small Baptist seminary in Rangoon (Yangon). Deep inside I felt that it was like a trip home, although I had never been there before. This was part of my family's priceless heritage.

The government does not make travel convenient or easy. If you get off the beaten track, it takes real effort. I was seized with hopeless fascination. How could I actually be here and not try to trace the footprints of Ann and Adoniram? Impossible!

There was no clear way, no marked and easy map to follow, no record of what had been where, and what might possibly remain from those long ago years. And yet, it was amazing to discover that wherever we went, so many knew of whom we inquired. “Ah, yes, –Yoodthan (Judson), of course, we know who he was!” And in the first bookstore we entered in downtown Rangoon, there on a display table with a bright modern plastic covering was the title *Burmese–English Grammar* by Adoniram Judson. I was intrigued. It would be like a treasure hunt...
to search out the trail of Adoniram and Ann Judson. That journey lasted one month but bridged two centuries.

This odyssey started on the road to Mandalay where Adoniram was incarcerated in two death prisons and where Ann somehow managed to keep him alive. From May 1824 until February of 1826, Judson was in three sets of iron fetters. The first was in the dreaded Let Ma Yoon death prison, which was literally in the very shadow of the king's glittering palace. The second prison was eight miles away in Aung-bin-le. Judson was one of nine foreign prisoners among nearly one hundred Burmese felons and murderers. These prisoners had no way of knowing when each morning dawned if it would be their last.

The sheer intrepidity, fortitude, and skills of the unrelenting Ann literally kept Adoniram alive. In addition to this horrible burden, Ann had struggles of her own including smallpox, Dengue fever, cerebral spinal meningitis, and giving birth to a baby girl—all alone. Through absolute determination and constant efforts to try anything necessary to preserve his life, she literally saved him from execution three times. Only a few months after Adoniram’s release, she herself died from the effects of two years of disease and malnutrition. Judson lived on to give Burma its first and best translation of the Bible, which is still in use some two centuries later.

The trail then led to the bustling capital of Rangoon, where a number of large spires reach heavenward—not just the spires of Buddhist pagodas now, but also the steeples of Christian churches crowded with worshippers! The invisible trail next went on to the far South, over hazardous roads and the danger of flooding to areas seldom seen now by foreigners. This was Moulmein, where the venerable old Judson Baptist Church stands tall, founded by Adoniram himself in 1827. This is the oldest church in Burma. The footprints led even farther south to Amherst. There I stood at the simple but beautiful memorial erected by faithful Burmese believers over the grave of Ann Judson. I marveled at being here. This sacred spot spoke to me. Ann Judson had given her life away for love of a people.

We want our grandchildren to know the Judsons’ story and to understand this priceless legacy.

They need to know how God used the lives of two intrepid young Americans who accepted the challenge of the Great Commission. We want them to know, as we have learned, that this same Commission is ours. So, as we followed those footprints deep into Burma, we rejoiced at the living legacy of Ann and Adoniram Judson. Somehow . . . they still seemed to LIVE!

Notable scholar and researcher on America’s first foreign missionaries, Rosalie Hunt, graciously shares her experiences retracing the very steps of the Judsons in Burma.

Publisher: The Judson Press, Valley Forge, PA
(Not sold by BIMI, but information/copies may be obtained from the author, Rosalie Hunt, 5009 Doris Lane, Guntersville, AL) www/rosaliehallhunt.com
Dear Dr. Ray:
I received my issue of the Nations Magazine today and have already finished reading it through. Mrs. Dowell went home to be with the Lord a little over a year ago. Pray for me, I miss her so much. I am 91 and a half years old now. I will see my wife again soon but I want to see my Saviour first of all. You are blessed to have a dear wife like Mary. I pray for you both.
—Dwight Dowell, Statesville, NC

Dear Dr. Ray,
I feel happy to be able to send Scriptures where they are needed and look forward to sending more funds for your Bible ministry. Our former pastor was Dr. J. B. Buffington. This is where we got our start knowing about BIMI. Thank you for contacting me and may the Lord continue to bless you and Mary as you minister to a dying world who needs the Lord desperately.
—Shirley Pruim, Leslie, GA

Dear Brother Ray:
I really appreciate your faithfulness to the Lord and for the diligent work you put into making the missions videos. They have been a tremendous encouragement to me and the students I have shared them with. May God continue to bless you and your wife as you serve our Great King.
—Jake Friesen, General Director, CanAmerica Missions International, Winkler, Manitoba, Canada

Dear James & Mary:
I thank God for your service to the Lord. My prayer is that He will continue to bless you.
—Lula Wright, Hendersonville, NC

Dear Brother James:
Thanks for your great work at BIMI. Our family at Round Oak enjoy the Nations Magazine each time we receive it. The stories are so informative and interesting. Enclosed find a check for Bibles wherever they are needed. Keep up the wonderful work.
—Charlotte Wilson, Round Oak, GA

Dear Dr. Ray:
I love getting the Nations Magazine and your updates. We’ve been busy here. My wife has been ill and we are dealing with that. Please keep her in your prayers. Thanks so much in Christ.
—Al Mjaanes, Bridgeville, DE

Dear Brother Ray:
Thanks so much for the Nations Magazine. It helps me stay up with our missionaries and what is going on around the world for Christ. Please know that you are prayed for daily.
—Joan Moody, Georgetown, Georgia

Dear Dr. Ray:
I would love to get a copy of the January 2021 Nations Magazine. It has a wonderful article in it about my parents, Jim and Betty Cooper. I would like to share it with my grandkids as they never had the opportunity to meet my parents. Thank you.
—Candy Cooper Martin

George Whitefield’s Chickens & Baptist Ducks

There is no way to explain George Whitefield apart from the hand of God. The Great Awakening in Colonial America was a moving of the Spirit of God, unparalleled with anything seen before that time. Follow James and Mary Ray in the very footsteps of some of the greatest lives ever to touch America.

Special Price: $10.95 DVD
Please add $2.50 for shipping.

For credit card orders, go to www.bimi.org/resources (click on History of Missions & Heritage DVDs).
If paying by check, use the attached envelope in this magazine.
In 1968, BIMI Africa Director Dan Truax surveyed the central Sahara region of Africa with the hope that something could be done about that neglected mission field. That was the beginning of what became known as the Sahara Project. Describing the conditions in the Sahara, Dan wrote: “The climate of the Sahara makes it an uninviting place to do battle with the enemy. Temperatures sometimes soar to 140 degrees with ground temperatures of 175 degrees during the day and sometimes falling below freezing at night. The vastness of the desert makes it a lonely place to work. This takes men and women of spiritual backbone and physical endurance. No sissies need apply.”  

Linda and her husband, J.B., joined BIMI in 1973 and became part of the Sahara Project. The Godfreys and Ron and Donna Bragg pioneered the work in Senegal, West Africa, which was a Moslem stronghold. After serving there for 16 years, Dan Truax asked the Godfreys to pray about going to the area where the Congo Gospel Mission (now BIMI) had originated in the Belgian Congo. Dan wrote, “There are some 80 churches there in the interior of the country. The leadership and many of the pastors were killed some 20 or 25 years ago by the communists, but now they are calling for us to train pastors for them.”

J.B. and Linda accepted the challenge, and in August of 1991, they and three of their children traveled to the village of Tshene in the country of Zaire, which was formerly the Belgian Congo, to begin their ministry. Two weeks after their arrival, the country seemed to fall apart. The shops and stores in the Kinshasa, which was the capital city, were looted and many were burned. People were killed and ten thousand foreigners fled the country. J.B. tried to talk Linda and the children into leaving, but they did not want to leave without him. After all, Linda was no stranger to trials, danger, and uncomfortable living. The Christians had prayed for years for a missionary to come help them. They begged them not to leave. After much prayer, the Godfreys felt that it was God’s will for them to stay. They lived in a house that missionaries had lived in their ministry. Two weeks after their arrival, the country seemed to fall apart. The shops and stores in the Kinshasa, which was the capital city, were looted and many were burned.

"Are you afraid at night?" I asked my friend Linda with whom I was having lunch. It seemed like a sensible question since her husband was out of town, and she was alone. She looked amused, laughed, and answered, "AFTER AFRICA?"

previously and had not been used for 25 years. The natives cut a road to the river so that they could bathe.

A good night’s sleep was not part of the Godfreys’ lives. One night, they heard a crackling in the plastic that they had stuffed in the crack in the corner of their bedroom. J.B. got up with a flashlight and a machete. Whack! Something fell to the floor. Linda asked J.B., “What is it?” He answered, “You don’t want to know!” You guessed it. It was a snake going up the wall. It was hard for her to go back to sleep after that for a while. Then the Lord reminded her once more of Psalm 56:3, What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Then, she slept well.

One night the cows were in the backyard and tore down the outside wall of the outhouse trying to get out. Later the pigs were digging up the backyard with their snouts. Then a couple of goats kept banging on the tin door of the washroom on the front porch. When J.B. went out to run them off, he almost ran into a bull on the front porch. What a night!

The Godfreys were completely “cut off” from the outside world. They could not send any mail or receive any. The food that they had brought with them was soon depleted, but the Christians brought them fruit, eggs, local vegetables, and meat (gazelle, antelope, and other animals). When J.B. was away preaching, men from the church would come and guard Linda and the children.

The Lord greatly blessed the ministry in Zaire. There were prayer meetings in the church in Tshene five mornings a week. The people helped tear down buildings that could no longer be used and repaired others. There were 600 students in the schools on the mission stations. A medical clinic had more than 50 people come to it each day.

On April 20, 1992, BIMI Africa Director Ron Bragg wrote, “The government situation there has not improved and living conditions are difficult to say the least. There is even word that civil war could break out. Last month while J.B. was in Kinshasa, soldiers shot down and killed 12 people coming out of church. As there is still no mail service in Zaire, we cannot know where things stand now.”
cool off. Things changed drastically after they returned home. They received a message via ham radio that the American Embassy was closing and all of their staff was leaving the country. They informed the Godfreys that they would no longer be responsible for their safety if they decided to stay. MAF (Missionary Aviation Fellowship) called to say that they would send a plane the next day to Idiofa, which was the nearest airstrip to the village of Tshene.

The Godfreys decided that it was time for Linda and the children to leave the country, but J.B. would stay behind. Linda, Bonita, Lydia, and Robert frantically packed two suitcases each. The following morning, they loaded the truck and drove three hours over rough roads to Idiofa. Upon arriving, they saw that the airstrip was waist high in weeds and that there was a herd of goats grazing. When the people heard the plane’s engine in the distance, they ran the goats off the airstrip. It was a small one-engine plane and had a critically ill man in the copilot’s seat. Also, there was a chicken in the back seat, which was probably payment for the sick man’s hospital stay.

Linda quickly realized that they could not take all of the suitcases. They would have to leave them with J.B. She grabbed a few clothes out of a couple of the cases and placed them in a rubbish bag, which the pilot stuffed into the belly of the plane. As the plane taxied down the airstrip, Linda prayed for a safe flight, and she prayed for J.B.’s safety. Tears filled her eyes as she saw him standing on the primitive airstrip. Would she ever see him again this side of heaven? In all their years as missionaries, they had been through many dangers and hardships, but they had endured them together. It broke her heart to see him standing there all alone.

After leaving the patient at the American Hospital in Vanga, Linda and the children flew to Kinshasa where she filled out papers for exit visas so that they could leave the country. Then, they were flown to Brazzaville, Congo, where BIMI Africa Director Ron Bragg, along with the help of many supporting pastors, had already bought plane tickets for them.

When Linda, Bonita, Lydia, and Robert arrived in New York City, they had to go outside to change airport terminals. Snow was on the ground and the weather was freezing and so were they because they had no coats. They flew to South Carolina where Linda’s parents, with great joy, met them at the airport WITH COATS!

Linda had no way of knowing whether J.B. was dead or alive. She and the children had said goodbye to him at the airstrip on the fifth of February, and there had been no news from him since then. One day in March, the phone rang, and Linda heard the voice she had longed and prayed to hear. It was J.B. He, with all the suitcases, was in the airport in New York City. It was snowing and freezing and, of course, HE HAD NO COAT.

As I thought about the life and ministry of my friend Linda, and all the trials and difficulties she had gone through as a missionary in Africa, I understood why she had looked amused and laughed when I asked if she were afraid to be alone at night. I decided it really was not a sensible question after all.

Note: After the Godfreys were airlifted to safety from Zaire, J.B. served as a pastor in South Carolina until 2002 when he was asked by BIMI leadership to become the Far East Director. He served in that capacity until he became Vice President of BIMI in 2011. He and Linda reside in Harrison, Tennessee.
Brunei is a small country located on the northern coast on the island of Borneo. The Brunei Empire had its golden age from the 15th to the 17th centuries when its control extended over the entire island of Borneo and north into the Philippines. In more recent times, the country was under the protection of Great Britain. On January 4, 1979, Brunei and the United Kingdom signed a new treaty of friendship and cooperation. Five years later on January 1, 1984, Brunei Darussalam (full name of Brunei) became a fully independent state.

Brunei is an absolute monarchy. The Royal family retains a venerated status within the country, and the Sultan of Brunel is one of the richest men in the world. The Sultan is the supreme leader and is advised by five councils and a cabinet of ministers. There is no elected legislative body.

The media is extremely pro-government. Drug trafficking and illegally importing controlled substances are serious offenses in Brunei and carry a mandatory death penalty.

Pray for this tiny kingdom and that Christianity can make an inroad. Brunei proclaims freedom of religion but it is a crime for Muslims to change. Non-Muslim groups are closely watched by the government. Christ is all powerful to change lives. Pray for seeking hearts in the Royal family.

For more information on Southeast Asia, contact Steve Maldoff, BIMI representative for that area.

Before becoming director for Southeast Asia, Steven and his wife, Christy, served as missionaries in Australia.

The Greatest Story Ever Told...

to the Land of
A MILLION GODS
Her name was Sachiko Yamashiro. For all of her young life, the only gods she had ever known were carved inanimate images of Buddha and multiple other idolatrous pagan deities.

Her darkness was shattered when God sent Missionary Don Sisk into her life with the message of Christ. Sachiko stepped out of the shadows into the glorious light of the Gospel. She immediately became concerned for her father, a devout Buddhist.

Don Sisk met Sachiko’s father when he went to take a series of Bible lessons to Sachiko’s home. Don told him about Senri Newtown Baptist Church and invited him to the services. Being a devout Buddhist, Mr. Yamashiro did not seem to have any interest in anything to do with the church; however, Don asked for permission to bring a taped Gospel message and play it for him and his wife. He consented, and later in the week Don went to the Yamashiro’s apartment with the Gospel message. It was called “The Light of the World,” by a Japanese evangelist.

Don watched with great interest as the couple listened to the message. They seemed to have received it well and afterward they discussed various things. The Yamashiros began attending the services on Sunday mornings. A month later, they too, like their daughter Sachiko, stepped from darkness to light accepting Christ as the one true God.

A few days after their conversion, Mr. Yamashiro said to Don, “Brother Sisk, I have one entire room filled with idols. I would love for you to come and help me tear down the idol shelves, and then you can do whatever you would like with the idols.” That afternoon Don took his station wagon to the Yamashiro home. He and Mr. Yamashiro tore down the idol shelves, and Don loaded them all in his station wagon.

After the evening service, they had an idol burning ceremony at the church. All the idols were stacked in a big pile. They poured kerosene on them, and then they encircled the idols and began to sing Christian hymns. Mr. and Mrs. Yamashiro gave their testimonies of how they had been saved by God’s grace. Then, taking a match, he lit the idols, and they were burned for the glory of God.

As the idols were burning, a man came by and asked, “What in the world is going on?” Mr. Yamashiro answered, “We are burning the idols. I have served them for many years, but they have never answered a prayer. They have never helped me in any way. I have found the true and living God. I no longer need these idols.”

Through the years, Mr. and Mrs. Yamashiro remained faithful Christians. Their children and their grandchildren followed in their steps. The Yamashiros had burned their bridges behind them. Even more so, they had burned their idol gods! As the smoke of their burning gods rose toward heaven, their hearts burned within them. They had found the only true God of heaven and there would be no turning back.

Like Mr. Yamashiro burning his gods, we in the West should abandon things that separate us from the only true and living God.¹

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¹ Don Sisk “A Testimony from Japan,” Baptist International Missions, Inc., 1–4.

The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate’er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only thee.  
—William Cowper
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