

## Sharing the BEST NEWS Globally & Locally: Grace Vandervort's Journey

### **First Word: What influenced your passion for outreach?**

Probably growing up in a very missionary-minded home, being named after a missionary - these were the early influences for me to become involved in outreach. I always wanted to "witness" to my friends at school and was challenged each year at Bible camp to do so. Usually I failed to do it! Sometimes I would get into arguments, as kids do, with others who didn't know about the Lord. It meant a lot to me that I was a Christian and that my friends needed Him too. When I was about 12 years old, we began having prayer meetings in our home for the Red Sea Mission Team, and its founder, Dr. Lionel Gurney, had a big impact on me for outreach to Muslims. After completing nurses' training, I went to Moody Bible Institute, and there we were involved in outreach. Also I got more involved personally in praying for Muslims in the "Middle East Prayer Band" because I knew these people were the most neglected. God used this to really call me to serve with the Team among Muslims.

### **FW: What made you join the outreach commission?**

I've been on the outreach team since shortly after I returned home from Djibouti in 2004. I think Maureen Juarez invited me to join it, and I thought, "why not?" Missions is something very close to my heart!

### **FW: What adjustments surfaced as you reached out in Djibouti?**

Of course I had to learn the language of the international people I was reaching out to, and that takes a long time and lots of hard work. It also gives you time to learn their culture so that major mistakes aren't made. I had good mentors when I first began working among the Afar people. They were women who just loved the people and were always seeking to share the Good News (we use the term "Best News" in Afar). I learned you have to begin early on in a relationship to speak of Christ, and I think it's the same here. If knowing Him means everything to me, then He will soon come up in a conversation, whatever the language.

### **FW: Hardships you face with local outreach vs. global outreach are...?**

The difficulties here compared to overseas is that there, people are very God-minded. They want to talk about spiritual things. Here there is the threat or danger of not being "politically correct"! So I miss the openness of my friends in Djibouti where I could share something of the Lord every time I visited - even if they weren't believers. I also have found it very difficult just to get to know people here. People's homes are their castles, and it's hard to get beyond polite greetings we give each other in the stairwell, elevator, or hallways. This has been especially true in my apartment building but also in the neighborhood, walking around Lake Harriet, and so on. How do you get to know people?

### **FW: How have you made outreach personal and direct in Minnesota?**

Outreach isn't distant and indirect, but to be honest, I have found it more difficult in Minnesota than it was "out there" in Djibouti. Praying for people, looking for opportunities, expecting them - that's where I am today.

### **FW: What misconceptions do you deal with regarding outreach?**

Outreach should be a lifestyle. But like everyone else, I am a learner and long for more opportunities. I long to see that candle on the organ lit every week - and more than one candle at that!



**GRACE VANDERVORT HAS RETIRED AFTER 37 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE MISSION FIELD. HER LAST ASSIGNMENT WAS WITH THE RED SEA TEAM IN DJIBOUTI, AFRICA.**

**DURING HER TIME IN AFRICA, GRACE HELPED MOTHERS AND CHILDREN IN A CLINIC AS A NURSE, AND SHE ALSO WORKED IN A BOOKSTORE.**



# LOOKING OUT REACHING IN

I will never forget the day when outreach took on a very personal perspective. It was 1995. My family and I flew to China and Hong Kong. I had not been back since I was five.

On one particular outing, we visited a Buddhist temple. The courtyard was saturated with incense, but that was not all that filled the courtyard. Bondage and hopelessness crowded out any sense of peace. I had never seen so many people weeping at the same time. At that moment, I saw myself in the eyes of these people.

I knew that had my circumstances been different, had I never heard of Jesus and made a choice to follow Him, I would be standing by these people desperate before a lifeless deity.

Obedying the Lord is always rewarding, though we do not always feel it. At times we may be directed to ask a non-believer, "What do you think our purpose on earth is?" Sometimes the Lord provides a time for us to do something really unexpected that leaves Christ's impression on the non-believer. It is awesome how open people are in auto shops and city buses! Other times an opportunity arises to share the gospel or pray for a person who may have become a friend.

It does not take much for me to remember the people in that courtyard in Hong Kong. In Minneapolis, there are people who are just as lost and sad. God longs for people here to worship Him and to seek Him. He longs to give them eternal life and to walk with them as redeemed people! I am grateful for His love in this way.

KaWan Olson

"I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light."

John Keith Falconer



"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot

"We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first."

Oswald J. Smith

## Sunday, October 15

Join us for worship on Outreach Sunday. Tim Addington will be speaking in both the 8:30 am and 11 am service. Tim is an executive director of Reach Global the EFCA International Mission.

Come for a panel discussion with two FEFC supported missionaries during the Adult Bible Study Fellowships.

- Rocky & Rachel Bliss  
(Touch Global - formerly Compassion Ministries)

- Ben & Debra  
(EFCA IM in France)

