

WRONGLY **ACCUSED** AND **IMPRISONED**

BY: Holly Meriweather
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Pastor Bismark Trujillo is one of David Dickson's "jungle pastors." He and other pastors in this area of Nicaragua choose to work to plant churches in this difficult-to-access part of the country that, with very few exceptions, is only accessible by horse and cart.

Pastor Bismark pastors a church in the Wapi region where, according to Brother David, "someone always has something for you to carry to someone else." It was because of his willingness to carry a package – without knowing its contents – to someone at his destination that the worst happened: Military checkpoint police found drugs in his bag.

Although the drugs were not his, Bismark refused to defend himself or name the person who asked him to carry the package. He was told that if he gave any information about the individual, his wife and children would be killed.

A lawyer pastor in Nicaragua helped with Bismark's defense fees, but his wife eventually had to sell everything they had to pay for his services. However, they were not successful, and he was sentenced to five years in prison.

He had decided not to let anyone in the prison know that he was a pastor. Even still, when he arrived at the prison, he told fellow prisoners that he would not be in prison for five years. "Why?" they asked. "Because I know someone," Bismark told them. "So who is it that you know?" his fellow prisoners asked.

"Jesus," Bismark answered.

Normally a new prisoner is stripped, beaten, and humiliated, but for some reason, this did not happen to him, and he gives credit to God for being spared that beating.

While in prison Pastor Bismark says that he began repeatedly hearing God whisper to him, "Romans 1:16." Because God continued to whisper the verse, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," he shared his faith with fellow prisoners and 32 men made professions of faith while he was there.

Bro. David recently visited Bismark and says that he is a changed man who loves to plant churches like the other pastors in the Wapi area who choose to live in the jungle instead of cities. His faith has been strengthened, his attitude – Bro. David – says, is completely positive and he's even more on fire for presenting the gospel to non-believers.



His current ministry includes a family that is helping sponsor the work and has given him permission to use their building for a church plant. Please pray for Bismark as he reaches the broken with his own story of brokenness, deliverance, and faith in God to use the worst of circumstances to glorify his name.

FROM BROKEN TO REDEEMED

BY: Dr. John David Smith
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When I arrived in Cape Verde as a missionary on the island of St. Vincent to begin ministry at the only Baptist church there, I did not expect that Pastor Manuel Ramos to retire and that I would fill his role. It was a small church with a congregation of fifteen, half of them children. Among the adults, there was a young man I noticed who came in after services started, sat in the back, and left during the closing prayer.

I didn't have the opportunity to meet him until one Sunday after service when he came and introduced himself as Claudino Gomez and explained that he was a new believer. He also said, "My common law wife, Francelina, is not a believer. Would you please pray for her?" It was clear that he loved her very much, and I agreed to pray for her. I also invited him to my house to talk about his new faith in Christ and we began meeting during the week for Bible study.

During one of our meetings, I asked Claudino if he wanted us to go talk to her and share the gospel, but he said no because she was very antagonistic to the gospel. So instead we continued praying as he studied the Bible.

Claudino grew rapidly in his faith and told me one day, "I can't continue in this lifestyle of immorality because it doesn't honor God." When he told Francelina they should get married, she didn't want to do it and refused to quit going out to parties. Later Claudino knew God wanted him to issue an ultimatum, so he told Francelina she had three months to change her lifestyle or he would move out. Despite his love for her, he had to follow through with his decision and didn't believe she would accept the gospel.

I had lost track of Claudino's deadline, so I was unprepared when late one night he came to my house weeping, telling me "the time is up" and that he had moved out of the house. I watched his profound sadness in the next weeks as he prayed for her. He knew it was her brokenness that caused her to continue in a lifestyle that did not honor God, but he went through with the ultimatum, difficult as it was.

In the meantime, the church had grown and Claudino had to sit up front during services, so he did not see Francelina come in one evening and sit on the back row. I was excited to see her, but there was no way I could get his attention that she was there, so instead I prayed, "Lord, let this night be the night of salvation for her."

God had been working in her heart, and during that service when the opportunity came to make a decision, Francelina almost ran to the front without Claudino even realizing it. Then he saw her at the altar, and his facial expression was indescribable. He joined her there and I knelt with them as she gave her life to the Lord that night.

Later Francelina was with a group of new converts "making a profession of faith," which was the tradition. After her baptism with other new believers that night, she asked to sing a song: "At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away, it was there by faith I received my sight and now I am happy all the day." Many tears were shed that night.

A few weeks later they were married, and it wasn't long before Claudino made known his call to ministry. They were the best I'd ever seen at leading others to Christ, drawing people to church, and creating relationships. They love people and are very fruitful in ministry.

The first church plant where they served was in Salamansa, a little fishing village, then they went to another fishing village on the other side of the island called Calahau. After that they planted a church in Santo Antao then returned to Saint Vincent where he is now interim pastor for that original church in Saint Vincent.

Just recently they went to the island of Sao Nicolau where they are now pastoring a church.

I am so blessed to have walked that journey with them from their own brokenness to their call to serve broken people, and I'm proud to call them brother and sister.



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NEWS

FROM HIDING OUT TO CHOOSING LIFE

BY: Stan Scroggins
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“Joab” was born into a poor Filipino family and soon became an orphan. His father was involved in the Philippines’ underground government conflict, so while Junmar was just a young boy, he was pressured to join.

Eventually he became a hit man.

During the annual Kalilangan Festival in the town of General Santos on Mindanao Island, local pastor Santos Lumang and his church (Fundamental Christian Baptist Church) were handing out tracts to festival-goers. Joab was there as well, waiting in the shadows for his next hit. But before the target arrived, Joab was given a tract that changed his life.

Later something drove Joab to find the pastor from the festival, Pastor Santos, who took him to a hiding place immediately for protection. Although putting himself at great risk, for ten days he worked diligently to get Joab to safety on another island.

Finally permission was given for Joab to come to Negros Island and take refuge at the BMA Bible College (BMABC). After his arrival, another pastor, former Bible College employee Richie Pugoy, housed and fed Joab.

The first priority, however, was to lead Joab to Christ, and so he did, surrounded by his new friends

To avoid suspicion, Joab enrolled as a student at BMABC, but with no education and no English-language ability, a couple began teaching him English so he could pass the high school equivalency exam. The result? Joab became a star college pupil and graduated five years later.

Now married with two children, his wife is the cook at BMABC and Joab is a church planting missionary for Karis Baptist Church where there are currently two active missions. He borrows my truck

every Saturday to go to the river for sacks of sand to mix cement (because he can save 10 centavos a bag) for the mission building.

He is truly my missionary partner and best friend. He was a broken, crushed man, hiding for his life. Then, using a pastor in Mindanao, our missionary God sought him. Now he is the most dedicated man of God I’ve ever known, seeking out broken people just like himself. There is no such thing as suffering for Jesus, and for Joab, everything is a joy.

Pastor Santos Lumang’s kindness and love still affects Joab today, and because his heart was broken for an enemy soldier, many lives will be changed as well.





Lifeworld Global Partner Updates

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The Lifeworld USA team and global partners from all over the world meet on Zoom calls to share ministry updates and encourage each other. Representing Central America, Europe, Southeast Asia, Middle East, and Africa, these men and women are not only media missionaries but also church planters, pastors, and ministry leaders in their cultures.

El Salvador

In El Salvador, church planter Valmori Zelaya produces Spanish language content heard worldwide and at the online radio station *Radiocentroamericana*. Valmori has been recording thirty-second video testimonies that are reaching people, which encourages them to continue. In addition, writers have been producing blogs two to three times a week and working on *mission:world* News translations.

Nepal

Nepalese speaker Sishir Rai is a missionary to India but also plants churches in Katmandu, where he lives and records his daily devotionals in Nepali. He says that many different dialects are spoken among college students, so the vision is to bring them to Christ then disciple them to return to their people groups and share the gospel. Sishir and his father, who is a pastor and taxi driver, have the same multiplication vision for those drivers, who also speak multiple languages.

Prayer: that God will open the border between India and Nepal so he can minister to the very poor Nati people group.

A new global partner in the region, Kishan is a native of India who has also been called to reach Nepal. He began using audio and video media two years ago and has begun on-line gospel teaching. Recently God called him to move his family to an area of unreached people groups in Western Nepal where infrastructure is almost non-existent and travel is difficult.

Lebanon

To reach those who are “seekers,” Joe Costa has added WhatsApp to his social media tools. He and his media team first engage those seekers then add them to a discussion group, which currently has eight members. He and his team have a new social media series targeting agnostics and atheists that addresses controversial topics like women’s rights, answers theological questions, and presents proof of the Bible’s inerrancy. He is also partnering with like-minded ministries and training them in social media ministry.

Romania

For global partner Bogdan Bilav, the current focus is on gypsy brothers who are excited about a Bible in their language beginning with the New Testament and have volunteered to hand write the translation in notebooks. It will then be transferred to computers so a professor can correct it for grammar and sound theology. The final step will be to make it available in audio form for those who can’t read or write.

Pray for good progress on implementing the steps to complete this Bible translation.



Philippines

Although still recovering from his Covid hospitalization, Pastor Pete Etabag – along with his daughter Ping – is continuing to manage video content and making sure it is uploaded to the cloud, Facebook, and YouTube. He is unable to travel to the mountains where most of his 42 community radio stations are located, but he still records evangelistic messages, teaches and trains students at the BMA Bible college, produces Ilongo language content, records online tutorials for global partners and manages the online radio station.

Pray that Bible college graduates, who speak a variety of languages, would be called to produce gospel media in their native tongues.