

MISSIONAL GARBAGE

ONTARIO

By Mike Mileski

Our church scatters in small missional communities, called “faith families”, where we are learning to practice discipleship and being on mission together. Each month we choose a way to bless our neighbourhood. Recently, we invited our neighbours to join us for a community clean-up, to be followed by a hot meal.

As we filled bag after bag with trash, passersby treated us like royalty. Drivers slowed down, honked, and said things like, “God bless you guys, eh?” and “Seriously dude, thanks for cleaning up our garbage!” This was more warmth than we’d expected from downtown Hamilton. It was downright special.

By the end of the day, we were all dirty, stinky, and hungry. Supper was ready, and it was that awkward moment when no one is sure if it’s okay to start eating or if someone is going to pray first. I started with, “If I could have your attention?”, and twenty-five sets of eyes were suddenly fixed on me. Oh boy, I thought. Here goes!

“So, um, we like to say a prayer before we eat. If you’re okay with it, we’d like to give thanks for all of you who joined us this afternoon. Would that be okay?” A kid in the room said “No thanks!” The adults all laughed, and I prayed anyway.

Over dinner, watching my faith family interact with my neighbours was a little like being at a wedding. My worlds were all colliding in beautiful ways. Many of the neighbours asked us what kind of church we were, what we believed about this or about that, and they even shared stories of churches they’d once attended themselves when they were children. We laughed a lot, and at a few points there were also tears as someone shared about a recent loss. The whole thing was surreal. I thought to myself, “Wow. Thank you, Jesus!”

Since then our neighbours have gone from seeing “church” as a building to seeing it as a people who are here to learn together and share life together in messy, practical and loving ways. Whether it is to grab vegetables from the community garden in our front yard, or to bring us our mail when we’ve been away, or just to hang out and talk about their struggles, they keep coming.

THE MISSING BIBLE

THAILAND

By Becky Spahr

It was mid-April in Thailand and the old traditional New Year, Songkran, was approaching. Pastor Bank and his wife Ching were glad to be able to take time off and close their restaurant for the first time in the six months since opening, and they decided to treat themselves to the popular custom of a Thai massage. As they entered the establishment, Bank noticed a Bible sitting on a table, an uncommon sight in this primarily Buddhist nation. He asked who it belonged to, and if there were any Christians there.

An employee overheard his question and spoke up. “I am a Christian,” she said, “but that Bible is not mine.”

The woman, Ann, told Bank and Ching that she had moved to Chachoengsao a few years ago and had recently began praying for a servant of the Lord to come to her workplace and help her find a church to join. A few days after praying this, a young Western woman had then come in to her establishment to get a massage. While the woman waited, she read a Bible.

“I was sure that this woman was the answer to my prayer,” Ann said, finishing telling her story to the couple, “but she left before I could talk to her. She left her Bible behind, and it has been here ever since.”

Curious, Pastor Bank opened the Bible to find out who the owner was, thinking that perhaps he could help find her. To his great surprise, he found a photo of himself and his wife inside, and his own name was written on the inside cover. The Bible was his! Then Pastor Bank remembered that a Bible of his had gone missing a long time ago. How had it come to be here?

Pastor Bank asked his parents and brother if anyone had taken his Bible to this massage place at some point, but they said no. No one could explain what had happened, and to this day, the young Western woman has yet to reappear. The following Sunday, Bank and Ching – servants of the Lord – brought Ann to their church. Her prayer was finally answered, and this couple has been the bridge to bring her back to Christ and a church family.

Daily Prayer Guide

February 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 WENDY EROS JAPAN	2 TONY & SARAH BROWN PANAMA
3 S & D RESTRICTED	4 REBECCA HIEBERT THAILAND	5 SANDRA PLETT MEXICO	6 OTTO & MARJORIE EKK PORTUGAL	7 CORY & MASAMI GIESBRECHT JAPAN	8 ROBERT & MARLENE BAERG MONGOLIA	9 ROBERT & ANNE THIESSEN MEXICO
10 P & S RESTRICTED	11 PHIL & CAROL BERGEN BURKINA FASO	12 S & B RESTRICTED	13 JILL RAMER THAILAND	14 J & F RESTRICTED	15 JOANNA CHAPA PERU	16 JOANNA PHARAZYN PORTUGAL
17 JOHANNA NEUDORF GERMANY	18 EDD & INGRID RUSSELL THAILAND	19 DOUG & DEANNA HIEBERT BURUNDI	20 DAVE & LOUISE SINCLAIR-PETERS THAILAND	21 VR UKRAINE	22 ANDY & CARMEN OWEN THAILAND	23 M & R RESTRICTED
24 RICKY & KAREN HUEBERT-SANCHEZ THAILAND	25 MOTOHIRO & MARIYA HAMANA THAILAND	26 SANDRA FENDER THAILAND	27 AK RESTRICTED	28 CYNTHIA FRIESEN THAILAND		