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Reaching the World Next Door Miracles

By Scott Griswold

Miracles are necessary when starting a missionary training center by faith. And miracles are exactly what God gave us as we set out on this journey.

We praise God for Advocates for Southeast Asia and the Persecuted (ASAP) Ministries and the support of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (United States). Because of their passion for the unreached, the vision for *Reach the World Next Door Training Center* was birthed.

God led us to purchase 26 acres on the outskirts of the city of Houston, the fifth largest metro area in the United States and home to many unreached people groups. God miraculously brought together a multinational training staff with experience among Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Native Americans.

As we rushed to repair the seven aging buildings, God sent help in the form of Jim Christensen, who found the property and stayed on to help work. Members from area churches where we gave outreach training volunteered their time at work bees to get the property ready.

We needed at least ten confirmed students. As we neared August, only five had signed up. We prayed for young people willing to commit to nine months of mission in a new and untested place and program—and God provided five more students—yet another miracle!

Of course, new students meant we had to quickly extend the men's dorm. To do this, we needed extra fill dirt brought in—but where could we find it? Once again, God provided. The day we realized this need, Bill, a friend from the Conroe (Tex.) church, arrived to grade our driveway. After talking to him, we learned he had a dump truck—and extra dirt on his nearby property. Before the day was finished, the dirt was brought in and the site was ready to build on. Next, God sent Pastor Saeng, ASAP's new associate director, and Scott S. (who both have building skills), to help with construction for several weeks.

In early August, just as our funds were beginning to dwindle, a man approached Julia O'Carey (the director of ASAP) on the last night of the international Adventist-laymen Services and Industries (ASI) convention, and pledged \$10,000 USD more. Those funds enabled us to get desks, bed sheets, and other necessities and supplies. Some of the students were unsure they would be able to cover the cost of the training program, so the staff began to earnestly pray, and God impressed another donor to extend \$15,000 USD in matching funds. Immediately we sent out an appeal and within three days, the match was achieved with over \$17,000 USD more given or pledged. What a miracle!

When Hurricane Harvey hit Houston, rain came in torrents and both area airports closed. We postponed the start of classes for a week. As our students—four from Myanmar (Burma), two from Taiwan, one from Burundi and three American-born—arrived at the beginning of September, they each shared stories of the miracles God had performed for them to attend the program.

As we met together, we all had one thing on our minds. How could we help in the aftermath of the hurricane? A phone call later, we were in a Cambodian agricultural community that had been severely damaged by flooding. The community leaders first put our group to work going door-to-door surveying the needs of the community. The information we collected allowed them to prioritize medical and evacuation needs.

The next day we got up early again and returned to help, first transporting donations in the morning, then cutting out ruined drywall and soggy insulation in the afternoon. At the last house, the most damaged we'd seen, Rachel, one of our students from Taiwan, took a special interest in the 70-year-old owner, who opened up to her about his personal tragedies. As our time at his house came to a close, I gave him two beautiful Cambodian Christian books, and he hugged them tight to his chest as we prayed together.

This interaction was the miracle we'd been praying for most. God had given us property, a team, finances, and students, but what we were really praying for was for the unreached people in our surrounding community to be transformed by the love of Jesus. Please pray for more of *these* kind of miracles.

Scott Griswold is director of Reach the World Next Door Training Center in Houston, Texas, United States. While Reach the World Next Door (RWND) is supported largely through individual donors, it is part of ASAP Ministries, which is working in collaboration with the Texas Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, the Southwestern Union Conference, and North American Division.

World Church Prayer Requests for Jan. 14-21, 2018

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the remaining of Ten Days of Prayer. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a powerful way around the world, and that church members will come together in sweet humility and love, lifting up the name of Jesus.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the thousands of ethnic groups around the world (69% of earth's population) who have not yet had a clear presentation of Jesus. Pray for God to change the hearts of those radicalized in other religions—that the Holy Spirit would speak to them and draw them to Jesus.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please continue to pray for refugees trapped in difficult living conditions in refugee camps around the Middle East and Europe. Pray for refugees in your own neighborhoods. Pray that God would give us wisdom to minister to them in practical and personal ways, for His glory.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray this week for the following General Conference Departmental Directors—that God will give them Holy Spirit wisdom and blessings in this New Year:
 - Ministerial Association, Jerry N. Page.
 - Planned Giving and Trust Services, Dennis R. Carlson.
 - Public Affairs and Religious Liberty, A. Ganoune Diop.
 - Publishing Ministries, Almir M. Marroni.
 - Sabbath School and Personal Ministries, Ramon J. Canals.
 - Stewardship Ministries, Marcos F. Bomfim.
 - Women's Ministries, Heather-Dawn K. Small.
 - Youth Ministries, Gary T. Blanchard.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for departmental directors in your local church, that they can have a renewed vision for their task and a deep filling of the Holy Spirit.