

# THE HITCHHIKER

By Jeremy & Adrienne Penner

She stood alone on the side of the beautiful mountain road. Pastors Isaiah and Moe Aung were on their way to a region of small Chin villages, and seeing the girl hitchhiking, they stopped to offer her a ride. Once she was in the vehicle, they began to engage her in conversation. Her name was Ma Thida.

Moe Aung, recognizing that she was from his own people group, began to speak to her in the Chin language. Immediately a new level of trust was established. "My village has only an elementary school," Ma Thida shared. "So, I have to travel to the next village to attend high school." As they talked, Ma Thida confided that she had once heard the gospel at a small church close to the school. The message of Jesus had touched her heart, and she had given her life to Christ. But, being the only believer in her family, she had been ridiculed and rejected, even by her own father. Ma Thida felt very alone.

"Pastor," she said earnestly, "couldn't you share the gospel with my family?"

Isaiah sensed the Spirit of God in her request. Then, looking out of the car window, Ma Thida commented that the pastor who had first discipled her lived close by. Isaiah felt compelled to stop and seek him out. Ma Thida excitedly went with them, and when they at last found the man, Isaiah arranged with him to have an evangelistic meeting when they came back to the village in a few weeks.

Word spread that they were coming. By the time the meeting occurred, over eighty people came from the surrounding communities, some walking up to three hours to hear pastor Isaiah's message. That day, thirty people made the decision to give their lives to Jesus. After everyone had prayed, Isaiah then shared the story of the girl he had met hitchhiking, and how because of Ma Thida's desire to have her family hear the gospel, they had come to this village. Suddenly, two men sitting in the front row spoke up. It was her father and her uncle, and they had just received Christ as their Savior!

Ma Thida is now no longer the only believer in her family. And what started out as a kind gesture to one lonely hitchhiker has now led to a new church planting partnership in Southeast Asia.

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# TWELVE BOTTLES OF COKE

Japan

By Nikki White

Cory and Masami Giesbrecht are ministering on the streets of downtown Osaka, bringing groups from the Ishibashi church to reach the hurting and the homeless. Those to whom they minister find hope emerging from the chaos of their lives, and the volunteers are finding that their own lives are also being changed as they serve.

Following the 2016 earthquakes, Cory took three such volunteers to help with shoveling the rubble that was once a man's house. The homeowner, Narita-san, sat mute with shock while they worked that first day. Although the volunteers were keenly aware of the man's pain, they respected his silence; Narita-san was only one of thousands in the city who was experiencing the trauma of homelessness.

The entire city of Kumamoto was without water, the roads impassable and a five-hundred bed hospital knocked off its foundations. Thousands were injured from collapsed buildings, and hundreds of thousands were without shelter. Many, like Narita-san, were numb with despair. But in the aftermath, God began to weave this disaster into his overarching story of redemptive love, as Christians across the nation of Japan united to bring order to the chaos, and hope to the hopeless. To people like Narita-san.

Over the two days that Narita-san watched the determined efforts of the volunteers digging through the debris, his heart slowly warmed and his head cleared enough for him to find his voice again.

"You guys must be thirsty," he finally said on the second day, and held out a case of cold Coca-Cola to the soiled and sweating men. They smiled and received the gift with appreciation. They were indeed thirsty, and in ways that they had not even realized.

Cory's volunteers were students who had themselves been overwhelmed by the destruction of the earthquakes. One of them was not a Christian, but found himself deeply affected by seeing the body of Christ working together to restore hope to his country. The other, a believer, had been reluctant to volunteer at first, feeling no connection with his church and little compassion for their cause. But that day, as he labored to restore Narita-san's home, he found that God was likewise labouring to restore his own heart.

Pray for the Giesbrechts, and for the continued healing of Japan.



# Daily Prayer Guide

# February 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Wendy Eros Japan	2 Andy & Carmen Owen Thailand	3 Tony & Sarah Brown Panama
4 S & D Restricted	5 Cory & Masami Giesbrecht Japan	6 S & B Restricted	7 Sandra Plett Mexico	8 C & F Restricted	9 Cynthia Friesen Thailand	10 Robert & Anne Thiessen Mexico
11 Ricky & Karen Huebert-Sanchez Thailand	12 S & S Restricted	13 Melvin & Gudrun Warkentin Paraguay	14 M & R Restricted	15 Robert & Marlene Baerg Mongolia	16 Motohiro & Mariya Hamana Thailand	17 Otto & Marjorie Ekk Portugal
18 P & S Restricted	19 Phil & Carol Bergen Burkina Faso	20 Rebecca Hiebert Thailand	21 J & M Restricted	22 Jill Ramer Thailand	23 J & F Restricted	24 Dave & Louise Sinclair-Peters Thailand
25 Joanna Pharazyn Portugal	26 Johanna Neudorf Germany	27 Edd & Ingrid Russell Thailand	28 Doug & Deanna Hiebert Burundi			