

# The Gospel in Scandinavia

Aug/Sept 2008

My Family In Christ,

I know I said this report would not be out until later this month but too much has gone on and no one would want to stand in the church building and read anything longer than this one will be! Renee and I are still amazed at the love of our brethren and realize anew each day that all of this is only made possible by God and His people. For those who have not seen it, I will provide the complete list of our monthly supporters at the end of the report. Let's talk about our last month working full-time with the Manchester, TN congregation and our (well, my) first experiences with the Bergen, Norway congregation!

Manchester

We really enjoyed our time working with the Manchester group. They are such a dedicated, loving group of people. We were glad to be a part of and help out with some of their new beginnings. In August of 2007 we finished building our new meeting place. It was a big project with many expenses for this small group. They really shined through it. Everybody was willing to work for it because they knew the progress it would bring for the Lord. Since then, they have been working so hard and have been generous in their giving so they can pay off these expenses quickly. They want to be able to shift their funds as soon as possible to do more evangelistic and benevolence work. Even with the many expenses they encountered with building, they have picked up support for Terrell on two occasions, helped us with our moving expenses, and been involved in benevolent work. We are continually thankful to God that we had people such as these to help us prepare for Norway.

It is with sadness that once again I must ask you to pray for Josh Bingham. Josh, even though he returned and repented just a couple of months ago, has showed little desire to truly serve God faithfully. This was the case when we left and if it continues to be the case I know the Manchester group will follow up with the needed discipline (Matt. 18; I Cor. 5; II Thess. 6 etc...). As I said before, a letter of concern and love was sent to Josh as well as Adam and Tracy Nunley. Tracy has had some contact with the church since we left. Please pray that they can help her to come back to God. Adam has still failed to respond. Please continue to pray for Adam and Josh.

In June, I began a series on the book of Revelation. I did a (very) quick overview of the book in seven lessons. The brethren expressed thankfulness for the study. They said that although it went very fast it gave them something to use in future studies of the book that they hadn't really had before. Borgar, a member of the group here in Norway, expressed interest in studying Revelation. We will begin that study in January. I did not get through all of my lessons for the Sunday AM Young Adult Bible class. Our study was from my own material to which I entitled "Have You Not Read?" It is a study of several fundamental issues for people trying to seek and serve God effectively. While we were mainly focused on what the Scriptures teach regarding these issues, some other religious groups were discussed in regards to how they have erred in some of these areas. Young people are challenged constantly on these crucial issues. We must make sure we are always grounding them with a firm foundation in these things.

## Norway

Finally, we are here! We have had great experiences this last year and a half preparing for Norway and raising our support, but we are glad to get started. We were met with a small problem when we arrived. Terrell had rented his house out this past year so that he could afford to keep it for us. Well, the renter began to not pay his rent many months ago. He continually made up excuses, some of which proved to be untrue. Terrell sought counsel from someone who deals with those things in Norway and followed through with the process the law required to evict someone. The renter continued to be difficult and the issue spilled over till after our arrival. We were forced to stay in a hotel for a week. Luckily, the emergency fund the Bartlett congregation gave us came in helpful. After finding out many government offices were not helpful, we finally came in contact with a judge who thought that what the renter was doing and the rejection we received from the other offices was unacceptable. He wrote up a "sak" (a case) against the renter and scared him into giving us the keys to our home. Luckily, all the things that were left in the house were still here (just EXTREMELY dirty). It is still up in the air whether Terrell will ever see any of the lost rent. However, God blessed us with finding that caring judge to help us get in the house.

I filed my paperwork with the foreign police the first week I was here. I am still waiting to receive my Persons Number (Social Security Number). I was notified that my work-permit is valid for one year. I can apply to renew it up to four years. Since our plan is most likely to be here longer than that, we will begin the process of applying for a different permit called Familiens Forening (Family Re-unification). Since Renee has a living permit here, I can apply to be joined with her here. I can do this while my work permit is still active. If I receive this permit and renew it for three years I will then be eligible to receive the same living permit that Renee has. We can, then, live here however long we wish. We will tell you more about that later.

We have had a good first month of working with the church here. We worship and have Bible study on Sundays and have restarted the mid-week Bible study on Tuesdays (they have not met during the week for a long time). We are studying the Gospel of John on Sunday mornings and First Principles on Tuesday evenings. Our first Sunday (9/7) it was Borgar, Sana, Renee, and I. However, the following week (9/14) we had ten in attendance. Victor and Ellen Mall, Christians from Sandefjord, and an American family who are currently working in Stavanger visited with us. Also, we were excited to have a Norwegian man visit from the community. He said he just got up and searched for churches in Bergen and found us. We offered many ways we could stay in contact and study in the future. Hopefully, he will visit again soon. The next Sunday (9/21) it was back to just the four of us. Sana flew to Thailand the following week (9/28) but her presence was replaced by a long time visitor, Manuel. If any of you received Bryan Moody's or Terrell's reports before you know some about Manuel. He is originally from Portugal but works on a ship and travels quite a bit. He always worships with Kristi Menighet when he is in town. Bryan had some conversations with him about baptism last year. I believe he was baptized in some kind of denominational church, but, of course, "he who believes and is baptized" (Mk. 16:16) is one who believes in Christ and the church He built. Manuel returned for our midweek Bible study. This past Sunday (10/5), Sana was still in Thailand but Eva Kjærvik was present. Eva is a regular member but has not been attending regularly lately. She has given two reasons for this: she has had some bad leg problems and she can only visit her father, who is ill and lives in a senior citizen home, on Sundays. She had to leave after worship (we have Bible class second). I told her that I thought it was important for her to be at worship every Sunday even if she has to leave before class to visit her father. I know she knows the seriousness of carrying out God's command for us to worship Him and hopefully will be there every time.

Since we were not in our house the first week we were here, we were able to begin getting some cleaning and remodeling done at the church building. A few years ago, the sign with the church's name on it was stolen. Sana is looking into getting a replacement for us while she is in Thailand (could be much cheaper). Renee is working on a song index for our Norwegian song books and is almost finished. We will be making new signs with biblical information in Norwegian to put up in our large windows. We also designed and ordered new business cards to hand out.

I have begun to revamp the church's website, [www.kristimenighet.no](http://www.kristimenighet.no) (there is also an English version: [www.churchofchrist.no](http://www.churchofchrist.no) but I have not done any work to that one yet). Starting in November I will be writing articles in Norwegian and recording one sermon each month in Norwegian specifically for the website. We have already received and responded to an interested Norwegian man on the church's email account ([kontakt@kristimenighet.no](mailto:kontakt@kristimenighet.no)). I believe this website will prove to be a great tool for us.

As I said, I am putting the list of all of my supporters at the end of this letter, but I must tell you in detail about the generosity of Mason and Louise Harris. Mason, a faithful gospel preacher for many years, preached in Norway in the 60's. He is now retired after both he and Louise have dealt with serious health problems. Even so, they showed their hearts are still very much concerned about the spread of the Gospel in Scandinavia when they lovingly gave \$500 to help us. However, the money is not the most valuable thing they have given us. Mason's health issues have affected his throat and vocal cords. The first time I heard Mason was after all these medical issues just a few years ago. When he started to speak, I wasn't sure I could pay attention or understand the lesson because of the scratchiness in his voice. But after just a minute or so I was so into the lesson, the scratchiness was gone. His preaching is biblically strong and delivered with zeal and love. I always leave worship services strengthened when I have listened to Mason. I pray that God will help me and the rest of the preachers of my generation to see that the Bible is always enough for the honest heart and that our voices and abilities never hold any real power. After Mason's operation on his throat he has continued to "preach the word" and "do the work of an evangelist" just like he did before it and he continues to be successful at touching people's lives. Mason and Louise both have fought many battles to teach the lost and build up the Saints. May we look to and follow after their examples and those like them.

Your Brother and Sister,  
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(This is an internet phone that anyone in the United States can call just like they would call any other US number. The charges are also just like any other US call.)

South Bumby Church of Christ, Orlando, FL - \$300 per month

Kettering Church of Christ, Near Dayton, OH - \$300 per month

Riverview Church of Christ, Near Tampa, FL - \$300 per month

Southside Church of Christ, Somerset, KY - \$300 per month

Ellettsville Church of Christ, Near Bloomington, IN - \$300 per month

Helena Church of Christ, Near Birmingham, AL - \$350 per month

Northside Church of Christ, Jonesboro, AR - \$500 per month

South Livingston Church of Christ, Near Tampa, FL - \$500 per month

Westside Church of Christ, Owensboro, KY - \$500 per month

Hanceville Church of Christ, Near Cullman, AL - \$700 per month

Tom and Shirley Bunting, Murfreesboro, TN - \$200 per month

Phillip and Betsy Phillips, Manchester, TN - \$120 per month

Archer Church of Christ, Near Gainesville, FL (Yearly Support of No Set Amount)

Bartlett Church of Christ, Near Memphis, TN gave a one-time Emergency Fund of \$10,000

Total: \$4370 per month