

Interview with Missionary Ted Gregory

ByCarolynn Stanton Bell

Biography: Ted Gregory is the oldest of seven children, born and raised in Portsmouth, Virginia, by a single mother due to his father leaving the family when he was very young. Having grown up in the sixties and seventies during the hippie/rock/peace/love movements along with the Vietnam Ear War, racial tensions and civil rights movements, brought with it confusion in his spirit and life. He joined the Marines and left for California, where he currently lives with his loving wife, three wonderful children and to this date, five grandchildren and three foster “grandchildren”.

Education: Graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School 1973, received an Electronics Telecommunications Certification in Radio Repair Maintenance form the USMC. He has also received an Associate Degree in Quality Control from Long Beach City College and currently enrolled in the Bible College at Abundant Living Family Church this year.

Missionary Service Impact on Family: Both Ted and Caroline are missionaries and greatly supported by their children. They are currently working on their own Missions Ministry: Gregory Ministries International while continuing to participate in the Mission Ministry in ALFC their home church. The directions on how and what specifics their family ministry will perform is with the leading of the Holy Spirit. Ted has blogs and websites which include his journal of Inspirational Revelations, (www.tedgregory.com), where he shares his Life Scripture- “Psalm 46:10: Be still and know that I am God”, and also description of their mission trips to Uganda and Thailand, from the calling to missions and his experiences.

Calling: Ted explained his journey of life which included his call to Christ in 1969, but expressed his lack of directions by a male figure in the home and gave into carnal life. In 2008, after playing in several bands, (trying to live the life of a rock star), God showed him of vision of life if he didn't turn to God and he did. He joined that Media Ministry and Connection Groups without training, but was told he had to trust God. He realized through the small groups that he had idolized the gift of music that God had given him above God- Revelations. Because he felt the yearning to do more than "just come to church " and wanted to give back to others, so began his participating in outreaches, Bible Studies, ministry events and just serving other when the opportunities arose.

In 2014, the couple was urged to attend a Missions Ministry orientation, even though they felt that they weren't ready to go on a trip for 2 years, since they were still directors in the Connection Groups ministry. In the orientation meeting trips to Israel, Philippines and then "God showed up" and then it was done, the Uganda trip was discussed. Feeling overwhelmed by God's Spirit and the visions of African children, the poverty condition, both Ted and Caroline knew that it was their calling at the same time, both sharing an awkward look at each other, him thinking how to tell Caroline, just as she proclaimed," I guess we are going to Uganda?". This began their journey to become missionaries, with the confirmation of Isaiah 61.

Preparation and training for missionary service: Ted and Caroline have participated in two mission trips, Uganda in 2015 and Thailand in 2016, which is birthing their own family mission. They attended meetings that provided some general and specific training toward the specific country, cross-cultural training, social customs and sensitivity, laws, protocols of the Mission teams, tips on packing, what to wear, safety, use of photography, video or social media (what is or not prohibited), fasting in-country and out of country regulations. Spiritual tools such as

Spiritual warfare training, fasting, prayer, team building exercise, evangelism tools, how to witness, fundraising, (as ministry, both team and personal). They also read books related to mission, leadership and spiritual development. The training endured for eight to nine months before the mission trip.

Ted and Caroline's level of cross cultural training was specific to the country in general, which included the difference of the western culture verses eastern culture, how to approach both men and women, what to say or not to say, appropriate and inappropriate use of body language, local customs in the region, some common sayings in their language, signs of respect verses disrespect, use of photography especially around military and local police. Ted gave an example of this, while in Thailand (stop over), the King of 70 years had just died and they were in a state of mourning which lasts for a year and their custom of not wearing certain color clothing had to be observed.

Ted expressed concern of more in-depth training needed in area of emergency situations, only briefly addressed, but understood that sometimes you can't be prepared for everything. He gave an example of a situation that occurred on their second leg of their trip from Thailand to United States where their names weren't printed correctly, (Bangkok to Beijing) because of erroneous information given to them, but because they had arrived earlier than scheduled, they were able to have it corrected in time to catch their flight.

Missiology, Philosophy, Theology of Mission: Ted believes overall, both trips, were successful because they requested a needs list in the initial planning of the trips and they were able to meet and exceed in some cases the needs requested by each host organization. In Uganda he explained that some needs may have been better met [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]. In Thailand, things were fast paced and the word from the Lord was “flexible”, they were able to readjust through their spiritual training and the unity training models to remain focused on their main goal; meeting the needs of the people they were sent to evangelize and help, with the love of Christ.

Ted explained that he feels that these missions have both a business and ministry relations of equally importance due to the call to represent being good stewards of the church tithes and sponsor’s funds that were raised. The money was used to provide some of the supplies, paying of the local drivers, support people in the countries, airfares and, meals, etc.

Fundraising for the mission trips was done by individual team members, teams as a whole and through donations from the ministry to support cost not covered by the funds raised by each missionary. The team leaders’ travel expenses were covered by the church due to their added duties of leaderships, of which they were chosen as team leads for the Thailand mission, feeling thankful that church, covered one of our expenses.

The missions afforded them a difference of cross cultural awareness in that the west takes God for granted: having many idols such as cars, money, things, careers, job, homes, celebrity status and even a running toilet inside the home. In the west there is freedom to worship God in public as well as doing things that in the east, would cost them to be jailed, beaten or killed.

Ted’s personal view of the Church in missions of the world today, feels that there is a sense of “I did this and I want a pat on the back syndrome,” throughout some areas of mission organizations just as there are a variety of faith denominations. He feels that God is changing the hearts of His people to see its more about what He wants versus glory for them. He further stated

“That it is all reflected in how much there is relationship with Christ (intimately knowing Him, versus religion of Christ (knowing of Him)”, (Gregory 2013).

Vision: Ted feels that there is much to learn in his home church’s mission ministry and wants to improve their serving of the needs of God’s people using that knowledge to be a formulating foundation as they build their family ministry to help in making others locally and globally know Christ and empowering them to be self-sustainable” (Gregory 2013). He further wants people to witness God’s healing, feed those that hunger for truth, show unconditional love and simply to let God have His way with them and those they meet.

Gregory Ministries International vision is to “enable” those they will help, by providing yearly continuous support. They want to help develop ideas, strategies using available or even co-laboring to help develop future technology that would lead to self-sufficiency and sustainability in the areas of people they service which includes the unreached, lost and hurt.

Ted has written. Gregory Family Spiritual Declaration, which includes the family scripture Joshua 24:15 NIV and reads as such” As current patriarch of my family, I make the following declaration for my household and future generations to come: I leave the following Spiritual Legacy for the Family of Theodore Gregory Jr. to follow as a means to live an abundantly fruitful, productive and holy life unto our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. By adopting this declaration as your own, you also procure for yourself the blessings and more that our Lord has graciously ordained for us in His word. We declare His Grace, Love, Mercy forgiveness, Goodness, Provisions, Protection, Perfect Well over our lives, our family, future generations and any who choose to be in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The legacy provides a living

testimony of what God has done for us and will do for you if you accept Him personally as your Lord and Savior and obey His commandments”, (Gregory 2013).

Summary: God’s plans are perfectly timed and positioned for this I understand clearly now in my journey as I viewed this assignment. Ted Gregory and I grew up together and lived one life at home and another culture outside of that, clearly not accepted by either. We attended the same junior high and high school with him playing the cello and I playing the viola. Our mother’s became best friends the same as we did and considered each other family. Because of this school, course and teacher, we have conversed several hours over the phone regarding past hurt and confusion of life and we both know that it is God’s timing. We both feel the same, God is changing the minds of His people and we are a part of it, an international awakening of all people giving God the glory. **We are not here to change nor force conversion, but to share in helping meet people where they are, accept diversity, and most of all, to share God’s love. To stand for justice for all, and to bring peace and love, one person at a time is also our understanding.**

Reference

Gregory, Ted *Inspirational Revelations Journaling God’s Word*, April 21, 2017,
www.tedgregory.com