

Subject: NEW MISSION FIELD

Date: Sat, 24 Jan 2026 22:07:09



JANUARY 2026

"LOOK AT IT AS A WHOLE NEW MISSION FIELD"

At least that's what I was telling myself as I grappled with the closing of Calvary Homes' medical wings and the unexpected move to Trillium Place. Little did I know how true that thought would be. I've had some interesting spiritual conversations with my healthcare providers. Many have come from other countries.

- An early morning “vampire” (phlebotomist), who usually arrives at an ungodly hour of the morning to take my blood, said how much she liked my room decorations. She especially liked my cross on the wall. It's a large olive wood cross from Israel, with the crusaders' cross stamped on the bottom. (It was given to me by the mother of my Austrian landlord, when I first went overseas.) That led to a conversation of how Charlie Kirk's death had impacted her life. She has returned to church and is reading the Bible and praying regularly. After that initial encounter she has stopped by to pray with me--even when she wasn't after my blood!
- One of my young aides is a Christian. We have had several conversations about spiritual things. Several months ago, she asked if I would be willing to be interviewed for three hours as an assignment for her college sociology class. We had a wonderful time together and it gave me a chance to share how Christ has impacted my life.
- Another healthcare worker told me that she, along with her live-in boyfriend, are searching spiritually. She accepted two copies of the Gospel of John, with the plan of salvation in the front. One for her and the other for her boyfriend to explore the truth of God together.
- I was especially burdened for a worker from the LBGT+ community. I had been fervently praying for an opportunity to share with her, before she left for her new job in another facility. I wanted to share with her in a non-condemning way that would perhaps cause her to consider exploring a personal relationship

with the Lord. God gave me both the opportunity, and I believe the words to do that. She listened graciously and accepted the Gospel of John I offered her. Two days later she left for her new position.

- Shortly after that yet another worker, who had been here only once before, came into my room, clearly upset. Her 17-year-old daughter was considering exploring a relationship with another women. "Doesn't she know that God didn't make us that way?! Does the Bible speak to that?" she asked me. I shared with her a section from the first chapter of Romans that deals with that issue. She made note of it to share with her daughter

- A Muslim woman, wearing a hijab, who I first met when I was in Health Care at Calvary Homes, followed us over to Trillium as a part-time worker. We have had several different encounters and have become quite friendly. We've had some light conversations about spiritual matters. I was pleasantly surprised when she accepted a rather lengthy book, *Tales That Teach*, by Dr. Don McCurry. He is a Christian missionary to Muslims and an expert in evangelism to Muslims. I was very up front with her as to whom Don was, yet she accepted the book eagerly.

I met Don McCurry and his wife when I was in Colorado Springs and spent an evening with them in their home. At that time, I was trying to learn as much about Islam as I could. I had signed up of be part of the Entrust Women's Ministry team going to the United Arab Emirates. Unfortunately, that training never materialized. However, the crash course I got on Islam has been invaluable

- Another Muslim woman who does not wear the hijab, was working in our therapy department. Even though I "graduated" from therapy months ago and never had her as one of my therapists, we became friendly because she was born in a Soviet Bloc country and speaks fluent Russian. She patiently bears with me as I try to dredge up what little Russian I can remember from my years in-country. She came into my room during her break several weeks ago and we started talking about the differences and similarities in Christianity and Islam.

I heavily emphasized that their prophet Esa (the Muslim's name for Jesus) was the One who died for our sins. Muslims believe Esa was born of a virgin and was that He was sinless, but they believe He was only a prophet and not the Son of God. We had quite a lively, but pleasant discussion about this.

Then it got a little comical when she went to one of our chaplains here at Trillium and told him that Liz said their prophet Esa died on the cross for our sins. The chaplain, who knows me well, told her she must have misunderstood. She insisted she was correct in what she heard from me. He thought I had "lost it." I knew immediately where the mix up was. She was saying Esa. He was hearing Esau. (Actually, Esa is a form of Esau, but it is Esa not Esau that Muslims call Jesus.) It was about a week before I could catch up with our chaplain—and, just as I thought, he was unfamiliar with the Muslim name of Esa for Jesus.

Sorry, I just have to share "one more story, before I close," (a nod to my upbringing at Roxborough Presbyterian Church, when often our pastor would bring his sermons to a close using that phrase :-)

- I use a ride-share transportation service that allows me to take my electric scooter onboard when I go to doctors' appointments. The other week as I boarded, I thought I heard Joseph Youssef (an Egyptian American Christian pastor) on the van's radio. I asked the driver if it was Joseph Youssef. He in turn asked if I followed that pastor. I said, "No not really, but I knew of him and that he was a great preacher." And then, still assuming it was Pastor Youssef and that the driver was listening to him, I asked him if he was a Christian. "No," he said, "I'm a Muslim."

I sent up a hurried prayer that God would lead me in this conversation. Again, we had a great conversation about the similarities of the two faiths, until we got to the sticking point of Esa being God and dying for our sins. He remarked that he was so pleased I was using the "proper" name of Esa rather than Jesus.

He went back to Genesis, I and followed him there, as he talked about God speaking the world into existence. I immediately took him to the first chapter of John and quoted "In the beginning was the Word and Word with God and was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory, the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth."

He was so excited and joyful as we continued our discussion. He said he was seeking to know the truth. He said his life was already changing. He had given up drinking and partying.

It was an incredible trip to the doctors. It was just the two of us in the van. We talked the whole way. At the end we both agreed that it wasn't an accident that brought us together. I offered him a copy of the Gospel John, which he eagerly accepted. I told him he could find the verses I just quoted to him in the first chapter. He promised he would read it, as he really wanted to know what was true.

Please pray that any seeds that may have been planted during these conversations will be nurtured by Holy Spirit and bring them into a relationship with Him and/or a deepening of the relationship they already have.

In addition to these "divine encounters" I've had other opportunities to pray and talk of spiritual things with staff and residents. This includes some poignant conversations with those close to their final journey. Attending "Celebrations of Life" seem to be one of my main "social events" recently. What a privilege and honor to share with those who are in Christ, the future that awaits us in His presence for all of eternity!

It truly is a whole new mission field the Lord has called me to. Please pray for me to continue to recognize opportunities to share and the boldness to do so in a God-honoring way.

THE NUMBER ONE QUESTION I'M ASKED THESE DAYS IS...

..."How's your book coming?" It was going great until the end of August, when I ended with leaving for the mission field. Fourteen chapters are done with 146 pages written.

Gordon, my editor then asked that I date all my stories as to when they happened and put them on a dateline software, he has me working with.

It took forever to do that since I don't journal. I was flipping through old date books and passports trying to get at least approximate dates. It took some time, but I finished by year's end and was hoping to start afresh again in the New Year. However, that was further delayed when I realized that June was my last "Organ Recital" and that I had better let my friends know I was still alive. Then that was interrupted by a week of stomach issues that pulled me away from the computer. Pray that I can FINALLY get back to it next week.

A huge THANK YOU to those who volunteered to be readers for me when that time comes. I was overwhelmed by the response and will indeed be utilizing all of you--especially, since Gordon, recently informed me he thinks I have three books in the making!!! One - preparation for the mission field. Two -

on the mission field. Three - home from the field and on to new adventures. I've asked him to let me finish all my writing and then decide how to "slice and dice it."

I still battle with fatigue which of course affects my productivity. After any number of blood tests, scans and x-rays nothing is jumping out as the cause of it, so we are just attributing it to the Parkinson's Disease progressing. Please pray I can push through it and get this book DONE!! Also pray for my next step-- reading through my newsletters from the field and selecting what adventures to share. I've got to carefully pick and choose because this next segment alone could easily be three volumes in and of itself! Pray for wisdom as to which stories will be most motivating to others and glorifying to the Lord.

MANY THANKS...

...for all the Christmas cards and greetings, I received from so many of you. I really appreciated them! I trust you all had a blessed Christmas season and pray that the New Year will overflow with His rich blessings for you and your families.

Resting in His strong arms,

Liz

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