

## Rejoicing in Small Beginnings

BY STEVE IRVIN, AN ALLIANCE  
INTERNATIONAL WORKER SERVING IN SPAIN

When my wife, Claudia, and I moved to this city in January, our meetings with neighbors were limited to serendipitous encounters in the elevator. But when summer arrived, the pool opened. We soon discovered that many of our neighbors would sit and talk together in folding chairs in the shade while the children played.

As we considered how we could become a part of that informal fellowship, Claudia decided to make three batches of brownies. We went outside that evening, asking people young and old to sample them so we could decide which was the best recipe. Everyone joined in.

Soon afterward, we bought a couple of folding chairs and planned to join the group most nights of the week. We also prayed for open doors to share Christ.

That same evening, we were invited to a birthday party for one of the children. While we were mingling, one man, Joe\*, asked, "Are you a pastor?"

We have been open with people that I am a Bible institute professor, but this was the first time anyone had ever asked me directly about my role. "Yes, I am an evangelical pastor," I said.

"In my home country, I was raised as an evangelical," Joe said. "But since coming to Spain several years ago, I haven't been part of a church."

I was going to preach the following Sunday, so I invited him to come to our church. For the first time since Claudia and I moved to Spain in 2013, one of our neighbors joined us at a church service. I preached the Word, and afterward, Joe told me that God had spoken to his heart through the message.

The Bible tells us not to despise small beginnings, as God rejoices to see the work begin (see Zechariah 4:10). Joe's visit to our church may seem like a small step to some, but to us, it's huge. Please pray with us that the Lord will not only work in Joe's life but also continue opening doors for us to share the gospel with many of our neighbors whom we have come to care and pray for.

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## Praying for Kingdom

### Connections

BY KEITH NEIGENFIND, AN ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL WORKER SERVING IN THAILAND

Breaking into any new community can be hard, and it's no different in the academic world in Thailand. Since I started a PhD program in Bangkok, I've made it a practice to arrive to class early and trust God for Kingdom connections.

One evening, I left for school two hours early with no clear goal in mind. As I walked the streets near the university, I asked God to open some doors. Suddenly I heard someone running up to me and shouting, "Hey!" It was Charles\*, a classmate with whom I was not well acquainted. "What are you doing now?" he asked. I told him nothing, and he invited me to tea.

Over the next hour, Charles and I talked. He shared about his background—how he had been Buddhist and rejected that for atheism. Charles said that the more he has studied philosophy and religion, the more he has moved toward agnosticism, thinking there probably is a God. We talked philosophy—about Hume and Nietzsche and Searle. But most importantly, we talked about Jesus, about grace and truth and the way of the gospel. The following week I headed to class at the same time, and we met for tea again. This time Charles and I discussed prayer and sin, and I gave him a book. Please pray that this is just the start of his journey toward faith in Christ.

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## The Land of Promise

*Adapted from the book by A. B. Simpson*

Many Christians do not see all God has for them in this life. The Church needs to get her eyes opened to see the land. Ask the Lord to show you your full redemption rights in Christ. Ask Him to show you the unappropriated promises of your Bible. It would be a terrible thing to miss what He made and redeemed you for.

Let us sum up the landscape. It is a land of rest, not only from care and fret and trouble, but rest in the living God. Next, it is a land of victory. You are not to be beaten always in your life, but to overcome sin and Satan. You are to be triumphant in the hard places, to be master of the difficulties and trials, pushing through the obstacles and accomplishing your work for God in spite of them. That is the land of promise. He who has led you through a hundred battles will lead you through a hundred more. Have you this line of victory, my friend? Are you being beaten, or are you overcoming? Say as Caleb did, "The LORD helping me, I will drive them out" (Joshua 14:12).

Take care lest you think the difficulties cannot be overcome. There is a life of victory for you, and there is power and blessing for others in the land through your ministry; do not stop until you have it in all its fullness.

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