

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN THE LORD'S WORK



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How to get involved in the Lord's work

The following excerpts come from an introduction I gave during a missionary meeting with young people:

"I'm very happy and thankful to see so many missionaries this evening. Perhaps you are surprised that I call you missionaries. A few days ago, a brother asked me some questions about the work the Lord allows me to do in some African countries, and he asked me about the length of the period, so I just told him that on the January 9th, 1975, brother Siegfried Nick from Germany and I, together with our families, left for Cameroon. So he said "Oh! You have already been a missionary for 38 years!" I could understand why he made these observations, and I agree on the one hand, but on the other hand, I do not agree.

I did not become a missionary on January 9th, 1975. And that's why I said at the beginning of the meeting that I'm happy to see about 129 missionaries. Because as soon as you repent towards God and you believe in the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior, you start with your Christian life; you start to serve the Lord, you start to become or to be a missionary. Each of us has become a missionary from the very first day of his repentance to God and his faith in the Lord Jesus. And the question is not in the first place, "How to get prepared to become a missionary," but the question that occupies our hearts is: "Am I ready to do what the Lord wants me to do from the very first day that I got to know Him as my personal Savior?"

When I was asked to give a short introduction on missionary work, I was asking the Lord, "Lord, what do you want me to say?" and while thinking about this question, it was not easy at all. I prayed for it, and finally, the Lord gave me two verses. And I'd like you to open your Bible and read these two verses.

First in Exodus 4:2:

"So, the LORD said to him: 'What is that in your hand?'" I would like you to engrave this question in your heart, in your minds. I'd like you to ponder this question this evening, and even in the coming days. "So the LORD said, 'What is that in your hand?' And he said, 'A rod.'"

And then, another question in 2 Kings 4:2.

It says, “So Elisha said to her: ‘What shall I do for you?’” And now the question I was thinking about “Tell me, what do you have in the house? And she said, ‘Your servant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil.’ Then he said, ‘Go, borrow vessels from everywhere from all your neighbors, empty vessels and do not gather just a few.’

Two questions that I would like to consider a little bit, to study a little bit together with you, as missionaries

Two questions that the Lord has put before us:

- **What is that in your hands?**
- **What do you have in the house?**

I would like to make some applications. God asks this question: “What is that in your hand?” because He wanted to use Moses as His instrument. But Moses was not willing to do it; there was a lack of willingness. But the Lord helps him and finally, Moses becomes willing, really willing.

I’d like to emphasize the point of willingness. Are we willing to use the opportunities the Lord is giving us day by day? “What is that in your hands?” A stick! A dead piece of wood. What can you do with a dead piece of wood? Not much! But as soon as the Lord sees willingness to serve Him, He can use even the little things that He has entrusted to you, it’s even a principle of Scripture, that the Lord often starts with small things, to see if you are faithful. And then he can entrust bigger things to you.

Our personal experiences

Allow me to share some personal experiences, not because I want to put myself in the forefront—that’s not the intention—but perhaps our personal experiences might be of help.

We got married in 1971 and were looking for opportunities to serve the Lord in our village. And we got the opportunity to have a stand in a marketplace. Brothers Jan and Karel Rouw gave us some literature that we could use at the market. But how to get the literature to the marketplace? We had bikes, old bikes but still useful. We took a bike, bought an old suitcase and filled it up with Bibles, books, and gospel tracts and



we brought them to the marketplace on Wednesday morning. And my wife started to work in the marketplace while I went to work. I was a teacher and was free on Wednesday afternoons, so I would join her then. But later we needed two or three suitcases, because there was a growing interest in the literature we offered. So I found a chassis from an old buggy and wheels. I

made a wooden box and fixed a bar so we could pull it. I filled it up in the morning with literature—we lived in an apartment on the fourth floor so we had to go downstairs to pull it up—and then my wife pulled it 3 kilometers to the marketplace on Wednesday morning. (And what we did not know at that time was that she had a heart problem. It was only during our stay in Cameroon that the Lord allowed us to discover it. She had to come back to the Netherlands for medication and then she was able to return to Cameroon.) But despite this heart problem, the Lord gave her strength to pull this heavy wooden box, filled with books, to the marketplace. And then at 12 o'clock, when I was finished at school, I joined her at the market and all the people around who were selling clothes, candies, and whatever, saw me coming, and they often said, "Oh! Mr. Wijnholds, Mary is already there, now Joseph is coming!" They were mocking us. But they were kind as well and we were able to give them a lot of literature.

One day, when my wife was pregnant with our first child, we were no longer able to do this. She was not able to pull that heavy wooden box. And we prayed to the Lord, "Lord, you stopped this opportunity, but we would like to serve you in our place, to preach the gospel, and also to help people to get know the truth of the assembly and other important truths that so many believers and the churches don't know." It was in the 70s when most churches in the Netherlands were still conservative. So I put an advertisement in a small newspaper and announced a Bible study at our home in our fourth floor apartment starting in one month.

While we were waiting, we were out walking one Saturday, and suddenly, a lady was coming, running after us, stopping us to ask, “Are you the Bible man?”



It appeared that people had asked her: “Where are this man and his wife? Who are they? We are looking for Bibles, books, and tracts, and they are no longer at the market place.” This lady was a journalist for a free local newspaper. So she said, “Can I come and visit you and have an interview?” We answered her, “Yes, you can come; we can talk, but have an interview...? let’s talk first!” So she came and said, “I just want to know why you stopped, because people ask me all the time, ‘Where is the Bible man?’”

She asked permission for an interview, and we said, “We agree with the interview, but we want to read the final text before you publish it.” She said, “I agree. Can I also have a picture of the two of you?” But we answered: “No, no pictures of us, but we have another suggestion for a picture.” And I went in one of the rooms and came back with a double ladder with steps. On the steps, I had put keywords. From the middle upwards, keywords like ‘repentance, forgiveness, justification, heaven,’ and from the middle downwards, keywords like ‘disobedience, condemnation...’ and at the end ‘hell’. Black letters on a white ladder. I said to the journalist: “You can take a picture of this if you want and insert it in the article.” And she did it! With these keywords about heaven and hell!

People don’t like to hear about hell, do they! The next week, she sent us the article: it was really good, there were so many references to the gospel. Really, a gospel tract, all in the pages of the newspaper! It was printed the next week, in the free local newspaper, 250,000 free gospel tracts with these keywords! With our address... “This is the address of the Bible man, if you want a Bible or a book or whatever...” So you see! We started—please, I don’t put myself forward, I just give an example—we just started with small things: a bike and a suitcase, and then

a wooden box. And then, when we didn't see other opportunities, the Lord provided. And in one day, 250,000 free gospel tracts. It didn't cost us anything!

Then we had the Bible study at home and some people came. Two men, a lady and her daughter, and a married couple that lived on the fifth floor of our building. I thought "Wow," I was 24 years old and the two men were 60 years old, but not only that, both were elders in their churches, in two different Protestant churches. I suggested studying the gospel of John, but I was really very nervous to study the Bible with two elders. But, my dear friends, we are so rich in our assemblies, we are so rich with the books we have, the commentaries on the Bible that brothers wrote years ago and new commentaries as well, because in a few minutes, I found out that I was like a one-eyed man in the land of the blind, because they didn't know much about the Bible. But they enjoyed it and one of them prayed at the end of the Bible study. He always said, "Lord God," he used the Old Testament name of God. In the Protestant churches in the Netherlands they refer to the Old Testament a lot, hence "the Lord God." But when we arrived in chapter 10, he prayed at the end of our Bible study using the expression, "our God and Father". At the end of his prayer, he had tears in his eyes and he said, "Brother Hilvert, I'm over 60 years old and it's the first time in my life that I call God my Father. I've never known it, it's new, but I got this knowledge through these Bible studies."

We see the two aspects of the ministry the Lord is still entrusting to you and to me, because we all are missionaries: the ministry of the gospel for those who are still unrepentant, and also the ministry of the assembly with all the truths that are linked to the assembly. That's what we were able to do in a very simple way during these Bible studies, just an example to give you as an encouragement.

And if God could send Moses, you should ask: Can God send me for a certain task? And he did it in full fellowship with his God. But it was not easy... Serving the Lord is not always easy. Serving the Lord is one of the most blessed and beautiful privileges! Do you understand? I want to repeat it: Serving the Lord is one of the most blessed privileges the Lord allows! It's grace! He does not need me, he does not need you! He wants

to use us! It's grace! And when we are ready to serve Him, we will know these two things: sufferings and joy. I can tell you from our own experience that this is true. I often say to young people who have questions about serving the Lord: Tears in your eyes but joy in your heart!

While serving the Lord in our own city, He directed our thoughts to His Work in Cameroon where brothers and sisters were praying that the Lord would send missionaries.

The Lord guided our exercises by His Word and Spirit, making it plain to us and another family, Siegfried and Erica Nick from Germany, that He was calling us to serve Him in Cameroon. We shared our exercises with brothers and sisters of our local assemblies and they gladly extend to us the right hand of fellowship.



Construction work in Mputu (Northeastern Congo) from 2007 till 2017, resulting in the "Bible Conference Center" (BCC)



A Quiet Partner on the Homefront

(Eugene P. Vedder jr.; Charlotte, NC, USA)

When we pray for missionaries we should, and hopefully do, remember to pray for their entire family. When a family is on the mission field we look for news from them. We are interested to hear about the work they are doing, about their needs, their progress and reverses, about God's blessings and the enemy's attacks. We are interested too in their children, their health, their family life, their fellow workers and helpers. News is important for, being human, the more we know, the closer we feel to them, and the more we will be praying for them.

More than a century ago, when a missionary or a missionary couple or family went out to the mission field, it was usually by ship. Family, friends and brethren at home often never saw them again, or if they did see them again, it was usually after an interval of years. News was scarce. Telephones were only invented in 1876, and were unheard of on most mission fields for many decades thereafter. Postal service, if available, left much to be desired. Computers, internet, cell phones, iPads, Skype and other present-day means of communication were not even imagined yet! Even science fiction was still in its infancy and brethren warned their fellow-believers against reading fiction! While our faithful God thankfully does not change, technology does change, making life easier and more convenient in many ways. Missionaries are now in most cases able to fly to their



field of service. This makes it possible to fly home at more frequent intervals for furloughs, and to receive medical and dental care or to give birth to a new baby at home. Technology is often better in the homeland than on the field, and supportive loved ones are more likely to be on hand. These are advantages. There may be better educational opportunities for the children as well. If there are health problems or other special needs, they can be more easily attended to.

These apparent advantages have made possible some changes in how missionary work is carried on. As souls are saved and led on in the truth, a missionary may find that he does not have to live on the mission station, supervising the work locally or from there as a headquarters, as it were. The insidious and undesirable pattern of colonialism is at least lessened. Developing national brethren have greater opportunity to serve the Lord and minister among their people directly rather than simply as the missionary's helpers.

Where hearts are honest and true to the Lord, these are advantages. However, where this is not the case, there can be disastrous consequences, too. Faithful brothers, committed to the work the Lord has entrusted to them, need faithful wives, equally committed to the work the Lord has entrusted to them. A husband's first responsibility, from the human standpoint, is to his wife, and then to the children the Lord may give them.

A wife's first responsibility, from the human standpoint, is to her husband, and then to the children the Lord may give them. In several



cases among us on the mission field, health problems made it impossible or at least inadvisable for a family to remain on the field. The husband is needed on the field. His family also needs him. What is he, what is his wife, what is the family to do? Let's look at one such situation. Hilvert and Jeanette Wijnholds came from the Netherlands to Cameroon as missionaries on January 9, 1975. (Interestingly enough, the Lord took Jeanette to Himself exactly 42 years later on January 9, 2017.) Years after the Lord had brought them to Cameroon, the couple faced such a need. They had to return to the Netherlands with their family, which eventually grew to three daughters and four sons. Hilvert was needed both on the field as well as with his family. He would alternate between time at home and time on the field in Cameroon and neighboring countries. This involved extra expense.

And to all this was added a period of years when we all, but especially the many assemblies in the Netherlands, were struggling with division. Well known, respected leaders there were ad-



vocating principles that were different, that amounted to a removal of biblical landmarks that our fathers had rediscovered in Scripture. Hilvert wrote some helpful material in several languages setting forth sound principles during this time.

At the request of brother Ernie Barnes he also took on fresh responsibilities with a growing new work in eastern Africa next door to where division among missionaries had gravely injured a work of long standing. Much of the day by day work of bringing up the seven children fell upon Jeanette, Hilvert doing all he could when he would be at home.

These were not easy years. These were not years of glowing reports. Jeanette's task was to quietly walk with the Lord, to bring up sev-



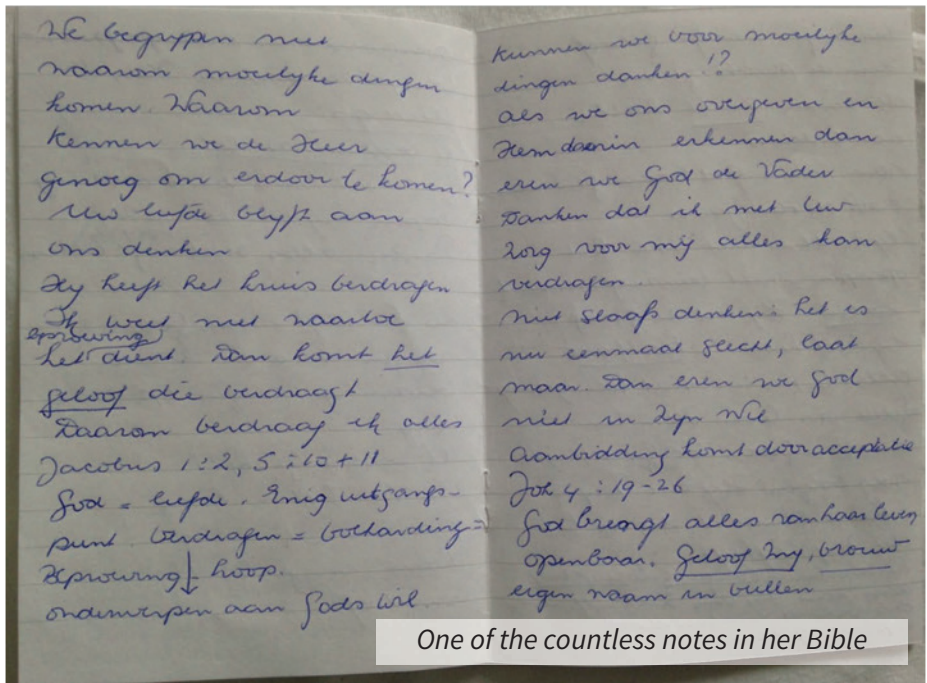
en children to love the Lord and walk with Him in times like these. Indeed, to be that helpmeet standing by a husband active in serving the Lord under stress at home and abroad, required “a virtuous wife [whose] worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her ... she does him good and not evil all the days of her life ... Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land ... She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness. She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idle-

ness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her ... a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised”!

Little mention was made in the Wijnholds’ newsletters about Jeanette’s work at home doing this excellent work of bringing up the children for the Lord. Hilvert often asked for prayers for his family at the beginning of a trip, and later thanked the Lord for answering these prayers.

But the time came when she said, “If my dear Saviour who died on the cross, giving His life for me, with whom I walked for so many years, who sustained me in difficult times—if this blessed Saviour wants me to go home earlier than I expected, I do not say no to Him.”

But without Jeanette's quiet, steady service at home Hilvert would hardly have been able to carry on the work in Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, and elsewhere that the Lord was giving him to do.



Jeanette did come with Hilvert to Bible conferences in North America, availing herself also of the opportunity to spend time with some of the grandchildren. Very seldom was she ever able to travel back to Cameroon with her husband or to any of the East African countries where the Lord was using him except for South Africa.

And then Jeanette got a very aggressive form of breast cancer. Thank God, help was available and was kindly given. The treatments given her in Switzerland from October 2015 till December 2016 were not easy for her.

Hilvert could not always be with her. In the first half of this time Hilvert could make short visits because sister Charlotte Pickering stayed with Jeanette and became her spiritual daughter. Jeanette gladly accepted this, being deeply aware of the spiritual needs in the countries Hilvert

was visiting then and praying for them. She also continued witnessing for her Savior and Lord to other patients and to the staff in the clinic.

During most of the time of her illness, Hilvert remained with his wife, taking care of her day and night, staying with her during the daily treatments in the clinic. Much prayer went up for her among saints in many parts of the world.

But the Lord in His infinite but inscrutable wisdom eventually saw fit to take Jeanette to Himself in the glory. We all bow to Him, accepting what He has done. All His ways are right and for the best, whether they accord with our desires or not!

The Lord's reward for Jeanette, we can't help but feel, will certainly be a "Well done, good and faithful servant. You've helped your husband and family tremendously. You've served Me well. Enter into the joy of your Lord!"



In April 2019 my daughter Hillechien (Houston, USA) composed a song with elements from four songs that my dear wife often sung, especially in the last year of her life. See the next two pages.

If I could hear my mother sing again,
in evening hours, when all at rest
her voice, the melody would fill my heart
I would be blessed, I would be blessed.

1.

She would be singing
That day by day
His strength would keep me along life's way.
In tribulation and suffering,
He's always with me
And I will sing.

2.

She would be saying
Look up above
In the face of Jesus, so full of love.
Earth's pain and pleasures, are vanishing
seeing His glory
And I will sing.

If I could hear my mother sing again,
in evening hours, when all at rest
her voice, the melody would fill my heart
I would be blessed, I would be blessed.

3.

She would remind me
Trust and obey
His joy will fill you, His peace will stay
And in His presence, remembering
His love and goodness
And I will sing.

4.

She would be asking
Show me the way
Guide and keep me, Lord this I pray
In His footsteps following
Till I reach heaven
And I will sing.

I know I'll hear my mother
sing again
on heavens shore,
forevermore
her voice the melody,
a bright new song
forevermore...
forevermore...

My Mother





Mayuano, DR Congo (2004)



Kigali, Rwanda (2017)



Nairobi, Kenya (2015)



Mpondwe, Uganda (2018)

EBC 2022 information

Looking back over the past five decades, three dates particularly come to mind:

1. **9 January 1975:** the departure for Cameroon, together with my wife and our first child. This date reminds me of the important **consideration** that you do not become a missionary by serving the Lord in another country or continent. In the five years before this date, by His grace, we had already served Him in our hometown in the Netherlands: in my job, on the streets, in marketplaces, through home Bible studies.
2. **9 January 2017:** my beloved wife Jeanette went to be with the Lord after a very happy marriage of almost 46 years. This date leads me to the following **consideration:** It is of immense importance that a married couple together are convinced of the Lord's calling, wherever that may be. For only then can you share and bear both joy and sorrow, ups and downs, laughter, and tears. Together with HIM whom you also serve together.
3. **9 January 2022:** five years after the homegoing of my beloved wife. The experiences with the Lord during those years have brought about several **considerations** of which I want to share one. Besides the comfort and encouragement of my own children and grandchildren and many brothers and sisters in the Netherlands and elsewhere, I experience again and again how blessed it is to have built up a deep practical fellowship with those brothers and sisters in several countries in Africa, among whom I have been allowed to serve for years, both with the Word and in practical things.

Another **consideration:** such a practical fellowship comes into being primarily by spending several days with them in their simple huts, sharing their living conditions, gratefully using a simple bathroom made of bamboo sticks, the hot water prepared with a lot of work, eating their meals prepared with love by sisters in smoky kitchen huts.



Home visit in Rwanda (2022)

How great a love, how much compassion, how much care, to experience again and again, on every journey, in every country, town and village, in the homes where I visited them and can— by the grace of the Lord—still visit them today.

These three dates are part of missionary work over many years and in various countries.

By His grace we served the Lord in Cameroon for seven years from the village of Nko'emvon and returned to the Netherlands for health reasons of my beloved wife. From 1983 my wife continued her faithful service as wife and mother in the Netherlands. Her faith and love for the Lord enabled me to make regular visits of longer duration to Cameroon. The Lord led us in such a way that I also visited other countries in West Africa in cooperation with and at the invitation of other brothers, such as Siegfried Nick, Philippe Laügt, Klaas Rot and others.

In the late 1990s, my ministry shifted more and more to East Africa:

- Brother Ernie Barnes asked me several times to come and help him in Kenya, North-East Congo and West Uganda.

- At the request of brothers from French-speaking Switzerland, I also started visiting Rwanda in 2000.
- Visits to South Africa, where I had already been with brother Edwin Cross, started in 2005, following contacts with brothers who had originally come from the Dem. Rep. of Congo.

Another **consideration**: It is extremely important to be personally led by the Lord and at the same time to seek and experience practical fellowship with other servants of the Lord.

On my travels I have always been—and still am—accompanied by one or more local brothers who themselves serve the Lord in their own countries.



I am also very thankful for the visits of other brothers from Europe and North America, usually together with me, but also without me, usually two or three brothers together.

I would like to share with you some prayer topics:

1. The need for more local—younger—brothers to serve the Lord

in their own country, based on 2 Timothy 2:2.

2. The need for brothers from Europe and North America to visit the above-mentioned countries regularly for Bible conferences. In recent years, through the work of local brothers, many new assemblies, groups of believers, preaching points, especially in Western, Central and Eastern Uganda, have come into being. They need regular teaching from God's Word.
3. The need for teams of young brothers and sisters to hold youth camps.

See also www.allthenations.info/get-involved

More info can be found on the website: www.allthenations.info, about, among other things:

- Sponsoring children: www.allthenations.info/sponsor-a-child
- Activities: www.allthenations.info/our-activities
- Newsletters: www.allthenations.info/news



