



CROSSWINDS
CHURCH

WINTER 2018

UPDATE FROM OVERSEAS

KAYLEE MCMILLAN

Hello Crosswinds! A quick update on what I've been doing the past few months! I've been based in Wollongong, Australia, home to 1,500 Syrian and Iraqi refugees. I have been in close relationship with them for the last three years, maintaining those friendships through house visits, outdoor gatherings, and Bible/Quran studies. I have become very close with one family in particular.

One of the daughters, Ola, and I have begun to work together with the common heart to break down stereotypes and fear that come with immigration. She and I have held multiple sessions for Christians to come talk with Muslims and hear personally from them what they believe, instead of simply believing what the media says (which tends to feed into the fear that comes with the Middle East.) This goes hand in hand with the Peace Camps we offer in Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey. We'll soon be sending a team to Jordan to scout out possibilities for another Peace Camp there.

We have been hosting several outreach teams here. With that in mind we started a ministry where the teams can meet Syrian families and take the kids out for a day in the park. We played soccer, taught them to skateboard and slackline, and had a sweet little picnic with a couple of families! A friend and I have also begun laying the groundwork for a documentary on Child Marriages in the Middle East. A 13-year-old girl named Jamile, with whom I have become very close, was sold by her parents to a 30-year-old man in Lebanon who already has a wife and two kids. Sadly, this is a common story in this region. The documentary a very long-term dream, but we hope to shed light on this topic.

One last note to celebrate: a couple of the Syrian girls I have been discipling for the last three years just graduated from High school!!! So I was invited to attend their graduations and their school formals. It was a reminder that the relational foundation God is helping me build, is truly making roots and making a difference. Thank you for your support in this journey.

Love, Kaylee.





SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

ROB NORMANN

CHAPTER PRESIDENT OF SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE-ALAMEDA COUNTY

THERE HAVE BEEN A SMALL HANDFUL OF TIMES OVER MY FIVE-PLUS DECADES ON THIS PLANET WHEN I HAVE FELT THE UNMISTAKABLE HAND OF GOD PROMPTING ME...NO, PROPELLING ME... INTO ACTION.

One such occurrence was at the beginning of this year when I stumbled across a Facebook TV show called "Returning the Favor" starring Mike Rowe from Dirty Jobs and Ford commercial fame. I've always related to Mike since we are both "roll up your sleeves get your hands dirty" kind of guys. The episode was about a man named Luke Mickelson from Twin Falls, Idaho, who quit his job to build bunk beds for kids who didn't have a bed of their own. Sleep In Heavenly Peace (SHP) was started in Luke's garage with the simple motto: "No Kid Sleeps On The Floor In Our Town."

After watching this episode, God placed on my heart the desire and vision to start a local chapter of SHP. His call was so compelling that I soon found myself hurtling east on Highway 80 toward Twin Falls to be trained as a Chapter President. Afterward, on the drive back from Twin Falls my mind was filled with ideas. It was clear that God was at work calling specific people to my mind to help me get the Alameda County of SHP up and running. I also began to picture how to restore one of the old barns on our CrossWinds property into a bunk-bed-building workshop. So, over the course of the summer, a small group of us transformed the neglected barn into a workshop complete with chop saws, drill presses, and sanders. God's vision of serving low income families in Alameda County was becoming a reality.

Each bunk is made with love, and that love gets delivered in the form of a new bed, complete with a brand-new mattress, sheets, comforter or homemade quilt, pillow, and a children's book. Tentative smiles evolve into joy and excitement as boys and girls watch their beds being assembled in their home. Each delivery experience is part of a bigger story. Here are just two of those stories...

We received a phone call from a high school counselor in Alameda County regarding two students, who are brothers. The boys were struggling to stay awake in class and finally shared with the counselor that they had difficulty sleeping because they didn't have a bed. One was on the couch and the other on the floor. The counselor contacted SHP to apply for a bed. Our vetting team was able to contact their mom and set up a delivery. She was grateful for the help even though she said it was difficult to ask for it. Hugs and thanks and two more kids off the floor in Alameda County.

Delivering a bed to a little girl who was sleeping on the floor with just a blanket was an incredible privilege. She lives with her grandma and her kitty cat. Mom is in jail and life is uncertain but she had a huge smile on her face as she sat on her new bed. When we arrived, Grandma had a look of disbelief when she opened the front door.

She kept saying, "I can't believe it, I can't believe you are really here. I prayed that it would happen but I still just can't believe it." She was so grateful and hugged us right there. It felt good to be able to provide practical help in a small corner of their life. Our service model is based on volunteers building bunk beds then delivering them to kids in need throughout Alameda County. To date, we have had two community build days and have completed 27 bunk beds.

Thank you to those of you that have already participated in a build day or supported SHP with your time and donations (either directly with SHP or through CrossWinds' Close Up Initiative.) My hope is that the Alameda County Chapter will become a key ministry of CrossWinds and ensure that no kid sleeps on the floor in our town.



WHEN NATHAN BAUER WAS A TEENAGER GROWING UP IN WISCONSIN, HE HAD NO IDEA THERE WAS A CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA THAT WOULD ONE DAY BE HIS SPIRITUAL HOME. IN FACT, HE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW MUCH ABOUT CHURCH AT ALL.



ONE WAY TICKET

NATHAN BAUER

SMALL GROUP LEADER FOR STUDENT MINISTRIES

“When I was in middle school, I took a few weeks of catechism classes,” he says, “but I never really connected to the true meaning behind what was being taught.” But one thing he did connect to was playing video games online, and that’s where he made a connection that would change the course of his life for good.

“I met Daniel Bonilla playing Xbox,” Nathan explains. “He and I would spend hours talking online and playing video games, getting to know one another and sharing what was happening in our lives. We became best friends through a headset and a controller.” It wasn’t long before they decided to meet up in real life. In the summer of 2012, Nathan had a trip planned for California, and the Bonilla family took it upon themselves to show him around their home state - and a little bit more.

It just so happened that his visit to California coincided with CrossWinds Church’s annual houseboats retreat, where every year around 200 high schoolers take over Lake Shasta and have fun while connecting with each other and learning about Jesus. For Nathan, it was a moment of life change that he couldn’t have predicted.

“Houseboats was the most spiritually awakening experience I’ve had to date,” he says. “The moment I stepped onto the bus, I felt like I was part of a family that had known me for years. The students and the leaders opened their arms and their hearts to make me feel welcomed.

I had the time of my life. I watched people crying with one another, opening up about what was hurtful in their lives and receiving love and affirmation from those around them. I remember opening up in small group and feeling so accepted. I slept under the stars and loved every minute of it.” It was there that Nathan says he found God.

“WITHOUT THAT TRIP, MY LIFE WOULD BE EXPONENTIALLY DIFFERENT THAN IT IS TODAY. I’M SO GRATEFUL I FOUND THE PATH I AM ON NOW.”

If you’ve been a part of CrossWinds Church for any prolonged amount of time, this story will ring true and possibly even mirror your experience. At CrossWinds, we see first-hand the authentic and loving community that sparks life-change.

Many of us have stories of how an invitation to small group, or to volunteer on a Sunday morning team, led to an experience with God and a deeper involvement with healthy community. All good things come to an end, and Nathan knew he had a plane ticket home after his houseboats experience. He headed back to Wisconsin, renewed but not sure if there was more in store for him with this new community he found. There was high school to finish and a career to start. California was fun, he thought, but it was time to be an adult in Wisconsin. As luck would have it, after graduation, Nathan began working for a large corporation doing tech work. It wasn’t long before a job opportunity in Northern California opened up.

“I interviewed and accepted a job opportunity in Mountain View, but I was ready to back out. Several months earlier, though, a close friend suggested I serve as a leader on the houseboats retreat. God truly had something in store for me. The houseboats trip came as I was on the verge of deciding whether I should stay in Wisconsin or move to California.” So he volunteered as a leader on the houseboats trip, and realized that God was telling him something. “By the second night [of that retreat], I knew this was where I needed to be...I was confident that California would be my new home and that CrossWinds would be a huge part of my life.” So, for the last time, Nathan flew out to California...only this time, it was a one-way ticket. He moved to Northern California, and immediately got plugged into CrossWinds. It’s been about half a year, and to hear him tell it, it’s been incredible.

“I’m a small group leader for high school and college, and I also volunteer on Sundays in the middle school ministry. I’ve been learning the worship songs [so I can be a part of the worship team] for student ministry.”

“Serving the church and the community has brought life and purpose back into my soul. I am beyond grateful that I get to be a part of the lives of CrossWinds students that, like me, have found a home here.”

GOD WITH US

BOB CHISHOLM

THIS STORY IS FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO NEED HOPE; FOR ANYONE WHO FEELS LIKE GOD IS DISTANT OR FAR; FOR ANYONE WHO FEELS LIKE GOD HAS ABANDONED THEM OR LET THEM DOWN.

My name is Bob Chisholm and this is my story. I write this as a 73-year-old man and as a recently retired dentist of 47 years: During this season as I look back on my life, you could say it has been one of adventure, happiness, and pain. Growing up I suffered various hardships—some self-inflicted, some not. As a kid, I knocked out my front teeth two separate times and broke my arm so severely it landed me in a full upper body cast. During my middle school years, I landed in juvenile court two times for various stupid kid things. In high school I messed around quite a bit and quickly realized that if I was going to do well in school, I had to turn some things around.

I finally got my act together and graduated from high school. Soon after, I graduated from San Francisco State and got accepted to Loyola Dental School in Chicago. Maybe becoming a dentist had something to do with my early childhood dental traumas! I met my wife, Jan, in dental school and we were married shortly after graduation. We had our first daughter, Dana, followed by our son, Robert. Then tragedy struck. Our daughter, Dana, almost drowned in a swimming accident when she was two. As new parents we were terrified of losing her. We couldn't imagine the grief of losing a child. But to our surprise, Dana recovered from her near-drowning and we were able to bring her back home.

Everything went smoothly for the next several years and Jan and I welcomed two more children: Breanna and Brennen. Our family was complete...then tragedy struck again. While Jan and I went on a second honeymoon, some friends watched our kids. Somehow, Brennen made his way to the backyard, over a small gate, down a short flight of stairs, down a walkway and into our pool.

And on April 11, 1988 at 23 months and 1 day old, our beautiful Brennen passed away. Our grief was overpowering. We did not know how to move on without him. We were beyond devastated. Over time, we felt that our family didn't seem complete without six people so we adopted a sweet baby girl named Rebecca. And life was smooth for a while. But in 2010, things took a turn once again. In January of that year I learned I had kidney cancer. My kidney was removed but three years later it metastasized to my brain, necessitating brain surgery.

After my health improved, I went back to my dental practice and life resumed once more. These are the pieces of my story. When you take them all together, it would be easy to think that God let me down, forgot about me or that He had abandoned me throughout much of my life. But I can tell you, the opposite is true. They are the times when God came near. He came close. He was intimate. Immanuel – God with us...Immanuel – God with me.

Through each hardship, God was there and He carried me. Sometimes I knew it was happening. Other times, I couldn't see through the pain. Sometimes, I just ignored what God was doing altogether. But God was there.

Each time He faithfully showed me how He was putting the pieces back together, despite the pain and darkness. Gently, over time, He continued to unfold His plan for my life. He eventually brought me purpose again and gradually restored my soul through each trial. How else could I write these words with so much joy and gratitude in my heart? How else could I still sing His praises after everything that has happened?



**IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH
HARDSHIP OR FIND YOURSELF
IN PAIN, I WANT TO TELL YOU
THAT GOD IS WITH YOU.**

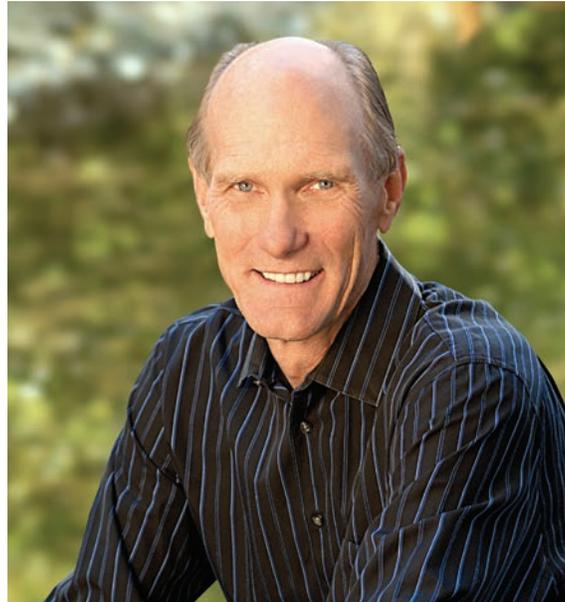
This Christmas season has brought another season of trial and thankfulness—and another season where God has proven Himself faithful. I am currently fighting a mass of medial steinum tumors in my left chest and neck. I've undergone chemotherapy the past six months and I'm doing well.

As I think about God drawing near to me this holiday season, I can say this with confidence: God has been with me through it all and whatever God's will is for my future, it is okay with me. God has proven Himself to be faithful to me time and time again.

And even though I have seen my fair share of heartache and pain, I can still say that God is great and that my life is blessed. I look forward to seeing what God will do with me and how He will continue to show up. If you are going through hardship or find yourself in pain, I want to tell you that God is with you. You might not see Him now or experience Him right away. But you will.

God can't NOT show up for you! It's not in His nature to abandon you. One day in the near future, you will turn around and you will sense Him waiting with His arms open wide, and He will show you what He's been doing and how He has been carrying you. My encouragement to you is this: Cling to the hope of Immanuel, God with us. Cling to the hope of Immanuel, God with you.





1988-2018

JOHN MERRITT

FOUNDING PASTOR

How could we reinvent the church to make it more interesting, more relevant, more beneficial to people's lives? how could we break down the barriers that discourage so many people from coming to church? Those were the questions I was asking as a young pastor in Wisconsin back in the 1980's. To get answers, I did on-sight investigations of cutting edge churches who were effectively reaching church dropouts and spiritual skeptics. A vision for a new kind of church began incubating in my soul. The next question was where?

Through church networking, my wife Debbie and I checked out church-launching opportunities in Anchorage (where we saw more moose than people—so Debbie joked), Seattle, and the Bay Area. Trusting it was the Holy Spirit, we felt prompted to leave Wisconsin and move to Pleasanton.

While making that 2000 mile journey from East to West, I asked myself more than once what kind of boondoggle we'd talked ourselves into. But within the first week of moving into a rental home in P-Town, God began doing things we never could have anticipated. Not knowing a soul, I connected with the local pastors group where I met a pastor who was giving up after three years of trying to

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get a church going. I asked if I could meet with the 18 adults who were the core of his church. He graciously said yes. After a vision-casting meeting in the living room of one of the member's homes, all 18 committed to help start up a church that eventually became CrossWinds.

So many unlikely stories—like how God used telemarketing to give us a big kick-start. Using 10 phones, volunteers made 20,000 calls in a month-long campaign, identifying 2,000 non-churchgoing people who said they'd be interested in checking out a new church and would be okay if we mailed some info to them. (I can't imagine that working today!) Of these 2,000 people, 200 of them showed up, joining our growing core group about 60 strong. Counting kids, we had nearly 300 attend our first service on November 6, 1988.

Before that first Sunday, we identified 7000 square feet of warehouse meeting space on Johnson Drive, but had no assets to secure a rental agreement. I'll never forget the look I got from Debbie the day I came home and told her that along with three other core team members, we had just leveraged our home in order to provide the security necessary to lease the warehouse. She wasn't sure if that was faith or stupidity. I wasn't sure either. But in those first three years, word of mouth spread and the church grew from 0 to 700—from one

service to four. Having outgrown our space, we transitioned to Pleasanton Middle School in 1991, while we awaited the build-out of new warehouse space on Sierra Court in Dublin. This was our church home from 1992 until 2015 when we occupied the wonderful church campus that we now enjoy.

People have often asked me why CrossWinds grew so quickly in those early years of our start-up phase. First, it was not because of the sheer genius of the founding pastor! Looking back, I realize how incredibly naïve I was (like walking around with a commercial real estate broker in 1988 with no clue as to what I was doing). This is why I always say that the church grew: BECAUSE GOD'S HAND WAS ON US! I say this not to sound humble nor to diminish the hard work a lot of amazing people put into this. But bottom line, God has chosen to bless CrossWinds Church—from the beginning and throughout these 30 incredible years of ministry.

Over those 30 years, many key people have left a lasting legacy with their time, talent, and treasure to make CrossWinds Church what it is today. Moving forward, it will take new legacy-makers who will invest in this beautiful church community in order to advance even greater things for the kingdom of God. Would you add your name to those who have gone before you? I am praying that you will.





COLLECTIVE

MONTANA NIELSON

LEADER FOR COLLECTIVE

AS HUMANS, WE CAN AGREE THERE ARE CERTAIN UNIVERSAL COMMON GROUNDS THAT UNITE US. A BIG ONE IS HOW PEOPLE SEARCH FOR BELONGING AND COMMUNITY.

We realize that God put us in a world with a ton of fascinating, intricate minds and complex hearts to live alongside. This theme of finding community is represented throughout our lives in different ways. For example, it starts in Kindergarten where we connect with the kids that happen to sit next to us for snack. Then we stumble upon a sense of belonging through middle school as we navigate new friendships.

The trend continues into high school, as we bond with a group of possible lifelong friends. Through all this, we moved toward graduation, picturing the perfect moment of throwing our graduation caps in the air. It's a celebration and an important milestone. It signals the start of something new.

It becomes the moment we enter the world through a new lens as we begin the chapter of our young adulthood. This is exciting, most definitely, but also comes with its challenges and our own fears. There's uncertainty in a lot of us. Some of us reach a point where we feel like we're supposed to have our life put together and figured out, all the while struggling to comprehend where God is leading us. This is where Collective, CrossWinds' College Ministry, begins.

We want to share the good news that, through Jesus, we don't have to live into this life by ourselves.

There is a community here of people going through some of the exact same things, having the very same feelings. Whatever you are going through or celebrating, we want to walk through life together! We do this through worship, weekly small groups where we discuss everything from family to faith to life in general, monthly events, and just laughing and having fun together. We serve an amazing God who supplies us with a community of people with the same uncertainties and questions as our own.

This makes our heart feel full when we are part of something bigger. Whether you are in college or not in school, you are welcome to join us as we bond over the season we are at in our lives. Wherever you are in your faith, we value you and your story. We can grow together with the people God has placed in our life. It is a privilege to call this ministry a family.

Together, we make up Collective.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CROSSWINDS TEAM

MATT VANGENT

Matt was raised in Southern California and has spent all of his adult life living and working near Los Angeles.

He studied youth ministry at Azusa Pacific University, then went on to get a Master's of Theology from Fuller Seminary. He's served in full-time ministry since graduating from college and absolutely loves the blessing of serving people in the church and in the community. He spent his first nine years of ministry as a Youth Pastor before helping launch Sanctuary Coffee, which served as a valuable time of preparation for this current role at CrossWinds. He's married to Erin, and they have two young daughters, Ellie and Kenzie.



WHAT'S YOUR FONDEST CHILDHOOD MEMORY?

One of my fondest childhood memories is spending time with my friends on our bikes. We would ride everywhere together — to the park to build bike jumps, to the Thrifty down the street for ice cream, and everywhere in between. We all lived on the same street. It was great to be able to grab my bike when I got home from school and spend hours riding around with my friends.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LAST MEAL?

Chicken parmesan. My all time favorite meal, the way my wife makes it.

DO YOU HAVE ANY HIDDEN TALENTS?

I could tell you, but then it wouldn't be hidden anymore... Just kidding. I was really into jazz when I was in high school, so I can play a handful of instruments: saxophone, flute, clarinet. In fact, I was almost a jazz performance major when I went to APU!

TELL US ABOUT YOUR TIME AT SANCTUARY COFFEE. WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED THAT YOU'RE EXCITED TO BRING TO CROSSWINDS?

I have learned so much during my time at Sanctuary! One of the most valuable things has been experiencing leadership in new arenas. I've always loved learning, but moving into such a new context (High School Ministry to Non-Profit/Church Plant/Cafe Management... wow!) really gave me the opportunity to dive into areas of leadership, management, and ministry that I hadn't considered before. Learning business management gave me some valuable lessons that apply to leadership in a church setting. I'm excited to bring that to CrossWinds.

I also try to read as many books as I can get my hands on. It's one of the ways I enjoy learning. The person I am now is not the same as the one I will be this time next year! I always want to be growing and improving.



WATCHING MY KIDS GROW UP HAS BEEN ONE OF THE BEST EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE. IN PARENTING, THE MOST MUNDANE BECOMES EXTRAORDINARY.

WHAT DID YOU AND YOUR WIFE DO ON YOUR FIRST DATE?

For our first date, we went to dinner at PF Chang's and then ice skating at a nice little outdoor rink. We ended up going to PF Chang's (a different one) on the night that I proposed to her as well! And the first time we met was at a fast food Chinese restaurant. I guess you could say Chinese food has played a significant role in our relationship!

WHAT'S THE MOST SURPRISING THING YOU'VE LEARNED ABOUT FATHERHOOD?

Fatherhood is both better and harder than I ever imagined. It's harder... I've never been as tired as I've been since having kids. (My pre-kid self didn't know how good he had it in the sleep department!) But it is infinitely better at the same time.

Watching my kids grow up has been one of the best experiences of my life. In parenting, the most mundane becomes extraordinary. It's so fun for me to share my interests and hobbies with them. Seeing them take an interest in things I enjoy doing is so much fun!

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE PLAYER ON THE GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS?

That's a hard one since I'm not much of a baseball fan... does Steve Young still play for them? I was going to leave it at that, but I actually am a Warriors fan... so my real answer is of course Steph Curry. #stephgonnasteph

HOW WOULD YOU SURVIVE A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE?

I would grab my camping gear and take my family out to the middle of a forest or up a mountain. We'd hide out there as long as we could. My backup option is to get a group of humans together and barricade ourselves inside a WalMart. We'd have enough weapons to fight off the zombies and enough food to survive on. (When I was a High School Pastor, we actually spent way too much time talking about this, so I've already got it thought out.)

WHAT WOULD BE THE WORST "BUY ONE GET ONE FREE" SALE OF ALL TIME?

Glitter. Speaking from personal experience as a father of girls, a little bit of that stuff already goes too far. I do not need more glitter in my life.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TRADITION?

A couple years ago, we started doing "Elf on the Shelf" with our oldest daughter. That's a lot of fun to hide the elf every night. (I mean... Ellie, if you're reading this... it's a lot of fun to let Elfie hide on her own.) She gets so excited to find her every morning. And now that our younger daughter is old enough, she's going to have a blast with it as well.

KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR 18-YEAR-OLD SELF?

Matt, remember that you don't know everything. Not everyone who thinks differently than you do is a heretic. There are some pretty smart people out there and you just might learn something from them.

WHAT'S THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

This is perhaps more proverb than advice, but I'll count it anyway. The Senior Pastor at the first church where I worked told me people will either be glad when I enter a room or glad when I leave it.

Since hearing that, I've strived to live with the kind of presence that encourages other people and makes them glad for me to be around, rather than glad at my departure.

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