

# Calvary Connection

October 2017

## Ministries We Support

Directors Joe and Jill Norvelo first became involved in ministry on the Amazon River in 1988, when Joe was a ship's officer on Mercy Ships (hospital ships offering humanitarian aid) and Jill worked for YWAM (Youth with a Mission) Belém, Brazil.



"We were passing all these smaller waterways and I was wondering who was ministering in those areas. God touched my heart and said 'Maybe you should go there.' And so, we started Amazon Reach in 2008.

There are 36,000 communities assessable *only* by boat in an area the size of the continental United States.

*(continued)*

## The Issue is not Primarily Homosexuality; it's Scripture

The issue is not primarily gay marriage; it's whether "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The issue is not whether people are good-intentioned and sincere in desiring things that God forbids. The issue is whether we all bear the sin of Adam, a rebellion that gives us a sin nature that we cannot erase on our own terms and by our own hands.

Twenty years ago, I lived as a lesbian. I delighted in my lover, our home on one of the Finger Lakes, our Golden Retrievers, and our careers. When Christ claimed me for His own, I did not stop feeling like a lesbian. I did not fall out of love with women. I was not converted out of homosexuality. *I was converted out of unbelief.*

Conversion to Christ did not initially change my sexual attraction for women. What conversion did change immediately was my heart and mind. My mind was on fire for the Bible and I could not read enough of it. The gospel gave me a light that was ruinous - it ruined me for the life I had loved. In saying "yes" to Jesus and "no" to the desires of my flesh, I learned that the only way to peace with my God was through the Cross—the one that Jesus died on and the one that I was called, with the help of Jesus, to carry. I wondered how this could be so. How could that which I loved be sin?

I learned that my homosexuality was a logical consequence of the fall of man, the thumbprint of original sin on some of us. It is true that some of us are born this way. It is also true that we are all born in sin, in one way or another. We can hate our sin without hating ourselves because we who have committed our lives to Christ stand in his righteousness and not our own. Our real identity is not in the sin we battle, but in the Savior that we embrace.

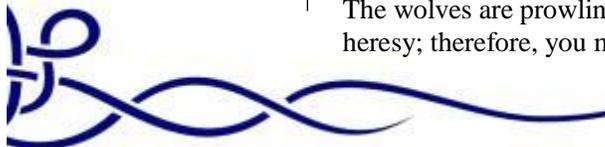
We gain more than we lose when we pick up our cross and follow Jesus. But pick up our cross we must. And for many of us, our cross demands forsaking the sexual sin that calls us by name. We live now in a world that has no use for the God of the Bible, for Jesus, the Savior of His people and of the world. Calling people like me to forsake sexual sin is no longer considered a first step toward walking with Jesus in liberty and in new life – according to some church leaders.

When blasphemy comes from the church, the Bible gives us ways to understand how prophets become lions and wolves. "Be sober-minded. Be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Pet. 5:8) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits." (Matt. 7:15) Christian fruit grows you in grace—grace leads you to love and desire the moral law of God, and not to despise it. Christian fruit has no measure but the word of God.

I stand with Biblical orthodoxy, which is inseparable from God's creation mandate and definition of gendered personhood found in Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female, he created them". The soul is God's fingerprint on humanity, but the gendered body—essentially and ontologically male or female—will also, for the believer in Jesus Christ, be glorified and resurrected in the New Jerusalem.

The wolves are prowling, and the lions are roaring, because they are bold and proud of their heresy; therefore, you must be warned. *by Rosaria Butterfield (condensed)*

*For many of us, our cross demands forsaking the sexual sin that calls us by name.*



## Ministries We Support - continued

Over the years, we've been able to minister to 55 different river communities. The problem is - we don't have the personnel to *maintain* contact in those areas.

"One of the strategies that God revealed to us to reach the community in which we actually live is to reach through the kids in order to reach the families. We have a program called Kings Kids on Saturdays, as well as after-school programs to teach the children how to read and to tutor them in math. We're involved in combating human trafficking, evangelism, medical and dental outreaches – all with the goal of reaching the people with evangelism and church planting.

"Our vision for the future is to plant people who will live within the river



communities, to maintain a constant presence, to lead Bible studies that will grow into churches. The goal of our School of Community Development is to bring a holistic approach to community development, as well as uplifting the spiritual needs in each community.

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*We believe the time for 'convenient' evangelism is over.*

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"Many of the communities are closed to outsiders, but it's gotten to the point where we actually have people request that we come and minister to their area because of the free medical and dental services that we offer. But we can't evangelize them, and then tell them to go to their local church when there *is* no local church. So, the need for planting of churches is paramount for what is needed for the future."

[www.amazonreach.com](http://www.amazonreach.com).

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## **Our Gardeners**

Surely, you've noticed what spectacular grounds are kept around our church building. And if you are the one in your household who does the mowing, trimming, planting, weed whacking, and general caretaking of your property, you just might wonder who we can thank for the loving care that they provide.

Our friendly gardeners include Marc Stenglein and Andy Imes, who spend two and half hours each time that the grass needs mowing and the borders need trimming. And the artistic care of the flowers, trees and bushes is the ownership of Chris and Theresa Gnage. Thanks to all of you for your behind-the-scenes ministry!



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## **Enriching Your Bible Vocabulary**

**farthing** – one-fourth of a penny. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.* (Matt. 10:29)

**firmament** – the region of the air; the sky or the heavens. *And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."* (Gen. 1:6)

**forswear** – deny under an oath. *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, 'You shall not forswear yourself, but shall perform unto the Lord your oaths.' But I say unto you, 'Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, 'Yes' be 'Yes', and your 'No', 'No'; for whatsoever is more than these comes from the evil one.* (Matt. 5: 33-37)

**fret** – grieve. *Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be envious; neither be envious against the workers of iniquity. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil.* (Psalm 37: 1, 7, 8)

**froward** – stubborn, difficult, evil-disposed. *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.* (1 Pet. 2:18)