

Interview with John & Marge Connor



Joe Estes: I'm here with John and Marge Connor in their comfortable enclosed sunroom. The first question is, "Would you please share how you sensed God's call in your life to serve as missionaries?"

Marge: I was a teenager. I had already graduated from high school. I didn't really know what I wanted to do, but I had studied bookkeeping and liked it. So, I enrolled in Business College. And one night the Yoder's, who were missionaries in South America, came to give their presentation, and after the presentation I felt like God was specifically asking me to accept a call to missions. I really didn't know what that meant. I fell in love with Sybil Yoder. and I attribute a lot of my call to her presentation. What a wonderful lady she was, and she took an interest in me!

That's how I felt God's call on my life.

John: In the early sixties, I was in Papua New Guinea with my parents, who were missionaries. I was a teenager and some of my friends were, of course, New Guinea boys. One day they asked if I would go to their village with them. So, I agreed and got permission to go. In those days, the pastors couldn't read. And even if they could, they didn't have all the scripture. All they had was the book of Mark. On Thursday of each week pastors would go to the mission to learn the Bible story, and then that would be their sermon for Sunday. When we were at that village church, the pastor stood up to give his story and he saw me there. I was probably easy to see! He asked if I could read. I said I could. He said, "Well, do you have a Bible?" I said, "Yeah, I've got a Bible." And he said, "Why don't you come up here and read it and tell us what it says?" So, I did that, and it became quite a popular thing. Every Sunday my friends and I would go to a church where we were invited and I would read the Bible and tell them what it said and what I thought it meant. And then we'd go to the next place and usually we had two or three places we'd go every Sunday. I didn't feel called to do it or anything. I just it was something to do. The people fed us good food. I liked it and my friends did too. I was probably 17 at the time. At one of the places we visited, an old woman came up and took my hand, as New Guinean women sometimes do when they want you to talk with them. As she did, she asked, "Who will come and tell us the story when you're gone?" I didn't know any Greek, or Hebrew or homiletics or hermeneutics. I just knew how to read the Bible and apply it to your life. As we talked to her, I realized that probably nobody would go because it was too hard a place to reach. And so I told her I didn't know if anybody would come. Well, during that

week in prayer in private prayer, I felt very strongly that the Lord called me to missions. I think if my call was just emotional, I would have felt called to go back to New Guinea. But I didn't feel called to a particular place. My parents served with an independent agency. But I felt called to the Wesleyan Church and to wherever they would send me.

Joe: Question number two: "How many years did you serve as missionaries?"

John: We served for 46 years. The first 12 were in Zambia. And then we were transferred to Korea. We only lived in the country for five years, but our assignment lasted for 10 years. During some of that, we did graduate degrees and part of it was in and out. During that period, we were in the Philippines for a year, and we were back and forth to Korea. Then finally we were able to go back to Korea to live. They worked out a deal between the Nazarene Mission and us that I would teach full time at the Nazarene Theological Seminary, and they would help us get a visa. We couldn't get a visa because our church was too small.

Following that time, I served as a consultant for church development. Usually, there was some problem, and the mission wasn't sure what the problem was. So, we would go there to work with the people and see if we could figure out what the problem was and how to solve it. Both of us had assignments when we did that. Sometimes bookkeeping and finances and that kind of thing were the issue. That was Marge's job. We did that for 10 years I think, and we had 23 assignments during that time. We would stay in the country an average of three and a half months. So, we were in a lot of places and had a lot of different assignments. During our last 14 years of service, I was director of the Jesus Film ministry, along with being a mission director and then area director for the Pacific area. *(To be continued in the Fall issue)*

Condolences



Kerry David Kind—May 27, 1951, to May 21, 2023—was a loving husband, dedicated father, and unwavering servant of the Lord. He began his journey in Columbia City, Indiana, before moving to Marion, Indiana in 9th grade. He went on to complete studies at Purdue University, where he sang in the Purdue Glee Club, and Asbury Theological Seminary.

As a teenager, Kerry Kind chose to follow Jesus because of the youth outreach of College Wesleyan Church in Marion, Indiana. Coming full circle, Kerry also sought comfort and spiritual growth as a member of College Wesleyan during his final months.

In 1972, he married Jule Lytle and their devoted marriage crossed the half century mark in December 2022. Their faithfulness lives on in their three children: Kara Parsons (Tom), in Watkinsville, Georgia; Andrea Summers (Jeremy) in Marion, Indiana; and Paul Kind (Brooke) in Altadena, California.

Kerry also shines brightly in his 11 grandchildren, who brought immeasurable joy to his life: Bryce, Thomas, Becca, Bailey, and Allie Parsons; Macy, Ava, Micah, and Ty Summers; and Lyla and Jack Kind. His memory is also kept alive by his father, George Kind, and his sister, Kathy Hodson. Kerry was

preceded in death by his mother, JoAnn Kind.

Kerry served The Wesleyan Church with steadfast dedication for nearly five decades. His service took him from being a local pastor in Michigan to a missionary in Sierra Leone, West Africa, and then to a denominational leader in Global Partners, Education & the Ministry, and Communications.

His courageous spirit shone brightly during his decade-long battle with pulmonary fibrosis. Kerry's journey through those challenging years was marked by grace, courage, and surrender, inspiring many. Full of gratitude, he was given the gift of new lungs on November 13, 2022. And for a time, he could breathe again.

Kerry Kind was a man of immense faith, resilient spirit, and boundless love, and his legacy of service, devotion, and insatiable curiosity continues to inspire those fortunate enough to share some steps on his journey. The memorial service was held at College Wesleyan Church in Marion, Indiana.

Regional WMAF Gathering in Canada



It has been my goal for several years to attend the Missionary Alumni Gathering in all six regions where they are held. I am happy to report that Jeanette and I completed that goal this July by attending the annual alumni gathering that is consistently held at Beulah Camp in Brown's Flat, New Brunswick during the Atlantic District's camp meeting. We were hosted by Rod and Joy Guptill, who served in Colombia. It was a privilege to greet this group and share some of what WMAF is doing and hopes to do in the future. The featured speakers were Michael and Shawna, who are newly appointed missionaries to Central Europe. They shared their hearts and how God has been helping them in their transition. The group gathered around them in prayer as they now work on their prayer partner and financial support. It was also a delight to have Carl and Maya Gilles in the meeting. They are currently active missionaries from the Atlantic District, who serve the Third-World fields where French is spoken. It was very meaningful to have DS Peter Moore in the meeting. He was an "MK," who served with his parents, Bill & Joyce Moore, in Zambia. Joyce is standing left of Jeanette Vermilya in the photo.

~Jim Vermilya, WMAF President

Celebrating Our Missionary Heritage



Two years prior to the 1968 merger of the Pilgrim Holiness Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church, The Reformed Baptist Church of Canada merged with the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Depending on your background, you may not be familiar with some parts of their missionary history.

The Atlantic District celebrated their 120 year mission impact this summer during Beulah Camp in New Brunswick. They featured the history of Rev. Ella Kinney Sanders, who went with her

husband, Herbert, to South Africa in 1914, just 13 years after the Reformed Baptist Church was founded in 1901.

Ella was the first woman evangelist of the Reformed Baptists, the first woman in all of Canada to be ordained, and, with her husband, the first missionaries of the Reformed Baptist denomination. They sailed from St. John, New Brunswick and served in South Africa for 25 years by God's grace, sharing Christ and the Good News of salvation!

A creative feature of the celebration was an interview with DS Peter Moore and a person dressed as Ella Sanders might have looked in 1901, impersonated by Shirley Mullen Mills, former Houghton College president, in front of the Mullen Archives building. DS Moore challenged, the audience, "As you listen to Mrs. Sanders this evening—think about what God may be calling you to do that no one has ever thought of before." This was a delightful event, enjoyed by children, youth and adults of all ages.



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