

August and September Newsletter

1 message

Dr. David Eckman <cathy@bwgi.org>

Tue, Aug 5, 2014 at 3:10 PM

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August & September Newsletter

August 5, 2014 - Vol. XVI, No. 8

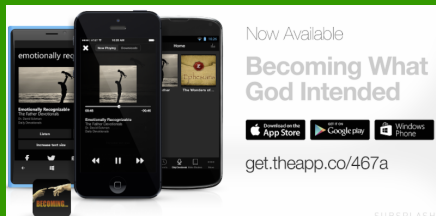
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The Archaeologist's Corner: "Egypt, Israel, and Iraq: Back to the Future"
by Dr. Marilyn Copland

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Dear Tim,

When I was preparing a presentation for our board meeting a few weeks ago, I had a pleasant and exciting surprise. I was creating a slide that described the number of different teams we had, both in the United States and in Southeast Asia. As I was writing the facts for the slide I realized, "Wow, we have a lot of great stuff going on! The Lord has been extravagant in the opportunities and help he has provided!" We have six teams that are currently actively engaged: the Northern California teaching team, the Core Singles Ministry teaching team, the Beijing Universities Mental Health team, the China Spiritual Life teaching team, the Chinese translation teaching team, and the Hong Kong high school curriculum development team. We also have a seventh preparing to launch, a business skills training team.



As I considered the facts for the slide, I was further surprised to discover the large numbers of godly, professionally skilled members involved. For the Northern California teaching team, we have six and the latest

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BWGI Speaking Schedule

Please be praying for God's blessing on the following upcoming events:

August 3, 2014

The Villages Community Chapel
Cribari Auditorium
2500 Villages Parkway, Suite E
San Jose, CA 95135
[408-238-3079](tel:408-238-3079)

Morning Service: 10:00 a.m.
David Eckman

August 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31, 2014

Core Singles Fellowship
For individuals in their
mid-30s to mid-50s.
Church on the Hill
500 Sands Drive
San Jose, CA 95325
6:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
For more details [Click Here](#)
Various Speakers

September 7, 14, 21, & 28, 2014

Core Singles Fellowship
For individuals in their
mid-30s to mid-50s.
Church on the Hill
500 Sands Drive
San Jose, CA 95325
6:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
For more details [Click Here](#)
Various Speakers

It Is Easy To Contribute

Isn't it thrilling to be used by God? I praise Him for you, for our shared vision and for the Spirit who works through us. Consistent prayer and contributions fuel our world-wide mission to reach others for Christ. Thanks to you, the Lord used BWGI in amazing ways in 2013. Please [click this link](#) to help us keep up the momentum in 2014.

Quick Links

addition, teacher and evangelism trainer Jan Villott, also contributes to our BWGI app through "Jan Villott's Corner." For the singles ministry, our NorCal team is augmented by five additional speakers, exemplified by Pastor Tom McEnroe, who has vast experience as a singles pastor and speaker. The Beijing Universities Mental Health team has approximately ten professionally skilled members; these are Christian counselors and psychologists who go to Beijing to train the counselors and mental health teachers of the universities. Both the China spiritual life training team and the Chinese translation team each have about seven such members. Jijian, one of our long-standing translators, also works as a staff trainer at an international school in China. The Hong Kong high school curriculum team has six members; one, Devin Kleffer, a teacher at Monte Vista Christian High School and a graduate of Western Seminary, has been using BWGI material in his classroom and wants to help to introduce that curriculum to Hong Kong and China. The combined total is staggering: over forty highly motivated and spiritually capable volunteers who are taking the teaching material and curriculums produced by Becoming What God Intended Ministries to change the lives of others. On top of that, we have about a dozen more who support our team by editing, for example, this newsletter or do volunteer IT work, like Mark Loos who has been a perfect godsend for this ministry.



We don't want to stop there! Just a few days ago Elgin Quan (one of our NorCal team members) and I interviewed a prospective spiritual life teaching team member who was very interested in what we do in Asia. If you have gifts and abilities that you feel the Lord would have you use in the context of this ministry, please contact us. We have a limited budget, and a limited paid staff, but we are having an influence far beyond our capacities because dozens of volunteers and supporters like yourselves see value in what we do. For your prayers, support, and friendship we thank you!

Your co-laborer in Christ,

[NEW! YouTube Channel](#)

Watch Dr. Eckman's sermons, webinars and other presentations.

[Value-based Family Life Education](#)

curriculum and power point files for Dr. Eckman's Beijing Project trainees to download.

[Immersion Experience](#)

bringing spiritual, emotional, and relational health back to God's people.

[Creekside Church](#): Listen to and watch a sermon and Sunday School series at Creekside Church by David Eckman

[Berkely F.A.T. Sheep](#): Listen to Dr. Eckman teach on "What Christianity is Not"

David Eckman

David Eckman

"Egypt, Israel, and Iraq: Back to the Future"
By Dr. Marilyn Copland



In watching television reports of conflict in the Middle East I find myself saying, "This is nothing new; it has always been this way." The two ancient super-powers, Egypt and Mesopotamia were always a threat. Yet God sovereignly chose this land, Israel, between the two of them for Abraham and his descendants, and there are some lessons for us to learn from that. Abraham's homeland is in what is in the country we call Iraq today. Historians often refer to this area as the "fertile crescent". The fertile area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is where archaeologists find the earliest civilizations. It is also fits the location of the Garden of Eden according to Genesis

2:10-14. The land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers has not only excellent soil for farming but also a means of transport of resources along those rivers to the the Persian Gulf. That area is where writing, mathematics, a calendar, monumental architecture, music and so many other things were invented. This beautiful harp was found in a grave in Ur, Abraham's birthplace. That same area has remained very important, though now more for its oil deposits than agriculture. In the last few years gold deposits have been found in an eastern suburb of Baghdad, and diamond reserves and platinum are also reported to be in the western desert region. (http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/IG27Ak01.html)

For Abraham to leave that fertile area was to leave the most advanced place on earth for a place God would show him was an enormous act of faith. It would also be a test of faith to stay in that promised new home, Israel.



Nor would Abraham be given the fertile land of Egypt called "the gift of the Nile" by Herodotus, an ancient Greek historian. Nile in flood season would deposit rich top soil every year and made possible three harvests per year. The pharaohs extended their authority southward bringing alabaster, ivory, ebony, etc. to the capital. Expanding to the east into Sinai they brought copper from the mines, and exotic products from the east. The deserts to the west and east protected it from armies. Also word of how Egypt dealt with its enemies also would act as a deterrent.

Egypt usually controlled the land of Canaan with "client-kings" ruling fortified cities owing loyalty, taxes, and whatever the pharaoh required of them. Even after the Israelites moved into Canaan and conquered those fortified cities, there were military campaigns by several Egyptian pharaohs against Israel. Solomon avoided a conflict with Egypt by marrying a Pharaoh's daughter. During the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam, however, Pharaoh Shishak, invaded Judah and captured 46 fortified cities (1 Kings 14:25-26).



On the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses there is a large relief carving on a wall showing the tally of enemy combatants killed. The Egyptian official is shown keeping track of the numbers of enemies killed as right hands were cut off of their dead enemies.

And what of the powerful kings in Mesopotamia? For the last millennium B.C. the kings of Assyria and then Babylonia made repeated invasions into Israel and Judah sometimes taking exiles back to be used as workers on building projects there. The Assyrians were known for being extremely cruel to captives, skinning them alive or impaling them on a post. The depiction of cruelty to captives from Israel or Judah comes from the audience hall of Sennacherib, King of Assyria. (2 Kings 18-19 and 2 Chronicles 32)

God promised Abraham a land between these two advanced civilizations with abundant, predictable food supply. My professor of Historical Geography of Israel, James M. Monson, described the many ways the country called Israel today was "the land between". In fact *The Land Between* was the name of his first book. (I highly recommend the resources he has produced including *Regions on the Run* and *Regional Study Maps*, available at www.bibback.com.) The Promised Land was between the desert and the Mediterranean Sea, straddling the land "bridge" between Africa and Asia, *between* but not *in* the two best places to live, between the two most powerful enemies a nation could have. The expressions "between a rock and a hard place" and "between the Devil and the deep blue sea" also describe Israel's location.

Neither of the two super-powers, Egypt and Mesopotamia (Iraq), were content with the wonderful land they had; each wanted to control "the land between". The results of those desires were numerous invasions of Israel establishing that control of that buffer zone. The multiple destruction layers of cities in Israel bear witness to those many invasions and result in the plateau shape of the *tels*. They also keep archaeologists happily employed!

Often people are a bit disappointed when they arrive in Israel and get their first glimpse of the Promised Land. It is not the Garden of Eden, and unlike Saudi Arabia it does not have oil reserves that could be of some consolation for the relative lack of water for irrigation. Living in this land would take trust and hard work.

That would be hard enough, but Israel's position between the powerful ancient super-powers of Egypt and Mesopotamia (known in the Bible as Assyria and Babylonia) meant that powerful armies would cross through this "land between" looting, pillaging, taking livestock and food supplies, killing those who would try to stop them.

So why did God want to give this land to Abraham and his descendants? I believe that is because the only way to get this land, make this land fertile, and keep it safe was to trust God and obey Him. Deuteronomy 11:10-12 describes the land of Israel as unlike Egypt. The Promised Land was the Land "for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year." The key to survive there was stated after the description of the land. "And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and o sere Him with all your heart and all your soul...." (Dt. 11:13)

Much like the ancient Israelites we prefer an easy, safe, predictable life. We would like to be insulated and protected from harm without possible harm from others. And we would not want success based on obedience and love for God. But what if Israel had never occupied the land and told others around them that there was only one God, a good God, a God who loved them and wanted a relationship with them? The world would have been without light.

One verse in Isaiah reveals what people in Isaiah's day and equally in ours is an amazing future for Egypt, Assyria (=Iraq), and Israel.

"In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third party with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance." Isaiah 19:23-25

It is a walk of faith in a loving and gracious God that will result in what now looks impossible: worship of the LORD in the Middle East.

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