

Dear Friends, It's always a challenge to decide about what to write. Do we update you on things we described in our previous newsletters — OR — do we write about upcoming ministry opportunities that are ahead? How about "bit of both"?*

UPDATE

CHAD: Previously we wrote about a U-M graduate student named "Chad" who had sent me a long email about why he was turning away from Christianity and from attending church. To my delight (and I must admit, my great surprise!), a few Sunday's after Chad wrote me that scornful email, he texted me saying he was coming to church again and bringing his new girlfriend.

They came moments after the morning service began, so I didn't have the chance to greet them. The sermon that morning was from Colossians 2:6-23. It almost seemed like our pastor had Chad specifically in mind as he spoke. He read and explained with examples verse 8, "*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*" Our pastor addressed some of the very same ideas Chad had said why he was rejecting Christianity.

I sat there listening to the sermon gripped with the thought, "How was Chad hearing this?" Was he convicted or challenged? Maybe he was disapproving and upset—even offended? Would they bolt for the door after the service and never look back? They were sitting a few rows behind me off to one side, so I couldn't look at them to observe their faces possibly to discern their reactions.

After the service I had to work an information table in the lobby area, so I couldn't seek them out. I asked the grad student guy who had initially met Chad with me if he talked with them after the service. He said he watched them immediately get up and leave, heading straight for the doors. We both wondered, would they return another Sunday?

Again, to my surprise, they came the next Sunday—actually, most Sundays since then! I've talked with them casually at church, saying "hi" and seeing how they are doing in school or how their holidays were with families and friends. The Christian grad guy tried a couple times to get together with Chad to talk over coffee, but each time Chad declined or later cancelled their meeting, saying he was too busy then. Somethings definitely up with Chad?

Please keep praying for Chad and also his girlfriend. And, pray that Chad and I can have an open, honest conversation before the end of this semester (late April). It will be interesting!

Lee: We've continued to meet "Lee" every week to talk about who Jesus is and what he came to accomplish. We often will read and discuss a chapter from the Gospel of John. Lee has learned the basics of the gospel—but still hasn't responded. He keeps saying he needs more information if he's to believe that all the Bible says about Jesus is true. **Please pray for "Lee".**

On Saturday, February 9, we're hosting a gathering at our home to watch the DVD video "Jesus". All the dialogue in the video is taken directly from the Gospel of Luke. We're having Lee and, hopefully, some of his friends. Lots of food, for sure. Should be fun and prayerfully will advance their understandings about Jesus. **Pray** the Jesus video helps them to be even more desirous to know God. Will they soon come to faith in Jesus? Would be very exciting!

UPCOMING

Cuba Mission Trip 2019: Last March 2018, nine of us with GradCru and Michigan Cru (undergrad) traveled to Havana, Cuba with "Filter of Hope" on a mission trip to install home water purification filters and share the gospel. Our team had the privilege of installing filters in 53 homes and sharing the gospel with 86 adults. To God's glory, 39 prayed to receive Christ with us!

Now in 2019, during the first week of March, we're returning to Cuba, again with Filter of Hope. This time our team will be 19 persons: with me will be 4 U-M graduate students (below) and 2 friends from church. And, with 2 other Cru Staff, 10 U-M undergraduate students.

Our goals are the same as our first trip, but to do even more as our team will be twice in size: • To install home water filters to provide clean water for families in Cuba. • To share with those families the gospel message of Jesus Christ. • To expand our vision for furthering God's kingdom and develop our abilities to communicate the gospel more effectively after we return home.



Wenshley, a 3rd-year Dental School grad student, is originally from Haiti.



Ruth, a 2nd-year School of Information grad student, is from East Asia.



Edith, a Molecular and Integrative Physiology grad student, grew up in Mexico.



Ritz, a 3rd-year Nuclear Engineering grad student, is originally from India. He went last year with me to Cuba. You may remember me writing what Ritz said after returning, "*I would not trade the days I spent in Cuba with any other days of my life. It helped me to convey the gospel and my testimony more efficiently. It helped me to be more bold with my fellow graduate students at U-M to share gospel.*"

It will be wonderful if more from our team of 19 say the same as Ritz after they return home. If you'd like to read my personal webpage about this year's trip, type the following in your computer browser's text box: app.managedmissions.com/MyTrip/chuckroeper1. (There's a one "r" at the end.)

My hope is this trip will be a life-transforming mission trip for these graduate students; and that they will trust the Lord to share the gospel boldly and see God use them to change lives eternally.

Please pray for Chad, Lee, and our upcoming Cuba Mission Trip. Pray that God would work in Chad and Lee's minds and hearts — and also do the same to prepare those we meet in Cuba to respond to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Serving Christ,