

40 Years in Ministry!



This month marks a special milestone for us. In **September 1971** we officially joined Canadian Youth for Christ as their first missionaries (earlier Canadian missionaries with YFC were sent out under the USA office). After 7 months of deputation in western Canada the Lord gave us a support team and in April 1972 we headed off to Nairobi Kenya for our first assignment.

In this **anniversary newsletter** we want to take a look back at these past four decades with much thanksgiving for what the Lord privileged us to do in partnership with our support team and a host of co-workers on three continents.



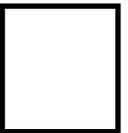
During our **first 5 years in Kenya** we focussed on developing a **full range of evangelistic and discipleship ministries**. These included large rallies in two downtown venues plus one in another town, high school clubs in Nairobi, a staff music team for ongoing ministry and annual evangelistic touring teams using music and testimonies, Youth Leaders Training Schools to help churches, weekend seminars at boarding schools, a followup correspondence program, and radio programs aired

by the Voice of Kenya national service and the Far East Broadcasting Association shortwave broadcast from the Seychelles.

Mary was our office secretary and especially looked after the followup ministry plus training Hannah Mwangi as secretary after our two children were born here.



Early in our time here, God gave us a wonderful assistant who was working in a local church office. **Gilbert Emonyi** was a young man with a passion for evangelism, a gift for music, and a faithful spirit in following God. He served Kenya YFC for many years and later went into the pastorate and other ministry. Gilbert was a delight to work with and a great encouragement to us. Our music teams recorded a number of cassette albums over the years plus an early 45 rpm record with one of Gilbert's own compositions. You can listen to it by *clicking the box on the right*: (Gilbert is playing the guitar, Lamech—one of our main singers on many teams—is the soloist and bass player, and Brian is on the electronic accordion and vocal backup).



music clip

In our **last 5 years in Kenya**, Brian's ministry expanded to the countries in tropical Africa in his new role as **Area Director**. Besides on-site assistance to national programs, this included recruiting, training and travelling with multi-national African music teams which ministered in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia (numerous times as we pioneered the development of YFC here), Nigeria, France, the USA and Canada.

The 1979 "Liberation" team included Don Osman, a Sierra Leonean with outstanding leadership ability in addition to his musical skills. Some years later, Don became the third Africa Area Director and developed this continental region into one of the strongest ministry areas in the YFCI world family.

Another ministry Brian initiated in these years was **STEP Magazine**, a newsstand publication for young people across Africa. **Tim Stafford** and **Bob Butt** led this development which impacted untold thousands of kids in many countries. A West African edition is still going strong!

We praise God for the many African young people who came to Christ and grew in the Lord through Kenya YFC and the ministries of YFCI/Africa. Our support team enabled us to leave behind a wonderful ministry legacy as well as a two-apartment property in Nairobi which continues to be well used by YFC.





In 1982 we moved to the island republic of Singapore which — like Nairobi — was 100 miles from the equator. YFCI had just moved its **international office** from Switzerland to Singapore and Brian was asked to be the new **Director of Administration**.

The next 10 years was filled with lots of office work and international travel for meetings of our global staff and board. It was exciting and rewarding for Brian to make a contribution to the worldwide development of YFC ministries in 120 countries.

His responsibilities included preparations and coordination of three major conferences in Hong Kong, Manila and Nairobi for the YFC international family. These were sometimes stressful and exhausting but also thrilling to worship and fellowship together

with staff from scores of countries, languages and cultures.



We were glad that our children could grow up here in a safe environment and good schools. **Mary** connected with American ladies by becoming chair of the Christianity Group in the **American Women's Association**. This greatly expanded her network and led to life-long friendships which enriched her life. Mary's personal ministry began to flourish too as the Lord opened up doors for her to befriend **international ladies**,

especially Japanese, and begin what developed into a long-term ministry of **teaching English** and holding **Bible studies** for non-Christian gals. She initiated and led the development of three **Coffee Morning outreach** programs reaching Japanese ladies living here and bringing them in touch with Christian women for friendship evangelism. Many precious gals came to the Lord over these years and the Coffee Morning outreach continues to be an effective ministry even today. For example, in this 2005 photo of a few of the ladies involved, the fourth from the left and the fourth from the right both became believers through this ministry.



On one occasion, Mary met a Japanese lady in the elevator of our apartment block. She struck up a conversation which led to friendship and eventually salvation for Miho. On another occasion she met a Japanese woman on the train, introduced herself in Japanese (which broke the ice), befriended her and a few months later Satoko became a believer. Mary has many such stories of God's working through her life to bring Japanese ladies to the Lord.

After our time in Osaka (next page), we returned to Singapore in 1996 where Brian once again served as **Director of Administration & Finance**, this time for the **World Evangelical Fellowship** which had its international office here. During the next five years, Brian had the privilege of assisting national evangelical fellowships in some 120 countries. At the same time, God greatly expanded his **Bible teaching ministry** which had begun during his years in Singapore with YFCI. He served as an interim pulpit pastor in a couple of churches for 3½ years, taught approximately 500 Bible seminar sessions and preached a few hundred times in many churches throughout our years in Singapore.

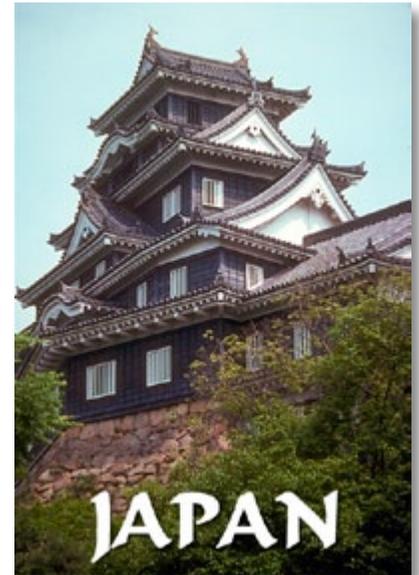
The beginning of this aspect of Brian's ministry (in 1983) brought us in touch with a wonderful group of mostly younger people at our home church, Wesley Methodist. Brian led an early morning Bible study for these business people once a week. They became like family to us, and God created a strong **Singaporean support team** for us made up of friends from this group and a few others who connected with us through Brian's teaching. Without these special people it is hard to imagine how we could have managed an ongoing ministry over these past 20 years.



In between our two periods of ministry in Singapore, the Lord led us to **Osaka Japan** for four years, 1991–1995. Our original purpose was to try and develop a Youth for Christ ministry here, so we went under the auspices of YFCI. However, at the same



time the **Osaka International Church (OIC)** was looking for a pastor to succeed their founding pastor after 17 years. Rev. Jack Marshall had first gone to Japan in the 1950s as a YFC missionary so that connection brought us together initially. The Lord clearly, and graciously, led us to this ministry opportunity at OIC where we met many wonderful people. It was a truly international group as many Sundays we had people from 20–25 countries in the 100+ congregation.



During these four years it became clear that we would not be able to develop a YFC ministry in this very complex culture where less than 1% are Christians. But the Lord affirmed His leading us there as we were able to provide a good pastoral transition from the Marshalls to the next pastor.

And **Mary** thrived in this situation where she could meet and **befriend so many Japanese ladies** for whom she had a special love. Her outreach took the form of small groups of gals who wanted to learn English. She taught them, befriended them, and in many cases was able to conduct Bible studies with them.



Here (photo right) is one of those groups of non-Christian ladies which met at our home. A



good number of Japanese friends became believers as the Lord touched their hearts through Mary.

Our first residence in Japan was a house-sitting situation in the beautiful town of Ikoma. We soon met a rather shy teenage boy who lived next door. **Jun Yamane** and our son Rein became friends and Mary and I became “Mom” and “Dad”. While we lived in Japan we had opportunities to witness to Jun, take him to church on occasion, and even bring him back to Calgary with us on a brief visit home. But he did not take the step of faith to become a believer.

After returning to Canada in 2001, we remained in touch with Jun by email. And a time came when his spiritual hunger and personal situation led him to ask us for help. Many emails crossed the ocean between our computers as we did long-distance Bible studies with Jun and eventually he made a **commitment to Christ** with the help of a pastor friend in Ikoma, and was baptized. He soon moved to Tokyo where he met and married a wonderful Christian girl, Yoshiko. When we met them on their honeymoon in Hawaii a few years ago, we were excited to see the change that was evident even in Jun’s face! And God encouraged us that our time in Japan would have been absolutely worthwhile just for Jun’s sake.



Jun and Yoshiko Yamane



We returned to Canada in 2001 and began working with **UB David & I'll B Jonathan** in October 2002. This Bible-based correspondence discipleship program already had a long history of effective ministry with thousands of young people, primarily by paper lessons through the mail. Brian's involvement included upgrading lesson graphics, producing p.r. materials, assisting the Calgary office, and developing new media tools like lesson series on interactive CDs.

Over the next few years his focus shifted increasingly to the **UBDavid.org** website, upgrading the design and expanding the number of online lessons. Today there are **over 600 lessons available online** including

more than 130 in Spanish. Since 2005, visitors to our website have increased from 19,000 to a **quarter million** this year from more than 50 countries, and our online students are doing well over 20,000 lessons per month. Due to the ever-changing web standards Brian still has a great deal of work to do on this large (around 1300 pages) website to keep it up to date and increase the number of visitors and online students.

It is a great encouragement to receive **constant testimonials** from our students telling us of how God is using these lessons in their lives. A mother wrote us just this past week to say, *"Although I am far from being a teenager I enjoyed this teaching [a course for teens]. It taught me many things I wish I had known growing up. I have my son doing the lessons. He is 15 and has many questions but this is so well done I am hoping that his questions will be answered."*

In recent years Brian has also provided graphics and media assistance to a dozen **other organizations/ministries**, including producing well **over 30 websites** since the first one in 1996, six of which he continues to manage. This extension of ministry has been a special privilege.



Mary has also plugged into her ministry niche by **teaching English part-time to new immigrants** at a local ESL centre. Her students have come from **34 different languages** and though she is restricted in what she share in class she has made some personal connections with some. One of her students, a very young woman in a difficult situation, said that Mary was the only person she could trust. She returned to her home country of Albania for a visit and Mary ended up talking with her via the Internet (Skype) numerous times to counsel and encourage her. Another student from Colombia, whom Mary has befriended, wrote her an email this week to say, *"What I know about English is thanks to your excellent work... In Colombia there is a saying that angels without wings are called friends and you are an angel/friend because you love what you do and care about people."*

We do miss living overseas but are so glad to have been able to live close to our families during this past decade, especially getting to know our precious grandchildren (yes, we had this photo in our last newsletter too, but hey! they're great kids). Although we both turned 65 this year, we are definitely not retired — there is so much yet to be done.

We hope that this "historical" newsletter has been encouraging to you, our ministry team members, as none of this could have been done without you. **Thank you so very much!**

We really value your much-needed ongoing partnership in prayer and giving. And may God Himself bless you in every way and continue to make you a blessing!

