

Rob and Rebecca Gaebler - serving at Gospel for Asia

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM



But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ~Matthew 6:33

What We're Reading

For many years, Brother K.P. has encouraged the staff to learn about the early church fathers and to read their works, to gain a better understanding of the early church and the important role it plays in our lives today as believers. In the past year the two of us have been making a more concerted effort to follow his recommendations, especially Rob, through it has been a challenge to carve out time for reading and study. Last year we were able to read more books, especially about theology and church history, than during the previous year. At the beginning of this year, we made some further adjustments to our schedules and habits to increase the amount of time we have for reading. One of those habits is to spend more time reading together after dinner, which has been valuable for both of us. Even though it's still challenging, making this time for reading and study is one of our priorities in 2019.

One of the books we recently read together was "On the Incarnation" by Athanasius, one of the church fathers from the 4th century. In this short yet powerful book, Athanasius explores why it was so important for Jesus Christ to come in the flesh. He also answers many arguments against the incarnation from both Jewish and Gentile perspectives.

*[By becoming Man]
He banished death
from us and made us
anew...
~ Athanasius, "On the
Incarnation"*

Christmas Giving ~ 10 Years Later

By God's grace, 2018 was a record year for us in the number of Christmas catalogs we mailed to people! It took quite a bit of work from several different departments, including IT. But of course, just giving out catalogs isn't our main purpose. Our desire and prayer is that many gifts will be given, so that many families in Asia will be blessed through the generosity of believers here in America.

It's often hard for us to understand just how much of an

impact these gifts make. But then we hear reports of men like Pratul, who received a cow at a Christmas gift distribution event 10 years ago. Pratul lived as the majority of people in Asia live: trapped by poverty, never able to break out of that vicious cycle. He worked hard all day as a farmer, but even so he didn't always have enough to provide for his family and certainly didn't have any surplus to invest in his farm.

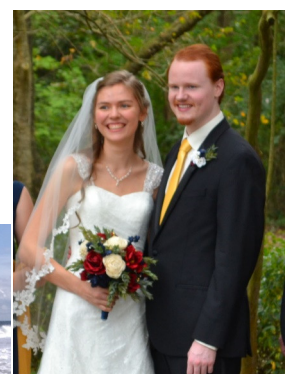
That all changed the day he received a cow at a Christmas gift distribution event. In just a few months, the cow gave birth, supplying a calf and milk for the family. The calf provided extra help for Pratul to plow his fields, and he used the cow dung as fertilizer. As the years went by, the cow gave birth to three more calves! Through the additional sources of income from his herd, Pratul's family had plenty of food to eat and his five children were able to finish school.

And the best part of this report is that Pratul and his family received not only physical blessings from the gift, but spiritual life as well. He is eager to share with others how much God has blessed him and taken care of his family, and many others have come to know of God's love because of this family's testimony.

Check out the full story at tinyurl.com/XmasCow

Ehren and Elyssa Are Married!

At the beginning of November last year, we took a few vacation days and traveled to North Carolina to attend the wedding of Rob's brother Ehren. While we were there we also did a bit of sight-seeing, including driving over to the Atlantic Ocean (which was Rob's first time to see it).



Above: E&E's big day



Left: R&R at the Atlantic Ocean

IT Teamwork

Last year at GFA we had a strong focus on development projects, most of which involved the “Enterprise Applications” half of IT: Jonathan, LaMott, Rob, and Rebecca. Working on these projects highlighted the synergy we have as a team in this season. We have different areas of expertise, so we complement each other well and rely on each other through all the steps of a project. Rob thinks we have the best synergy he’s seen during the 8 years he has served in IT.

As an example of this team synergy, right now we are working hard to wrap up the third large project Rob coordinated during 2018, which we’re calling the “Account Notify Project.” The end goal is to communicate with our donors and sponsors by email about their recurring giving (instead of just mailing them a letter), providing them with a way to update their card information by logging into their online account. As the genius mastermind behind the project, Jonathan wrote up all the detailed design specifications for the project, including amazing flowcharts. He has a sharp mind that keeps the vision for the project clearly in view while at the same time tackling complicated technical issues and making wise decisions. LaMott is the genius software developer who never ceases to amaze us with his breadth of knowledge, great solutions, and lightning-quick programming. He wrote the code for the project. Rebecca is very meticulous and careful, so she handled the majority of the testing, making sure that every little detail



Grace, Faith, Rob, Rebecca, LaMott, Di, Jonathan, Nathan

works according to the specifications in the design. All this requires a lot of coordination and collaboration. As the project coordinator, Rob has kept the many tasks on the project moving along and has kept communication flowing between all team members. He enjoys bringing everyone together to get the job done, and seeing how everyone’s strengths complement each other so well, in a positive environment of cooperation rather than competition.

In addition to the “computer work” we do as a team in IT, we have a spiritual component to working together that is unique to GFA. Each Monday we meet as a department, asking the Lord to help us with specific projects and issues we’re facing in the week ahead. Then on Friday we meet again to share praises, which many times are answers to the prayers we had at the beginning of the week. Throughout the week we often have informal gatherings to pray for issues as they arise. We’ve also read and discussed books together such as “Life Together,” by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, about living in a loving Christian community.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Travels

Thanksgiving with Rebecca’s family in central Texas

*Right: Boomerang lessons with Rob
Far right: Sister time, processing a
pomegranate*



Christmas with Rob’s family in eastern Iowa

*Far left: Repairing the electric organ
Left: Rousing games of Dutch Blitz*



Paper roses for Rebecca’s 30th birthday!

*Lovingly made by Rob, with creative
direction from his brother Evan.
3 white roses for 3 decades of life,
3 pink roses for 3 anniversaries,
4 red roses for 4 Christmases.*

By His grace,
Rob and Rebecca

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Praises

- **Praise** God for lives transformed by Christmas gifts and the love of Christ, like Pratul and his family!
- **Praise** the Lord for His protection over us in our various travels, and especially for giving us the first year with no car problems driving to Iowa and back!
- **Praise** God for quality time spent with family and friends over Thanksgiving and Christmas!
- **Praise** the Lord for so many valuable resources as we read and study about how He is building His church from the early days until now!

Prayers

- **Pray** that GFA's missionaries in Asia would be faithful ministers of the Gospel, even in the face of many difficult challenges.
- **Pray** for us in IT as we have several large projects coming this year; we need His wisdom for effective prioritization and His empowerment to complete them.
- **Pray** that we may press on to walk more closely with Christ and know His will for us in light of what we are learning in church history, theology, and the writings of godly men and women who have gone before us.
- **Pray** that we will be faithful to walk in all that the Lord has for us in this new year.



Thank you for your prayers

“...be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Eph. 6:18)