

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Dec. 2019

What comes to mind when you think about Christmas; a Christmas tree, decorations, a nativity scene, presents, family gatherings, snow? The word **Christmas** holds the clue to the only reason for the season... **CHRIST!** Who is this Christ that has impacted the entire human race throughout history? The words to the right give us just a glimpse of who Christ is, but He is so much MORE! Here's the challenge... In 2020, make a list of words describing Christ using all the letters of the alphabet based on what you learn through your daily devotions, your personal experiences in your walk with Christ, what you glean from church and Bible studies, etc. Watch your list grow, read it over and over and KNOW why Christ made an impact on all of humanity. Let Christ make a difference in your life!

It was exciting to attend the 1st youth congress in Islândia, Peru recently and see young people from the church in Islândia, Santa Luzia and students from other villages of the area who live in a dormitory in Islândia, participate and learn from God's Word.



C	CHRIST, CREATOR, COMPASSIONATE, CARING
H	HOLY, HEALER, HELPER
R	RIGHTEOUS, REDEEMER
I	INCORRUPTIBLE, INFALLIBLE
S	SON OF GOD, SAVIOR
T	TRUE, TEACHER, TRUSTWORTHY
M	MASTER, MIRACULOUS
A	ALMIGHTY, AWESOME
S	SHEPHERD



I also had the privilege of attending the first night of the women's congress in Benjamin Constant. What a tremendous blessing to see God at work in the midst of an area covered in darkness. Our God reigns!

I have been really looking forward to sharing about the retreat in Tallinn, Estonia with YOU since my participation was a direct result of your prayers and loving donations! 😊 After 20 flight hours plus time spent in airports from Bogota, Columbia to Orlando, FL where we slept overnight at a friend's house, then on to New York and Moscow, Jessica and I finally reached Estonia to attend the retreat from **Thrive Ministries** together with 68 global women, representing 32 countries, with a sum total of close to 600 years of service on the field. There were also 33 staff members and volunteers to teach us God's Word, "love on us" and pamper us throughout the week!



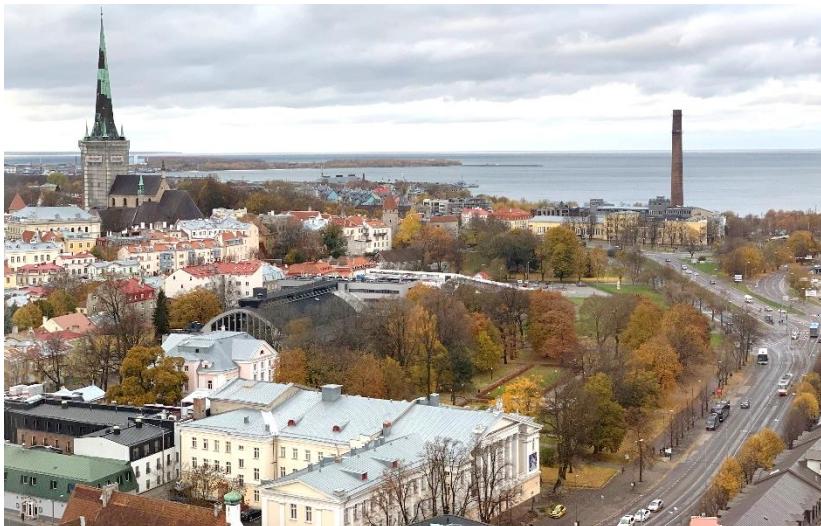
Each morning session began with a devotional from the book **31 Days of Praise** by Ruth Meyers followed by an amazing and



extremely worshipful praise time and a seminar based on the theme "**Anchored in HOPE**". After a short

coffee/tea/cookie break, our small group leaders helped lead insightful discussions about the seminar. Then it was time for lunch. During a few of the meals, we sought out a table with a **Connection Topic** of our choice to discuss with other global women. Some of the topics included: **Raising Third Culture Kids, Grieving Long Distance, Marriage: Thriving Not just Surviving, Singleness, Team Dynamics/Challenges**, etc. I also had the privilege of attending a seminar on **Unavoidable Losses in Cross Cultural Work**.

Afternoons were set aside for **Free Time / Self Care** options which included: getting some much needed rest, signing up for massages, counseling sessions, pedicure, prayer, spiritual direction, facials, physical therapy and art, walks through the mall that was attached to the hotel and also time to tour the town of Tallinn, Estonia; Old Town, Tallinn Bay, etc.



My discussion group minus one gal

Tallinn is an incredibly beautiful, extremely clean city. Quaint, old, colorful, brick buildings and shops, many filled with beautifully handcrafted items and arts, line narrow, winding cobble stone streets in the Old Town sector of the city. They are in the process of renovating other sections of the city into new, modern buildings and malls. The people were delightful, polite and educated. Take a tour with us 😊...



So many delightful things to see!



*We saw so
many
beautiful
doorways.*





*Evening sessions began once again with a wonderful time of praise, the rest of the evenings were set aside for **FUN** and **GAMES**. The first evening we played a game that was both hilarious and based on something we could really relate to as global women. They had us all sit in a circle. The leader told us to move anywhere from 1-3 chairs to the right if we could answer YES to any of her questions. All the questions were based on experiences faced by those who live in another country, culture, speak a foreign language, etc. Here are a few examples: Move two chairs to the right if you speak more than 2 languages. Move one chair to the right if you ever broke the law in your country... if you have issues with airports, etc. Some of the women whose answer was “NO” stayed in their chairs which meant we often ended up sitting in each other’s laps, sometimes 4-5 deep! The second night we split into three groups to play the game of our choice and the last evening they gave us a chance to tell our “stories” ... bloopers we experienced during our years of service. It was another delightful and relaxing evening filled with laughter as we shared our experiences.*

*I loved the fact that from the start they put us together with 4-5 other women and two leaders so we would not feel alone and would have the chance to really get to know each other and minister to each other. With one key seminar each morning, we had time to digest the material and let God speak to us throughout the day. We had time to truly rest, learn, discover our surroundings and have lots of **FUN** together. We were with other women who could truly understand and identify with what it’s like to live and minister in another country and culture. What an eye opener it was for us to get a glimpse of what life and ministry is like for other global women around the world!*

Here are just a few of the precious pearls I gleaned during the week:

HOPE is: “Waiting in patience with a settled assurance that God is at work; so that I am convinced that the “not yet” is already done.” My hope needs to be in God my solid rock.

Sovereignty is knowing and believing that God is on His throne. He is in control.”

Providence is the hand of God in the glove of human events.”

God CARES! He gets involved in what we feel and the events of our lives.

“You can only have HOPE in something you already have the promise for, the assurance of... you KNOW the end result. Our HOPE rests on the things that are SURE and TRUE, which are His PROMISES!”

We learned about **PERSPECTIVE** and the fact that **we need community**. **We need to practice PRAYER** and **FASTING** and know that God has a **PLAN** for our eternity.

Have you ever heard the word **PERIPETY**? It’s when “God steps into the ordinary and changes events into a new direction (a pivotal moment in time). It’s what makes our stories a story worth telling. Our story will then make a difference for eternity. (Story of Esther) We are purposed for eternity! **MY STORY MATTERS!!** “We offer ourselves to the Lord “**Here I am. Send me.**” (Isaiah 6:8) But we only want to offer God that which is perfect. Our stories are broken. God wants to use broken vessels. God will not let our story end until glory ends the last word. Start small, He will make our story big!”

So, how did our guys fare throughout the week? Because of your faithful prayers, they did GREAT! Lucas and Chloe, our “**grand treasures**” (the phrase our main speaker, Peg Forrest so lovingly uses) were loved on, cared for and blessed with all kinds of special activities. They couldn’t wait to go to Grandpa’s house each evening for a little “surprise”. They received simple unique little snacks and on alternate days they were rewarded with fun little activities like bubbles, bowling, spinning tops and little spiked balls that light up. Jessica left scavenger hunts and activities for them to do each day like hop on one foot and run around the table, etc. The guys took them on creative little outings on their time off too. We all want to give you our special thanks for allowing God to use you to so richly bless us throughout the week!

The beginning of November, we enjoyed an early Thanksgiving celebration with other American missionaries in this region. We are so thankful for how God is using each one of them for His Kingdom. (See the little turkey mom and daughter made? We each wrote our “thanks” to the Lord on it’s feathers and stuck them in!) We are reminded of so many other things to be thankful for. God’s blessings are amazing and abundant. We strive to remember that and give Him thanks all year long!



We praise and thank
God for YOU! 😊

A Very Merry Christmas to you and a most blessed New Year!

Wilson and Lori

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