

Fall  
2013

# The Believer's Byline

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Missions  
Monitor

## Sheets for the King

By David Scott Fields II

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” ~ Matthew 28:19-20.**

This short passage is familiar to virtually every Christian across the planet. We call it *The Great Commission*. Originating from the precious lips of our Savior, these words have sent countless numbers of believers into unknown and often dangerous regions of the world to spread the good news that Christ died to save sinners. These missionaries have flung the gates of heaven wide open, and through the power of Christ brought untold millions, perhaps even billions to eternal life. I am sure you know some of their names – Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Lottie Moon, David Livingstone, etc. Men and women like these have been willing to sacrifice comfort, family, and sometimes even their own lives in order to share God’s unending love. It is easy enough to sit safely at home and praise these heroes of the faith, but for some that is hardly enough. With each new generation, a select few burn with a passion to follow in the footsteps of these spiritual giants and take Christ’s message to foreign lands. I would like to introduce you to one such couple – my dear friends, Jason and Sarah Sheets.

At first glance, Jason and Sarah might seem like your typical married couple. Becoming friends as counselors at Canyonview Camp in Oregon and falling in love during college, they were married shortly thereafter. Now, a little over eight years later, their family includes Nathan (6), Evelyn (4), and a baby boy due in December. However, there was something different about this couple from the very start. Recalls Sarah, “I told Jason, I’m going to be a missionary, and he said, ‘I’m good with that.’” Indeed, Sarah’s heart for missions extends far back into her childhood. She told her mother she wanted to be a missionary at the tender age of seven. Sarah was forewarned not to choose Africa as her mission field, to which Sarah replied, “Don’t put God in a box.” Regardless of the destination, Sarah’s desire was simply to reach people with the hope of Christ that lives inside her every day.

For Jason, the road to a missions heart was a bit different than Sarah’s.

Says Jason, “I’ve never been an American Dream kind of person.” While many have dreamed of wealth and success in business, Jason’s heart has always been stirred by something far more eternal. Though becoming a career missionary wasn’t necessarily on his “to-do” list, Christ was instilling in him a love for other cultures through trips to regions such as China, Western Europe, Nicaragua, and various parts of the United States. At 6 foot 5 inches, Jason was hardly inconspicuous in many of these places, but that didn’t matter. God had ignited a love for these cultures within his heart, and he was sure he could be perfectly content living among them.

Christ united this couple on April 30, 2005, but that was only the beginning of the journey and the mission field still lay far off. As Sarah put it, “We had some growing up to do.” And over the next eight years they grew in Christ, grew as a couple, and grew as a family; then finally the time was right! In 2012, the Sheets were accepted as missionary candidates with *The Evangelical Alliance Mission* (TEAM). Originally founded over 120 years ago, TEAM currently has over 550 missionary units on 5 continents, in over 35 countries. The Sheets in particular will be serving in Arequipa, Peru, and in the nearby village of Ciudad de Dios, working specifically in the church planting process. When asked why they had chosen Peru, Sarah replied with a laugh, “Because TEAM needed us there!” There was, of course, more to it than that. The Sheets as a couple and as a family have always had a heart for Latin American cultures; they have even served in a Latin American church in their home city of Salem, Oregon. It wasn’t that much of a stretch to see themselves serving in an actual Latin American country, and so when God called them to Peru, they were faithful to that call.

The Sheets plan to depart, kids and all, for Peru in early 2014, but in the few months remaining until then there is still much to accomplish. One of the greatest obstacles any missionary faces is raising support to finance their ministry. Missionaries rely on the faithful giving of those of us at home. Sarah was once asked to put the idea of supporting them in easy to understand terms. To which she said



simply, “If each of our Ministry Partners [their Facebook group] gave \$10 a month (about the price of two cups of coffee at Starbucks) we’d have more than enough.” With a little less than six months left to their planned departure, the Sheets are still trusting Christ for his provision, and they are immensely grateful for all those who have come alongside them in prayer and financial support.

As Sarah put it, another aspect of preparing to depart is saying their “good goodbyes.” Few realize this, but making the commitment to become a full-time missionary in a foreign country can mean being apart from your extended family and friends for several years at a time. TEAM encourages its missionaries not to return home during their first term (about three years). This alone might discourage many perspective missionaries, but as Jason related, “Seeing you stay for a long time shows the locals that you really want to be there. It shows them that you are home.” Thus, saying “good goodbyes” in the States will be incredibly important, because the Sheets have no intention of turning back.

Some might say that the Sheets are crazy to take this all on, but as Sarah notes with a chuckle, “Most missionaries are a little bit crazy; you have to be crazy for the Lord.” I am not quite so sure I would call these two dear friends crazy, but I do know this – their passion for the Lord is undeniable and inspiring. In March of this year they had the

opportunity to visit their future mission field, and when asked how their trip was they replied simply, “We liked it, and we still want to go back.” And so, in less than half a year, I will be having to say my “good goodbyes” to two dear friends that I have known for over a decade now. It will be hard, but I know they go in the power of Christ, and I want to support them in every way I can.

At the close of our interview, I asked Jason and Sarah how all of us could support them. Financial support was, of course, huge. Donations can be made at [www.team.org](http://www.team.org) in one time or recurring gifts. The Sheets also receive royalty donations from *Rudyard Kipling’s The Jungle Book – Enhanced Classroom Edition* published by Thrive Christian Press. However, Jason shared a need that far out shadows any financial shortcoming. He said, “Pray for Peruvian people. Pray for those that are lost. Give because you trust God is working.” That’s really what it’s all about, isn’t it – the work of Christ? Missionaries both long term and short term get to be part of the work of Christ for a season, but it will always be HIS work and HIS glory as HE brings the Lost into HIS kingdom. And for my dear friends – Sheets for the King – “The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace” (Number 6:24-26).

Support Jason and Sarah Sheets



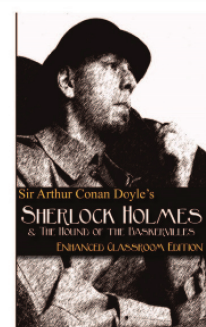
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# The Believer's Byline – Fall 2013



## Servants of the Crown

By David Scott Fields II

Comfort zones – we all have them; those areas of our lives where we feel safe and secure. However, in my now 25 years as a servant of Jesus Christ, I have come to realize that God laughs in the face of comfort zones. In fact, it was Christ Himself who said, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it” (Luke 9:23-24, KJV). As hard as it is for Christians to accept sometimes, we are not called to a life of ease. Instead, we are called upon to struggle against this world, sacrificing comfort and even our own lives if necessary to share the truth about what Christ has done for sinners. Often times, Christ has to yank us out of our comfort zones suddenly and unexpectedly. We rarely volunteer to give them up. However, for the members of *Reign Ministries’* summer missions program *Royal Servants* that is precisely what takes place each year.

I am privileged to personally know three of those who answered the call to serve Christ through *Royal Servants* this past summer – Grace Christian School’s own Ryan Binder (10th grade) and Jake Reesman (9th grade), and Brian Wissehr the youth and young adult pastor of Cornerstone Church here in Anchorage. This month I sat down with these three men of Christ to find out more about this amazing experience.

Ryan got me started with some background information on *Royal Servants*. As a division of *Reign Ministries*, *Royal Servants* sends teams of junior high, high school, and college-aged students all over the globe each summer. The particular trip that Jake, Ryan, and Brian participated in was called *EuroQuest* and took them to the European nations of Holland, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Austria, Switzerland, France, and England. The purpose of *Royal Servants* is to develop disciples for Christ that will not only serve Him on the foreign mission

field, but also take the skills they have learned back home and share Christ there with their friends, family, and classmates.

The whole two-month long mission trip began with a period of intense training. A total of ten Alaskans, including Jake, Ryan, and Brian traveled to Pardeeville, Wisconsin to join with fellow *Royal Servants* missionaries in a rigorous 10-day preparation process. As Ryan described it, “The whole time it was go, go, go! We never knew what was going on!” In fact, this whole keeping the team in the dark philosophy was part of the process of teaching them to trust fully in Christ. The team was expected not to ask future questions (anything that might give them insights into the day’s events), and instead just trust that Christ would accomplish what He had intended. Even Brian, who as a member of the senior leadership had some insight into what was going on, often asked to be kept in the dark as well. As Brian put it in retrospect, “Not being in control was very beneficial.”

As this trio described it, the training program was run in a pseudo-military fashion. Trainees could often expect to be woken up at insane hours and sent off to do any number of unexpected tasks. And, of course, the spiritual training itself was not for the faint of heart. In the words of Brian, “The biblical and evangelical training was solid and intense.” The purpose of *Royal Servants* is to build leaders for Christ, not simply to send kids on a trip overseas. Jake learned the overwhelming nature of what he had taken on right away. As he recalled, “I had never felt more homesick in my life, and I realized I needed God to make it through this.” Ryan also recalls that the greatest challenge for him was the spiritual component, and truly taking hold of the calling God had on his life at that time. Each team member was also expected to participate in a specific skill group to be used on the mission field. Jake’s skill group was dance, and Ryan chose drama. (Having personally seen Ryan in Grace’s rendition of *You’re a Good*

*Man, Charlie Brown*, I am certain the performances were amazing!) No doubt the training itself must have felt like a lifetime, but that was only the beginning of the journey. The next stop – London!

Getting 40 plus teenage missionaries and staff from one continent to the next is probably not something most people would feel equipped to do, but it is a regular part of the routine for *Royal Servants*. With training complete, it was time to hop across the pond for a three-day orientation process in London. Though the team would come back to London to do more focused ministry later in the trip, this initial period was primarily to help them get over their jet lag and to further prepare for the mission field. Once this period was over the team headed into France and Holland, and then began their actual mission work in Denmark.

Jake described their work saying, “We would perform in public areas with a portable speaker – often in places where there was a fountain. Then afterward we would talk to people. Usually we would use a survey to start conversations with people. The surveys would have questions like, ‘Do you believe in God?’ and ‘Do you think you’ll go to heaven when you die?’” Ryan also explained that one of the main things they did was just going out and loving on people, whether that was volunteering someplace or just listening to someone on the street. The team was out to show that Christianity is not judgmental. True Christianity is out to share the love Christ has for sinners. According to the *Reign Ministries* website, “Europe is one of the least evangelized continents in the world: only about 2% attend a Christian church.” And as Brian explained, “Many believe in God, but don’t see a need for Jesus and see the church as corrupt.” And, in fact, other *Royal Servants* teams to this region have faced police opposition to their ministries in the past. Fortunately, that did not happen on this trip, and the team got to see Christ work in extraordinary ways!

Ryan recalled one such instance in Poland, the first place he personally had the opportunity to lead someone to Christ. He and a few others had been sharing the gospel with a local vendor. Not only was the man receptive to talking to them, but he also wanted to accept Christ on the spot! In my experience, most who are willing to hear the message of Christ, still want time to think it over before making such an eternal commitment, but, as Ryan described it, there was no holding this man back. Jake also had such an opportunity. He and a group made connections with a girl visiting one of the many campgrounds they stayed in. She also accepted Christ, but as Jake complained, “I got called away for packing crew, so I didn’t get to be there when it happened, but it was still cool to be part of it.”

The rest of their journey took them to places like Berlin, Germany and the infamous Auschwitz Concentration Camp of World War II, Croatia, Poland, France, Holland,

Switzerland and more until finally they returned to London. It was here that they had the opportunity to minister in Little Pakistan, a segment of London that looks very much like an Arab nation and has been known as a recruiting area for al Qaeda. Of all the areas visited, it was perhaps here that the team had to be the most careful. As Brian explained, “We never felt in danger, but we had to constantly be aware of our environment.” Working with local missionaries, the team helped lead Holiday Clubs (a secular version of VBS), and at one point as many as 65 Muslim children were hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ through these clubs.

To adequately describe all the amazing things that God did through the 2013 *Royal Servants* team, I would probably need several novels worth of space (and being there myself might have been helpful as well). Needless to say, I have little doubt that this group left a lasting impact on a continent where Christ is so desperately needed. At the close of our interview I asked each of these men of Christ, “How did the experience change you?” For Jake, he learned to rely on and trust in God to deal with problems, and not to just try and deal with them on his own. In his words, “It’s not about comfort; it’s about character.” For Ryan the lesson was, “...to find my identity in Christ, and not in others. I learned not to be so controlling.” Finally for Brian, “The Holy Spirit taught me that I was not in control, and I had to rely on Him.” Brian also took the time to assess his own personal ministries, and understood with even greater clarity the importance of being in constant communication with Christ. These are all lessons I am sure will never be forgotten.

And so, now, everyone is back home. What’s next? Will these men of God slip back into their comfort zones? Hardly! *Royal Servants* is not just about sharing Christ in foreign lands; it’s about sharing the power of His cross right here at home. Ryan is already working to take more leadership in his youth group, and Jake is finding more and more opportunities to show his friends and family that Christ is always available for them. Brian also plans to incorporate what he has learned into his own ministries, but he was also clear that, “It’s not about us; it’s about Christ!” Well said, Brian. In the end, it is Christ who will accomplish the work of bringing lost souls into His kingdom. For a brief season, we get to be His hands and feet, but it is still just about Him. We are all simply royal servants, *Servants of the Crown*, and I can’t think of a more exciting thing to be.





# Destined for Victory.

By David Scott Fields II

Of all the places I have been in this great state of Alaska (and there have been quite a few), none have felt more like home to me than Victory Bible Camp. The low fog hanging over the majestic mountain lakes early in the morning, the kaleidoscope of fall colors greeting the eyes from atop Tepee Ridge, and the occasional meandering moose are natural sights I have come to cherish over the years. However, there is something deeper that comes over me each time I step onto those grounds. Victory is a place where there is no doubt that Christ is alive and working. I've experienced that firsthand on many occasions as it was my great privilege to serve at Victory during the summers of 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, and at various weekend retreats. Though I was not raised in Alaska, I truly feel like I am home again when I have a chance to visit Victory. Even so, for some, just visiting Victory falls epically short, and they have decided to make it their true home. This month, I would like to introduce you to my friends and Victory missionaries Justin and Lynsey Hostetter.

My friendship with the Hostetters goes back years! In fact, Justin and I were friends and roommates during college. However, it would not be until the summer of 2006 that Justin would meet the love of his life, Lynsey, in the very place they were destined to serve together – Victory Bible Camp. At the time, Justin was serving as the director of Victory's Alpine Camp, and Lynsey was a counselor in the S.A.L.T. (Servant and Leadership Training) program. It was not hard for the two to see in each other a love for Christ and a passion for young people. A friendship was formed, which quickly grew into a romance, and marriage seemed a foregone conclusion for this couple. Unfortunately, as is often the case with servants of Christ, there would be a time of waiting and growth before this couple could finally be united. As a teacher in the remote Alaskan village of Quinhagak, Justin needed to return to work after the summer camp season ended. Lynsey likewise was set to begin an internship at Victory that fall. Being separated was definitely not easy for the new couple, but they continued to grow closer over the next nine months through countless phone conversations and visits as often as possible, until finally the time was right! On May 25, 2007 Justin and Lynsey became man and wife.

The next few years were spent back in the village and later in Kenai, but camping ministry and Victory never left their hearts. When asked why serving at a Christian camp had such a powerful attraction, rather than some other ministry, Justin replied simply, "God gave me a passion for it. It's the only logical thing for me to do. It brings me joy." Lynsey likewise has a deep love of working with young people, and personally loved going to camp as a child. And speaking of children, it was during this interim between their marriage and their final move to Victory that God started to grow their family. First came Evangeline (now 5), followed by Norah (now 2), and most recently Grady (2 months).

Toting three kids off into the Alaskan wild is a challenge in itself, so I had to ask, "What's it like raising a family at



*"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14*

Victory?" Lynsey didn't hesitate when she said, "It's AWESOME!" She then elaborated, "It's like we live out of the world, but can head into town and be in the world anytime we want. There are also lots of other kids and young families." Having personally experienced the Victory family environment, it's easy to understand Lynsey's sentiments, and so when they finally received the call to come and serve full-time at Victory in 2012, they didn't hesitate.

And who could blame them! The Victory Bible Camps and Conference Center are nestled among the Talkeetna Mountains approximately 95 miles north of Anchorage. The stunning views alone are enough to touch anyone's soul, but it is the Spirit of Christ that Victory missionaries wish to share with souls young and old alike. The traditional summer camp season consists of four separate camping programs – Alpine, Frontier, Ranch, and S.A.L.T. – spanning over seven to eight weeks. At Alpine Camp, kids in 6th through 12th grades stay in cabins and experience all the adventures of camp through activities like canoeing, archery, hiking, horseback riding, and much more.

Frontier Camp is geared toward the elementary grades, and kids get the option of sleeping in a traditional cabin or a tepee. Frontier Camp is also where I had the pleasure of serving for four summers. From late night stories, to personal testimonies, to actually leading young boys and girls to Christ – my time at Frontier Camp changed my life incredibly, and my memories of my time there will be cherished for the rest of my life.

Ranch Camp, a primarily high school-aged camp, bases its ministry around basic horsemanship, and campers get to work with and ride horses on a daily basis, in addition to all the fun of camp. The week concludes with a pack trip to nearby Hicks Creek.

Finally, S.A.L.T. (Servant and Leadership Training) prepares young teens for what it truly means to be a servant of Christ. Staying for two weeks instead of the traditional one, S.A.L.T. campers help cook, clean, and basically do any chore that needs doing around camp. While it might not be the most glamorous work, by the end of their two week session, these campers are that much closer to understanding what Christ meant when he said, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35).


Every summer each and every one of these camps, their respective staffs, and untold numbers of campers get to see Christ working in powerful ways. Lives are changed for eternity, and the Kingdom of God grows and grows. As the Victory website (www.vbcalaska.org) puts it, "This is real-life camp. There are no iPods, video games, or cell phones, and you won't miss them! The adventure is real-life and it's life-changing. We hope your most important experience will be to draw closer to God."

It's hard not to envy Justin, Lynsey and their family. They are on the front lines of an amazing work of Christ, and I know He will use them powerfully for years to come. I highly encourage


any parent to send their children to Victory for any one of the available camps. Your kids will never be the same! You can register by visiting [www.vbcalaska.org](http://www.vbcalaska.org) and clicking the register tab. There are also a limited number of scholarships available. Call Victory at 907-745-4203 for details. Additionally, Victory is always on the lookout for future summer staff that have a passion for Jesus Christ. Visit the Victory website for further details.

And so, for my friends, Justin and Lynsey, this adventure serving Christ at Victory Bible Camp has only just begun. As for any missionary family, there will be challenges ahead. Financial support is always a challenge, and the Hostetters welcome any new financial and prayer partners who wish to join their support team. In the end I know that my friends want to see the name of Christ lifted high, and my prayer will be for His constant presence in their ministry. I miss my days at Victory, but I know I am never far from my true Alaskan home.





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Try to fill in the missing numbers. Use the numbers 1 through 9 to complete the equations. Each number is only used once. Each row is a math equation. Each column is a math equation. Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.

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Washington, D.C.

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AIR FORCE ONE	ARLINGTON	BILL
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HOUSE	LEGISLATION	LINCOLN
PENTAGON	PRESIDENT	REPRESENTATIVE
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VETO	VIETNAM	WASHINGTON
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How do you avoid God's judgment?

Directions: The puzzle below is a fallen phrase. Reorganize the letters to form words to reveal the fallen phrase. Hint: The phrase is a Bible verse from the fourth gospel.



RESCUE 'COPTER

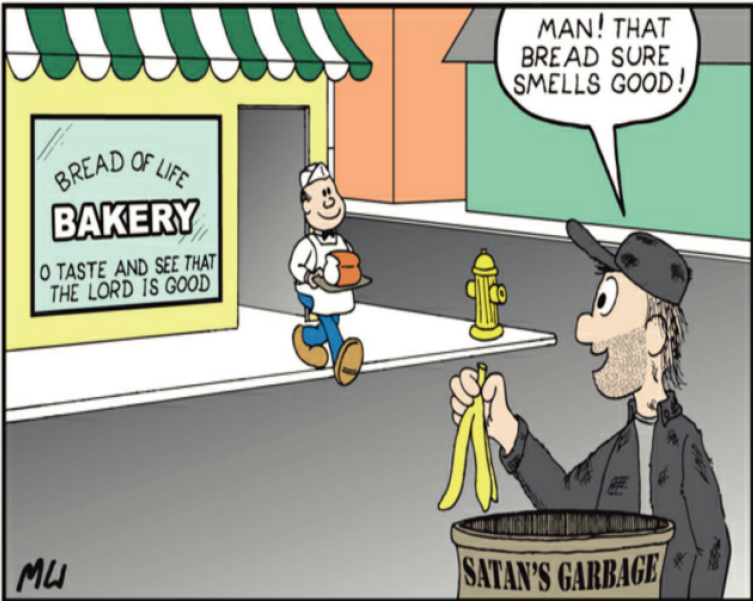
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Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. - PSALM 89:14 NIV

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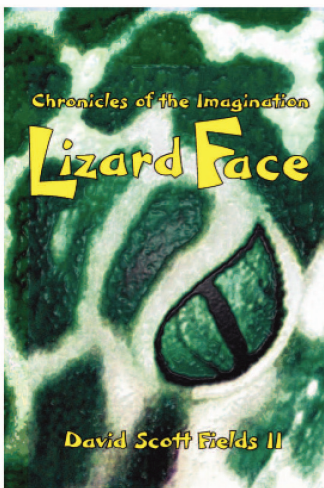
But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. - 2 CORINTHIANS 2:14 NIV



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