

World Mission

NEWSLETTER

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Covenant World Mission is involved with a variety of ministries around the world, and we are very pleased to partner with international believers in a variety of ways. Each ministry is unique, but all are carried out for the glory of God. From ministries with artists in France to villages in Thailand to pastors in Colombia, God is moving around the world.

La Fonderie: A Ministry to Artists in France

By Francisco and
Stephanie Ramos

La Fonderie, which means “the foundry” in French, is a ministry in Paris that values, inspires, and encourages Christians who work in the arts and in creative professions. Recognizing art as God’s gift and understanding the influence of the creative arts within culture, La Fonderie explores the link between art, culture, and the Christian faith.

At the heart of the ministry is the conviction that God has given artists their talent to be used for God’s purpose. As H. R. Rookmaaker wrote in his book *The Creative Gift*: “A Christian artist is not different from a Christian teacher, minister, scholar...



La Fonderie provides an intimate space for concerts, productions, and events.

An artist is simply a person whose God-given talents ask him to follow the specific vocation of art.”

Many Christian artists in Europe feel alone in their professions. They often feel the need to justify what they do. Some may even become marginalized by their church, their culture, or their professional communities. La Fonderie offers spiritual care to individuals who may feel isolated in their work and faith. It offers them fellowship and a place to grow in their faith and in the art they produce.

The goal of La Fonderie is “to assemble artists from a Christian confession; to explore the ties between art, culture and faith, to encourage artists to deepen their spiritual and moral values; to assist the artists while they are in training, studying and practicing their art, preparing and supporting them spiritually for the challenging professions related to their art form; inspiring them as they work in the Christian community and in the cultural marketplace.”

This ministry began in 2001 and has been a place for sharing and fellowship among Christian artists. The evening



A small group of artists meet as part of La Fonderie’s ministry.



Small ensemble concert at La Fonderie

of the first gathering, people prayed that at least a handful of artists would come. God answered those prayers when more than fifty showed up. A small team began to organize various gatherings and events.

In 2006, La Fonderie opened a multifunctional exhibit and events space in the heart of Paris. This space serves as a gallery, a place for small venue concerts, theater, and other events. It is an incredible resource for artists and an important part of the process of encouraging Christian artists as they develop mastery of their art form. Relationships with non-Christian artists are also developed through the multifunctional exhibit and events space. In that place God's love is communicated through service, sharing, and caring. La Fonderie also uses that space to connect with the larger community of artists in Paris. More than half of those who show their work or perform in this space are not Christians. The ministry is God's arms extended to non-Christian artists. Many are discouraged due to their financial difficulties and the tremendous amount of effort needed to make it in their professions. They are loved, served, and encouraged; and through contact with members of La Fonderie, they are exposed to Christian values and faith. With the participation of professionals and amateur artists who attend its various events, La Fonderie now reaches well over a hundred French and international participants in Paris.

Jean is an artist who has been a part of La Fonderie community for a number of years. He has found a spiritual home

and a community of Christian friends through this ministry. Jean is a young professional guitarist who leads a jazz group, and teaches guitar. His jazz group, where Jean is the only Christian, regularly uses the multifunctional space for their concerts. This is one example of the way La Fonderie develops relationships with non-Christian artists and encourages them in their professions.

This year, La Fonderie hopes to increase participation in the events it supports,

which include conferences, film viewings and discussions, and dinners. An important part of the ministry is a variety of series of weekly meetings, which last four to ten weeks. Each meeting includes a meal; a time of worship through art such as song, poetry, or creative readings of Scriptures; a testimony shared by an artist or a practical biblical teaching; and small group discussion.

As a result of the work of this ministry, a Christian community is developing. In addition to artists, Christians who have not found a church have been coming together for fellowship in Bible study and monthly worship serv-



People gather for an art exhibit.

ices. La Fonderie is prayerfully moving forward in giving structure and identity to that community.

By providing discipleship and opportunities where artists can grow in their faith and pursue excellence in their art, more artists who are believers in Christ will be released into French and European culture. They can then bear testimony to their faith in Christ in the sphere in which they work, not as outsiders but as participants in European culture. □

[Francisco and Stephanie Ramos are Covenant missionaries serving in France.](#)

New Believers in Thailand

By Randy Bevis

The little village of Yang Sur doesn't look like much as you pass it about twenty kilometers southeast of Roi Et, Thailand. In fact, you might miss it if you blink. There are about fifty households in this little village. Most are rice farmers with livestock.

Lamyai grew up in this village, married an American man, and moved away to the state of Georgia. When she became a believer she started praying for her family and for people in her



A worship service in Yang Sur

village in Thailand to come to know Jesus. She contacted a pastor in Thailand and asked him to visit her family and share the good news with them. The pastor then contacted Daeng and Tipawan (Tip) at the Thailand Covenant Church since they lived closer to the village than he did.

In late 2006, Daeng and Tip started visiting Yang Sur where they met Lamyai's younger sister Nuui Kai. She then sent them to visit her older sister Pa Pai in Bangkok. It was Pa Pai who was the first to become a believer. Soon she felt God's call to return to live in the village of Yang Sur and share the good news with her extended family and many others.

In the meantime, Daeng and Tip continued to visit the village, and they began to see seeds take root. A small house on the main road was set aside as their meeting area. Soon so many people were coming to worship that they couldn't fit in the main room of the house. So they took down two walls

to combine the rooms into one large area for meetings.

Since that first visit, about twenty people have been baptized. Daeng and Tip, along with other staff from the Covenant work in Roi Et, Thailand, visit this village weekly. Daeng, who is now the president of the Thailand Covenant Church, feels it is important to train these young believers and help them to grow in their faith. The new believers are encouraged to share from the Bible, while the Covenant staff helps out. There are about thirty people worshipping weekly, and a few families come from three other villages. Daeng has encouraged the new believers in Yang Sur to visit these families weekly to encourage them and help the community of believers to grow in those villages too.

I have personally gotten to know Pa Pai in the last year. She is always excited



Randy Bevis (right) visits the group in Yang Sur.



Lesson time for children

to have anyone visit Yang Sur and eager to tell of all the good things God has done in her life. She likes to say she is like a person who was able to get on the ark just before the flood.

After returning to Chiang Mai, Thailand, following home assignment, I got a phone call from Pa Pai's younger sister Lamyai, who still lives in Georgia. She was so excited that I

had been able to visit her family and encourage them. She shared how she had prayed for her family in Yang Sur for more than ten years. She calls almost daily from Georgia to check in and see what God is doing in that little village and the surrounding villages.

Sometimes the gospel takes off in the most unexpected places and we see how God hears the prayers of his people. It has been a joy to be with the people of Yang Sur, who are new to the faith and are really excited to learn what it means to follow Jesus. □

Randy Bevis is a Covenant missionary serving in Thailand.

Pastoring Those Who Pastor in Colombia

By Gary Sander

God did it! He called us to begin a task and we accompanied him in carrying it out. Over the past fourteen months, Mary Lou and I have traveled to the city of Barranquilla eight times to meet with pastoral couples for spiritual mentoring and growth, and to build relationships. We had been hearing God call us to this emphasis in our ministry for some time.

While we lived in Bogotá, we often sought out the Covenant pastoral couples and initiated some gatherings and ministry among them. One major reason for our move to Medellín eight years ago was to carry on this spiritual mentoring and pastoral ministry



Combined service of the Barranquilla churches

among pastoral couples and families in the Covenant Church of Colombia. We have been doing that through various means and gatherings for several years.

When we became empty nesters, we began to sense God calling us to expand our efforts to other regions in

Colombia where the Covenant has churches.

We first went to the North Caribbean Coast Region, where we asked the pastors' wives to join us in talking about the possibility of meeting together for spiritual enhancement and mutual ministry. The wives had never

been included in a meeting like this. They were so impressed by the fact they had been invited to join this ministry that they readily agreed to give it a try.

The group agreed to meet for a forty-eight-hour spiritual retreat every two months. We committed to doing this for one year and to celebrate together what God did among us at the end of the year. God kept all of us faithful to the task.

Recently we concluded a celebration weekend. Everyone was present, even the youngest participant, Yenedi Ortega, who was born during our year together just five months ago.

Throughout the year we had prayed with each other and for each other. We completed our study of devotional classics—fifty-two spiritual readings from authors over the centuries. It was quite an accomplishment for everyone to participate in leading the group through the study of various spiritual writ-

ings. We celebrated how God has developed relationships among us as pastoral families by decorating visors and sharing a meal together. We celebrated God's building unity in the Covenant as we worked together through a combined service on Sunday afternoon. We also celebrated the life we enjoy together in Christ by spending a morning on the beach and an after-



Retreat events include time for sharing (above), and time for fun (decorating visors above right).

noon in a pool, and everyone laughed and played together.

The best thing is that we've been so blessed by God that we have committed to continue this ministry on the North Coast. Now we need to figure out how to include the other two regional conferences of the Covenant Church of Colombia who are hearing God call them to include this ministry in their regions as well. □

Gary and Mary Lou Sander are Covenant missionaries serving in Colombia.

We're looking for more friends!

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