



Olson Family Christmas Newsletter

*Serving the Lord to take the
Gospel where Christ is not known
with Ethnos 360*

Issue #42, December 2024

***"Where is He who has been
born King of the Jews? For
we have seen His star in the
East and have come to
worship Him."
Matthew 2:2***

***"There is no fear in love,
but perfect love casts out
fear, because fear has to
do with punishment. He
who fears has not been
perfected in love."
1 John 4:18***

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financial support, please
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next page.**



**Isaac & Bethany brought the kids
to see the Alamo!**



**Visiting our Filipino missionary
training center**



The Octopus Cart at Burning Man

Dear friends and family,

There is a famous quote often attributed to Vladimir Lenin: "There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." That idea could easily be attributed to the entire year of 2024.

As we look to celebrate this Christmas season and reflect back on the year, we are compelled to look ahead and determine how we will approach the next year. Given that so much happening in the world today is filled with uncertainty, how do we, as individuals, as communities, as citizens of a state and citizens of a nation move forward? How do we as members of the body of Christ prepare for the future in uncertain times?

The answer, of course, is in the verse to the left. We move forward in faith and love, not fear. While at Christmas we celebrate the birth of the Christ-child, we remember also what the whole of His life on earth represents. God became flesh, in the uncertain times of His day, in order to reveal the Father to us, and show us how to live, fully trusting in the One who loves us.

Our year in ministry has been filled with a tremendous amount of activity. Here is a quick summary of what we did:

- In February, I (George) was in Florida for our annual team meetings, followed by a ministry security conference.
- In March, I tuned into an on-line Christian conference that tracks the trends of many of the things I am following. At the conference, I watched a presentation on Burning Man and how it is connected to changes in worldwide social, political, and geopolitical realms. I had a chance to get to know the presenter at the conference, and we became friends.
- In April I went to a 5 day eclipse event in Central Texas with the presenter I had met in March. We attended workshops on AI, space exploration, and their plans for the legalization of psychedelic drugs. This was my introduction to working in this space, so it was mostly a learning experience.
- After this trip, and being convinced that the Lord was leading Ginny and me into ministering to people in this area, we bought a travel trailer in order to prepare to go to Burning Man in August.
- In May we were hit with a hailstorm which damaged our cars and roof, followed by a tornado that knocked down 2 of our trees and caused widespread damage to the Temple area.
- In July I spent the entire month in the Philippines traveling around the country, researching the security environment of the country and assessing how prepared our ministries are for a contingency event in case of a war with China. While I was there, Ginny was back home in Texas, planning in detail how we were going to get to Burning Man, how we would eat and survive there, and how we would get back.
- In August after I returned, we packed the trailer and drove across the desert to attend Burning Man. More on that below, along with some discussion on our outreach at the event and the research we are doing.
- In September, just 3 days after arriving home, I was off to Ohio for another ministry security conference.
- In October, we were able to finish repairing the roof of our house and one of our cars from the hail damage back in May. Also I was able to attend the University of Texas Navy ROTC alumni reunion for the first time since I graduated back in 1993.
- In November, I traveled once again to Missouri for a week to help train the new missionaries at our annual safety week.
- At the end of November, we said good-bye to Sarah, who has decided to take a job in Portland, Maine, which is a long way from Texas. Please pray for her.

Global tensions only increased this entire year, as predicted. The rivalry between China and the US-led Western allies has become more intense, not only affecting the Asia-Pacific region, but international trade, economics, and the alignment of the nations of the Global South. In Europe, Russia began dominating the war of attrition that it is fighting with Ukraine, as the war there passed through its 3rd year. In Israel, the war following the October 7th unprovoked terror attacks by Hamas against Israeli citizens continued on. As of the time of this writing, a cease-fire in the north with Hezbollah has been implemented, while in Gaza it seems like combat events are slowing down. In the Asia-Pacific region, there were multiple incidents with China attacking Philippine Navy boats and blocking Philippine re-supply missions to their military outposts in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea). Donald Trump was elected President, and has now begun appointing new cabinet ministers as he prepares to take office in January. Internal Philippine political tensions reached a level I have never before seen, with very significant threats by the Vice President against the President, and we are tracking things closely.

My trip to the Philippines in July was very eventful and informative (you can read more about it on my substack, linked on the left). After visiting tribal ministries, talking to people on the streets and in government all over the country, I came away with the impression that the entire country believes there is a high



I had some opportunities to preach in Filipino churches...



A different message is preached by the Oneist at Burning Man, as he tells people that we are all God



Our team, the Camp of the Unknown God (Acts 17) stays true to the authentic Gospel message, not oneism



We do this to try and reach people like this... the girl told me she left the church to pursue shamanism



Masks are a necessity in the dust of Blackrock Desert



Sign says "I'm Fine," made from bullet ridden street signs in Ukraine

likelihood of war with China, and that they expect the USA to come to their defense. This is, of course, a big part of what is driving the internal political tensions in the country, and why it is very unlikely that China will let up on their hostile activity. Please pray for the Philippines, as they have also been hit with multiple devastating typhoons this year.

Our trip to Burning Man was amazing. Many people think of Burning Man as just a big party in the desert, kind of like the 1969 Woodstock music festival. There are elements of that, but it is so much more. Did you know that a lot of the technology we have, such as google maps, AI, and the ubiquitous proliferation of smart phones, are all ideas that were incubated at Burning Man before they were launched? The big themes this year were future developments in AI and ideas on psychedelic drug therapy, coupled with shamanism. In the aftermath of the event, I noticed these ideas featured in articles in the BBC, the New York Times, The Economist, and others. As for geopolitics, in 2023 at Burning Man, we heard that the Ukrainian defense minister took a week off of managing the war in order to attend Burning Man. This year, the geopolitical undercurrent was focused on the war in Israel. One time, police had to stage a significant intervention to prevent a massive fight from breaking out between Palestinian supporters and Israeli supporters, as we heard rumors of a potential a terrorist attack.

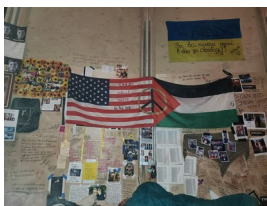
We had some incredible conversations for outreach. At the Earth Guardians seminar, the doctrine being presented was that human beings and animals have equal value, and that we shouldn't swat mosquitoes, try to manage stray cats, or manage the construction of beaver dams. When they asked for questions from the audience, one of our team members pointed out that beavers are not getting together and discussing how their dam-building activities are affecting the wildlife ecosystem. The discussion raised ideas like the fact that cats and dogs are not having meetings to determine what parts of the city need to be cleaned up to reduce flea infestations. It is only human beings that have these meetings. We presented our questions in a non-confrontational manner, but it made people there think, instead of just absorbing the false doctrine that was being presented. After the seminar, a young couple approached us to inquire more about what we believe. Later we met with them again, prayed for healing (one of them had been injured in an accident), and they began attending our morning devotions.

It was not an accident that we connected with the whole Burning Man phenomenon, in order to learn what is happening and how to respond. There is a worldview that dominates the mindset of many leading Western thinkers, and it all comes to a head at Burning Man every year. It is also readily apparent in many other contexts. For example, when I was in the Philippines in July visiting a tribal church, I noticed that many of the children, 5 years old and younger, were speaking English to each other. They are losing their tribal language, don't even speak the national language, and are becoming proficient in English. I asked their parents (in Tagalog, because ironically the parents mostly don't speak English) how this could possibly be happening. They told me that they regularly hand their kids smart phones and have them watch youtube nursery age videos. While we were talking, one mother did exactly that, and I observed this 3 year old tribal kid get absorbed in watching an English nursery video. While this was happening, the ideas of this "Age of Re-enchantment" (as the author of *Game of Gods* termed it) were subtly being implanted, in seed form, in the mind of this 3 year old, through youtube. This is happening regularly all over the world, and it is something that we in the church really need to be paying attention to.

Ideas, ideologies, world events, geopolitical tensions, political movements, religious movements, technological change, economic disruption, climate disasters, elections, terror attacks, wars... all of these things are connected and are converging right now, the time in which we all live. We can be afraid of it, or we can embrace the calling that God has for us to live through it, together, without fear, and shine the light of who He is to a lost and dying world. This is why we stay in ministry and continue to press on.

May God bless you all this Christmas season and into the New Year!

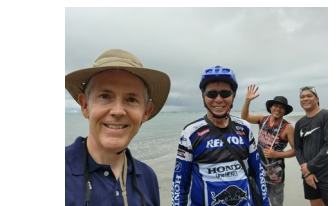
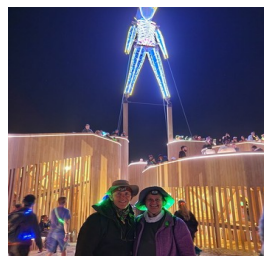
Serving Him,
George & Ginny, serving international missions in the Philippines, Asia, and around the world



Palestinian flag displayed at the Temple... Israel flags were pulled down by Palestinian supporters



The Temple area at Burning Man, where people post their deepest feelings of grief and loss



Standing on the shores of the South China Sea with a Filipino missionary friend... we pray that war does not come here...

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