

Happy Thanksgiving!

Here are some things that we thank God for this year:

Time together. A benefit of living in a cold climate is that people tend to stay in their homes more during the cold months. As a family, we have certainly experienced that, and love it!

Home in Colorado. After over a year living here, Colorado is beginning to feel a little like home. It is nice to feel more settled and enjoy relationships!

Amistad (translation: friendship). All four of us feel more connected to friends this year than we did last year. What a difference a year makes!

Neighborhood YMCA. We joined the YMCA when it opened its doors last April and have enjoyed visiting it often as a family!

Kyle's travels. This fall, Kyle had the opportunity to travel to Costa Rica, Bulgaria and Romania for a variety of meetings. He lights up when he speaks of his travels and of his interaction with international leaders!

Soccer and scoring. Elena has just completed her third season of soccer and loves it! For the first time she has been consistently scoring during games! What an exciting season!

Gymnastics. Mikayla was convinced after watching the 2008 Olympics that gymnastics is the sport for her! She has enjoyed her weekly trips to the gym!

In the classroom. Nell began teaching a half-day kindergarten class in September at the girls' school. Something in her has come alive again in that setting!

Visits with family. We spent about a week with Nell's parents and brother's family in August and will be spending Thanksgiving with Kyle's parents, sister and niece this year! What a blessing!

Invigorating Bible Study. We meet with two other families as a small group two times a month and have been studying the book of Galatians this fall. What an amazing time we've had digging into the book of grace!

New missionaries, and seasoned ones! Working in the personnel department at OC gives us the opportunity to interact with missionaries being sent out for the first time and those who have been on the field for years! What a joy it is to be a part of their process and care. They are an amazing group of people!

Givers like you. We couldn't be serving in OC without your prayer and financial support. Thank you for your dedication to God and your love for us. We are so blessed to have you behind us!

We pray that you and yours have a joyful and meaningful Thanksgiving. As you reflect on what God has done in and around you in the last year, please take a moment with us and thank Him for what He is doing all over the world! May all be reached with the Good News of the Love of Christ!

The Stiffs



Thankful for hiking just 15 minutes from our house!

From the President...

Our Mission

*To mobilize
godly and
effective
Church
leaders to
reach all
nations.*

Our Vision

*Healthy
churches
working
together to
disciple all
nations.*

Twice a year OC's International Leadership Team (ILT), which is composed of our Colorado Springs-based Executive Leadership Team along with our six Area Directors, meets together for a week of strategic planning meetings. Last month our ILT meetings were conducted in the country of Romania, where for more than a decade OC has been assisting the churches of Romania to saturate the nation with healthy churches.



ILT meeting participants.

The primary purpose of the meetings in Romania was to work on OC's strategic ministry plan for the years 2009–2011. I traveled to Romania with a strong sense that these ILT meetings were of great strategic importance. In large part, this conviction was the result of a deepening sense of stewardship I have felt over the past number of months related to the growing personnel resources and expanding ministry opportunities the Lord has graciously entrusted to OC.

At a time when many North American mission agencies are declining in size and impact, we entered these meetings with more OC ministry personnel, serving on more ministry teams, impacting more national church leaders, in more countries of the world, and with more strategic ministry opportunities before us than at any time in the 57-year history of the mission! During our week together in Romania, through daily times in the Word, in prayer, and robust interaction, we earnestly sought the Lord's direction concerning the most strategic ways to steward the resources and opportunities He has entrusted to us as a mission.

As the meetings concluded, I had a deeper conviction than ever that this is indeed OC's hour! I was thrilled to hear the reports shared by our Area Directors concerning the strategic ministry goals and projections they are envisioning for the years 2009–2011. If the Lord provides us with the needed additional ministry personnel, in the next three years we could see OC grow from 57 to 80 ministry teams (40 percent growth!) and from 23 to 31 resident fields (35 percent growth!) With this growth in size we are envisioning an exciting acceleration in the worldwide impact of OC's ministry (which last year impacted over 2,600,000 national church leaders in 76 countries).

We completed the meetings in Romania encouraged and energized. As never before, I covet your prayers for the Lord's continued guidance and provision as we begin to implement the ministry plans which were the fruit of our meetings in Romania.

With deep gratitude for your partnership,

Dr. Greg Gripenrog



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