

the jungle. One year, before Easter, his daughters Darlene, Liz, and Lynn were going to a boarding school in Jimma. Thankfully, they could fly there. Grandpa said goodbye, and they left for the motel, because they'd be flying the next day. Back home, Grandpa prayed for their safe flight. While he was praying, he felt God telling him, "Why are you praying for people flying tomorrow? Pray for those flying today." So Grandpa prayed for them. Later, he found that plans were changed—the girls flew that day! As they flew, both engines went out, so they prayed. The engines started again, but they returned to the airport. When they were fixed, they flew safely to Jimma. Grandpa didn't know, yet God put it in his heart to pray for those flying that day! God works in mysterious ways.

Another story. Saturday mornings, Grandpa would drive downtown to run errands. One Saturday, six preschool children came. "It was a joy to treat them to something they couldn't do other times!" he explained. They jumped into the van. Before they left, an African friend asked to come. He stepped into the car, and off they went. Grandpa's briefcase which contained his

passports was in a holder behind his driver's seat. First stop—the bank. Grandpa needed more coins to give to children at church for the offering. Second stop—the iron works to pick up a large plate for cake. He left the kids and his friend in the car. The owner of the iron works was Italian, so when another man came in shouting in Italian, and they both ran out, Grandpa couldn't understand what was happening. Outside, he saw the white faces of the children screaming, "Briefcase!"

It was gone.

They searched, but to no avail. Then Grandpa stopped and did what he should've done first—pray. Then they saw two policemen with his briefcase and...his friend? The man's face was awful. He'd taken the briefcase! What a miracle! Grandpa remembered Ishmael. God answers children's prayers.

Later, Grandpa moved to Three Hills and taught grade 8 for six years, then grade 5 for one year, and special education for 26 years! Now he does something which he and many others enjoy immensely—he meets regularly with men in his home, where they pray and encourage each other. On his wall is Psalm 34:3. He and his sweetheart, Grandma, have been married 56 years! Grandpa says, "It's been a honeymoon all the way."

—Karis Rashleigh



Forum housekeeping

Forum is a Prairie Congregation platform for learning, for exchanging spiritual ideas, encouragements, and insights. Your participation as a contributor or on the editorial side is welcome.

Formatting, John Mills; editorial, Miriam Rashleigh, John Rueck, David Nadeau; publisher, Pastor Tim Strickland.

To make a contribution, contact David: helpedit@telus.net or call 403 443 5319.

Forum

—learning together—
Prairie Tabernacle
February 2010



The Prairie Tabernacle story
Article Two —Birth and Growth
by Rhoda Murray

1956–1965

1. In March, 1956, the name chosen for the newly formed church group was _____.
2. The pastor of preaching was _____ and the pastor of visitation and administration was _____.
3. There were _____ charter members.
4. In April, 1957, a young people's group was formed called _____. Its first formal function was a _____ hosted by _____.
5. It was held in the _____. A graduate from that class who is PT member today is _____.

1966–1975

6. Prairie Tabernacle's first official secretary, _____, faithfully served in that position for many years.
7. In 1968 the church had several unique events. There were _____ young people baptized, _____ double weddings as well as _____ single weddings; _____ funerals, and _____ child dedications.
8. In 1972 PTC participated in a community evangelistic outreach with local churches. The name of the

ministering team was _____.

9. PTC ladies had for many years been part of the Ladies Flannelgraph Group. In 1972 they became officially affiliated with PTC and the group was renamed to _____.

10. When Rev L. E. Maxwell retired in 1975 and the new pastor of preaching, _____, was called. Mr. Maxwell received the honorary the title of _____.

1976–1985

11. A number of PTC ministry programs were being carried on and uniquely blessed. Some of them were _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

12. On February 4, 1984 founding Pastor of Preaching, Rev. L. E. Maxwell, was called home to glory. The speaker at the memorial service was _____. One of the numbers sung by the PBC choir was _____.

1986–1995

13. Another wonderful PTC ministry has been the Caleb Fellowship. At its peak, approximately _____ PTC seniors were considered part of the Fellowship. Its

dynamic, creative leader for many years was _____ who now resides in _____.

1996–2005

14. In 1997 PTC celebrated the 100th birthdays of two members:

_____ and _____.

15. In 1998, following the retirement of Dr. Rendall, two men (who still ably serve and minister to PTC in various avenues) were appointed as interim pastoral team:

_____ and _____.

16. PTC location of ministry had been _____.

The first PTC service in its present location was on _____.

17. In the fall of 2005 there was great rejoicing in PTC because _____.

Answers

1. Prairie Tabernacle Congregation.
2. Rev. L. E. Maxwell; Rev. A. C. Strom
3. 250
4. Prairie Youth Fellowship; PHS graduation banquet; Pastor and Mrs. Strom;
5. Junior High Auditorium, Rhoda Murray
6. Margaret Ewing
7. 27; 2; 6; 8; 9
8. Campbell-Reese Crusade
9. Women's Missionary Fellowship
10. Dr. T. S. Rendall; Pastor Emeritus
11. Boys Brigade, Pioneer Girls, Prairie College and Careers, Sunday School (nursery through to adults, including all Prairie boarding students), Tabernacle Choir, New Student Wives Tea, Prairie Adult Fellowship.
12. Dr. Stephen Olford; Hallelujah Chorus.
13. 300; Miss Joan Chapman, Golden Hills Lodge.
14. Nick Bauman; Victor Carlson.
15. Dr. George Foxall; Rev. Henry Goertzen.
16. Maxwell Memorial Tabernacle; August 28, 2005.
17. The Lord confirmed His leading to PTC and the Stricklands to serve as our senior

Meet the Brucks

We met in PHS in 1943, graduated from PBI in 1948, and took graduate studies from Luther-Rice Seminary in Florida. Don's father, Emil Bruck, moved from Tacoma, WA, to Three Hills in 1945, and was on Prairie staff for 25 years.

In 1950 we joined Japan Evangelical Mission and worked in its American offices for 33 years until 1983 when JEM and TEAM merged.

During those years we took four home assignments *in Japan*, updating our presentations and getting audio-visuals for our ministry of representing and recruiting missionaries in America. Don incorporated three mission societies with the Canadian government, and Vivian set up their Canadian offices.

In 1987 we were invited to pastor the English Department of the Japan Evangelical Free Church in Tokyo which we did until our 1995 retirement.

We have three children—at one time on three continents—nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

—Don and Vivian Bruck

Promise or lie?

Have you ever been given a promise and it turns out to be a lie? For example, someone promises to meet you and never shows up. When a promise turns out to be a lie, we feel hurt, sometimes violated.

“Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him” (1 John 3:21-22).

John encourages us to have confident hearts that move toward God in prayer. When we pray, the promise of God is that we will “receive from Him anything we ask.” Literally, John states we continue receiving as we continue asking. John's



*Daniel Nornyian and his mother,
Kubee Nornyian*

widow (paraphrased from NIV):

Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. A judge neither feared God nor cared about men, and there was a widow who kept coming to him with the plea, “Grant me justice against my adversary.”

For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, “Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't wear me out!”

Jesus said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Seeing faith in unexpected places

We have seen God's faithfulness in taking us to South Africa and Botswana twice, for a total of 18 years; working around Alberta and BC with CSSM for

a total of 15 years, and on staff at PBI twice for a total of six years. The following incident happened while we were in Botswana:

Our VW van was up on blocks, needing repairs. During our time in Botswana, our four children had to go to school in what is now Zimbabwe, staying at the Mission Hostel in Harare. One day an invoice arrived from the hostel. To pay this on time, about two-thirds of our next month's cheque needed to go for the children's board and room. What would we live on in the meantime? How would we afford parts to get the van fixed? Though we tried not to be anxious, we wondered where the money would come from and prayed much. We told no one but God of our urgent need.

One day's mail contained a letter with a Swaziland postmark. There was no name on the outside of the envelope—only a post office box number. Inside of the envelope there was no letter, only a postal order (with no name) for the exact amount needed to pay the children's bill! Who was it from? We don't know to this day. Who told them of our need? God did! Philippians 4:19 proved true; “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

—Rex and Dorothy Beam

Grandpa Rashleigh

Grandpa Rashleigh is a man who has committed his life to the Lord and served Him fervently for years. Every day he prays, and many are blessed. He's my loving grandpa. He's had numerous adventures, sometimes scary, but God's always led him through.

In Ethiopia, Grandpa worked at a school in Addis Ababa. He also lived deep in

be directing us elsewhere. Adoption is a lot of paperwork and money, but I know Someone who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and I'm sure He will care for us!

Just recently, our life came to a climatic peak. We have two major decisions to make that could affect the rest of our lives. Through praying that God would stir up my life (I was feeling stagnant), my Very Big God sent us on a new adventure. We are praying and we would ask that you join us, especially regarding adoption.

I had been feeling anxious and wishing that I could fast-forward to see how this all turns out. Someone reminded me that we need to embrace the process, not just the destination. We need to see our present placement as also having value.

We are learning what we need to know for the next stage. It's not always easy, or fun, but God is bigger than us, bigger than our problems, and bigger than even our very big decisions. We are learning to trust, hold on to hope, and to embrace His process!

Story from Nigeria

The following is one of Martin Reedyk's experiences during a November-December 2009 medical trip representing PTC's N'Vision ministry.

Twenty-one years ago, Daniel Nornyian was born in Gboko, the hometown of Peace House.¹ His mother was left with seven children when his father died of a fever 12 years ago. His mother was uneducated and had no means to support her family since her husband's family refused to take her in. She heard there was a caring pastor nearby who ministered to children. She went to him and Pastor Luga introduced her to me as a widow worthy of our help. His church

did not yet have a widows' assistance program. Our medical team helped her with enough money to start a small provisions store, which enabled her to feed and educate her children. She has required only occasional help since then.

In November 2009, this same widow had an urgent need. When she heard I was spending two weeks on a medical outreach at a remote place, she came the 60 miles by a rickety taxi and found me treating patients. She pleaded with me on behalf of her son Daniel who she said had been falsely accused of a minor theft. He had been jailed, beaten, mistreated, and now was sick. He would not be released until a fine of approximately \$200 was paid. Having no assurance her story was true or that the boy was innocent, I made a snap decision, told her I would not help, and turned my attention to my long line of patients. She slept that night in the village and came again the next morning, begging on her knees. Again I sent her away, being very busy. When she returned again, I took time to ask the Lord for wisdom. "Lord, what am I to do?" And it was as if the Lord said, "Give her the money. The boy needs to be released to come to the Peace House Conference next week."

The widow went away rejoicing, and I felt very much like the unrighteous judge.² Next week, the young man was at the conference, along with 25,000 others. His heart was convicted by the call to become a disciple of Jesus and to put His kingdom ahead of all personal ambitions. He has entered discipleship training and is seeking God's will for his life. Please pray that he will grow in faith and total commitment to Christ.

1. Peace House is an indigenous revival and discipleship ministry in our area.
2. Luke 18—Parable of the persistent

statement is sourced in the promise of Jesus Himself that is found frequently in the gospels (John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23).

Some years ago I met a young man named Jim. His brother had a serious chronic disease for which he took medication. The family was convinced that God's promise was to answer their prayer for his physical healing. They threw away the medication. Jim's brother died.

Is God's promise for answered prayer hollow? Or worse still, is it really a lie? Certainly, Jim's family felt that way. They assumed God's promise was a sinister lie which resulted in a deep violation in their lives. But what if Jim's family misunderstood God's promise? There are two realities within the passage that are critical to understanding this promise of answered prayer:

1. The promise must be understood by the context.

There is not one statement in Scripture that stands alone without a context. Scriptural context interprets Scripture. This promise of answered prayer is conditioned in the immediate context by obedience (1 John 3:22-23). Other passages teach that prayer is to be according to His will (1 John 5:14), according to His name (John 16:23, 24), for His glory (James 4:2-3), made with a clean heart (Psalm 66:18), and requested in faith (Mt. 21:22).

These conditions are not to be understood as hoops that God requires us to jump through so that in turn He repays us by answering our prayers. These conditions do not become the meritorious cause for answered prayer. But these conditions significantly frame the promise of answered prayer.

For example, if I promise my daughter that I will give her two hundred dollars for shoveling the sidewalk on Saturday morning and she refuses to shovel, she should rightly assume that I will not give her the

two hundred dollars. I have not broken my promise. She simply did not meet the condition. But even if she had shoveled, that minor amount of work would not merit the two hundred dollars. The two hundred dollars is made possible because of my means and generosity, not her work. The shoveling simply frames the promise, but does not earn it.

2. The promise must be understood within relational intimacy.

Prayer is an invitation into relational intimacy. John invites his readers into such abiding intimacy in verse 24, "Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them." Prayer is not for us to get what we want, nor is it a magic formula of self-fortune. Prayer is not twisting God's arm to accomplish our wants. Rather, God invites us to prayer in order to enter deeply into relationship with Him. It is within this intimacy that there evolves a synergy of God's will and our desire. The more fully we enter into that relationship, the more our asking will mesh with His will.

This promise of answered prayer does not support us treating God as the great genie in the sky. Claiming this promise is not to be compared to rubbing a magic bottle, uttering a magic name, and thereby guaranteeing our asking, or more accurately, our demanding that God fulfill our wants and wishes. We cannot hold God hostage to satisfying our will. God is simply not obligated to a promise that He has not made.

Is God's promise of answered prayer a lie? Absolutely not! Is God's promise of answered prayer supported by His character? Absolutely! But the promise must be understood within the parameters of context and relationship.

—Glenn Loewen

Radio work in Iran

In 1967 Rachel was teaching missionary kids at Murree Christian School (MCS) in northwest Pakistan. I was studying Persian in Iran. After Rachel accepted my postal proposal we set a date and I traveled to Pakistan a week or so before the September 2 date. Our wedding was in the town of Murree and the reception in the dining room of MCS with all the school kids and many missionary parents attending. We remained at MCS until Rachel finished her fall term.

About the middle of December 1967, friends with their two young children, drove us with all of Rachel's belongings from Pakistan through Afghanistan to Kermanshah in the southwestern part of Iran where I had been in language study. We set up our first permanent home. Since then, we have lived in many homes in many places, including about seven in Three Hills.

In 1968 Far East Broadcasting Association built a new radio station in the Seychelle Islands in the Indian Ocean east of Africa. Our mission (International Missions at that time but now Christar) decided to set up a recording studio and begin producing programs in Persian to be aired from this station. Because I had experience in studio work from my time at Prairie, Rachel and I were asked to move from Kermanshah to the capital city, Tehran. By then Joanie had been born. Moving in Iran was quite an experience but that is another story.

We found a two-story home not far from the university and converted two upstairs bedrooms into a studio and control room with a glass connecting door. My job was the technical work, not writing or speaking. Rachel kept the house going and served many cups of

tea for guest speakers and singers. Joanie kept us entertained as a baby and toddler. One of our speakers and a singer have since been martyred in Iran; one was a convert from Islam, the other was from a Christian background.

In 1976 we moved the recording equipment to Rezaiyeh in the northwestern part of Iran and built our studio in a three-story house. Our co-workers lived in the top story, we were in the middle, and the studio was in the basement. Because of the Revolution which began in 1978, we left Iran in January 1979 with our two daughters, Joanie and Sharon, traveling overland through Turkey by bus and train with just a suitcase each. Later, our co-workers got the recording equipment out of Iran.

Since then our co-workers have carried on the work and expanded it to a much wider ministry of shortwave, satellite radio, a website, and free phone available to Iranians. The work is being done in the States with Iranians participating. It has been and still is a very fruitful work. Pray for Iran—many are turning to the Lord.

—Ned Fairchild

Note: We have a DVD called A Cry From Iran, done by the son of one of the martyrs.

Seeing God's evident glory

On my trip to Cameroon I was amazed by the glory of God that was so evident. As I prepared for bed and slid under the one sheet (no more was necessary in the heat) on our first day, I listened to the symphonies and the strange animals as they sang, rattled, and screamed.

The sounds lulled me into a deep sleep, though my mind was actively thinking

trips into ancient history personally cost him about \$6,000 each. The digs operate under the two universities mentioned in the article, with Israel's Antiquities Authority having overall jurisdiction.

Our traveling James Janzen

Since returning from the Ukraine in late January, James Janzen says he has struggled to make sense of the images and thoughts flooding his mind. Some thoughts excerpted from a recent report:

During this trip God showed me that the first loops of mentorship and discipleship in my ministry are being completed. This was especially evident in the lives of Sergii and Vitaly, who show a strong commitment to teaching even the children yet to be born. The work in Latvia is a direct result of Vitaly's setting up the Latvian Christian Music Academy. Sergii provided Russian translation for the Latvian seminar and became an equal partner in a variety of discussions. The 30 Estonian students who traveled 300 km to attend the seminar are a result of Sergii's work with the Estonian Christian Music Academy.

In Kiev, I had the privilege of rehearsing the Kiev Union Baptist Choir (comprised of young people from the various Evangelical Baptist Churches in Kiev), formed and conducted by these two wonderful young men. Sergii and Vitaly were both students at the Christian Music Academy when I was first thrust into teaching during the exploratory visit concerning Prairie's Ambassador Choir proposed ministry tour. Given the challenges of language, I questioned the value of my contributions, compared to those of these young men who knew the culture, language, and students. But once again, the student-guest-servant principle ingrained in me by SEND In-

ternational since day one paid off. During the next five days, I saw choir members and conductors inspired, motivated, and taught in ways only possible by being a servant and student to these much younger men.

Thank you for your part in this ministry. I trust this report has encouraged you.

If not for the prayers

My name is Angela Aziz and my husband Hasan and I have lived in Three Hills almost five years, our purpose being that Hasan would take Prairie's aviation program. Hasan is working for Prairie as an admissions counsellor and has finishing his flying hours.

I (Angela) am at home with our two young children, Hope and Amir. After Hope was born, I got very sick, was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease, and required various medical procedures and medications. If not for the prayers of people in our community and wise doctors, I might have lost my intestines. God worked a miracle and now I am in the best health of my life.

Because my condition has been connected to giving birth, I have been advised not to have any more children. While I am not always completely happy about it, God has given us an amazing peace due to a process that began with us before we were married!

Both of us grew up knowing that adoption would be part of our lives. It was only a question of when. I had always thought it would come later in life (not in our 20's). But after Hope was born we felt God leading us in that direction. We are still in the preliminary stages, and most things have gone smoothly. Our heart's desire is to adopt from India, although at this point God might

I removed bucket after bucket of soil. Hundreds of buckets later, I had carved out a substantial cavity that allowed me to enter and dig from the inside to expand the excavated area.

Being careful to leave support pillars in place at strategic points to minimize the risk of collapse, I dug to the north and to the south inside the west wall of the cave. I pushed deeper into the cave to enlarge my standing room area and to provide more space for storing the full buckets of dirt that were waiting to be emptied onto the discard pile.

I was almost two meters below my entry point when a brick-sized piece of wall broke off; I stopped digging to examine this chunk of broken limestone. I immediately noticed there appeared to be not one, not two, but three layers of plaster of a very high quality attached to the chunk of limestone. Upon examining the wall from which the chunk had broken off, I realized the plaster was intact all the way from the underside of the collapsed roof down to the level at which I was digging.

I dug quickly to the north and to the south to ensure that the plaster that I was looking at was not just a small section of the cave wall, but as far as I dug to the left and to the right of my entry point the plaster was intact and complete. Also, after I had cleaned about a twelve-foot area of the west wall I could see a very gentle curve emerging and realized this section of the wall was just a small part of a much, much larger circular enclosure.

By now, I was certain I had discovered the long-sought water source for the site, a massive plastered water cistern located inside what had been an ancient cave—either natural or man-made—that stored run-off from the rainy season's

torrential downpours, a common practice in the Holy Land.

I dug faster, wanting to reach the cistern's floor. The floor was over three meters down from my point of entry, directly under the roof of the collapsed cave. Where the wall reached the floor there was a beautifully smooth curve as the wall gave way to the horizontal floor. The floor was also plastered, but it was so smooth it felt and looked like marble in the dim light of the flashlights. I excavated several feet inwards on the floor of the cave-cum-cistern and pushed my digging to the north along the wall where I suspected there was an outlet or inlet to the cistern with a simple but effective rock filter to block impurities.

It was at this point that the dig season ended. All other areas of excavation had stopped digging and had removed all their tools to storage. To my chagrin, I had to stop, the last to do so for the 2009 season. But to stop at such a point—perhaps only a few feet from one of the outlets or inlets to this massive but beautiful water cistern!

The 2009 expedition at Ramat Rahel answered, among other questions, one of the main questions: the source of its abundant water supply. Further exploration of this magnificent cistern will take place this summer.

The 2010 expedition begins in August and lasts two weeks. David Dunn, the author of this article, will be there, eager to get dusty and dirty again. His involvement in such an activity is, as he puts it, "Something I have always wanted to do. I have been drawn to it. It is a passion bottled within." It is an expensive passion. Even with Bridges for Peace throwing in airfare, these annual

of the beauty for at least an hour before falling to sleep. The next morning was Sunday, and we went to church after an enriching, fresh-fruit breakfast. We had the most wondrous pineapple, so fresh that when I picked up a slice, juice fell like a waterfall; yet still, as it entered my mouth, I could feel it was as juicy as ever.

I slept in a screened-in porch which was surrounded by jungle and all the smells and noises to go with it. Even though it was the jungle, with all the animals around, I felt safe. Many thoughts whirred through my mind—what beauty, what majesty! The animals produced a matchless symphony and I couldn't help but be struck by the awesomeness of God's genius and creation.

—Timothy Bowman

Digging into history at Ramat Rahel

Ramat Rahel is a kibbutz in southern Jerusalem. Ramat means high point, height, or high place and Rahel is from the word Rachel. Ramat Rahel is the high point in that part of southern Jerusalem, right next to the entrance to Bethlehem where Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin (Gen. 35:16-20).

Not only is Ramat Rahel a modern kibbutz, it is an archaeological park. Located on a hilltop on the eastern side of the Valley of Rephaim, which is the southern access to the walled Old City of Jerusalem, the elevation of the modern kibbutz and of the ancient settlements of the archaeological park is 645 meters (2,115 feet) above sea level. The glint of the Golden Dome on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is four kilometers to the north; the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is clearly visible four kilometers to the south.

The archaeological site was first explored as early as 1954, and then again from 1959–1962 by Israeli archaeologist Yonatan Aharoni. Forty years later, interest in the site was renewed when Tel Aviv University, in partnership with Heidelberg University, announced a five-year expedition to continue where Aharoni's excavations terminated. Of special interest were the remnants of a royal palace from the First Temple period that Aharoni had uncovered (an anomaly in the ancient world—a king's palace outside the city walls). The expedition also intended to dig deeper and wider into the seventh and eighth century B.C. settlements to understand the site's full history, as well as its nature, significance, population, activities, and ancient name.

The year 2009 was year five of the current expedition. As a permanent expedition member, I have been present for every season. Much was uncovered in previous seasons and some remarkable finds have stirred a great deal of interest in the site. A steady stream of world-class archaeologists have made their way to Ramat Rahel to view the excavations and be updated on the newly emerging understanding of the site's history and nature.

Since the second season (2006), it has been evident that the original site required an enormous amount of water for daily activities. Not only had the site served as a Persian administrative center, it also housed the Roman tenth and fourth legions during the Roman Empire days. Although a very elaborate system of waterworks had been uncovered, including baths and pools, a maze of water channels, and an elaborate arrangement of gardens, one question remained elusive and unanswered: what was the source of the huge volume of

A Design Demands a Designer

Article 5: The hand, God's amazingly designed tool.

Martin Reedyk

Imagine you are an engineer and have the task of designing a tool weighing about one pound with the following specifications.

Sensitivity

It must have capacity to detect and recognize small objects less than .5mm (like Braille), differentiate textures, detect temperature variations, and recognize a harmful environment like a hot stove and remove itself instantly.

Strength

It must have capacity to lift up to 200 kg, yet be gentle enough to pick up a raw egg without crushing it. It must be able to stroke a baby's skin and have the capacity to rip a phone book in two. It should adapt its surface to accommodate objects of various shapes, and toughen those surfaces subject to repeated use.

Dexterity

It must have the capacity to play a piano concerto, to produce correctly spelled documents by striking computer keys at 500 strokes per minute, and thread a nut onto a bolt in an inaccessible spot under the hood.

Durability

It must last a lifetime and repair itself when damaged.

Consider how God, in designing man for his task to rule over the earth and subdue it, gave him the versatile hand as a primary implement.

Flexibility and versatility

God made the hand with 27 bones and 36 muscles. He designed the forearm muscles to provide strength and the small muscles of the hand to provide dexterity and fine movements.

Control

The hand is controlled by an area of the brain equal in size to the area of the brain devoted to control of the trunk and extremities (excluding the hand) combined.

Protection

The hand's skin is unique. On the palm side, the skin is thicker and underlain by fat cells that are quilted into place so the skin is stable but padded to protect the bones. The skin also has the capacity to thicken and toughen at any point where there is repeated friction (calluses). On the back of the hand the skin is thin, pleated and flexible to provide increased length when the fist is closed.

Sensitivity

Three major nerves provide 15 times greater sensitivity to the hand than the skin of most of the rest of the body. This enables the hand to recognize even tiny objects by touch only.

Adaptability

The intricate system of opposing muscles allows the hand to assume multiple positions and maintain them for significant periods of time. These opposing muscles, combined with sensitivity, enables us to pick up delicate objects without crushing them.

This summary is but a small beginning of the hand's wonders. It is no surprise that scripture speaks often of the hand of the Lord in the context of His wonders. Every time you look at your hands, contemplate the amazing design that God has placed in this small but vital part of your body.

water the site clearly required? Nothing uncovered by the excavators had hinted at an answer as late as the mid-point of the 2009 season.

Then, I was asked to excavate on the west side of a collapsed cave. It was next to where I began digging that Aharoni had found evidence of a royal palace, including beautiful window balustrades.¹ Excavating by myself on this section, it did not take long before I found additional pieces of the balus-

trade, exactly as Aharoni had done. In total, I found eight new pieces of these beautiful window settings. Some scholars believe these window settings are the remains of what was described by Jeremiah the prophet in his scathing denunciation of the Judean kings in the last days before Judah and Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 22:13-14).

As I dug beside the collapsed cave, shards of pottery continuously appeared until at about the two-meter level I uncovered a row of four carefully carved oblong stones set tightly side by side. Between the stones a small opening

allowed me to see that under the stones was a cavity and then a layer of fine sand. I had uncovered an ancient Roman grave!

Working carefully because of their weight, I removed the two center stones and gingerly began loading the loose sand within the funeral cavity. After a short while, a beautiful Roman glass goblet came into view, and as I brushed carefully around it, I found three more, as well as a tiny but exquisite ceramic vase, probably an ointment or perfume bottle. The four Roman glass objects were in perfect condition, without any chips, scratches, or cracks. Two were

small goblets; two were candleholders. When put through a sieve, the sand yielded a beautiful delicate gold dangly earring. Its mate was found the next day in one of the goblets. The skeleton in the grave was only partially complete, and by the hip structure was recognizable as that of a female. There were skull, teeth, vertebrae, ribs, hip, and leg bone fragments. Also found were some of the hand and foot digits.

Having completed the excavation of the grave, I turned to excavating directly under the collapsed cave roof. Choosing an entry point at the top of the accumulated deposits under the fallen roof,

1. baluster—closely spaced and decorative supports.