

Wyatts' ministry among internationals broadens with transition to new city

By Carla Wynn Davis
CBF Communications

ATLANTA – This is the stuff Kim and Marc Wyatt's ministry is made of – a peaceful night's sleep for a refugee finished running from violence and danger, the sound of fellowship as a Christian connects with a once lonely international student and the joy of a congregation that rediscovers its mission and purpose in the world.

For more than a decade, the Wyatts, who serve as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship field personnel in Canada, have ministered among internationals, including students, immigrants and refugees. They began their CBF ministry in Thailand, where the firsthand experience of being an international helped them better understand those with whom they now minister. In 1998, they began serving at Matthew House, a refugee shelter in Toronto that has helped refugees from more than 75 countries resettle into Canada.

So successful and inspiring, the vision of refugee ministry grew and other similar ministries were soon born. As more individuals and churches became involved, the Wyatts widened their ministry scope to include meeting needs of other internationals, such as the large population of immigrants and international students living in Canadian-American border cities and Montreal, Canada's second largest city and the second largest French-speaking city in the world.

Last year the Wyatts, along with their children Rebecca, 18, and Jon Marc, 15, moved to Ottawa, the country's capital and fourth largest city, to be more centrally located to the mostly French-speaking congregations with which they partner.

One of these local churches is Eastview Baptist Church, a Portuguese and English-speaking congregation that the Wyatts are helping rediscover its missional presence. The church has connected with refugees like Pierre and his wife. Originally from the war-torn African country of Congo, the couple recently moved to Ottawa after years in Hong Kong, where they constantly feared deportation. The Wyatts have helped network churches and ministry organizations to assist this couple with furniture, employment, friendship and even a baby shower to celebrate the birth of the couple's first child.

“How wonderful it is when churches ... community leaders and municipal service providers ... work together for the common good, blessing immigrant families and communities,” said Kim, a native of Durham, N.C. “That is when we are so proud the word cooperative is in our name.”

Lately, the Wyatts have started ministering among a growing population of refugees from Haiti. These refugees journey to the United States and, fearing the risk of deportation, flee north to large Canadian cities such as Ottawa, where their native French language is more commonly spoken.

In Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal, the Wyatts are partnering with Baptist churches to create a refugee ministry that would include emergency housing assistance, a food bank and clothing giveaway, counseling services, immigration assistance and orientation to living in the country.

“Our work is to seek, discover, advance, encourage and bless the work [of Canadian churches] among internationals in their local neighborhoods,” said Marc, a native of Boone, N.C.

Ottawa is home to many immigrants, refugees and international students from approximately 150 countries. The doors for ministry are open, and through partnerships the Wyatts believe that more people can be reached with the presence of Christ.

“We work hard to include others with sharing the Great Commission of Jesus,” Marc said. “Much more is possible together than separately.”

While most of their work is with Canadian churches, the Wyatts also involve CBF partner churches such as First Baptist Church in Reidsville, N.C., which added the sending of a summer missionary to Canada to their already faithful prayer and financial support. Other supporting churches include First Baptist Church in Danville, Va., and Monument Heights Baptist Church in Richmond, Va.

“God is sending his church to so love the world, to share and demonstrate the gospel to everyone, everywhere,” Marc said. “God is bringing those he loves into proximity of his people, his church, his good news. Missionaries and churches are needed to send, support, pray for and welcome those [internationals] God is literally bringing to us.”

Like many CBF field personnel, the Wyatt’s ministry is funded by gifts to CBF’s Offering for Global Missions. Without financial gifts to the Offering, the Wyatts would be unable to live, minister and share the gospel in Canada.

“The churches and individuals who give faithfully to the Offering for Global Missions, those who pray, participate in our lives and work and send care packages are our family,” Kim said. “Each dollar that is given to the Offering makes [ministry] possible. Every dollar matters.”

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This year’s goal is \$6.1 million. Learn more at www.thefellowship.info/ogm.



Marc Wyatt, right, prays for the people of Lowertown, a community in Ottawa, where he and his wife, Kim, serve as CBF field personnel.