

Bios:

J Spurling grew up in Horseheads, N.Y. He was dedicated and baptized at Maranatha Bible Chapel of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA). J attended Nyack College where he received a Bachelor's degree in business administration and later received his Master's of Missiology degree at Columbia International University. J served as senior pastor at Neighborhood Church of Gainesville, Florida prior to going overseas with the C&MA.

Karen Liz Spurling was born and raised in Arima, Trinidad in the Caribbean. She accepted Christ and committed her life to full time missionary service at a young age. She was raised in the Evangelical Church of the West Indies, a group of churches established by World Team missions. Karen attended Columbia International University receiving her Bachelor's degree in psychology and a Master's of Arts degree with a concentration on Missions.

J's Testimony

"Cease striving and know that I am God." My testimony is a progression of my understanding God's desire for us to cease striving. It's been a shift from striving for total independence to being totally dependent upon Him. A change from the determination of personal increase to the want of my own decrease. I've come to understand that my Christianity is not an obligation but it is a response to the living God and His display of unconditional love for me. As we understand the extreme of God's love, His mercy, and His grace, what other recourse do we have but to respond to Him with our lives? My life is now in submission to what I believe to be God's **purpose**—to be glorified. To finish out the verse from Psalm 46:10 my life pursuit will be spent exalting Him *"among the nations,"* exalting Him *"in the earth."*

I was born and raised in the Christian and Missionary Alliance family. The son of an elder I've always had close contact with the church. However, I did not commit to Christ as Savior and Lord until I was 19 years old. Upon making that decision I immediately transferred to Nyack College, figuring I needed to immerse myself into a Christian community if I was to escape the entrapments of the world. After graduating from Nyack I found myself back inside that world and succumbed to its pressures. And three years later I found myself at my lowest emotional and spiritual point.

It was at this point that I recommitted my life to God. I believed in Jesus as Savior and wanted Him as my Lord but was having difficulty maintaining a Christian walk. My prayer life began to reflect that self-awareness. I would pray, "God, the Christian life isn't working for me. No matter what I do, or what I decide, I seem to end in failure. Father, I'm at a point where I would rather quit trying and walk away. But, before I do, please help me. Father you make this work because I can't." James' tells us that the prayer of a righteous man is both powerful and effective. I became a righteous man at the point I totally depended upon God. And my prayers for help continue to be powerful and effective.

In 1996 I began my seminary training at Columbia International University (CIU) in Columbia, South Carolina. During the following five years God continued to answer my prayer for help as He made my commitment to Christ "work." At CIU I learned what it meant to walk in the Spirit and live the victorious Christian life. I learned to be patient, to resist the devil, to listen to the still small voice of God, to understand humility and strive for it. There were so many things that I learned because of a willingness to place myself in the hands of God.

In 1999 God answered another prayer effectively. God arranged for me to marry a woman who far exceeded my expectations for a wife. The godly qualities that Karen possesses will enable us to make God known among the nations and in the earth beyond even my wildest imaginations. As we remain dependent upon Him, He will powerfully answer our prayer of being used by Him in reaching this world for Christ.

Karen and I served the Lord as part of our two-year home-service in Gainesville, Florida (at the time, a requirement for overseas ministries with the C&MA). J is served as the senior pastor and Karen proved herself to be a great help-mate to him. Often J referred to Karen as his unofficial assistant pastor. Although that was received in humor it was a sincere statement, in that Karen is indispensable. We committed ourselves to the ministry in Gainesville for a minimum of three years. Our greatest desire always remained to serve Him overseas as soon as He opened the door for us to do so.

People often ask us, "Where do you want to go? What people group has the Lord laid upon your heart?"

The reply is always, “We both seem to have a desire to minister in Latin America and we would like to eventually be involved in leadership training. But we will go where the Lord leads.” Honestly, we just want to go where there are people that need Christ, and that’s just about anywhere. Our success will be determined by our ability to remain in submission to Christ’s directives. As we remain faithful and focused on His centrality in our lives we will succeed in all things.