

# ‘Everyone from *CBF field personnel practice hospitality*



PHOTO COURTESY OF OTTAWA TOURISM

**K**im and Marc Wyatt serve as CBF field personnel among immigrants in Canada’s three most influential urban centers — Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. These cities rank among North America’s largest and most secular, increasing their diversity with nearly 200,000 new immigrants each year.

The Wyatts describe these areas not as a “melting pot,” but as a “mosaic, where all colors fit together.”

Every world religion and political opinion can be found here among internationals who have varied stories of how they came to Canada, a country known for its traditionally open immigration policy and support of refugees’ rights.

“Those God is bringing by His hand from homelands far away include doctors, business professionals, refugees, internationals in academic settings and the trafficked,” said Marc. “‘Everyone from everywhere’ is a good way to describe those we seek to serve in Canada’s cities.”

Whether they come for a new job or to flee persecution, immigrants and refugees flock

not to Canada’s rural communities, but to its cities, where there is greater access to jobs and assistance from government agencies.

“We look at this as God being involved — as part of God’s plan to bring people from distant lands within proximity of our own church fields to be touched and hear the gospel,” said Marc, who, has served with Kim in Canada for the last 12 years. Together they have coordinated social and evangelistic ministries for people from Pakistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Burma, China, India, the Philippines and other countries.

“We say to churches, ‘There’s a grand opportunity here. The city needs us. You

**GIVE** The Wyatts’ ministry is made possible through Fellowship Baptists’ gifts to the CBF Offering for Global Missions, which provides for their salary and ministry expenses.

# everywhere'

*as they minister in Canada's cities*



The Wyatts are based in Ottawa, where they facilitate ministries and partnerships for immigrants.

can be part of the solution to the needs of the city. What it takes is people saying, 'I'm going to be a missional person, be outward-focused, be responsive to the crisis of cities and communities, be salt and light.' This is the way that God is bringing everyone in the same direction," said Marc.

## Matthew Houses, Furniture Bank provide basic needs

Believing in the power of many hands working together to transform Canada's cities, the Wyatts have built their ministry on networking and partnership. Two networks

they have helped create are the Matthew House network and the Furniture Bank of Ottawa.

Matthew Houses, named because of Matthew 25:35 ("I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home"), provide temporary shelter and assistance with basic needs to newly arrived refugees in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Ft. Erie and Windsor.

"In Canada, it takes refugees about two years to go through the process to determine if they meet the United Nation's definition of 'refugee,'" said Kim. "While they are being evaluated, Matthew Houses provide assistance. These are people

who, in the United States, would go to detention centers or not be allowed into the country at all."

Azeb is a young woman from Ethiopia whose brother was killed 13 years ago because he was known to be both politically active and from a minority people group. After her brother's death, Azeb's mother sent Azeb out of the country to protect her. When she made her way to the United States, she was detained for several months in a U.S. detention center. Last summer, Azeb was told that she would be deported back to Ethiopia. She was disheartened un-

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This year's Offering goal is \$5.5 million, and you are a vital part of reaching this goal and keeping CBF field personnel in ministry. You can give to the Offering online at [www.thefellowship.info/give](http://www.thefellowship.info/give) or use the envelope included in this issue.

til she learned that one of her family members in Canada was able to convince the authorities to deport her to Canada instead.

Arriving in Canada last August, Azeb was one of the first residents to live in the newly opened Matthew House in Ottawa.

“It was her first time to speak English,” said Kim. “She stayed at Matthew House for about three months, and then we were able to help her rent a room within the Christian community. Two women in their 70s have opened their home to her, and now they are all just like family. She is cleaning the house and making breakfast, even though that is

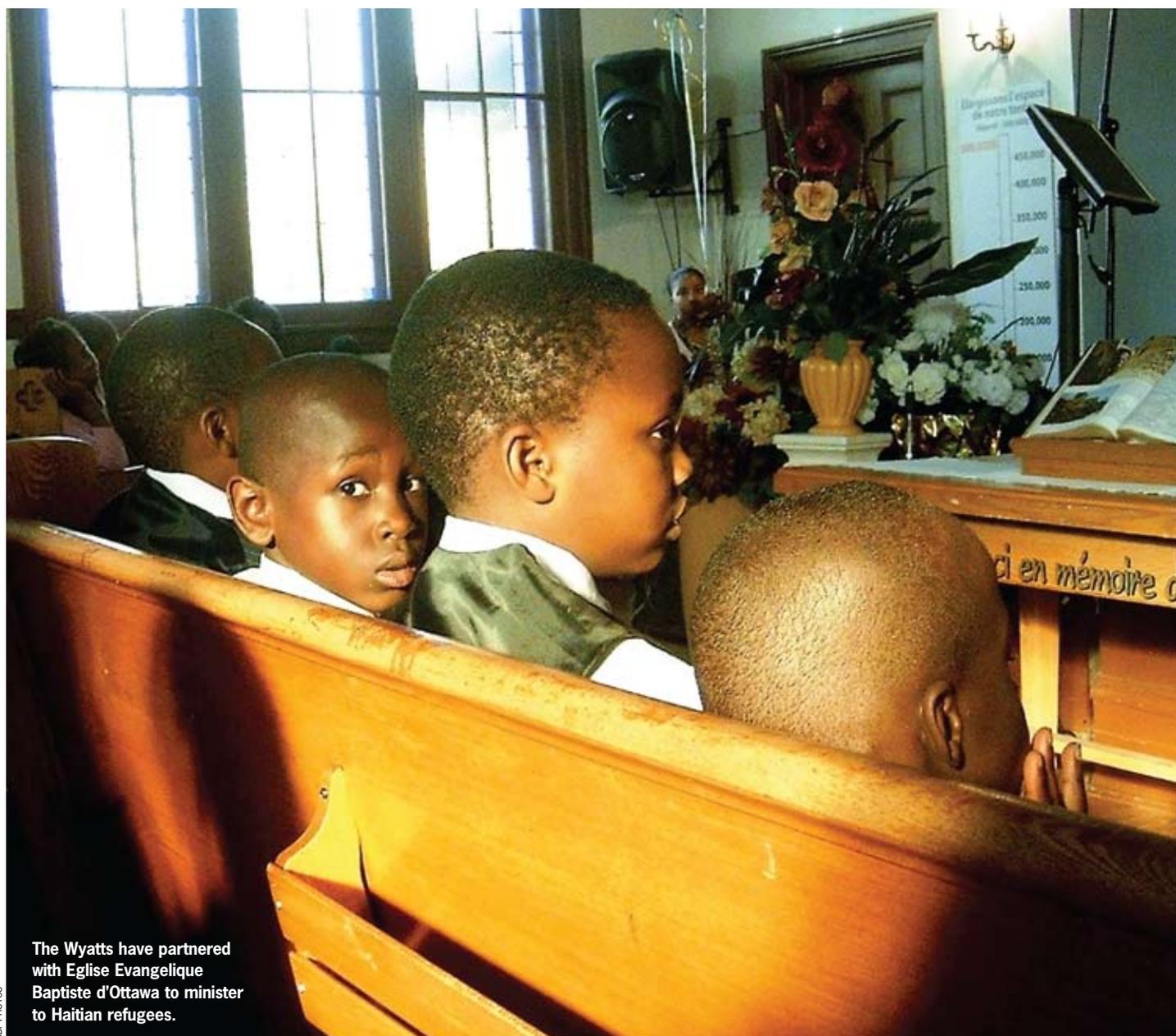
not part of the arrangement. She is starting over, working on her English so she can get a job and attending a Friday night Bible study. She is joyful. She says that God has been with her on her journey to get here.”

Azeb is just one of thousands of people that the Wyatts have been able to help during their transitional periods. Recently, Marc received a call about a Sri Lankan family who needed assistance getting settled into an apartment.

The family had just arrived in Ottawa with nothing but two suitcases and their two young children, ages 8 and 5. The call

came from an associate who knew of Marc’s connection with the Furniture Bank of Ottawa – a network the Wyatts started three years ago in partnership with 15 social service organizations, nine local businesses and eight churches to provide furniture and household items to those in need.

After using his small van to deliver multiple loads of furniture from the warehouse to the family’s new apartment, Marc invited the family over for dinner and learned the family’s story. They had left their homeland for the sake of their children because they no longer felt safe.



The Wyatts have partnered with Eglise Evangelique Baptiste d’Ottawa to minister to Haitian refugees.

They had experienced natural disaster, political upheaval and a lack of family support. Though they had no Christian background, through an ongoing friendship with the Wyatts, they began attending church and have become part of a Bible fellowship.

“They think it’s because of our friendship, but they have been brought by the hand of God to this place,” Marc said. “These doorways have opened their hearts to talk about things they’ve never thought about.”

## Urban ministries help newcomers build a new life in a new land

As a part-time pastoral care counselor at a secondary school with 1,300 students, most of whom are newcomers to Canada, Kim sees families every week who are aching for a friend.

“I meet people from every race and religion,” Kim said. “Folks want someone to pray with them. They’re trying to process [what’s going on in their lives].”

The Wyatts resource churches both in Canada and the United States, seeking to match neighborhoods in need with Christian individuals who can support them financially, in prayer, and through hands-on service. Ultimately, their goal is to help churches understand their role in being on mission with God.

“We challenge churches to invest in the needs of their communities instead of themselves; to network rather than go it alone,” said Marc. “We ask individuals to get back to the basics of hospitality, home meetings and volunteering in local schools and community programs.”

First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City is one of the Wyatts’ partner churches, supporting the Wyatts in prayer but also engaging in international ministry in Oklahoma City, specifically with local Chin refugees and Sudanese immigrants and refugees. Because the church and the Wyatts are doing many of the same things in their respective neighborhoods — addressing critical needs such as housing, language learning, empowerment and job development — they share ideas with each other.

“Our partnership with Marc and Kim serves as a vital part of helping our congrega-



**Marc Wyatt, right, prays with two participants in CBF’s Student.Go program for college students. The students worked with the Wyatts in the Lower Town neighborhood of Ottawa, a mix of high end and subsidized housing communities.**

tion fulfill the vision for mission that God has laid before us” said Tom Ogburn, senior pastor of FBC Oklahoma City. “In addition, we anticipate that the teams we will send to work beside them will come home with a stronger passion and deeper missiological understanding of what is required to serve as the hands and feet of Christ among refugees. The Wyatts are helping us gain a greater vision of what it means to walk beside refugees as a people of faith as they build new lives in new lands.”

## Making friends, changing lives

At its heart, the Wyatts’ ministry is based on the age-old idea of hospitality.

“It’s really simple — if we go back to practicing the hospitality we did when we were younger, we can be missional without ever having to get on a plane,” said Marc.

The Wyatts site statistics that among international students in the United States 70 percent are never invited into an American home and more than 80 percent are never invited to church. The Wyatts hope Fellowship Baptists consider everyday opportunities to reach out with hospitality to internationals in their own cities.

“Think about it. Where do you go every day? Who do you encounter? A colleague, your banker, the parent of a child in your child’s classroom?” Kim said. “It’s our hope that every Christian in the United States would have a friend from another country.



### About the Wyatts

Both originally from North Carolina, Kim and Marc Wyatt have been serving with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship since 1996. They began in Thailand, and now serve in Canada where they have been for 12 years, ministering among refugees and immigrants in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

“To whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). We have been given much and desire to share what we have been given with others.”

The story of who God is will come through in our friendship. In friendship, needs are met and lives are changed — the world is changed!”

The Wyatts’ life-changing ministry is supported by the CBF Offering for Global Missions. The Offering funds their salary and ministry expenses, as they seek to reach out to internationals in Canada and resource churches as they reach out to internationals in their own communities. The CBF Offering is not an extra contribution to their ministry. The annual \$5.5 million CBF Offering goal is the amount required to keep the Wyatts and many other CBF field personnel on the mission field.

“God’s plan is unfolding every day, little by little, among the nations where CBF field personnel serve,” said the Wyatts. “Here in Canada, your gifts to the CBF Offering for Global Missions make a difference daily. Thank you being a part of this ministry. Be faithful. Give generously.”

*By contributing writer Laurie Entrekin*