

Biographical Information

Name: Joel Wagner
Home church: Cornerstone Baptist Church
8508 Pelham Road, Greenville, SC 29615

Joel was born on February 19, 1984 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee but the family soon moved to Sandusky, Michigan where he grew up. Joel is the second of ten children with godly parents who were committed to raising their family to love and serve God. At an early age Joel remembers many conversations with his parents about things of the Lord. During one of these times, Joel finally realized the seriousness of his own sin and his personal need for the saving work of Christ. That day he called on the Lord and accepted God's gift of salvation. He was baptized shortly after. Joel and his siblings were all home schooled and he enjoyed growing up in the country where he learned hard work on a dairy farm from the age of thirteen until he went to college. His dad also set up a lawn care business for Joel and his brothers to help them earn their way through college. Although his parents were not in full-time ministry, they had a heart for the Lord's work and were always involved in church activities, especially missions. Joel grew up with the privilege of knowing many missionary families, seeing their example and testimony firsthand. The Lord began to work in Joel's heart and shape his perspective that serving the Lord was the greatest possible calling. As a teenager he committed his life to full-time service and believed the Lord was leading him to the mission field.

Toward that end Joel enrolled at Northland Baptist Bible College where the Lord directed him into the field of Biblical Languages. At the beginning of his sophomore year Joel heard the presentation by Glenn Kerr of the ministry of Bibles International, the Bible society of Baptist Mid-Missions. With over 4500 people groups still without God's Word in their language, Joel believed God was preparing him to serve in this field. The Lord confirmed this direction for Joel's life as he had opportunity to travel with Glenn to Myanmar and see the Bible translation process in person.

The Lord brought Sarah Braden into Joel's life through serving together on a ministry team at a local church and after graduation from Northland, Joel and Sarah were married on September 30, 2006.

Joel then continued his studies at Bob Jones Seminary in Greenville, SC where he enrolled in a Masters in Bible Translation that BI had helped create. After finishing this he went on to complete a Master of Divinity in 2012 as well. The Lord blessed Joel and Sarah not only with a wonderful church family in Greenville but also with six energetic children: Hannah, Will, Andrew, Kara, Sam & Laura. (God took Andrew home to heaven at his birth.)

Joel's first trip to Myanmar was in 2005. But after completing Seminary and starting deputation in 2012 Myanmar was still a closed country to missionaries. So the Wagners planned to move to India and be as close to the work in Myanmar as possible. In January 2015 the Lord allowed Joel to visit Myanmar for further training and it became obvious that things in the country were changing dramatically. Not only did the Lord bring in the needed support for the Wagners to move to the field that year, but by December 2015, after much prayer and council, the Lord opened the door for the whole family to move directly to Yangon, Myanmar! Currently in their first term Joel and Sarah are studying the Burmese language and training with Sr. translation consultants to take over current projects as well as help start translation work with new people groups as well.



Biographical Information

Name: Sarah Wagner
Home church: Cornerstone Baptist Church
8508 Pelham Road, Greenville, SC 29615

Sarah was born on March 10, 1982 in Nashville, Tennessee and raised in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. She was born to godly parents, the second of three girls. Sarah enjoyed school and attended Franklin Road Christian School from first through twelfth grade. After graduating as valedictorian she went to Northland Baptist Bible College and studied in the area of Secondary Education, with concentrations in counseling and business.

The godly influence of her family impacted Sarah so that she wanted to be saved at the age of five. At that time God graciously saved her from the penalty and power of sin and gave her His righteousness so that she could live for Him. About a year later she was baptized. Throughout elementary, high school, and college Sarah made choices to surrender her life to the Lord for full-time service, although with no specific direction. After meeting Joel Wagner when she was in her Senior year at Northland, God's specific plan began unfolding. Sarah was introduced, with Joel, to the ministry of Bibles International and followed the Lord's leading to become involved on a personal level. She had the opportunity to work at the office of Bibles International in Grand Rapids, Michigan for a year before marrying Joel on September 30, 2006. The year spent at BI proved to be a great experience and confirmation of the Lord's call for her to serve as a missionary.

In college Sarah had the privilege of serving on a weekend extension ministry to a local church for four years. Her main responsibility there was pianist. She has also enjoyed teaching Sunday school, singing in choir, and starting a young mom's fellowship group.

After their marriage in 2006 Joel and Sarah lived in Greenville, South Carolina until the completion of Joel's seminary studies in 2012. God has given Joel & Sarah six children, Hannah, Will, Andrew, Kara, Sam and Laura. In God's sovereign, merciful plan He took Andrew home to heaven at his birth in 2011.

Throughout high school and on college breaks Sarah worked as a receptionist and assistant at a photography studio in her hometown. Following her graduation from Northland Sarah worked for one year as graduate assistant at Northland, studying Bible and working as a secretary. In Greenville Sarah worked as administrative assistant at a marketing company for one year until Hannah was born. She has since been a full time, stay at home Mom, homeschooling their children while traveling across the country, and now around the world!

After traveling on deputation for three years the Lord made it possible for the Wagners to move to Yangon, Myanmar in December 2015. Currently in their first term Joel and Sarah are learning to adjust to a new language, culture and ministry among the many people groups in Myanmar.