

Where Are They Now?

Church-Planting in Thailand



Leslie Nesbitt (M.A. '02) and **Debbie (Yarrall, '06) Nesbitt** have been missionaries with Grace Brethren International Missions (GBIM) in Novosibirsk, Russia (Siberia), for the last five years, but recently completed the transition to Khon Kaen, Thailand, where they will continue serving with GBIM. In Siberia, the Nesbitts worked in church planting and leadership development, and in their new role in Thailand they will work in church planting and business for transformation. The Nesbitts have traveled to more than 25 countries, speak Russian fluently and are now working on their Thai. Debbie's siblings are all also serving cross-culturally. Her sister Angela (Yarrall, '94) Loudon and husband Bill Loudon (M.A. '09) live in Bogota, Colombia. Her brother, Jonathan, is serving with OM in London. Debbie and Angela's parents, Richard and Nancye Yarrall, are missionaries from New Zealand (to America!) working with Spanish speaking churches in Los Angeles. Leslie and Debbie have four children: Misha, 9, Sydney, 6, Lillie, 3, and Eveline, 1. You can follow them at their blog, <http://grace4russia.blogspot.com>, or at Leslie's photography site, www.nesbittphotography.com.

Working as One of Orange County's Top Lawyers

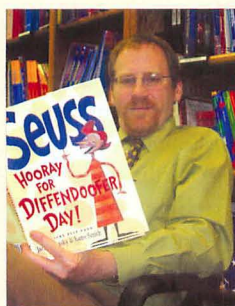
Brian Pedigo ('98) was recently selected by *OC Metro* magazine as one of Orange County's top lawyers for the second year in a row. After graduating from Biola, Brian was a programmer for Mariners Church in Irvine for nearly two years before he decided to pursue a career in law. Brian attended Whittier Law School from 2004 to 2007, where he focused on the field of intellectu-

al property. After passing the California bar in 2008, Brian founded his own firm — The Pedigo Law Corporation — with a service mark of "fighting for the average Joe." Brian chose this slogan because it was one of the main reasons he became a lawyer — to help the downtrodden, oppressed and hard-working average Joes who need legal help, he said. "There is often a large disparity in economic power in our current society," said Brian. "The poor, or even average, members of society are regularly crushed or treated abusively by creditors, insurance companies or even



governmental entities." Brian is married to Rosemead School of Psychology alumna Laura Pedigo ('07), and now lives in Corona, Calif.

Helping Schools Improve in Oregon



Rob Hess ('86) is the founder of Breakthrough Schools, a network of educators who are dedicated to school improvement and who believe that all children can learn and achieve at high levels. Rob has been a teacher and principal and is currently working as superintendent for the Lebanon Community School District in Lebanon, Ore., where he currently lives. Rob — who received a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Oregon — has written three books, taught courses at three universities and presented at state and national school conferences on topics such as school improvement, teacher leadership and systematic change. Rob recently helped lead a coalition of six school districts in Oregon in winning a \$13 million grant from the Teacher Incentive

Fund, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. With Breakthrough Schools, Rob offers consulting and coaching services with the goal of leading to school and district improvements and successful outcomes for all students. You can learn more about the organization at www.breakthroughschools.org. Rob is married to Jeanne ('86), who has a film production company called Crackpot Productions (www.crackpotproductions.com). They have four children: Daniel, Jacob, Grace and Truman.

Managing Award-Winning Fairgrounds

Rick Pickering ('81) is CEO of the Alameda County Agricultural Fair Association, and was recently recognized with the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award — a national award given to only one out of every thousand Eagle Scouts. Following graduation from Biola, Rick worked in city management for 15 years before taking on a leadership position at the Orange County Fairgrounds and then with the Alameda County Agricultural



Fair Association, a nonprofit that manages a 268-acre fair facility without the support of any tax dollars. The award-winning facility was recently dubbed "The Fastest Growing Fair in America for 2009," and Rick was named by *Amusement Business Magazine* as "One of the Most Creative CEOs in America." Rick's wife, Dawn (Bouwman, '82), whom he met at Biola, teaches at Valley Christian High School in Dublin, Calif., where she is head of the Bible department and was recently named 2010 "Teacher of the Year." Rick and Dawn have lived in Pleasanton, Calif., for the past 12 years and attend Valley Community Church. They have three sons — Chris, 23, Nick, 21, and Josh, 17 — who are all Eagle Scouts. In addition to his other endeavors, Rick recently started a new ministry, "Partner Resources in Ministry & Evangelism (PRIME)."

We surprised these alumni with a phone call or e-mail. Who knows, you may be the next alumnus to be featured in "Where Are They Now?"