



**Jon and Elin Morris -- brought together for God's purposes
by Karen Hesseberg**

Jon and Elin Morris are no longer able to work in the frontlines of missions, instead they make up a significant part of the provision line, equipping and inspiring students to take the gospel of love, freedom and justice to the Third World. This September they'll be leading the Justice DTS together.

Jon and Elin came as 19-year-olds from the ends of the earth and landed right in the middle, in Hawaii. Elin came from Norway in 2001 for a DTS, trusting God to help her out with the language. "I hated English in school," she says, now fluently! But she was well acquainted with God's voice, and simply asked Him to give her what she needed from the teaching. "The first three weeks I didn't understand much, but looking back and talking to the teachers I had in my DTS, I can see that God gave me the content on His own."

This childlike trusting faith has followed her all her life. "I felt God so close as a little girl and trusted Him wholeheartedly," Elin recalls. She loved to go hiking, talking to God. And this intimate relationship to God as her Father is still what Elin values the most.

On the other side of the world, Jon grew up in a Christian family in Australia. During his high school years he was caught up in surfing and the partying that came with it. "I always respected and believed in God, but didn't necessarily follow Him," Jon says. But as an 18-year-old, he made the decision of his life. He applied for a DTS in Kona. "I came in 2000, on what I planned to be a break from university," Jon says. Deep down he'd always wanted to work with children at risk and orphans, and now God set him up. His DTS went to China and Taiwan for outreach, where they were reaching out to needy children. He put on hold his plans of returning to Australia. "God led me to staff a DTS, and in the following years I oversaw five of them." YWAM became his career.

After Elin's outreach to Taiwan, she also felt led to stay. She just went home to work and save up money for another school. After doing the Introduction to Biblical Counseling School, she went on as staff. With her huge heart for the hurting, this was the right place to stay.

In 2002 they crossed paths as they staffed a DTS together.

Two years later they married here in Kona, as one of many cross-cultural happy couples in YWAM. But the years in between had held great trials. On the first outreach Elin led to Cambodia in 2003, she became seriously ill from multiple parasite infections. They went to several doctors, but it took months before one of them came up with a diagnosis. By that time the parasites had destroyed her whole digestive system and inflicted her with all kinds of allergies. This condition still dictates much of their everyday life. "Our marriage however, would not have been where it is today without the experience of Elin's sickness. You know, the issues that newlyweds go through? We've never had them, they all seem so minor!" Jon says.

For a season they left Kona and headed back to Australia, due to Elin's illness. "In the months after I contracted parasites, I slept 20 hours a day, sometimes couldn't walk and had to be carried to the bathroom."

Jon was seriously afraid she could die. Many nights he would turn over in bed to check Elin to make sure she was breathing. But Elin felt safe and experienced God almost touchable and closer than ever before.

She suffered serious side effects as Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia and she is still extremely limited in what types of food she can eat. It's striking though, this is not a weak woman! She seems to be glowing with love and strength. Maybe because there are no whys and whens in Elin's mind, only whats. There is no bitterness as to why she got ill, no speculating on when she will be healed. It's all about what to do today, to her family and the people in her heart, the unreached and the poor. And the outreach to Cambodia? "I still consider this as the best time of my life," Elin smiles. "I love the people there!"

Jon worked as a youth and young adults pastor at his parents' church for three years in Australia. They both loved this ministry and the opportunity to live in the Gold Coast of Australia. But their hearts moved them back into missions. They sold their car and their beautiful condo on a lake, gave the dog away and moved back where it all started, Kona.

"It has been remarkable watching the Lord lead their lives together, and to see Him build a passion for the poor and the needy in them," said DTS leader Sean Murphy. "Jon is a true leader of leaders, and Elin is a master discipler of young women, helping them to discover and step into the dreams God has deposited into their hearts." Sean met Jon and Elin back in 2001, and he and his wife consider them as both friends and family.

Five months ago their relationship was crowned with a little princess, Matea. A miracle to them and people close to them, knowing their trials. "She's so much alive," Jon laughs, fittingly proud.

And the pregnancy left Elin stronger. She now is completing her education as a nutritionist. This coming autumn she and Jon are going to lead the Justice DTS together. On their homepage jonandelin.com you won't find anything about their own struggles, their focus is on the poor and the broken caught up human trafficking, war, AIDS or poverty.