

Transforming

Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Summer 2015
VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 2



Incarnation is God's pattern for mission



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Virginia Mennonite Missions

Called. Sent. Transformed.

Extending God's embrace

BY AARON KAUFFMAN
PRESIDENT



Sometimes the Apostle Paul sounds absolutely crazy. For example, take these words from 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NRSV): "Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose."

Today the estimated number of Christian denominations exceeds 45,000. United in the same mind and purpose? Ludicrous! Since when have Christians ever agreed on everything?

Undaunted, Paul addresses the skepticism of the fractured Corinthian church, and our own. Perhaps we don't need to agree on everything. But we must be united in the one thing, the only thing, that has brought us together in the first place: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

If we think Paul a fool, perhaps we need to hear the gospel again. There's no way around it. At the very center of the Christian message stands the shameful, ugly, offensive cross of Christ. A crucified God is the heart of the gospel. And it was and is a scandal.

"Jews demand signs," Paul says. "Greeks desire wisdom." How many of us see the cross as the height of power and the epitome of wisdom? Jesus, King of the universe, nailed to the most humiliating instrument of Roman dominance and control? Jesus, God's Word made flesh, taking on the curse of sin by absorbing its effects in his own broken body? How can this be good news?

Article 8 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* puts it this way:

God so loved the world that, in the fullness of time, God sent his Son, whose faithfulness unto death on the cross has provided the way of salvation for all people. By his blood shed for us, Christ inaugurated the new covenant. He heals us, forgives our sins, and delivers us from the bondage of evil and from those who do evil against us. By his death and resurrection, he breaks the powers of sin and death, cancels our debt of sin, and opens the way to new life. We are saved by God's grace, not by our own merits.

Put more plainly, on the cross, Jesus extends his arms in an embrace that's big enough to reach our entire broken world.

Embrace is a compelling image for mission in a divided world. Like Jesus, we open our arms to others, inviting them to welcome us and the kingdom we represent. In an effort to make the offer understood, we learn their language and adopt their customs. Like Paul, we become "all things to all people" that we might save some (1 Cor. 9:22). But we force no one to accept the offer. We assume the profoundly vulnerable posture of holding our arms outstretched. Our audience is free to refuse us, ignore us, or even outright oppose us. Yet we gently persist in making the offer. Those who welcome us and the gospel become equal members in the family of God. Together, we extend God's embrace even further.

In a divided church and society, Jesus' offer of embrace still stands. How will we respond?

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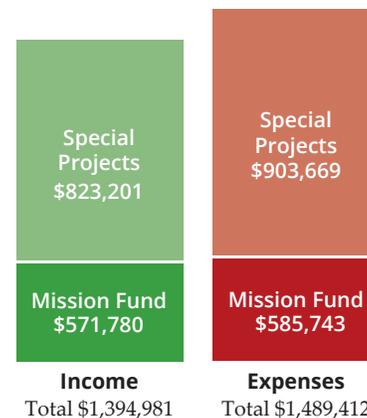
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Transforming

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Commissioning Join us for a tranSend commissioning service

Virginia Mennonite Missions will bless and send the 2015 class of tranSend in a meaningful time of worship and fellowship, Thursday, July 16, at Hershberger Barn (5647 Wengers Mill Rd., Harrisonburg, Va.) Following the service, enjoy a Taste of Missions featuring foods from our areas of ministry around the world.



Katrina Schmid

Whitney Specht



Elsie and Richard Bowman

Balkans Workers renewing terms and returning to service

Four VMissions workers are planning to return to their service assignments this fall. Katrina Schmid, a tranSender at Lezha Academic Center (LAC) in Albania, will return for another academic year. Whitney Specht, a tranSender in Kosovo, will return to work with livestock management and a milk plant in Istog. Richard and Elsie Bowman are currently serving with *Partners in Mission* at LAC, and will return as tranSenders for the new academic year.



Kitchen renovation New office kitchen provided with volunteer labor and materials

Virginia Mennonite Missions has been blessed with a new kitchen, designed and built with mostly volunteer labor and materials. It is a beautiful and welcoming space and we want to thank everyone who contributed to it.

Christian Education Consider opportunities to sponsor students

Partner with VMissions to support students in Christian schools in Albania and Jamaica.

The **Joshua Center** is an early learning center located in a lower-income and underdeveloped section of Lezhë, Albania, populated predominately by Roma (Gypsy) families. The center is directed by VMissions worker Norma Teles, in partnership with Junta Menonita de Missões Internacionais.

Maranatha School for the Deaf provides Christian education for students with a variety of disabilities. The school is a ministry of Jamaica Mennonite Church in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Missions. This past year, Caleb and Roni Kiefer have been serving at Maranatha with VMissions.

Learn more at vmmissions.org/schools/

Join the team Advancement Director

Virginia Mennonite Missions seeks a full-time Director of Advancement to lead the Advancement Team in generating resources for mission support and communicating God's work through VMissions. Qualified applicants will demonstrate personal faith in Jesus Christ, commitment to the church and mission, a strong reputation, proven leadership, and excellent interpersonal and team-building skills. Position supervised by the President. Beginning August 2015. To apply, contact: dianna.lehman@vmmissions.org. See vmmissions.org for details.

Staff transition Sherah-Leigh Gerber to transition to pastor role



Answering a call to pastoral ministry, Sherah-Leigh Gerber will begin as Associate Pastor of Worship, Discipleship

and Care at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, beginning August 30. She will complete her service to VMissions as Director of Advancement on July 31. We extend our thanks and gratitude for her excellent work on behalf of VMissions. We will miss her presence in the office and her strong commitment to missions.

tranSend anniversary Videos available to show in congregations

The tranSend 10-year celebration video that debuted at Conference Assembly is at vmmissions.org/u/bhq, along with several shorter videos of specific workers. Consider showing this great introduction to the tranSend program to your congregation during a moment in mission.

● Being a bridge

Richard and Elsie Bowman served with *Partners in Mission* at Lezhe Academic Center and as a bridge to the local Mennonite church, living the Gospel incarnationally in the city of Lezhë, Albania.



BY RICHARD L. BOWMAN

As I consider some of the scenes from our living in Lezhë, Albania, I hope our lives are showing the Good News from God. A few examples:

Some time ago I walked with my tea mug from the teachers' room to the sink in the main eating area at Lezha Academic Center, one of the women staff members came scurrying up to me and said I should not be washing my own cup. So with my usual bent to tweak the system (or persons) around me, I asked, "Why?" I was eventually told that it is because of my age (66 going on 88?) and that I am a man. "In Albania, men just do not do this. Women do."

When meeting a church member or friend on the street, should I give them kisses on both cheeks or just a handshake?

One Saturday, three of us couples were invited to a student's home for lunch. It was a very pleasant outdoor setting with plenty of good food and good conversation. As the perceived older person there who deserved honor, as I was told, I received the head of the roasted kid goat from which to get savory morsels to eat. I felt very honored, even though it was a bit of a startling experience.

There is also the problem of cheating among some students that appears to arise, at least in part, from the high value placed on loyalty to friends and family in Albanian culture (and in many other cultures).

When I move into another culture, I must learn to know that culture in real and practical ways.

So how do we as God's people share the Good News that through Jesus Christ we can become God's children—redeemed, forgiven and given meaning for living? One of the names for Jesus that means a lot to me is "Immanuel," which Matthew (in 1:21) defines as "God with us," that is "God incarnate."

And the Apostle Paul gives us this same mission elsewhere in 1 Corinthians.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. (12:27-28)

"And yet I will show you the most excellent way." (31b)

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (13:13)

To me, incarnational living means two primary things. First, when I move into another culture, I must learn to know that culture in real and practical ways. My goal is to acquire it as my second nature. But as a finite human being who was born into another culture, I will often make mistakes and "goofs." (For some reason, my students at LAC find my use of that word to be very humorous.) For me, admitting my imperfections and failures is also part of being the Good News incarnate in an adopted culture.

So I am trying to learn the language and its idioms (albeit not very rapidly), new and old foods and how to cook and eat them, how to wash dishes and clothes, how to clean our apartment, and especially how to be friends with others in the new culture. When Dini Shahini put his arm around my shoulder as we walked along the sidewalk, I felt I was beginning to understand how to be and have a friend in Albania.

The second part of incarnational living is to know when and where God wants to speak into a culture and redeem its practices and its people. This should be done neither lightly nor quickly. Only as God, through his Spirit, works in



Elsie and Richard (left) with friends Rafael and Morela Çukaj at the Guri i Themelit church. Photo: Richard Bowman



The worship team leads songs at Guri i Themelit, including Justin Rittenhouse (left), a teacher at Lezha Academic Center, and pastor Rafael Tartari (with guitar). Photo: Richard Bowman



Klejdia, a senior at Lezha Academic Center, works hard on her chemistry final. Photo: Richard Bowman

our lives to sort out what is from our culture of origin, our adopted culture, and the counter-cultural nature of the Gospel, can we begin to know how to be God's transforming servants.

I need to be God's humble servant (at least that feels more comfortable to me than being his raging prophet) sharing God's love when trying to bring the Good News into another culture.

Only as I really know the culture and love the people will I begin to be aware of how to address issues of violence in families, tribes and nations. Only then will I understand the biblical principles behind collaborative leadership that fit into the new culture.

When do I wash my own tea mug? When should I be willing to let others serve me as their cultural hospitality?

Being Christ's disciple will always be lived out in a culture and will transform that culture, but it should never be equated with that culture.

God wants to take real people in real societies and make them into transformed people. Not because some of us are perfect (we are not!), but because God loves all people everywhere. We have been given the task of loving others who are not yet in God's family.

Richard Bowman serves in Lezhë, Albania, with his wife Elsie. He teaches science and works with the local Mennonite Church.

● Living the incarnation



In the heart of the South Asian Muslim world, James and Ann work with a small business and with the local church in discipleship, neighborhood outreach, and developing leadership and resources.

BY JAMES AND ANN*

Benefactor or servant?

Let's just imagine that you feel called to serve unreached Muslim people in South Asia. Where do you start? Most of us would probably start with looking for service opportunities in which we could use our expertise – as doctors at a mission hospital, Bible teachers, and development workers.

Upon arrival, we'd juggle a full-time position with setting up a home, getting to know local coworkers, and doing two or three months of language learning. If you were to join our team, we would ask you to put your service ideas on hold until you finish two years of language and culture study.

"But isn't that squandering precious time that could be spent serving? Why would you do that?"

Jesus contrasted his example of true servanthood from the pagan's model of becoming a "benefactor" leader:

"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that...I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:25,26).

A benefactor is a powerful person who, from a distance, gives money or resources to help the less fortunate. But Jesus divested his position and became one of us. Too often, well-intentioned attempts to serve have resulted in bitterness by the recipient culture because those initiatives were entirely from the outsiders' point of reference.

Studying language, building trust

Veteran missiologist Paul Heibert has said, "No task is more important in the first years of ministry in a new culture than building trusting relationships with the people." You can't truly serve people unless you understand them, you can't understand another people until you learn their perspective, and learning their perspective takes prolonged language and culture study! When we use colorful local idioms, smiles break out on our friend's faces; they feel like their culture has worth. Good language skills are also necessary for deep discipleship. God's Word and the Holy Spirit are of utmost significance, but God uses flesh-and-blood mentors to grow new disciples.

Home stays

If you joined our team, we would have you live with a local Muslim family for about a year. It is terribly hard: You must eat and sleep as the family eats and sleeps, and function without any English. All of our teammates can attest to days in which each moment was painful. To debrief and rest, you'd spend weekends with teammates, who would sympathize with the frustrations of being perpetually treated as a child, help you navigate confusing cultural situations, and treat you to some Western comforts.

We are so grateful that we were directed in this way. One time when James was sick, our host father fed James an unknown herbal remedy in the middle of the night. Ann was terrified, "What are they feeding him?!" But after that, our hearts were more bound

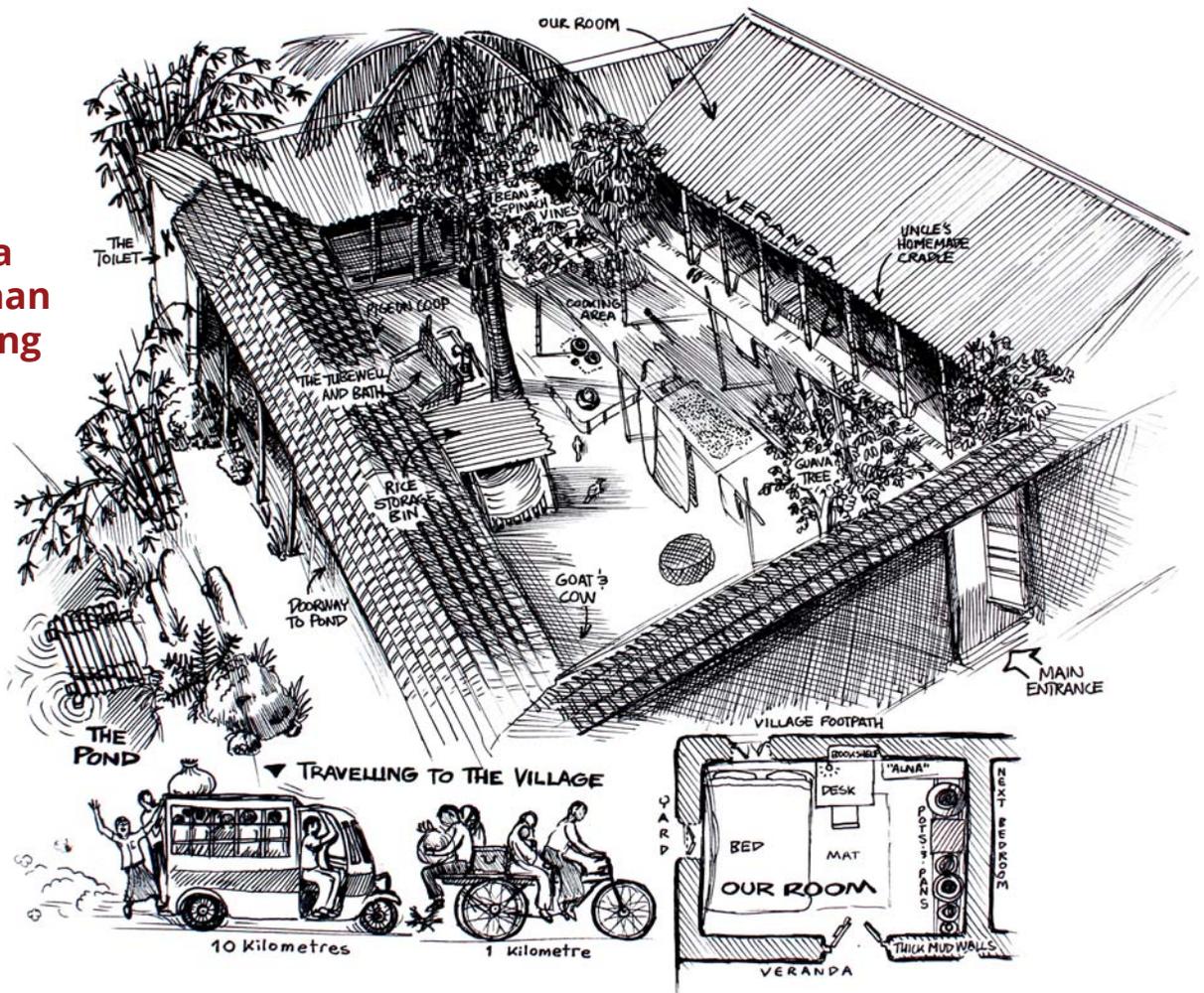


Ann enjoys spending time with her host family's young child. Photo by author

No task is more important in the first years of ministry in a new culture than building trusting relationships with the people.

—Paul Hiebert

A sketch by James of his family's village homestay, where they lived with a local Muslim family as they studied language and culture.



James and Ann's host family makes bread for the evening meal.

Courtesy photo

But when she saw how we lived, gradually she relaxed and

together. We had become their children, and talking about faith became more natural.

Homes for hospitality

If you joined our team, we would want the home that you eventually establish to be a place that feels familiar and welcoming to locals.

I remember when some local believing friends came to visit a Westerner's beautiful home. They were in awe over the perfume beside the bathroom sink! That's all they wanted to talk about! All our affluence and gadgets can easily distract them from what we want to communicate: Jesus.

This last year we got to know a new believer, a young Muslim cleric. He and his

Ann had some good conversations with her.

It's hard to change lifestyles and tastes, but new preferences eventually emerge. When our teammate, Franklin, returned home to the Solomon Islands after years in South Asia, he lost no time in buying his favorite brand of 'spicy tuna.' At first taste, he thought the product had been changed, since it wasn't spicy; then he realized that it was his taste buds that had changed!

Whose church?

Incarnational ministry is not just about building trust and having good conversations – ultimately it is about what kind of church we plant. If we don't study language and culture, we will inadvertently convey a Western model of church into our new setting. Learning from the locals, serving them, creates space for their discernment. They might end up worshipping in ways we don't appreciate; they might like books of the Bible that we hardly read. But when a local comes into this "indigenous" church, he will say, "These are my people! This is my culture!" The chance for exponential growth will be much greater as will the level of local initiative, because they will see the church as theirs, not as a Western transplant. Then we foreigners get to go home and let them multiply, because it's been their church from the start.

*James and Ann (*pseudonyms) serve in South Asia with their two children, in partnership with VMissions.*

New Creation opening shop to combat sex trafficking

BY CAITLIN TICE

I grew up with the idea that to be a missionary meant going overseas to a poverty-stricken land where no one had ever heard of Jesus. I watched missionaries leave my church to head to the mission field to share the love of Christ with people in other countries. They would come back sharing stories and photos of the work God was doing, and thought maybe someday I would do something like that. As I got older and began gaining a better understanding of what it means to be a missionary, seeing so much need in my own country and in my own community, I thought, “why must someone go to a faraway land to be the hands and feet of Jesus? Is it possible to do this in my own community where I see huge needs in every corner?”

I did not feel called overseas, and I wrestled with that for a while because that was how I saw other people “doing missions.” I soon learned that God was calling me into something different. I was being called to serve my Creator by serving my local community; by finding a need and creating a business to meet that need. I have spent the last 12



The New Creation team at a “pop-up” shop selling items at the ONE Justice Conference in Richmond this past May.

years building relationships that I now realize were stepping-stones for my journey: God leads us near and far. God has a plan, and for me, right now, that means staying in my own community.

My stepping-stones led me to an amazing organization, New Creation, a ministry in Harrisonburg combatting human trafficking. My heart pulled me in their direction immediately: a business fulfilling a need! There are places in my own community that need the light of Christ. I didn’t move to a faraway land, but I am still giving my life to serve the Lord.

Over a year ago, New Creation purchased a former pornography shop to house the ministry. The work in our New Creation Shoppe funds rescue and restoration around the globe for victims of sex trafficking, as well as, assisting prevention and education in our community. We carry items from nine organizations; these products are handmade by survivors and designed for justice. With a global mind and local approach, New Creation is allowing me to share the grace and truth of the gospel in Harrisonburg.

We will open our doors to the public on July 25 after a 14-month renovation process. We are so excited to be able to focus our attention not on daily construction needs, but rather on people as we share the love of Christ and teach about the reality of who God is and who we are designed to be.

Looking back on my life and the way God has knit each event and situation together, I want to fall on my knees in praise. He has been preparing me for missions since I can remember. Being the hands and feet of Jesus is the best calling one can receive, no matter where in the world one is called.



Volunteers remove carpet and help with painting (left side: international students from Up with People, right side: youth from Renew Camp) Courtesy photos

Caitlin Tice is a tranSender, serving at New Creation in Harrisonburg, Va.

A snapshot of Kids Club with Seth and Theresa Crissman

BY SKIP TOBIN

Katie waited on her porch, waiting to get picked up for Kids Club, like every Monday evening. Kids Club is her favorite part of the week.

She was among the first to come when Kids Club started in May. Leaders from Early Church and Immanuel Mennonite Church met with Seth and Theresa Crissman to listen, pray and launch a new way of sharing God's love in their local neighborhoods. Three years ago, Seth and Theresa worked for Eastside Church, beginning a Kids Club partnership with Ridgeway to do the same thing: share God's love in their neighborhood.

Last May, when volunteers from Immanuel and Early Church invited their neighborhood to come, Katie was there, curiously peering through the screen door. First Katie invited her sister because she didn't want her to miss out. What happened at Kids Club was just too good not to share.

After a few weeks Katie invited her next door neighbors and they started coming. A few weeks later she showed volunteers where her friends the next street over lived. Over the next several months, Katie seemed to invite the whole neighborhood.

But one family wasn't allowed to come no matter how many times Katie invited them. Katie would ask the adults walking with her, if they could stop and invite them and week after week they gave different reasons for not coming; it was shopping, or busy, just going out. But Katie kept inviting. One week, after another rejection, a volunteer noticed tears coming down Katie's cheeks and asked why Katie was crying. "It's not true! Why can't they come?" Katie cried. But, two invitations later, Katie finally received a "yes." She was ecstatic, like the shepherd who had found their lost lamb. And, much to Katie's joy, they've been coming ever since.

Every Monday evening at Immanuel, you can find a dozen volunteers in blue t-shirts from several congregations with around 40 children, pre-K through 8th grade. Together, they sing, act and retell stories from the Bible, eat and

Seth leads a Kids Club activity at a local congregation.



Seth and Theresa, with daughter Eliana, will be serving in the Shenandoah Valley, helping churches share the Good News with children in their local communities through Kids Clubs. Courtesy photos

play together as they learn to give and receive God's love with each other.

Seth and Theresa Crissman are beginning a two-year term with VM Missions to provide direction and coaching to congregations interested in sharing God's love in their own communities through Kids Clubs. They bring expertise and enthusiasm to equip congregations to engage as mission-shaped communities. They are currently raising funds, hoping for a fall 2015 launch, pending adequate funding. Please contact skip.tobin@vmmissions.org for more information on how you can participate and support this ministry.



Skip Tobin is Cultivate Coach and USA Ministries Director for Virginia Mennonite Missions. He is also supported by Virginia Mennonite Conference.

Kids Club: a local My Coins Count project



Virginia Mennonite Missions has designated Kids Club as one of its 2015 My Coins Count projects. This program, formerly known as Penny Power, will help provide the material resources for this ministry.

As part of the Virginia Mennonite Relief Sale, My Coins Count donations are divided evenly between Mennonite Central Committee and VM Missions. Learn about the other designated projects at vmmissions.org/support/my-coins-count

Call to Prayer: Multiplication

BY SARAH SHOWALTER

What does prayer have to do with fishing? It may seem like a petty request to ask God to give you a big catch, but what if you're fishing for more than just fish?

Jesus invited his disciples to follow him, promising that he would show them how to "fish for people." (Mark 1:17) Just as Jesus multiplied the catch of fish for his fisherman disciples, so Jesus wants to multiply the "catch of people" for his followers today.

Last year, I tried an experiment of working one day a week at a retail store as a way to expand my interactions with non-believers. I quickly met several co-workers who did not know Christ as Lord, but then I faced the problem of trying to figure out what to say and how to steer conversations towards faith. It's not always an easy thing to do!

So I began to pray. First, I asked God to show me one co-worker to focus on, one whose heart might be open to the Lord. I was pretty sure it wouldn't be "Chris," an ex-marine with a calloused attitude who took joy in degrading other co-workers. But to my surprise, the more I prayed, the more I was pointed towards him. I began asking God to give me opportunities for conversation with Chris and to provide open doors.

A week later, the schedule at the retail store changed and I began working with Chris every week, often times one-on-one. Not only did God provide the space for conversations to happen, I could also see God directing the conversations, opening doors as Chris shared about trying to reconcile with his wife after a separation, of his struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder, and his difficult relationships with his family. I saw God answering my prayers for open doors and I know that He was working in Chris's heart. I often look back and wonder what I might have missed if I hadn't sought the Lord's aid.



Fisherman heading out with their nets in south India. Photo: Sarah Showalter

Just as Peter, James and John got the catch of a lifetime after listening to Jesus' instructions, so fishing for people starts with being tuned into what God is saying!

Ways to pray for multiplication as you "fish for people:"

Ask God to show you where to fish. Are there places where you regularly interact with non-believers? If not, ask God to show you where you might start connecting with non-believers on a regular basis. Maybe it's joining a secular mom's group, a bike club, or a yoga class. Or maybe it's spending more time in your backyard or on your street getting to know your neighbors.

Pray for specific persons. Be explicit in your asking. Pray for specific non-believers in your lives and pray that they would know Christ.

Pray for opportunities. Ask God to open doors for conversations with the non-believers you're praying for. Trust God to provide spaces and opportunities to share his love with your non-believing friends. Not only do we invite God to work in those relationships in that way, we also increase our awareness and intentionality in such opportunities. It's harder to miss the open doors when you're looking for them.

Ask others to pray with you and hold you accountable. Life Transformation Groups (LTGs) are a great example of how this can work. Two to three people commit to reading Scripture and praying together, and holding each other accountable. Part of the prayer guide includes "interceding for two people you know who have not embraced the good news that Jesus is Lord." Your group then joins you in prayer for these persons and checks in with you weekly to see how interactions are going. The hope is that when these persons become believers, they will join the LTG and participate in the practice of disciple-making. (LTG resources are available at VMissions.)

Ask God for divine appointments. Be open to ways God might be inviting you to cast your nets outside of your regular zones of interaction. Begin each day asking God who you should share with that day. You might meet someone in the grocery store check-out line who just needs an encouraging word, or you may run into an old acquaintance who really needs a reminder that God cares for them. Ask God to make you aware of ways to show His love through you each day. And when God speaks, ask for the courage to obey!



Sarah Showalter is the Administrative Assistant for Virginia Mennonite Missions.



Shawn and Laura with their sons Emmanuel (left) and Lucas. Courtesy photo

Worker profile: **Shawn & Laura Green**

Home: Harrisonburg, VA
(New Beginnings Church)

Service program: Long-term

Serve in South Asia

Dive into an immersion experience in a Muslim context. VMMissions has openings to serve with tranSend or longer-term in South Asia. Assignments feature home stays, language study and mission mentoring. Join a team dedicated to prayer, relationship-building and discipleship. Based on location, assignment may include assisting at a Christian-run business (as mission), working with a local fellowship of believers to develop leaders and multiply the Gospel in culturally relevant ways.

Go to vmmissions.org/tranSend to learn more and to discover other service opportunities.

Assignment:

We are in the town of Termoli, Italy, on the Adriatic coast. Our goal is to assist the church at Vasto in forming a sister church in Termoli.

There is already a home group community of believers that meets during the week, but we are still in the discipleship/spiritual growth stage so currently we are meeting together with the church in Vasto.

We assist where needed at the church in Vasto on the weekends, while building relationships with both the believers in the the Vasto/Termoli areas and also in our community and daily routine.

Biggest challenges:

Challenges include balancing our relationships and responsibilities between the two communities of believers, working within a local culture that equates the state religion with the corruption in government and sees no use for either, and balancing ministry life with raising small children.

Biggest joys:

Seeing six people complete the discipleship course this past spring and follow in believers baptism, seeing our children becoming more acclimated to the culture, and being able to live life and be an example and encouragement to the believers here, especially the first generation that don't know what growing up in a believing family looks like.

A typical day:

Laura has language lessons several mornings a week or shops the local vendors to buy food for the day. Late morning and afternoons are set aside for Shawn to study and prepare for Bible studies or worship responsibilities. We are then either at Bible study, youth group, or prayer meeting in the evening. If we don't have an event in the evening, we try to either host friends or neighbors or go down into the town square to make connections and build relationships.

transSend service opportunities with

(a one-year program of cross-cultural mission service and discipleship)



Location	Context	Assignment	Qualifications
Lezhe, Albania 	Lezha Academic Center (LAC) offers rigorous academics with a Biblical worldview to over 80 students in grades 7-12.	Teaching: Join the teaching staff of LAC. Support the long term vision and ministry of the Albanian Mennonite Mission, including church planting, leadership training, community development, and education. Study Albanian language and culture.	Licensed secondary education teachers in the areas of history, math, and science; TESOL training preferred.
Mindanao, Philippines 	Peacebuilders Community, Inc. ministers in a context of religious polarization, poverty, displacement, and ongoing violence.	Peace-building: Engage as a peace-building intern with Peacebuilders Community, Inc. Use interests and skills to partner with local agencies and entities in a variety of peace-building activities. Study local language(s) and culture.	Skills and training in biblical peace-building, workplace mediation, and/or corporate conflict transformation.
Nazareth, Israel 	Nazareth Village brings to life a farm and Galilean village, recreating Nazareth as it was 2,000 years ago.	Christian Presence: Relate to visitors from many cultural and religious backgrounds. Participate in the operation of the farm and village. Worship at a local church. Study Arabic and/or Hebrew.	Willingness to live and learn in a conflicted society and relate sensitively to people of other faiths.
Bangkok, Thailand 	A small Catholic-run refugee center provides English-based 9-5 services for urban refugees and asylum seekers in the city.	Refugee Ministry: Serve as a volunteer at the center and cultivate relationships in the broader refugee/asylum seeker community. Teach refugee children, serve in the medical clinic, or provide social work assessments and help clients connect with social services. Study Thai language and culture.	Bachelor's degree in education, nursing, or social work or appropriate experience.
South Asia 	Dive into an immersion experience in a Muslim context with home stays, language study and mission mentoring.	Join a team dedicated to prayer, relationship-building and discipleship, receiving regular mentoring from seasoned mission workers. Based on location, assignment may include assisting at a Christian-run business (as mission), working with a local fellowship of believers to develop leaders and multiply the Gospel in culturally relevant ways.	A commitment to discipleship formation and desire to live with humility in a community—believers and not yet believers. Willingness to learn language and be part of a team.

Contact Martin Rhodes, Director: martin.rhodes@vmmissions.org • (540) 434-9727