

# Transforming

Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Summer 2016  
VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 2



**The whole earth is the intended reach of God's mission**



● Finding  
life inside

PAGE 4



● A tidal wave  
is coming!

PAGE 6



**Virginia  
Mennonite  
Missions**

*Called. Sent. Transformed.*

## Walking with neighbors near and far

BY AARON KAUFFMAN  
PRESIDENT



I recently returned from a week of vacation with my father and my brother, hiking a section of the Camino de Santiago. It's an ancient pilgrimage path which starts in France, then wends its way through 500 miles of mountains, woods, fields, villages, and cities to its destination in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, the supposed site of the remains of the Apostle James (brother of John).

Pilgrims undertake the journey for a variety of reasons—the exercise, the adventure, the relationships, and yes, the search for spiritual renewal. Our five-day, 70-mile sojourn was for all of the above. We bookended our days with morning and evening prayers from the Anabaptist prayer book, *Take Our Moments and Our Days*.

A highlight of the experience was getting to know other pilgrims. There was Fermín, the tall, young Spaniard; Emilio, the Mexican-American aspiring to become a Catholic priest; and Yasushi, a middle-aged Japanese man on holiday from his job as a caretaker of handicapped persons. We found ourselves beginning to pray for them in our daily prayers.

The last day, we were sitting on a bench some distance from the path, saying our morning prayers. Around the bend came Yasushi, who upon seeing us, sat down on the bench beside us to take a rest. After an awkward moment or two, we told him what we were doing and invited him to join us. He agreed, so we finished our prayers together, ending with the Lord's Prayer and a blessing for the day. I don't know how much our Japanese friend understood, but he nodded his head and smiled as we prayed, and his eyes welled up with obvious gratitude for being welcomed among us.

Mission is a lot like pilgrimage. As Ugandan theologian Emmanuel Katongole puts it, "Mission as pilgrimage...is based on a vision of the Christian life as a journey. This model grows out of the sense of being pilgrims together, pilgrims who feel the dust under their feet and come to know the places where they sojourn." He adds, "It is pilgrimage that gives rise to the church as a unique fellowship of people drawn from different nations, tribes, languages, and races."

At Virginia Mennonite Missions we're learning what it means to be global pilgrims on behalf of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Such pilgrimage requires the orienting map of God's story in Scripture, adequate preparation, a sense of adventure, patience and persistence, deep reflection, openness to strangers, prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit, and the support of friends each step of the journey. Whether it's with God-seekers in North Africa and South Asia, Deaf children in Jamaica, Laotian immigrants in Virginia, or recovering addicts in Montenegro, we are walking toward God's kingdom. And we're inviting neighbors near and far to join us along the way.

*Aaron M. Kauffman*

## Features

### 4 Finding life inside

Among Muslim people in North Africa, a family on mission is seeing shoots of new life in Jesus.

### 6 A tidal wave is coming!

Rooted lives of prayer presage huge transformation in a South Asian city.

### 8 Partners team - Serving at Maranatha School for the Deaf.

## Spotlight

### 9 USA Ministries

### 10 Call to prayer

### 11 Worker profile

## Financial Report

Reporting: 9/1/15 to 06/30/16

Special Projects \$1,071,811	Special Projects \$941,535
Mission Fund \$586,444	Mission Fund \$658,562
<b>Income</b> Total \$1,658,255	<b>Expenses</b> Total \$1,600,097

**Mission Fund:** undesignated giving by households and churches, **Special Projects:** giving to specific workers or ministries

## Transforming

**Editor and Designer:** Jon Trotter

© 2016 by Virginia Mennonite Missions.  
All rights reserved.

*Transforming* (USPS-15280) is published quarterly to tell stories of our participation in God's mission and is distributed free. To subscribe, contact: Transforming circulation: (540) 434-9727 (800) 707-5535 • info@vmmissions.org

Our offices are located at:  
601 Parkwood Drive  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
Website: vmmissions.org

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2

POSTMASTER Send address changes to:  
601 Parkwood Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22802.  
Periodical postage paid at Harrisonburg, VA 22801.



# ● News+Events

## Mission Service Newly appointed and reappointed workers

### Long-term Workers (terms in years):

- Alfonso Alvarado — Rockingham, Va. (2)
- Steve & Laura Campbell (Ruth, Esther) — Montenegro (2)
- Shawn & Laura Green - (Lucas, Emmanuel, Matteo) — Italy (2)
- Lorene & Earlene Horst — Trinidad (1)
- Brent & Alisha Justice — Uganda (5)
- Francisco & Juana Machado — Spain (3)
- Francis & Juliana Marques (Samuel) — Albania (2)
- Yugo & Grace Prasetyo (Jeremi, Simeon) — Indonesia (2)
- Vince & LaVonne Ramella (Sid, Bradie, Justin) — Kosovo (2)
- Dini & Klementina Shahini — Albania (1)
- Dave & Rebekka Stutzman (Immanuel, Liana, Nathanael) — Germany (3)
- Rafael & Solange Tartari (Paulo, Sofia) — Albania (4)
- Norma Teles — Albania (1)
- Caitlin Tice — Harrisonburg, Va. (2)
- J. & M. W. family — Central Asia (2)

### Short-term Workers (1 year term):

- Alex Rubel — Albania
- Crystal Lehman — Argentina (Partners in Mission)
- Jessamyn Tobin — Thailand
- Anna McMullen — Albania
- Elsa Miller — Israel/Palestine
- Alisha Brubaker — Kenya (with EMM)



## Bike Shenandoah Annual event to raise funds for mission

The 19th annual Bike Shenandoah will be Saturday, September 17, beginning and ending at Eastern Mennonite School, 801 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, Va. This cycle for service offers century, metric century, 30-mile, 15-mile and family-friendly 5-mile rides for all ages. Virginia Mennonite Missions is one of the six agencies that benefit. Riders are encouraged to find personal sponsors for their ride. The event is generously sponsored by Wyse Cycles and other businesses. On "Fair Trade Sale Day," September 17 at A World of Good Thrift Shop and Artisan's Hope, a portion of all sales will benefit Bike Shenandoah.

## Events Resourcing potluck and appreciation banquet

### Potluck & Resource Time for Parents of Mission Workers

Saturday, August 27 at 6:30 p.m.  
VMMissions Conference Room  
Join with other parents and staff for a time of fellowship and sharing.

### Donor & Prayer Partner Banquet

Saturday, November 19 at 6:30 p.m.  
Eastern Mennonite School Dining Hall  
Those who pray and give on behalf of VMMissions are invited to a banquet as a small token of our gratitude.



## Perspectives Harrisonburg class to be offered Spring 2017

As you are reading in this issue of *Transforming*, the message should be clear: God is on a mission. Those global purposes of God beckon us right where we are and extend out to embrace the entire world and each and every distinct cultural context that can be encountered. The fact that God intends good for all that God has created encourages us. The fact that God can be glorified in myriad expressions of cultural creativity captivates our imaginations. We want to lean in more. We want God to use our lives, right where we are. We want to understand the challenges, the complexities. We want to listen to God's call.

That's why we at VMMissions encourage you: students, homemakers, professionals, church leaders, others—to get in on the Spring 2017 *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* class to be offered in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Check out [www.perspectives.org](http://www.perspectives.org) for more information about our upcoming class, or contact [carol.tobin@vmmissions.org](mailto:carol.tobin@vmmissions.org).

"Taking this class will make you less content with private, status quo Christian faith and push you to consider a deeper invitation into missional partnership with God."  
—a *Perspectives* alum

Carol Tobin  
*Perspectives* coordinator

# ● Finding life inside

In the North African context where Raleigh and Opal\* and their two children serve among Muslims seeking to overcome their debt to God, they are finding open doors.



BY OPAL\*

We live near a gated community, of sorts. The first time we walked past its medieval-type turrets, sun-baked stucco walls, and arched gateways we were intrigued. We wanted to explore but someone told us the crumbling fort was where the poor lived. Walking through would actually be trespassing in their homes. At the entrance men with food carts prepare for a day of selling oranges or snails; others sort trash and recyclables. A modest mosque takes up one small corner of the complex.

As we live in this land, stories of loneliness surround us like old, earthen castle towers. Women sometimes practice henna rituals trying to appease demons. One friend tells us that only 10% of men here are 'good' and only 30% of women. He is a young man hoping for a wife but uncertain when he, with his middle class upbringing and fabulous education, will be able to afford the new house full of new things he must have in order to marry. He also wonders where that partner is who will care about more than just glitzy material security and will want to really share a meaningful life with him.

Another friend shares story after story of men cheating on their families, young women making desperate calls to any man

who will pick up his phone,  
people swayed again  
and again by wealth  
to desert their  
families and  
t h e i r  
belief

in God, family members controlled by demons of fear. People fast from water and food through the year's hottest months trying to draw close to God, trying to pay the debt they owe to God (in fact, the word for 'religion' is the same word used for 'debt').

Everywhere people are talking about God! We hear the name of God praised multiple times a day across the neighborhoods of the city. Our language tutor is stunned that people somewhere would actually believe there is no God. The young men Raleigh meets always start their friendships with him by asking if he is a Muslim, by asking what he believes about God. Daily we hear 'God's peace be with you,' 'God give you help,' 'Thanks be to God' in the ordinary greetings of neighbors. But multiple times a week we are reminded that a great poverty hangs over our friends. Even with belief in God, the debt remains.

But let us return to the fortress community near our house. At one side, along a crumbling, dusty wall, under faded arches, among what appears to be a mass of overgrown grasses, are three simple stone steps leading up and over a bank and under a few scraggly trees. As we pass through the rough opening, we suddenly find ourselves in a greenhouse! A thin, white-haired man with gentlemanly manners kindly greets us as we stand amazed at dirt paths winding through what appears to be hundreds of varieties of trees, herbs, flowers, and bushes.

The universal smell of soil and sunshine fills the quiet green space. We learn later that we have stumbled into one





Raleigh and Opal\* look out over their city in North Africa, praying for open hearts and transformation.

Photos courtesy of author

of the more famous greenhouses in the city, known for its plants, terracotta pots, and soil. What a surprise! This humble spot, cultivated so carefully, shared so lovingly, is full of life inside the walls of the crumbling fortress.

As strange as it seems, I, too, have breathed in new life in this land. My hope in Jesus has become much bolder. Hidden behind the cultural restraints on women, the prescribed prayers, the inherited greetings full of God's name, the sadness of carrying such a debt before God, I have found a green space. Jesus offers new life! Maybe like a basil plant. The delicate stem offers a power and life that will transform those who live nearby and share in its goodness.

We see this life at work as young men meet with Raleigh for hours, literally leaning on his knee to get close enough to share ideas in Arabic and English and hear about how Jesus transforms the way we look at violence, even violence threatened against one's own family. They also ask deep questions about marriage and observe our great accep-



tance and love for a differently-abled child.

Another friend wants us to share stories about Jesus, then casually asks for a New Testament in her language. One day we are discussing Jesus' words about how sinful acts begin in our hearts (Matthew 5) and she takes the text, begins reading it, asking questions of comprehension, and can't stop reading when the relevant passage is finished!

Like Lydia in Acts 16, we sense she is a 'worshipper of God.' Our prayer for our friends, for our millions of neighbors, is that 'The Lord would open their hearts to pay attention to what was said...' (v.14).

---

*Opal\* serves with her husband and two children in North Africa with Rosedale Mennonite Missions, in partnership with Virginia Mennonite Missions.*

*\*Names have been changed and last names not used for security.*

# ● A tidal wave is coming!



Living in the dense neighborhood of a Muslim crossroads city in South Asia, James and Megan\* build relationships and pray for breakthrough and blessing, all the while sustained by the vision of what God wants to do.

BY MEGAN\*

From the time I was in kindergarten and all through my years in Christian school, I heard about God and the Bible. But I can remember a specific week in the fourteenth year of my life when I decided, “If this is really true, then it changes everything.” Then and there, I made the decision that I was all in, and began to sense that God had a specific calling for my life and a role for me to play in God’s amazing story.

From the beginning, God created us “in his image” to reflect and carry out his purposes on the earth. He revealed more specifically to Abraham what his purpose is. God told him that he would bless him so that all the families of the earth would be blessed through his children. God said over and over again that all nations—every tribe, language and people group—would praise him. We are not talking a mere sprinkling here and there. No, he said that one day the knowledge of the glory of the Lord is going to cover the whole earth as deep as the waters that cover the sea!

So, where does this “water” come from? Jesus said that whoever believes in him, out of them would flow rivers of living water. So this is how I see myself: a walking fountain, pouring out the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. I believe that the water is going to get deeper and deeper as this spreads and keeps on spreading until Jesus comes back! What an amazing privilege and honor to be alive in these days!

I am thrilled as I hear more and more stories of movements of people from different *ethne* (people groups) turning to and following Jesus. So what has that meant for my life? Well, my husband and I felt led to go to the places where people have not yet been able to hear the Good News.

We have lived in this region now for seven years, and God has given us these instructions: “Devote yourself to prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). In prayer we’ve learned that it does not mean just lifting up our own feeble attempts and ideas to fix all the problems around us. It means entering into his presence to hear what his plans are. Because he is the Lord of the harvest, and he has a master plan that he wants to co-labor with his people in bringing it from heaven to earth. We believe that our prayer and our worship, done in faith before seeing the answers come, are powerful to prepare the way for the breakthrough!

As we listen, again and again, do you know what God has said? There is a tidal wave that is coming! It is going to cover the nation where we live in South Asia and then sweep up into the nations around us. What is exciting to us is that we have begun to see it. In the first city where

we lived, a place where Christian faith has never been able to take root, a movement has begun of Muslims turning to Jesus and studying the Word. It has spread to villages and towns all over that particular densely populated state. But we know there is much more coming!

At times in our work, it feels that it is taking a long time. But no effort is wasted! In those times, instead of fixing our eyes on what is not yet, we must fix our eyes on the promises that he has given (to us personally and also all throughout his Word.)

Muslim pilgrims come seeking healing and specific answers to prayer. They hope for a greater connection to God. From their rooftop looking down and in the narrow alleys with the supplicants who have gathered, James and Megan pray.

Photo courtesy of author







James and Megan\* live in a guesthouse for Muslim pilgrims, immediately adjacent to a shrine which is packed from morning until night with devotees and seekers from all over the region. They see a ‘tidal wave’ movement to faith in Jesus coming in their country and region, built upon God’s promises to all nations. Photo courtesy of author

Even though we don’t see it yet, we believe it, just as Abraham believed before he saw. It is not easy for us to live here. We have found that continually going back to God’s promises for all nations has given us perseverance and the anchor for our souls that we need. (Hebrews 6:19)

I am so grateful that God is the Author and the Finisher of His-story! And I am so thankful to be alive in these days

and play the part he asks me to play. What part is he asking you to play?

*Megan\* serves with her husband and four children in South Asia, in partnership with Eastern Mennonite Missions.*

*\*Names have been changed and last names not used for security.*

## A note from Carol Tobin, Asia Regional Director



I had the privilege of visiting this family earlier this year. Here are some of the things I saw:

- A joyful house-helper being lovingly disciplined and encouraged in her gifts.
- The challenge to stay physically healthy in a dense urban context with limited access to recreational opportunities.
- Happy children, who nevertheless have to be sent off to school with masks due to the terrible air quality.
- A daily schedule that prioritized the *work* of prayer. They are doing it; what fortitude and focus!
- Warm neighborhood relationships and all team members investing in their own ways: afternoon tea visits, English tutoring, and work with a Muslim public health entity in the neighborhood.

- Contextualized resources being developed. James working on a team with the preparation of Biblical story sets in local language; Megan, with her teammates and househelper, writing worship music in local style and instrumentation.
- Relationships and opportunities to cast vision among expatriate Christians and Hindu-background believers for the breakthrough needed among Muslims.
- The clear fact that God has placed them in this particular spot, for which I gained a deep appreciation. Here, supplications are being made all of the time, but there is no revelation of what God has done in Jesus to give us full access to God’s presence. Would living here have its challenges? Yes! Thankfully, they are part of an on-site team and have us here in the US to uphold them.



# Serving and showing God's love in Jamaica

BY REBECCA SNODGRASS

In May, my mom, sister, and I spent two weeks at Maranatha School for the Deaf in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, on a *Partners in Mission* team. Since I am studying to be an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., I thought this trip would give me a chance to observe how another culture works with the Deaf community, to experience interpreting and communicating in ASL in another culture, and to share the love of Jesus with children who have so much less than what I do in both material possessions and opportunities.

Our days at the school consisted of working in the classrooms, playing on the playground with the children, and leading their morning devotions, where we taught them a few new songs to sign. We often wrapped up school in the afternoons by working on craft projects with the students. One project was beading a faith bracelet in which every different color of bead represented a different aspect of our faith. On the morning of our departure, the students did a presentation for us where they signed what each color of the bracelet meant. We were touched by how they took this lesson to heart.

The children at the school were always smiling and wanting a hug.

Radica is thrilled to play with Becca on the playground.

Photo: Sandra Snodgrass

One 9-year-old girl had only been at the school for a year because of no previous educational opportunities. We played games daily with her that taught colors, numbers, and letters. Another very active young boy constantly strove for our attention with loud outbursts. We gave him a kite to play with one day, and though the rest of us had trouble keeping our kites in the air, he did it with ease, and flew that kite for hours and hours. He cried when I gave him a hug



Sandra, Becca and Gemma Snodgrass assist students with craft projects. Photo: Galen Lehman

goodbye. Another girl had cerebral palsy. She walked with a limp and had no use of one hand. One day, I held her on my shoulder and took her from bar to bar on the monkey bars. She would touch each bar with her one good hand and giggle and giggle. She so appreciated every little thing we did for her!



Camalee, Becca, Justin, Glenroy and Gemma.

Photo: Sandra Snodgrass

God was there, working on this island, in this Deaf community. One girl we visited had dropped out of school because her father was jobless, her mother was sick, and she had many younger siblings that she had to care for. She was my age, yet had so little to look forward to in her future. Yet, even in difficult circumstances, I saw the Jamaican people with faith, and hope, and love. God in them, and God in me, connecting us together.

*Rebecca is a student at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., studying American Sign Language.*



## Chanthy Saengmanivone, ambassador of peace

BY CAROL TOBIN

In 2006, Chanthy Saengmanivone lay helpless on the floor of his Harrisonburg home, immobilized by a sudden stroke. With Harrisonburg Mennonite Church (HMC) friends gathered around him during the difficult months that followed, Chanthy slowly recovered. After a second stroke in 2010, he was entitled to a full medical disability, which gave him the opportunity to regain his strength and focus on serving others, as had been modeled for him upon his arrival in the mid-1980s by Harrisonburg Mennonites, most notably by big-hearted Harold Eshelman.

"If you ask me what Jesus looks like, I say, he looks like Harold. Even though we could only understand twenty percent of what he said, when he said 'come to church,' we came and listened to him teach. We respected him so much." The Laotian members of the Seeker's Class that became established through Harold's unflagging care for them, recently realized that they were far more committed to Jesus than their name implied, so they renamed themselves *Christijak*, the Lao word for 'church', or literally, 'Christ's interlocking engine.'

In the summer of 2014, Chanthy jumped on an opportunity to lend a hand in a peace education initiative in Laos that he learned about at HMC. With memories of the chaotic and broken land he had left behind, and his distressing experiences as a conscripted soldier serving with the American military, he was now tantalized by the thought: Could God use him as an ambassador of peace?

During that trip, Chanthy found himself further out on a ministry limb than he had anticipated. He lived in a village and singlehandedly taught the children who flocked to his makeshift school. His heart broke as he served these desperately poor children. "I didn't have enough money, but I tried to make them lunch every day. Something simple. I did what I could."

He returned to the US, determined to find a way to be faithful to what God had placed on his heart. Recognizing an opportunity for attentive nurture, the pastoral leadership at HMC and VMissions worked together to prepare for another trip—a learning tour under VMissions' short-term *Partners in Mission* program—focused on giving him the opportunity to listen and learn from others.

After re-connecting in the village with his extended family, Chanthy visited the Life Enrichment Church in Det Udom, Thailand. Having met several of the leaders already, there was an easy rapport between Chanthy and these relatively uneducated rice farming believers. "They know



Chanthy sharing at the MCC peacebuilding seminar.

Photo courtesy of Chanthy Saengmanivone

how to share the gospel, and they are willing to devote themselves to reaching out in new places. They care for the sick and lead people to faith that the world has cast aside."

His next stop was a bustling town on the Mekong River in southern Laos, and home to the Terra Clear water filter factory, a business for transformation initiative which is providing employment, hitherto unknown access to clean water for many, and multiple contexts for faith sharing. He met newly-baptized believers at the factory and was able to freely share his own faith journey. "If there were not restrictions placed on people there, so many would come to faith. Here in the US, we face no such restrictions, and yet, we don't have the same whole-hearted attitude. We act as if faith is not important."

Chanthy then traveled north to the capital where he was welcomed warmly by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) country representative, who received him as a valued partner, given the role that HMC Christijak's famous egg rolls have played in the Virginia Relief Sale! Here he experienced a real highlight, the opportunity to attend an MCC-sponsored peacebuilding seminar with leaders from various faith traditions. The fact that he was given a voice at such a venue was a deeply appreciated honor.

Throughout the weeks in this exploratory mode, he showed himself to be a learner, made connections, and received invitations that may provide agenda for the future.

None of us who are involved: Chanthy, HMC leaders, VMissions staff—can see clearly what will come of all of this. What we do see is a great story of how God has been at work, drawing this unlikely ambassador back across the world to bring gospel hope to his hurting homeland. Here are the signs that God really does hold the whole world in his hands, that the good news we carry is indeed *good*—here, there and everywhere.

---

Carol Tobin is the Asia Regional Director at Virginia Mennonite Missions and a former mission worker in Thailand.

# Call to Prayer: To the Ends of the Earth

BY SARAH SHOWALTER

Reaching the entire earth is a theme throughout Scripture, from God's promise to bless the whole earth through Abraham's descendants in Genesis 12, to Jesus' commission to his disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28), to John's vision of people from every nation and tribe standing before the throne of God in Revelation 7.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus promises his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." As followers of Jesus, we are part of the great promise that Jesus leaves with his disciples—with the power of the Holy Spirit we will be Christ's witnesses in our hometowns and to the ends of the earth.

But how exactly do you witness to the "ends of the earth," especially if you're not planning on packing up and moving across the ocean in the near future? Perhaps, one important way is through prayer.

A few years ago, I was introduced to The Joshua Project. The Joshua Project is an effort to compile data on people groups across the world for the purpose of pinpointing groups that are least reached by the gospel. On their website, [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net), viewers can search through over 9,000 people groups, learning about their location, history, beliefs, and also their accessibility (through translated Scripture or other believers) to the gospel. Some people groups are beginning to grow multiplying churches, others still have almost no Christians. For example, the young men in this photo, whose silk dyeing and weaving operation I visited during my semester abroad in India, are part of the Ansari people group. Through the Joshua Project's website I learned that the Ansaris are a Muslim people group of about 16 million found primarily in North and West India that have almost no followers of Jesus.

I'd like to offer an invitation and challenge to begin praying for a specific people group as a way of praying for God's blessing to reach the ends of earth. As a family, a Sunday School class, or even as an entire congregation, choose a specific people group and commit to praying for the Good News to spread throughout that group. Pray for:

- People to share the Good News of Jesus with your people group. For groups that are completely unreached, someone from outside their group will need to introduce them to the gospel. Pray that God will stir in people's hearts to share the gospel with your people group.
- Leaders from within the people group who will devote themselves to spreading the Good News and growing multiplying churches. Pray that those who believe will find ways to share Jesus with their friends and families.
- Dreams, signs, and wonders. Ask God to pour out his Spirit on your people group, giving them miraculous signs that point them to Christ.
- Unique and genuine ways for contextualizing the gospel within



Ansari young men in India dye silk and their ethnic group is known for weaving. According to The Joshua Project, there are almost no followers of Jesus among a population of around 16 million. Photo: Sarah Showalter

your people group's cultural context. Pray that your people group will find that God has not called them to give up all aspects of their culture, but that God meets them in and through their culture which is part of his unique creation.

- Strength in the face of persecution. Many believers around the world face persecution for their faith in Christ. Pray that those who believe in your people group will have strength and faith to continue proclaiming God's goodness even when they are abused because of it.





Steve and Laura Campbell and their daughters Ruth and Esther serve in Podgorica, Montenegro, a country under-reached by the Good News. Photo: Jon Trotter

## Worker profile: **Steve & Laura Campbell family**

**Home:** Trissels Mennonite Church (Broadway, VA)

**Service program:** Long-term

### **Assignment:**

We are working with a local congregation in Podgorica, Montenegro. We are making disciples in the way of Jesus. We are encouraging and training local leadership in the congregation and are making new relationships in our surrounding community. We see the work in the community particularly as introducing people to Jesus over and over.

### **Biggest challenge:**

We are getting better at the Serbian language, but this still is a challenge. We also are still learning the culture. We believe these two will remain challenges the whole time we are here; we view the challenges as opportunities to keep learning. We see these challenges as ways the local people can help us—

we humble ourselves to realize that we need help. This is just one way to empower our brothers and sisters here. We see the model of Jesus with the women at the well in John 4 as our way in working in Montenegro. We humble ourselves and ask for a drink, for help with language and culture. This invites a further discussion to point people to God.

### **Biggest joy:**

Our biggest joy is having seen some amazing answers to prayer in these past two years: Lazar being set free from alcohol addiction, Masha receiving healing from a bad operation and further healing through another surgery, the pastor catching the vision for being a praying church. We have sensed there has been a hole poked in the darkness over the nation of Montenegro and more light is streaming through. We are humbled and overjoyed to play a small role in God's big drama for this nation.

### **A typical day:**

We rise early for devotions. I (Steve) usually go up to the coffee shop and study Serbian and pray and continue the relationship with our friend Darko who is the waiter at the coffee shop while Laura does devotions at home. We get the girls up and do breakfast together and then take them to preschool by about 8:15. They go to the national preschool four days a week from 8:15-ish until about 2:45. After leaving the girls at school we have language lessons for two hours. Then depending on what else needs to happen for the day, there may be a meeting later to plan for, or a visit to someone's house, or errands. We have supper together as a family. And depending on the day there may be meetings or Bible study in the evening. The girls usually are in bed by 9:00 and then Laura and I have some time together in the evening to relax.





Transforming (USPS-15280)  
Virginia Mennonite Missions  
601 Parkwood Drive  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802-2498

# Help us complete the next leg of the journey.

**We are just \$96,000 away from our Mission Fund goal!**  
**Help us meet it by August 31.**

Donate at [vmmissions.org](https://vmmissions.org)

or send donation to: 601 Parkwood Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

