

Transforming

Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Summer 2022
VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 2



THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYONE.

A SPECIAL ISSUE FEATURING STORIES FROM OUR
CHURCH OF MANY CULTURES CAMPAIGN



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 **VMMissions**

● From the President

Catching the Wave

BY AARON M. KAUFFMAN

Launching a campaign in the middle of a pandemic has been a venture of faith. Dreams were stirring in our hearts as we celebrated our centennial in 2019. We asked God, "Where are you leading us as we enter our second century of ministry?"



The clear response was to continue sharing new life in Jesus Christ with all people, especially those who haven't heard. Still today, one-third of the world's population has no access to the gospel, and less than half of all Americans say they belong to a local church. How can we reach out in creative ways?

Two ideas came to the fore. First, we noted that a truly global church has emerged after two centuries of the modern missions movement. Today, more Christians hail from Africa, Latin America and Asia than from Europe and North America. As gifted leaders from the Global South relocate by choice or by circumstance, how might we come alongside their efforts to reach their new neighbors for Christ?

Second, we observed that many places resistant to traditional mission work are wide open for business development. Together with local entrepreneurs, we caught a vision for Christian-led businesses as a means of blessing communities not only economically, but spiritually as well. How might we help launch businesses that will provide jobs and be an authentic witness to the gospel?

So we developed a plan to raise funds for these two initiatives: Global Church Planting and Business for Transformation.

Along the way, we recognized the need to expand our facilities to serve our growing ministries and bless the local community. What resource did we already have that might serve that purpose? A dream of renovating the barn on our property into a mission training center came into view.

Tying these three dreams together was the biblical vision that, one day, people from every culture on earth will gather to worship Jesus. We decided to call our campaign, A Church of Many Cultures.

We were ready to roll it out in March of 2020. Then the pandemic brought everything to a halt, including our campaign. We did not know whether it was for a season, or forever.

But soon the mood began to shift. As we tested our ideas with key supporters in the fall of 2020, we heard overwhelming support. Most of them were ready to give right away. Soon, a team of volunteers—our Campaign Cabinet—came together to help us. The campaign was a go!

Since then, we've reached out to donors, churches, businesses and foundations, sharing the vision of A Church of Many Cultures. And people have responded. To date, 245 donors have committed over 95% of our \$3 million goal. I stand amazed at God's provision through the generosity of his people.

Early in the process of developing this campaign, Paul Yoder, vice chair of our board, observed, "It seems like we're riding the crest of a wave that God has put in motion. How do we position ourselves to catch that wave?"

The response to our Church of Many Cultures campaign has convinced me that we are indeed catching the wave of what God is doing. We hope you'll join us.

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An existing barn on the VM Missions property is being renovated into a Mission Training Center.

Financial Report

Reporting: 09/01/21 to 05/31/22

Special Projects \$1,105,628	Special Projects \$1,137,687
Mission Fund \$684,675	Mission Fund \$707,025
Income Total \$1,790,303	Expenses Total \$1,844,712

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

These figures do not include campaign income or expenses.

Transforming

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Perspectives™

Perspectives Course Coming Back to Harrisonburg Early Next Year

Faith Community Church will host the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course this spring (held on Tuesday evenings, January 3 to May 2, 2023). VMissions staff members are working together with volunteers and staff from a variety of local churches to bring the class to Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement is a 15-week course, heartily endorsed by a broad spectrum of evangelical denominations, ministries, and mission agencies. Over the last 50 years, God has used the Perspectives course to inspire and inform mission vision within those denominations, ministries and agencies, helping God's people find their place and calling within God's heart and mission. The class provides an overview of the biblical mandate, a review of mission history, a window into cultural factors and an examination of mission strategies.

Students will participate in 15 discipleship-focused classes. They will have reading assignments drawn from a curated collection of articles from missiologists and practitioners. Class sessions will provide opportunity for in-person interaction with approved Perspectives instructors who offer insights drawn from their experience and expertise. Reflection assignments reviewed by mentors will help learnings to become personalized. Students can enroll at whatever level is appropriate: key reading, certificate, or for undergraduate or graduate level credit. For more information, contact kierston.kreider@vmmissions.org

Explore God's Heart for Justice on the U.S.-Mexico Border, October 23-28

Border Perspective, a VMissions E³ Collective, is an immersive and educational service learning trip that will offer participants a first-hand connection with immigrant leaders serving families on the U.S.-Mexico border. Participants will gain an understanding of the complexity of immigration on the border and service opportunities to help support local immigrant ministries. Participants will volunteer at a local immigrant shelter and serve alongside immigrant pastors and their congregations. Learn more at vmmissions.org/service-opportunity/border-perspective/

Motorcycle for Missions Celebrates 10th Anniversary Ride

"It started out as a big hairy idea," said Pastor Tim K. (last name withheld by request). That "hairy idea" was to turn a fun annual motorcycle ride to Summer Assembly into a meaningful community-building activity that also raised funds to support the work of VMissions. Ten years later, that idea that started at Powhatan Mennonite Church has now raised nearly \$115,000 to support the mission of VMissions. This year's ride on June 3-4 broke several records. Funds raised from registrations and sponsorships yielded \$18,875. Riders from 15 congregations and three denominations made up a record number of 25 riders, along with five passengers, for two beautiful days of riding. Riders covered over 400 miles of Virginia and West Virginia on a route designed by Lowell Haarer, and led by Ed Lehman. Haarer, who has been on every ride since the event's inception, remarked, "I just can't get over the fact that we get to do this amazing ride and people give us money for missions! It's awesome!"

Teams Putt Around to Support Mission

Putt Fore Missions on June 30 brought together a lively group of all ages to support the work of VMissions. It was a hot evening on the greens at Mulligan's Golf Center in Harrisonburg. Fueled by a delicious meal catered by Harvest Table Catering, and cooled by Scotty's Italian Ice, twenty teams of four enjoyed a friendly competition.

The evening included an opportunity to hear VMissions worker Ken Wettig share his vision for SLAQ, a servant leadership program which focuses on raising up Christian leaders among high school aged youth in the Harrisonburg area through discipleship cohorts. Cohort participants engage in outdoor excursions, service projects and "crucial conversations" about cultural issues that they face.



Mindy Schwartz finished with the best individual score and won the "Green Jacket" t-shirt. Team Vrolijk (Chad and Bryse Vrolijk, along with friends Ava Galgano and Christien Grantham) had the lowest combined team score. Ethan Wilcox won the 9-12 grade category while Joel Metzler scored best in the 6-8 grade age group. Levi Early won the K-5 competition. Our "Hole-in-One" sponsor for the event, Everence Financial Credit Union, awarded prizes to the first twelve holes-in-one on the course.

GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING

VMMissions is mobilizing church planters from around the globe to the places where the gospel is needed most. The following profiles feature the first recipients of the Global Church Planting grant.

BY LIZZETTE HERNANDEZ

A new generation of church planters from around the globe is needed to reach those most in need of the good news of Jesus. We live in an unprecedented moment of globalization and migration. What an opportunity to join God in launching this new generation of global church planters!

Mission is multidirectional now. God is sending people from anywhere to anyone like never before. This is especially true in the global church where God has deposited a strong impulse for mission.

But most of these workers face significant hurdles, lacking resources, relationships, and networks of support. That's where VMMissions comes in. Through training, grants, and support structures, VMMissions is creating an on-ramp for global church planters to share the gospel with the DNA of healthy kingdom communities that multiply.

THE NEED AND OUR RESPONSE

- Three out of 10 people in the world have never heard the gospel, and half the population in the U.S. does not belong to a local church.
- The fastest growing parts of the church are in the Global South, where a new generation of mission leaders is emerging.
- VMMissions is mobilizing church planters from around the globe to the places where the gospel is needed most.
- Our church planters are launching new communities of faith that multiply disciples, leaders, and churches.

GRANT RECIPIENT PROFILES



Diomedes Franco is a church planter in La Vega, Dominican Republic. He is working to establish a church community that welcomes at-risk youth and is equipped to grow and reach out to broken and marginalized persons.

"We envision a church that grows, multiplies, that is multigenerational, passionate about God, Spirit-filled and sensitive to the culture. We desire to join God in building up 'people of grace.'"

A Scripture quote that Diomedes finds meaningful is Mark 9:23: "Everything is possible for one who believes."

"This grant has been decisive in the launching of the church plant that God has called us to serve here in La Vega. With these resources we have been able to make contacts in the city, disciple people, form community groups, evangelize, and above all it has given stability to the ministry here. It is my prayer that God continues to bless you in every aspect of your lives."



Alfonso Alvarado is planting a church in Lacey Springs, Virginia, called Iglesia Menonita Monte Moriah. He is reaching out to the Latino immigrant population in the area, inviting them to follow Jesus as his disciples.

The church's vision is to "reach out to the community for Christ making disciples of all nations, starting in Harrisonburg and until the ends of the earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit."

"This grant is helping support and increase our capacity to do ministry," writes Alfonso. "It allows us to continue visiting families in their homes, to share the gospel through Bible studies which we call 'family groups,' praying for the sick and helping the needy, and reaching out to those who are far from God so that the church can grow and multiply for God's glory."

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)



Juan José Lagos is planting a church called Iglesia Renuevo among the many Latino immigrants in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He and his wife Ceci are bringing the message of hope and salvation to the different families they are connecting with through Bible studies. They have

started to gather for worship in a new meeting place that the Lord has provided.

"We are a church called to obey the great commission to make disciples among our community. We believe we have been called to be ambassadors of reconciliation. This is what we do and teach to every follower of Jesus so that we



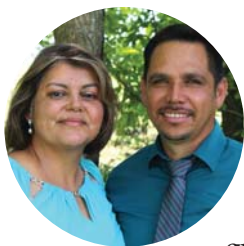
Children gather in one of the children's clubs in La Vega, Dominican Republic, that Diomedes Franco and his wife Victoria started to share God's love and present the gospel in age-appropriate ways. Courtesy of Diomedes Franco

all become instruments of blessing to our communities and beyond," Juan José writes.

"This grant has helped support our ministry in many ways. It has allowed me to focus on the work of the gospel more fully, to visit many people to share the gospel with them and to help families and couples who are experiencing brokenness and crisis. We have a gathering space now that can accommodate more people and has space for children's classes."

that they share with their partners Augustin and Ervisa is to multiply disciples and fellowships throughout northern Albania.

The VMissions church planting grant also enables a broader reach, enabling the Tartaris to visit fellowships and leaders in the region to share encouragement and connection with the body of Christ. This networking and exploration gives hope for the clear discernment of where the Spirit is birthing new disciples and fellowships in towns and villages still without an evangelical witness.



Armando and Veronica Sanchez are planting a church called Iglesia Shalom in Waynesboro, Virginia, where the gospel has brought new life to several immigrant families.

Their church's vision is to reach out to the Latino community in Augusta County with the gospel of Jesus.

"This grant has allowed us to continue with the work of the gospel providing the resources needed for the church planting work. We are grateful for the financial support we have received; it's been a blessing to our ministry," they write.

Lizzette Hernandez is Latino Ministries Coach for VMissions.



Andressa Coutinho (left) serves on the ministry team in Shkodër along with Solange and Rafael Tartari (center). VMissions staff Tom and Karen Yoder visited them in June. Courtesy photo



Rafael and Solange Tartari serve with a multicultural team in the city of Shkodër, Albania, with a clear focus on multiplying disciples and planting churches in northern Albania. Embodying a family-in-ministry style, the Tartaris and their Albanian partners live to demonstrate kingdom lifestyle and relationships in a city

dominated by Muslim and Catholic traditions.

Through a variety of means, including compassionate service, mentoring, and Bible study, the Shkodër team does life-on-life discipling of men and women, with a focus on the emerging generation of Albanian leaders. The vision

BUSINESS FOR TRANSFORMATION

VMMissions is blessing communities through kingdom business through a subsidiary board of business experts who find and coach partners, vet plans, monitor progress, and makes loans to new and growing enterprises.

BY JASON SHOWALTER

VMMissions believes that work can be a form of Christian discipleship and a blessing to the world. A few years ago, VMMissions formed a business for transformation subsidiary—let's call it our "B4T board"—to foster businesses that bless their communities, especially those least reached by the good news of Jesus. Christian-led businesses can create just employment and sustainable economic growth even as they invite spiritual transformation through the gospel.

Countries closed to traditional witness are often open to entrepreneurs, yet there are still many barriers to success. That's where our B4T board can help. The board helps leaders experienced in business, management, marketing, and lending to come alongside new entrepreneurs as they develop business plans, seek startup loans, and receive coaching for long-term success.

THE NEED AND OUR APPROACH

- Countries closed or resistant to traditional missionaries are open to business development.
- Business for transformation (B4T) creates businesses that bless communities in four areas: spiritual, economic, social and environmental.
- In post-communist Europe and in Central Asia, VMMissions is helping Christian entrepreneurs launch businesses in hospitality, education, information technology, and the building trades.
- The subsidiary B4T board engages with entrepreneurs and partners, providing coaching and monitoring, and makes loans to new and expanding enterprises. VMMissions supports the B4T board with staff and appoints B4T workers.

LOAN RECIPIENT PROFILES

For more than 20 years, **Herman and Angela*** have addressed local needs and shared their faith through a microfinance company in a Central Asian country where 30% of the population earns less than \$2.50 a day. Because of few opportunities for local employment, 10% of the population goes abroad to work, separating men from their families for long periods of time, a reality that frequently leads to broken marriages and fatherless young women susceptible to human trafficking.

Through steady faithfulness over time, the company has impacted thousands of families by focusing on supporting small to medium-sized businesses. Among its 20,000 clients have been 7,000 women, many of them single mothers. Most of these businesses are family-owned, employing only a few people, yet 16,000 jobs have been created through the loans that the company provided, creating a ripple effect of blessing to 65,000 family members through local employment and increased income.

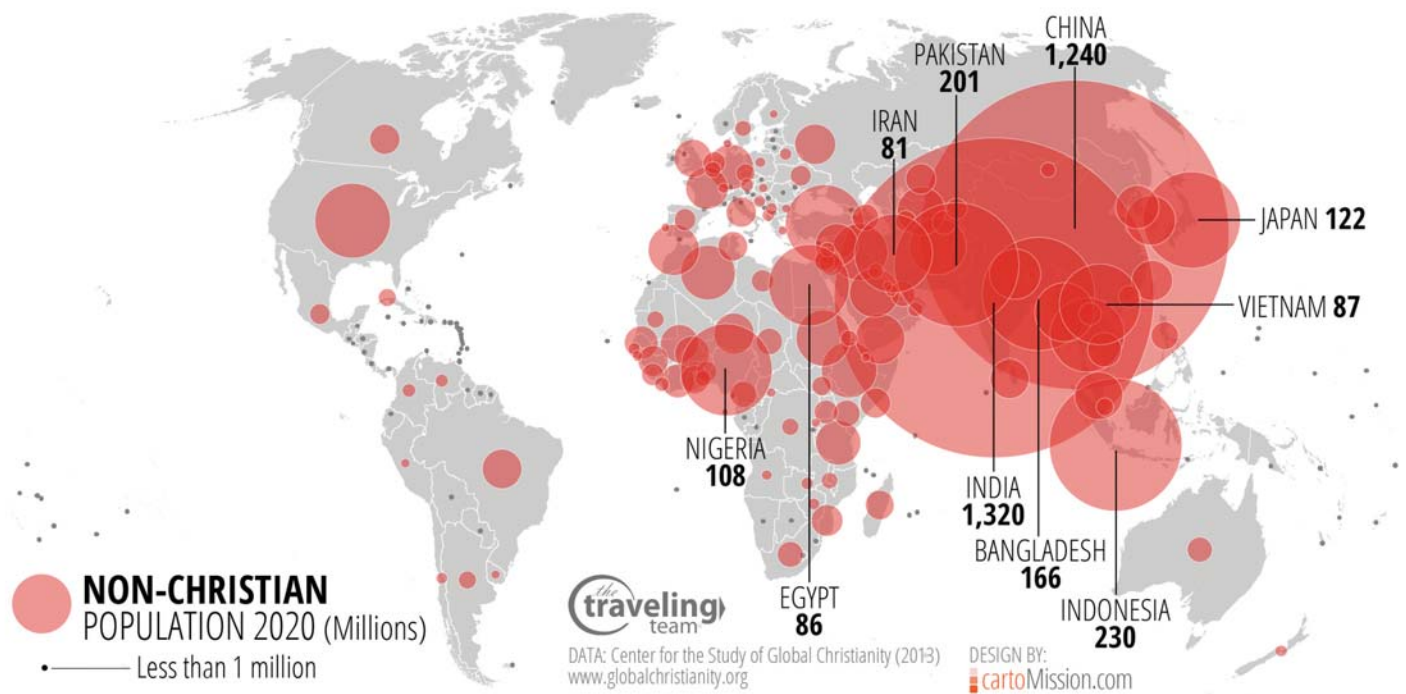
Through the integrity of their work, Herman and Angela are living examples of the faith they profess, discipling local believers and taking opportunities to pray with employees. Habido* is an example of a perennial entrepreneur who has flourished with the company's support. A client since 2011, Habido expanded an existing farming business and then bought two cars to rent as taxis. With this income and additional loans, he bought a truck to haul vegetables to market from his produce farm, lowering his field-to-market costs. Specializing in greenhouse-grown citrus fruits, he became an expert in the region, consulting with other farmers on best practices. His latest loan was for \$5,000.

VMMissions' Business for Transformation group recently invested \$20,000 with this microfinance company, supporting Herman and Angela in their vision to reach new markets in the country, opening new networks of relationships to the gospel.

After opening its doors for the first time during periodic pandemic closures, a preschool on the doorstep of Western Asia is taking hopeful steps toward long-term

A partner in Montenegro disciples men who, like himself, have become Jesus-followers after years of drug addiction. He teaches them a trade, such as welding and tiling, and conducts his business ethically. VMMissions photo





Much of the world's population unreached or underreached by the gospel is in the 10-40 window, an area of the globe which is home to the greatest concentration of people groups with little or no access to the gospel. This vast region is also home to many countries restricted or closed to traditional mission activities but open to business investment.

sustainability. Director **Caroline*** partnered with local believers in the vision and ownership of a school that seeks to encourage the learning of children from Christian homes while also creating a context for deepening friendships between Christian staff and majority-religion students and teachers in this limited-access country.

Instruction in the majority religion is required of all students in public schools, and children of local believers are offered harassed when their parents' faith becomes public, making learning difficult. About half of the teachers and staff of the preschool are believers, and a values-based curriculum and Caroline's training of staff in interactive, hands-on methods helps create a school culture that provides a warm and encouraging environment.

The presence of English-speaking teachers in each classroom gives the school a niche in the market where many upper-class parents want their children to have a competitive advantage in language-learning before starting elementary school.

But significant challenges remain. Over the past year, inflation of local currency has increased dramatically, tripling the prices of required supplies and basic goods in several months. In response to rising costs, the government has raised minimum wages several times during the school year, forcing the school to increase pay for employees without being able to raise tuition in order to offset these increased costs.

An increase of 10 students from previous years will bring the school to a level of financial viability. In the midst of these challenges, teachers and the families of students of the majority religion see first-hand Caroline's dedication and integrity.

GRANT RECIPIENT PROFILE

In the case of one ministry, B4T and Global Church Planting have converged. **Paulo and Ana*** left their home in Brazil 17 years ago to share the gospel in a neighboring country in Central Asia, a former republic of the Soviet Union. After serving in disciple-making ministry through their work in nonprofit administration and counseling services at an international school, they sensed the Lord leading them to a new field in the region. They returned to Brazil to discern what was next, seeking a way to return and teammates to join. Shortly after, VMissions worker Jay* met a colleague of Paulo and Ana at a B4T convention in Seattle, and learned about their desire to return to Central Asia.

Jay and his wife Em* also planned to return to the region after nearly a decade in Western Asia, but they knew they needed teammates who could bring additional leadership and mentoring gifts to a launch team composed of members from different organizations.

With their extensive experience in the region, management skills and counseling background, Paulo and Ana will help to mentor a new generation of workers in the country. After a period of language study, Paulo will work part-time with the local branch of Jay's business. Ana plans to work in an international school, as well as provide support for new workers and their families in their adjustment to the country.

Paulo and Ana received a church planting grant from VMissions to support their work of gospel-sowing and leadership training in this country with few believers.

*All names changed for security reasons.

Jason Showalter is Global Ministries Director for VMissions.

MISSION TRAINING CENTER

Excitement builds as an existing barn on the property is renovated into a space for training, meeting, and community events.

BY AARON KAUFFMAN

At VMissions, we see renovation as a form of innovation. Taking a storage barn and transforming it into a training center will give it a new purpose for a new generation of missional leaders.

Glen Stoltzfus is helping us turn this dream into a reality. "As a retired contractor, I always get excited when I can use the skills I've acquired over the years in the trades to help the church. After looking at the building, I was encouraged to see that the bones of the structure are in good shape, the foundation and the roof need minimal work, and the building is pretty much the right size of what we need and can be made easily accessible," Stoltzfus said.

VMissions staff eagerly anticipate the new possibilities that the Mission Training Center will provide.

"I'm excited about a space to pray. A space to gather together. A space that calls us; a space that's been purposed for prayer," said Skip Tobin, USA Ministry Coach.

"A larger meeting space is pretty exciting to me, so that we won't be limited by our current spaces that we have," said Melanie Sherer, Executive Assistant.

Martin Rhodes, Discipleship Ministries Coach, agreed. "I am really excited about using this space to equip people for mission, hosting training events for new workers, hosting training events for the church, and seeing people encouraged in their lives of discipleship."

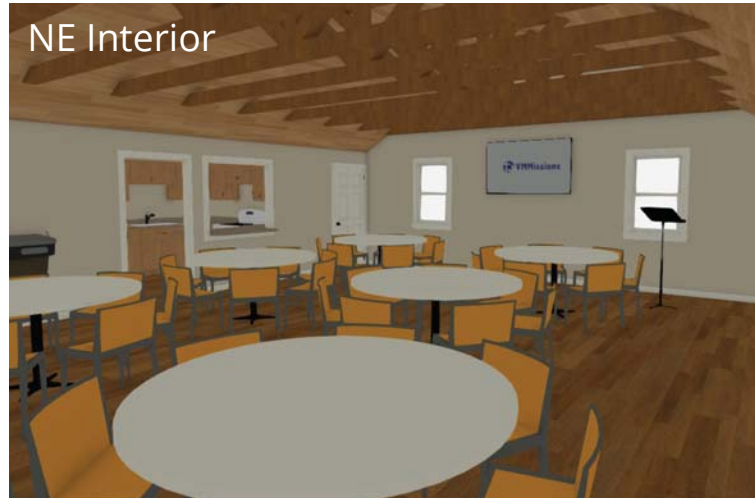
"It's a reminder of what God does with our lives," added Lydia Martin, Human Resources Assistant. "He takes us where we are and fills us with new life through the Spirit."



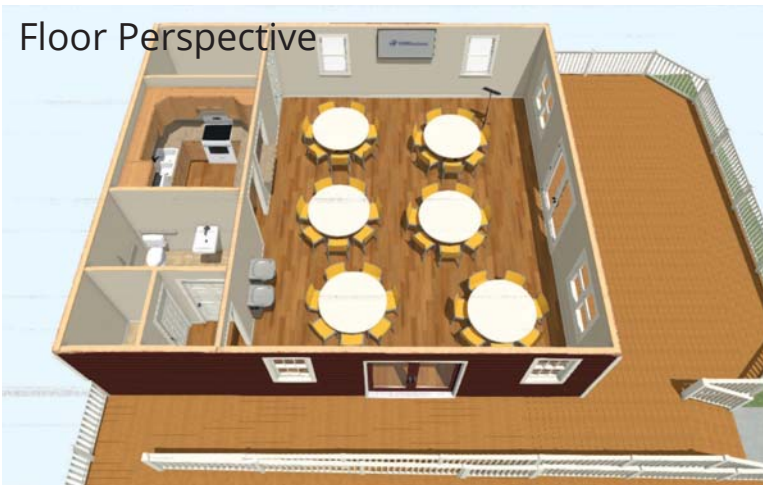
NE Exterior



NE Interior



Floor Perspective



NW Interior



This year, three E³ teams have served and learned across various cultures.



Nazareth/Bethlehem participants at Nazareth Village, a recreation of a first-century village. Leader Dorothy Jean Weaver is seated center.

Photo courtesy of Janet Blosser

NAZARETH/BETHLEHEM

This is a country of walls: barbed wire along the road for miles, 30 foot high construction walls near the cities, check-points everywhere, keeping people in or out. Conflict abounds. The team joined local Christian staff as “villagers” in Nazareth Village to re-create a first century atmosphere for tourists who had come from around the world to learn about Nazareth and how Jesus may have lived, bringing Scripture to life. They heard the stories of Palestinian Christian staff—many of them recounting their struggles and experience of injustice. In Bethlehem, the team worked mornings at the Dar-Al-Kalima University, a Lutheran university for both Christians and Muslims, where they gained more understanding of Christian Palestinians in the West Bank and a deepened understanding of the conflict. The two-week journey challenged them to live faithfully in the way of Jesus.

WAYFARERS (Germany and France)

With clear eyes toward both the challenges and opportunities for Christian faith in a rocky terrain, Wayfarers served up a rare feast of learning and praxis. Through daily times of sharing and prayer, the team watched and listened for the ways that Jesus was present in the church of the past and present. They saw in new ways the tension inherent in the incarnational ministry to which Jesus calls his followers: a good and natural impulse to be relevant, to take on the “flesh” of familiar forms and to be seen by broader culture as beneficial in addressing the felt needs of communities, and yet always prepared to face opposition when necessary. Knowing the difference—a time for relevancy versus a time for prophetic opposition—requires careful discernment in contexts with a long and complicated history with Christian faith, a situation one leader described as “living in the rotting corpse of Christendom.” The team returns to ministry in their local neighborhoods and in the church with ears more attuned to and eyes sharpened for that important work of discernment.



Wayfarers participants (back row) Dara Showalter, Jason Showalter, Shin Ji Kang, and Jason Song with host David Stutzman (second from right).

Photo courtesy of Jason Showalter



Homeowner Billy Lambert works alongside Jan Liskey (center) and Lizzette Hernandez to install underpinning. Photo by Peg Martin

SWAP (Sharing With Appalachian People)

In May, VMissions staff members completed a week of service in Kimball, a small town in McDowell County, West Virginia, where nearly 32% of residents live below the poverty line. Once wealthy due to its rich coal reserves, the county and its residents have struggled economically after many mines closed and two significant flood events in the early 2000s did additional damage.

The staff served alongside Associated Workers Lee and Peg Martin, who are Location Coordinators in Mennonie Central Committee’s SWAP program. Through SWAP, Lee and Peg host and lead short-term teams who act as the hands and feet of Jesus as they work together with the local community to provide safe, warm, and dry housing for residents in need. Together with the homeowners, staff worked to improve the safety and comfort of their homes, fixing floors, finishing a bedroom, repairing plumbing, and even adding a new roof to an entire home, just in time to beat a storm that brought heavy rain and flash flooding to the area. Though the physical labor was grueling at times, it was a blessing to be invited into homes, and to exchange stories of faith, to pray with the residents, and to hear about their love for their home community and their dreams for its future.

Call to Prayer: Lord, Teach Us to Pray

BY WILLARD EBERLY

Very early in Jesus' ministry the disciples humbly asked their master, "Lord teach us to pray," an admission that effective prayer is not readily grasped and is very much a learning process. And indeed, that describes the journey that I have needed to pursue throughout my life. Meaningful, effective prayer has not come easily and has required humility and willingness to learn. I wish to share some of the things that the Lord has taught my wife Eva and me regarding this foundational and essential practice of living a life of prayer that draws us ever closer to the Lord, to discern his ways, hear and follow his voice, and pursue his purposes.

Even as the "Lord's Prayer" begins with an acknowledgment of the holy presence of our heavenly Father, I have had to realize that prayer is more about worship and praising God for who he is and what he has done than presenting my personal and intercessory requests for others. It is a time to lift up God's name and attributes and enter into the realization that he, our loving and caring Father, is to be honored first, and that his provisions and interest in every aspect of our lives flow out of his love. Indeed, the cares and burdens of life that we carry for ourselves and others often cause us to neglect that foundational aspect of prayer.

Effective prayer requires faith, intentionality, and perseverance. It's not a quick automatic repetition of the "Lord's Prayer" or reciting "Now I lay me down to sleep." In addition, it is not easy to persevere when prayers seem to go unanswered or countless urgent life pressures distract. When I would ask Eva if she had time to pray with me, her response would inevitably be, "I always have time to pray!"

Taking time to join in deliberate focused prayer with your spouse or a close friend requires commitment and sacrifice but underscores the power of collective intercession, "where two

or three are gathered in his name."

While in Sicily, we learned that prayer is spiritual warfare. We realized that we were facing the invisible enemy who seeks to control and destroy our lives and hinder the advancement of the kingdom of God in the lives of individuals and communities. Learning to stand against Satan in the name of Jesus and his shed blood, we also experienced God's divine intervention to liberate persons from bondage and slavery to sin and the evil kingdom. When the disciples were unable to deliver a demon possessed boy, he taught them that demonic powers are conquered through prayer and fasting. Kingdom warfare advances on our knees.

There are times in life when there is nothing left to do but pray. I can distinctly remember specific periods in our missionary experience when all we desired or could think of doing was to wait before the Lord in prayer. Our human resources and plans were exhausted and, humanly speaking, there was no way out—similar to Moses and the children of Israel as they camped beside the Red Sea with Pharaoh's mighty army in hot pursuit.

Precisely in those times we were drawn to prayer and discovered a deeper meaning of prayer. Not knowing how to pray, we learned to trust God; we learned to turn our lives over to our loving Father in total surrender and dependence. Prayer became a time of communion and listening to his voice of comfort, instruction and direction.



Some of the specifics of how God responded to our desperate cries are described in detail in Eva's recently published book, *Treasure in Jars of Clay*.

During the past year, it has been a privilege to join with others at VM Missions in focused and regular prayer for this fundraising campaign.

As we have faithfully met before our heavenly Father, whose missional heart longs for all nations to worship and serve God's eternal purposes, we have experienced surprises. Many have been prompted to give generously to reach the goal. We were encouraged to persevere even when progress seemed stalled, because we were embracing God's high calling and priority to take the saving gospel of Jesus to those who are still living without hope.

In conclusion, I believe that every disciple of Jesus must recognize the need to learn how to pray. Prayer is not easy nor automatic, but faith empowers a commitment to a dependence on God for every area of life and a lifestyle of walking in submission to the will of God.

Willard Eberly is the Prayer Team Leader on the VM Missions Campaign Cabinet and a former long-term worker in Italy.



Photo courtesy of Hannah Shultz

Worker profile: **Hannah Shultz**

Service program: tranSend
Serving since: 2020

Assignment:

My assignment is to disciple children in our local Hispanic churches in the way of Jesus through word and song. I am currently partnering with Iglesia Menonita Monte Moriah. I teach piano, violin, and biblical truths about worship to Pastor Alfonso and Milagros' daughters, Sophia (12) and Mariana (9). Sophia and Mariana help facilitate worship through leading music at their church.

My work with Esperanza de Vida Church has taken different forms over the past year and a half. In the beginning of January 2021, children worked through a 12-week curriculum I created to highlight the overarching theme of the gospel through Bible stories. Then God directed us to study other biblical themes including the beatitudes and Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of heaven. Most recently God has led us to use a bilingual discipleship curriculum called "Conquistadores-Conquerers" from Senda de Vida Publishers. My work with VM Missions is quarter time.

Biggest challenge:

My biggest challenge has been learning to delegate. I enjoy creating, developing, and envisioning ways to better disciple and help others see how God is moving in their lives. These visions require the body of Christ. Yay! Though I am still learning to ask for help, our brothers and sisters at partner churches (Esperanza de Vida and Monte Moriah) have been gracious with me and eager to support and help.

Biggest joy:

I have many joys! I enjoy the thought-provoking questions that our Esperanza de Vida kids ask about the Bible. They propel me back to the feet of Jesus and to his word to find the answers. There is a group of three sisters and their cousin who attend church faithfully. They wake up so excited on Saturday mornings because they get to go to church in the evening. This brings me joy! I also enjoy the process of witnessing Sophia and Mariana develop their instrumental gifts. Their youthful boldness and willingness to serve God and the church inspires me.

A typical day:

My day usually involves undivided time with Jesus through scripture reading and a morning run followed by meeting up with a friend, preparations for teaching piano in the afternoon, teaching, and church activities in the evening. This summer I've also started taking online classes through Liberty's Music and Worship Master's program.

I teach Sophia and Mariana on Tuesday afternoons. To prepare for our time together, I play through the songs on the piano and violin, ask for God's guidance, and write up the lesson plan. It's a true treasure to have the whole family come to music lessons and worship God together! Esperanza de Vida meets for a church service on Saturday evenings. I have the privilege of leading music once a month and teaching/co-teaching our precious children (ages 3-15) the other Saturdays (except for my Saturdays off). I seek to keep sabbath Friday evening through Saturday morning. I desperately need the Holy Spirit's guidance every day.



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

A Church of Many Cultures

Campaign Summary

Two new programs:

- \$2 million for endowments
 - \$1 million for Business for Transformation (B4T)
 - \$1 million for Global Church Planting
- \$500,000 for immediate B4T and Global Church Planting needs until endowments are established

Renovation of “the barn”:

- \$400,000 to create a Mission Training Center

Campaign costs:

- \$100,000

Total: \$3 million (pledges payable over 5 years)

Special Thanks to Our Campaign Cabinet

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Dave Yutzy

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Campaign Goal
\$3 million

95%
current level



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