

Transforming

Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Spring 2024
VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 1

Unreached People Groups

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BREAKING NEW GROUND A SERIES ON NEW TRENDS IN MISSION

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 **VMissions**

From the President

Striving for Greater Balance

BY AARON M. KAUFFMAN

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NLT).



This year the concept of “unreached people groups” (UPGs) turns 50 years old. UPGs refer to groupings of people from similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds that have limited or no access to a living and credible witness to the gospel. In that sense, the idea of UPGs is not new. In fact, you might even trace the idea back to Jesus, who tells his disciples they will be his witnesses not only among Jews like themselves in Jerusalem and Judea, but among people they differ from (Samaritans) or don’t even know about (those at “the ends of the earth”).

But it is relatively new for VM Missions to make UPGs a priority in our work. Up until 20 years ago, most of our mission dollars and personnel served communities that were already predominantly Christian—at least in name. That began to change when we started offering the course, Perspectives on the World Christian Movement.

In the Perspectives class, students learn about something called The Great Imbalance. Surprisingly, nine out of ten of missionaries serve in contexts where there is already a viable Christian presence. That’s not to say they aren’t doing important work. But the vast majority of missionaries are not serving the people with the least access to the gospel.

The UPG concept first hit home for me some 15 years ago during a conversation with Skip and Carol Tobin. Describing their original call to go to Thailand, Carol said, “What an injustice that some people have the opportunity to hear about Jesus and others don’t!”

That resonated with my spirit. The fact that UPGs exist is a justice issue. Or, as a leader at a church I was visiting recently put it, “It’s simply not fair that some people have no way of knowing about Jesus and coming into a saving relationship with him.”

Last year, our Board of Directors made the decision to start tracking the percentage of workers we support who are serving UPGs. Currently, that number is 43%. The goal is not to eliminate other ministries, but to elevate our involvement with UPGs. When the Holy Spirit is at work among us, we will be Christ’s witnesses among neighbors near and far, like us and unlike us. We are committed to supporting a variety of ministry callings. We simply want to devote a greater portion of our effort to reaching the unreached.

After all, the gospel is for everyone.

Cover: The majority of gospel-unreached people groups that VM Missions engages through workers and partners are followers of Islam, from North Africa to Southeast Asia. In this issue, Anita Rahma shares about her family’s ministry to Muslims in a Southeast Asia slum. **See article on page 6.**

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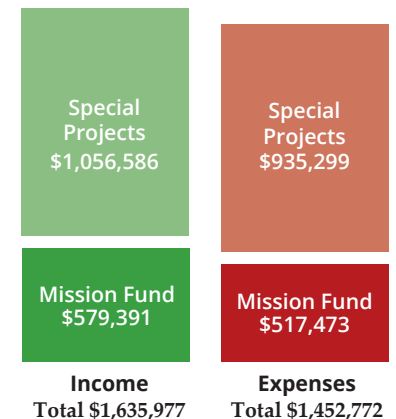
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Reporting: 09/01/23 to 02/29/24



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Transforming

Editor: Jon Trotter

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Great Community Give Raises More Than \$20K



On April 17, VMissions participated along with 156 other agencies in the Great Community Give, a dedicated giving day for nonprofit organizations in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, Virginia. VMissions held a cookout and open house over lunch, serving 70 burgers and 30 hot-



President Aaron Kauffman grills food at the open house on April 17.

Photo: Jon Trotter

dogs as some of our workers, board members, supporters, and staff enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship, adding a characteristic relational touch to this “online” day.

We are grateful to God for the outpouring of donations — 57 donors contributed \$19,989, including challenge gifts.

VMissions also won the Early Dawn Power Hour Prize sponsored by Evermore Construction, adding \$700. The net total (after expenses and fees) was \$20,250, representing 135% of the goal of \$15,000. Thank you to everyone who participated!

VMissions Launches Redesigned Website



VMissions is excited to introduce a completely redesigned website at vmmissions.org. This redesign places the site on modern web architecture and is designed to look and function well on mobile devices. Our goal is for visitors and current partners to more easily discover, serve, and partner with us as we help people join God’s movement to change the world. VMissions is grateful to the project team of Lindsey Kolb (Kolb Designs), page designer, and Clay Showalter (clayshowalter.com), website developer.

VMissions Giving App Now Available

The new VMissions app is a way to easily donate and connect with news and events, stories of mission, service opportunities, prayer support, and other ways to support the work of mission. It even has a built-in Bible app! Available for iOS and Android, find the free app by searching for VMissions at these stores:



(play.google.com/store) (apple.com/app-store)

Hannah Guisewite Joins Board of Directors



Hannah Guisewite joined the Board of Directors of VMissions in March as a Member at Large. She writes, “I used to work at

VMissions [as Events and Publicity Coordinator] and was asked to join the board after changing jobs. It seems like a great way to stay involved and continue to do the good work Jesus calls us to do!” Her interests include youth ministry, reading, travel, and spending time with friends.

Workers Reappointed



VMissions reappointed **Ben and Risa Yutzy** as Marketplace Workers from March 1, 2024, to August 31, 2027. They will

continue to engage with and disciple workers on their Timberville, Virginia, dairy farm as well as other persons and groups they’ve connected with in their community and in Mathias, W.Va.

Ministry leaders invited to join year-long cohort

In the first quarter of 2024, VMissions hosted a series of three luncheon workshop events for pastors and church leaders. As VMissions equips the church to share new life in Jesus Christ with neighbors near and far, a new opportunity is being offered for ministry leaders through a year-long cohort with curriculum, monthly peer accountability, and monthly coaching. Contact Kierston Kreider, Missions Mobilizer, to learn more: kierston.kreider@vmmissions.org

Ambassadors to the Unreached

Does the Unreached People Group framework still serve as a helpful lens as we look to the future of mission?

BY JASON RHODES SHOWALTER



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Lausanne Congress, a global missions gathering at which missiologist Ralph Winter introduced the Unreached People Group (UPG) frame-

work for thinking about Jesus' commission to his followers: "Go and make disciples of all peoples."

In September, the fourth Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism will gather 10,000 in-person participants from the global church in South Korea and thousands more through virtual venues to consider gaps and opportunities that remain in this call of Jesus. In an increasingly interconnected world marked by transnational migration, does the UPG framework still serve as a helpful lens as we look ahead to the next decade of mission?

Several years after the first Lausanne gathering in 1974, a strategy group offered further definition to the UPG framework. A people group, they proposed, is "the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance." Followers of Jesus within such a group can communicate freely without significant cultural differences that could threaten gospel sharing.

A group that is "unreached" refers to one that has 5% or fewer professing Christians (those who claim Christian identity, often because of cultural heritage but not necessarily because of personal conviction) and 2% or fewer of practicing Christians (those who see themselves as disciples of Jesus who seek to make disciples). A subset of UPGs, "unengaged people groups," describes groups who have no known Christian presence among them.

What does this practically look like in many places around the world? Imagine you live in a town of 10,000 people that meets this criteria of

"unreached." There might be 200 residents in your town who have "Christian" on their government-issued identity card. There is one public place of worship in the town for these Christians, and of these 200, 30 attend gatherings for worship and prayer on a weekly basis.

If you happen to meet one of these people at your place of work or in your neighborhood, you most likely won't know that they are Christian. There are also perhaps 20 evangelical Christians in your town, but they do not have a visible gathering place because they are not part of an officially recognized religious group, so you won't ever see them gathering as the body of Christ.

A focus on people groups shaped by language and cultural norms invites us to remember that God, the pioneer and primary actor of mission, chose to work through incarnation.

If you happen to live near one of these followers of Jesus or work in the same factory, she may share stories about Jesus as you get to know each other better. One of these believers may offer to pray with you for peace and healing in the sickness you're experiencing. But because many of these believers are the opposite sex from you, and cultural norms in your town discourage having conversation with unrelated people across these boundaries, it's even less likely that you'll ever meet one of these followers of Jesus. Furthermore, these believers won't likely share the good news across your town of 10,000, much less across your people group of 2 million spread across a large area in your country.

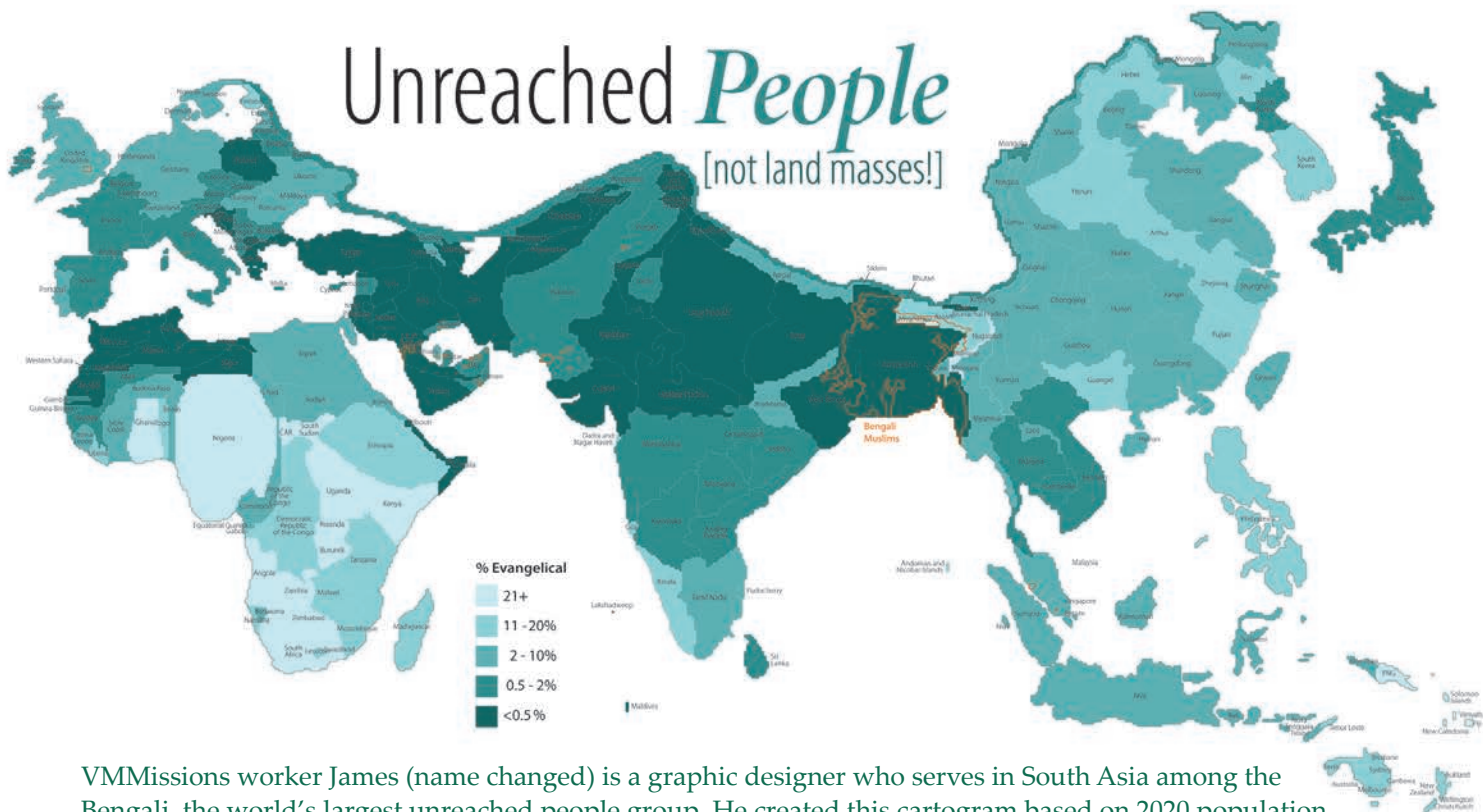


If the Great Commission is about people, why do we represent it with geographic maps?

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Unreached *People*

[not land masses!]



VMMissions worker James (name changed) is a graphic designer who serves in South Asia among the Bengali, the world’s largest unreached people group. He created this cartogram based on 2020 population estimates—every pixel represents 100,000 people, shaded by percentage evangelical. Graphic by James T.

This example highlights the continuing need for cross-cultural ambassadors to go with the good news to the approximately 7,000 remaining UPGs, most of whom live in the 67 countries of the 10/40 Window, a swath of the globe stretching from North Africa in the west to Japan in the east.

Focus on UPGs has galvanized interest, research and knowledge of peoples among evangelical Christians around the world like perhaps no other single lens in my lifetime. In the 1980s and early '90s, mission organizations and churches learned about people groups that would likely never have the opportunity to hear the gospel unless someone crossed barriers of understanding and acceptance. Christians began to pray for people groups in distant places. Some found ways to visit these locations in order to develop relational ties or send long-term workers. Some developed friendships with neighbors from UPGs much closer to home.

VMMissions increasingly partners with churches in the global south, the majority Christian world, as they send workers to live and work among UPGs as ambassadors of the gospel. Many of these sent ones continue to work in the professions they practiced in their passport nations.

Last fall, I joined an annual gathering of Anabaptist sending organizations, most of whom were from the global church. Members of that group are near-neighbors to half of the remaining UPGs, living in

the same country or an adjacent one and often sharing more cultural similarities to these UPGs than do many Western Christians. Surely one important piece of completing the commission of Jesus is greater collaboration as his global body in sending workers into new fields.

Jesus came as a baby to a particular people shaped by language and culture. He learned language and proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom from within a culture. And just as Jesus crossed barriers of understanding and acceptance, he invites his followers to do the same. After receiving the promised Holy Spirit, the disciples would be witnesses of the gospel in four categories of places: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). None of these represented home for Jesus’ listeners that day, most of whom were Galileans.

This work remains unfinished by Jesus’ own criteria. Jesus said, “[T]his gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:12-14). Let’s intentionally live toward the day when we’ll join “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev. 7:9) in worship around the throne of the crucified Lamb.

Jason Rhodes Showalter is Global Ministries Director for VMMissions.

Do You Want a Puppy?



To reach Muslim neighbors and remove barriers to the gospel, a worker family uses contextual language and lifestyle to connect.

BY ANITA RAHMA (NAME CHANGED)

My family and I have been making our home in a primarily Muslim slum community on the outskirts of Jakarta for over the past decade. We believe that the Lord has planted us in this place and that God deeply loves the people here. We try to be witnesses to the gospel in word and deed, sharing about Christ in contextually appropriate ways. This has certainly not been an easy journey, and we continue to learn as we go along.

One afternoon recently, my son and I were biking to the photocopy store, when we passed a house with adorable little puppies on the front porch. After completing our errand, we went back to ask if we could hold the puppies. We knew the son of this Christian family, and the grandmother graciously welcomed us in and indulged our puppy-holding desires. She told us in a few weeks they would be for sale, at the cheap price of \$3.25 each.

My son named the puppy he was holding “Oreo,” and immediately started making plans to purchase the puppy with his allowance. I had to explain to him, once again, that we could not have a dog. “We are trying to show God’s love to our neighbors in this place,” I said. “Our Muslim friends are terrified of dogs. We cannot have a dog.”

When we say “yes” to God’s call in our lives, it often means saying “no” to many other things—often good things. For us, saying “yes” to trying to communicate the gospel in this place means surrendering some things that we might feel like we have a “right” to.

We choose to not have a dog. We choose to not eat pork. We choose to not drink alcohol. We choose to wear clothing that is respectful and appropriate. And those are the easy, superficial things. But we do not want these essentially unimportant things to be stumbling blocks to our Muslim neighbors. We do not want the trappings of “Christianese” language or culture to be walls keeping our friends from being able to really hear the good news of Jesus.

Even though we live among two of the largest unreached people groups in the world (Sundanese and Java Pesisir), as we serve here, we learn that many people have already had interactions with Christians in the past. And very frequently, there have been negative experiences—even traumatic and manipulative. When we have built enough trust in relationships for people to share such things, we are indeed treading on holy ground.

We run a free school in our neighborhood, tangibly sharing God’s love with our students and their families. We desire to give them hope for a better future, equipping children to read well and get off to a good start in elementary school. Through this school, doors have opened over the years to know hundreds of families. We have shared stories from scripture, prayed for people when they are sick or demon possessed, and been part of life in the community. It has been beautiful and ugly, heartwarming and heartbreaking— a sacred journey.

Reaching unreached people groups demands more than what is easy or comfortable.

We chose from the beginning of our work here to use contextual language. (There are many insightful books that discuss this topic, and it is beyond the scope of this article.) We say we are followers of Isa Al Masih. We learn to pray with our eyes open and our hands lifted up. We do not have any crosses or pictures of Jesus and his disciples displayed in our living room (we do, however, have one cross and one picture of Jesus in our bedroom).

Again, we are trying to get rid of as many barriers to the gospel that we can. This is not because we are ashamed of the gospel or trying to hide it, but because we want our neighbors to meet Jesus. We want them to learn about Jesus, not as a Western, outside religion, but as a Savior who has come to announce his loving kingdom to them.



Residents of the slum community where Anita serves with her family are members of two unreached people groups, defined as less than 5% professing Christian and less than 2% practicing or evangelical.

Courtesy photo

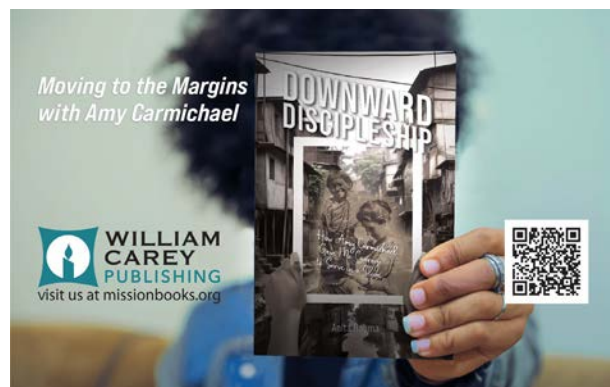
This is not easy work. The more we learn, the more we know we have more to learn. We sow seeds. We trust God to bring the growth.

There is pushback from Christians who do not understand. It is easy to own a dog, eat pork, flaunt Christian terms for God in drive-by evangelism encounters and then hope Muslims respond. It is more comfortable to gather with other believers and talk about religious things with terms we grew up knowing and understanding.

Reaching unreached people groups demands more than what is easy or comfortable. God invites us to surrender. To learn His ways are not our ways. To confess that we continue to have much to learn, and that much has been done in the name of Christ that is counter to his way. While on furlough last year, we sat and listened to seasoned missionaries share about a movement of people coming to know Christ in their context. We saw photos of baptisms and listened to testimonies of changed lives.

I cried as I listened, wrestling with God. Are we doing something wrong? Or is God trusting us with this journey of not-yet-seeing-fruit? I think the answer is the latter, but as we continue to serve—longing for the day when people will decide to follow Christ—it can feel like a lonely journey.

In my new book, *Downward Discipleship: How Amy Carmichael Gave Me Courage to Serve in a Slum*, I share seven invitations that I have learned from



the life and legacy of missionary Amy Carmichael. Amy served for over fifty years in India, founding the Dohnavur community and rescuing girls from lives of temple prostitution. I weave in stories from our context of ministry in Indonesia, and reflect on how Amy has inspired me to carry on— even when it is hard.

Our hope is that those who hear our story will be inspired to thoughtfully discern how to choose a life of downward discipleship wherever God might be leading. Moving from self to surrender, and control to compassion—may the Lord lead us all to humble lives of serving and witnessing to our King.

Anita Rahma serves in a slum community in Jakarta, Indonesia, with her husband and two sons, running a free school called House of Hope. They serve with Servants to Asia's Urban Poor and VMissions.

Planting Kingdom Seeds

Retracing the openness to God’s call that led to long-time service among the Isaan people group in Thailand.



BY CAROL TOBIN



My husband Skip and I have often said that our saying “yes” to going to an unreached people group was like stepping into a river that swept us along in its powerful current. Within a few months of saying “yes,” we were a family of six, with four-month-old Noelle in arms, on the other side of the world in Thailand.

What happened? God had opened our hearts to the gripping truth of the biblical story: God bestowing blessing—profoundly and fully in Jesus Christ! And God’s intention that there be worshiping communities—churches—bearing witness to that blessing within every tongue, tribe and nation. He was inviting us to be a part of that great story. Looking back, we can see that God had been preparing us.

We had never aspired to live a “domesticated” Christian life. From the time we married in 1980, leaning into ministry was what excited us—whether that meant holding worship services in our local prisons, gathering kids in the backyard for songs and Jesus stories, or opening our home to hitchhikers and newly released inmates. We were not alone in these ventures, and over a number of years, we saw God form a group of us “Jesus People” into what now had a name: New Life Christian Fellowship.

These were years of intense volunteer involvement. We rejoiced to receive invaluable input through a training center, created specifically to serve newly emerged churches such as ours. We went as a ministry team to Haiti and noticed that where others felt overwhelmed, we were invigorated. By the time we had three daughters, we had bought a four-story home in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Somehow, we ended up with a houseful of undocumented Hispanics living with us. We learned a lot about cross-cultural discipleship in that chapter; we also learned that it was neither wise nor safe.

The next people who came for a night and stayed for a summer were missionaries serving a remote tribe in Peru. They were a quirky and far from perfect homeschooling family of five, just like us! We peppered them with questions. Our interest was piqued because our final class at the training center had dealt with the great imbalance of missionary work, the fact that a huge percentage of funds and personnel are invested in places where the gospel has already gained a foothold, while a vast number of “people groups” are left without access. Yet, God’s mandate is for us to make disciples of all nations.



The Tobin family prepares to leave for service in Thailand in fall 1989. Courtesy photo

Our perhaps simplistic response was, “The call has been given. Unless we hear a specific call to stay, we need to go.” Our gaze was lifting; Kennett no longer felt like the center of the universe. We asked our training center teacher where he would like to send us. “How about Thailand?” We said yes. Our pastor countered with a plea for us to go to Haiti. But we were resolved to go where people had never heard the name of Jesus.

Funds poured in. Finally, we weren’t just unbalanced fanatics. There was a name for people like us:



“[The gospel] really is great news, but why do we have to be the last ones to hear? Sometimes we feel like in Isaan we are at the end of the world, and the rest of the world forgets us.” — A new Isaan believer

Courtesy photo

we were missionaries! We had experienced church emerging in unlikely ways among unlikely people, so off we went, full of hope,

leaving sad but supportive grandparents behind.

We were invited to be part of a small mission team in the seaside town of Hua Hin. Seven-year-old Hosanna would run to tell us when neighbors paused at our gate; she was so eager for them to know about Jesus. During those two years, Melody was born, we studied language, and we observed ministry practices that shaped our convictions about church planting—there were some things to admire, but we didn’t want to do it like that.

Most significantly, we learned about Buddhism from a young Thai believer who had been a spirit medium. From her, we learned the ways that the longings of sincere Buddhists for the Lord of Mercy connect naturally with the gospel.

We began our next term serving under a Thai pastor in Bangkok and studying for our sixth grade language equivalency test. By this time, we knew we wanted to do our church planting among the 20 million rice farming people of the Isaan plateau. We had sensed the spiritual hunger of the many who flocked to the city to earn money to send home. We knew how Isaan people tended to be looked down upon for their “countrified” ways. So, we were delighted when, in submitting to this godly man, he asked us to work alongside a local pastor in the heart of this sunbaked region. The soil there had been sustaining rice farming for 5,000 years. Could kingdom seeds be planted here? Could God receive the harvest he longed for?

Arrangements were made for us to rent a house in the village, near his church building. This was immersion. No one spoke English. And they weren’t speaking Thai! How shocked we were to discover that after all of our study, we couldn’t understand our neighbors! Skip began studying Isaan, the unwritten form of Lao spoken in the region.

I had my hands full teaching the girls. The downstairs of our house was like a huge garage. In the morning, we would slide the giant screeching security doors to the right and to the left to let in both the light and the various neighbors who chose to

stroll in to watch me teach! Thankfully, this allowed the kindly older aunt next door to notice when I needed help with two-year-old Melody, which was often, as I was also pregnant. The girls had the run of the village with a handful of neighbor girls. We gradually learned the many delights of Isaan life, loving the food, the music, the humor.

Skip had a God-given opportunity to learn both from this young pastor and from missionaries nearby who were leading out with a holistic ministry model and radically contextualized church practices. In this way, a vision for what church could look like in Isaan context began to come into focus.

The soil had been sustaining rice farming for 5,000 years. Could kingdom seeds be planted here?

As our fifth year ended, it was time to discern where we would begin our own work. With our director, David Shenk, we prayed and poured over the demographic details of the largest unreached districts. It was decided that we would move over six hours south to Ubon Ratchathani province.

Within weeks after moving, Jessa was born and Skip escorted 13-year-old Hosanna to boarding school in India. We spent a quiet nine months serving and gaining the trust of leaders within three small Western modeled and funded city churches.

Skip sharpened a team vision to see not one church but a “spontaneously reproducing church planting movement spread across the southern sector of Ubon Ratchathani Province.” The Ubon churches with one voice blessed and directed us to go to the district of Det Udom. And thus began the seven year adventure of seeing this vision come about!

Many districts in Isaan remain totally unreached. However, the cluster of worshipping village-based groups in the Det district, called Life Enrichment Church, have now spread across four districts in Southern Ubon and maintain a strong vision for gospel outreach and multiplication.

Carol Tobin is a former mission worker in Thailand and a former VM Missions staff member.

Call to Prayer: Music as Prayer

BY RALEIGH (NAME CHANGED)

I have often said that my favorite way to connect with God is through singing. I have also often told people that my worship songs feel as if they've been given to me. In fact, it has been in times of prayer with my guitar at hand that some of my best songs have come.

"You Showed Us How (Adoration)" came into the world in one moment of such prayer:

You lived and you died // You lived a perfect life // You lived and you died to show us how to live and die // You left everything // You gave it all away // You left and gave everything to show us how to leave and give everything // Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, perfect sacrifice // Adoration, Adoration // Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, perfect sacrifice // You died and now live // You chose to forgive // You died and now live to show us how to die and live.

The Apostle Paul tells us that "the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words" (Romans 8:26, NLT). I wonder if these "groanings" might sometimes be music.

Recently I was driving alone to the airport and decided to sing prayers rather than think or speak them. I was surprised how much more real my praises and petitions felt to me as I expressed them in this way. It was as if the words became alive with new meaning, as if lifting from a journal page and flying to the heavens. The words felt enlivened by the Spirit of God groaning within me, connecting me with the Father God.

Another prayer song came to me as our family was preparing to move to be among our unreached people group. I longed to find hospitality in that new place, for me and for my family. I longed to find neighbors with whom to live life and to whom Jesus could become visible through our witness and our prayers for them.



VMMissions worker Raleigh, with his son Robbie (names changed) sings and plays his guitar.

Courtesy photo

I was given a picture of many doors: the door of our future house in that town; doors of neighbors being opened to us; a door of heaven opening for our neighbors to enter; a door through which Jesus will come when he returns to earth. And a simple song emerged in the language of our people group.

I was surprised how much more real my praises and petitions felt to me as I sang them.

A couple months ago I stopped by a local farmer's house to pick up milk, a visit I make weekly. He saw the guitar in the back of my car and asked me to play it for him. In his language, I sang the song which was actually in many ways an answered prayer in his family's kindness to me over these past years. Now almost every time I go to his house he sings this simple prayer song back to me:

Open the door // Open the doors // Open the door of heaven // Come, Jesus Messiah!

Jesus, you have answered my prayer of doors opened in hospitality in this place. I will keep on singing until all our friends and enemies receive you into their doors and you come again to this earth.

Raleigh and Opal (names changed) serve with their four children in North Africa among an indigenous people group. They serve in partnership with Rosedale International.



Worker Profile: **Nathan and Anya Stan and J. and D.**

Service location: Central Asia | **Service program:** tranSend | **Serving since:** 2023

(Names changed)

Assignment:

As eastern Europeans, we have seen many people from the West coming to our communities and helping us in so many ways since our early teen years. We lived in a country transitioning from communism to democracy, and the needs were many (both spiritual and economical). Inspired by their example, we realized that it is now our generation's turn to serve others in areas where the gospel is almost unknown. We are glad to follow God's calling and to partner with VMissions in this calling. Now we are part of the Launch Team in one of the post-Soviet countries in Central Asia. The long-term goal is to be involved in Business for Transformation, to use our professions in order to have an authentic role here. And having an authentic role will help us to develop new and deep relationships and show the love of the Lord among the people of the biggest ethnic group in the area we are located. We are currently involved in language and culture acquisition. We learned that this is one of three pillars for "tentmakers," and we hope to make good progress in this area. Nathan works in software engineering and Anya is a dentist.

Biggest challenge:

Our biggest challenge has been to get to know this place, and the many small, practical steps we as a family need to take. Twenty years ago, I (Nathan) began to feel a burning in my heart for this kind of work. It has been a long journey to receive clear guidance and actually move our family to Central Asia. The biggest challenge now is the difficulty to have real communication with the locals, but we try to improve

every day. Our teachers encourage us that we have made progress, and in two months we can already have basic conversations that help us survive. Another challenge is bringing up our daughters with calm and wisdom, especially in these times of transition.

Biggest joy:

Our biggest joy is to take every day as a new experience and to know God's presence with us as we interact with our language teachers. One of them is watching us very carefully and we learned that the messenger is the message. Because our host country has restrictions about sharing the good news with words, we hope to demonstrate it without words at this stage. May God help us do so! For now, we feel the connection with one of the language teachers deepening, which is good for both sides.

A typical day:

During the week, after personal prayer time we have breakfast and then head to our daughters' preschool. While they are there, we have language classes for 2 or 3 hours. After some play time in the park, we head home and usually review our language lesson. We often cook at home, but sometimes we try local food in town. Nathan explores the city whenever he can to learn about local life. Some evenings we have team meetings, trainings, and opportunities to make connections. Weekends are more relaxed; we try to spend as much time as possible outside with our daughters. On Sundays, we join a home fellowship with other workers in the morning and in the evenings join a bigger international fellowship.



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ENCOURAGED!**

EVENT SPONSORED BY

**Weaver's
Flooring
America.**



SMALL CHANGE, BIG DIFFERENCE

 **VMissions** RECOVERY MINISTRY
FROM ADDICTION

 Mennonite
Central
Committee

EDUCATION FOR SPECIAL
NEEDS CHILDREN

COUNTED AT THE
VIRGINIA MENNONITE
RELIEF SALE
October 4-5, 2024
Rockingham Co. Fairgrounds

**WATER JUGS ARE FUN TO
FILL WITH COINS AND BILLS**

Encourage your congregation to participate. Share the hope of Jesus near and far!

