

Transforming

Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Summer 2024
VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 2



Business for Transformation



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BREAKING NEW GROUND A SERIES ON NEW TRENDS IN MISSION

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From the President

Workplace Witness

BY AARON M. KAUFFMAN

Hola, *Profe!* Hello, Teacher! This was how I was often greeted in the streets of La Mesa, Colombia, during our three years of missionary service there.



As a rare foreigner in a small town, I had a recognized and respected role in the community, teaching English at the local Mennonite school. It was known as the best school in the region and open to all. Every year they had a waiting list for families to enroll their children. And that's how people knew me, through my role at the school, even people whose children did not attend there. *Profe*. Teacher. I loved it.

I have never served in business, but my experience as a teacher gives me a window into what it is like to have a genuine and readily understood role in a cross-cultural context. Locals are more likely to see you as making a valuable contribution to their community. They are more likely to consider you one of their own.

This is only one of many reasons we have embraced the Business for Transformation (B4T) movement, also called business as mission. B4T offers a way for Christians to be authentically present in cross-cultural settings where traditional mission work is not allowed or understood. As a business leader, one can build trust and enjoy a recognized role in the community.

Business also benefits communities by creating jobs. Patrick Lai, a leader in the B4T movement, shares the story of visiting Senegal to do consulting with a local charity. After getting to know the only English-speaking taxi driver in town over the course of several days, Lai asks the driver what he thinks the charity should invest in. Clean water? Medicine? Schools?

"Don't waste your money on any of them," is the terse reply from the taxi driver. Then he adds, "You asked me what we need. What we need are jobs. If the [charity] creates jobs for us, then we can decide if we need water or medicine or education."¹

So business provides Christian workers with a genuine role and an authentic way to bless communities. Our deepest longing, however, is for spiritual transformation. In the workplace, Christian values are on display and create natural opportunities for people to inquire about "the reason for the hope that [we] have" (1 Peter 3:15, NIV).

It was in the classroom that one of my students learned about my faith in Jesus. His cousin then invited him to church, where he eventually put his trust in Jesus, too. Now a young adult, he was recently named the national youth director for the Colombian Mennonite Church.

Workplace witness is an approach to mission that all of us with jobs can practice. May we let our light shine—in the classroom, the office, and the marketplace—and so bring glory to God.

¹ Patrick Lai, *Business for Transformation: Getting Started* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 4-5.

Cover: Handcrafted wooden trains are some of the products of Squirrel Toys, a business in South Asia owned by Anowar (name changed), a believer who operates the company as a business for transformation. See article on page 6. Photo courtesy of Squirrel Toys Facebook page

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(NAMES CHANGED)

Financial Report

Reporting: 09/01/23 to 05/31/24

Special Projects \$1,402,912	Special Projects \$1,353,533
Mission Fund \$758,578	Mission Fund \$783,874
Income Total \$2,161,490	Expenses Total \$2,137,407

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

Transforming

Editor: Jon Trotter

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Putt for Missions Raises \$5,420 for Mission Fund



The annual VMissions mini-golf tournament Putt for Missions was held May 25. Fifty-five golfers on 14 teams participated, supported by 11 business sponsors. VMissions worker Baker Rigg, serving as a local jail chaplain, shared about his ministry and stories of God's transformation among inmates. The event raised a net total of \$5,420 for VMissions ministries.

Annual Motorcycle for Missions Ride Raises \$15,720 for VMissions



Motorcycle for Missions was held May 31 to June 1. Joining the ride this year were 33 motorcyclists and passengers. Along with rider sponsorships, six businesses supported the event, which raised a net total of \$15,720 for the Mission Fund. The two-day ride stopped overnight in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on May 31. VMissions hosted a cookout and program for the riders, with live music and a time of sharing by VMissions worker Nathan Carr, serving in local recovery ministry.

New VMissions Workers Appointed



Destiny Alston

Campus ministry at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, with Every Nation Campus and VMissions



Peter Brown (name changed)

Engaging business for transformation on the VMissions Central Asia Launch Team



Andrea Hamsher

Volunteering at Die Villa and working with the Emmaus community with David and Rebekka Stutzman, Mannheim, Germany



Rebeca Ramirez (name changed)

Joining the VMissions Central Asia Launch Team as a dentist, serving with United Brethren Global and VMissions



Marcello Arrostuto & Marianna Vaglica (Elia)

Mentored internship with Shalom Church, an Italian Mennonite congregation in Palermo, Italy



Jorge & Ginny Enciso (Matilde, Maia, Matthias, Martín)*

Serving as leaders of Viva Youth in Bogotá, Colombia, with South American Mission



Alia Muhammad

Campus ministry at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, with Every Nation Campus and VMissions



Lydia Showalter

Participating in Vida220's discipleship training school, followed by outreach as a Viva Youth intern in Bogotá, Colombia

Workers Reappointed for New Terms

Joyel Allen*, serving with Every Nation Campus at Mary Baldwin University, Staunton, Virginia, term open-ended

Shawn & Laura Green*, continuing their assignment in Termoli, Italy, 9/2024 to 8/2026

Steve Horst & Bethany Tobin*, continuing their ministry in Bangkok, Thailand, 9/2024 to 8/2026

Dave & Rebekka Stutzman*, continuing in their ministries in Mannheim, Germany, 9/2024 to 8/2026

*NOTE: Workers listed on this page are serving in a tranSend internship, unless marked with *, which indicates those serving in the transForm (long-term) program.*

Help us reach our annual Mission Fund goal of \$440,000 by August 31.

Scan the QR code or text GIVE to (877) 722-0176 or send a check to make a gift.



An Impact for Generations

Business enterprises in Central Asia seek a long-term economic, social, and spiritual impact.

BY JAY W. (NAME CHANGED)

As my wife and I serve in Central Asia, our hope is that the business endeavors that we have helped to start are a true blessing to the community. We hope that ultimately, building authentic relationships through business ventures will be a bridge to sharing the hope of Jesus in this Muslim context.

For me, a big part of what drives me is creating legitimate roles for Christians to be able to live in Muslim communities as salt and light. We have seen both an information technology (IT) company and an educational center with language and IT courses succeed. So we would love to see those businesses expand into other areas where currently there are no Western workers living. I've also seen some projects that have not been as successful. We had to close down one school and another is not financially viable at this point, but we're hoping it can become so.

We helped start three schools and one IT company along with its own sales and marketing arm. The initial school, established 14 years ago, and computer company, 10 years ago, have about 60 local employees between them and provide authentic relationships for the foreigners that want to live there. Through these long-term relationships, we've seen multiple families come to faith. These businesses have also provided a work environment where Christians and Muslims can work in partnership, add value together, and build respect and mutual understanding.

Our focus right now is an area of Central Asia where there are more than 10 million people and no Western workers currently living there. There are four main cities, and we would love to see additional IT offices and educational centers started in each of them. We chose the initial city because it has a strong university that is graduating about a thousand IT students per year who have some job potential, and opportunities for local projects, but

it's with a much lower salary. The best graduates often leave and move to the capital, where there are more job opportunities, or they leave the country. We would like to see IT offices where these top graduates can work in their community, be part of their family relationships, work alongside Christians, not to in any way push our faith, but be able to share naturally what God has done in our lives to be able to pray for people as there are needs around us.

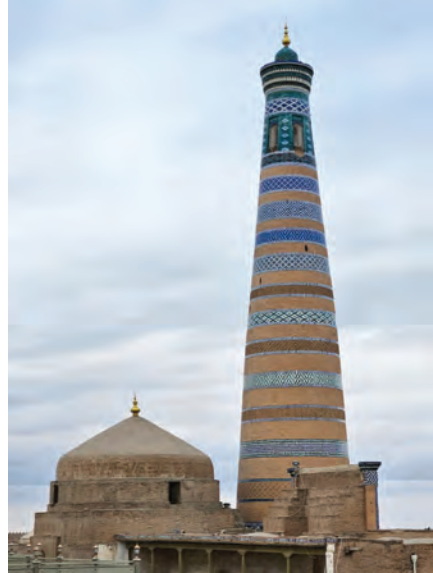
We really want to be a blessing holistically to the community: providing jobs, providing education, and paying taxes. In our first location the school and the IT business pay 1% of all of the taxes for that region, and pay enough into the pension fund for more than a hundred retirees to receive their pension. We view this as a blessing to the community and it is something we're glad to do. This is an unusual perspective on taxes among the local community and among international workers.

We want to be fully legitimate, making business decisions based on how any other business would make those decisions. We also want to be structured to be financially profitable, providing value to clients and good wages and benefits to employees. There are multiple cities in Central Asia where there's an opportunity to

live out this vision. I am particularly excited about providing a good salary to other workers from the Global South, who can support themselves after they have finished language study and are in full-time work roles.

We're envisioning at least four additional IT offices, and four additional educational centers teaching English and IT. The hope is to take some of the profits from the IT business and invest them through grants into the educational centers to provide opportunities for more students as well. The first educational center is a neat example. Most of our team





Around this ancient city along the Silk Road in Central Asia, German Mennonites lived in peace with their neighbors from 1883 to 1934 and blessed the local community with new agricultural techniques, craftsmanship, and technological development. The Mennonites who lived here left a legacy of blessing that continues to be remembered. *Photos courtesy of author*

leaders attended the educational center that we had started when they were younger. There's some synergy in the educational center preparing future IT workers.

Starting a new IT business requires at least one entrepreneur, one strong software engineer, and someone to lead the human resources and spiritual impact side. These three people, working together, can start a new location. This is also true for the educational centers, with at least one strong foreign teacher, one leader, and a person focused on spiritual impact and human resources. Under this model, we envision six families or foreign workers collaborating to start a school and a business in each location. The biggest limitation to this vision is having the right people join. We do, however, have a ready supply of local partners to work with us.

When new people join our team, we often talk about how to be effective and have deep relationships through which we can share. Three components are essential. People joining need to be spiritually mature and able to rely on God for strength in difficult circumstances. Secondly, they should really invest in learning the language and culture of this context, which may mean taking the whole first year or two before getting into an employment role. Lastly, people need to have an authentic reason for being present—to be a blessing—and the working role provides that. We encourage people to move to the regions where there are less existing resources. It takes people who are fairly hardy and flexible.

Our business leaders partner closely with other long-term international workers to support new people. We partner with what we call a Launch

Team, that helps people through the first two years of language and culture learning, logistics, finding housing, navigating the country or town, and providing member care. Most people are assigned a mentor. Sometime in the second year, they will probably transition to working half time. In their work role, they would be supervised by the business leadership structure.

We know that fellowship and spending time together as believers is really important for discipleship and growth. International workers typically meet every week for worship, Bible study, and time to pray for one another. And we encourage local believers to do the same among themselves. This allows local believers to express their faith fully in their culture, and avoids the concerns by neighbors and the government that would arise from a mixed gathering.

As we expand into these four new cities, there are opportunities for skilled professionals to join this vision in a large variety of roles, especially for software developers, experienced business people, and language teachers. We also provide up to five college internship opportunities each summer. There are also opportunities for US companies to join as clients, working with an international team.

We pray that this business expansion will plant the seeds of faith and genuine community blessing for generations to come.

Jay is a mission worker, businessman, consultant, and Launch Team leader serving in Central Asia.

The Story of Squirrel Toys



A business in South Asia makes safe and high quality wooden toys to bless children and families.

BY JAMES T. (NAME CHANGED)

I grew up in South Asia, but when I returned there after college some twenty years ago to help serve the church, I faced some surprises.

One of them was that virtually all ministry funding was from the West, not from local church giving. There were (and are) many foreign-funded workers, but not a single full-time locally-funded worker that I had heard of. Well-intended Western generosity had stifled local giving.

Meanwhile, many youth in the youth group I volunteered with were either pursuing get-rich-quick schemes, avoiding menial work and hoping for desk jobs, or doing work that didn't really benefit society.

I quickly realized the importance of teaching Ephesians 4:28: "Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need" (NIV). I wanted to see these young people finding ways to bless their communities with quality work so they could provide jobs and give financially to the Lord's work.

Now, fifteen years later, I'm overjoyed to see Anowar (name changed) living this out.

The idea for Squirrel Toys started when Anowar's uncle was forced out of his ancestral Muslim village because he now followed Jesus. A carpenter by trade, his uncle now had no work, and Anowar was wondering how he could help him make quality, marketable products. Meanwhile, Anowar had two young daughters of his own.

As a creative designer, he had learned the importance of creativity in the workplace and wanted his kids to develop creativity. However, the local education system doesn't develop creativity, and the local toy industry is dominated with cheap plastic junk that beeps and flashes but doesn't have any educational or developmental value for children. He started researching Montessori-style toys and

creating prototypes with his uncle, testing them with his daughters. He researched thoroughly about safety—what types of wood finishes are truly non-toxic and child-safe? He ended up choosing to avoid paint finishes since it's hard to evaluate its toxicity. Instead, he uses various types of local woods to add variety in tone.

After two or three years of prototyping, he was ready to launch the company. Anowar was surprised by the demand for his toys after the business launched. There was a backlog on orders, far more than he could supply. Soon he had five employees working from their family home.

He realized that he needed business advice, and at this point I connected him with the Business for Transformation (B4T) catalyst group that supports entrepreneurs who live out their faith daily through business. Through a series of video calls, B4T mentors encouraged Anowar as he developed a business plan and identified priorities in management. They also gave him a tailor-made loan that could help his business grow at a sustainable rate.

Anowar was surprised by the demand for his toys. There was soon a backlog on orders, far more than he could supply.

Further projections are needed in order to chart out longer-term growth, and the B4T group continues to support Anowar through mentoring, analysis of the health of the business and loan structures that give him access to funds as needed without the crushing burden of long-term interest.

Recently Anowar has quit his job as a video editor to focus more on this business, his family and faith. He's experiencing a shift in his faith. As he describes it, for many years he was far too preoccupied with establishing financial stability: money



At left, Anowar holds a wooden toy in the process of being made in the company's workshop. At right, a girl plays with a new lacing toy. Photos courtesy of Squirrel Toys Facebook page

had become his god. He has now discovered experiencing Jesus' presence through meditating on scripture and experiencing God's love directly.

"After 12 years of marriage I seem to be falling in love with my wife again, and I'm building many new experiences with my girls as well. Perhaps one day I might have a lot of wealth but then my daughters won't want to play with me. Fathers hurt themselves when they focus on building their future while destroying the present," Anowar wrote. "I'm realizing that the future really just comes to us as the present. I urge you fathers, *your* time is your kids' most precious toy. Let's all invest quality time with our wives and children."

Currently, Squirrel Toys has 29 products: puzzles, stacking rings, lacing toys, cars, trains, marble tracks, teethers, and blocks. For marketing, he uses Facebook and WhatsApp, sending products by courier from his home. Sometimes he visits children's fairs to promote his products, but mainly his marketing is done by word of mouth and quality videos on his Facebook page.

He has many happy customers who leave positive reviews and recommendations. One customer wrote, "The toys are very beautiful and quality. Children have no problem playing. The funny thing is that no matter how many new toys are given, they will take this wooden toy." Others noted how the toy market in their country is flooded with toxic colored toys and plastics that can be harmful developmentally, appreciating the option to buy good and healthy alternatives.

Anowar doesn't have huge dreams for the business. He wants to live in the present and see how he can support his family and his employees through this business, but also give time to his family and his relationship with God. He's happy to see how new products are touching customers and making them find safe, healthy ways to play together.

James T. is a graphic designer serving in South Asia, where he disciples youth, develops leaders, and works for church multiplication among Muslim-background believers.

Work as Worship and Blessing

Business as a way to empower local believers, make disciples, and bless communities in Central Asia.



BY MAX Z. (NAME CHANGED)

My wife and I, along with our two young boys are moving to Central Asia later this year where I am looking forward to working in Business for Transformation (B4T). The company that I will be joining is part of a bigger network with a vision to use agricultural businesses in Central Asia to empower national believers to live in rural areas and make disciples through business connections. The goal is to also bless the region by creating jobs, increasing food security, and developing agricultural value chains.

My journey as it relates to B4T started in a rural, post-communist, Eastern European context, where my entrepreneurial parents were missionaries. Due to a lack of jobs, a significant number of the villagers went abroad to find work. Seeing the adverse effects on families from a parent being away from home half of the year, inspired me to study economics and international development.

My vision for healthy families and communities was connected to Jesus' call to love our neighbors. Initially, I had a "social gospel" mindset. I was unsure of what I believed about various aspects of Christian theology, but I knew I wanted to follow Jesus in caring for the poor.

Through the witness of the church, God continued to open my eyes to the beauty of Jesus, the gospel, grace, and the church, and I came to realize the need for a more holistic mindset. A framework where loving neighbors includes gospel proclamation and Christian discipleship along with social, environmental, and economic development.

The theological framework that I grew into sees work as a key aspect of image bearing and reflecting God to the rest of creation. As in other areas of creation, sin infected work and humanity's rule of creation. Through the sin-defeating work of Jesus, the perfect image bearer—"the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being"—God is reconciling the world to himself. As reconciled, new creation, Holy Spirit-empowered, image bearers, we (the church) have been given the min-

istry of reconciliation in addition to the mandate to rule creation in a Christ-like fashion.

Through my university studies, my employment, connections with others, and the church, I have been learning how to do redeemed work. One of the takeaways from my university studies was that tying community development initiatives to business and economic incentives increases the sustainability of the initiatives.

Over the past ten years, I have been blessed with the opportunity to work for a number of agri-food companies that in addition to pursuing economic profitability, also had missional goals of improving their customers' lives, their employees' lives, their industries, and the communities in which they operated. Through the churches that I have connected with, I have had the opportunity to join others in providing for the needs of disadvantaged people in our local communities.

I want to promote a mindset of business as growing value rather than extracting profit.

Through a couple of organizations, I have had opportunities to be engaged in the process of providing loans to B4T companies in the 10/40 Window. Through the encouragement of fellow believers and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I have been learning to see and to seize opportunities to testify about what God is doing in my life.

As I move to Central Asia, I want to keep seeking ways to integrate business, development, and disciple-making in my own life and in the lives of others in the church. I want to help others see work as worship and to promote a mindset of business as growing value rather than extracting profit. The B4T model is a great way to holistically witness in a Muslim context. However, this way of thinking about work as worship is a framework for people everywhere and not simply just a tool to get into hard-to-reach places.

Max Z. (name changed) is joining the Central Asia Launch Team to engage in business for transformation.

Business as Gospel Opportunity

BY SUZY KANODE

We are all missionaries, whether we have the official title or not. That is the mindset which my husband Hahns and I have embraced throughout our marriage. We have been taught in our churches and families that sharing the good news of Jesus is a vocation, not just a job. We also prioritize ministry to a whole person, not just one part of them.

Seeing business as a tool for transformation allows for this holistic approach in an authentic manner as relationships are built and cultivated over time. Many businesspeople don't view themselves as missionaries, even though they may be supportive of missions in general, but we believe that business is a great venue for spreading the knowledge of Christ and what it means to follow him through ongoing relationships.

In a business context, we have access to many more people who may be interested in knowing more about Jesus and following him than if we just waited for people to show up in our churches with their questions and curiosity. We form and build relationships with vendors, customers, and employees.

We have learned to be alert all the time, in every setting, for who God is calling to come into a relationship or a deeper relationship with him. At times, Hahns has had opportunities to ask leading questions that have in turn led to deeper discussions about faith and what discipleship entails with customers who have become our friends over a long period of time. Sometimes the conversations simply offer new perspectives in ways that challenge the status quo.

Through business relationships, we have opportunities to share our faith through intentional conversations. At the least, the way we conduct ourselves within those relationships speaks to our faith. We strive to follow Jesus' "golden rule," to treat people fairly, and to act with integrity.



Hahns and Suzy Kanode. Courtesy photo

We believe Jesus gives us opportunities to fulfill our missional calling to these people whom God places in our path through business.

Rather than doing business with profit as the only bottom line, we desire to transform the workplace into places where people can thrive. There have been times when employees have messed up and we have chosen to offer them a second chance and

continue to treat them with dignity. We have forgiven as Jesus commands us while also providing accountability for future performance.

Another desire we have is to help people meet their goals. Some customers want assistance with their own business to be able to grow and better provide for their families and contribute to their communities. The goals for other customers might be finding ways to have fun, relax, or spend extra time with family or friends.

For employees, maybe these goals look like opportunities to better their lives, identify strengths and provide space to grow their skill sets, as well as improve areas where they're not as strong.

Of all the businesses we have been a part of, the products and/or services that we have offered are very diverse. The commonality of all these businesses is people. We believe Jesus gives us opportunities to fulfill our missional calling to these people whom God places in our path through business.

Suzy Kanode is a businesswoman, church elder, and client advocate at AVA Care, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Call to Prayer: Reflecting Christ in Relationships

BY DAVID AND MARTA R. (NAMES CHANGED)

As believers, all areas of our lives should be impacted by our identity as Christians, and one aspect of that is prayer. A passage that has been important for David, in relation to prayer, is John 11:41-42, when Jesus visits the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus prayed, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me” (NIV). This has impressed upon him the importance of prayer not just being for us in private, but that prayer is also for others through public expressions of prayer.

In our Central Asian country, there are opportunities for David to pray in public settings—at the beginning of meetings, for example. The traditions here are that people typically pray at the end of meals, and the oldest person prays. David is often the oldest, so he takes the opportunity to lead in prayer, asking God for blessings on the people we’re with. David wants to be recognized as a man of God by friends and neighbors. His prayers with people should also reflect this desire of his heart. While David is the one in a professional role, Marta has a role in this by supporting him in prayer, asking the Lord to open doors for relationship in his work setting.

Recently, we’ve been thinking about how prayer was a practice in the church we attended in the past. We have often prayed for God to open doors in relationships with neighbors, and asked God to provide opportunities, guiding us in how we relate to them, and the words that we use. We follow many of the same patterns here: asking the Lord to give us wisdom in the relationships we have, negotiating the cultural differences and asking for the right words in these conversations. We want to reflect that, in every area of our lives, we are shaped by spiritual transformation.

We also pray for the gospel to be preached in all nations. It was through prayer that the Lord placed the burden on our hearts to work cross-culturally with this message of good news.

We want to reflect Christ in our lives here; that is the most important aspect of our vision for our work in this country. Our Muslim neighbors are

often outwardly religious, but there are often underlying longings. Prayer helps us connect with what is below the surface.

As we serve here in Central Asia, we can testify to God’s provision. There were so many barriers and obstacles that we had to overcome to even be here. We couldn’t do this on our own; it was only through God’s work and provision. God is praying through our own prayers. And it’s not just us, but also the concern of how our children will adjust and adapt here. We have seen how God has provided in this area: friends and connections in our former setting and now in our new location. And we have also seen God’s provision back home, especially in bringing brothers and sisters around Marta’s parents to care for them as their only child is serving far away.

**We want to reflect that,
in every area of our lives,
we are shaped by spiritual
transformation.**

The larger body of Christ can join us in prayer for the local believers here, and for their spiritual growth. Ask God to keep the door open for them to gather and grow in discipleship. Pray that the Lord will prepare the hearts of those who do not yet believe to hear and receive the good news about Jesus. Our biggest desire is to be connected to a circle of local believers and other friends with whom we can share the gospel. It’s easy to surround ourselves with others who are also foreigners in this country, but that’s not our purpose.

Pray for open doors for these relationships, and for our family as we serve here. Our desire is that we can beautifully reflect Christ in our relationships, among our family and with others. We want to be here as long as the Lord permits. Please support us in this work by asking God to nurture our spiritual growth and for the cultivation of our own discipleship. Our work of sharing new life in Jesus with our neighbors will overflow from this.

David and Marta R. (names changed) are tranSend interns serving on the Central Asia Launch Team.



Art and handcraft market in a Central Asia city park.
Photo: Francisco Anzola via Flickr

Worker Profile: **Joy M.**

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

(Name changed)

Assignment:

I teach middle and high school science part-time in an international school where both Muslim and Christian students (mostly the children of expats) learn together. I also co-moderate the school magazine with another worker, where we mentor a team of students in coming up with a monthly publication that reflects events and issues in the school community. I am also studying the language for 20 hours each week, which includes face-to-face lessons, self-study, and informal conversations with locals for practice.

I see my role as integral in the spiritual formation of these students with whom I have the privilege of developing relationships. Although the majority were brought up in a Christian background, they may not necessarily have a personal relationship with the Lord. They go through challenges like most teenagers, even more so living in a third culture environment. As many of their parents labor in this vast harvest field, I hope to contribute to building godly families as a testimony in this largely unreached region.

Biggest challenge:

It is certainly a major challenge to juggle the many responsibilities that I have. High schoolers can be quite a handful and teaching them requires patience and much grace. Learning a new language is also both challenging and overwhelming at the same time, as there's so much to learn in such a short time. The weather here has also posed some health challenges. My first weeks were difficult as my hypertension is often triggered by the dry, warm climate.

Biggest joy:

Favor and honor come from the Lord (Psalm 84:11). My co-worker and best friend Elaine (name changed) and I have both experienced this as we teach students and interact with those around us. We've had opportunities to show love and kindness to students, colleagues, cleaning ladies in our apartment complex, and our retired next-door neighbor, all of which have opened conversations about different aspects of life. I see how much the Lord loves these people and has made them cross paths with ours. We pray for more spiritual conversations to happen and that our language learning would enable Elaine and I to connect with them more effectively.

A typical day:

My mornings begin with language self-study, followed by my work in the international school. My classes are usually after lunch, which poses a challenge in keeping students active and engaged! After school, I go to language class three times a week, and on other days we have team meetings or meet-ups with other single ladies on our team for encouragement. Occasionally, our colleagues in the school will invite us for a meal. Weeknights are spent reviewing language lessons, checking papers, and preparing for the next day's lessons. I also have informal conversations with locals for language practice.



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APPRECIATION BANQUET

Saturday, November 16

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