## Transforming Stories of making disciples in the way of Christ

Fall 2024 VOLUME 10 • ISSUE 3

# Multidirectional Mission

## IN THIS ISSUE: EVERYWHERE TO EVERYONE





PAGE 6



PAGE 8



PAGE 9

#### BREAKING NEW GROUND A SERIES ON NEW TRENDS IN MISSION

Disciple-making Movements

- Unreached People Groups
- Business for Transformation
- Multidirectional Mission



PAGE 4

## From the President

### The Whole Church to the Whole World

BY AARON M. KAUFFMAN

ear the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus hears his disciples remark about the impressive architecture of the temple in Jerusalem. He startles them by prophesying the end of not only the temple, but the world as we know it.



One verse is often cited from this context as motivation

for the missionary enterprise: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14).

This verse is sometimes misused to lay a guilt trip on the church. It's as if Jesus is just waiting in heaven for us to finish the job, then he'll return. If he hasn't returned yet, it's our fault.

Part of the challenge with this interpretation is the ambiguity of the task. The meaning of the term *nation* is uncertain at best. Does it refer to the Gentiles, generally? Does it mean nation states? Or is it, as modern missiologists contend, ethnolinguistic groups? Or even smaller subsets of social groupings? What about groups long gone? Or yet to emerge?

It is also unclear how we determine whether the gospel has been preached to all of those "nations." Is sharing a tract or digital resource enough? Does anyone actually need to convert? Or do we need a viable, multiplying fellowship of believers in every nation? What is the goal post?

Despite these uncertainties, I thank God for those who have created resources for measuring the unfinished task of proclaiming Jesus to all nations, however that is understood. It helps us know where to focus our efforts. If one in three people still has no access to the gospel, let's start there.

To me, the larger point Jesus is making is about God's heart for all people. The temple was meant to be "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7). Jesus foresaw a day when the new temple, the church, would proclaim his kingdom to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

If we wonder why Jesus tarries while the world seems to crumble around us, we need only remember how much God loves the world. As 2 Peter 3:9 puts it, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

And God's primary strategy for reaching the world remains the church, everyday followers of Jesus like you and me. To my joy and utter astonishment, that church now includes believers from every continent on the globe, and most of the world's known people groups.

Instead of calculating the timing of the Lord's return, let's concentrate on mobilizing the whole church to the whole world. From all people, to all places, until Christ comes again.

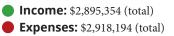
#### Features

- 4 From Everywhere to Everyone BY KIERSTON KREIDER
- 6 From Brazil to Albania BY NORMA TELES
- 8 Mission Among Immigrants BY ARMANDO & VERONICA SANCHEZ
- 9 Co-Laborers Without Borders BY JORGE ENCISO

**Cover photo:** Jorge Enciso, a VMMissions worker serving with Viva Youth in Bogotá, Colombia, washes Viva Youth staff member Santiago Leiva's feet as a demonstration of the Christian practice to children attending VBS this past March. Photo by Sophie Kauffman

### **Financial Report**

Reporting: 09/01/23 to 08/31/24





Mission Fund Undesignated giving by households and churches Special Projects

Giving to specific ministries

## Transforming

Editor: Jon Trotter

© 2024 by Virginia Mennonite Missions. All rights reserved.

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

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

#### VOLUME 10, NUMBER 3

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



#### Mission Fund Campaign Exceeds Year-End Goal

VMMissions is incredibly thankful to God for his generous provision this past year. We exceeded our undesignated Mission Fund goal of \$440,000, reaching a total of \$443,978—the second highest amount ever. The Mission Fund covers about 40% of our overall office operations (about \$1.1M), like staffing, building maintenance, board expenses, the annual audit, publicity, etc. The other 60% is covered by estate giving, investment income, support fees, events and rent.



#### Eastside Church to Host 2025 Perspectives Class

The next Perspectives class in Harrisonburg will meet each Monday from January 6 to April 28 at Eastside Church. The 15-session class provides an overview of the biblical mandate, a review of mission history, a window into cultural factors and an examination of mission strategies. It has been impactful in helping God's people find their calling within God's mission for the past 50 years. Learn more and register at <u>vmmissions.org/</u> <u>perspectives/</u>

Publicator/The			14. Januar Date for Discussion Data Becom 07/15/2024	
providence				
Entered and M	ter	of Circulation	Average Mr. Copies Each loner During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Room Published Meannal to Filling Date
à Tribi North	èè	Disset (Net press tub)		
Pait Croatin (ly line and South to that	-	Manuel Duponie Courty Plan Support games and PD Yours 2041 (provide part destandan alone courted care, a General's prof septement of each organization	¢.	
	-	Maiest In-Courts Paid Bulanceptons. Dated on PS Ture 3541 include pair distribution (down homon) late, Advertiant's prof-oppins. and victurings (oppins)	0	
	de	Field Distinution Outlide The Matte Instituting Asiles Through Disates and Calmins Street Vendors, Coamer Stales, and Other Asia Dambuton-Dubatie USPSIP	σ	41
	ja,	That Distribution by Office Classes of Mat Trimage the (UPP)- or g. Prot-Class Mall*)	1	
s. Toni Pint Contractor /Sure of 150 (1) (2) (2) and (4)			0	- A.
Rate Dampotion direction d	0	Free & Nonlinel State Couline County Capiers studied to PS Form 3(4)	\$21	605
	m	Free or Nonesek Rale In County Copies Included on PS Form 2941	754	196
	e	Freek on Montenai Mader Coggies Million at Other Chasses Through the USPS of g., Freek-Cases Use:	ø	
	14	Free or Montriel Raw Distribution Dubate the Matricanness or other oneing	41	- 40
in Total Print of Homman Plan Operations (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (6).			1348	1343
t Total Starry	-	(Sury of 15c and 15e)	1386	1340
y Classes and Distributed (Saw Institutions in Phillipper (M) gauge #20)				sr.
h. Sam /bar in the site p			1435	1400
Parent Par		the state	a	

#### Bike Shenandoah Raises \$28,425 for Local Impact



Photo: Cindy de Tablan

On September 21, eighty-six riders pedaled the Valley on a beautiful fall day, embarking on one of five rides between five and 100 kilometers in support of five organizations making a local and global impact. With rider registrations, rider sponsorships, and business sponsors contributing, the event raised more than \$28,000, split evenly (\$5,685) between the organizations. VMMissions and the Stephen R. Leaman Memorial Endowment for Missions are two of the beneficiaries, along with Mennonite Central Committee, NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center, and Our Community Place.

#### Fellowship Opportunities Planned for Young Adults

VMMissions and friends are creating fellowship opportunities for all young adults in the Shenandoah Valley. Two upcoming events are planned:

- Hike to Humpback Rock, Sat., November 9 at 1 pm. Meet at 1680 Country Club Rd, Harrisonburg (DUCC parking lot) to carpool.
- Christmas Party, Fri., December 6 at 7pm at the VMMissions Barn (601 Parkwood Dr, Harrisonburg). Includes an ugly sweater contest, Minute to Win It games, and more. Please bring a snack to share.

If you or your congregation have questions or would like to be added to the email list for future events, please email melanie.sherer@vmmissions.org.

#### New VMMissions Workers Appointed for Service



Caleb & Stephanie Schrock-Hurst, serving in Hualien, Taiwan, with ministry involvement with a local congregation and working

at a Mennonite hospital to establish a nursing exchange program. They serve with Mennonite Mission Network, in partnership with VMMissions.



Malakai Wettig, serving as an intern with Viva Youth in Bogotá, Colombia, the ministry started by Jorge and Ginny Enciso, workers

with South America Mission and VMMissions, that partners with local churches in children's ministry and builds faith community for young adults exiting the foster care system.

#### Workers Reappointed for New Terms

**Alfonso Alvarado**, church planter at Iglesia Menonita Monte Moriah, Timberville, Virginia, 9/2024 to 8/2025

**Seth Crissman**, director of The Soil and The Seed Project, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 9/2024 to 12/2027

**Clay Kauffman**, ministry intern with Highland Retreat and local ministries, Bergton, Virginia, 10/2024 to 9/2025

**Joy M.** (name changed), serving as a teacher in Central Asia, 9/2024 to 8/2025

**Yacoub Rasul** (name changed), serving among the Arabic-speaking population of Harrisonburg, Virginia, 9/2024 (openended)

**Hannah Shultz**, serving as an English teacher to international students, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 10/2024 to 9/2025

**Elaine U.** (name changed), serving as a teacher in Central Asia, 9/2024 to 8/2025

## From Everywhere to Everyone

One third of VMMissions workers are now sent from global Christian centers once viewed as the "mission field."

#### BY KIERSTON KREIDER

hristian mission is, and has always been to some degree, multidirectional in nature. As the word of God takes root within people and cultures, they rise up as partners with the missionaries who first shared the gospel with them. This dynamic has characterized Christian history from its conception in the book of Acts.

However, one of the unfortunate consequences of colonialism on mission has been a hesitancy to partner with emerging churches. "The four most dangerous words in the global church today are 'I don't need you," said Michael Oh in his opening message this year at the Fourth Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Seoul, South Korea. He noted that we must recognize our need for each other in all areas to see God's mission accomplished. Just as the eye can't say it doesn't need the foot, nor the ear to the hand, so it must be within the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Protestant mission over the past two centuries has largely been characterized as "from the West to the Rest." It was primarily Europe and then the U.S. that sent missionaries to the rest of the world. Missionary sending throughout history has largely been out of the centers of Christian influence and power to the places "where Christ was not known" (Romans 15:20). Mission came to be viewed as directional, from the wealthy and elite to the poor and marginalized lower classes.

In spite of this, over the last century the church around the world has seen incredible growth where these missionaries faithfully sowed the gospel. During this same period, however, the church in the West has seen a drastic decline. This has resulted in a shift in where the majority of Christians live. Christianity today is polycentric. While the West remains a center of Christianity, multiple other centers have emerged, including South Korea, Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and even China and Iran, among others. As these new centers of Christianity rise in power and influence, they have also been sending large numbers of missionaries across the globe, including to the Western countries and to one another. Therefore, mission today is characterized as being "from everyone to everywhere." Part of this new dynamic is that many people are being sent as mission workers from economically poorer areas in the world to the wealthy and affluent areas.

Migrant workers and refugees from these new centers of Christianity are planting churches and sharing the gospel with the people around them. Ethiopian taxi drivers in Saudi Arabia share the gospel as they drive clients around. Filipino houseworkers share their faith with their Saudi or Emirati employers. Central American immigrants plant churches in the U.S. Egyptian church planters work among huge numbers of Arabic-speaking refugees and immigrants in the U.S. and Europe. Brazilian missionaries share the gospel with Yemeni refugees in Malaysia. Some of these Yemenis go as missionaries themselves to still other countries!

At the same time, Brazil continues receiving missionaries from countries like Uruguay and the U.S. This same dynamic is happening across the globe. Countries are no longer classified as either a mission force or a mission field; countries can be both missionary receivers and senders.

#### God has enabled VMMissions to call and send mission workers to five continents.

While the centers of Christianity have changed, these dynamics are far from unique to the twentyfirst century. In the book of Acts, we see something similar taking place. In the beginning, Jerusalem and Judea were the centers of Christianity. Then the Jewish believers were scattered due to persecution in Jerusalem, and some ended up in Antioch. They began preaching to Greeks and not just to Jews. As



a large number of Greeks began responding to the gospel message, the church leaders in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to encourage them, and he in turn recruited Saul to join him. Later, these leaders sent Saul and Barnabas out as missionaries.

The church in Antioch was emerging as a missionary sending church within only a few years of being planted. It became an influential center that spread out to other parts of the world and shaped the future of Christianity. In the years that followed, Rome, Alexandria, and Carthage also emerged as other centers of Christianity in both theology and missionary sending.

Mennonites who migrated to the Shenandoah Valley wanted to share their faith with their neighbors. When VMMissions was founded 105 years ago, the vision was to send the early missionaries to plant churches in the surrounding states of West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The wind of the Spirit later opened doors for mission presence in Italy, Jamaica, and Trinidad, and workers were sent internationally. Since then, God has enabled VMMissions to send out workers to five continents. Many are now being sent from the Majority World, the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, places formerly viewed as mission fields.

VMMissions has been living into this shifting reality in many ways. Currently, a third of VMMissions workers come from the Majority World. Honduran, Mexican, Salvadorian, and Egyptian workers are planting churches here in the U.S., and there are Filipino, Colombian, Romanian, Brazilian, and Honduran workers serving in Albania, Central Asia, and South Asia.

Though this shift has been rewarding and fruitful, there have been accompanying challenges, such as worker funding, visa delays and denials, and lack of missiological training. The Global Church Planting fund established in VMMissions' recent "Church of Many Cultures" campaign enables mission workers from less affluent regions to be sent by allocating money for worker support.

Similarly, the Business for Transformation fund has empowered businesses and entrepreneurs from around the world to have a greater impact for God's kingdom in their communities, with a strategic focus on areas unreached by the gospel of Jesus.

Revelation 7:9 provides a glorious picture of "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." VMMissions is joining with the global church to send and receive workers from everywhere to everyone. God is doing a new thing! We want to faithfully keep in step with the Spirit's leading.

Kierston Kreider is Mission Mobilizer for VMMissions.

## **From Brazil to Albania**

Called to Albania as a mission worker 25 years ago, Norma's ministry has made a generational impact.



**BY NORMA TELES** 



c a l l e d to know God and to make him known. This is accomplished through discipleship and through sharing the good news to everyone, everywhere.

When we understand that God has authority over all cultures and that God's word is completely applicable to all contexts, we can preach the gospel with boldness, because we have the conviction that the gospel is totally valid for all people.

Through my church, I was encouraged to think about missions from childhood. At a very young age, I began focusing my life on ministry in the local church. I made my life available to the Lord to be used according to his will.

Along with three other friends, I started to reach out to kids who lived on the streets of Recife, a city in Brazil's northeast, giving them an opportunity to have a home and a loving community. We were doing important and impactful work in a vast country that is both a mission field and a mission force.

Later, when I received a calling from God to go to Albania as a mission worker, it was hard to leave all that I was doing behind and start a new season in Albania. Cross-cultural mission was not in my plan, because Brazil is its own mission field. But once I understood that God could use me as an answer to my own prayers, my posture changed. My experience working with children on the streets of Recife has helped me to adapt to what I am now doing in Albania.

When I was preparing to serve, my local church encouraged me to work with the Mennonite missionaries who were already living in the city of Lezhë. These workers, and their spiritual support and care, have been very important to me on this journey. I am also very grateful to God for the support given by my devoted Ministry Support Team (MST), knowing that I cannot serve in mission on my own. They have prayed earnestly and shown me so much love and care.

When brothers and sisters in Christ unite, God pours out his special oil over his priests (Psalm 133). That is why the partnership with VMMissions has been such a blessing to my ministry and to the body of Christ.

#### Cross-cultural mission was not in my plan. My posture changed once I understood that God could use me as an answer to my own prayers.

When I arrived in Albania, which is a Muslimmajority nation, I learned a lot about serving in that new culture. I also faced the challenge of learning two new languages. I learned Albanian to communicate and minister to local people. I also had to learn English in order to work with the other mission workers on our regional team. In this time of intensive learning, I would pray for the fulfillment of Mark 16:17, "In my name...they will speak in new tongues."



Members of the ministry team in Albania pray for each other, ca. 2000. VMMissions photo



As part of her ministry, Norma meets with a a group of mothers as an outlet for fun and relationshipbuilding. This also enables honest spiritual conversations in an atmosphere of trust. Photo by Tom Yoder

Single women are not as respected in every country as they are in the United States. I remember a situation when I was living in a city in the north of Albania with a family that was very dear to me. A man in the community was about to lose a finger because of an accident, and I had scheduled an appointment to dress his wound.

However, I did not have anyone who could go with me. When the father of the family I was staying with saw me out in the street on my own, he slapped me in the face and told me to go back home. To him, it wasn't acceptable for a single woman to be walking alone in the street, and I was dishonoring them by leaving the house unaccompanied. This unforgettable moment showed me how important it is in this culture to maintain honor and avoid shame.



Norma leads children at the Joshua Center in a cooperative activity. Photo by Tom Yoder

Here, like in other honor/shame cultures, the gospel connects with people when they understand how God takes away the shame of our sin through the sacrifice of Christ.

My ministry, which became the Joshua Center, came about when I began to notice how Roma kids at church were belittled because of their color and culture. Historically (and often pejoratively) known as gypsies, the Roma have been an itinerant people in Europe and beyond for centuries. They have faced widespread marginalization, and sometimes outright persecution.

The Joshua Center works with the Roma community specifically, a community in need of Jesus and his merciful love. Our goal is to make Jesus known through teaching. The Center has a preschool and afterschool program, and we also work with mothers and young women in the community. We can see how the power of the word of God can transform anyone who receives it, and how that transformation brings hope, not only to individuals, but also to the community.

This work over many years has resulted in generational impact. We know that God is present in our midst. He is helping us see each person as created in the image of God, a beautiful but fallen human being, in need of being reached by the gospel and its transforming power.

Norma Teles is the director of the Joshua Center. She has served in partnership with VMMissions and the Brazilian Mennonite Church since 1999.

## **Mission Among Immigrants**

The hopes and challenges of ministering to the Latino community in Waynesboro, Virginia.

#### BY ARMANDO AND VERONICA SANCHEZ



s missionaries in an immigrant c o m m u nity, we have learned to identify the distinct cultures of other Latino countries. We learn to know and adapt to their values. But our identity,

and what brings us together, is our relationship with God.

Migrants really seek God in their need because they realize that, in the U.S., they face loneliness. They have left their native places and may not have family close by. This makes them feel vulnerable and leads them to seek places of community. The place where many find identity and community is through the church.

In our experience working with Latino immigrants, we have witnessed many people accept Jesus Christ as their savior, and now they are disciples making other disciples.

#### The gospel is meant to be shared. We evangelize in the streets, receiving the people who want to turn to Christ and we baptize them.

There are challenges and tensions when adapting to culture and identity in a different context. As immigrants in the United States, it has been a challenge since this culture is demanding of people's time. Migrants come here with the vision of working more than 12 hours a day if possible, leaving them without any time to congregate or participate in a Bible study.

Another challenge is how the second generation, the children of immigrants, faces a difficult struggle with identity. Where do they fit as they live in two cultures, navigate two languages, with their friends and their community of faith? As church planters, we have learned to be patient in how we plant a church. There are a lot of theological, physical, and economic things to get in order as part of church planting preparation. But once launched, we live and share our faith and put our hands to work through the training we through receive VMMissions.

The gospel is meant to be shared. We evangelize in the streets, receivthe people ing who want to turn to Christ, and we baptize them. We have discipled our community of faith and taught them to grow theologically by inviting them to participate in further training.



Pastor Armando Sanchez (right) embraces Angel at his baptism in August. Courtesy of Iglesia Shalom



Children make crafts at the congregation's Vacation Bible School this summer. Courtesy of Iglesia Shalom

We have been blessed to have teams accompany us in this work. VMMissions supports us by providing ministerial care, training, and opportunities to learn different forms of simple mission work. We also have a Ministry Support Team (MST) that prays for us and helps our ministry in many practical ways.

Armando and Veronica Sanchez are church planters of Iglesia Shalom-Nuevo Comienzo, Waynesboro, Virginia.

## **Co-Laborers** Without Borders

#### The three tiers of partnership that make mission possible.

#### **BY JORGE ENCISO**

n order to stay sane in my field of work, in Colombia and Venezuela, we rely on three kinds of indispensable friendships: friends who listen to you, friends with a vacation house, and friends who know graphic and web design! I call those *first-tier partners* and without them we are nothing.

Jesus relied on those three things: on his Father (to listen to him), on his Father's mountain (to spend recharging time with him), and on Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and other content creators (to make his ideas known in a suitable and contextualized format).

Then, there's what I call the "empanada tier" of partnerships, after the popular Latin American pastry with savory filling. This tier is built at the local level with colleagues from like-minded churches and parachurch organizations with whom you do the day-to-day work-in our case, building support networks for orphaned youth. Support networks are sometimes built around empanadas. In Mark 4:35, when Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side," I like to imagine the reason he wanted to go there was to get some empanadas!

Jesus had partnerships like that with Zacchaeus and Simon the Leper, who helped him catalyze his movement by putting together networking events-perhaps the ancient equivalent of Tupperware Dinners.

There's also a third tier of partnerships with international individuals, kingdom businesses, churches, and mission organizations who make it possible for us to go further, faster. Distance and speed are not values exclusive to the Olympic Games. Jesus had a thing for the ends of the earth, which is literally the farthest you can go. And the Holy Spirit is known for speeding things up when he wants someone somewhere, even if takes teletransportation. Talk about eagerness!

#### Jesus had partners who helped him catalyze his movement by putting together networking events.

So, wanting to expand our housechurch network beyond Colombia and Venezuela before 2030 and desiring to grow the staff in our youth resource center, are not expressions of unhealthy ambition but, rather, humble obedience, or so I like to believe. And in pursuing these goals we rely heavily on

our international partners.

Viva Youth, the organization founded by Jorge and

Ginny Enciso, is a ministry reaching young people

who have exited the Colombian foster care system

through a Christ-centered program called *Primos y* 

Primas. Courtesy of Jorge Enciso

Enter the gap year. Our house-church network was pretty much started on gap-year fuel. And as we prepare to receive several more interns through VMMissions' tranSend program, we are working hard to strategize around the best ways to squeeze their energetic youthfulness to the limit!

Consider, also, the idea of short-term service teams. Who in their right mind uses their only annual vacation days to sweat blood and tears in mosquitoinfested lands? North American Christians! It took me a few years to understand the gospel potential of that heavenly silliness.

However, after 15 years on the field, I've learned that international partners are also incredible firsttier and second-tier friends. They have provided us with counseling services and effective mentorship, they've helped us vacation and refresh, they've worked with our websites, and they've put together great fundraising potlucks. At a time when charitable giving is decreasing around the world, I want to thank the North American Christians who continue to lead in generosity.

Jorge Enciso serves with his wife Ginny with Viva Youth in Bogotá, Colombia. They serve with South American Mission, in partnership with VMMissions.



## Call to **Prayer:** The Importance of Prayer

#### BY PAULO AND ANA (NAMES CHANGED)

he vision to reach the unreached cannot be completed by individual efforts only! It's so great to be able to partner with all of you to make every effort to fulfill the Great Commission. Our family has lived in the capital of a Central Asian country since March 2022. It's a privilege to be here in a place that was closed for so long, and now has opened its doors to receive people from so many countries.

Prayer plays a very important role in the lives of the Global South workers. Workers devote their lives to the habit of spending time with the Lord. It helps them to abide in the Lord. It is also a good practice to pray through the word, because there are many spiritual battles. This country has a history of Islamic faith, but shamanism, occultism, and witch-craft are still practiced here. Shamans and fortune tellers are still in high demand.

The power of intercessory prayer can be revealed in the lives of those who intercede and the lives of those who are the object of the prayers of intercession. It's an opportunity to walk side by side, shoulder to shoulder with workers from the Global South. Usually, when we are not feeling well physically or emotionally, we pray to the Lord to raise up our intercessors. Because when the battle seems too big for us, it comforts our hearts to know that there are people praying for us.

We see the value of prayer when the doors that were closed are opened, when a worker who is not able to sleep well starts getting better rest. When the difficult moments on the field become lighter we know that it is because there are people standing in "the gap" (Ezekiel 22:30). We see God working among the people we're living with as well, breaking through the darkness, breaking chains of bondage, and setting people free.

In our work here, we need to be available to each individual as their needs arise. We need to check in often to see how they are doing in every area of their lives, because they are all new workers in the heavy stages of learning language and culture. We need to equip them to cope with the different situations they face, especially their culture shock and other struggles.

#### Prayer plays a very important role in the lives of the Global South workers on our team.

When they first arrive we lead them through an orientation, usually over two days. We talk about things like transitions, coping mechanisms, language learning, things they can or cannot do, places they need to go, emergency bags, earthquake drills, and so on. We meet with them periodically to spend some time together, go shopping, debrief, help them to make good decisions, take them to the doctor, and other needed practical help.



Ana (name changed) serves the team through worker care. She also leads trainings on child safety and best practices. Courtesy of Paulo and Ana

Unfortunately, congregations back in our home country of Brazil don't mobilize as much prayer support as is needed. It would be great if they could get more involved in prayer for the workers, connecting with them to know what the needs are. It is an encouragement for workers to know that people back home are standing up in prayer for them. Latino workers especially tend to share their prayer points or their needs more openly, because when they know that people are praying for them, their faith increases. Then they experience the precious feeling of "I'm not alone, I have people that are not here with me, but who are for me; they are on my side!"

*Paulo and Ana (names changed) serve on the Central Asia Launch Team in partnership with VMMissions.* 



## Worker Profile: Andrea Hamsher

Service location: Mannheim, Germany | Service program: tranSend | Serving since: 2024

#### **Assignment:**

My assignment for the next year is assisting Dave and Rebekka Stutzman at die Villa, a community center in Mannheim. Die Villa is located in a neighborhood with both German and immigrant residents, and offers a place for people of different cultures to meet, serve, and be served by one another. I help with various groups and programs that run through die Villa, including a knitting group, cafe, game night, and kid's gardening group. I also participate in the Emmaus Gemeinde, a small discipleship group centered around table fellowship and discussion.

#### **Biggest challenge:**

I just recently arrived in Germany, so my biggest challenge thus far has been adjusting to a different language and culture! Even though I am grateful that I had the opportunity to study German in high school and college and already have some grasp of the language and culture, it is still challenging to adapt to living in a new context. Since the Mannheim area has a strong dialect, the language is a little different than what I'm used to and can be harder to understand. Even trivial things such as switching over to the metric system, sorting different types of trash and recycling into the proper containers, or opening windows the correct way require more thought and energy!

#### **Biggest joy:**

So far, my biggest joy has been being able to spend time with and listen to different people talk about what's happening in their lives, both positive and negative. It has been good to sit down and connect with people through shared hobbies such as knitting or playing board games. Even in just a short time here, I have really been able to see how offering a space for fellowship and building intentional relationships has allowed people who may have had difficult histories with the church to be more open to hearing about Christ.

I'm also very grateful that people have been willing to accommodate me as I adjust by speaking to me in English, even though it's more effort for them, as well as pointing things out to me as I get to know the city.

#### A typical day:

My schedule each day changes based on what's going on at die Villa! On most days, I go to die Villa and spend time cleaning and setting up for the next group to arrive, which includes things like going grocery shopping and making coffee. I then spend some time participating in whatever group is meeting that day or making cappuccinos (I've been working on my latte art!). In the evenings, I have dinner with the Stutzman family and then spend time either reading or playing board games.



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



CANTORE MAGNIFY INNER HARMONY BRIDGEBUILDERS GOOD TIME GOSPEL QUART HMC MEN'S ENSEMBLE JOURNEYMEN

#### Join us on Tuesday, December 3



One annual giving day. An opportunity to multiply your impact through recurring giving.

🐣 Give one time

Set up recurring

Whether gifts are large or small, or given monthly, quarterly or annuallycommitments to regular giving help us to focus our energy where it matters most:

Partnering with the church to equip and send disciples on God's mission to change the world!



Learn more and give vmmissions.org/giving-tuesday

