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COUNTRY Matters

"Train up a child
in the way he should
go and when he is
old he will not depart
from it."
Proverbs 22:6



Village Missions of Canada
Keeping Country Churches Alive



A View From the Country with Murray Graham, Executive Director

One Thing In Common

As I visit with Village Missionaries throughout the year, I have the wonderful opportunity to hear stories of struggle and victory. Each of their stories are unique, but most share one identical opportunity for ministry—children.

Sadly, many rural children struggle under the weight of poverty and parental drug use, with no knowledge of the hope of Jesus Christ. These are not children living far away on another continent. They are our neighbors.



In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus was never too busy for children. He cared for them and commanded that believers care for them.

Village Missionaries also consider it a great joy to reach the children of their communities. Many volunteer as teachers and coaches. They teach the little ones at church or lead youth group. Some come beside the teens in their community as mentors and take them fishing or shopping, or just take time to talk.

We refuse to let these rural children, who are so often forgotten by society, fall into the cracks. They desperately need to discover the hope that Jesus Christ offers.

I invite you to read the following two stories, which highlight how Village Missions and Village Missionaries reached young people this summer through Vacation Bible School.

Standing with the country church,

Murray Graham
Murray Graham

Executive Director

A FREE Gift

It's not just another summer program.

For many rural children, Vacation Bible School is the only place they will ever hear the Gospel.

Unfortunately, many churches in rural communities and small towns across Canada are finding themselves unable to host VBS programs. Whether it be a lack of funds, a shortage of staff

or simply too few children, the week-long program is sometimes impossible to pull off.

This year, Village Missions began donating VBS kits to churches that could not afford them. One of those recipients was Crossroads Congregational Church in Northfield, ON.

A MINISTRY TO CHILDREN

For the small church in Northfield, reaching children has long been a priority with the church offering nursery, Sunday school and even soccer camps.

"Not many churches in our area have the opportunity for reaching children," said Village Missionary Joan Germain.

"To have those programs really attracts younger families."

This year, thanks to their donated VBS kit, the congregation at Crossroads was able to reach these kids through VBS this summer without any financial burden.

"We invited the children in our community to come enjoy songs, snacks, crafts and, of course, a message from God's Word. Excited and prepared, the teachers and

Tim Griffiths (right) presents a VBS kit to a Village Missionary. His children were eager to explore the VBS kit.



many helpers were able to give the kids much more than crafts and games. They were able to share the Gospel message from Proverbs. Everyone really made an extra effort this year."

Each day, 38 kids gathered from around the community to have fun and learn from God's Word.

"Teaching verses such as 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart...' the teachers were able to explain how important a heart that pleases and relies on God is for salvation. Jesus and His redemptive work was accented as we allowed the children to choose Christ."

A separate ministry was working with teenagers doing community service. They volunteered to help with VBS in order to fulfill some of their 40 hours required by the local high school. While the teenagers were technically leaders, several of those who came were unbelievers. So, lesson time served as an opportunity to speak into the lives of both the kids and teenagers.

Vacation Bible School proved to be an overwhelming success for reaching not only children and teens, but adults as well.

"We are so thankful for the material that was sent. As a result of VBS, we have had another family come join us on Sundays!"



THE ONLY VBS AROUND

When people live in the country, they get accustomed to driving many miles back and forth between larger towns. They drive for groceries, to see a movie or go to the bank. This is the story of one grandmother who drove two hours a day so that her grandchildren might find Jesus.

Village Missionaries Ed and Ruth Peters serve in Garrington Community Church outside of Bowden, AB. While their little church primarily serves the Bowden area, their impact on children recently expanded.

For years, both Garrington and a church 40 miles away hosted a Vacation Bible School, but after the other church decided to cancel theirs last year, Garrington became the only VBS around.

"The first day, when everyone was registering their children, I visited with a grandmother who lived near the other church, said Village Missionary Ed Peters. "She told me she was bringing her grandchildren who lived in a town that made her drive an hour one way. She ended up staying each day as it was too far to drive home and back again."

With her grandchildren unchurched,





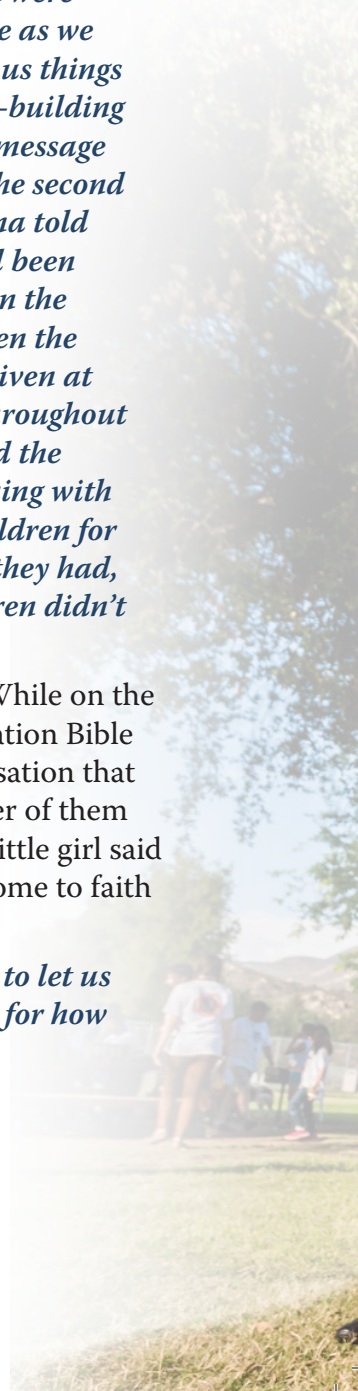
this grandmother took it as her responsibility to expose her grandchildren to the Gospel.

“As we went through the week, I had the privilege of leading the Bible Adventures part. Those two children were especially attentive as we talked about various things in the life of Jesus—building up to the salvation message on the last day. On the second morning, that grandma told us that the kids had been full of questions on the drive home. When the invitation was given at various times throughout the week, we had the privilege of praying with several of the children for various concerns they had, but those two children didn’t respond.”



But the story wasn’t over. While on the long, hour-drive home after the last day of Vacation Bible School, the grandmother continued the conversation that had begun at VBS. Their grandma asked if either of them wanted to accept Jesus as their Savior, and the little girl said she would like to, so her grandma helped her come to faith in Christ.

“When they arrived back home, she called to let us know what had happened. We praise God for how He works!”



THE FORGOTTEN *Generation*

Across rural Canada, children are looking for hope. Whether they are eight years old or eighteen, these children desperately need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What if these two churches had closed when times were tough?

Village Missions exists to preach the Word and love the People. While some of this happens on a Sunday morning, Vacation Bible School is often the very first contact rural children have with the Gospel.

Statistics show that 85-90% of people who accept Jesus Christ do so before reaching the age of 19. It is vital that we reach children across rural Canada—today!

When you choose to help a struggling country church, you are helping reach the next generation with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These kids will grow up to be farmers, teachers, politicians, mechanics and police officers.

Imagine the impact these kids could have on this nation if they were all following Jesus Christ.

Imagine the impact you could have on this nation simply by helping reach these kids with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!





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Rural children are often overlooked by society, but you can change that! When you give to Village Missions, your gift helps reach children that no one else in the world is reaching. Would you come alongside us, as we share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the forgotten children of rural Canada?



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