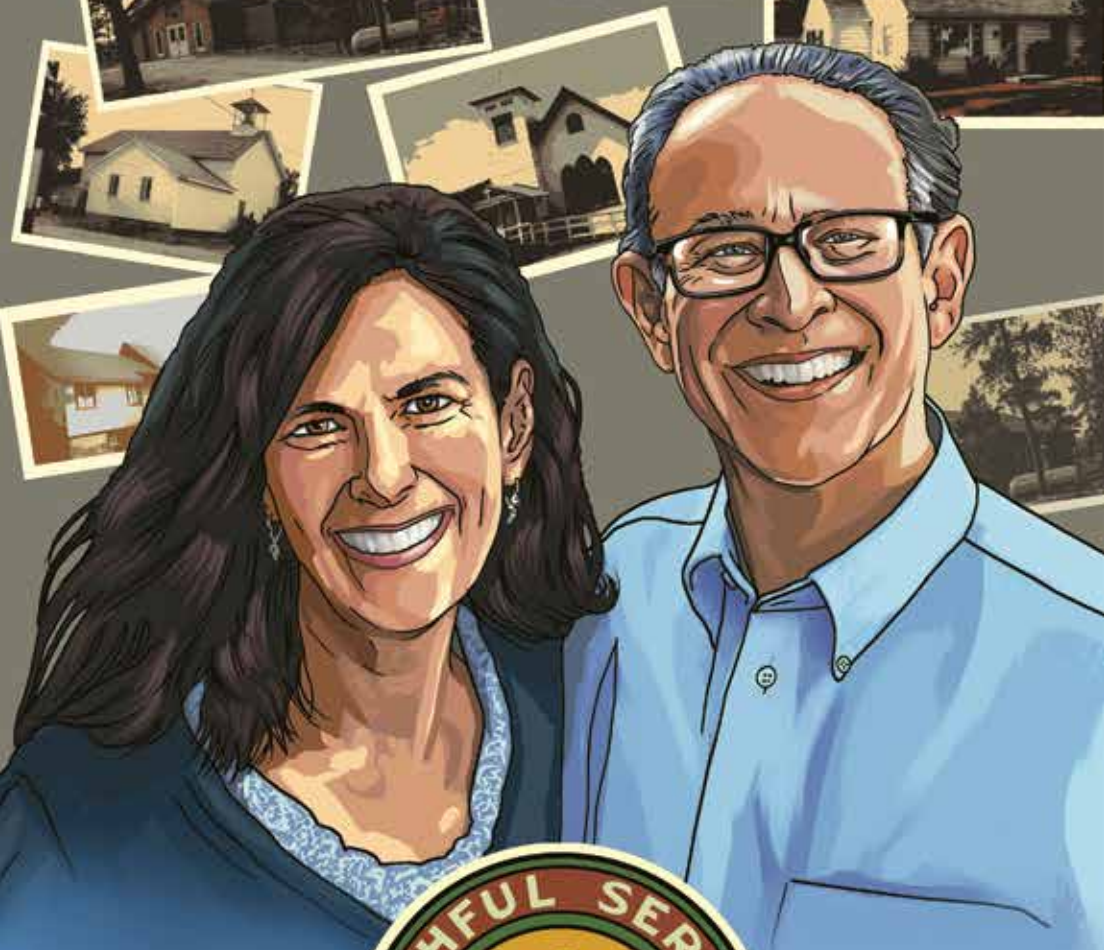


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# COUNTRY Matters



Village Missions of Canada



## **A View From the Country** with Murray Graham, Executive Director

*In 2016, I took over as Executive Director of Village Missions of Canada. However, for 16 years before that, Brian & Carole Wechsler oversaw the mission for both the U.S. and Canada. This wonderful couple has faithfully served Village Missions for many years, and their desire to see the gospel reach the rural communities of both our countries has been inspiring.*

*After many years of faithful service, Brian & Carole will be stepping into retirement in August of 2020. Because of all their hard work, dedication, and support they have given to our ministry, I would like to dedicate this Country Matters in their honour.*

*I invite you to join me as we take a journey through Brian & Carole's story with Village Missions, and say our final farewell to this couple who has laboured for the gospel in rural North America for many years.*

Murray Graham

*Murray Graham*  
Executive Director



*Cut me, and I bleed  
Village Missions.*

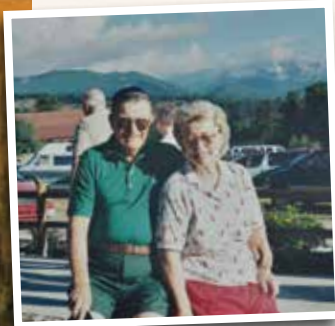
That has been true for me and Carole for a long time. Although our chapter with Village Missions will draw to its bittersweet close this summer, our hearts will always beat with an undying love and passion for rural ministry with Village Missions.



Before we reflect on parts of our journey which spanned 37 years, I want to show you where our path first intersected with Village Missions, and introduce you to a very special couple.

We walked through the doors of Fernwood Community Bible Church in July of 1973 after moving all the way from Maine to Idaho. I had only known Jesus as Savior for about a year and we had only been married a little over one month!

Village Missionaries **Ray & Martha Bell** welcomed us, and they quickly became like parents. We were amazed at their hospitality. We saw the church grow both numerically and spiritually through their leadership. Our congregation, community, and especially us were transformed because of them. Indeed, they were tireless workers for Christ.



**Ray & Martha  
Bell**

Carole and I followed in Ray & Martha's footsteps and joined Village Missions in 1983. We served for 17 years before becoming the Executive Director in 2000. Now the time has come for fresh new leadership to lead

the way. Dr. John & Candy Adams, whom you will meet later, are fully capable and will do an incredible job. We have the utmost confidence in how the Lord will use them.

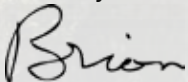
Nearly four decades of laboring for the gospel in rural North America have given us many dear friends and wonderful memories. We experienced both triumphs and challenges, tears of joy and tears of pain, times of harvest and times of trial.

But one thing is clear: our love for Village Missions started many years ago with a Village Missionary couple in rural Idaho—Ray & Martha—who believed in us and generously poured their lives into ours. We have carried their example with us on every step of our journey.

Our prayer is that in all things, Jesus Christ has been glorified and that His gospel will reach more forgotten places in the U.S. & Canada. It has been a joy and honor serving the Lord with you for these many years.

We cannot wait to see how the Lord continues to use this ministry to build His kingdom in rural North America and beyond.

Always In Him,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Wechsler Executive Director



## LIFE AS VILLAGE MISSIONARIES



Brian & Carole's life as Village Missionaries began on a beautiful summer day in 1983.

Although they loved the mountains, the Wechslers promised Village Missions they would go anywhere. So, despite mixed feelings about being sent to the rural Midwest, they trusted the Lord and headed for Finchford, Iowa, population 57.



*Brian & Carole as a young couple; Brian gets into the moving truck, headed to Finchford from Bible school.*

As they pulled into the driveway of the parsonage, 30 people from Finchford Community Bible Church were waiting to help unload their van. All reluctance

they once had quickly blossomed into a deep love for rural Iowa and its people.

For 6 years, Brian & Carole completely invested their lives into this community. It was purely by accident that Brian became known as "the pastor who almost drowned" after a church canoeing trip went awry! In addition to his amusing infamy, he also gained a reputation for being the pastor who visited folks in the hospital.

*"On our first field, we learned how wonderful the rural church is and how you can connect with people in various ways," said Brian fondly.*

But, perhaps their greatest blessing was the adoption of both of their children here, Sarah and Caleb.

*"We are so glad we didn't miss Finchford," shared Carole, remembering their initial hesitation towards Iowa, "because that's where He wanted to bless us."*



*Brian & daughter Sarah with newly adopted son Caleb*

In 1989, the Lord led the Wechslers to Red Feather Lakes, Colorado, their second field and home for the next 11 years (and to their delight, in the mountains!).

The Volunteer Fire Department and local school provided ample opportunities to minister to the community. Their ministry at Morning Star Community Church was vibrant, as well, including a VBS that once saw 15 children come to Christ!

In 1997, a beautiful new church building was constructed. However, the unthinkable happened less than a year later on a cold November night when the church tragically caught fire. Brian was first "on scene" as captain of the first response unit. But



*Brian burns the mortgage to the newly completed building; ruins of the Morning Star Community Church.*

with cold temperatures and high winds he and the department watched the remaining structure—built by a labor of love and hard work—become consumed in scorching flames. Carole, at home with the children, could see the flames from two miles away.

Yet, in the midst of heartbreak, Brian & Carole spoke words of truth.

***“We reminded people that the building was the Lord’s, and He could use it however He wanted, even as a burnt offering,” remembered Carole.***

Even as the smoke settled, the Lord’s faithfulness abounded. The whole community rallied around this little country church, and within a year a new building was complete.

For 17 years, Brian & Carole faithfully preached the Word and loved the people, experiencing both the joys—the adoption of their children—and struggles—losing their church—of rural ministry. But through it all, they knew the Lord was with them. So when they answered His call to lead the mission in 2000, they knew He would still be with them every step of the way.



***Brian & Carole at a 2013 staff conference.***

# LEGACY

When asked what the role of Executive Director has been like, Brian chuckled. "You never know what's going to happen in a day!" he answered jovially. Reflecting on their time in ministry together, Carole chimed in, too: "The Lord has stretched us in every way imaginable! And He's still not done."

For the last 20 years, the Wechslers have traversed many miles across the U.S. and Canada visiting churches, meeting supporters, and encouraging missionaries.

They helped lead the mission through some of its lowest points, including the loss of funding from a major donor in 2008. And of course, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has greatly affected the mission and the ministries of Village Missionaries, resulting in the difficult decision to cancel this summer's Staff Conferences.



***Brian & Carole with Ron Sallee and his wife Marilyn.***

But they celebrated many milestones as well, their most lasting achievement being the development of the Contenders Discipleship Initiative (CDI).

Started by Village Missionary Ron Sallee in 1995, CDI began to train up leaders within the local church. Now a two-year Bible school, CDI has sent out more than 20 Village Missionary couples to the

field and has equipped thousands more across North America to serve in ministry.

***"God did way beyond what we could have ever***



*imagined with CDI," reflected Brian, joy in his voice.*

They never knew what each day of their long journey with Village Missions would bring, but their final day will certainly be filled with mixed emotions and many tears.

For sure, they did not envision their final months to be interrupted by a global health crisis. Even though this may not be how they planned to close their chapter with Village Missions, they know God is still at work and His plans never fail.

In the end, this is their hope: that missionaries continue to preach the Word and love the people, and that our churches have a profound impact on rural North America, and the rest of the world.

***"We want two things to be remembered: Jesus Christ, and the importance and great potential of the small, rural church."***

***- Brian & Carole Wechsler***



# AN UNEXPECTED OFFER

It was Staff Conference at Cannon Beach, Oregon, in the summer of 2016. Village Missionaries John & Candy Adams were curious as they sat down with Executive Director Brian & Carole Wechsler, wondering about the purpose of their visit together.



An hour later, John & Candy took a walk on the beach to pray and think about the unexpected offer that Brian & Carole had just made to them—the offer to enter a process to become the next Executive Director.

Now four years later, John & Candy have been co-leading the mission alongside the Wechslers, and will take over as the next Executive Director. But long before they were in leadership, they spent 21 years as Village Missionaries.







*From left: John & Candy shortly after their marriage; John & Candy with Candy's parents at the beginning of their internship at Hauser Community Church.*

## LOOKING FOR DIRECTION

Candy was born and raised in the world of Village Missions, the daughter of Village Missionaries Mel & Jeannie Wiggers. As a teenager, she surmised that a pastor's wife, in her words, "would be the best job ever!"

So when she met John in college, she was excited to hear that he felt called to ministry. After they married and started seminary, John decided to explore rural ministry, interning with Candy's dad.

After a time of exploring ministry options—including a year in China teaching English—John & Candy felt God directing them to Village Missions.



*From left: John & Candy with a group of students in China; the Butte Falls church family.*

*"It took us a while to figure out where the Lord wanted us to serve!" said Candy, chuckling. "But we ended up in Village Missions, and we just love it."*

## SERVING RURAL OREGON

John & Candy's adventure as Village Missionaries commenced in the fall of 1995.

The old logging town of Butte Falls, nestled in the mountains of southern Oregon, became their mission field for the next eight and a half years. This little community holds many fond memories, including being the first home of their children, Callie & David.

The congregation of Butte Falls Community Bible Church loved and welcomed them from the beginning, becoming dear friends to this young missionary family.

*"This place helped me learn how to be a missionary-pastor," explained John. "We learned the value of having a pastor who lives in the community, and letting people see the gospel in action."*



***The Hauser church family signed balloons and left them in John & Candy's yard during Pastor Appreciation Month one year.***

In 2004, John & Candy followed the Lord's leading to serve Hauser Community Church, the church Candy's parents served and where John had interned during seminary.

Pastoring her childhood church was not what John & Candy envisioned, but they had confidence in what the Lord had planned at their second field. The Adams had

a wonderful and fruitful ministry here for 13 years, loving their job more than ever as they preached the Word and love the people on the southern Oregon coast.



# STEPPING INTO LEADERSHIP

The transition from Village Missionary to Assistant Director in 2017 was as unexpected as it was challenging. But as John & Candy adapted to their new role, their love for Village Missions grew as they saw its influence all across North America.

In fact, Candy got into a habit of proclaiming "we have a great bunch of missionaries!" after attending each of the staff conferences their first summer in leadership!

*"We've gotten to see the big picture of what God is doing in Village Missions," said John, mirroring his wife's enthusiasm. "But, there are challenges in our churches, so we've also learned how important our District Representatives are to our missionaries."*

Remembering times in their ministry when they needed encouragement in the midst of hardship, John & Candy have closely worked with the District Representatives to help strengthen their ministries so that missionaries and churches can be better supported.

Ensuring the success of the expansion of the DR Ministry will be an integral focus as they transition to Executive Director, as well as continuing to help our missionaries'



*John & Candy and Brian & Carole pose with the District Representatives.*

churches deal with the repercussions of coronavirus.

Although leading the mission carries a heavy weight, especially in such a unique time in our world, John & Candy share a deep conviction that this is exactly what the Lord has called them to do.

***“We would really value if the champions of Village Missions would pray for us and ask the Lord to guide us in this new position.”***  
**- John & Candy Adams**



## LOOKING AHEAD

Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us that “for everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (ESV).

Village Missions is certainly in a season of change.

Bidding farewell to faithful servants and commissioning new ones. More churches in need of leadership. More missionaries in need of encouragement. More communities in need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. All the while, learning to live and serve with the challenges brought by the coronavirus.

Whatever awaits us down the road, it will be no surprise to the Lord, and He will be with us through every step of it all.







Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we had to cancel several fund-raising dinners this year. As a result, we have a financial gap to fill for 2020. We trust God will provide for the needs of Village Missions Canada. Your partnership is vital to the ongoing ministry of Village Missions as we seek to come alongside small churches, reaching rural Canada with the gospel!

You can partner with us in ministry! Just visit [villagemissions.ca](http://villagemissions.ca) and choose the “Learn More” option at the top of the page, or select the “Reach Canada 2020 Campaign under the “Events” tab.

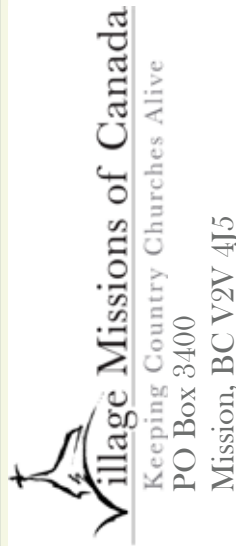
I THANK MY GOD IN ALL MY REMEMBRANCE OF YOU,  
ALWAYS IN EVERY PRAYER OF MINE FOR YOU ALL MAKING  
MY PRAYER WITH JOY, BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP  
IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW.  
(PHILIPPIANS 1:3-5)

No doubt, God is on the move in rural North America through Village Missions. But there is still a lot of work to be done.

We need the help of faithful ministry partners to continue sending missionaries to rural

Canada. Would you please join us in prayer that the Lord would raise up missionaries for the country churches that have asked us for leadership?

USA: [villagemissions.org](http://villagemissions.org) 800.617.9905 | Canada: [villagemissions.ca](http://villagemissions.ca) 866.885.3885



Helping Country Churches Thrive