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COUNTRY Matters

ANNUAL REPORT
THE
JOURNEY
VILLAGE
MISSIONS
2019



village Missions of Canada



A View From the Country

with Murray Graham,
Executive Director

The Journey

Last year, Village Missions of Canada celebrated its fiftieth anniversary!

While many things have changed over the years—missionaries, locations, churches, just to name a few—one thing has remained the same: Preaching the Word and loving the people.

As we enter this new year, I pause to reflect on the journey of Village Missions in Canada. Beginning in 1948, our ministry was nothing more than the vision of an Irish immigrant, deeply burdened for the small churches that had no pastor in his new country.

In 1968, his vision for rural ministry inspired the founding of Village Missions of Canada. Now, over 30 communities throughout Canada are being served by full-time Village Missionaries!

Indeed, as I look back at our journey with Village Missions, I am amazed how God was guiding and directing our path.

As Village Missionaries, the Lord took us to four fields across three provinces. After 30 years of pastoral ministry, I began serving as a member on the Canadian Board.

Finally, in 2016, I became your Executive Director. What a journey it has been!

In this edition of Country Matters, I want to share the journey of Village Missionaries Mark & Rebecca Bueckert, who have been



The Bueckert Family



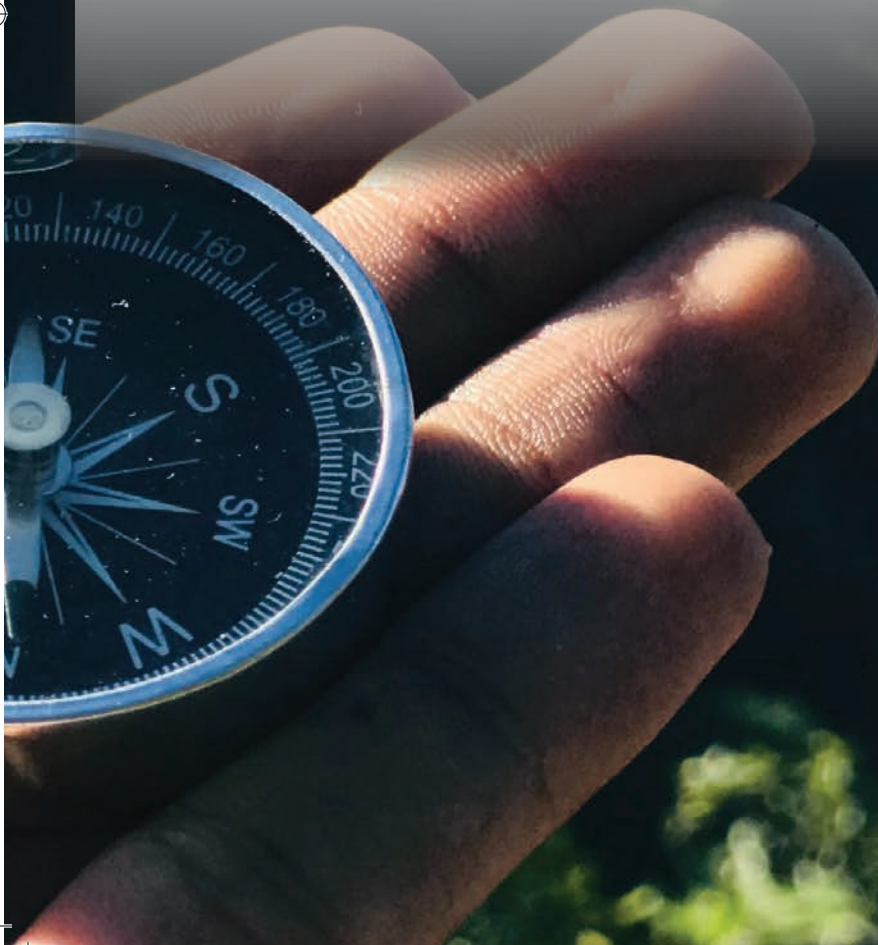
faithfully serving the community of Ryley, AB for twelve years. One of the things that our families have in common is that we also served in Ryley from 1991 to 2002!

Along with their story of how they became Village Missionaries, you will also learn about the spiritual journey of a mom and her son, and how they found faith in a very unlikely place.

I hope their stories will encourage you to reflect on your own personal spiritual journey, and how God's faithfulness was directing you every step of the way.

In Him,

Murray Graham
Executive Director



Claire* and her young son only had the clothes on their back when she scooped Sam* into her arms and fled. Leaving behind their possessions, they never looked back.

Driving into the night, they eventually arrived at their destination. Claire walked to the door and knocked, hoping that someone was home.

Her sister opened the door and let them in. Claire and Sam were finally safe from the abusive relationship that had entrapped them.

With a past marred with pain, Claire was initially hesitant to visit the church her sister's family attended. Despite her reservations, she took Sam's hand and they walked into Good News Community Church together, unsure of what they would find.



Good News Community Church

Instead of rejection and judgement, they were greeted with warm welcomes and loving embraces. Although strangers, Good News Community Church joyfully adopted them into their family.

Claire and Sam had never experienced such kindness and acceptance before.

Suspensions melted away, and trust began to build between them and the church. Their hearts slowly opened to the Gospel as they experienced the love of God for the first time.

Just a few months later, everyone rejoiced when Claire and Sam fully trusted in Jesus as their Savior!

For one and a half years, GNCC faithfully loved this small family. The congregation watched them grow steadily in their faith and knowledge of God. They vividly remember the joy on Sam's young face as he celebrated his very first Christmas. A much brighter and more joyful future seemed to lay ahead for them.



Then came the news that no one was ready for: Claire had developed terminal cancer. Devastated and heartbroken, GNCC prepared to say goodbye to a beloved

**names changed for privacy*



member of their family.

Although her earthly life was ending, the confidence in her eternal security did not falter. She did not worry for her son, because she knew he would be loved and cared for by their church family.



In October 2018, surrounded by her loved ones, Claire peacefully passed from this life and entered the eternal joy that awaited her.

Even though GNCC only had her for a short time, her story continues to touch many people's lives, including Village Missionaries Mark & Rebecca Bueckert.

They had the privilege of witnessing this incredible woman's journey of faith from beginning to end, and it all began in a very unlikely place: a small country church in rural Canada.

The Journey Begins



Roy & Lennie Adrian

Village Missions has been a part of Mark's life since childhood. When he was twelve years old, his family began attending a small church in Rose Prairie, British Columbia, pastored at the time by Village Missionary Roy Adrian.

A few months later, Mark trusted Christ in one of the church's AWANA programs.

Through discipleship and the ministry of Village Missionaries Roy and Lennie, Mark's spiritual foundation was solidified. Although he would eventually move away from Rose Prairie, his journey of faith began in that small Village Missions church.

Mark went on to study at Nipawin Bible College in Saskatchewan, earning his diploma in 1999. While at Nipawin, he not only met his wife, Rebecca, but he also received his call to be a pastor.

While doing a devotion one morning, Mark felt God impressing upon his heart the message of Romans 10:14-15:



"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Good News!'"

"I knew without a doubt that God spoke right to me," remembers Mark. "I would be one of those that bring the Good News."

After finishing his studies at Nipawin, Mark & Rebecca married and began working normal jobs. About a year later, they started to feel that God was finally opening the door for them into missions. Guided by prayer, Mark & Rebecca began looking for where the Lord would have them serve.

Amid their searching, Mark remembered Village Missions.

Reflecting on his childhood in Rose Prairie, and how much Village Missionaries like Roy Adrian had impacted his life, Mark & Rebecca considered the possibility that God was calling them into rural ministry.

Meanwhile, the Regional Administrator at the time just happened to be Mark's former pastor in Rose Prairie—Roy! Because Roy had remained close friends with Mark's parents, he was aware that the Bueckerts were currently seeking opportunities in full-time ministry.

When they finally called the VM headquarters, who better to answer their call than Roy! He famously responded, "Well, it took you long enough to phone."

That sealed the deal!



Mark & Rebecca at
Weekes, SK

After finishing the application process, the Bueckerts were officially accepted as Village Missionaries. Piling all their belongings into the back of a horse trailer, they headed to the first field: Weekes, Saskatchewan, in January of 2002.

17 years and 3 fields later, Mark & Rebecca continue to serve as Village Missionaries in Ryley, AB at Good News Community Church.

Indeed, God truly raised both Mark & Rebecca to carry His Good News to the lost in rural Canada.

Village Missions in Ryley

Although Ryley has its origins in agriculture, modern life has brought a mixture of farmers and urbanites into the community. Because of the special kind of clay that exists in the area, Ryley is home to one of the largest Waste Disposal Facilities in Western Canada. This multimillion dollar industry provides a lot of the local employment.

While much has changed throughout the years in this rural community, the spiritual needs remain the same.

With very little knowledge of the gospel and generations of families removed from church, many people do not see a need for God in their lives.

When Mark once initiated a conversation about Christmas with a woman at the local café, she interrupted, “It’s all fine and good if you want to believe in Jesus, but do not push any of that on me.”

In this climate of spiritual apathy, that’s where long-term relationships come into play.

After 12 years in Ryley, the community knows Mark & Rebecca. Even though many have never stepped into Good News Community Church, rapport has been established with people in the community.

Many of the kids Mark coaches in sports call him “Pastor Mark,” or simply, “Coach.” Parents may not attend a Sunday Service, but they’ll send their kids to AWANA each week.





Although trust and relationships with people in rural communities often take years before progress is made, Mark & Rebecca lean on the example set by Jesus for guidance and comfort.

“Jesus went to where people were. That’s what Village Missionaries do—we love people and are available when they are ready. Then when the opportunity comes, we can share the gospel with them. And God takes it from there.” – Mark

Why Small Churches Matter

Before passing away, Claire spent many of her final days with Mark & Rebecca. As they prepared the details of her memorial service, the Bueckerts made a realization: how different Claire’s funeral would have been had she not known the hope of Jesus Christ.

Had they fled to a community where no church family was present, their story could have ended much more tragically.

But, in His sovereignty, God led them to Ryley where they found community and acceptance in a small country church. Their journey of faith began in an unlikely place, and Mark & Rebecca rejoice that she is now in the presence of Her Savior.

If Good News Community Church did not exist, this broken family would have fallen through the cracks, never knowing how much God loves them.

Unfortunately, this is the reality in many of the unremembered places in rural Canada. Every time a rural church closes its doors, the light of the gospel is extinguished in that community. Because of the work of Village Missions, and the faithfulness of missionaries like Mark & Rebecca, the lost sheep of unremembered, hidden places are being found.

Two more souls were added to heaven because Good News Community Church was there, ready to reach the lost wherever they are in their spiritual journeys.

So, why does Village Missions care about churches in small communities?

For people like Claire and Sam. And one day, Good News Community Church will get to see her again.

Your partnership with Village Missions makes stories like this a reality. Your support enables our missionaries to remain on their fields long-term and full-time, thereby establishing the relationships necessary to share the gospel in communities like Ryley.

In this new year, would you consider partnering in the work of bringing the gospel to rural Canada?

New Field Purdy Community Church



In January 2018, Purdy Community Church became part of the Village Missions family. Purdy is located 4 hours north of Toronto, ON, and is surrounded by lakes and forest. Each weekend, people trek north to this location for snowmobiling on part of the world's largest recreational

snowmobiling trails. Locals and tourists also enjoy the beautiful lakes during the summer months.

For the past six years, the church has been served by a faithful interim pastor, Don and his wife Gwen. Don and Gwen have done a wonderful job of proclaiming the truth. Over the past year, the church has been remodeling a building to serve as the home for their first Village Missionary family. In March 2019, new Village Missionaries Jon and Laura Germain will be moving to Purdy, ON.

2018

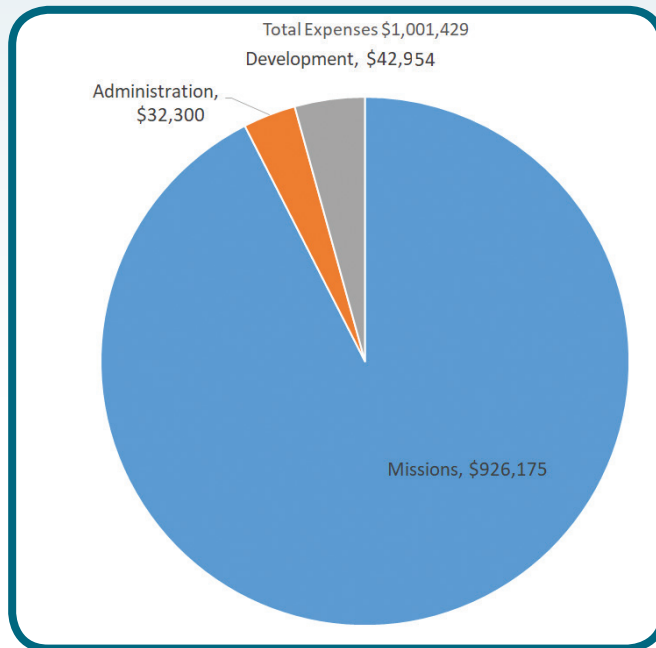
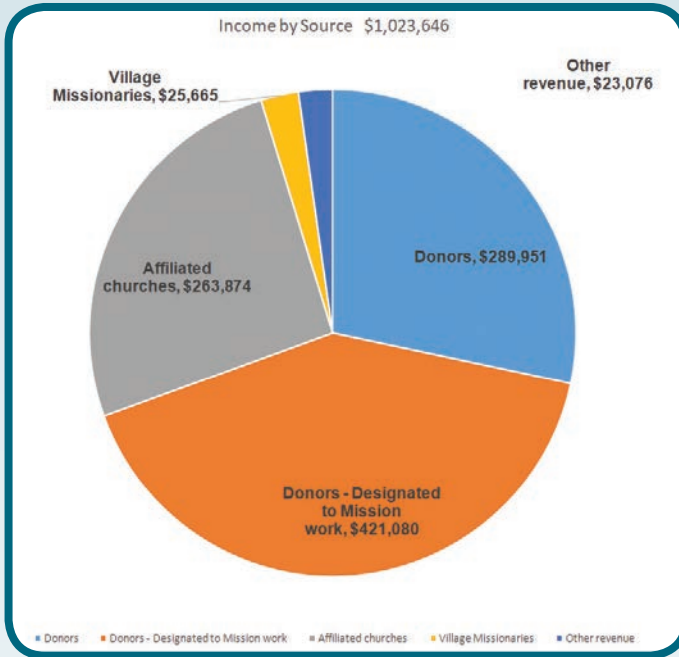
Village Missions Board of Directors



Left to Right: Executive Director Brian Wechsler (US), Board Member Hal York, Executive Director Murray Graham (Canada), Board Member Richard Semanya, Deb Graham, Board Chairman Lee Gregory, Board Member Ryan Schnee, Board Member Jenneke Schnee, Arnold Tracey, Eleanor Tracey, Board Member Norm Janzen, CFO Jim Cross, Board Member Ernie Munchinsky, Board Member Tom Telfer, District Representative Henry Vandermeer

Revenue by Source	2018		2017	
Donors	289,951	28%	227,106	24%
Donors (Designated to Mission Work)	421,080	41%	430,363	46%
Affiliated Churches	263,874	26%	239,258	25%
Village Missionaries	25,665	3%	29,515	3%
Other Revenue	23,076	2%	20,183	2%
	1,023,646	100%	946,425	100%
Expenses	2018		2017	
Missions	926,175	93%	919,614	93%
Administration	32,300	3%	35,096	4%
Development	42,954	4%	34,397	3%
	1,001,429	100%	989,107	100%
Deficiency of Revenue over Expenses	22,217		(42,682)	
Fund Balances, beginning of year	353,000		395,682	
Fund Balances, end of year	375,217		353,000	

Annual Report





Since our inception, many of our missionaries came out of Village Missions churches. By supporting the ministry of Village Missions, you are not only aiding the ministry of our current missionaries, but you are also paving the way for future Village Missions, as well! Would you consider partnering in our work of bringing the Gospel to rural North America?



Keeping Country Churches Alive
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