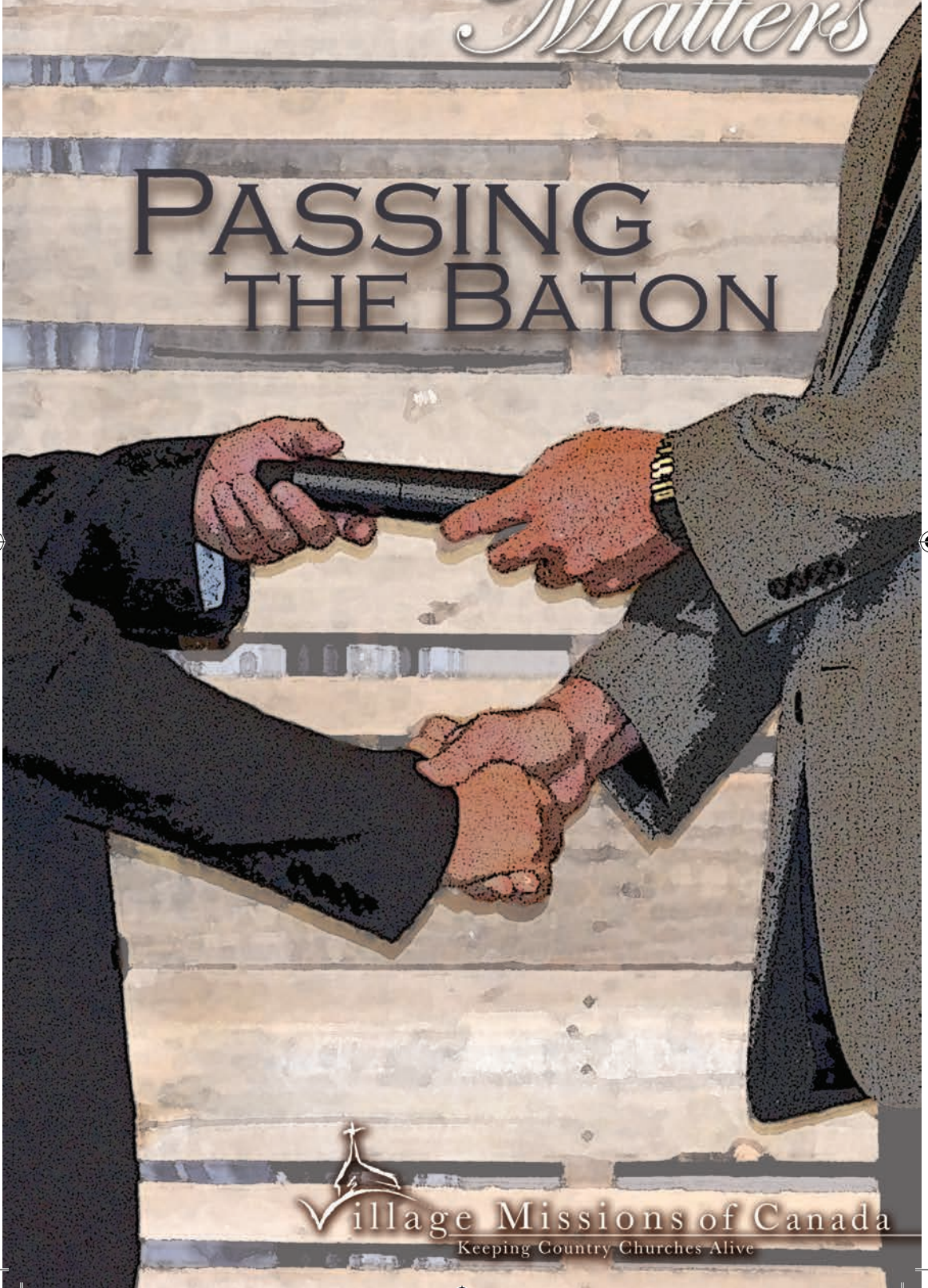




Canada: villagemissions.ca USA: www.villagemissions.org

COUNTRY *Matters*

PASSING THE BATON



Village Missions of Canada
Keeping Country Churches Alive





A View From the Country with Murray Graham, Executive Director

Making Disciples in Forgotten Places

The last command Jesus gave His followers while still on earth was to disciple others into a mature faith.

He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Matthew 28:19-20)




I became aware of Village Missions during my college years, and I was incredibly moved by their passion to take the Great Commission to a largely forgotten place of the world—rural Canada. It wasn't long after this that my wife, Debbie, and I became Village Missionaries, where we served for 30 years.

A few years after stepping down from Village Missions, I was asked to serve on the national board. I served in that role for another four years before being approached regarding the Executive Director position.

...people need the love and hope of Jesus Christ shared with them, and we are so thrilled to share in the ministry...

Debbie and I accepted gladly, because I believe that rural Canada still desperately needs the Gospel. These people need the love and hope of Jesus Christ shared with them, and we are so thrilled to share in the ministry in this leadership role.

Currently, we have two churches who have reached out to Village Missions for leadership. In recent years, we had no recruited missionaries to send them, but that is beginning to change.



In this issue of Country Matters, you will read how we are thinking “outside the box” to recruit new missionaries, and how we are working to better train and equip individuals within our own churches. You will see that our vigor for reaching lost souls is stronger than ever, and that the next generation is rising up to continue the Great Commission!

Standing with the country church,

Murray Graham

Executive Director, Village Missions Canada

PASSING THE BATON

The runner pumps his arms forward and back—cleats flying across the track—eyes fixed ahead. Swiftly, he passes the baton to the second runner, and off he goes—continuing the race.

Relay races are one of the most difficult events in track and field. Yet, when executed well, the passing of the baton is an incredible thing to watch.

This is the same kind of transition former Village Missions of Canada Executive Director Roy Adrian and new Executive Director Murray Graham hope to accomplish.


After serving as regional administrator from 1996 to 2015, Roy was officially named the first Executive Director for Village Missions of Canada, but he knew the role would be short lived. Feeling the Lord's guidance to step down from his position last year, Roy immediately thought of Murray as his replacement.

...we believe that the Lord is really leading him into this role.

"There's a whole lot of reasons," said Roy. "He's been on our board, and he's well up to date on policies and such. Murray isn't afraid to do fundraising. He's energized by talking to and being with people. It's a natural fit. He and his wife also love it on the road. You put all those things together, and we believe that the Lord is really leading him into this role."

Murray Graham is no stranger to Village Missions, his





experience going back to his college days. Murray was impressed that Village Missions went to the most remote where many refuse to go. Murray and his wife, Debbie, took up this call, serving as Village Missionaries for 30 years. Needing a rest, the two stepped aside from full-time ministry for eight years, though Murray served on the board for the last four.

During this past year, however, the Graham's business began to slow to the point that the two were driven to their knees in prayer. For months their prayers felt unanswered.

Then, just after the New Year, Murray received a phone call from Roy, asking if he would consider becoming the executive director. After much prayer, consideration and conversation, Murray accepted.

Stepping into his new role in July, Murray is eager to continue improving on the mission handed to him by Roy.

“My goals are to see this great mission go forward with manning the fields we have, as well as adding new fields to our list. We are already working on new fundraising projects. Our Contenders Discipleship Initiative and the intern program, along with the hard work of the District Representatives, are going to bring us missionaries for the future.”

My goal is to see this great mission go forward...

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Village Missions Canada is committed to reaching rural Canada, but in recent years, there have simply not been enough missionaries to fill the needy churches.

That's why the "Forward Again" campaign was launched, an initiative which, in part, sought to train, equip and send out 10 new missionaries. During that year, Roy Adrian and District Representative Henry Vandermeer worked tirelessly to recruit new missionaries.

"We've been in a state of decline for many years, with recruitment being nigh unto impossible," said Roy. "At the end of the day, we just didn't have anyone signing on the dotted line, so Henry started thinking outside the box."

One of these "out of the box" ideas was making the internship a salary position, something which has already proved beneficial. Village Missionaries have also begun implementing Contenders Discipleship Initiative into their churches, a tuition-paid program that prepares its students for ministry. Both of these steps have helped remove the financial obstacles for students.

The hard work paid off with Village Missions hosting its first Canadian Candidate School in decades, a time for training and fellowshiping with future missionaries. Five new candidates were invited, and all five were accepted.

One of these couples was Joe and Laura Letourneau.

Though feeling God tugging at his heart to enter full-time ministry early on in his marriage, Joe chose to become a carpenter. The two attended Nukko Lake Church, a Village Missions church served by none other than Henry and Marilyn Vandermeer.



Joe & Laura
LeTourneau enjoy
conference this
summer.

“Henry had asked me if I had thought of becoming a pastor. I said “no” and laughed it off. God got my attention, though, and I couldn’t let it go.”

Finally, in November of 2014, Joe quit his job and began an internship with Village Missions. After a year of interning, Joe and Laura were invited to Candidate school, and in August, the two moved to their first field in Marysville, BC.

These are the kinds of stories God has written in rural Canada, and by God’s grace, the stories are not over. Still five missionaries short of the 2015 goal, Murray and Henry are excited to continue recruiting new missionaries.

“It was exciting to accept five new candidates this year, and there are more to come as God allows,” said Murray.

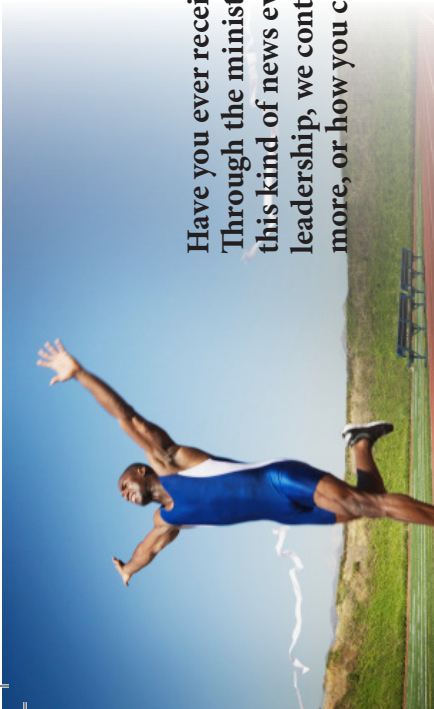
“We are into some exciting times in VM Canada. Roy and Lennie, along with the Board of Directors, have Village Missions Canada in great shape right now. We have a strong foundation to work from.”

We have a strong foundation to work from.

Already, two more interns have been placed for this fall, and there are others beginning the application process. The spiritual need in rural Canada is great, but by God’s grace, we will be able to continue placing new missionaries in those needy fields.

“People are hurting—seeking other things to fulfill their needs,” said Joe. “They need the one thing they don’t have, which is a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Currently, (X#) of churches have reached out to Village Missions for leadership. The harvest truly is great. So, while our goal of reaching 10 new missionaries is within reach, that number is certainly not the finish line. We will continue to seek out missionaries who have a heart for rural ministry, so that together we might share the Gospel of hope in the most forgotten places of this country.



Jumping Up & Down with Joy

Have you ever received news so wonderful you wanted to jump up and down with joy? Through the ministry of Village Missions, the most forgotten people of rural Canada receive this kind of news every day – the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As rural churches regularly request leadership, we continue training and equipping missionaries to meet that need. To learn more, or how you can get involved, read this issue and visit villagemissions.ca.



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