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# COUNTRY Matters



Village Missions of Canada  
Keeping Country Churches Alive





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

### Taking Larger Steps

The Old Testament is full of incidents when the Israelites looked back at what God had done. It is a form of worship to look back at the goodness and faithfulness of God.

This year, we mark 50 years of God's faithfulness to Village Missions in Canada. Although I wasn't part of this great ministry when Rev. Duff sent Chris Shuman to Canada in 1968 to scout out and open new fields, I did know them both for many years before the Lord took them home.

The desire was to push forward to have godly, Christian leadership in all rural communities that are open to the gospel (Matt. 28:19-20),

no matter how rural they may be. Today our purpose remains the same, "To glorify Jesus Christ by developing spiritually vital churches in rural North America."

Looking back, Deb and my greatest times of blessing were when people came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and their lives were completely turned toward Christ. Today we see not only their children following Jesus but also grandchildren. All praise to the Lord.

Second for me would be what I call the faith and trust-growing times. When Peter stepped out onto the water, he had to trust the Lord Jesus to hold him up while he walked (Matthew 14:22-33). For example, we had the privilege of stepping out of the boat in 1984 and again in 2004 while we built two different church buildings, one for cash and the other with borrowed money. Both churches had approximately \$10,000 in the bank,



but they stepped forward in faith to see the impossible. The church who borrowed had no borrowing ability in and of itself, but the members did. Before any of these great milestones of trusting in the faithfulness of God could take place, God took us on so many other, smaller stepping stones.

Having no Visa or emergency fund in our earlier years, receiving \$10 so we could buy our children milk was a "Praise the Lord" day. One day, we were praying for the Lord to meet our needs, and later there was a knock at the door. There stood a man whom we never met. He said, "The Lord told me to give you this!" He handed us \$100. We said thank you, and he left. We looked out to the driveway to watch him leave, but no one was there. An angel? I don't know. But God is good all the time! He has always taken care of us.

Today, we have a greater responsibility—to watch over VM Canada. I know with all my heart that the same Lord God Almighty who has held our hand while on and in the waters of life will take us to the other side.

Fifty years is a long time, but if the Lord should tarry, let's take even larger steps with Him in the next 50 years! We have a great start with our senior missionaries and 11 newer missionaries. Please continue praying for new growth as we move forward!

In Him,

*Murray Graham*  
Murray Graham



## The Man at the End of the Driveway

It was Sunday morning in the spring of 1974, and the local Village Missions pastor was standing at the end of Roy and Lennie's driveway, staring hard at the field behind their house. Roy called Lennie over. What's the pastor looking at? Lennie looked too. "Maybe there's an elk?" But there was nothing.

Leaving the window, they looked at the clock. They did not usually attend church and never Sunday school, but something about seeing the Village Missionary prompted them to give it a try.

As they crossed the threshold of Lardeau Valley Chapel, Village Missionary Jake Thiessen's eyes lit up. Later, Roy and Lennie learned that Jake had been standing by their driveway praying, "Lord, wake these people up and bring them to Sunday School."

Roy had never felt a call to ministry or knowledgeable enough to even teach a children's Sunday school class, but the faithful prayer of a Village Missionary changed everything.

"That was the beginning of the rest of our lives," said Roy.

### Familiar Stories

Fourteen years later and over 1300 kilometers north in Rose Prairie, BC, an 11-year-old boy, named Mark, began attending a rural church with his family. While attending AWANA one night, Mark listened to the Bible message presented by the local Village Missionary and gave his heart to



*Roy Adrian speaks at a Staff Conference.*







*Mark & Rebecca Bueckert have served with Village Missions for 16 years.*

Christ. That Village Missionary was Roy Adrian.

Mark Bueckert continued growing up in the church, but, like Roy, never felt compelled to do much with his faith, until he was encouraged to attend Bible college. After marrying Rebecca, the two interviewed with several churches. Nothing seemed to fit, until they finally made the call to Village Missions.

On their second field in Amaranth, MB, Mark met a young boy named Chris. Chris had grown up in a rough home with no dad and a mom who was disconnected. Invited to church by an uncle, Chris began attending youth group, where he was saved. Immediately, Chris became on fire for the Lord, walking nearly a mile each week to attend Sunday school, worship and youth group.

With no father figure in his life, Mark took Chris under his wing, inviting him to play hockey and go hunting and fishing. Even after moving to a new field, Mark continued to pray for Chris and even send him care packages at college, but eventually they lost touch.

Years later, Mark received an email from Chris. He was married and on his way to do mission work in Africa.

*"Thanks for being there," Chris wrote. "Without you*



*there, I wouldn't be here."*

The ripple effect of a committed Village Missionary in the 1970s continues today! Because Village Missionary Jake Thiessen prayed by Roy and Lennie's driveway, they dedicated their lives to the Lord. Because of their ministry, Mark Bueckert was saved. And because Mark gave his life to the Lord, a man named Chris took the gospel to Africa.

## A Legacy of Ministry

Village Missions began with a simple idea. People in rural places need Jesus. After 50 years of ministry in Canada, rural ministry is more important than ever.



*Village Missionaries pray together in the 1970s.*

"Nothing has changed," said Roy, who began serving in 1978. "People need the gospel as much as they ever have. They need to be loved as much as ever, and they need someone to sit down and talk with them."

Like overseas missions, Village Missionaries are going to remote places of the country, where many others are unwilling to tread. They are preaching the gospel to those who have never heard it, and they are often met with closing doors and hard hearts.





Sometimes Village Missionaries experience overwhelming growth and see many saved. Other times, it takes months, or even years, to develop trust in a remote community. But that is what it's all about.

For 50 years, Village Missionaries have been committed to reaching the rural church and community, through good times and bad. Village Missionaries are more than just pastors. They are neighbors, community members, volleyball coaches and friends.

Looking back, that's the reason Village Missionaries Tom and Rebecca Gerbrandt joined Village Missions back in 1975.

*"Rural ministry allows you to get to know people in their work and livelihood, and you get to help out much more than a pastor of a large church," said Tom. "There is a greater opportunity to get to know people both inside and outside*



*Tom & Rebecca Gerbrandt  
have served with Village  
Missions for 43 years.*



*the church on a deeper level, which allows for a deeper ministry. People are watching us to see if we live what we say. People are looking for authenticity, and they will see that quicker in rural areas."*

## 50 Years of Giving

It has been an amazing 50 years of ministry, and we look forward to what God will do in the years ahead. Yet, none of these stories would exist without partners in ministry, who have given generously over the years to make this ministry possible.

If these stories have moved you, would you help us continue reaching rural Canada with the gospel? Your gift will help us send new missionaries to churches waiting for leadership. Through your giving, people in the most remote villages of Canada will be able to hear the gospel for the first time.





## Planned Giving: A Lasting Gospel Legacy

Planned giving allows you to make a long term commitment for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through planned giving you can organize your finances to meet your current and future needs while giving to the work of Village Missions.

Village Missions of Canada has partnered with Link Charity to assist you as you plan your contribution to the work of Village Missions. Link Charity is a registered charitable organization helping charities with their planned giving.



**Through our partnership with Link Charity, you may gain these advantages:**

- Save hundreds of dollars in lawyer fees by using Link Charity's letter of direction with your will.
- Easy and cost effective process for donating stocks and mutual funds, which can save hundreds of dollars in brokerage fees and capital gains.
- Your donations can be anonymous and selective using one giving tool.
- Save thousands of dollars in taxes both now and at estate time with Link Charity's customized gift giving estate plan.



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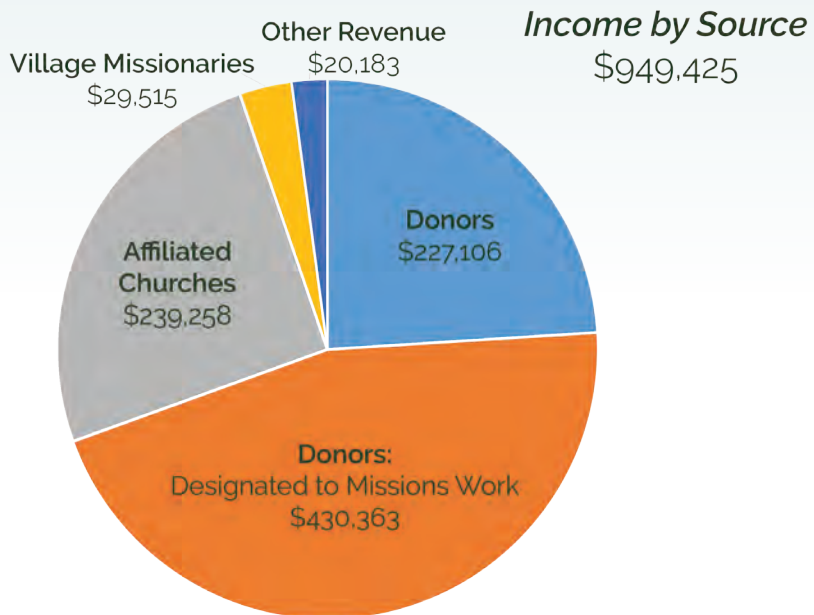
# 2017

## Village Missions Board of Directors



**Back Row:** Village Missionary Mark Bueckert (guest), District Representative Henry Vandermeer, Board Member Hal York, Board Member Ernie Munchinsky, Executive Director Brian Wechsler (US), Board Chairman Lee Gregory, Board Member Tom Telfer, Ex-officio Member and Village Missionary Ryan Schnee, Board Member Norm Janzen

**Front Row:** Village Missionary Rebecca Bueckert (guest), Deb Graham, Executive Director Murray Graham (CA), Board Member Richard Semenyna, CFO Jim Cross, Ex-officio Member and Village Missionary Jenneke Schnee



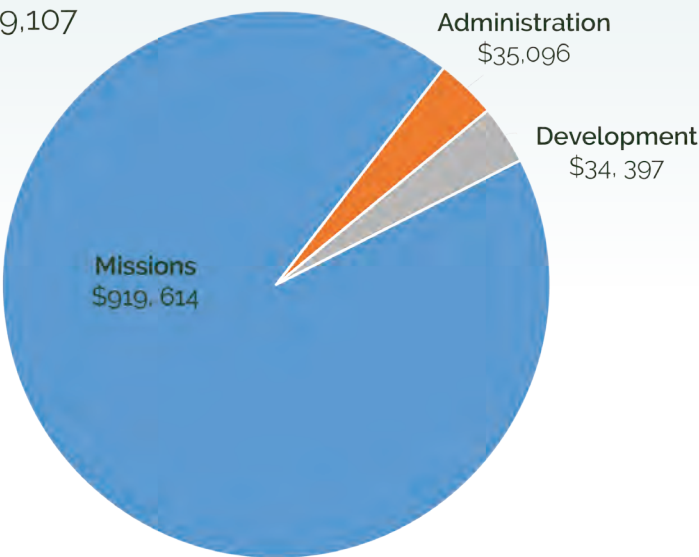


# Annual Report

## General Fund Income & Expenses for the year ended June, 2017

	2017		2016	
Revenue by Source				
Donors	227,106	24%	272,231	30%
Donors - Designated to Mission work	430,363	45%	406,009	44%
Affiliated churches	239,258	25%	189,919	21%
Village Missionaries	29,515	3%	30,100	3%
Other revenue	20,183	2%	18,726	2%
	<u>946,425</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>916,985</u>	<u>100%</u>
Expenses				
Missions	919,614	93%	904,913	91%
Administration	35,096	4%	80,551	8%
Development	34,397	3%	7,849	1%
	<u>989,107</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>993,313</u>	<u>100%</u>
Deficiency of Revenue over Expenses for the year	(42,682)		(76,328)	
Fund balances - beginning of year	<u>395,682</u>		<u>472,010</u>	
Fund balances - end of year	<u>353,000</u>		<u>395,682</u>	

### Total Expenses \$989,107





## Continue the Legacy

For 50 years Village Missionaries have been reaching rural Canada with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each day, they show the love of Jesus through their conversation, teaching, visiting the sick and hurting, and by mentoring youth. Through Village Missionaries, God has breathed life into the most spiritually dark corners of this country. Thank you for being a part of this ministry through prayer and financial support. To learn more and give a special gift today, please visit [villagemissions.ca](http://villagemissions.ca) or call 866.885.3885.



Village Missions of Canada

Keeping Country Churches Alive

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