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# COUNTRY *Matters*



Village Missions of Canada  
Keeping Country Churches Alive





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

### Every Missionary Is Different

While over 25 Village Missionaries serve in churches across Canada, I am always amazed how each of them is unique.

Each couple has a different set of skills and strengths. Some feel most comfortable and impassioned from behind a pulpit. Others feel most comfortable in a combine talking one-on-one. Some join Village Missions fresh out of Bible college and others join after a full career elsewhere.

There's no secret formula to becoming a Village Missionary—no type of family, region or denomination you must have come from. We have Village Missionaries who were once VM kids themselves, but I know others who are the only Christians in their entire family. No, the only common denominator is a love for Jesus Christ and a heart for reaching rural North America with that gospel message.

I think it's best this way, because just as every Village Missionary is different, so is every rural community or village. These out-of-the-way places have their own strengths and challenges, and having such a diverse group of Village Missionaries allows us to better meet the leadership needs of each community.





In this issue, you will read about Ryan and Jenneke Schnee, who came to Village Missions after working in several other professions. This story is a fantastic reminder that God's timing is perfect and that He can use your past to impact His Kingdom in the future.

I hope this story is an encouragement to you, and I encourage you to learn more about Second Career Village Missionaries by visiting [villagemissions.org/second-career](http://villagemissions.org/second-career).

Standing with the country church,



Murray Graham  
Executive Director, Village Missions

#### READ MORE

We will also feature three more second-career stories in May, June and July. You can find these by visiting our Country Matters Online page at [villagemissions.org/category/country-matters/](http://villagemissions.org/category/country-matters/).



# Nothing Wasted

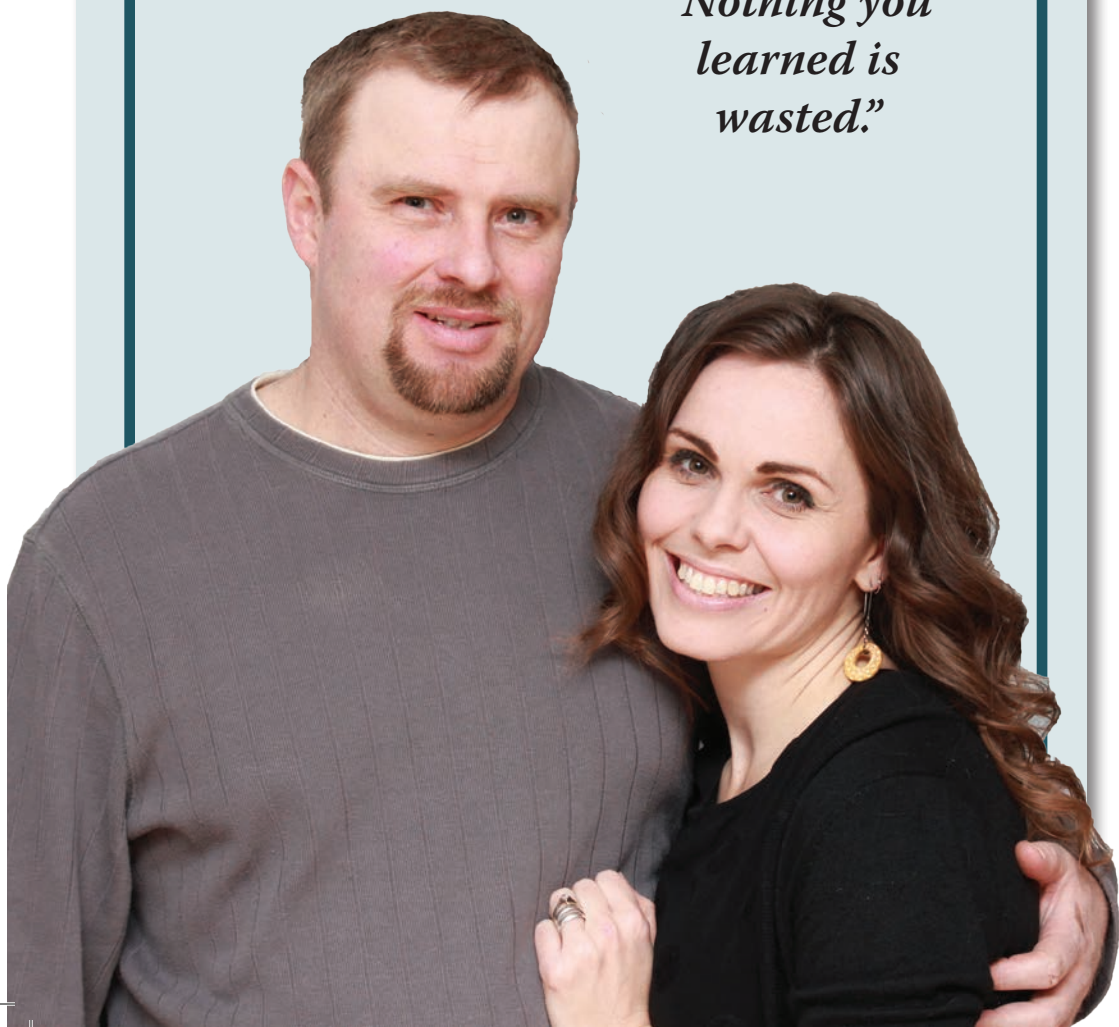
Village Missionary Ryan Schnee worked several jobs before entering full-time ministry, and none of them are typically associated with shepherding a church. Yet, he sees a purpose for each one of them.

Every job and life detour was preparing him for a career he didn't expect.

Could the same be true for you?

As Ryan says ...

***"Nothing you  
learned is  
wasted."***





# Commitment to Ministry

From his earliest memories, Ryan recalls his parents modeling faithful service within their local church in Gwynne, AB.

Serving was a way of life for the Schnee family. That example made a lasting impression on Ryan, who went on to become a board trustee, Sunday school teacher and occasional preacher by the age of seventeen.

However, Ryan's path to becoming a Village Missionary would not run through Bible College. At least not right away. Ironically, Ryan was the only one of his siblings not to attend Bible College or join a mission team after high school.

Instead, he completed a major in Farm and Ranch Production. After marrying his wife, Jenneke, Ryan earned his certification as a journeyman welder, as Jenneke finished her own university degree. Service at a church in Edmonton during this time formed connections that prepared them to serve in a greater capacity when they returned to Gwynne. The move home was motivated by opportunities in agriculture, but was made knowing it included a call to serve in the church there. Ryan became board chair, rotating preacher, and youth group leader. Realizing the church's need for fulltime leadership, Ryan guided the church through the process of applying to Village Missions, and helped unpack Gwynne's first Village Missionaries in 2006.

As the years passed, the couple began to consider full-time ministry and were encouraged to do so by others as well. However, after taking just one seminary course, Ryan put his education on hold to deal with their infant daughter's health challenges.

It wasn't until Ryan's dad passed away in 2007 that he re-enrolled in seminary. The flexibility of being a self-employed welder



enabled the Schnees to financially make the transition through fulltime schooling with four young children to a career in ministry. Shortly after graduation, the family would join Village Missions and begin serving in Middle Lake, SK.

Working with Village Missions' leadership in Gwynne became the foundation for the Schnees joining Village Missions themselves after Ryan's graduation, and the family has served in Middle Lake, SK, since 2011.

## Looking Back

Ryan doesn't view his or Jenneke's time in secular employment or education as wasted. Rather, he recognizes every job as a time of training and equipping.

From financial literacy gained in college, to cement and construction knowledge gained in a temporary job, to broader knowledge of agriculture, Ryan has seen God use each and every one of these skills in ministry.

Ryan also recognizes the tremendous benefit of having been involved in church service prior to full-time ministry. When Ryan and Jenneke made the transition into full-time ministry, the experiences didn't feel foreign to them.

Looking back, their lives didn't change very much, because God had been training them the entire time. Even through transition and waiting, God was teaching them the skills that would benefit them tremendously in the future, strengthening their marriage and molding them through their service within the local church and the workplace.

## A Second Career in Ministry

Ministry is a special calling, but it's not completely different from the job you are doing now. Small businessmen excel in planning, meeting new people and often work





long hours. Journalists work nights and weekends, and always need to be ready to drive somewhere on a moment's notice. Policemen have a heart for people and consistently deal with tense situations.

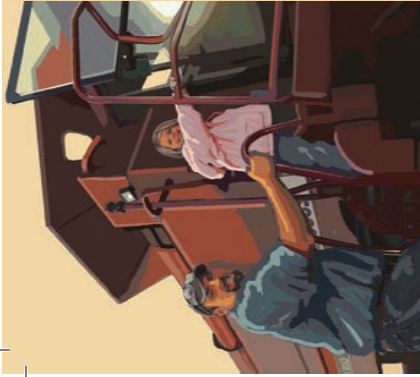
These are some of the same skills needed by Village Missionaries. But these skills must be coupled with a heart for ministry.

*"A pretty big key in all of this is actively servicing your church. That's really the proof of whether or not a transition to ministry is something for you. If you have a passion for God's house and serving and worshipping with God's people, you have the foundation there for full-time service," said Ryan.*

Has serving God in a full-time capacity been on your heart and mind? Maybe this is the first time you've entertained the possibility. Don't be surprised if God has customized your past for His future service.

*"I feel it is really important that wherever people are in life, they're learning what they can and they're doing a good job. Wherever you find yourself in the course of your life or development, God can use that as a training ground for His purposes. Nothing you learn is wasted."*





## A Second Career in Ministry

Called to a second career in ministry? Many of our current Village Missionaries became missionaries after a full career elsewhere, and God has used their skills and experiences to do great things for His kingdom. If you are interested in serving with Village Missions, we'd love to hear your story. Just visit [villagemissions.ca/ministry-opportunities](http://villagemissions.ca/ministry-opportunities) or give us a call at 866-885-3885 today!



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