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COUNTRY Matters



village Missions of Canada

From the Director's Desk

with Guy & Geni Shields
Executive Director



In a second letter to his son in the faith, the Apostle Paul tells Timothy, *"And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also"* (2 Timothy 2:2, ESV). Paul's ministry was coming to an end (see 2 Timothy 4:6-8), and he was handing the reins to Timothy.

Timothy had spent significant time with Paul. He observed Paul's life. He heard Paul's teaching. He learned from Paul by walking alongside the apostle through some critical years of ministry. As it were, Timothy interned with Paul before he was entrusted with a ministry of his own.

Many Village Missionaries will testify that a ministry internship is invaluable.

I WOULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED

Ed Peters, a 38-year veteran of pastoral ministry with Village Missions, still remembers his first year as a pastor. *"I wouldn't have survived without the mentorship and support of two men: my VM District Representative, Castle Thompson, and a church elder."*

Joel Brooks is in his first year as a full-time VM pastor. *"I think that going from college straight into a lead pastor position would be difficult. My entry to full-time ministry would have been extremely difficult without my Village Missions internship."*

Joel is one of seven current VM pastors who were trained through a VM pastoral internship. They are now shepherding small-town churches in Alberta, British Columbia, and Manitoba.

In this issue of *Country Matters*, you will read about Joel's unusual call to ministry and his comprehensive pastoral internship. I'm sure

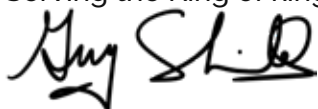
you'll be encouraged by how God led him and prepared him to be a Village Missionary.

In addition to a 1-2 year pastoral internship like his, we offer an 8-month internship for recent Bible college graduates.

To encourage those trying to discern if God is calling them to pastoral ministry, we expanded the internships to include a one-month "job shadow" for high school students and a summer ministry internship for Bible college students.

Village Missions is committed to providing ministry training opportunities for men called of Christ to shepherd His people in small-town and rural Canada. Do you know someone with this desire and calling?

Serving the King of kings together with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Shields". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "G" and "S".

Guy Shields, Executive Director



FROM NEW BELIEVER TO MISSIONARY PASTOR

Joel Brooks placed his faith in Jesus in 2021. Joel was in his early 30s and had spent years dismissing Jesus and choosing his own path. *"After I was saved, I thought immediately that I needed to be a pastor. It's ridiculous, isn't it?"*

Perhaps not.

Pastor Ed Peters certainly saw Joel's potential for pastoral ministry.

Pastor Ed
saw
Joel's potential.

DISCIPLED IN A SMALL-TOWN CHURCH

The two men met when Joel and Laura Brooks moved to Garrington in 2022 and started attending Garrington Community Church. Joel and Laura had been Christians for one year. Eager to grow in their faith and commitment to Jesus, they took baptism classes and were baptized by Pastor Ed.



One day, Ed asked Joel, "Has the Lord ever impressed on you for pastoral ministry?"

Joel replied, "Yes, I feel I'm supposed to go in that direction."

Ed then suggested that Joel take Bible classes and complete a Village Missions pastoral internship.

Joel enrolled in Contenders Discipleship Initiative (CDI) for online Bible and theology classes. He also started meeting weekly with Ed to discuss what he was learning. After Joel lost his job, he focused full-time on CDI and finished the six courses in record time.

CDI gave him a Biblical and theological foundation. Now he was ready to train to be a pastor.



A PASTORAL INTERNSHIP: OBSERVING, TRYING AND LEARNING



**"I wanted him to
be
well-equipped."**

Pastor Ed was ready for Joel's internship, too. He had been a pastor for 38 years. He had also mentored other young men for pastoral ministry. But this internship would be different. Ed had in mind that he would train Joel to be the next pastor of Garrington Community Church!

He didn't want to make Joel into another Pastor Ed; his goal was to help Joel develop into the pastor God had created him to be. *"I wanted him to be well-equipped in*

key areas of ministry, but my overarching desire was to prepare a man who would be passionate for God's Word, passionate in prayer, and passionate for the people."

From the beginning, Ed invited Joel into whatever he was doing. They made almost daily visits to church members' homes so that Joel could learn the art of visitation and get to know the church family. When Ed was helping a family plan a funeral service or a couple prepare for marriage, he asked if Joel could sit in on their meetings. Ed modeled for Joel how to work well with the church's elders and other leaders. He also allowed Joel to be a part of some very difficult conversations.

Joel said, *"Ed told me some of the fine details of operating a church, but that wasn't his priority. He was always available to answer my questions and offer suggestions, but he encouraged me to develop my own way of doing things."*

After some time, Ed asked a couple preparing for marriage if Joel could lead the sessions while Ed merely observed. They agreed. Joel then had the privilege of performing their wedding!





In addition, Joel assisted with baptisms, taught a Young Adults Bible Study, prepared and delivered sermons, and led a Vacation Bible School.

"The highlights of my internship were the same things I love about ministry now: connecting with people and talking about the Lord."

THE VALUE OF A MENTOR

Joel said his internship exposed him to most aspects of ministry without the pressure of being on his own. *"I knew Ed was there, so I could be bold and go for it."*

**"I could be
bold
& go for it."**

Joel sometimes had doubts and questioned his calling and capability to be a pastor. *"I experienced intense spiritual warfare. At times, I felt crazy for considering going into ministry."* But he had an empathetic listener and prayer partner in Ed.

In their weekly meetings, they talked about Scripture passages, what was on their minds, and what was happening in their families and in Garrington. *"Ed allowed me to talk with him about anything and be very honest, and we prayed about everything together."*

TRAINED BY THE CHURCH AND A BLESSING TO THE CHURCH

The church family also played a significant role in Joel's preparation for ministry. They welcomed him into their worship, their faith journeys, their suffering and grief, and their celebrations. They learned from his Bible teaching. They prayed for him.



The Garrington Community Church congregation prays over Joel and Laura Brooks during a dedication ceremony.

Elder Paul Schnell believes that hosting ministry interns is very beneficial to a church. It allows them to participate in the bigger picture of building God's worldwide church.

THE DIFFERENCE AN INTERNSHIP MAKES

During the internship, Joel and Laura applied to serve with Village Missions. They attended a week of training and orientation known as VM Candidate School. Then they invited relatives, friends, and churches to join their ministry partner team.

In July 2025, Joel and Laura were assigned to Garrington Community Church. Joel began his tenure as the pastor, shepherding the congregation and leading them in their outreach to the community.

On Joel's first Sunday, he looked at the congregation and felt an overwhelming sense of spiritual responsibility. But he wasn't unprepared to shepherd a church. He had solid Bible training through CDI, and his Village Missions internship had equipped him well for pastoral ministry.

FROM CALLING TO SERVICE

Ministry Internships with Village Missions

Village Missions offers ministry internships that can be tailored to fit your situation!

- » Are you a Bible college student? In a summer ministry internship, you can experience the life of a rural pastor while fulfilling the credits required by your school.
- » Are you a recent Bible school graduate? In a pastoral internship, you can gain firsthand ministry experience while discerning if rural ministry is the right fit for you.
- » Are you considering a career change into ministry? You can train for ministry through Contenders Discipleship Initiative and a pastoral internship with a veteran Village Missionary.
- » For high-school students in 11th or 12th grade, we now offer a one-month "job shadow" with a seasoned pastor.

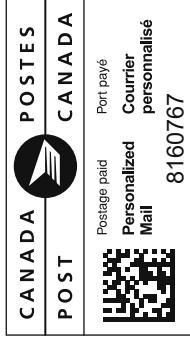
For more information, visit villagemissions.ca/internship/ or contact us at 866.885.3885

Few of us know about or see all the activities of our pastors as they shepherd the church. They do much more than preach on Sunday morning (although that is very important). Bible college provides a biblical and theological foundation, but pastors also need to know how to lead and shepherd people through all the experiences of life. Small-town pastors don't have a pastoral staff to lean on, either. So how does someone



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learn and develop the disciplines, habits and skills to be an effective small-town pastor? A pastoral internship with a godly, experienced mentor can be invaluable! Someone who says, "Watch me do it, then help me do it, and now try it while I watch." Village Missions offers a variety of ministry internships. Read on to learn more about these opportunities for you or someone you know.



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Helping Country Churches Thrive