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COUNTRY *Matters*



Village Missions of Canada

REACHING THE OVERLOOKED. TOGETHER.

From the Director's Desk

with Guy & Geni Shields
Executive Director



The District Representatives (DRs) are a critical support for the Executive Director.

One of my primary responsibilities is to oversee the on-field operations of the Mission—what is happening with our missionaries and the churches they are serving. The ministry of District Representatives Wayne and Joy Deneault and Mark and Rebecca Bueckert is essential to meeting that responsibility.

These two couples work directly with the missionaries and the churches. They are the ones in the communities and in our missionaries' homes. They are the ones in conversation with the missionaries and the church leadership. They are the first point

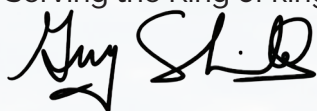
of contact when concerns arise. Most, and I mean MOST, of the decisions I make concerning the on-field affairs are at their recommendation.

I rely on them for support in other areas as well. My responsibilities include recruiting new missionaries, representing the Mission, and working with donors. The Deneaults and Bueckerts assist me in visiting Bible college campuses, missions conferences, and churches.

I can say with confidence that without the District Representatives, the Executive Director's role and responsibilities would be impossible to fulfill.

Besides the official responsibilities that we share and support one another in, I'm grateful for the personal relationship we enjoy. We are a team, and we support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. This is tremendously important! Geni and I greatly appreciate Wayne and Joy Deneault and Mark and Rebecca Bueckert.

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, looped "G" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Guy Shields, Executive Director



DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE MINISTRY SETS VM APART



The Wilsons' small children counted down the days. Then they watched at the parsonage window, eager for their visitors to arrive.

Who was coming? Wayne and Joy Deneault, District Representatives (DRs) for the East and West District.

For many VM kids, DR visits are like having uncles and aunts or even grandparents come.

Pastor Jordan and Ashley also look forward to visits from their DRs. Jordan appreciates the opportunity to discuss what's happening in the church and his current Bible study and sermon preparation. Ashley enjoys talking with the DR wife about being a wife and mother as well as ministry.

Jordan said, *"I'm thankful every day for our DRs! But I was especially grateful for them during our first couple years."*

*I'm thankful
every day*

WHEN EVERYTHING IS NEW

Jordan and Ashley moved to Wynndel, B.C. in June 2020. Jordan was a recent Bible college graduate, so everything was new for

him. *"I had so much to learn,"* he said.

He had an excellent mentor: District Representative Henry Vandermeer. Jordan called Henry with questions about how to handle a variety of tasks and situations.

Henry and Marilyn Vandermeers' ministry to the Wilsons was crucial. Jordan's first years of pastoral ministry were also an unprecedented time in Canada. Because of the Covid19 pandemic, fear and tensions ran high, and even experienced pastors were bewildered.



Jordan Wilson (left) talks with current DR Wayne Deneault.

We felt very supported.

"We felt very supported by the Vandermeers," Ashley said. "They helped us think through how we could care for all of the people of the church and how to communicate well with the church leaders."

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT TIMES

Brenden Peters (shown below with DRs Gordon & Val Rowland and his family) was a pastor's kid, and he completed a VM pastoral

(continued on page 8)



NOT JUST THERE WHEN PROBLEMS *Always There. Always*

District Representatives provide a year-round steady presence and a strong support system for every Village Missionary and church in their district.



Village Missionaries
are not alone.

They are known, supported,
and strengthened by their calling
because the church and the people
matter.

— Guy Shields,
Executive Director

WHAT HAPPENS



RELATIONSHIP

Building trust. Listening.
Sharing life and ministry.
Being present.



PASTORAL CARE

Praying together.
Offering guidance.
Providing encouragement
in every season.



Village Missionaries are not alone. They are known, cared for, and supported because their calling matters, and because the church and the people matter.
— Guy Shields, Executive Director

IS ARISE. Caring.



Village Missions of Canada
Helping Country Churches Thrive

TWICE A YEAR. EVERY CHURCH. EVERY MISSIONARY.

In the fall and spring, District Representatives make their "rounds," personally visiting each Village Missionary and church in their district.



FALL

Building relationships.
Encouraging for the road ahead.



THE ROUNDS

A regular rhythm of presence, care, and support.



SPRING

Strengthening for the season.
Planning together.
Praying together.



NOT A QUICK STOP.

These visits are not rushed. Sometimes they extend over a couple of days, depending on the situation and the need.

DURING A VISIT?

SUPPORT

Reviewing needs.
Offering resources.
Helping remove roadblocks.



EQUIPPING

Training. Mentoring.
Discipling. Strengthening for faithful ministry.



PRAYER

Standing with them in prayer—for them, their ministry, and their community.

and strengthened—
people they serve matter.

WE GO TOGETHER.
WE MINISTER TOGETHER.

internship, so he was familiar with rural ministry. But after a few years on his field, significant issues arose with a church leader. Brenden tried to push through, but a fellow Village Missionary became aware of the situation and urged the DR to make an emergency visit.

Our DR helped us navigate challenges

"Our DR was instrumental in helping us navigate those challenges," Brenden said. "We wouldn't have made it through without him."

Who was the VM pastor who expressed concern to the Peters' DR? Mark Bueckert, who is now serving as a District Representative!



Chris and Naomi White (shown at far left and far right with DRs Gordon & Val Rowland) also credit District Representatives with helping them navigate challenging times.

When their church experienced conflict that led to a split, Chris called his DR often for advice and help. *"He had experience, and he gave us an outsider's perspective on how to handle the situation."*

He gave us
perspective

When the Covid19 pandemic halted the church's progress on building a parsonage, District Representative Gordon Rowland and Director Murray Graham spent weeks helping with the drywall, flooring, and other projects. Chris will never forget their selfless service that freed him to focus on ministry.

COMING ALONGSIDE CHURCHES

District Representatives are an important resource for Village Missions' partner churches as well.

Andy Burkholder (shown in photo at right) has been part of Upper Pine Gospel Chapel since his parents moved the family to the area in 1977. He became the church board chairman in 2002. He remembers every VM pastor who has served in Rose Prairie.



"UPGC is what it is because of the partnership with VM. Our first pastor was Ken Shields. He and Marlene provided clear direction. The Adrians followed them. Both couples built into the church strongly."

Andy appreciates the ways DRs have come alongside the church.

"We've been without a pastor off and on, and we could always turn to the DRs for support and direction."

For example, Upper Pine Gospel Chapel's building was destroyed by fire in January 2023. The DR helped church leaders communicate with the insurance company. Then he contacted other churches, who sent financial assistance and items that helped the church family move forward.

After the church lost their pastor in 2024, DR Wayne Deneault focused on building up the men called to be elders, both during his visits and through phone calls with Andy.

In early August this year, the church welcomed their new VM pastor and his family.

MENTORS IN MINISTRY

Twice annually, typically in the fall and spring, the DRs make their "rounds," visiting all the missionaries and churches in their district. These visits are not rushed. Sometimes they extend over a couple of days, depending on the situation and the need. Pastoral care is the heart of the DR Ministry.

Village Missionaries—whether new to ministry or with years of

experience—all value the mentorship, care, and support they receive from their District Representatives throughout the year.

Chris White, VM pastor since 2006, said, *“Their mentoring has helped me persevere in ministry. They have given me advice, direction, and even some correction at times. They’ve also offered a shoulder to cry on and comfort when I needed it.”*

Brenden and Helena Peters said, *“Our DRs have all been present for us and contact us regularly to check in. Rebecca Bueckert sent messages on our wedding anniversary and the children’s birthdays.”*



Helena added, *“The DR wives are very supportive of my role. They are genuine and share the joys and struggles they experienced in ministry. They also encourage me as a mother and wife.”*

Ashley Wilson agrees. *“They care for me as a person. They ask how I’m doing as a pastor’s wife and as a young mother. They’ve been very encouraging through the stages of parenting newborns to toddlers to young kids.”*

Jordan Wilson: *“They always say, ‘I’m only a phone call away,’ and it’s true. If they are busy when I call, they always call back quickly. The longest I had to wait was until the next morning.”*

The level of support and care provided by District Representatives sets Village Missions apart.



MAKING VM KIDS FEEL SPECIAL

Whenever the Whites' children eat at Pizza Hut, they think of the District Representatives who went out of their way to make them feel special.

"They often scheduled an extra day so they had time to take us swimming and to Pizza Hut. They gave us thoughtful gifts such as a hand-knit sweater and a graduation mug. On their last visit before retiring, they took us to the West Edmonton Water Park."

~Clarice White

As Chris White pointed out, many VM kids live far from their grandparents and relatives. The DRs become surrogate grandparents and aunts and uncles, creating special memories with them, praying for them, and being godly examples they can follow.



DR Mark Bueckert leads an activity with Village Missions kids at Staff Conference.

When you see the abbreviation DR on a calendar, you probably think of a doctor and a medical appointment. But for Village Missions, DR stands for District Representatives and exemplary missionary care. Village Missions Canada has two District Representative couples who serve as pastors to the missionaries. They visit the missionaries and



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churches twice a year, but they provide so much more than a biannual wellness check. All year long, they offer a caring heart, a listening ear, a supporting arm, and a voice of perspective and wisdom. They help missionaries persevere and thrive in ministry. They are crucial to the work of Village Missions!



Helping Country Churches Thrive