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CHANGING LIVES



EXCHANGE STUDENTS

By Pam Ianni

What are some ways we can give our children a larger worldview if we can't

travel? This was a question answered for us several years ago. A friend from church was going to teach a Japanese language camp in the spring of 2004 and asked us to host an exchange student. That was the beginning of a life-changing, family-changing life style. Our homeschooled children (14, 13, and 11) had never left the U.S. and had only been on mission trips to Mississippi. Little did we know how hosting exchange students would change our lives. You love them, model your Christian faith, and speak Jesus' love for the whole world to the students and your own children. Everyone sees the good and the bad in daily life—but you trust that you are making a difference.

Today, 16 years and about 25 kids later, we have seen some of the impact we have had. Some students have only been with us for language camps but many for the entire school year. Some students have gotten saved and are a part of our family. Some haven't gotten saved and are part of our family. And some students we had an okay time with and we still care about them. Social media has allotted us opportunity to continue our relationships and influence. Six students have been here for one of our children's weddings and two have been here for all three. Two have been here during the birth of our first grandchild. They share life with us. We have tried to be the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus to those in our home. Our children's lives were changed, broadened and they have brothers and sisters in over 10 countries. Many of our exchange students have now met each other and are friends and, of course, Sam's and my life have been deeply affected. The students have brought their lives and world to us! We are so grateful to God for giving our family this life changing opportunity.



FULFILLING A DREAM

By Ed Algys

I had been a bi-vocational pastor for 12 years and owned my own construction

company for nearly 40 years. My prayer and dream was that I would find a way to use my construction skills in ministry. Little did I know that across the world in Kiev, Ukraine, my dear friend, David Henson was praying about something similar. David and his wife Mindy had been ministering in Ukraine for many years. Since the war between Russia and Ukraine began in 2014, they had seen the focus of their ministry change. Many of their efforts were focused on meeting the needs of soldiers and others affected by the war as well as displaced refugees. David and Mindy began ministering to refugee families in practical ways but David's dream was to do more. He saw a need to provide housing for displaced families but many of the houses in the villages were primitive or uninhabitable. David's dream was to remodel homes for displaced refugee families. But beyond that, he hoped that a team of Americans and Ukrainians could work together to accomplish this. This is where our dreams converged. The following summer, a team of Americans worked with David and a team of Ukrainians to remodel two homes for refugee families. In the spring of 2018, David was called home to eternity. The Ukrainian brothers and sisters desired to keep David's dream alive and asked us to return to complete another project. This past summer, we returned and began building a home for a local pastor who was himself a refugee. The motto of our efforts was written on our tee shirts in Ukrainian, "Service—it is love dressed in work clothes." David Henson's dream was fulfilled and the love of Jesus was shared through our acts of service.

MISSION USA

MADISON CHURCH PLANT

By Chris Biang

Sometimes being in Madison, WI and planting a church here feels like Christmas Eve—anticipating what we will find under the tree. We have used the example of how Jesus took the fish and loaves, broke them up, and fed the five thousand. So we too took what we had, gave it to Jesus, and are waiting to see how He uses it.

In 2016, the pastors in West Lafayette, Indiana at Purdue University were praying about expansion. We felt like we needed to raise the bar and created a program called 18-18. We were looking to find 18 people willing to undergo training

and either go on a church plant or stay with a heightened sense of working in the harvest at Purdue. We ended up with a small church plant team and moved at the end of 2018.

Our basic lessons have revolved around housing, jobs, and building our team. We have been here about one year and are reaching out to Internationals in married student housing. Our next initiative will be reaching freshman. People at the University of Wisconsin are open to talking, but few have shown an ongoing interest. It reminds me of Elijah, thinking of Israel's coldness to God. "The Lord said I have 7,000 that



have not dropped their knee to Baal" (1 Kings 19:18). We are trusting God to allow us to meet men and women like this, who we can serve in the faith. We are here for the long haul with watchful eyes for God's blessings—hoping to bless the University of Wisconsin with the Gospel!

GREAT PUMPKIN FEST AT THE ROCK IN CLEVELAND

By Dave Brunelle

Over the years, one of the ways that we've tried to serve our neighborhood is to provide safe, family-friendly celebrations. This past fall, The Rock Community Church in Cleveland, Ohio hosted a Great Pumpkin Fest on Halloween evening. It's one of the few "all hands on deck" events of the year and it's been a great success in serving our neighbors.

We hosted the event at our church building with lots of fun lights, banners, decorations, and wide-open doors to invite our neighborhood friends in. This

last fall's event was like a Trunk-or-Treat on steroids with inflatables, carnival style games with prizes for all ages, photo booths, free food, and prepacked treat bags with candy, stickers, a kid's Bible, and tracts.

We cleared out multiple spaces in our building and set up the attractions in small group rooms, the gymnasium, and sanctuary. In spite of the cold conditions, whether by foot or by the car-load, our friends from the neighborhood came in droves. We had a record number of over 1,000 people come to enjoy a safe environment on



Halloween. Over the years, events like this and others have helped us to build a reputation as a church that loves our city, our neighborhood, its families, and its kids.

INTERNATIONAL

TOTAL HEALTH IN COSTA RICA

By Tony Pierson

As Grettel shares her story, every eye fills with tears. She was a sex worker on the streets of San José, Costa Rica most of her life. A few years ago, Carol (pictured in blue) told her how Christ wanted to pay off her debts so she can live a different life. Grettel eagerly accepted the love of Jesus.

Now Grettel and Carol are reaching out to others on the street with God's

hope. But the scars left from decades "in the life" require emotional and mental health support that is simply not available to these women. So Total Health is partnering with GCLA San José to open a Mental Health Clinic to aid with their recovery and restoration.

If you would like to help these women, visit totalhealth.org/donate.



A HISTORY OF CHURCH PLANTING

By Jerry Van Dalen

We at The Rock Miami Church (TRMC) find ourselves in the middle of a sea of people from many nationalities, mostly Hispanic. According to DATA USA, the Hispanic and Latino population of Miami-Dade County, FL is 1.91 million, which represents 69.1% of the total population.

In light of this, we at TRMC have looked at the Spanish speaking world as our "Judea and Samaria" over the years. To give a brief chronology, in 1978, we sent our first missionary couple, Alex and Mayra Gonzalez, to start a church plant in Gijón, Spain. A few years later, they started a second church in Madrid. Then in 1987, a team of six brothers and sisters left for San Pedro de

Macoris, Dominican Republic. In 1989 a group of six adults and four children left for Caracas, Venezuela under the leadership of Juan Fernández. Lastly, in 2005, José and Mayra Silva left for Managua, Nicaragua. All these churches continue in their ministry and TRMC continues to support them. Currently, the Caracas, Managua, and San Pedro churches are under local leadership.

TRMC is committed to missions and to doing our part to reach the world with the Gospel. We try to send teams from within our own church, but if we can't, we will help others fulfill this mission. Currently, we support pastors, missionaries, churches, and ministries



Aldo and Luly Miranda, Thomas and Nancy Lemus, and Jesus and Mariana Díaz

in 13 different countries. Please pray for our dream of planting our first sister church in the USA, in our own Miami-Dade County. Please pray for God to lead us in making this a reality!

INSIDE GCC

MEET A GCC PASTOR

THIS EDITION:

Rob Busse

I am from a small town in the center of Wisconsin. I grew up going to a Catholic church and a Catholic school until entering public high school. I met, Michelle, my wife of 17 years, when I was in 8th grade and we've been dating for the majority of the time since. We had a 1.5 year break in college during which we both started a relationship with Jesus allowing Michelle and me to restart our relationship with God at the center.

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, we moved to the Twin Cities and found Hometown Church (Formerly Evergreen Church). We got plugged into a small group that first year and were asked to lead a small group the next year. We have led a small group ever since! We really love

small groups and have been blessed with many deep friendships and discipleship opportunities through them.

Michelle homeschools our 7 children (ages 2-15). I have been a full-time pastor on staff at Evergreen-Lakeville for the last 7 years. Up until then, I was putting my packaging engineering degree to work for a consulting company in Minneapolis where I was a senior manager. I do feel some of my job duties turned out to be great preparation for pastoring—working on teams together, managing an engineering team, giving client presentations, and helping companies find ways to be more efficient. For hobbies, I enjoy just about anything with my family—fishing, biking, golfing, etc. And even though we live in Minnesota, we still love the Packers!



In 2019, I took a new position as executive pastor of Hometown Church as we restructured in an attempt to become more fruitful. Instead of three autonomous locations with separate goals, we became more of a multisite church. While I am more than happy to take a behind-the-scenes role within the church, I also very much look forward to being on the front lines of reaching people in our communities.

With you for the Gospel, Rob Busse

FROM ACTS 1:8 TO ACTS 8:1

JOHN HOPLER - GCC ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR



After His resurrection, Jesus gave these instructions in Acts 1:8:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Later in Acts 8:1, we read: "And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

This "Acts 1:8 to Acts 8:1" pattern is seen throughout church history. God moves the church forward, by gathering believers to instruct them (Acts 1:8) and then scattering them (Acts 8:1).

This newsletter gives examples of people who were gathered and then scattered to proclaim the gospel. Due to the coronavirus, church services this winter were canceled, scattering the church, for prayer, for service and for sharing the gospel in new ways.

Jesus Christ is building His church through gathering and through scattering. Whether we are in the gathering or scattering phase, let's seize the opportunity to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.



NAE | National Association of
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