

BVVB

October 2017

Editor Janelle Daum

Volume 15, Issue 6

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR OCTOBER AND BEYOND

Birthdays:

October 2017

- 3 Jazmine Osberg
- 5 Sara (Hanson) Onnen
- 7 Judy Preston
- 7 Matthew Nelson
- 8 Dylan Foley
- 10 Aryanna Sanderson
- 10 Theresa Friesen
- 11 Bella Sanderson
- 14 Stacey Frost
- 16 Mike Kresak
- 17 Chuck Fischer
- 21 Amanda Benson
- 24 Glen Conradson

Anniversaries:

October 2017

- 15 Dan & Joan Murphy
- 20 Glen & Doris Conradson
- 31 LeeRoy & Ginger Nelson

Nursery:

October 2017

- 1 TBD
- 8 Justin & Sara Tiffany
- 15 Pam Osmanson &
Hailey Skogen
- 22 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 29 Erica Skogen

November 2017

- 5 Ginger & Katrina Nelson
- 12 Dee Olson & Dan Hanson

- 19 Aaron Skogen
26 Shawna James

December 2017

- 3 Justin & Sara Tiffany
10 Aaron Skogen
17 Pam Osmanson &
Hailey Skogen
24 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
31 Erica Skogen

Children's Worship:

October 2017

- 1 Dee Olson & Garrett James
8 Doris Conradson &
Megan Questad
15 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
22 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen
29 Pat Lacey & Hannah Frost

November 2017

- 5 Dee Olson & Garrett James
12 Trevor Skogen & Hailey Skogen
19 Matt Murphy & Cade Fox
26 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen

December 2017

- 3 Doris Conradson &
Hannah Frost
10 Lindy Johnson &
Megan Questad
17 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
24 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen
31 Scott/Nora Sittig

Scripture Reading:

October 2017

- 1 Justin Tiffany
8 Pat Lacey
15 Trevor Skogen
22 Lindy Johnson
29 Theresa Friesen

November 2017

- 5 Gene Preston
12 Kyle Skogen
19 Joan Murphy
26 Hannah Frost

December 2017

- 3 Pat Lacey
10 Kelsey Frost
17 Justin Tiffany
24 Matthew Questad
31 Lindy Johnson

Greeters:

October 2017

- 1 Terry & Chris Kramer
8 LeeRoy & Ginger Nelson
15 Glen & Doris Conradson
22 Aaron & Erica Skogen
29 Gene & Judy Preston

November 2017

- 5 Justin & Sara Tiffany
12 Doyle & Barb Young
19 Dan & LaDell Hanson
26 Lindy Johnson

December 2017

- 3 Dan & Joan Murphy
- 10 Pat Lacey & Scott Sittig
- 17 Ray & Dee Olson
- 24 Paul & Pam Osmanson
- 31 LeeRoy & Ginger Nelson

Ushers:

October 2017

- 1 Paul Osmanson
- 8 Mike Kresak
- 15 Doyle Young
- 22 Gene Preston
- 29 Dave James

November 2017

- 5 Scott Sittig
- 12 Paul Osmanson
- 19 Mike Kresak
- 26 Doyle Young

December 2017

- 3 Gene Preston
- 10 Dave James
- 17 Scott Sittig
- 24 Mike Kresak
- 31 Paul Osmanson

Events Calendar 2017:

Sunday, October 1, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service - Our New Pastor, Randy Battey, will give the sermon

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

11:30 a.m., Potluck Meal

5:30 p.m., Congregational Prayer Service

Wednesday, October 4, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m., TREK - Middle School Awana

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

Thursday, October 5, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Saturday, October 7, 7 a.m., Men's Bible Study at BVBC

Sunday, October 8, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

Monday, October 9, Native Americans Day

Wednesday, October 11, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m., TREK - Middle School Awana

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

Thursday, October 12, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Saturday, October 14, 7 a.m., Men's Bible Study (at the church)

Sunday, October 15, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

5:30 p.m., Congregational Prayer Service

Monday, October 16, National Boss's Day

Wednesday, October 18, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m., TREK - Middle School Awana

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

Thursday, October 19, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, October 22, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

Newsletter Articles are Due

Wednesday, October 25, 6 p.m. - 7 p.m., Journey 24/7 - High School Awana

6:15 p.m. - 8 p.m., TREK - Middle School Awana

6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Awana - ages 3 years thru 5th grade

Thursday, October 26, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, October 29, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY TEAM

MISSION OUTREACH TEAM AUGUST 15, 2017 BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

PRESENT: Jolene Benson, Theresa Friesen, Dee Olson, Joan Murphy

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 96:3 ESV

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

PRAYER REQUESTS: We always spend time lifting up the needs of our fellow BV Baptist church family.

OLD BUSINESS:

JULY Love Offering: Union Gospel Mission \$336.24

AUGUST Love Offering: Pastor Retirement \$116

AUGUST 27 Special offering Windswept. There is no current video (2015 latest), but we have a letter letting us know they have paid for and almost completed all building, just in need of operational costs and scholarship costs.

SEPTEMBER:

Brandon Valley Ministerium LO

Offering and video for Steger family in Greece and Beirut, Lebanon is being moved from September due to the special offerings and activities surrounding farewell and welcoming of pastors. Please pray for their safety in Lebanon as they will be in a very dangerous area.

BOX for Amanda: A list has been compiled and container put out for school and personal wishes for missionary Amanda Benson (Philippines). Deadline is September 10.

AMANDA BENSON

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

September 2, 2017

ANOTHER BEGINNING

Every school year is filled with a mix of emotions and activities. This year has been no exception! Everyone is excited to see their friends again (or students, in my case!). Students and staff may or may not be ready to get back to the grind. New students are nervous about making friends and finding out where they fit in. Some days are busy while others are relaxing.

Here are a few highlights from our first month of school at Faith Academy this year:

New Staff Orientation

I was a part of the new staff orientation committee this year. We greeted the new staff and helped them survive their first days at Faith Academy and, for some, in the Philippines.

All Staff Retreat

Every year, Faith Academy starts off with an all staff retreat. It is a great time of refreshment, fellowship, and encouragement before school starts. I was also on the planning committee for this retreat, and we thought it went very well. We were greatly challenged by our speaker and had a great time together!

Flag Ceremony

Every year we start our second day with a flag ceremony to celebrate all of the countries represented by our students and staff. I believe there are 23 countries represented this year!

Cross Country

This is my first year to be a coach! I am coaching middle school cross country. It has been a blast to run with the kids after school and to encourage them during their meets. We have had two meets so far, and we have two more to go. I have loved watching the kids improve!

D-Groups

This year I am leading a d-group again (it's our weekly Bible study). I thought I would be doing just 8th grade girls, but it turns out that I'm doing a mix of 7th and 8th grade girls. We are going to study 1 Peter. I also have two high schoolers

helping me, which I'm STOKED about! The goal is for me to disciple them to teach them how to disciple others!

Barkadas

A "barkada" is a Filipino word referring to a group of friends. In the middle school, we split all of the kids into four barkadas, called by four different colors. I am in Barkadang Lila! We are having a blast so far this year! We took second in our first round of competitions. We have Friendship Week next week, so we will dress up differently every day, have different relays, and end the week with a field day.

Friend Visit!

I had my very first Filipino visitor! One of my friends from Baliuag, the city where I study Tagalog in the summer, came to visit me for our long weekend last weekend. We had a great time, and it meant a lot to me that she would take the time to come visit me! (She may look like she's 12, but she's actually 21!)

Thank you for making this year possible! I'm loving teaching my students Algebra, 8th Grade Pre-Algebra, 7th Grade Pre-Algebra, and 8th Grade English! :) I love my students, and I'm so excited to see what amazing things God has planned for this year!

Amanda

Praises

- We've had an awesome first month of school!
- We have had one new staff member join us since school started!
- I am excited about the opportunities God has given me to invest spiritually in my students.
- Cross country has gone well so far (though it's still a bit weird for everyone to call me "coach"!).
- This year Faith Academy has a school-wide them: "In Christ, We Do Hard Things." It has been neat to see how God has brought this up over and over again already!

Prayer Requests

- Pray for wisdom as I think about how I spend my time. I have not been too overwhelmed this year so far, though I have had my moments.
- I have been asked to develop a curriculum for math for the summer school program that is hosted in the local community. This is the program I helped with

last year (I helped train the teachers how to teach math, if you remember me discussing that.). I loved helping them, and I'm looking forward to this, though it seems like a big task. It's still amazing to me that this is how God is allowing me to use my masters in "Curriculum and Instruction, Math Specialist" to help the Filipino community.

· Pray for continued wisdom as I invest spiritually in my students. Pray that God would do amazing things in their lives this year, with or without my influence! Pray that I would be aware of their needs and how God is working.

· This coming month will be full! We're already almost done with the first quarter, I'm attending a conference in Singapore in three weeks, and I have two friends coming to visit at the end of the month. Pray that I would continually keep the Lord first in all that I do.

DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

August 28, 2017

Home Service Update

We have been back from Japan now about two months and we are learning what it is like to live in our passport country. We have learned that the culture around us has changed, also our world view has changed. We are still adjusting to everything being sold in US Dollars and we find that things that we thought used to be \$5.00 are now \$10.00. We are finding groceries, entertainment, travel, and other things to be more expensive than we remembered them to be.

The girls are now going to Trinity Academy. They started the year not knowing anyone, but now after two weeks they now have some names that they know, but pray that they would make good friends this year as their heart is still with their friends at Christian Academy in Japan.

We are finding that churches are not the same as we left them four years ago, but thankful that there are new people and new people in leadership that we do not know.

We are now contacting individuals and churches and setting up our schedule for this next year. Please contact us and we will try to fit you into our schedule. We may not be able to visit all of you, but we would like to visit you all as much as

possible.

Financial Support Request

We often do not mention about our financial support, but your partnership is essential. We have been blessed by many gifts that exceed our expectations. However, we need additional financial support. We need additional monthly and one-time partners in our ministry. Some of our faithful supporters have passed away, others have had to stop due to financial reasons. Would you pray about joining our financial team by joining our monthly financial team? If you are already on our partnership team we want to say “thank you”, but would you pray about increasing your amount?

E-Mail Address Change

We are switching our email from dstoesz@send.jp to dkstoesz@send.org. Both emails will be used for a while, but please change your address books to this new email.

Schedule

Our tentative schedule so far is as follows. Of course, all dates are subject to change.

September 10-15 Detroit, MI for a SEND International meeting for Darwin

September 21-23 Dallas, TX for a Missio Nexus Conference called “Foundations”

September 24 Wichita, KS First E Free Church Visit

October 1 Halstead, KS Crossroads Community Church Presentation

October 15 Henderson, NE Faith Evangelical Bible Church

October 20-22 Omaha, NE Grace University Reunion

October 27-29 Hutchinson, KS Union Valley Bible Church

There are other dates already in 2018 that are on the schedule, but we are still creating our schedule. Pray that we would have safety and energy for these important visits and others.

Please pray:

Pray for our continued adjustment to life here in USA.

Pray that we would be able to meet all of the requirements needed for our return to Japan by June, 2018

Pray that the needed financial partners to get to 100% support.

Pray for continued safety in Japan.

Thank you for your continued partnership in our ministry here in Japan.

Darwin & Karen & Anna (14) & Clara (10) Stoesz

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MISSION NETWORK NEWS

In Nepal, new law cracks down on expression of religion

PUBLISHED ON 4 September, 2017 BY Julie Bourdon

Nepal (MNN) - Christianity in Nepal has two main bullies—Hindu radicals from within the country, and India. Thanks to growing pressures from these two sources, religious freedoms for minority groups are severely threatened. Earlier this month, a bill was passed that will likely restrict Christians and other groups from sharing their faith. It is currently being finalized into law.

The language of the bill closely resembles blasphemy and anti-conversion laws from neighboring countries. As we know, these laws are often abused to target specific groups—usually Christians.

More specifically, Christian Solidarity Worldwide says the law will criminalize some instances of religious conversion.

Joe Handley of Asian Access says this move goes against recent advances for religious freedoms in Nepal.

“The Church was making an impact in society and it was quite positive for many years which caused the Nepali government at the time to actually approach Church leaders and say, ‘we could use your help’.”

The government, he says, was eager to introduce more religious freedoms into the country and worked with Church leaders to widen these freedoms.

The government next door throws its weight around

After the earthquake in April 2015, one of the major sources of relief aid was the Church. They even went to locations that were more difficult for large aid groups to reach. It was a display of Christ’s love in a time of need. As a result, the Church

grew very rapidly. Since then, believers have been seen as major contributors to the betterment of society.

“They’re still on site, serving and helping communities. And it goes way beyond that. The Church has been at the forefront of orphan care for many years in Nepal. And in addition to that, they’ve been helping significantly related to the human trafficking conditions in the country.”

But that presented a problem to neighboring India where the pressure is on to create a Hindu dominant state.

And so, he says, “Enormous pressure was put on the Nepali government to bring changes to this particular issue”.

Because Nepal depends heavily on India as its resource portal to the rest of the world, they are also subject to the giant nation’s influence. This, coupled with the fact that there are many factions within the Nepali government that support this view of religious intolerance, means the nation is walking backward in the fight for religious freedom.

“There’s a deep concern that’s happened most recently following the earthquake because so many have come to Christ that they have put into effect this new law that restricts the liberties of Christians and other minorities to share their faith.”

India itself has targeted religious organizations with a series of complicated laws. And six Indian states currently hold anti-conversion laws.

“There’s a significant correlation between what’s happening in India today, and what’s happening in Nepal. Nepal is heavily dependent, virtually in every way on India.”

The other issue, as we mentioned, is those who hold to a religious intolerance view within the government that would like to see severe limitations for Muslims and Christians and other minorities.

“There’s radical Hindu elements within Nepali society that don’t want to see the Church grow or don’t want to see other minorities have any kind of freedoms,” Handley says.

An effort surrounded by prayer

But while there is still time, Church leaders have been lobbying government officials in an effort to “soften the blow” of the law. Handley says that whatever happens, he believes the Nepali Church is prepared to live out their faith without

fear.

“Church leaders are very optimistic about the situation, not so much with what might happen legally, but in terms of their public witness. They know that nothing can hold them back from the advance of the Gospel. They’ve lived through twists and turns all throughout most of their history as believers. And when the pressure comes down, they know that the Gospel tends to grow, one way or another.”

So while they stand up for their freedoms, we can support them from wherever we are.

“Please pray for the leaders of the federation of Church leaders that are working with the government, lobbying right now as we speak. They desperately could use your prayers for wisdom, for discernment, for using the right words at the right time.”

And because the law endangers all religious minorities, we can also pray for effective collaboration between religious groups from all faiths.

Please pray that God would work his favor among the leaders making these decisions.

“Ultimately, pray that the Gospel would go forward, that no matter what decision is made, the Church could still thrive in the midst of whether it’s more persecution or more pressure or more openness in society.”

International Literacy Day: ministry starts with literacy, enacts holistic transformation

PUBLISHED ON 8 September, 2017 BY Lyndsey Koh

International (MNN) - Throughout history, Christians and Christian missions have placed a high value on education. According to The Gospel Coalition, Dana L. Robert addresses the topic in “Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion”:

“The first modern colleges and universities founded in India, China, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, and Africa were the products of nineteenth-century educational missions. . . . By 1935, missions were operating 57,000 schools and over 100 colleges worldwide” (50).

One of the major reasons for valuing education and literacy is because when individuals could read, especially in their heart language, they could study the

Bible for themselves. They could learn about their Heavenly Father. They could grow personally in the faith.

In the last 200 years, literacy rates have risen tremendously. While in 1820, only 12 percent of the global population could read and write, today 83 percent of the global population can read and write according to Our World in Data.

Although those stats are encouraging, much of the work yet to do for global literacy advancements reside in disadvantaged and impoverished communities. And today on International Literacy Day, several organizations and ministries are spotlighting this issue.

Grand Rapids, Michigan-based Mission India provides Adult Literacy Classes in India, and there is a critical need. One out of every four adults in India is illiterate. But with Mission India's Adult Literacy Class, students can reach a fifth grade level in reading, writing, and math.

So what does International Literacy Day mean to their ministry? Erik Morsehead with Mission India says, "It's a day that really kind of calls out — not just in India, but all over the globe — that literacy and education is not prevalent in every area in the world. As we strive to educate men and women in India, this day calls that out...that the need is still there."

Earlier this month, Mission India received an encouraging story from one of their Literacy Classes that illustrates the impact.

"This woman's name is Jaya. Her and her husband were both illiterate and, as a result, the people they worked for cheated them out of their wages and they weren't able to defend themselves after noticing the problem, one, because they couldn't read or write, and two, they didn't fully understand what was going on." What was already a frustrating situation then went from bad to worse.

"Jaya actually underwent a minor back surgery. Unfortunately, she actually had some complications that caused more pain throughout her body and was making it difficult for her to do her job. So she not only was struggling with illiteracy but she physically couldn't continue her job," says Morsehead.

"At first, she started praying to her gods, but nothing was changing in her life. But then an adult literacy class was started in her community and that's when she started to realize things were changing. She was taught how to read and write. And through the class, they had a health focus program which provided her with

recommendations from doctors and after following those recommendations for five days, Jaya's pain was healed."

As Jaya continued in the Adult Literacy Class, she was inspired to pursue entrepreneurship. "She started making candles and laundry detergent and so she left her job as a laborer and now is making her own products and selling them for a profit."

Morsehead says Jaya's story just goes to show that "not only is Literacy Day important where you're getting to read and write, but it's the results you get to experience once you learn how to read and write. You can start your own business, you can go to doctors and understand what they're saying to do or not to do. Literacy just transforms everyone's lives."

And the transformational impact doesn't stop there. Mission India's Literacy Classes are unique in that they are biblically-based and the Christian teachers have the opportunity to share their faith.

In Jaya's case, "she actually received Him as her Savior during the class. So now she is actively participating in her local church and she just had a holistic change of spiritual, financial, and socio-economical change. And that's the beauty of these Adult Literacy Classes is that it's not just one thing being changed in your life. Everything is being changed."

There are a few ways you can personally get involved in recognizing International Literacy Day. First of all, Morsehead says you can commit to praying for their Adult Literacy Classes.

"Just be praying for Jaya and her family as they are Christians in their community, that their community would be open to hearing about the Good News. Be praying for these adults who are attending these classes and the teachers who are leading them. Be praying for the individuals attending, [that] their minds and hearts would be open. And be praying for the leaders as they are leading these classes, that He would give them the courage and the wisdom to teach them well. And just pray for God to move in a big way."

Then, you can also give and make it possible for more adults in India to join Mission India's Literacy Classes.

"A gift of \$30 will sponsor a student in an Adult Literacy Class for a full year. A gift of \$900 will sponsor a class of 30 students!"

Children, young mothers, surviving in Nicaragua

PUBLISHED ON 12 September, 2017 BY Julie Bourdon

Nicaragua (MNN) - We know that a child's early years are very important when it comes to development and growth. We also know that poverty hits women and children the hardest. For some children, just surviving the first few years of their lives is a struggle.

This is why Compassion International's Child Survival Program (CSP) exists—to give children a chance to live and grow up healthy and to help their mothers provide a safe home for them.

These programs are run with the help of local churches around the globe. CSP provides home-based care, group-based learning, advocacy for moms, and a place for mothers and children to learn, grow, and stay healthy.

One of the locations where Compassion is running a CSP is in Nicaragua.

Setting the scene

According to Compassion International, 75% of the Nicaraguan people live on less than two dollars a day. They also have a very high maternal death rate. A third of these deaths are teenage girls. In fact, in rural areas, the marriage of minors and children is not that unusual. A third of the children here are chronically malnourished, and they are three times more likely to die before the age of five than children in the US. And sadly, many children have to work at a young age to help make ends meet.

To get a look at how the CSP program is addressing these needs, we spoke with Fátima Romero, a project director, and Ena Liz Torrez, a CSP specialist. They described the unique challenges they face in their community.

“The challenges we face is the poverty they live in. And we also face different kinds of cultures,” Romero says, explaining that some harmful cultural beliefs are passed from generation to generation, even from grandparents to their grandchildren.

“For example, they think that it's best for the children to [have a] bottle of milk instead of breastfeeding. We can see also, they don't know about good nutrition during the pregnancy because they think that just eating something is going to help, and they don't know what is [best] for them.”

In this area, there are many large families with few resources. Children are susceptible to disease and illness because they do not know about basic hygiene

like washing hands. They walk around barefoot.

Another challenge is the work available for mothers. It's typical to see young mothers try to eke out a living by washing and ironing. There are few opportunities for more profitable work because they have not had very much education if any.

Torrez says another major issue is malnutrition.

"Most of them, maybe 50% of the mothers, are younger than 16 years old. And they don't know how to take care of a baby. And so, the mothers are [malnourished] and also their children are like that."

Addressing the need

The goal of this program is to help children survive. But it is also very clearly helping children, and their families, thrive.

Romero says, "We work with pregnant women who are young, [and] babies, needy people and those in low society.

"We work with these kind of people in order to make [help with their development] and to show God's love to the children and help to take the women and children [through] the counseling the church provides for them."

As a church, they offer individualized and personal care to the participants of the program. This means they visit families, provide resources such as marriage counseling, and hold special services in their homes. They also provide children with classes that help them develop and grow. The mothers and their children will also receive food assistance.

"So this way, they will know a God who offers help and solution to their problems," she says.

The program offers classes that touch upon breastfeeding, nutrition for pregnant women, nutrition for children in their first year of life, family planning, and more, depending on what information is needed in a particular situation.

Workers keep tabs on the health of children and pregnant mothers. They make sure they're getting adequate care, including important vaccinations for the children.

In many ways, the program is also addressing the great educational and vocational needs, as well. They help the mothers get basic education, scholarships for further schooling, job training, or come up with strategies to generate income. Eventually, it becomes more about a sustainable future than just avoiding a crisis.

But along with the physical and educational help, Compassion is also introducing

these women and children to their greatest spiritual help, Jesus.

Romero explains, “Considering the challenges they are facing, we bring the Gospel to them by teaching them that there is a solution for their problems, and that is through Jesus—that we can rest in Him by giving our sadness or our problems to Jesus.”

In Jesus, she says, the children and the mothers can grow.

The message of the Gospel is integrated into the lessons the mothers receive at home. Implementers of the program who do home visits carry a Bible with them and hold a small worship time. They dedicate time for prayer with the mother who is, of course, invited to church services.

Those who give their lives to Jesus can participate in a child dedication ceremony at the church, and be baptized.

Stories of transformation

Once a month, a meeting is held with all the women and the children participating in the program.

“In this meeting, all the women interact—sharing experience between them,” Torrez says.

But what are some of these experiences? Torrez and Romero each share an example that has impacted their lives.

Romero shares the story of a woman who today, is doing quite well. She has two children and is married. While typically the mothers in the CSP are single, there are many situations that make married women eligible for the program.

For this particular woman, Romero says, her husband sickness “affected the home because he couldn’t work because of his illness. [He] has spinal problems”.

Despite his serious condition, his wife trusted that God would do something about their situation. Their three-year-old girl, who is a beneficiary of the program, believed it, too.

“One day during the service, this little girl stood up and said ‘I need you to pray for my father because he was in the hospital, very sick.’

“This is the faith that this little girl had learned about in the program,” Romero says.

After this request, her father’s health was no longer as serious as the doctors had said. His improved health led him to begin attending the church. Today, he is

hoping that God will heal him completely.

The story Torrez shared is not so much about improved health as it is about a changed heart.

One day, she and a program implementer were visiting a family who had a young baby. Torrez says they knew the husband was jealous and violent towards his wife. He didn't let her work. Nor did he allow his wife to take their child to the project center.

Torrez says, "one day when his child was less than one month old, the baby got very sick. And that day the implementer had a visit, and the mother notified [them] that her baby had a high fever."

At first, the baby's father would not allow Torrez or the program implementer in the house. But they could see how sick the baby was, and so they kept asking.

"We told him that his baby needed to go to the hospital—needed medical attention. And because we [insisted] he allowed us to come into the house."

However, he did not allow his wife to speak about what was happening with the child. But they learned that he prevented her from breastfeeding, and so the child was not very healthy. They were able to counsel the father until he calmed down and let them help.

Torrez and the implementer prayed for the baby and the parents. They explained the benefits of breastfeeding. After a while, the mother was able to feed her child. The baby also received medical attention. The mother was also able to get an appointment with a psychologist.

After that meeting, things changed for the small family. The father has allowed his wife to have a job. He's now accepted the program as part of their life, and he even visits church!

Praying for the vulnerable

Because this program operates at a local level, the individual care women and children receive is phenomenal. But that doesn't mean prayer isn't still a big need. Romero and Torrez ask you to pray for the women and children of the program. Pray, first of all, that they would accept Jesus as their savior, and secondly that they would live a healthy life. Ask God to provide more education and job opportunities to young women in Nicaragua, to protect children from the abuse that can go hand-in-hand with poverty, and to grow the economy of this nation.

Pray for the church to be strengthened, and for more workers for to help with the CSP. Pray for the implementers of the program who also face their own, personal challenges. Pray for their protection and stamina.

The church in this area is growing, and there many more people who need help. Right now, this CSP unit is hoping to find a bigger place to help with more children. Please pray that God would provide this building.

Reach Russia Now brings the Gospel to Far East Russia

PUBLISHED ON 19 September, 2017 BY Beth Stolicker

Russia (MNN) - It's been a year-and-a-half of growth since the Slavic Gospel Association launched its long-term, frontier ministry—the Reach Russia Now initiative. And since then, SGA has seen the initiative cultivate from a dream and into a ministry.

Far East Russia

The Reach Russia Now initiative primarily focuses in Far East Russia. For some people, Far East Russia is the equivalent of Siberia. However, Siberia is actually the middle region, or middle third, of Russia. Far East Russia is the final third of the country, stretching to the Pacific Ocean, and is made up of many different people groups who share both the country and the Russian language.

Speaking of the land mass size, Far East Russia is roughly the same size as the continental 48 states of the United States.

Yet, this vast region only holds five percent of Russia's population. Needless to say, the cities and villages which occupy Far East Russia are remote and often hard to reach.

But, the Reach Russia Now initiative is helping to break down these barriers for the Gospel.

Reaching Russia

“Reach Russia Now is a broad-based initiative filled with many different aspects. An exciting aspect of Reach Russia Now is an aviation aspect,” shares SGA's Eric Mock, who was recently in Far East Russia. “Part of the reason that many of these villages have never been reached is many of these villages have no good year-round accessibility.”

Through partnership and support, SGA is helping train pilots who fly national

missionaries to these villages. These are pilots are trained in the United States and certified in Russia. And, when they fly into these villages, they encounter people who have never heard of the Gospel or even seen an airplane.

In fact, a lot of these villages have cultures which are deeply embedded with Shamanism, a practice that people use to reach an altered state of consciousness in efforts to interact with the spiritual world.

However, Reach Russia Now is also helping support those churches in the region who are Bible-believing and Bible-teaching churches. How? By helping the same way it helps other churches across Russia and Central Asia: through partner supported funds.

“Only this year, through Reach Russia Now, have we begun to support missionary pastors, lay-leaders, and missionary work to orphanages, Compassion Ministry, Immanuel’s Child, summer camps—all that is just fresh,” Mock explains.

SGA has found over 340 orphanages that have seldom been reached with the Gospel. Now, SGA is trying to reach these orphanages through the Orphans Reborn program. This program helps to both provide for physical needs and spiritual needs of orphans through the work of local Christians.

Challenges and Barriers

Still, there are numerous challenges to reaching these villages beyond the physical barriers. Many villagers do not trust outsiders and will sometimes kick visitors out of their village within hours of their arrival.

Villagers also don’t really listen to what an outsider has to say until the outsider has earned their trust. In fact, some villages even have Shamans who speak against what outsiders bringing the Gospel say.

For these reasons, ministry in Far East Russia is difficult. And while parts of the ministry do rely on monetary funds, a large part of the ministry requires the necessary time to travel to and build relationships within these villages.

Will you consider helping SGA continue to get the Gospel into the Far East Russia? Start with praying for God to raise up more missionaries willing to travel to these small villages, and for the villagers to have open hearts. Pray for these missionaries to be able to learn how to communicate with the villagers in ways that help them understand the Gospel.