

November 2021

# MISSIONS



## CMML100

Celebrating 100 Years of  
God's Faithfulness



# THINKING IT THROUGH

BY TOM TURNER

## Your Role in the Great Commission Today and Tomorrow

As CMML commemorates its 100th anniversary, my heart fills with thanksgiving and praise for God's faithfulness in years past. Since 1921, He has equipped CMML with a team of directors, staff, and volunteers who love Him and rejoice in "serving those who serve."

Today, our team stands on the shoulders of those who went before us, to aid the work of the Gospel around the world. We thank you, our readers and missions supporters, for covering this ministry with your prayers and practical gifts, sometimes meeting needs before we became aware of them.

This work is God's, not ours, and He directs our team. And you, the assembly or fellowship you attend, and your elders are also part of this team. As we pursue what the Lord has for CMML's future, I challenge you to consider the role you will play in this ongoing ministry.

The world is changing rapidly; it is much different than when I was a teenager and maybe when you were too. The Lord began to work in many of His servants, whether overseas or domestic, in their teen years. Perhaps an older believer took an interest in them, coming alongside to reach them with the Gospel and disciple them as they grew in the Lord.

We need more shepherding hearts today. Peter encourages such hearts in his first epistle: "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers . . . [and] being examples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:2–3) This command shouldn't be reserved for elders. Fellow believer, please invest in our young people. They are our future. "Commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2)

As children and young people face challenges and pressures all around them, youth leaders and Sunday school teachers can build into their lives—this mission field has great potential. Elders can challenge the believers they minister to each week and be examples, in word and in deed.

When I was a teenager, my assembly's small group of elders

cared about me—sharing their advice and encouragement with much love. I observed how they lived and served the Lord and the congregation. Today, many decades later, I remember things they taught me: how to chair a service, lead singing, comfort the sick, welcome visiting missionaries, and function as an elder. These men worked full-time jobs but still made time for their families, the assembly, and the Lord's work. One of them even served as a CMML director for many years, never knowing that the Lord would allow me to serve in that capacity later in my life.

Out of similar personal experiences, the CMML board developed a burden to help young people discover and fulfill their role in global missions. As a result, 17 years ago, CMML began considering how to challenge the high school, college, and career age group. With much prayer, we launched the first 26 Below retreat in 2006. Fifteen years later, we've seen 26 Below Retreats serve almost 4,000 young people in three regions across the US. We also host Reaching Higher for career-aged young adults and What's Next? for youth. With more than 40 percent of *Missions* subscribers falling in the "young adult" range (teens through 30s), the magazine informs, encourages, and inspires the next generation of servants and supporters.

Throughout this 100th-anniversary year, and in this issue of *Missions*, we celebrate with three goals in mind: *Recall to rekindle*, or look back and remember so we can look forward and work. *Educate to equip*, or reinforce the assembly movement as viable and active by showing God's amazing work worldwide. And *illustrate to inspire*, or show what God has done to motivate the next generation to take on the work.

We hope that, as you read this issue, your passion for supporting missions is renewed and you are inspired to encourage the next generation of believers. God wants to use each believer, young or old, in the Great Commission. Each role, big or small, is priceless in His kingdom. ■

Tom Turner, CMML vice president, publishing

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# Recall to Rekindle

## *The Extraordinary Advance of the Gospel over the Last 100 Years*

BY JOEL HERNANDEZ

Christianity was supposed to be dead. “God is dead,” Friedrich Nietzsche blasted relentlessly around the turn of the 20th century. He declared the Christian ethic outdated and irrelevant, and he was not alone: a long line of philosophers, atheists, and despots throughout history have clamored for the downfall of the faith.

Christianity’s demise seemed overwhelmingly plausible during the 20th century. Evolutionary theories rose formidably, shaking their fists at the Bible. Two world wars, the Holocaust, and numerous genocides paraded unspeakable horrors, driving many to question God’s goodness—even His existence.

Economic depression plunged millions into despair. Communism, ruthlessly antireligious, took the world by storm. Cultural and moral relativism gripped the West, seeing in religion a vestige of a primitive, unscientific age.

Against this dark backdrop, a miracle occurred: the Gospel advanced. Quiet like a tide, it surged throughout the world. “I will build My church,” Jesus promised, and despite every wave that crashed against it, hell did not prevail (Matthew 16:18).

### THE PEOPLE GOD USES

The most remarkable part of the miracle is the people God used to accomplish it: missionaries. They are a misunderstood lot, really—misunderstood at home because they defy cultural expectations, leaving the familiar and placing themselves in the path of untold risks to gain near-impossible rewards, and misunderstood abroad because they insist on a message that seems foreign. Yet they persevere, empowered by God and driven by a deep awareness of His call. In the last 100 years, these unassuming radicals have played a central role in God’s remarkable work. They have planted the Gospel in foreign soil; it has taken root and spread.

In 2020, the number of Christian missionaries serving abroad reached an impressive 425,000.<sup>1</sup> Of this number, Plymouth Brethren (assembly) missionaries stand out. Their contribution to evangelical missions has always been substantial, compared

to the movement’s size. “For a denomination that had no creed, headquarters, or organizational structure,” observed Gavin Barnett in *Like a River Glorious*, “the Brethren missionary effort made a powerful impact all over the world.”<sup>2</sup>

But why? We offer two reasons: Brethren missionary character and the Brethren missions model.

### THE CHARACTER OF BRETHREN MISSIONARIES

Assembly missionaries’ character, which contributes to their impact on evangelical missions, can be summed up in four unique character qualities:

#### Total surrender

Good missionaries consider their lives expendable. From the start, they weigh God’s call against the high cost: to exchange family, fellowship, and comfort for hardship and, perhaps, to relinquish their lives.

No missionary knows hardship like the early pioneer missionary. Before modern advances, peril and misery characterized the opening of every new mission field. Some of the highly committed died upon arrival. Survivors walked thousands of miles and endured plagues, hunger, violence, and loneliness. They buried colleagues, spouses, and children. Early pioneer missionaries went to the field willing to die.

On December 23, 1955, five young men—Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Ed McCully, Nate Saint, and Roger Youderian—met to finalize plans to establish contact with Ecuador’s fearsome Waorani tribe, which they sought to reach for Christ. Days later, their lifeless bodies lay strewn across the Curaray River, victims of an ambush.



**Right:** On December 25, 1955, the Elliots, McCullys, and Flemings celebrated Christmas together, not knowing that two weeks later the men would become martyrs.





Was the mission, with its obvious risk, foolish? Jesus taught that, to bear fruit, a seed must first fall into the earth and die (John 12:24). Understanding this truth, Jim Elliot once wrote in his journal,

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

The men’s deaths brought unimaginable fruit. Within weeks, the story echoed throughout the world. Thousands of young people inspired by the men’s testimonies enlisted for missionary service. The five widows stayed among their husbands’ killers and, eventually, saw the tribe embrace the Savior.

## Responsiveness to change

When God’s work takes unexpected turns, missionaries adapt, flexing with the Spirit’s leading and redirecting. Richard “Dick” and Nita Papworth (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 29) understand this.

Dick Papworth first heard of Persia (Iran) when a student at Emmaus Bible School (now Emmaus Bible College) prayed for the country. Dick’s degree in radio and TV production from John Brown University and experience at WMBI (Moody Radio) in Chicago set him on course for ministry.

Then, he met Nita while serving for a year with Operation Mobilization in Iran, and for the next few years, their plans progressed smoothly: In 1973, they married, received commendation, and moved to Iran. They settled in Tehran, started Farsi lessons, built a recording studio, and founded Radio Voice of Christ, which reached thousands of people in Iran and beyond with the Gospel.

Then, everything halted. In 1979, the Iranian Revolution ushered in the Islamic republic. The situation escalated rapidly. Disappointed and full of questions, the Papworths dismantled the studio, packed their belongings, and returned home. Why

would the Lord lead them through each stage of missionary preparation to let them lose everything within the first term?

Soon, the Papworths realized that a studio in Iran had not been their final destination but part of the training. They reopened Radio Voice of Christ in the US and have continued to broadcast daily programs into the Middle East for 45 years. Millions have heard the Gospel, and an incalculable number have turned to Christ.

## Innovation

Missionaries plow the field in hope of a crop they can only dream of (1 Corinthians 9:10). Armed with vision and optimism from the God of the impossible, they think outside the box to spark new ministries.

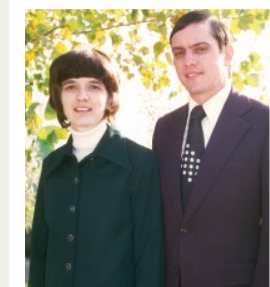
Consider Ed Harlow. While serving in Congo, he brainstormed how to deploy a generation of young people who know their Bible.



The answer led him to start Emmaus Bible School in Toronto in 1941. More than 140 students enrolled, but many more interested people lived overseas. To include them, Harlow condensed lessons into a booklet that could be studied remotely and mailed in

for grading. Harlow and John Smart wrote the first three courses, birthing the Emmaus correspondence course ministry.

More than 8,000 miles away, Cyril and Anna Brooks extended hospitality to servicemen stationed in Manila, Philippines, and also engaged in literature distribution, church planting, and radio evangelism. When Japanese troops invaded the Philippines, they interned the Brooks family and 2,000 others at Los Baños Internment Camp in July 1944. Seven agonizing months later, American forces liberated the Brooks family within hours of their scheduled massacre.



**Top left:** After their husbands’ deaths, (L–R) Marilou McCully, Barbara Youderian, Olive Fleming, Elisabeth Elliot, and Marjorie Saint continued ministering among the Waorani people. **Bottom left (L–R):** In the early 1970s, the Papworths began their ministry in Iran; By 1986, the Papworths had reopened Radio Voice of Christ in California. **Top right:** (L–R) In 1941, Ed Harlow organized Emmaus Bible School in collaboration with C. Ernest Tatham and John Smart. **Bottom right (from top):** In 1949, a few years after their rescue from an internment camp, Cyril and Anna Brooks (front, L–R), pictured with their children and daughter-in-law, returned to the Philippines; Cyril Brooks distributes tracts in a Philippine village.

In 1950, after a time of rest, Cyril and Anna started the Bible School of the Air, a radio program that offered Emmaus courses. Demand for the courses skyrocketed. Today, some 45 million courses have been distributed in more than 100 countries. And it all began with missionaries who thought outside of the box.

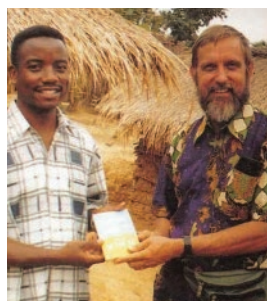
## Sacrificial love

Missionary work is primarily a labor of love—a deep love for the Savior, His people, and the unsaved (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Such is the example of Ruth (Nelson) and Harry Johnson (MPH Day 3), who grew up as MKs in Africa.

Ruth's missionary call was clear since childhood, but Harry wavered, dreaming of conservation work. Ruth could see his missionary potential: "Everyone knew Harry and loved him. . . . I could see his love for the people." So she prayed and vowed not to marry him unless he became a missionary.

Ruth was commended in 1974, and two years later, Harry was commended too. They married in 1976 and began to serve in Burundi—immediately opening their hearts to those whom the society rejected, including widows, orphans, and those with disabilities.

In 1981, working with Dr. Andrew Foster, they founded Ephphatha Deaf School. Eight years later, they opened Kanura School for the Blind, and in 1991, they founded Vyizigiro ("hope"), a community-based rehabilitation program for people with physical disabilities and their families. Each ministry was the first of its kind in Burundi.



Some people in the country object to the Johnsons' care for the marginalized, but Ruth simply responds, "That's what the Lord came to do. As you serve the marginalized, you show Christ's love."

## THE MODEL OF BRETHREN MISSIONS

While the impact of assembly missionaries has much to do with their character, the qualities examined above ring true of good missionaries beyond the Brethren movement. To understand the effectiveness of assembly missionaries, we must look at their missions model.

## Gospel priority

Missiologists have debated whether the missionary priority should be evangelism or social action. However, the priority of the Gospel is hardwired into the DNA of assembly missionaries. If the Master's return is imminent, assembly missionaries reason, then stewardship demands that His priorities become theirs (Luke 12:4–44). The Gospel must be preached throughout the whole world.

But this gospel focus does not diminish their social concern. Throughout missions history, even the most committed evangelists remained deeply aware of the needs around them. They supported the poor, cared for the sick, and lifted up the vulnerable. They founded orphanages, clinics, hospitals, mission stations, schools, and discipleship programs.

Herbert "Bert" and Colleen Elliot were such people. Though Christians everywhere know of Jim Elliot, fewer know his older brother Bert. If Jim were a spectacular meteor, then Bert was a faint but steady star.<sup>3</sup>

Bert and Colleen arrived in Peru when he was 24 years old and she was 19. For 62 years, they labored in an astonishingly multifaceted ministry. Driven by love, they traveled throughout the jungles, the Andes Mountains, and the coastal region. Bert provided relief for hundreds of people with dental emergencies; Colleen cared for the sick and injured and even delivered babies. They founded a Christian school and a rehabilitation center.

Yet their focus was always the Gospel. Whether preaching in the open air or distributing tracts door to door, the Elliots shared the Gospel with thousands of people. They led hundreds to Christ and planted more than 150 assemblies.



The priority of the Gospel is hardwired into the DNA of assembly missionaries.

**Left (L–R):** Harry Johnson gives a Swahili devotional book to his host in Lubengela, a Tanzanian village; Alongside Dr. Andrew Foster, the Johnsons opened a school for deaf children, like these pictured here praying before a meal. **Right (clockwise from top):** While providing medical and dental aid to Peruvians, Bert and Colleen Elliot focused on the Gospel; At a commemoration conference, Bert Elliot speaks from the Curaray River bank, where his brother Jim Elliot was martyred (Photo courtesy of Dan and Peggy Covert.); Despite losing their brothers to the mission field's perils, Ken Fleming (left) and Bert Elliot (right) served the Lord overseas, motivated by love. (Photo courtesy of Ken Fleming.)



## Priesthood of every believer

It's hard to imagine a more docile man inciting a revolution. Within a few years of the Brethren movement's beginning, Anthony Norris Groves sensed God calling him to leave his home in England to serve in Baghdad, Iraq. But convention dictated that only clergymen could dispense communion, and since missionaries would eventually plant churches that would observe communion, missionaries had to be ordained. Therefore, missions agencies only accepted ordained candidates, and only men could be ordained.

So laypeople, including Groves, all unmarried women, and women not married to clergymen, were disqualified from missions service. Yet, using the Bible, Groves insisted that God's call superseded human ordination. After all, every believer is a priest (1 Peter 2:4–10).

The argument struck a chord, and the door to missions opened to the unordained. Soon, the China Inland Mission began recruiting laypeople by the hundreds. Single women rose to become a formidable force; by 1910, women outnumbered men on the mission field.<sup>4</sup> The story of the Logan sisters comes to mind.

In 1923, Wallace and Ruth Logan sailed to Northern Rhodesia, known today as Zambia. At Chavuma, they labored in evangelism, Bible teaching, and medical work. A lifetime later, their children would bury them in African soil, but a thriving work remained witness to the couple's love and zeal.



Each of their seven children followed in their missionary footsteps. But the middle three children—Eleanor, Viola, and Grace, all in their 20s—felt a particular burden to educate girls. In 1956, after education training from Cape Town University,

the sisters opened Chavuma Girls' School. It was the first girls' boarding school in the province and would become one of the largest in the country.

They taught first through fourth grades in the local language and fifth through seventh grades in English. Annually, the school drew hundreds of students from a 500-mile radius and continued until the government nationalized education in the 1980s. Undaunted, the missionary teachers turned their focus to a circuit of teaching religion classes at several government schools. The Logan sisters' story models what Groves advocated for: ministry is the privilege of every believer, not the exclusive right of the clergy.

## Freedom from structural constraints

T. Ernest Wilson once wrote, "The object of all assembly missionary work is the planting of New Testament churches on native soil, completely autonomous, with no foreign domination or control, dependent on the Holy Spirit alone for guidance and progress."<sup>5</sup>

Few things have marked the Brethren so profoundly as a conscious pursuit of dependence upon the Holy Spirit. It permeates their identity and practice, and it affects the order of their worship services and approach to personal decision-making—all based on the belief that the Holy Spirit can lead without mediating agency.

As the Spirit rerouted the apostle Paul toward Macedonia, so He leads a missionary now, bypassing interference from a missions agency that may wish to dictate when, where, and how a worker may serve. Such freedom enables ordinary people to do an extraordinary array of ministries. Consider Albert and Petronella Horton.



Although a recent convert when he arrived at Moody Bible Institute, Albert still sensed God calling him to missions. As he studied his Bible, he was surprised to discover that the church he knew did not reflect the simple New Testament model. When he attended an assembly conference and experienced the Breaking of Bread, his lifelong fellowship was settled.

**This page:** (left, clockwise from top left) The Logan family—(L–R) Viola, Eleanor, Paul, Frances, Ruth, Wallace, Esther, David, Grace—served in Zambia; A student at Chavuma Girls' School enjoys her morning devotions; The school comprised buildings like the one pictured here; Students built friendships, received an education, and heard the Gospel; (right, L–R) The Horton's story exemplifies the process of assembly missions; Albert Horton and an assistant check the Luvale New Testament translation. **Opposite page:** (left, from top) Gavin and Jean Mowat inspired the Hortons to serve in Africa; During their years of service in Turkey, Steve and Diane Richards depended fully on God (Photo courtesy of Diane Weber.); (right) As the Richards ministered to the people of Turkey, God provided. (Photo courtesy of Diane Weber.)

After a newsletter from the Africa Inland Mission stirred Albert's heart, he met Gavin and Jean Mowat, missionaries to Zambia who were on furlough. The encounter led Albert and Petronella to serve in Africa. A talented linguist who taught himself Hebrew and Greek, Albert once said, "If the Lord were to enable me to translate the Scriptures into Luvale, I should be most grateful to Him."<sup>6</sup> God answered his prayer. By the time the Angolan Civil War forced the Hortons to leave Angola, Albert had given the Luvale people a Bible in their language and had authored a Luvale grammar book, a Luvale-English dictionary, and an English-Luvale glossary.



Stories like the Hortons' repeat themselves throughout assembly history, illustrating the simple but effective process: the Spirit leads, the servant follows unconstrained, and fruit results.

## Dependence on God alone

Besides challenging the rules about clergy-only missions, Anthony Norris Groves challenged the practice of depending on people instead of God for support. Groves read in his Bible, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth," and took it literally (Matthew 6:19). If Christ instructed His disciples to trust the omnipotent God to supply all their needs in that day, then, Anthony concluded, God offered the same promise in his day.

His ideas took root, and "faith missions" began to characterize the assemblies and impact the evangelical movement. Assembly missionaries go out in faith, without a salary or the promise of funds; they trust God to provide for their needs, since the God who calls is the One who provides.



Steve and Diane Richards are an example of trusting God at every step. But their story didn't start that way. Steve was struggling spiritually when he heard Dale Rhoton speak at a conference.

Rhoton and George Verwer had started the organization known today as Operation Mobilization (OM), and their message of radical discipleship was setting a generation on fire. The message changed Steve's

life. Soon, he started attending Emmaus Bible School, where he met Diane, who was also interested in missions.

After Steve read a letter from Rhoton in which he pleaded for workers in Muslim countries, Steve prayed, "God, please send workers." Suddenly, God interrupted him: "You hypocrite. Why don't you go?"

In June 1965, Steve and Diane married, and within weeks, they were in Turkey. They went in faith, with only the promise of prayer support. And God provided.

They hosted OM teams, distributed gospel literature door to door, and disciplined people through hospitality. Steve was jailed twice and put under surveillance once. After his second arrest, God orchestrated Steve's miraculous release. The family moved to Germany, where they evangelized Turks. There, too, God provided.



The family moved to Germany, where they evangelized Turks. There, too, God provided.

In 1984, Steve had liver surgery, and the family left the field after serving for 21 years. Steve's fight with cancer ended when the Lord took him home in 1991. Did his faith in God waver during the ordeal? "We had a song we used to sing together often," says Diane, "I have decided to follow Jesus . . . no turning back!"

## THE GOSPEL'S UNENDING ADVANCE

Far from meeting its demise in the modern era, as many predicted, the Gospel has advanced remarkably. At the center of this miracle stands the Lord Jesus Christ, who foretold His unstoppable work of building the church. He has used people whose character and missions model give clues to the success of their labors.

In the last 100 years, thousands of faithful servants have opened clinics, hospitals, printing presses, mission stations, and schools; translated the Bible and established Bible training programs; evangelized through literature, radio, and the internet; founded Christian camps and planted churches; penetrated closed countries; and cared for those in need and loved the outcast. In doing so, assembly missionaries have demonstrated the ways in which the Gospel reveals itself as "the power of God to salvation." (Romans 1:16) They have proven God and found Him faithful. And they have changed the course of history. ■

*Joel Hernandez is a CMML director.*

<sup>1</sup> Gina A. Zurlo, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing, "World Christianity and Mission 2020: Ongoing Shift to the Global South," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 44, no. 1 (2019): 17. Journals.SagePub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2396939319880074. <sup>2</sup> Gavin G. Barnett, *Like a River Glorious* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 36. <sup>3</sup> Randy Alcorn, "Bert Elliot: A Faithful Star, Rising Night after Night for Christ," *Eternal Perspectives Ministries*, 19 February 2012, EPM.org/blog/2012/Feb/19/bert-elliott-faithful-star-rising-night-after-night. <sup>4</sup> Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 288. <sup>5</sup> T. Ernest Wilson, *Angola Beloved: A Story of God's Faithfulness* (Port Colborne, Ontario: Gospel Folio Press, 2007), 15. <sup>6</sup> Albert and Petronella Horton, *Africa, Oh Africa!* (Wall, NJ: Christian Missions in Many Lands, Inc., 1979), 82.

# THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY

## A History of Multifaceted Missionary Service



BY SARAH DUNLAP & ROBERT F. DADD

The year was 1921—a golden age of opportunity in America. The economy was growing rapidly, World War I was over, and the 1918 pandemic had finally run its course. The steamship business also began expanding, enabling easier travel to distant lands. With it, the Lord's command to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel” took on new meaning (Mark 16:15).

Across North America, missions interest grew, and in increasing numbers, young, believing Americans began heading overseas in faith, commended from their local assemblies. “We are encouraged by seeing new assemblies and new missionary study classes springing up both in the United States and Canada; also, more young men and women are giving themselves to the Lord for labor in the foreign field,” wrote L. A. Steen, editor of *Voices from the Vineyard*, in January that year.<sup>1</sup> These young believers saw, firsthand, a world beyond North American shores that needed the Gospel.

However, they left without the support services generally available from denominational mission boards. And, as missions activity expanded, foreign governments increasingly scrutinized it. Therefore, the need for an organization that could address governmental requirements and offer missionaries the support services that local churches could not provide became urgent.

### TAKING ROOT

In May 1921, a group of believers formed Christian Missions in Many Lands, Ltd., in New York City. The organization purposed to represent missionaries at foreign consulates or in official matters where the US Department of State was involved. Between 1904 and 1938, several other organizations emerged to serve assembly missionaries and began working in unison—they are key to the CMML story.

### Voices from the Vineyard

In 1904, acting on the suggestion of Mrs. Andrews, a missionary in Angola, Malcolm MacJannet Sr. began publishing a two-page pamphlet of missionaries' letters to disperse news of assembly missions work in foreign countries. Several years later, he asked L. A. Steen to assume responsibility for *Voices from the Vineyard*, and Steen fulfilled the role of editor for the rest of his life. At its height, the publication reached a circulation of 14,000. As people became more aware of the global missions effort, *Voices from the Vineyard*, the organization, began transmitting funds that believers at home donated to missionaries worldwide.

### The Fields

In 1938, a new assembly organization called The Fields formed in the US. The Fields' objectives were to publish a monthly subscription magazine, *The Fields*, containing missions-related

1904

*Voices from the Vineyard* starts.



Hasse Missionary Home incorporates; CMML, Ltd., forms.

1921

Boxwood Manor is built (original building of the CMML facility).

1930

The Fields forms.

1938



The guest home becomes the Julia Hasse Memorial Missionary Home.

1949

1954



The Missionary Clothing Center opens.

1967

The expanded *Missionary Prayer Handbook* releases.



articles and excerpts of missionaries' letters and to transmit funds to workers. Beginning in 1951, The Fields also published a list of missionaries commended from the US and Canada. In 1967, the Fields expanded it into the annual *Missionary Prayer Handbook*, which CMML publishes today.

**Julia Hasse Memorial Missionary Home**

In the early 1900s, the Lord led a faithful believer, Julia Hasse, to open her home to missionaries. In 1921, in Union City, New Jersey, the Hasse Missionary Home Corporation was established as a temporary lodging place for missionaries on furlough or on their way to or from the mission field.

After Julia died in 1949, the home was renamed the Julia Hasse Memorial Missionary Home in honor of its founder and her daughter, Julia Hasse Dibble, a missionary in Nigeria who had passed away years prior. Then, the guest home's trustees assumed full responsibility for its care and operation.

In 1950, in an effort to host more missionaries, the corporation purchased a larger home in Union City—which remained an ideal location due to its proximity to New York City, a hub for missionary travel.

**Missionary Clothing Center**

A clothing center, which Anne Jacobson started in 1954, complemented the services of the three partnering organizations and the guest home by providing new and gently used clothing and accessories free of charge to missionaries. The Missionary Clothing Center operated out of Jacobson's home in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, until 1966 when it moved to join The Fields' office in Lower Manhattan.

**JOINING FORCES TO BETTER SERVE**

By 1970, with each organization located in New York City and serving assembly missionaries, their leaders recognized that they could be more effective stewards if united; by eliminating overlapping ministries and duplicated expenses, they could also better expand efforts. In 1971, *Voices from the Vineyard*,

The Fields, Julia Hasse Memorial Missionary Home, and Christian Missions in Many Lands, Ltd., merged under the name Christian Missions in Many Lands, Inc.

The leadership decided to consolidate the publications too. *Voices from the Vineyard* ceased publication with its January 1971 issue, and *The Fields* continued publication until the merger was finalized and the leadership could form a new magazine.

In 1972, CMML purchased land in Wall Township, New Jersey. The property included a building that had first served as a private estate, Boxwood Manor, and then as a Catholic congregations' headquarters, Mount Saint Joseph Generalate. The organization, including the clothing center (renamed the CMML Clothing Center) and the missionary guest home (renamed the CMML Missionary Guest Home), began operations there in July. In that same month, the first issue of *Missions* circulated.



Today, from the Wall Township facility, the CMML Missionary Guest Home welcomes an average of 110 guests annually; the CMML Clothing Center blesses about 100 families annually; and the office processes an average of \$1 million in funds each month, organizes 11 conferences per year, and publishes *Missions* monthly and the *Missionary Prayer Handbook* annually.

**CONTINUING THE STORY**

From the beginning, CMML sought to be a Christ-centered, Christ-honoring organization that "serves those who serve." As we celebrate 100 years, we look back and thank the Lord for His faithfulness. As we look forward, we consider the words of the intrepid first-century missionary Paul: "For a great and effective door has opened to me." (1 Corinthians 16:9) The Lord gave our predecessors grace, wisdom, and courage to go through the door He opened in 1921, and 100 years later, we pray He will guide us in the same way today. ■

*Sarah Dunlap is the editor of Missions magazine.  
Robert F. Dadd is the CMML president.*

<sup>1</sup> L. A. Steen, untitled editorial, *Voices from the Vineyard*, January/February 1921, 2.

| 1970                   | 1971  | 1972  | 1992  | 2006   | 2020  | 2021  |
|------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| The merger is planned. | CMML incorporates; <i>Voices from the Vineyard</i> ends publication; CMML hosts its first Annual Fall Conference. | <br>CMML moves to Wall Township; <i>The Fields</i> ends publication; <i>Missions</i> begins circulating. | The first Missionary Orientation Program (MOP) is held. | CMML launches the first 26 Below retreat for young people. | CMML hosts three regional 26 Below retreats annually. | <br>CMML celebrates 100 years. |

# EDUCATE TO EQUIP

## A Look at the Global Mission Field Today

BY PHILIP C. PARSONS

One hallmark of the Brethren, wherever we serve, is our active response to Christ's command "to go into all the world and preach the Gospel." (Mark 16:15) On this anniversary year, and every year, we pray that more believers will catch that vision.

In 1829, Anthony Norris Groves and his family settled in Baghdad, Iraq, after the Holy Spirit convicted them of the Muslim city's spiritual need. As the "Father of Faith Missions," Groves established a pattern: if the Holy Spirit calls a believer and a local assembly sends him or her, the missionary should go in faith and trust the Lord to provide.

For the last 100 years, CMML has supported this pattern. While the Holy Spirit's work, the local church's role, and the believer's responsibility remains the same, the state of assembly missions today looks much different than when Groves served or when CMML started, in 1921.

Currently, seven billion people inhabit the globe. As of July 2021, the 10 most populous nations are China (1.4 billion), India (1.3 billion), the US (335 million), Indonesia (275 million), Pakistan (238 million), Nigeria (219 million), Brazil (213 million), Bangladesh (164 million), Russia (142 million), and Mexico (130 million).

When it comes to major world religions, 31 percent of the global population claims Christianity, 25 percent claims Islam, and 15 percent claims Hinduism.<sup>1</sup> Yet Christianity's influence has shifted from the global North to the global South. In 1910, 35 percent of the world's population was Christian, with more than 90 percent of that number concentrated in Europe and North America—the global North.<sup>2</sup> Today, however, Christianity is decreasing there while increasing in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America—the global South.<sup>3</sup> The worldwide growth and decline of the assembly movement reflects this shift.



## Africa

Nearly 1.4 billion people live in Africa. That's equivalent to 16 percent of the world's population. In 1910, only nine percent of Africa's population claimed Christianity, but in 2010, that number had increased to about 50 percent.<sup>4</sup> Today, 33 percent of the world's evangelical population comes from Africa.

The most significant growth in assemblies across Africa has occurred in Chad (now with 22 percent of the continent's 8,384 assemblies), Zambia (more than 16 percent), and Nigeria (14 percent).

However, Islam is also on the rise. Currently, more than 41 percent of the population claims Islam, which is growing by 2.4 percent annually. Islam penetrates politics, business, education, and media platforms.<sup>5</sup>

CMML serves 49 US-commended missionary units involved in more than 15 African countries.<sup>6</sup>



**Left:** An assembly meets in Chavuma, Zambia. **Right:** A school in Burundi reaches students for Christ. (Photo by Kim Hankerson; courtesy of Jesse and Joy Johnson.)



## Asia

With its 4.7 billion people, Asia is home to 60 percent of the world's population. However, only about nine percent of Asia's population professes Christianity. Many of its countries are in the "10/40 Window"—regions of North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia that fall between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. Of the 5.2 billion people living in the 10/40 Window, 3.2 billion are considered unreached.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, 44 percent of Asia's population claims to be nonreligious, which grew significantly during the 20th century largely due to the spread of communism. Today, as governmental restrictions continue to spread across Asia, fewer missionary units serve on this continent than did at the end of the 19th century. Nonetheless, Christianity is growing rapidly in some of its regions, especially South Asia and Southeast Asia.<sup>8</sup>

During World War II, Christian soldiers who fought in the Pacific Theater saw an abundant mission field. Following the war, countries like South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines experienced an increase in commended workers. Today, the assembly work in South Korea and the Philippines is thriving. Nepal and Cambodia have seen significant growth in Christianity since 1990 through workers that South Korean assemblies have commended. India has seen many new assemblies start, almost doubling from 2011 to 2019 (from an estimated 2,235 assemblies to 4,210).

China, despite decades-long religious suppression, may be one of the most fruitful, fastest-growing mission fields today. Officially, eight percent of China's population is Christian, yet the number grew from 2.7 million in 1975 to 100 million in 2019.<sup>9</sup>

The number of assemblies in Asia has increased 59 percent since 2011 (from 3,574 to 5,696). Today, CMML serves more than 45 US-commended missionary units involved in more than 16 Asian countries.



**Above:** Women in Papua New Guinea listen to audio recordings of the Bible. (Photo courtesy of Luke and Lois DeJager.)



## Europe

Europe is the world's third most populous continent, after Asia and Africa, with about 750 million people. While more than 71 percent of Europeans identify as Christian, less than 10 percent regularly attend church—making it one of the world's most secular regions. Additionally, only 2.5 percent of the population identifies with evangelical Christianity, and the number of assemblies in Europe has declined nearly 14 percent since 2011 (from 3,421 to 2,950). Assembly missionaries face the anti-religious forces of relativism, atheism, and agnosticism, which lead many Europeans to be suspicious of biblical truth and to deny the Gospel's validity.

However, Europe is seeing new open doors for Christian witness, including increasing use of social and mass media as an evangelistic tool, especially in post-Communist Eastern Europe. In the past two years, the number of people in Romania who watch church programs via television or the internet has tripled, as it has in so many countries since the COVID-19 pandemic's onset. This trend has led some Romanian churches to create interactive websites, enabling visitors with spiritual, physical, and emotional needs to contact elders.<sup>10</sup>

Today, CMML serves 58 US-commended missionary units involved in 16 European countries.



**Above:** In Romania, when the COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person church services, believers began meeting online.







## South America

With a population of 435 million people, South America is home to about six percent of the world's population. Of that number, 92 percent claims Christianity, with Roman Catholicism dominating (77 percent). Although the number of Roman Catholics remains high, it began decreasing in the late 20th century. Experts attribute the decline, in part, to an expressed desire for "a more personal experience with God," which led many people to leave the Roman Catholic Church in favor of Protestantism.<sup>11</sup>

A total of 3,125 assemblies function on the continent, with the highest numbers in Argentina (1,000) and Brazil (750). Brazil actually boasts the highest evangelical population in the region and one of the highest in the world, at 55 million. Argentina, Chile, and Peru follow closely behind.

Today, CMML serves 49 US-commended missionary units involved in 11 South American countries.



**Left:** Peru is home to one of South America's largest populations of evangelical Christians. (Photo courtesy of Peter Hocking.) **Right:** Phil Parsons prays with Aché elders in Paraguay.



## Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean

The majority of Central America's 182 million people (more than two percent of the world's population) claim Christianity, with Roman Catholicism the dominant branch. Central America is home to 3,230 assemblies. The highest percentage of evangelicals live in El Salvador: almost 32 percent, or about two million people. However, the increasing prevalence of secularism, spiritism, and Islam challenges the spread of the Gospel.

While geographically located in North America, Mexico's culture, dominant language, and demographics share similarities with Central and South America (often grouped as Latin America). About a quarter of Mexico's more than 130 million people live in and around Mexico City, the capital. More than 80 percent identify as Roman Catholic, but the number of evangelical believers is slowly increasing. Currently, 215 assemblies find a home in Mexico.

Some 44 million people live in the Caribbean, which encompasses about 30 sovereign states, overseas departments, and dependencies. The islands' religious, political, and economic systems reflect that of their historic colonizing powers. While 83 percent of the population identifies as Christian, some ethno-religions carry significant influence: Rastafarianism primarily in Jamaica, Santería in Cuba, and Voodoo in Haiti. Currently, 454 assemblies are active in the Caribbean.

Today, CMML serves 31 US-commended missionary units involved in this area of the world: 10 in Central America, 15 in Mexico, and 6 in the Caribbean.



**Above:** An open-air evangelistic event draws dozens of people to a town center in Mexico. (Photo courtesy of Ted and Priscilla Clark.)



**Above:** A man reads the Bible in his language. (Photo courtesy of Reg and Barb.)

## Special Areas

Some CMML missionaries serve in special-areas countries—those undisclosed for safety and security reasons. Many of these nations fall in the 10/40 Window. Missionaries work under governments that forbid Christianity and conversion or that declare religious freedom but seldom tolerate it.

Other challenges also slow the spread of the Gospel in special-areas countries. In Afghanistan, the threat of violence, a crumbling political system, increasing poverty, and the prevalence of drugs affect Christianity's growth. In Nepal, obstacles include poverty, isolation, and unemployment. Early in 2021, a ruthless military junta in Myanmar removed any semblance of democracy. Most Christians there, as ethnic minorities, face relentless persecution.

The church in special-areas countries also faces challenges including human-rights violations, human trafficking, and drug abuse. However, as in any region of the world, special-areas missionaries can use these issues as opportunities for service, when handling them carefully and creatively.

Today, CMML serves 42 US-commended missionary units involved in special-areas countries.



**Above:** The five Spanish-speaking assemblies in Oregon are growing. (Photo courtesy of Bard Pillette.)

## Cross-Cultural Ministries in North America

Some Brethren assemblies commend cross-cultural missionaries to serve among distinct foreign or aboriginal people groups within the US and Canada. Of the 335 million people in the US, about 70 percent identify as Christian, but nonreligious affiliation grows at a rate of three percent annually. Immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean comprise about 15 percent of the population, thus becoming a growing mission field. In recent years, cross-cultural workers planted five Spanish assemblies in Oregon. A ministry in Freedom, California, evangelizes, disciples, and plants churches among the migrant farmworker population, which speaks Spanish or indigenous languages. With socioeconomic challenges abounding, indigenous communities across North America also need the Gospel, and Canadian and US mission workers are increasingly serving among them.

Currently, CMML serves 12 US-commended missionary units involved in North America.

## Pray for missions

As evidenced above, today's missions landscape is changing rapidly. Still, we have no task more urgent than to transmit the Gospel to every person. Please pray for the missionaries currently serving on the field. Pray for strength and faithfulness in the tasks God has given them and for creativity and knowledge in developing new ministries as the global mission field changes.

Pray, too, that amid the COVID-19 pandemic, God will enable missionaries to return to their countries of service or continue safely serving there with renewed opportunities.

Pray that the people they work among will listen to the Gospel and accept Christ. Pray for relief amid the persecution, human-rights abuses, and internal conflicts that affect so many people, believers and unbelievers. Pray for the mission field of today. ■

*Philip C. Parsons coordinates CMML's assembly relations and missionary care.*

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, facts were obtained from the following sources: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *The World Factbook*, 2021, CIA.gov/the-world-factbook; Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, 7th ed. (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010); Ken Newton and Jeanette Newton, eds., *The Brethren Movement Worldwide: Key Information*, 5th ed., 2019, IBCM.net/brethren-movement-worldwide/. <sup>2</sup> Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population," *Pew Research Center*, December 2011, PewForum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/. <sup>3</sup> Bruce Drake, "Number of Christians Rises, But Their Share of World Population Stays Stable," *Pew Research Center*, March 2013, PewResearch.org/fact-tank/2013/03/22/number-of-christians-rises-but-their-share-of-world-population-stays-stable/. <sup>4</sup> Pew Forum, "Global Christianity." <sup>5</sup> Pukuta Mwanza, "4 Challenges to Evangelism on the African Continent," *The Gospel Coalition*, July 2019, Africa.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-challenge-evangelism/. <sup>6</sup> Note: A missionary unit can be a single, couple, or family. <sup>7</sup> Frontier Ventures, "What is the 10/40 Window?" *The Joshua Project*, 2020, JoshuaProject.net/resources/articles/10\_40\_window. <sup>8</sup> Dr. Todd M. Johnson, "Christianity in Asia," *Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary*, November 2020, GordonConwell.edu/blog/christianity-in-asia/. <sup>9</sup> Johnson, "Christianity in Asia." <sup>10</sup> Interview with Elisei Rusu (MPH Day 13). <sup>11</sup> Michael Lipka, "7 Key Takeaways about Religion in Latin America," *Pew Research Center*, November 2014, PewResearch.org/fact-tank/2014/11/13/7-key-takeaways-about-religion-in-latin-america/.

*I PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. THEREFORE, LET US, AS MANY AS ARE MATURE, HAVE THIS MIND. (Philippians 3:14–15)*

BY THOMAS J. SCHETELICH

**T**he Bible instructs us to render to all their due: “taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, and honor to whom honor.” (Romans 13:7) CMML’s 100th anniversary is a time when much honor is due.

Honor is due, first and foremost, to the Lord God, who is faithful to His Word and His promises. Honor is due to CMML’s founders, who began and then consolidated several ministries into one vibrant missions organization. Honor is due to those who have worked in the ministry over the years, continuing it, strengthening it, and modifying it.

A particular and distinctive honor is due to the missionaries who have taken the Gospel to lands far and near, “holding fast the word of life” and bringing in an abundant harvest (Philippians 2:16). CMML has no purpose except to serve those who go and to encourage those who send and those who support.

## PREPARING TO MOVE FORWARD

Much of this anniversary year has been a look back, a celebration of Brethren missionaries’ faith and accomplishments. Their stories inspire new generations, and the true measure of their heroism is known only to the Lord. While looking back, CMML and commending assemblies can stop momentarily to measure how far we have come.

But our 100th anniversary is more than a time for reflection. It is also a time for us to prepare to move forward together, pressing toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. We do so with anticipation, direction, and confidence.

Often, and rightly, we say that a missions endeavor “goes out in faith.” CMML, like the missionaries it serves, is entirely faith-based, trusting the Lord to provide the needed support. Faith in Jesus Christ and a ministry built upon it are always forward-looking. While faith celebrates the past’s struggles and victories, it is not an exercise in nostalgia. Faith does not long for the good old days or bemoan the present state of circumstances. Faith does not fear the future.

Rather, faith sees and embraces things that are afar. Faith desires a better country. Faith looks for a city “whose builder and maker is God.” (Hebrews 11:10)

Therefore, faith thrives in times of change. While some people may find change confusing or frightening—with societal norms cut loose from their moorings—faith sees the currents of change as waves of new energy, new ideas, new opportunities, and a new audience for the Gospel.



## MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

We must remember that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not and has never been part of the established order of things. Rather, the church is an agent of change in the world, the vanguard of God’s kingdom. The Gospel has always challenged societal norms, and it will continue to.

Indeed, the Gospel describes itself as *new*. It is a new commandment, the new covenant, the new man (who is renewed daily), new mercies, a new song, new wine, a new doctrine, and a new creation, and it looks for a new heaven and a new earth. Our God makes all things new, and our faith is endlessly new.

Perhaps no time of greater change has occurred than in the Gospel’s first days—when doors of new revelation and new opportunity were being flung open in every direction, when centuries of what everyone understood about God and about life became obsolete overnight, when racial and cultural walls were being torn down, and when the resurrection from the dead began. The Gospel thrived; it did not change with the world but was the change in the world.





# Illustrate to Inspire

LET US PRESS ON

CMML was born in a time of great change: the years after World War I. Political and societal transformations were sweeping the world. America was developing a new economic model based on an explosion of new technology. A worldwide pandemic had recently ended. Again, the Gospel thrived and produced the victories we celebrate today.

And, now, this anniversary reminds us it is time to be new again, to thrive in a changing world. CMML will continue to enable the servants who are ready to go; engage the senders as they assess, prepare, and commend missionaries; and encourage the supporters who enthusiastically supply the physical manifestation of the Lord's provisions.

We pause for a moment on this anniversary to reflect on how far we have come, and then, we turn our eyes to the future. We renew the march and press on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ■

*Thomas J. Schetelich is a CMML director.*

## *Prayer points:*

- ▷ Pray that CMML and all servants, senders, and supporters will be catalysts of change as they spread the Gospel across the world.
- ▷ Pray that the servants on the field will remain faithful yet look for new ministry opportunities.
- ▷ Pray that the senders at home will equip more servants for the harvest while deepening their care for those already on the field.
- ▷ Pray that the supporters at home will enthusiastically participate in global missions and more believers will join the effort.

# EMERGING GOSPEL OPPORTUNITIES

## What Might the Next Chapter of Missions Look Like?

As CMML looks to the future, we have noticed developments in the world that may represent frontiers in missions work. We are praying about four particular developments and are seeking to support ministries related to them. Perhaps the Lord will lay the following areas on your heart, too—leading you to pray for, support, or serve in them.



### PEOPLE-GROUP MOVEMENT

Currently, more than 80 million people in the world are displaced—refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced peoples, and more. Many are forced to leave countries that, traditionally, have been closed to the Gospel, and some move into countries that are more open to the Gospel. Although the circumstances causing this movement are tragic, the opportunities created for the Gospel, in our local communities and overseas, are significant.



### URBAN FOCUS

Experts estimate that, by 2030, the percentage of those living in urban areas will have doubled since 1950.<sup>1</sup> Urban mission work is challenging as the pressures of life make relationships difficult to establish and maintain. It is important that we, as believers, intentionally connect with people in urban settings for the Gospel's sake.



### CREATIVE ACCESS

For many years, certain countries were designated as “closed countries” due to the difficulty of accessing them in a missions context. Determined believers, whom God has led, have redefined these countries as “creative access,” finding new opportunities to serve through business, education, and humanitarian efforts.



### CHANGING MEDIA

Some 2,000 years ago, believers wrote gospel literature on papyrus, and Paul proclaimed the Gospel in the judicial court at Mars Hill. Today, believers have found ways of effectively proclaiming the Gospel through digital media—websites, podcasts, social media—enabling millions of people, even in creative-access or unreached areas, to connect with God's Word. Methods may change, but the message remains the same: “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)



*By John Peasland, CMML Executive Director*

<sup>1</sup> Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 14.





# One Hundred Years

BY KRISTA BESSELMAN

One hundred years of serving Christ,  
Of faithfulness and sacrifice,  
Of sending and of being sent,  
Of long, hard days and years well spent.

Those years have brought eternal worth—  
The Gospel spread throughout the earth—  
As close to home and far away,  
We give and go; we watch and pray.

Though some are passing their baton,  
The harvest is still going on.  
We look to God, by His good grace,  
To raise up more to take their place.

We do not count our lives our own  
But live for Christ, to make Him known.  
What once was gain we count as loss  
And boast in nothing but the cross.

One hundred years have come and gone.  
The time is short; we're pressing on.  
From jungle paths to city slums,  
We do His work until He comes.