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# MESSAGE

abwe



## The Mission Continues

The 2022-2023  
New Missionary Class

Lost Sheep Meet  
the Good Shepherd

The Fruit of  
Faithfulness



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**WHO IS ABWE?**

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. Supported by a network of 400 like-minded churches, we are a global family of ministries, dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 1,000 ABWE missionaries are reaching the lost in 84 countries through evangelism, discipleship, church planting, leadership development, and national partnerships.

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## EDITORIAL

FROM THE PRESIDENT



## The Mission Continues

BY PAUL L. DAVIS | ABWE PRESIDENT

### Unfinished business makes me uneasy.

Perhaps you're the same way. When I see tasks in my home, office, or ministry that have been left incomplete, I'm palpably dissatisfied. I crave the sense of fulfillment that comes from a mission accomplished. Without that, discouragement soon sets in.

So, I find it curious that, for Paul, there was a single, gargantuan, unfinished task that, rather than daunting him, animated him with indefatigable, apostolic zeal.

By the year A.D. 56, though the message of Jesus had spread across the Roman empire, much gospel work remained undone. Someone had to shoulder the responsibility of going where Christ had not yet been preached, planting gospel seed on virgin soil. Yet faced with this task unfinished, the apostle to the Gentiles didn't waver, but responded with striking resolve: "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation" (Romans 15:20 ESV).

Notice the weight of one word in particular: "ambition." The original Greek word conveys the sense of doing something "for the love of honor"—to aspire passionately for the prize of accomplishing what is noblest and worthiest. This is not the sigh of a man downcast by the weight of incomplete work. This is a statement of one pulsing with energy at the high, heavenly privilege of heralding Christ to lands and peoples unknown for the sake of God's glory.

Contrary to much modern pessimism, the gospel has radically advanced in the two millennia since Paul penned these words. The trajectory of history has been irreversibly altered by the risen God-man, and numberless nations and peoples have already been won to his kingdom. Still, the task is not done. Nations, tribes, and people groups—comprising billions of unreached and hell-bound souls—remain without the light of Christ.

The Spirit of God remains at work, electrifying his set-apart workers with an ambition to take Christ where he is not yet named. In the 2022-2023 period, the ABWE family witnessed the approval of 52 new short-term workers and 53 new mid- and long-term missionary appointees.

This issue of Message Magazine exists so that you can (1) praise God for and (2) pray fervently for this new class of global gospel workers. They aren't daunted, and neither are we as we long and labor for the day when all nations are assembled before the throne of him who is supremely worthy (Revelation 5:9). ■



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Missionary Lucas Bair (right) and Brazilian believer Márcio Nunes de Nunes (left)

Photo: Marissa Dickey

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# Connections



**J. & B. T.**  
Southeast Asia

"In July, distribution of printed copies of 'The Ancient Path,' a gospel booklet J. developed to overcome objections to Christianity in Southeast Asia, surpassed four million copies worldwide. 'The Ancient Path' is now available in over 75 languages, many of which are mother tongue languages of unreached people groups. Live Global national partners in Myanmar report that when they distribute this resource, Burmese people immediately stop their activities to read it."



**ANTONIO & DIANA  
NAVARRETE**  
Mexico

"God allowed us to graduate five men from our Bible training center in Mexico. All of the graduates are now leaders in their churches, and one student, Marco Gutierrez, is now pastoring the second church that God permitted us to plant near Mexico City."

## Lost Sheep Meet the Good Shepherd

BY KATELYN HAWKINS

**LOCATION:** MONGOLIA



Photo: Danny

**"I have a story for you," Emily called to the children gathered along the rocky riverbank. The students, part of a summer school program led by Danny and Emily's national partners in rural Mongolia, quickly abandoned their volleyball and card games to crowd around the storybook.**

As they listened intently, Emily read about a shepherd boy searching for a lost sheep—mirroring their nomadic context in which life depends on raising sheep, goats, horses, yaks, and camels. The story provided a natural opening for the gospel.

"For most of them, it was their first time hearing about Jesus," Emily reported.

One of the girls asked, "How can I know how to ask God for help?" Emily then realized that none of the children had access to a Bible.

"I started showing them a Bible app, a free audio version in Mongolian, and the kids were just amazed. They were practically swarming around me, saying, 'Please, I want to hear this. Please, how can I download this?'" she said.

Ten girls followed her into the school dorms begging to read the gospel booklets she had brought from the city.

"I know God will use this," Emily conveyed. "There are no Christians in that town . . . but it was possible to share the gospel because we and the teachers had built trust with these children, and their





parents trusted us, and all that builds together to allow the gospel to really be heard, not just said.”

In a vast, 98-percent unreached nation, the summer school program has provided inroads to far-flung communities otherwise untouched by the gospel. To meet additional needs, Danny, Emily, and their local partners donate sheep to impoverished families and arrange veterinary training for herdsmen.

“When we meet with them later, we share the gospel,” said Danny. “Many people have accepted Jesus.”

Danny and Emily visit these communities throughout the year, driving along unpaved tracks through rivers, mountains, and windswept plains beyond

the reach of internet or cell service to find each family’s *ger*—a portable round dwelling. They prioritize training teachers, providing biblical education for pastors, and encouraging new believers.

One couple lamented to Danny and Emily, “We’re the only Christians here, and we feel alone.”

Recognizing the need for biblical resources, Danny and Emily are developing a discipleship booklet and remain committed to engaging remote areas.

“That’s the uniqueness of Mongolia,” Danny commented. “But the gospel is spreading.” ■

*Editor’s Note: Danny’s and Emily’s names have been changed for security.*



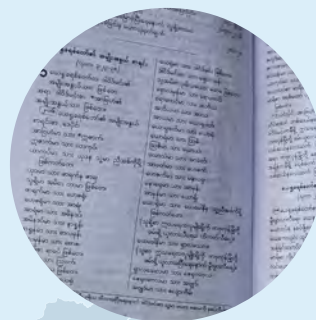
Photos this page: Danny



## STEVE & SUE MAYO

Australia

“ABWE’s Australia team reached a milestone in March, when an association of Australian churches, including four planted by ABWE, launched an Australian missions agency, Declare International. The first two missionaries sent through Declare have set a high standard. Friesca trained the radiology department at the Hospital of Hope in Togo, and Peter led maintenance projects on the Goroka Baptist Bible College campus in Papua New Guinea.”



## K. L.

South Asia

“After 10 years of hard work, our team of national Bible translators completed the New Testament translation into a local indigenous language and printed it here in Southwest Asia. We started the Old Testament translation this year as well.”



# The Powerless Clay Pot

BY JULIE S.

LOCATION: TOGO

The village leaders and their families encircled the clearing between Kodzo's huts, watching as he chipped away at the hard clay earth with his spade. He dug until his spade hit a small round pot—the fetish he had paid the witch doctor to create. As he pulled it from the ground, all eyes watched to see what the fetish would do.

Like most Togolese living in the bush, Kodzo had buried the fetish when his family constructed their two thatched-roof mud huts. With the little money he had, Kodzo hired the witch doctor to fill a small pot with items believed to have power to protect the family, trusting it to ward off evil spirits.

Living miles from the river, Kodzo's family struggled to survive. His children

had no clothing, and his wife began cutting firewood on the property across the dirt road. When the landowner, pastor and ABWE Live Global partner Joseph Akakpo, visited in 2021 and saw Kodzo's family, he invited Kodzo's wife to use the land and hired Kodzo to farm maize and yams.

"My heart turned to them," Joseph said.

Three churches in Lomé donated clothing, and Joseph returned to the village to ask the chief for permission to call the people together to distribute the gift. Joseph shared the gospel, and later raised money with Live Global to build a well and small church building. Since coming to faith in Jesus in 1983 through ABWE missionaries who shared the gos-

pel and disciplined him, Joseph has been active in ministry.

As the cinderblocks and bamboo came together, God was building Kodzo's faith. Kodzo placed his faith in Christ, eager to bring others in the village to the church.

But the fetish still lay buried. After church one Sunday, Kodzo led the village families to the clearing between his huts. Unearthing the fetish, he handed it to Joseph. Joseph removed the contents, explaining: "Kodzo has a new life in Christ. This fetish pot means nothing to him now."

Kodzo took the pot in his hands, raised it in the air, and smashed it to the hard earth in front of him. Everyone stared at the motionless pieces on the ground. Joseph and two other Togolese pastors gathered tinder to burn the fragments. As the powerless fetish turned to ash, the believers began to sing in their tribal language, "I have decided to follow Jesus."

That afternoon, the chief invited the Togolese pastors to follow the trail to the nearby village to teach the Bible. Joseph has continued to minister in the village, building a church and witnessing the victory of God's power. ■



Photos: ABWE personnel

# Discipleship Under Cover of Darkness

BY KATELYN HAWKINS  
LOCATION: NORTH AFRICA



Photo: Andrew and Anna Ruth

**Brahim knew his questions were dangerous. How could he find out the truth about Jesus' identity without being turned in to the authorities?**

Brahim had been watching television in his shop one day when he tuned into an Egyptian religious channel and heard a man speaking about Jesus. As a devout Muslim, Brahim knew Jesus to be a prophet and messenger of God, but this time his heart reacted differently. *Could Jesus indeed be the Son of God?*

Searching the internet, he began reading passages from the Bible. The more he studied Scripture online, the more he grew convicted that Jesus truly was God, and his eyes were opened to the truth of the gospel.

Still, questions remained. Weighing the risk, he decided to confide in his friend Sidi, with whom he often discussed Islamic teachings. Through God's providence, Sidi, although still Muslim, had been secretly meeting with Andrew, an ABWE worker, after attending an

English conversation class Andrew led with his wife, Anna Ruth.

"Many times, Andrew had questioned God on whether to continue conversations with Sidi, and each time, God would convict him to continue," said Anna Ruth. "God was paving the way, even when we didn't know what he was doing."

When Andrew met with both men, Brahim confessed his salvation, saying he "felt like someone who was ordered to be released from prison after being imprisoned his whole life."

Responding to Brahim's desire for discipleship, Andrew began traveling to his house late at night, concealed by darkness from fundamentalist neighbors. Brahim daily pours over his Arabic Bible, persevering in his faith even through testing. Despite proselytizing

being illegal in his Islamic nation, and conversion punishable by death, Brahim carefully and courageously proclaims stories about Jesus to his wife, friends, and family.

Although his business partners withdrew their contract, demanding payment and keeping watch over him 16 hours a day, his wife has been intrigued by the growing spiritual fruit in his life.

"Among the handful of believers among this people group, there are no whole families or couples who are believers together. We are praying that Brahim's wife will come to faith, so they would be the first," said Andrew.

Andrew connected Brahim with a new believer who was recently disowned from his family, laying the foundation for a future church plant. In the meantime, they continue to develop trusting relationships to strategically share the gospel.

Brahim explained, "It is our duty to communicate the truth to others, otherwise we will be like those who see people drowning and do not save them." ■

*Editor's Note: Names have been changed for security.*







# The Fruit of Faithfulness

One missionary team in Brazil is reaping a spiritual harvest sown through years of intentional investment in local believers.

BY KATELYN HAWKINS

**“I didn’t know if tomorrow it would be me.”**

The sudden, brutal deaths of his colleagues haunted Lehman as he and his wife, Adriana, swiftly packed their essential belongings. Despite his success as a member of the security forces, he feared falling under concocted suspicion of treason amid Venezuela’s socialist regime. Unsure if he would be the next to be killed, Lehman fled across the border to Brazil with Adriana and their small children.

Their initial stay in a refugee camp brought more danger. With thousands of Venezuelans awaiting documentation in northern Brazil, camps lacked sanitation, medical care, and privacy. Lehman’s family shared a cramped room with another family and later moved to a roofless plastic shed under the scorching sun. Despite her vigilance, Adriana was caught in a robbery while buying groceries and attacked, wounding her hand.

As hostility in the camp increased, a Venezuelan friend urged Lehman to request UN assistance to move to Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state in Brazil. A few weeks later, Lehman and his family arrived in the town of Dois Irmãos.

“It was very difficult,” Lehman recalled. “I was unemployed, unable to use my profession.”

The struggle of rebuilding life in a new language, culture, and climate prompted Lehman to consider deeper changes within himself.

“In Venezuela, I had another life, but that good life required that I be very far from God,” he explained. “I did many things that went against the laws of God—harming people, earning money improperly. I thought I was taking care of my family, but it wasn’t so. In Venezuela, I always looked for God, but I was very busy, or I left God to the side and went to drink alcohol or went out with my wife. But when we got here, I tried to find God.”

Lehman asked a neighbor if he attended church and immediately accepted the neighbor’s invitation to join him. The neighbor later introduced him to his brother, Chico, a founding member of the ABWE church plant in Dois Irmãos. Soon after, the Brazilian pastor, Diego, arrived at Lehman’s door with a bag of food and an offer of clothing and blankets from the church.

“When the COVID crisis began, Diego and I went to the city council and said,

Randy Richner, ABWE regional director for Brazil (left), planted a church with Fritz Weber (right), a Hunsrik farmer dedicated to sharing the gospel with his family and neighbors.

Photo: Allison Basye



**“Most people think that Brazil is a reached country, but there are still several regions that are very closed to the gospel. Rio Grande do Sul is the least evangelized state in Brazil.”**

Randy Richner

“Is there anything we can do to help?” said ABWE Regional Director Randy Richner. “They told us about this group of about 100 Venezuelans that came here promised jobs. But because of COVID, all those jobs closed, and they had great physical needs. So we distributed three tons of food.”

Randy offered Lehman a job renovating ABWE’s Sítio da Esperança retreat center—which would provide additional facilities for ministry and later assist missionaries Benjamin and Tatiana Candee in planting a new church. Due to COVID lockdowns, Lehman stayed alone on the property, dedicating his evenings to a discipleship Bible study with Randy via Zoom.

“Being with Christians and learning the Word was changing my life,” he said. “I wanted to leave the Lehman from the past indeed in the past.”

Lehman trusted Christ, and soon after, Adriana was also saved through a Bible study with Randy’s wife, Cindy. They were the first new believers baptized in the Dois Irmãos church plant.

In 2022, desiring better opportunities for his family, Lehman left Brazil to find work in the US. Against the recommendation of the church, he flew to Venezuela and traveled on foot through the perilous jungles of Central America, intending to enter the US illegally.

“When we knew that he was determined to go, we gave him water filters and other supplies to help keep him alive,” reported ABWE missionaries Rob and Lin Wachter. “Later, Lehman said several people died along the way.”

Arriving at America’s doorstep, Lehman was repeatedly denied entry and finally understood his church’s warning.

“I have to let myself be led by God, not my desires,” he explained. “I have to let God work . . . to trust him and keep my family together and in fellowship with the church.”

### **The Least Evangelized State in Brazil**

In the diverse region of southern Brazil, the ABWE team and their national partners have committed to the long work of disciple making—cultivating relationships, sharing the gospel, and planting churches among the many people groups in their state.

“Most people think that Brazil is a reached country, but there are still several regions that are very closed to the gospel,” said Randy. “Rio Grande do Sul is the least evangelized state in Brazil.”

Populated by German and Italian immigrants in the 1800s, southern Brazil retains a strong European influence, which, combined with the proud *gaúcho* heritage of traditional ranchers and cattle herders, has produced a culture distinct from the rest of Brazil. The religions of the region create unique challenges for evangelism; cultural Catholics or Lutherans often lack a true understanding of the gospel, non-religious persons adamantly promote a secular worldview, and spiritists practicing Afro-Brazilian religions are tempted to place Jesus as another idol on their shelf.

“We have to think through how we present Jesus to each person in a way



ABWE missionaries Lucas and Teresa Bair recognized the impact of divorce on their community—and demonstrate the love of Christ through biblical marriage counseling.









Photo: Jeff Raymond

**Joel Lippert, a chiropractor, began using chiropractic as an outreach in the church, treating physical pain and spiritual problems.**

that makes sense in their context,” explained Lucas Bair, ABWE team leader. “We can’t just open a church building and expect people to come—we need to develop relationships, to gain respect and trust by being a blessing to the community.”

### **From Community Outreach to Church Planting**

Part of the team has focused its efforts on the Hunsrik people group, an under-reached population of five million, of whom only 1.5 percent are evangelical. Living primarily in mountain towns of southern Brazil and speaking an unwritten German dialect, many Hunsriks have a strong sense of independence and dedication to traditional religion that creates resistance to the gospel.

“The Lord brought contacts to our field team who are Hunsrik believers,” shared Lucas.

Partnering with these couples burdened for their communities, the team launched two Bible studies in short succession: one in Ivoti in 2010 and, a few months later, another in neighboring Dois Irmãos. As new members trusted Christ and began learning God’s Word, both groups expanded, and the Ivoti study grew into a church plant in 2011.

Fritz, a Hunsrik farmer who dedicated his life to sharing the gospel with his family and neighbors while praying fervently for help in ministry, was the impetus for the new church.

“He came to my wife and me and said, ‘Can you come help us plant a church in my city?’” recalled Randy.

While the new church plant initially generated interest, and some turned to Christ, the small group soon faced opposition—even from close relatives of church members.

“But God gave us wisdom, he gave us strength, he gave us perseverance—and praise God, a church was born,” said Randy.

**Witness God’s work among the Hunsrik people:**  
[abwe.org/video/hunsrik](https://abwe.org/video/hunsrik)

With help from supporters in the US, the church purchased a building and continued to develop healthily. In 2020, ABWE team members returned to the Dois Irmãos Bible study to transition it also into a church plant.

From the beginning, the Bible study had met in Chico and Neu’s home, both noted for their deep roots in their community and evangelistic zeal—not only for their Hunsrik neighbors but for

other people groups, including the Venezuelan refugees who arrived after the church’s founding.

“We’ve seen some wonderful fruit, and so much of that fruit comes from Chico and Neu’s contacts,” said Randy.

To further build trust in the community and make contacts to share the gospel, the team prioritizes ministry to the whole person. ABWE missionaries Rob and Lin Wachter and Joel and Megan Richner teach courses in English as a Second Language and host game nights and youth events. Another ministry offers free chiropractic care every Monday.

This too resulted from the work of discipleship. Joel Lippert, a chiropractor, spent two years learning biblical truths with Randy over cups of chimarrão (traditional green tea). As he witnessed God answer prayer—including his own prayer for a child—he placed his faith in Christ. He began using chiropractic as an outreach, even serving city council members and health professionals when other ministries were on hold during COVID lockdowns.

“[W]e apply chiropractic to physical care, understanding that patients often come with physical pain, but many also come with a history of spiritual problems,” Joel explained. “I integrate my work that we might bring them to Christ.”

Through the faithful, disciple-making efforts of believers, the Dois Irmãos church has grown to 50-60 members within the last three years.

“This is all for God’s glory,” Randy reflected. “We were not expecting to be where we are right now.”

**See Joel’s incredible testimony of salvation:**  
[abwe.org/video/joel](https://abwe.org/video/joel)

## Restoring Families Through Discipleship

A series of marriage crises opened doors for ministry among a different population: residents of Porto Alegre. Intending to plant a church in the city alongside two Brazilian couples, Lucas and Teresa Bair's vision expanded when, within the same week, both the wives announced that they were separating from their husbands. Lucas and Teresa witnessed the toll of divorce on their community—and saw unique opportunities to represent Jesus to the hurting. Through biblical marriage counseling, they demonstrate a hope and love nonexistent in local spiritualist religions.

"If we can help the Lord restore marriages and families, if we can help them become full-fledged followers of Jesus, that's going to change the trajectory of generations," Lucas explained.

### 'Everyone Deserves a Hangout'

Missionary Erin Wawro was strolling the campus of a Brazilian university one night when God impressed upon her heart, *What about all these college students?* Continuing down the street from the main entrance, she noticed a building plastered with "for rent" signs and wondered, *Why not open a coffee shop as an outreach?*

Renovating that space, Erin opened the Hangout in 2015. Since then, young adults have wandered in on weekday afternoons to snack between classes, play board games, or lounge on couches with friends. Erin leans against the counter, pouring coffee and dispensing biblical advice as a pseudo mom, sister, or counselor.

"This ministry is like a front-line first contact," she said. "So many people here are so against religion. And it's a huge success when they come in and decide not all religion is bad."

The atmosphere of refuge has created interest in the gospel, inspiring some students to attend an evangelistic Bible study or the Logos church plant

associated with the ministry. A few have trusted Christ and were baptized.

Regardless of where students are in their spiritual journey, they repeatedly highlight the Hangout's influence on their lives. "Everyone deserves a Hangout," declared one young man.

**Watch how the Hangout is transforming lives:**  
[abwe.org/video/hangout](http://abwe.org/video/hangout)

## Training Leaders for Impact Beyond Brazil

Underlying each ABWE ministry in southern Brazil is the team's deep desire to partner with, rather than replace, Brazilian church leaders. When Diego, now the national pastor in Dois Irmãos, confronted cultural differences as a Brazilian missionary from the north, the team took him under their wing.

"We feel it's really important to see Brazilian leadership taking the lead and partner with them," explained Randy. "As missionaries, we can support, encourage, and strengthen, and provide resources to see them move forward to accomplish their mission."

The team's bond with local workers does not end in Brazil but extends across the globe. ABWE maintains a close relationship with the Brazilian mission agency, Multi-Cultural Min-

istries Maranatha, which has sent over 30 Brazilian missionaries to Portuguese-speaking nations around the world.

Through the faithful ministry of the southern Brazil team, they have witnessed every stage in the missionary task—from initial-contact evangelism, to church formation, to empowerment of national leadership. Yet the work is just beginning.

"We need Brazilians to come work alongside us. We need Americans. We need others to reach this area," urged Randy. "It's really exciting when you see the fruit of your ministry. You might not see it right away, but it will come. And that's our hope here." ■

### WE CAN DO MORE WITH YOUR HELP

These faithful workers are bringing Christ to the lost. But they need help, training, and resources so they can continue to answer God's call to serve.

Give to the Global Gospel Fund and empower these missionaries—and others around the world—for eternal impact.

[abwe.org/helpus](http://abwe.org/helpus)



ABWE missionary Erin Wawro shares the gospel with young adults in her coffee shop, the Hangout.

Photo: Katelyn Hawkins



# A Legacy of Faithfulness: One Woman's Stewardship Blesses God's Kingdom



As the summer of 2021 drew to a close, Jane, a faithful servant of God and financial partner with ABWE, felt a calling to update her living trust agreement.

Little did she know that just under nine months later, God would call her home.

Her daughter, Carolyn, was left to carry out her mother's wishes—a sobering, bittersweet responsibility marked with challenges along the way.

Jane's trust included a significant gift to Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB), ABWE's hospital ministry in southern Togo. The timing of this gift, as Carolyn would later reflect, was nothing short of perfect. But there was more to Jane's legacy than a financial contribution.

## A House Filled With Love

Several weeks after Jane's passing, Carolyn faced a potential hurdle. Her mother's clear desire was to sell her house to some dear friends—a decision which, on paper, would not have represented the greatest return on investment. Carolyn knew her fiduciary responsibility but also her mother's heart.

"While in hospice . . . mom called the friends and asked them if they would want her house after she died. She wanted them to have her house. I am simply trying to carry out my mom's wishes," Carolyn shared.

This complex situation found a compassionate response from Greg Heath,

ABWE's Legacy Giving director. A solution was reached, and Carolyn's gratitude was palpable: "Thank you for helping allow that to happen."

## A Legacy Beyond Borders

The impact of Jane's stewardship extended far beyond her immediate circle. Her estate gift not only completed the HBB building project but allowed for further expansion in Togo, with the hospital now able to serve as a training base for indigenous medical missionaries to be equipped and sent out to advance the gospel throughout Africa. Her gift was a blessing that continues to resonate in the lives of those healed and saved through HBB.

Jane's faithfulness also reverberated much closer to home. "[The homebuyers] are strong believers and probably the most vocal people I know when it comes to sharing their faith," Carolyn shared. "Mom's home will be filled with love for the Lord."

## A Gentle Invitation

Jane's story is a gentle reminder of the power of faithful stewardship. Her legacy, together with the efforts of ordinary, faithful believers like Carolyn and the ABWE team to extend her kingdom impact, continues to bless lives and serves as an inspiring example.

Her life, her choices, and her generosity speak to a heart aligned with God's purposes. It's a story that invites reflection on our own lives and possessions,

and how we might share them in service to God's kingdom. It also echoes the lesson of the widow's two mites, reminding us that any gift, no matter its size, is valuable in the eyes of God (Luke 21:1-4). ■

## Take the Next Step in Legacy Giving

Are you inspired by Jane's story of faithful stewardship? Do you feel called to explore how your own legacy could bless God's kingdom? ABWE's Legacy Giving team is here to guide and support you. Whether you're considering a living trust agreement, a will, or other forms of legacy giving, we can help you navigate the process with care and prayerful consideration.

**Contact Greg Heath, ABWE  
director of Legacy Giving, to  
begin your journey.**

**Email:** [greg.heath@abwe.org](mailto:greg.heath@abwe.org)

**Phone:** 616.822.2714

**[abwe.org/LegacyGiving](http://abwe.org/LegacyGiving)**





# The 2022-2023 New Missionary Class

BY KATELYN HAWKINS

**A**s the resurrected Jesus gathered his disciples one last time before ascending to heaven, he charged them with spreading the news of his glorious plan for salvation throughout the earth. The small band of apostles was to multiply into a world-wide congregation of Christ-followers.

Luke records their assignment: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Christ offered his unmatched power, knowing that the mission would demand commitment, devotion, and sacrifice. It would require the entire body of Christ—those who would directly confront the darkness of hostile religions, cultures, and political systems, and those who would faithfully and sacrificially support them along the journey.

Two thousand years later, the mission continues. With three billion people still without access to the gospel, our generation must pick up the mantle, carrying the name of Christ into unreached regions shadowed by Islamic minarets, empty cathedrals, or rugged wilderness.

Since autumn 2022, we’ve seen 53 new mid- and long-term workers join ABWE and seven join ABWE Canada. Their stories of calling and commitment to ministry follow.

Many are preparing to serve in contexts that pose a security risk to them and their partners in ministry. Their identities have been withheld to preserve their safety and effective witness.

The calling of each new worker is a calling for the global church: to faithfully pray, partner, support, or join them in ministry. Will you join us in Christ’s mission?



# AFRICA



Photo: Stanley Leary





## Jacob & Carol Lee

ABWE GO – Associate

**Jacob stopped his 1969 Dodge Charger on an Iowa farm road one night and, convicted by the Lord, surrendered his life to Christ.** His life changed again when a mentor pointed to a map on the wall and said, “Jacob, there are many people in this world who don’t know about Jesus. What are you going to do about that?”

After a trip to India, he began praying for a missions-minded wife to join him in ministry, and God brought Carol into his life. Carol was born in India to missionary parents—and grandparents. Jacob and Carol moved to India after their marriage but returned after six short months. God led them to a strong local church for discipleship, while Jacob found careers in construction and as a school principal, and Carol as a nurse.

Years later, their son invited them to visit Uganda with him, and seeing the dire need for pastoral training, they realized God was directing them to uproot. They formed Reaching Africa’s Unreached in 2013 to train church leaders from northern Uganda and South Sudan, provide theological literature, teach farming, and offer medical outreach. Recognizing their need for teammates and ministry successors, they joined ABWE and are excited to partner with a growing team.

[abwe.org/m/172301](http://abwe.org/m/172301)



## Rebecca Collier

ABWE GO – Mid Term

**The influences of godly role models and effective, caring teachers combined to shape Rebecca’s career path.** Growing up in a Christian home and Christian school, she learned about missions early and committed to following God’s direction for her life. After obtaining a degree in secondary education, she taught at a Christian school, but after five years, her growing burden for missions led her on a trip to Kenya. On the flight home, she realized the Lord was directing her to serve in Africa, and, soon after, ABWE missionaries shared the need for teachers in Togo. Rebecca spent two years in Togo providing educational support for missionary children, teaching in a local Christian school, and serving in kids’ ministry—and is preparing to return.

[abwe.org/m/192601](http://abwe.org/m/192601)



## Rebecca Johnson

ABWE GO Aviation – Long Term

**Rebecca grew up with a healthy understanding of missions and a passion to serve the Lord wherever he placed her—which was in the Midwest until she met a missionary named Andrew.** Andrew, a licensed aircraft mechanic, was appointed with ABWE in 2017 and traveled to Brazil, Togo, and Ghana to service aircraft. The Lord showed Rebecca that she could follow God and follow her husband into cross-cultural ministry without fear, and they married in 2022. They plan to serve in Ghana through aviation and developing national churches among unreached people groups.

[abwe.org/m/170401](http://abwe.org/m/170401)



# AFRICA



## Daniel & Anya Storey

ABWE GO – Mid Term

**Daniel and Anya had always been drawn to missions but kept delaying their plans—until serious illness prompted Daniel to reconsider his life pursuits.**

Daniel, saved at 14, began taking short-term missions trips in high school. He met Anya in Russia, her home nation, while serving together at a Bible camp for orphaned children as young adults. Anya trusted Christ at 18, and, inspired by the missionaries leading her church and by missionary biographies, completed a degree in linguistics to pursue Bible translation. After their marriage, however, Daniel's medical studies, their growing family, and the routine of life in the US relegated their missions involvement to short-term trips. God used two serious illnesses to restore their passion.

"I saw that my life might go at any time, and I may be missing what God has for me long term," Daniel said.

Daniel and Anya, with their seven children, joined ABWE to serve through medical and church ministries in Togo.

[abwe.org/m/172141](http://abwe.org/m/172141)



## Derek & Christine Penny

ABWE GO – Mid Term

**"You have to see this hospital!" Derek told his wife, Christine.** Derek was visiting his sister's family, short-term missionaries in Togo, when a medical situation brought them to Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB). He knew Christine, an anesthesiology assistant and respiratory therapist, would be amazed that the staff prays with patients and openly shares the gospel—privileges she did not enjoy in the Canadian healthcare system. As Derek and Christine weighed the possibility of missions work with their own hesitations, Christine noticed that the Bible says 365 times not to fear and surrendered her concerns to God, committing to visit Togo. After serving three years, they recognized the crucial need for ministry through anesthesia and construction and committed to longer service.

At HBB, Christine serves patients and trains Togolese nursing staff, while Derek maintains the hospital facilities, servicing the plumbing, electrical, water filtration, vehicles, and repairs to ensure uninterrupted ministry.

[abwe.org/m/787768](http://abwe.org/m/787768)



# ASIA



Photo: Unsplash Tianshu-Liu



# ASIA



## Stephen & Kaytlin Brock

ABWE GO - Long Term

**Throughout their marriage, God led Stephen and Kaytlin to serve in Japan.** They arrived in Japan in 2016 excited to begin ministry, but after confronting a series of difficulties, their first term ended in personal crisis and a sudden move back to the US.

As they embarked on a season of healing, they discovered a lack of resources for helping missionaries prevent and overcome crisis, which led Kaytlin to further her education in counseling. As God restored their family, he continued to provide opportunities to build relationships with, and minister to, Japanese families in their area.

In all this, their desire to serve in Japan never diminished.

Now, by God's grace, Stephen, Kaytlin, and their two daughters have a new opportunity to return to Japan as missionaries with ABWE, where they will help develop local churches and uphold missionaries and local pastors through counseling and care.

[abwe.org/m/170991](http://abwe.org/m/170991)

## J. C.

ABWE GO - Long Term



**As a child, J. hated God.** Orphaned as a baby in Ukraine, he was adopted as a toddler by a family in the US who hosted him for a medical procedure—a privilege he was granted only when the girl originally scheduled passed away before the travel date. His questions about God's goodness, coupled with the bad representation of Christians at the church his father pastored, led to growing resentment. The Lord allowed him to be humbled through complications from surgery at age 13, and he gave his life to Christ, recognizing God was far more gracious than he thought.

While listening to a message about the Great Commission in school, J. realized that if he had struggled with God's goodness, surely others did as well, and committed to serving God. After attending Bible college, he served in Southeast Asia and in Australian churches. He now plans to serve in anti-trafficking ministries in Southeast Asia.

[abwe.org/m/192631](http://abwe.org/m/192631)

## M. Y.

Live Global - Mid Term



**Born in a refugee camp in Southeast Asia to divorced parents, M. arrived in the US at age six with her dad and brothers.** She trusted Christ at the Christian sports camp she attended each year, and a believing couple serving as parental figures took her to church. She began volunteering in youth sports ministries, and after completing a degree in sports management, intended to serve her community until God gave her a desire to return to Southeast Asia for mission work. She plans to develop a ministry to nurture young women and evangelize youth.

[abwe.org/m/172371](http://abwe.org/m/172371)





## Jeff & Paige Brown

ABWE GO – Mid Term

**Jeff's first plan was to become a missionary pilot.** Saved in a legalistic environment as a child, his faith was transformed by God's grace in high school, and he wanted to share that message with others. After completing college and flight school, however, he discovered that his tall frame was not favorable for the single-engine aircraft used in missions aviation. Rerouting his plans, he stayed in the aviation industry to financially support missionary pilots. He served his local community teaching English, and, when the pandemic struck, moved and met Paige, who had grown up in a missions-minded church and gone on many short-term trips. They together committed to going to Japan after hearing a presentation in their church on ABWE's Open Initiative. They plan to use their experience in the hospitality industry to serve new and existing church plants in Tokyo.

[abwe.org/m/193581](https://abwe.org/m/193581)

## P. M. & R. P.

Live Global – Long Term



**P. and R., both South Asian nationals, were born to Syrian Orthodox families that turned to Christ. P.'s father became a missionary to an unreached region until insurgency forced their family to flee, losing everything.** As P. grew older, he sensed the Lord's direction to continue his father's ministry in that region, but, like the prophet Jonah, feared the people's violent history and fled to another city, where he worked with non-profit organizations.

R. was saved at 16, committing to serve the Lord with her whole life. God refined her theology through a master's degree, preparing her to equip pastors' wives.

When God again directed their family to the unreached area through a dream, they obeyed.

"From the moment we stepped in that land, God started moving," P. shared.

As hundreds of people came to faith, P. and R. strategized how to develop house churches, train leaders, and organize them into a network. They continue to serve churches in this region.

[abwe.org/m/193318](https://abwe.org/m/193318)

## C. P.

Live Global – Long Term



**C. was helping her mother with a church missions project when she learned about the spiritual darkness in restricted-access nations, igniting her passion for unreached, unengaged people groups.** At the guidance of godly mentors, she served short-term in Southeast Asia and West Africa before combining her experience with textiles and women's evangelism in businesses in Central Asia. When political situations changed, she landed in South Asia and met D., serving with Live Global. Now married, they plan to focus on church planting and community development in Muslim nations.

[abwe.org/m/170961](https://abwe.org/m/170961)



# ASIA

## R. & A. P.

ABWE GO - Long Term



**In a surprising phone call during their college days, R. expressed his commitment to overseas missions.** Initially thinking it was just a phase, A. learned about God's heart for the nations through a campus ministry, and they mutually decided they were willing and able to go. After extensive training through Bible school, pastoral ministry, and Radius International, they envisioned serving a remote, unengaged people group. When they met an ABWE missionary family who invited them to join their team in Southeast Asia, they briefly considered it—but were so sure it didn't align with their plans that they burned the missionaries' contact information as kindling in a campfire. To their surprise, their church elders later approached them about joining a team in Southeast Asia—the same people they had previously met. Recognizing the Lord's direction, R. and A. committed to serving in Southeast Asia.

[abwe.org/m/172201](http://abwe.org/m/172201)

## K. C.

ABWE GO - Long Term



**K. was serving with a campus ministry in college when a friend heard a missions presentation and told K. about unreached people groups.**

"We decided we really had to do something about this," K. explained.

Initially focused on prayer, K. didn't consider serving in missions herself until she attended a conference featuring David Platt and discerned that God was inviting her to leave her home, family, and possessions to follow him overseas. After a summer exploring ministry with an ABWE team in Southeast Asia, she committed to work among this unreached people group. She plans to build redemptive relationships with students and assist in church planting.

[abwe.org/m/172261](http://abwe.org/m/172261)



## Nathan & Azusa Stratton

ABWE GO - Long Term

**Nathan and Azusa have served in Japan for over 20 years.** Nathan, interested in Asia since childhood, decided to be a missionary at age 16 but was afraid to pursue his goal until others faithfully communicated the power of God in missions. He visited Japan and, in 2001, moved there permanently to teach English in public schools. He met Azusa, a Japanese national saved as a child in Sunday school and later discipled by godly women who taught her biblical principles for marriage and raising their four children.

When the pastor of their small Japanese church suddenly retired, his responsibilities fell to Nathan and another church member. When the other man also left, Nathan faithfully pastored the church while working full time until, discerning God's direction to focus on the church, they connected with ABWE missionaries and joined ABWE to continue full-time church ministry.

[abwe.org/m/170891](http://abwe.org/m/170891)



# EUROPE



## Madison Dugger

ABWE GO -  
Mid Term



Madison, a singer-songwriter, expressed her calling to missions through song after hearing a missionary read a letter from a remote people group begging to hear the gospel. Raised in a branch of Mormonism and saved when her best friend paid for her to attend a youth camp, she had become interested in short-term missions but committed fully after hearing the world's needs. Upon hearing her song, her pastor encouraged next steps, and she served as a missions mobilizer with the Traveling Team before spending a month in Portugal with an ABWE missionary family. Interactions with Portuguese baristas generated a love for the Portuguese people, and Madison plans to join the Portugal team, engaging young adults with the gospel.

[abwe.org/m/193381](http://abwe.org/m/193381)

## L. J.

Live Global - Long Term



L. placed his faith in Christ after hearing the gospel preached during a baptism. Through a long process of sanctification in his youth, God transformed his choices and lifestyle. While serving at a Christian camp in college, a coworker shared about his ministry in Southeast Asia, which, together with opportunities to witness to Roman Catholics, inspired L. to pursue missions. He graduated from seminary and is now preparing to serve communities in Europe influenced by Catholicism and postmodernism.

[abwe.org/m/172221](http://abwe.org/m/172221)

## B. F.

Live Global - Long Term



Born in Serbia and raised in Canada, B. grew up in a Christian home but didn't have a personal faith until his high school philosophy class prompted questions about his purpose in life, and he trusted Christ. When his parents informed him that they were moving back to Serbia to serve with Live Global, he joined them to assist their street evangelism ministry distributing gospel literature. After two years, he decided to join Live Global himself to expand his ministry. He plans to develop an online evangelical radio station in Serbia—the first of its kind in their nation.

"God has shown me my true purpose in life, a true calling that is worth most to me," he declared.

[abwe.org/m/172288](http://abwe.org/m/172288)



## Sarah Hanson

ABWE GO -  
Mid Term



God used Sarah's experience growing up as a pastor's kid to lead her to overseas missions. Moving frequently, Sarah's family remained immersed in all aspects of church ministry. As she searched for her own ministry calling, her love for children inspired her to study education at a small Christian college, where an ABWE prefield missionary introduced her to missions. While student teaching in Budapest, Sarah learned that the frequent uprooting in her childhood allowed her to connect with international students at International Christian School of Budapest, where she now plans to teach and serve missionary kids.

[abwe.org/m/172341](http://abwe.org/m/172341)

# EUROPE

## J. & L. T.

ABWE GO - Long Term



**J. spent his college years bargaining with God, attempting to avoid a call to missions and the challenges he witnessed growing up as a missionary kid.** During his senior year, he relented and received an invitation to accompany an ABWE missionary on a spring break trip to the Balkans. Seeing open doors for ministry, he returned for three years as a teacher at a biblically-based school—where he met L.

L. arrived as a short-term teacher after hearing her college professors present an opportunity and unexpectedly finding herself tell them she was interested. Discovering that her giftings were best used in serving the missionary team, she returned for long-term ministry.

Now married, J. and L. plan to serve their Balkan community together—J. as a discipleship coordinator, training local believers often isolated in their Muslim context, and L. through member care.

[abwe.org/m/171011](http://abwe.org/m/171011)

## H. L.

Live Global - Mid Term



**During her sophomore year in college, H. attended a presentation by the Traveling Team, and, for the first time, heard that three billion people lack access to the gospel.**

“I knew that I had learned something that I could never unknow,” she reflected.

As she began praying for missionaries to serve unreached people groups, God convicted her to become one of those laborers. She plans to use her passions for public health, discipleship, and mobilization to serve alongside Live Global national partners reaching Muslims.

[abwe.org/m/172241](http://abwe.org/m/172241)



## Jack & Loulou Murray

ABWE GO - Long Term

**Jack and Loulou’s journey to missions was marked with providential encounters.** Jack, an American, and Loulou, French-German, first met in Cyprus as he studied abroad and she completed a ministry year with Cru. After reconnecting several years later, Jack searched for a way to join her in Berlin and serve in a church. As Jack mentioned the difficulties of finding a doctrinally sound church in Berlin while visiting his brother in a hospital near Washington, D.C., a passing nurse overheard their conversation and recommended a Baptist church that she had attended there. Jack wrote the church that same day and arranged an internship with the ABWE missionary pastor. Now married, Jack and Loulou serve as youth directors at CrossWay International Baptist Church and serve youth through evangelistic outreaches, school visits, and Bible studies. They plan to expand their ministry through counseling, addiction ministries, and discipleship among Berlin’s diverse population.

[abwe.org/m/172321](http://abwe.org/m/172321)



# LATIN AMERICA



## Kurt & Bethany Gomez

ABWE GO - Long Term

**Kurt, born and raised in Mexico City, was saved as a teenager through the ministry of an ABWE missionary who invited his family to join a newly planted church in their neighborhood.** Impressed with a desire for kingdom work, he attended seminary and became a youth pastor in the church where Bethany arrived for short-term ministry.

Bethany first experienced missions on a local inner-city trip in high school, after which she unexpectedly told her church that God wanted her to become a missionary. At her pastor's suggestion, she assisted missionaries in Mexico City the summer after college, and later returned as a career missionary with ABWE. She and Kurt married and served together from 2009-2018. After a period of ministry in Pennsylvania, they realized their burden for Mexico had never left and committed to return.

"Mexico is changing from being lost in idolatry and syncretic Catholicism to being lost in post-modernism and atheism," Kurt explained.

Kurt, Bethany, and their three children will assist Mexican pastors in church planting.

**[abwe.org/m/132921](http://abwe.org/m/132921)**

Photo: James Dockery

# LATIN AMERICA



## Stephen & Jessica Morse

ABWE GO – Mid Term

**With a multi-generational heritage of missions on both sides of their family, Stephen and Jessica had grown up always naturally considering cross-cultural ministry for themselves.**

As Jessica pondered whether to pursue missions or medicine, the Lord's answer came: "You can do both." She met Stephen during medical school orientation, and, discovering their mutual interest in missions, they married. As family medicine doctors, they were assigned a rotation in Ecuador, where they met a German couple restarting the hospital in Shell, the historic ministry location of missionary martyr Nate Saint. Located strategically at the edge of the Amazon basin and serving seven people groups, the hospital integrates physical and spiritual care for the growth of the church. Resonating with the vision, Stephen, Jessica, and their three sons joined ABWE as the next step toward serving in Ecuador.

[abwe.org/m/172351](http://abwe.org/m/172351)



## Patience Czelusniak

ABWE GO – Mid Term

**Patience experienced international missions firsthand as a teenager when her family moved to Honduras.** As Patience's family came alongside a young lady pregnant at 15, God gave Patience a passion for helping young women in crisis. She completed a year of Bible college to gain a foundation for ministry and, learning about the impact of counseling, pursued a bachelor's in biblical counseling. Through college contacts, she connected with ABWE and discovered opportunities to apply her background in Spanish, counseling, and discipleship at the Florece Prenatal Center in Chile and in local Chilean churches.

[abwe.org/m/172331](http://abwe.org/m/172331)

## H. N.

ABWE GO – Mid Term



**H. grew up in a nominally Christian family, and through God's grace, came to faith at 16 in a theologically liberal church.** As her family become serious about their relationship with God, they called the local Baptist church, and the ABWE missionary pastor offered to teach them biblical theology using "The Story of Hope" evangelistic resource.

In college, H. ministered to international students from creative-access countries, and, at the advice of her pastor, began praying about ministry. Her experience growing up with friends familiar with abuse, addiction, and teen pregnancy gave her a burden for working with battered women and children, and she was excited to find opportunities on the ABWE Chile team.

[abwe.org/m/172361](http://abwe.org/m/172361)





## Lydia Neuman

ABWE GO - Long Term

**Born and raised as a missionary kid, Lydia learned Brazil's language and culture as a native.** She began serving in children's ministry at an early age, experiencing the joy of edifying others. She remained in Brazil for college, completing bachelor's degrees in early childhood education and culinary arts and a master's in biblical counseling, while serving in a church and teaching English as a Second Language. After her studies, her Brazilian pastor kindly exhorted her that, after having said that she planned to pursue full-time ministry since she was 14, it was time to begin. Her church sent her to intern with the ABWE team in southern Brazil, where, crossing cultural boundaries within the country, she served in children's ministries. She joined ABWE to serve long-term in southern Brazil and plans to use her skills in counseling, discipling women, and teaching English at the Life Center ministry and church plant in Dois Irmãos.

[abwe.org/m/193271](http://abwe.org/m/193271)



Photo: Getty Images

# NORTH AMERICA



## Christian & Ximena Aguilar

EveryEthne - Mid Term

**Christian's life changed 30 years ago when he was asked to donate bone marrow to his oldest brother diagnosed with leukemia.**

"I saw my past and my future," he reflected. "I gave my life to the Lord and told him, 'When you call me, I'll be there.'"

With a growing desire to testify of God's grace in their lives, Christian and Ximena immigrated to the US from their home in Chile in 2003. After planting several churches among the Hispanic population in central Pennsylvania, they launched a ministry to reach 2,500 migrant agricultural workers in the area.

"I believe they could be 2,500 potential missionaries to go back with the gospel to their families," explained Christian.

Now joining EveryEthne, Christian and Ximena will continue to reach migrant workers, lead a bilingual church, and increase missions involvement in local churches.

[abwe.org/m/172131](http://abwe.org/m/172131)



## Ray & Grace Brandon

EveryEthne - Long Term

**"Our call has been one that started at home and has continued,"** Grace said, **highlighting the influence of godly parents on their ministry.** Grace was saved at a young age, and witnessing the faithful testimony of her father, a pastor, and her mother created a desire to follow their example into ministry as a pastor's wife.

Likewise, Ray grew up immersed in his family's ministries: his father was an ABWE filmmaker and his mother served in Jewish outreach. He found his own calling through studying God's Word in college, where he met Grace. Ray planted a Korean church with a friend in Pennsylvania, and, over the next 30 years, planted subsequent churches and coached church planters in Michigan. Ray now serves as EveryEthne's director of church planting.

[abwe.org/m/172161](http://abwe.org/m/172161)





## Donna Childs

EveryEthne – Long Term

**A passion for the hurting led Donna to a new ministry—and life partner.**

The hurts and difficulties Donna faced in her youth set her on a quest to find God, and she trusted Christ at 19. Seeking continued healing, she met with a series of counselors but found herself leaving each office the same as when she walked in. Recognizing a problem, she realized God was leading her to become a licensed Christian counselor. She served 14 years as a counselor and mentor in her church before meeting Jim, an EveryEthne missionary who equips local churches to build grace and truth relationships with LGBTQ individuals—a ministry for which he is uniquely suited after the Lord brought him out of the gay identity that he embraced for 30 years.

Jim and Donna were married in 2022. Finding that their skills and passions dovetail for life and ministry together, Jim and Donna serve with EveryEthne to equip the local church through counseling, mentoring, and leading Heart, Mind, and Soul: LGBTQ seminars.

[abwe.org/m/192241](https://abwe.org/m/192241)



## Michael & April Davies

ABWE GO Aviation – Long Term

**An army chaplain encouraged Michael to consider missions while deployed as a helicopter pilot in Iraq and Afghanistan.** Originally from a Catholic background, Michael had come to faith in college through the witness of a Baptist roommate and developed his interest in missions through reading biographies and listening to sermons during deployments.

April's eyes were opened to the needs of the world as a child, listening to a teacher from the Philippines. A mutual interest in missions drew her and Michael together in college.

When Michael's army service ended, he trained to become an aircraft mechanic, planning to enter missions aviation. His love for teaching the Bible in an adult Sunday school class led him to seminary, where their family connected with ABWE. Michael now serves as ABWE's director of mission aviation.

[abwe.org/m/193121](https://abwe.org/m/193121)

# NORTH AMERICA



## Kenneth & Melissa Heiland

Beautiful Feet International – Long Term

**God's providence led Ken and Melissa to a world-wide ministry caring for the most vulnerable.**

Discerning God's direction into full-time missions, Ken, Melissa, and their three children moved to Costa Rica in the mid-1990s but were unexpectedly called back to the US after just one year. Amid the discouragement, they began to see God's plan: they adopted three children, fostered 40, and led hundreds of believers on missions trips. Through Melissa's work at a local pregnancy center and a surprising phone call bequeathing their family a building in Costa Rica, she realized God was directing them toward a ministry for which she was uniquely suited: establishing gospel-centered, life-affirming pregnancy centers.

"I went into pregnancy ministry for the same reason that we led mission teams: to share the gospel with people who were hurting," she explained.

Their ministry, Beautiful Feet, has expanded to more than 90 centers in 26 nations. Ken and Melissa are excited to bring Beautiful Feet into the ABWE family.

Read more about Beautiful Feet on page 33.

[abwe.org/m/172231](http://abwe.org/m/172231)

## B. & C. G.

Unspecified – Long Term



**B. and C.'s journey to missions began in 2015, when they committed to spend 21 days in prayer and fasting with their church in Michigan, resulting in an overwhelming desire to pursue short-term missions.** When they heard about an opportunity to use their background in public safety with ABWE's TACTICA ministry, they began traveling regularly with TACTICA to serve first responders in Central and South America. Through an early retirement, God answered their prayers for direction with news that ABWE was seeking a security director to provide security training, assessments, and crisis management for the global family of ministries—a role they have held since May 2023.

[abwe.org/m/172151](http://abwe.org/m/172151)

## D. & J. P.

EveryEthne – Long Term



**D. stared as the man seated next to him dropped a check for \$7,000 in the offering plate.** Intent on living for his own selfish ambition and financial gain, the man's actions prompted D. to question him privately.

"He shared the gospel with me in a way that my heart was stunned," D. recalled.

Turning from self to Christ, D. became excited about sharing his faith and later enrolled in seminary. He served as a church planting catalyst, starting churches in Michigan and Nebraska.

J. grew up in China and trusted Christ after hearing a sermon by Billy Graham. She found direction from Ezekiel 34, dedicating her life to finding the lost and healing the sick as a nurse.

D. and J. plan to use their backgrounds to serve rural areas through medical education and church planting.

[abwe.org/m/172181](http://abwe.org/m/172181)





## Paul & Katie Moss

EveryEthne - Long Term

**Paul and Katie's experiences prompted a mission to reach veterans, service members, and their families for Christ.**

Raised as a pastor's kid and saved at church camp, Paul strayed from God as a young adult. He joined the US Marine Corps in 2007, and he and Katie were married shortly after his graduation from boot camp. Paul served seven years as an infantryman and combat instructor, deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan. After combat, he began struggling with the effects of military trauma. Not prepared for the impact on their family, Paul and Katie found God's grace in the path toward healing and restoration in their marriage and relationship with God.

"We felt God was calling us to help other veterans because of our experiences," Paul explained.

Paul and Katie joined EveryEthne's Centurion Project to use their insights and Katie's nursing training in developing seminars for local churches on trauma and healing, along with resources to empower them to reach warrior families in their communities.

[abwe.org/m/172311](http://abwe.org/m/172311)

## B. J. & A. I

EveryEthne - Long Term



**B. was saved out of the darkness of alcoholism in his native Middle East.** He began drinking at age 13 due to family struggles, and, banished by his father, he lived homeless for eight years until finding Christ. His life transformed, he shared the gospel with homeless friends and used his resources to aid their recovery. When persecution arose, he fled to Southeast Asia.

A. moved to Southeast Asia at age 14 and became depressed at not having opportunity to attend school.

"When I met Jesus, he changed my whole life," she said.

B. and A. both served actively in local churches, and after their marriage, planted a church for fellow refugees, where they trained 17 new believers to become leaders. A. also manages a school for refugee children and women. Seeking new ministry opportunities, they connected with EveryEthne and plan to move to Canada to reach immigrants from Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia.

[abwe.org/m/172298](http://abwe.org/m/172298)

## S. W.

Live Global - Long Term



**S. grew up as a Catholic questioning her beliefs. Dissatisfied with the priest's perpetual answers based on tradition, she accepted her neighbor's invitation to attend the youth ministry they led at a Baptist church and trusted Christ.** Years later, another neighbor connected her with a Bible-believing church where she learned about missions. Desiring to serve God but unsure how as a single mother of five, she found a fit with Live Global. She plans to regularly travel overseas while advocating in the US for national partners.

[abwe.org/m/172251](http://abwe.org/m/172251)

# NORTH AMERICA



## Jesse & Bethany Stewart

EveryEthne - Long Term

**Music has always held an important role in Bethany's life, leading her to worship ministry after trusting Christ in her youth, but God revealed an additional avenue of ministry during college.**

"God impressed on my heart that if I wanted to be involved in something of eternal value, I needed to invest in people," she said.

She enrolled in seminary to complete a biblical counseling degree and met Jesse, who was studying to become a pastor.

Jesse, originally from Canada, trusted Christ after hearing the gospel from his mother and watching God transform his parents' lives. Through personal prayer, he felt a heavy burden to preach the Word, and later discerned a calling to plant churches in the Bible Belt where the name of Jesus is known, but Jesus himself is not. They now serve as church planters in Elizabethtown, Ky., focusing on preaching and lifelong discipleship.

[abwe.org/m/172211](https://abwe.org/m/172211)

## M. & K. D.

Live Global - Long Term



**As avid sports fans who named their six children after famous athletes, M. and K. plan to serve God as part of the Live Global sports impact team.**

Although both M. and K. grew up in the church, they didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus until later in life. Attending a missions-focused church, they began giving to missions and going on short-term trips until God brought them to a belief that they needed to go themselves.

"We met national partners who were faithfully working so hard to make Jesus known in their countries, but often with few resources," explained K. Through Live Global, M. and K. will cast a vision for national partnership among US churches.

[abwe.org/m/172271](https://abwe.org/m/172271)

## H. S.

Live Global - Associate



**H. and her husband J. (appointed in 2022) have served with Belizean nationals since 2005.** Both H. and J. were teachers and were given the opportunity to serve in Belize over the summers.

On one of their first trips, they followed God's direction to buy food for a pastor's family in a rural village. As they experienced God working through them to provide exactly what the national pastors needed for ministry, they were inspired to develop their role as a link between the ministry in Belize and churches in the US who can provide personnel and finances. They joined Live Global to continue regular ministry in villages throughout Belize.

[abwe.org/m/171771](https://abwe.org/m/171771)



# How Beautiful Are the Feet: A New Ministry Joins ABWE



BY ALEX KOCHAN

## **“It’s too late. I already did it. What am I going to do now?”**

Regret washed over Catalina’s mind. She had seen her baby boy. But he was already gone.

Her abortion, at that time illegal in Chile, was not what she had expected. No smiling wait staff, state-of-the-art facilities, or doctors.

How did she get here?

“It was really important to me to go out dancing and have fun with my friends,” she later reflected. “But that had its consequences.”

After the procedure, Catalina sought to quell her regret—by drowning it.

“I tried to erase that image from my mind . . . I used alcohol, I used drugs,” she recounted. “I became a violent person, slightly aggressive, always on the defensive, thinking that everyone wanted to hurt me.”

Her sense of guilt was not merely psychological but spiritual.

“I told myself, ‘I have already earned hell for everything I did.’”

Yet in time, by God’s grace, Catalina heard of the Savior and placed her faith in Jesus Christ—tasting true freedom for the first time.

“I met Christ and accepted him in my life as my Savior,” Catalina shared. “To know Christ was to be born again and leave my old person behind.”

But forgiveness was just the beginning.

## **A Legacy of Life**

As time passed, Catalina knew she couldn’t keep her newfound hope to herself. The Lord was stirring her to use her story.

“If God forgave me, if God made me a new creature, how can I not tell other people that they can have the opportunity to forget what they did and start a new life?” she wondered.

Years later, Catalina joined the Florece Prenatal Center in Iquique, a gospel-centered pregnancy ministry founded by ABWE missionaries. Armed with her testimony, today she brings young mothers the message she wished she’d heard long ago.



“Many women think that abortion is a quick solution, but it is not so, because it can cause many emotional, social, and spiritual disorders,” Catalina shared. But God “is a loving God, and he can forgive sins if we repent from the heart,” she related.

Since its founding in 2018, Florece—one of seven similar ABWE pregnancy centers—has witnessed more than 30 professions of faith, 40 births, and 700 Bible study lessons. Its workers, trained by Beautiful Feet International, are committed not only to prenatal counseling but also evangelism, discipleship, and connecting the vulnerable with Bible-teaching churches.

Yet vast, unmet needs exist worldwide in pregnancy ministry. Although

the US accounts for only three percent of global abortions, an estimated 97 percent of pro-life funding stays stateside.

Enter Beautiful Feet.

## **A New Partnership**

In 2023, Beautiful Feet officially became an ABWE ministry—paving the way to multiply the number of nationally led, gospel-centered pregnancy ministries on the mission field.

“God is using pregnancy ministry to change women, men, and communities, to bring glory to himself,” says Melissa Heiland, Beautiful Feet founder and ABWE missionary. “We are thrilled to join the ABWE family of ministries to make an even bigger impact.”

Beautiful Feet, which has helped launch more than 90 pregnancy centers in 26 countries, joins the mission during a critical moment in the cause of life.

“2023 marks a pivotal moment not just for the US, but for the world,” said ABWE President Paul Davis. “The integration of Beautiful Feet into our global family amplifies our commitment to protecting the defenseless and communicating the gospel in love to those in crisis.”

But the impact is most deeply felt not globally but on a smaller scale—in lives like Catalina’s.

“When I was young . . . nobody told me about God—I never had the opportunity to hear, ‘Look, your life can change. You have the opportunity to be a mother. God can help you; trust him.’” ■

**Learn more about Beautiful Feet at [beautifulfeetinternational.com](https://beautifulfeetinternational.com).**





# 3 Great Commission Mistakes

BY ALEX KOCMAN

In 2018, a Barna Group study found that about 51 percent of US churchgoers did not know the Great Commission.

Another 25 percent claimed to have heard of the Great Commission but couldn't recall its meaning.

Today, such biblical illiteracy—even among professing believers—is hardly unexpected. But for swaths of US churchgoers to admit ignorance concerning their very mission on earth represents a particularly grievous crisis of discipleship.

The New Testament authors record Christ's marching orders in multiple passages. Among them, Matthew's account is chief:

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**“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”**  
(Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

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Yet even those who know and embrace these words can fall prey to

common misunderstandings. Consider these common Great Commission missteps as you grapple with this familiar text.

## 1. Missing the Context

Jesus' final address to his disciples doesn't simply begin with the imperative “go.” His preamble is the foundation upon which the commission rests: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (v. 18).

With this statement, the risen Christ is identifying himself as the reigning Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14), God's anointed King (Psalm 2:6), and the ruler of the cosmos subduing his enemies (Psalm 110:1).

How dare we go into all the world and preach a gospel of grace deemed offensive by other religions and cultures? We can do so confidently because Jesus is not only *our* Lord but *the* Lord. If we do not begin our efforts with a sober recognition of Christ's universal authority, we'll buckle under the pressure of hostile nations.

## 2. Individualism

A more literal rendering of verse 19 might read “disciple the nations[.]” We are not only called to convert individuals but to labor such that whole tribes, lan-

guages, and nations would obey Jesus.

We're then told how: by baptizing and teaching. Both activities are carried out in the life of the church. Thus, to follow Jesus' orders, we must gather in local congregations, submit to his Word, and practice the ordinances he provided. Both the *end* and *means* of this mission are corporate and not just individual in scope.

## 3. Disobedience

Though Jesus spoke these words directly to the 11 apostles, he was revealing his will to all his people henceforward. Woe to us if we only parse, exegete, and debate the meaning of his commission but fail to enact it.

May we each prayerfully seek to spend and be spent in this great task of discipling the nations through the Word of Christ. ■



**Alex Kocman** is the director of communications and media for ABWE. He serves as general editor for Message Magazine and co-hosts The Missions Podcast. He lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and three children.





# The Skeleton Church

A haunting building serves as a portrait of the spiritual state of a nation.

BY CLAY AND MEG DALE  
PHOTOGRAPHER MARISSA DICKEY

**Location:** Uruguay

**A**BWE's first missionaries in Uruguay have nicknamed the collapsed and graffitied structure on the hill "the Skeleton Church." Overlooking the town of Piriápolis, it serves as a profound visual reminder of a nation in which more than 100 years have passed since religion was removed from the country's constitution.

With older generations distancing themselves from religion, younger Uruguayans are raised without acknowledging the existence of the creator God—save, perhaps, when the Bible is mentioned during Greek mythology class in school. As a result, Uruguay has the highest percentage of atheists and non-religious citizens in Latin America. This fact, coupled with Uruguay's distinction of having the highest suicide rate in Latin America, paints a dark picture of their future.

Sharing the gospel in this context is challenging, and many conversations end abruptly when the person realizes they are talking to a believer. Other people show signs of curiosity, yet end up accepting any and every belief they hear, resulting in a syncretistic worldview mess.

But where there is a witness, there is hope. Our missionary team is developing counseling ministries, youth outreach, and impactful relationships to demonstrate hope through a persevering presence. It will take time and commitment, but we believe the future is bright as we prove the love of Christ in the face of skepticism. ■



**Clay, Meg, Teagan, and Ezekiel Dale** are the first ABWE missionaries in Uruguay. After 10 years of pastoring in N.C., the Dale family followed God's call to share the gospel in the least evangelized country in South America.



**Marissa Dickey** is a missionary serving in Medellín, Colombia, in church planting, evangelism, and discipleship ministries. She also serves as the media specialist for the Baptist Seminary of Colombia and uses multimedia storytelling to share how God is working in order to promote missions movements within Colombia and beyond.





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Photo: Liz Ortiz

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