

June 2025

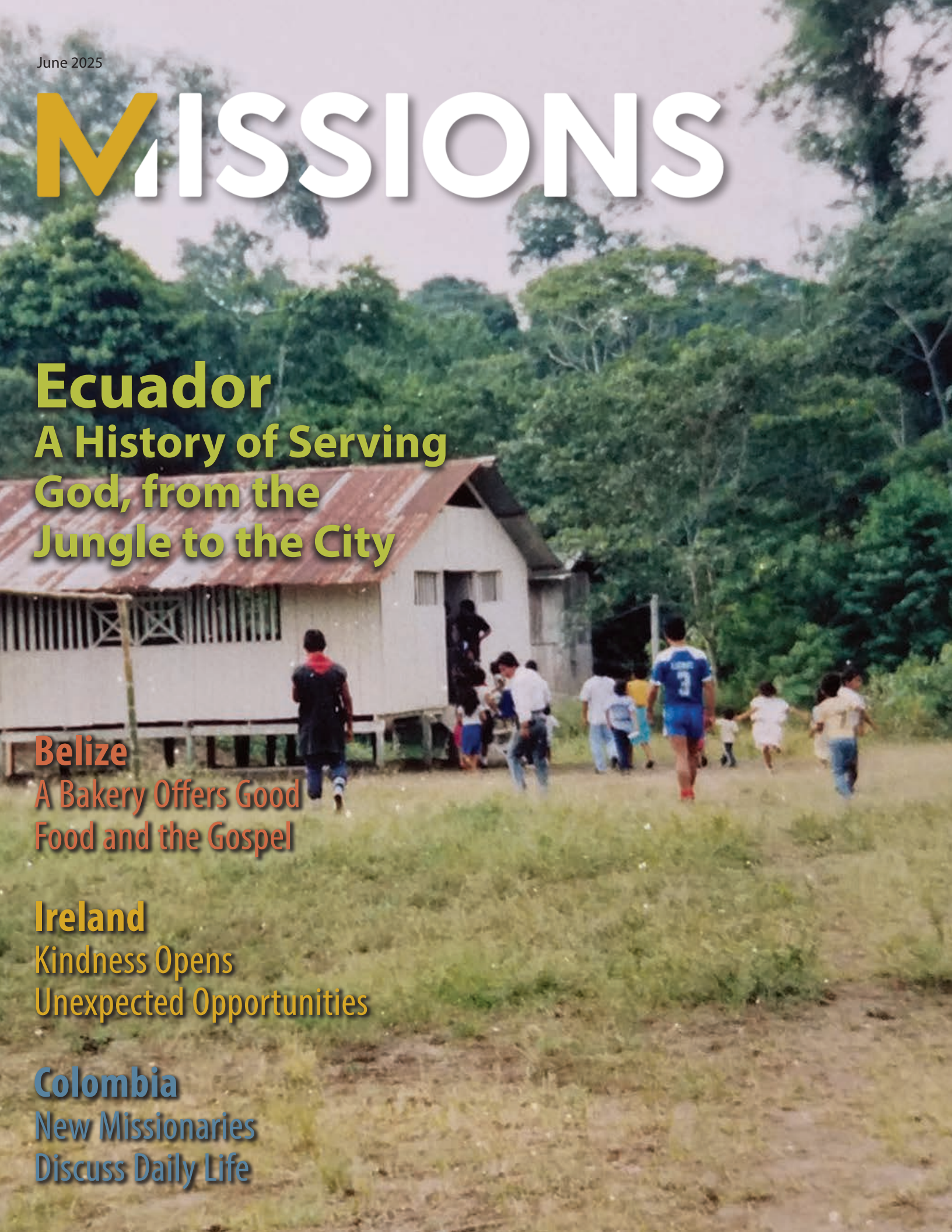
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THINKING IT THROUGH

BY TIMOTHY MARCY

Leave the Results to the Lord

Not long after we arrived on the field, a local elder asked about the ministry my wife, Christiane, and I were aspiring to do. He then said, “Evangelism in Japan is like trying to roll a boulder up a mountain.” In other words, “Don’t expect much success here, however hard you try.”

We all have a tendency to think that if we tried just a little bit harder, we could win our unsaved loved ones and neighbors to Christ. We can easily start thinking that the conversion of others depends on us. This idea can become so deep rooted that when results don’t come, we blame ourselves. We may end up discouraged and disengaged from the work of evangelism, as the believer above had.

The answer is not to get out and try even harder. We must go to Scripture and ask the Lord to refresh our understanding of what it means to be a successful witness.

Three accounts in the book of Acts show that a person’s conversion doesn’t depend on the evangelist’s effort but on God’s power and mercy alone. In each case, the Lord brought about conversion before the human evangelist even had a chance to finish what he was saying.

First, there’s the account of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts chapter 8. Verses 35–36 say, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture [Isaiah 53], preached Jesus to him. Now, as they went down the road, they came to some water.”

Every indication is that Philip was still speaking as the chariot approached the pool. Unbeknownst to Philip, the Lord had already opened the eunuch’s heart to accept the Gospel. Philip must have mentioned something about baptism, because the eunuch abruptly interjected, “See, here is water! What hinders me from being baptized?” (v. 36)

Next, there’s Cornelius in Acts 10. In verses 34–43, Peter is doing a great job explaining the Gospel to all who had gathered. But verse 44 says, “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.” Evidently,

the Lord had decided that the people had heard enough to believe. So, as they listened, He silently reached in and changed their hearts, and they responded in faith.

And, finally, there’s the conversion of Lydia in Acts 16. Verses 13–14 say, “And on the Sabbath day, we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”

Each of the evangelists involved in these accounts was clearly successful, but none would ever have claimed the power to change another person’s heart. At most, he would have said, “The Lord used me as His instrument to get the message across.” In each case, the work of conversion was the Lord’s from beginning to end. And this is true of every single conversion, whether then or now.

Consequently, just as it is unreasonable for human evangelists to claim the credit for conversion when it does occur, it is equally unreasonable for them to condemn themselves when it does not occur. Whatever the outcome of our evangelism, we will always be successful as long as we faithfully proclaim the Gospel when called upon to do so.

The work of evangelism is decidedly not like rolling a boulder up a mountain. According to Paul, God “always leads us in triumph in Christ and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.” (2 Corinthians 2:14–15)

The next time you’re tempted to lose heart because your best efforts seem fruitless, remember the eunuch, Cornelius, and Lydia. Obey when called. Get the message across. But leave the results to the Lord of the Harvest—He alone has the power to save. ■

Timothy Marcy serves in Japan.

Obey when called. Get the message across. But leave the results to the Lord of the Harvest.

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COVER PHOTO: Church in Dureno, Ecuador, circa 1991—Photo by Ron & Esther Borman





From the **JUNGLE** to the → **CITY**

GENERATIONS OF GOSPEL WORK IN ECUADOR



BY RON & ESTHER BORMAN

Deep in Ecuador and Colombia, the Cofán people—fewer than 2,000 strong—care for roughly a million acres of rainforest that the Amazon River basin feeds and the Andes Mountains surround. For centuries, the Cofán have made their home there, cultivating and defending a distinct way of life and language.

Our family has a long history with beautiful Ecuador. We, Ron and Esther, arrived here 35 years ago, in January 1990, as a family of three. At the time, our oldest daughter, Lydia, was only nine months old.

But let's go back a bit further. Ron grew up in Ecuador, in an area called Limoncocha. At that time, it was the shared Wycliffe and SIL missionary base, where his parents, Bub and Bobbie Borman, were translating the New Testament into the Cofán language. They had arrived in Ecuador in 1954 and were contemporaries with the Ecuador Five: Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, and Peter Fleming. Ron's dad was even part of the rescue team that went out to Palm Beach, where the five men had died.

Shortly after his high school years, Ron sensed his own call from the Lord to serve in Ecuador. While visiting the Cofán village of Dureno, he observed a ministry need for a new group developing within the culture: teenagers. Yet God didn't direct Ron to return to Ecuador until 1990, after we had met in Bible college and then married. We soon headed out to live full time in Dureno, in northeastern Ecuador. We began working with young people, children, and a small, struggling church.

Living on generator power

During our early years, a youth center was built with a full-sized soccer field. We held our youth and children's ministry, as well as special community meetings, in the building. Many groups from churches in the States came to help with projects, such as installing a potable water system for the village and putting on a VBS for the kids. During this time, we lived with only generator power and rainwater collected from our roof. It was about an hour trip to town to buy supplies, part of that by dugout canoe.

Our children, especially the older ones, played with village kids and learned the Cofán language fluently. Ron was always busy helping a neighbor, encouraging church leaders, or planning the next youth activity. With her nurse's training, Esther helped with some of the medical situations that arose and assisted in delivering a few babies. We homeschooled our kids, and two nephews learned with us one year. It was a unique time for our family, living right among the Cofán people—a time of blessings and challenges.

Sarah, Esther, and Ron Borman still serve in Ecuador. ▲

▲ Part of the rescue team heads to Palm Beach in 1956 (Bub Borman is at the far right).

While living in this jungle house, the family relied on generator power and collected rainwater. ▲

Upon arrival, the Bormans began helping the struggling church in Dureno. ▼

Esther, Lydia, and Ron pose in front of their house in Dureno. ▼

Lydia, Ethan, and Sarah play with their Cofán friends. ▲

Right: (top) The Bormans lived in Dureno for 11 years; (middle) The Dureno youth center hosts a children's ministry activity; (bottom) Esther and her kids sing in a Cofán church. ▲



God's Word in many forms

After 11 years in Dureno, we sensed that the Lord was leading us to move out of the village. The unrest along the Colombian border (about nine miles away) was strong, and homeschooling without electricity had become more challenging. We took an extra-long furlough of 11 months in 2001–2002 to rest and search for what the Lord would have us do next.

The Lord opened an amazing opportunity to purchase property north of Quito. It belonged to Bill and Irene Ridgeway (CMML missionaries now home with the Lord), but they were retiring and hoped the property would remain in use for ministry. God worked beyond our meager expectations, enabling us to purchase the property and continue serving in Ecuador. This change started a new phase of work among the Cofán people and opened ministry opportunities near the capital city of Quito.

The first opportunity was making radio programs in the Cofán language. With the help of some friends from Radio Station HCJB (now Reach Beyond) in Quito, Ron and his dad, who still lived in Ecuador at the time, remodeled one of the buildings on our property into a sound studio. God then provided recording equipment. Ron and some other Cofán church leaders put together over 500 radio programs in the Cofán language that aired over shortwave to the Cofán territory.

Besides bimonthly visits back to Dureno, Ron would visit the Cofán villages of Sinangue and Dovuno and, once or twice per year, the farthest village of Zábalo. These visits always included a time of encouragement for the village church leaders and

a children's program involving Bible time, singing, games, and coloring. As the ministry expanded, the Lord brought us opportunities to create an audio version of the finished Cofán

New Testament with the help of the US missions organization Faith Comes by Hearing; record the Cofán audio for the *Jesus* film; and then put together a bilingual copy of the New Testament in Spanish and the Cofán language.

In pursuit of the Cofán Old Testament

Ron's dad, Bub, had finished the Cofán translation of the New Testament and 25 percent of the Old Testament by 1991.



Ron, not trained in Bible translation work, always wished to see the whole Old Testament translation finished but wanted the desire to come from the Cofán people themselves. Several years ago,

a couple of the leaders approached Ron separately and asked why the whole Bible was not yet available. They discussed this need, and Ron started checking into organizations like SIL for help. We were surprised at how quickly things came together!

For three years now, our team of four Cofán men, working part time, have been slowly and faithfully finishing the Old Testament in the Cofán language. We feel inadequate for this task, but there are some wonderful tools and training available to help the team work toward its goal.

Please pray for the Cofán translators: Wilson, Martin, Leoncio, and Osmar. Pray for them and their families—for health, strength, and wisdom as they work at this important task. Pray for the integrity of the translation and direction from the Holy Spirit. Pray for Ron as he is the administrator of and one of the consultants on this project. There seems to never be enough time, especially with the other ministry opportunities the Lord has us involved in.



▲ Ron gives a Bible lesson to kids in Dovuno.

▶ Children in Dovuno enjoy Bible-lesson coloring pages.



▲ Bobbie and Bub Borman and their translation helper Delphin hold the completed Cofán New Testament, circa 1980.

▲ (L–R) Martin, Ron, Wilson, Leoncio, and Osmar work on the Cofán Old Testament translation.

Praying for a church for Dovuno

As mentioned earlier, Ron visits several Cofán villages. Three of the four have active churches and church leaders. But one village, Dovuno, does not have a church. Ron started visiting this village about 25 years ago and met some opposition. But he didn't give up and returned, visiting individuals and families and leading a children's program.

Historically, this village has always been the most closed to the Gospel. It denied Bub, Ron's dad, entrance back when he asked to visit and study the language. However, a few faithful villagers came to Christ over the years and always appreciated the visits.

Last year, a young couple named Rober and Estefania approached Ron, asking to be baptized. Ron had several conversations with them and gave them a course explaining baptism. They were baptized in December 2024, and in his testimony,



Rober explained how Ron's visits to Dovuno and the children's program affected him. This couple would love to build a church in their village.

We are happy to tell you that the church leaders in Dureno, where we lived for so long, have also been visiting Dovuno once per month to hold a service and teach the Bible!

Our growing ministry to youth

The jungle work isn't all we are involved in. Here in the city, we serve in our church. Ron is one of the elders and leads the youth group, and Esther teaches one of the children's Sunday school classes. Our middle daughter, Sarah, who attended Emmaus Bible College and then came back to work with us, is a big part of the youth and children's programs.

▲ Rober and Estefania were baptized last year.

These homeschooled teens enjoy an activity.



The Homeschool Teen Fellowship worships the Lord.

About 15 years ago, we also inherited a youth group that met in homes and reached homeschooled students ages 12–18. We currently hold meetings twice per month in our home. Over the years, we have seen our group grow from about 20 mostly missionary kids to upwards of 50 teens, two-thirds of whom are Ecuadorian.

We meet from 3 to 8 p.m. and lead outdoor games, serve a meal, enjoy a student-led worship time, and then divide into small groups for a Bible study. Our group is fully bilingual—English and Spanish. This year, we will hold our 11th Annual Home-school Teen Retreat. We alternate between the beach at Casa Rogers and another camp facility in Tabacundo, north of Quito.

Discipling these young people is one of our joys. Many of our kids have gone on to Bible college and some desire to be missionaries. The Lord has gifted many of the teens with musical talent, and we encourage them to use their gifts in their local churches and assemblies. What an affirmation this youth work has been of God's calling on Ron's life so long ago, when he was just a teenager himself.

Sometimes, people ask us how long we plan to live and serve in Ecuador. We smile and answer, "For as long as God directs us to stay here." ■

Ron and Esther Borman are commended from Bellingham Bible Chapel in Bellingham, Washington.



▶ The annual beach retreat for homeschooled teens is always popular.





BREAD *to* BLESSINGS *in Belize*

A Bakery Offers Good Food and the Gospel

BY HEATHER WALTON

Many years ago, I read a devotional that spoke of a pastor and his wife who had moved many times so he could help different churches. Whenever they moved, his wife would have a hard time making friends, but then, she started baking bread for people in the community. Each time people received a new loaf, she would have the blessing of speaking with them and getting to know them a little bit better.

I, too, enjoy baking bread and have used it as a means of getting to know people both in Canada and here in Belize. In September 2023, I started a bakery from our home and called it Bread to Blessings Belize, which stems from that devotional. Each order includes a gospel tract or Bible-verse card, and all the bakery's profits go to various youth ministries.

ADDING TREASURES TO THE BAKED GOODS

In the beginning (October 2023–July 2024), the bakery operated solely on orders people placed. Then, in July 2024, we started setting up a little stand at a local supermarket on Wednesday evenings. So many blessings have come from this! We have met many people from the community and gotten to know some quite well. Often, we have opportunities to speak about the

“We have met many people from the community and gotten to know some quite well.”

Lord, but some people are interested only in the baked goods. Nonetheless, each of the larger items—loaves of bread, rolls, banana or zucchini bread, muffins—is accompanied by a gospel tract or Bible-verse card. We also hand out Bibles, Bible-story books for children, gospel tracts, and verse texts.

One little boy came specifically to ask for a Bible, and it's truly an encouragement that people know they can receive free Bibles from us. One man who has been purchasing our baked goods for several months also asked for a Bible, for which we

praise God. One family has two little girls who look forward to seeing which verse they will get in their banana bread package so they can stick it to their refrigerator.

SPREADING THE BLESSINGS FAR AND WIDE

The proceeds have enabled us to donate to many groups, including Belize Camping Experience, a ministry to youth and children. Here is a snippet of how the funds and baking helped them:

With the financial support designated from one month of sales from Bread to Blessings, we were able to purchase much-needed lounge chairs for the youth to gather for fellowship and morning devotions. Beyond that, the bakery has also supported the ministry with extras and less-than-perfect orders that worked great for garlic bread and breadcrumbs. It is donations like these that help us keep our ministry costs down, which is an added blessing!



We have also donated a few times to a youth group at a newly started work in Mahogany Heights, a neighborhood about 30 minutes outside the capital. The leaders shared, “The financial assistance from Bread to Blessings has helped us out in providing personal hygiene products for our youth group.”

I have had the privilege of volunteering at a government home for girls taken out of abusive situations. The girls are ages 7–17, and many have little ones of their own or are expecting. The government has given me permission to read a short devotional each time I visit. A large part of the proceeds from the bakery goes toward funding the activities I do with the girls—crafts and baking—and Christmas gifts for each one. I have also taught them to crochet, and the bakery supplies yarn for the girls to make items that I then sell, which gives the girls a bit of spending money.

WORKING TOGETHER

The vision of the bakery is to train young women who may not have work opportunities otherwise. One young lady worked with me for a time, and it truly was a blessing. I would love to train some of the young moms at the government home to give them a trade they can use to support their little ones. We would like to eventually have a stand-alone kitchen where the training could be done—but the timing and location are in God’s hands.

Many visitors have helped with the baking for individual orders and for the bake stand. It is always a blessing to have help and to share this ministry. Our son and his fiancée, Amelia, came for a visit in February, and it was a joy to work alongside both of them and have their company and assistance at the bake stand.

In reference to their time, Amelia wrote: “I had the absolute pleasure of baking alongside Heather and learning more about this amazing ministry! It was extremely encouraging to witness the work being done to support the Belizean community in growing closer to Christ.”

PRAYING FOR THE MINISTRY

We are blessed by those who have partnered with us, supporting this ministry financially and through prayer, and we look forward to seeing where God takes it. Please pray for souls to be saved through the distribution of Bibles and tracts, for God to provide for a stand-alone outdoor kitchen and guide us in where and when to build it, and lastly, for permission to begin training some of the girls from the government home. ■



Heather and Ian Walton are commended from Grace Bible Chapel in Timmins, Ontario.



Opposite page: The bake stand overflows with white and wheat breads, hamburger buns, muffins, banana and zucchini breads, and much more. **This page (from top):** Patrons of the local supermarket can purchase items from the bake stand each Wednesday; This banner introduces the bake stand and offers free Bibles; Heather prepares Christmas gift bags for each of the girls at the government home; Heather taught the girls to crochet dishcloths; The bake stand displays tracts, Spanish and English Bibles, and Bible-story books.



KINDNESS EVANGELISM IN IRELAND

Unexpected Opportunities with Asylum Seekers

BY KATHY M.

Since February 2022, Ukrainian refugees have been pouring into European countries. In the last three years, Ireland has accepted over 110,000 Ukrainians and thousands of refugees from African and Middle Eastern countries. We couldn't resist the opportunities! "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." (2 Corinthians 5:14–15)

It all started years before, when my husband, Jim, saw supermarkets throwing out good food. He suggested we begin collecting such food and distributing it. As we went around to needy people, especially the Irish Traveller community, the food gave us an entry point to sharing about Christ. We began calling it kindness evangelism.

In early 2022, when we saw hundreds of Ukrainians landing at a hotel two streets away from our assembly, and other nationalities from Africa and the Middle East about a mile away in another hotel, we saw an additional opportunity for such kindness! The first step was to discuss and pray about it with our assembly. Then, we quickly took action.

I noticed that the arriving Ukrainian refugees were mostly women and children, leaving the able men to fight. Men who came had three or more children, had special needs, or were older than 60. These distressed Ukrainians were coming with only suitcases and maybe a beloved pet. So, besides offering food, we decided to open a clothing room in our church building.

With the generous help of CMML, I purchased new clothing for all ages and needed toiletries. (For that entire year, the supermarket I was buying the clothes from had great sales on!) The women in my assembly helped organize the clothing room's layout.

We are registered with the national food redistribution organization and receive donations of leftover food daily. I have a team of over 10 people who help. So, three times per week, I go to the hotel with Ukrainians and distribute food.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we open our assembly to our community. I set out food for visitors to take, and then, a crowd of 30–50 Ukrainians, Africans, Jordanians, Irish Travellers, and homeless looks through the clothes, which ladies' groups and individuals now donate. After that comes the Bible study. I am going through the 52 stories in the Simply the Story course combined with Ethnos360's *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ*

visuals. Jim and sometimes special speakers take the Thursday slot.

Other meetings are the Friday night social evening put on by a few of the women in our fellowship and the monthly Sunday evening gospel meeting. The Christian bookshop we operate on our grounds also adds to the resources we offer internationals.

It's wonderful that the Lord has given our assembly the desire and vision to reach refugees, and each of us does what he or she can. The community seems to appreciate what we are doing, and these ministries give us more of a profile.

Three different women on three separate occasions have gifted me a large red pepper—love gifts. We praise the Lord for this positive feedback and ask that He will continue to give us fruitful interactions. Even more, we ask for prayer that seeds sown will result in the salvation of these refugees. Pray especially for some Muslim women who are very interested regular attendees but face harassment for attending. ■

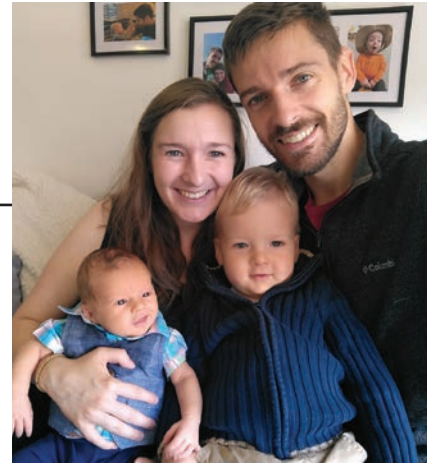


From top: This wonderful believer, pictured with her family, is Kathy's Ukrainian interpreter; Kathy encourages a woman outside a Ukrainian settlement; Refugees carry a load of clothes; Kathy received this red pepper from a thankful Ukrainian.



Kathy and Jim M. are commended from Bible Believers Assembly in Chicago, Illinois.

Interview with Aaron & Hannah Campbell



New Missionaries Share about Daily Life

After years of talking about overseas service, Aaron and Hannah Campbell heard the Lord calling them to Bogotá, Colombia, in 2023. They soon answered, gaining commendation from Northgate Gospel Chapel in Seattle, Washington, and arriving on the field in early 2024. The Campbells have become involved in the Aposento Alto assemblies, the network of local churches in Colombia, and the Obrero Fiel training program, which equips churches to send and individuals to serve as missionaries from Latin America. Please pray for the family, including Luca (2) and Benaiah (9 months).

What is your city like?

We live in the urban capital city of Bogotá, nestled amid mountains at an altitude of 8,000–10,000 feet. With more than eight million people living in Bogotá, housing tends to be crowded and traffic is almost always congested. Generally, people are open to discussing spiritual things, though sometimes you must be creative to get around the person's "correct answers" learned from Catholic influence. But, if you engage someone in a religious conversation, they will respond amiably at the least, and sometimes, they will respond with great interest.

What is the weather like?

Protected by the mountains, we have a pretty steady 60–70 degrees Fahrenheit year round. Colombians say to never leave the house without an umbrella since it rains often, yet the air tends to be dry because of the high altitude. Due to the thin atmosphere, the sun beats down hard, so you might burn quickly without protection, even on a cool day!

How do you get around?

For several reasons, we don't own a vehicle. We use the public bus system and ride-hailing services, which are relatively cheap. For many places we go, we walk!

What foods do you eat?

We have yet to learn to make Colombian food, so Hannah usually cooks meals we would have had in the US. But we love to try Colombian foods when invited for dinner or by purchasing the local *corrientazo* lunches, which usually include soup, rice, potatoes, meat with sauce, and vegetables or a salad. Generally, Colombians don't care for spicy foods, so the flavors tend to be mild. We've enjoyed almost everything we've tried!

What's your favorite cultural behavior or tradition?

Speaking of *corrientazo*, this term means "super common" and is the name given to family-run lunch restaurants where the cook will choose one to five dishes and prepare huge pots of each. The price is low (less than USD \$4, no tip expected), and the food is ready to be served. So a *corrientazo* makes a convenient option for Colombians on lunch break—and missionaries who need a break from making lunch!

We deeply appreciate Colombia's relational culture. At our local church, this includes spending extra time after services talking with everyone, often while enjoying empanadas or another snack.

How do you get to know people?

We have gotten to know many believers through visiting churches and conferences. We meet people in the places where we buy our food, and Uber drivers are usually interested in talking, even about spiritual things. We've started forming relationships with our apartment-floor neighbors by stopping at each other's doors with a food treat. After Benaiah's birth, they kindly brought us gifts and special foods.

What languages are spoken in your area? Do you speak any?

Spanish is the main language spoken in Colombia, though there are Indigenous languages. Many people also enjoy practicing English, and in Bogotá, it's common to find people who can converse well in English. While Aaron is fluent in Spanish, Hannah is taking classes and learning, but she can usually carry on conversations (since Colombians tend to be patient with her!).



Left (from top): The Campbells visit assemblies around Bogotá; Eight million people reside in that sprawling city. **Middle:** Luca learns to ride public transportation. **Right:** Aaron and fellow believers worship the Lord.

What does a typical week look like for you?

We attend a local church that meets on Saturday evenings, which frees us up Sunday mornings to visit other assemblies. Sometimes, Aaron preaches at these assemblies, or we just connect with the believers. We also participate in various midweek meetings, including a Tuesday evening prayer group, Wednesday afternoon women’s Bible study, and Thursday evening men’s Bible study. At home, Aaron prepares for sermons and Obrero Fiel classes, and Hannah meets with a tutor as she builds her Spanish skills. We host people regularly, and various other ministry and family things pop up to keep each week interesting.

What does your family like to do for fun?

We enjoy spending time with other missionaries—eating, talking, playing board games—and we have had lots of fun hosting young Colombian couples. As a couple, we plan simple but fun date nights at home or occasionally out.

Do you have any hobbies that you use in your ministry?

Aaron can often strike up a conversation about music and likes to join the church men in playing football (soccer to us Americans). Hannah tutors some missionary kids in piano and history and sometimes gets a fun opportunity to help with a project, employing her “crafty” side.

What’s raising two young boys in Colombia like?

Cons: Getting out with two kids is difficult since Hannah can’t load them up in a family car. We must plan outings around the fickle weather and walk. Usually, both of us must go if we want to take the boys in an Uber. Also, in Bogotá, there’s a shortage of relatively clean outdoor spaces

for kids to play. You must hunt down clean green grass!

Pros: People are very kind to and supportive of mothers and families with young children and will often offer help. The believers in the churches genuinely care about our kids and show it in many ways. It’s a huge privilege to raise our kids to see God at work through His people in many contexts and cultures!

What is challenging? What is exciting?

For Hannah, learning the language and getting to know people more slowly because of that barrier are challenges. There have also been several health struggles this year, but we are so grateful that the Lord and His church have cared for us! We are excited to see the maturing Colombian believers grow passionate, become equipped to go out as missionaries, and start discipling one another.

Do you feel settled?

Though we miss family and friends in the States, we do feel like this is home, and we have friendships that feel very close and supportive. We are grateful to be here and thrilled to be a small part of the work God is doing in Colombia!

How can we pray for you?

We want to be faithful disciples of Jesus, proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples with influential, gospel-centered lives. Please pray for wisdom and faithfulness in our daily decisions and tasks and our bigger decisions: where and what future ministry in Colombia will look like. Pray that we will parent our children with love and wisdom and that they will come to know the Lord. Pray for the Obrero Fiel (“faithful worker”) program that Aaron and other CMML missionaries are developing. ■



CMML
26 BELOW
2025

IS HIS MISSION YOUR LIFE?

26 Below Motivates Youth to Live for Christ

BY JUANES PINEDA

Growing up in Colombia, South America, but being connected to CMML in several ways, I remember hearing about and seeing pictures of an annual event called 26 Below. It was always my desire to be part of those weekend retreats CMML would host in regions across the United States, but I was never able for various reasons, including living in a different country.

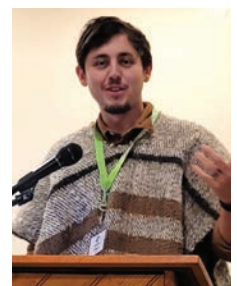
This year, the Lord not only allowed me to attend all four 26 Below retreats but also help organize them. I thank Him for how He has used these retreats throughout the years to equip and challenge American youth to look at the Savior and lift

their eyes to the fields, as He encouraged His disciples to do in John 4:35.

The theme this year was His Mission, Your Life, and it was a great reminder that the mission on earth is His and our lives belong to Him, since He bought them with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The Spirit led each retreat's speaker to share about the Lord's heart for us as His disciples and for the nations. It was incredible to see how aligned the speakers were—without even talking to each other. The Lord of the mission challenged young people in the four 26 Below locations: Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and Southeast.

Northeast 26 Below Stevens, Pennsylvania

This year's speaker was Rob Sullivan (CMML's president), who grew up in the northeast and previously worked in a well-known financial institution. His background as a businessman helped our attendees and future professionals remember that all who are in Christ are His ambassadors. Over three days in late January, Rob presented how God's mission of reconciling the world to Himself through His Son has been carried out throughout generations. He focused on 2 Corinthians 5:14–20 and shared compelling stories and biographies of missionaries who made God's mission their life. Rob offered our 100 attendees 12 lessons he has learned from other faithful believers for living with the great commission in mind. We pray that the participants will respond to the call, making our Lord's mission their life.



Midwest 26 Below

Dayton, Iowa

For the first time in the history of the 26 Below Retreats, we shared our rented camp facilities with 250 international students participating in an International Friendship Connection ministry. These students came from different parts of the world and had diverse religious backgrounds. It was a vivid example of what we were helping our attendees understand at this February retreat: God has brought the unreached to this part of the world so they can hear the good news of our Lord. Our speaker, Caleb Trent (serving with Freedom Teams in California), encouraged the 130 young people to approach their workplaces with a missions mindset and consider going



abroad to the unreached. His messages followed a sequence, moving from seeing what the Lord has done, surrendering before His presence, and stewarding what He has given us to remembering that we all are sent ones and being steadfast. The Lord was at work!

Southwest 26 Below

Denton, Texas

Emphasizing the parable of the talents from Matthew 25:14–30, Special-Areas missionary Dan B. (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 23) challenged our 32 attendees to use the gifts the Lord has equipped them with for His glory. This March retreat was the first 26 Below most participants had attended. They enjoyed the time of fellowship and being in the Word. Even though the group was small, the attendees were grateful to see how they can serve in Dallas, a city that receives people from all around the world. Most attendees had connections to India, which made the focus of praying for the unreached in



South Asia even more special. We thank the Lord for the time together and pray He will help this generation see life as Jesus does and use their talents to spread His glorious Gospel. One attendee is praying about being a Bible translator in an unreached people group in India. It was exciting to see the Lord work, so please pray.

Southeast 26 Below

Flat Rock, North Carolina

Our final retreat of the year, Southeast, ranked as our second largest, after Midwest. We had people who came from South and North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, and even Texas. The wide variety of backgrounds—including some from Egypt and others from Central America—made this March retreat unique. Nathan Bramsen (MPH Day 25), who serves in Special Areas, encouraged our 120 participants to consider the Lord's calling for their lives. He spoke from passages in Genesis, focusing on Abraham's life, and reminded us that God's mission is not something we must do but get to do. We



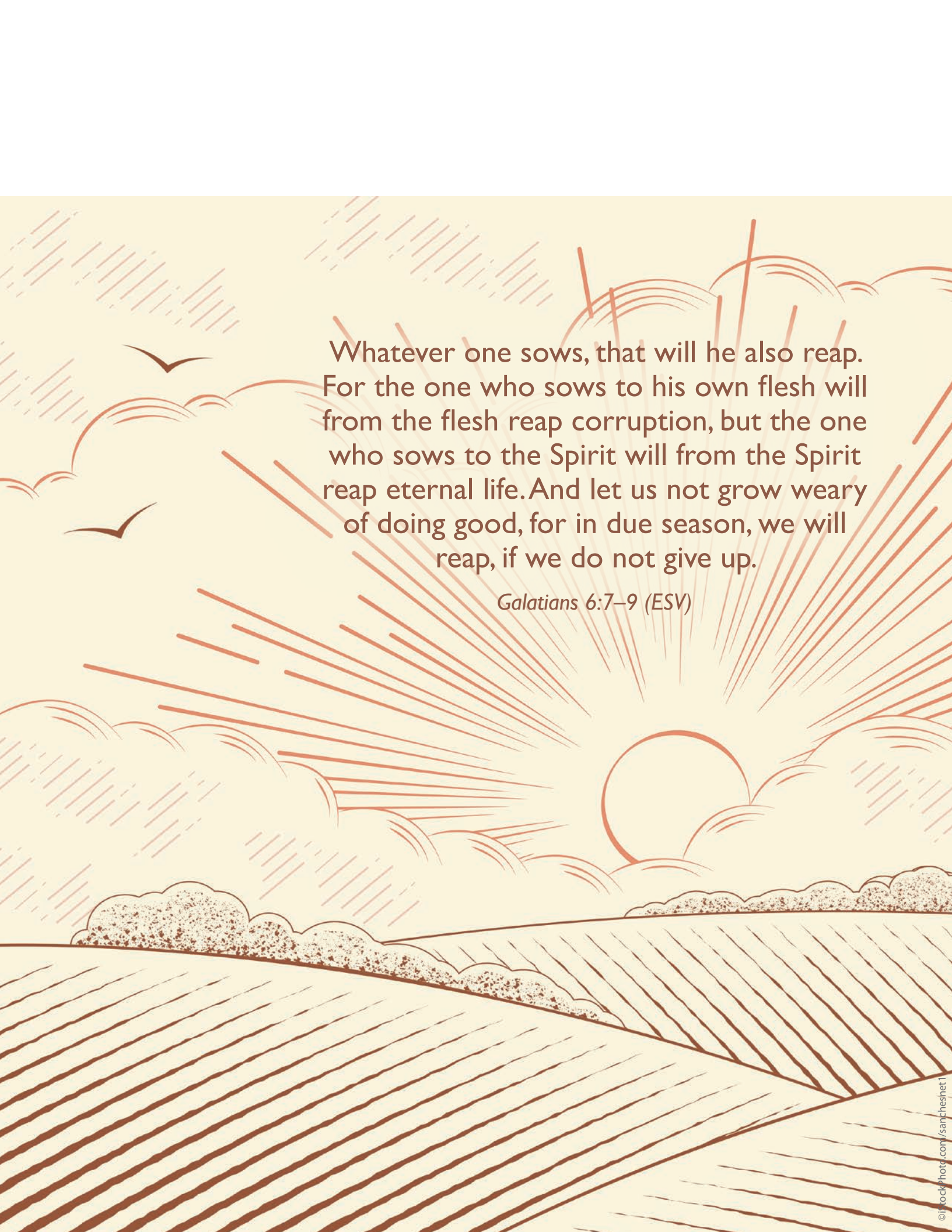
pray that Abraham's calling of going wherever the Lord led, being a sojourner in this world, will move people's hearts to two actions: look at the One who promised to be with us until the end of the age and love their Lord with all their hearts, minds, and lives. As a result, the Great Commission will be carried out for the glory of His name.

Up next

We thank you for joining us in prayer for everyone who attended a 26 Below retreat this year. May the Lord raise a generation of young people serious about their walk with Him and concerned for those who have never heard the wonderful,

powerful name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Now, we anticipate our annual Nationwide 26 Below planned for October 11, 2025. This hybrid event will reach youth groups and individuals across the continent, reminding them that His mission is our life! ■

Juanes Pineda, CMML event coordinator



Whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season, we will reap, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:7–9 (ESV)