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SHORT-TERM TEAMS, LONG-TERM IMPACT

BY CLEM BOYD AND NATALIA KIRYCHUK '19



SINCE 1971, MISSIONS INVOLVEMENT SERVICE/GLOBAL OUTREACH TEAMS HAVE VISITED 96 COUNTRIES, BRINGING THE GOSPEL, SHARING HOPE, ENGAGING CULTURE, AND MINISTERING TO SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND PHYSICAL NEEDS.

What begins with a short-term missions trip will often carry over into the lives of people living in those places, who will then impact the lives of their families, friends, and neighbors. And it all begins in the cornfields of southwestern Ohio, where God has grown a Professional and liberal arts university to bring glory for His name.

What follows are the stories of international partners whose ministries have been touched by the faithful service of Cedarville short-term teams.

THE LUKE COMMISSION

Since 2008, Cedarville teams have been visiting Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland until this spring), a landlocked nation between Mozambique and South Africa near Africa's east coast. They go in support of The Luke Commission, founded and led by Harry '96 and Echo (Tuinstra) VanderWal '96. The Luke Commission provides medical care coupled with Gospel proclamation at mobile clinics throughout the country.

Cedarville teams work alongside long-term staff to provide assistance with day-to-day operations at The Luke Commission's Miracle Campus, where the VanderWals and permanent staff live and lead the ministry, and on mobile outreaches. The short-term teams also help out with special projects related to administration, data entry, and warehouse organization.

"At times, students with certain majors are given the opportunity to assist with projects in their particular field of study, dependent on our needs when they visit," noted Joe Noonan, Senior Strategist for The Luke Commission.

Cedarville began sending teams in 2008, when a group of nursing students looking for a missions opportunity "happened" upon The Luke Commission. Rebekah Sartori '05 led that trip, which was originally planned for Zimbabwe, but was canceled due to political unrest in that country.

"I let all four students who were signed up for the trip know what had happened," said Sartori. "Some cried. We were all so excited to serve. We had raised support, turned down summer jobs, and put in lots of preparation for

service. I reminded them that God had a plan for us. So we started praying and looking for other opportunities."

Team member Tiffany (Schlueter) Riggelman '09 sent an email to the VanderWals, not really knowing much about them.

"Amidst the myriad mission organizations that wrote back with 'no'-type answers, Harry and Echo VanderWal responded back quickly, explaining that they both had also graduated from Cedarville and were already looking forward to having a Cedarville team come and serve alongside them," Sartori explained. "Their response was so positive: 'We feel like God has just dropped you in our laps, and we would love to have you come!'"

And so began the fruitful partnership of advancing the Gospel between Cedarville and The Luke Commission. And it's a relationship that continues to bear fruit through patients trusting in Christ personally and growing in their faith because Cedarville teams come with hearts prepared to serve.

"Cedarville works well with teams to speak to their attitudes of service before they come," noted Harry VanderWal. "Their willingness to come with no expectations of what they will do and how helpful they will be is evidenced in an attitude of service that is humble and teachable, willing to do whatever, whenever, however."

"We look back on Cedarville teams and have fond memories of them serving with us," added Echo VanderWal. "As more teams come, we look forward to the stories that develop as God writes His story into the lives of those who follow His invitation to serve."

IVORY COAST

When Thomas Mach, Vice President for Academics, originally pitched the idea of a missions trip to the Ivory Coast to serve alongside his missionary brother, Bob, he didn't expect much interest. Instead, more than 60 students attended the introductory meeting and Angelia Mickle, Dean of the School of Nursing, also expressed an interest in going. A medical missions trip was planned for spring break this year and Mach and Mickle, accompanied by 13 students, left for Côte d'Ivoire.

The goal of the trip was to create opportunities for church plants in two area villages, serving alongside Bob Mach and his church, Bingerville Church. During the trip, 167 people made professions of faith and opened the way for further evangelism and discipleship.

Of the 13 students chosen, three were nursing students, four were pharmacy students, and two were allied health students — comprising the medical side of the trip. Alongside them, a linguistics major, a business major, and a



molecular and cellular biology major came to serve. Mach's daughter, Kiley '21, a studio art student, became number 13, accompanying her dad to paint a mural behind the church baptismal for her uncle.

The night before the team left for the Ivory Coast, Bobby Hile '90, Lead Pastor at Southgate Baptist Church in Springfield, spoke with team members about the reason for their trip. He emphasized how the trip had a ministry focus and exhorted the team to go for something bigger than themselves. Everything else was secondary to the primary purpose of the team.

"You just have to give up your hesitations about going — whether that's the cost or fear of sickness — and be willing to see what God can do," Mach said. "I realized my hesitations were not important enough to stop the bigger purpose."

Once in Côte d'Ivoire, while Mickle oversaw the students at the clinic, Mach and his daughter traveled to the church to teach and paint. At the clinic, patients checked in, had vitals taken, and heard the Gospel as they waited to see the doctor. Pharmacy students dispensed medicine donated by Blessings International.

One of the days of the clinic, very few patients showed up so the team was able to travel to the church and set up a clinic for the missionaries and pastors serving in Côte d'Ivoire.

The goal of the clinic was to create a relationship with two area villages that could create opportunities for evangelism. One village currently has a Bible study and after the clinic, the missionaries in Côte d'Ivoire hope to grow that Bible study and start one in the other village. Their end goal is to see a Bible-believing church established in each village.

"For anyone on the fence about going on a missions trip, I understand your hesitancy," said Mach. "But these trips are faith-building opportunities and can even be an act of worship."

DELHI BIBLE INSTITUTE

Thad Franz's arrival at Cedarville was providential. And not only because he's a skilled educator and committed mentor within the School of Pharmacy.

Franz, Vice Chair of Experiential Programs and Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice, arrived on campus in 2012. In 2010, he had visited India as part of a short-term medical missions team. He shared in classes about his experience and encouraged pharmacy students to use their medical knowledge for the advancement of God's kingdom in India.

Also on campus for the first time in 2012 was Myriam Shaw Ojeda '16, one of the twin daughters of Isaac Shaw, National Director of the Delhi Bible Institute (DBI). DBI trains Indian Christians in the Bible at the main center in Delhi, plus in seven other satellite locations. DBI also teaches students about healthy nutrition, hygiene, and disease prevention, lessons they incorporate in their efforts to reach out to their communities.

"I had shared in one of my classes how pharmacists can be involved in medical missions, and I shared the

example of my trip to India in 2010,” Franz said. “Myriam was in that class, and that led to discussions between her family and me. One of the locations I visited in 2010 is where they have a training site, so they were working in a specific region where we shared a common interest and passion. We saw God’s favor in it. And in 2017, we were able to visit that same place, seven years later.”



Since 2012, Franz has taken a team to DBI and its satellite locations every year. Teams of pharmacy students instruct DBI students and other non-students interested in learning about health and wellness.

“Dr. Franz teaches from his pharmacy knowledge and expertise,” noted Shaw Ojeda. “However, he also shares from the Word. This has deeply impacted our students and guests who attend the educational sessions. He has gained the heart of many in our team who eagerly look forward to spending time with him and being encouraged by him.”

The health and wellness sessions have also opened doors for the Gospel. “The people deeply respect the pharmacy team for their medical knowledge,” Shaw Ojeda said. “This immediately opens the door for the team to share about the Word of God to a very receptive audience.”

Last year, a woman gave her life to Christ after an hour-long session about women’s health that incorporated Bible stories. Shaw Ojeda explained, “She stated that if the team cared so much about her physical health, she could share about her spiritual needs as well. The Gospel was shared, and she committed her life to the Lord.”

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HABITS OF A MISSION-FOCUSED CHRISTIAN

Missions is most often associated with boarding an airplane and traveling to another nation to serve and share the Gospel. But how do the majority of Christians carrying out a wide variety of vocations — from education to engineering — engage in missions where they are? These four habits can be a part of every Christian’s life and result in eternal impact.

GIVE. Reaching the unreached requires an immense amount of resources. God has blessed everyone with resources — some small and some great — that may be stewarded so the Gospel can be shared with unreached, unengaged people-groups. How can you create a habit of giving that supports unreached missions?

PRAY. Looking at the crowds, Jesus felt compassion for them and then turned to His disciples with specific instruction: pray. The Lord of the harvest is working through the prayers of His people. How can you create a habit of praying for unreached peoples?

GO. Going to the nations happens by going around the corner to share Christ with a neighbor as well as going around the world to share Christ with those who have no Gospel access. Going may mean changing your location short-term or for a longer tenure. At the end of the day, for the nations to hear the Gospel, the Church must be a going people. How can you leverage your gifting, experience, and resources to go on mission?

MOBILIZE. Every Christian has a disciple-making opportunity to influence others toward an awareness of God’s heart for the nations and the world’s desperate need for the Gospel. How can you create a habit of mobilizing others to implement these four habits of a world-focused Christian?

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