

Missions

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of Church Leadership

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New! "Ask a Missionary"

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THINKING IT THROUGH

BY WILLIAM YUILLE

Be Strong!

When Moses was about to die, the Lord appointed Joshua to take his place with these words: “Be strong and of good courage.” (Deuteronomy 31:23) After Moses’s death, the Lord again commanded Joshua three times, saying: “Be strong and of good courage.” (Joshua 1:6–7, 9) His assignment was formidable. The immediate challenge was getting across the Jordan River at flood time; then they had to capture the fortress of Jericho, and beyond that were other strongholds held by people who weren’t about to welcome the invaders. All of this might have overwhelmed Joshua. He had no experience with this kind of thing, it was more than he could handle by himself, and he couldn’t look to Moses for help. How then was he to be strong?

First, he could be strong as he remembered what God had promised: “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.” (Deuteronomy 31:23) The Lord had given Canaan to the Israelites and would enable them to take it and settle there. He would be with Joshua in all that he had to do.

Second, as he reflected on what God had done, Joshua could be strong and confident that He would keep these promises. More than 400 years before, God had promised Abraham that He would multiply his seed and bring them into the land that He had given them. “He Who promised is faithful” and is able to accomplish all that He said (Hebrews 10:23). He had brought them out of Egypt, provided for them throughout the wilderness, defeated the Amorites under Og and Sihon, and brought them to the borders of the Promised Land. He had shown Himself to be powerful and faithful. The command to be strong wasn’t unreasonable based on what God had promised, and the promise of God wasn’t doubtful based on what God had done.

When David returned to Ziklag, he discovered that the Amalekites had raided the town and taken everyone captive, including his family. David’s men talked about stoning him as though it were his fault. But “David strengthened himself in the Lord his

God,” inquired of the Lord, and went after the enemy (1 Samuel 30:6). He could remember what God had promised: at God’s instruction, Samuel anointed David, and so, God appointed him to become king. Moreover, he could reflect on what God had done: the Lord had delivered him out of the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear; the Lord had delivered Goliath into his hands; the Lord had protected him from Saul’s hands; the Lord had delivered him from Achish and the Philistines. His experience was such that he could say, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.” (Psalm

Remember what God has promised and what God has done.

23:4) God had proved that He could be depended upon. Therefore, David strengthened himself in the Lord.

It’s the same for us. Paul says to us as he said to the Ephesians, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” and to Timothy, “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 6:10; 2 Timothy 2:1) Remember what God has promised and what God has done. He is faithful, and He is able. You can trust Him and be strong in Him.

After the death of Dan Crawford, a missionary to Africa in the early 20th Century, a well-worn New Testament was retrieved from his coat pocket. Inside, he had written some of the words of Emily P. Miller’s hymn “We Two”: “I cannot do it alone! The waves dash fast and high; the fog comes chill around, and the light goes out in the sky. But I know that we two shall win in the end—Jesus and I. Coward and wayward and weak, I change with the changing sky; today so strong and brave, tomorrow too weak to fly. But He never gives up, so we two shall win in the end, Jesus and I.” The promise of God’s presence and the assurance of His faithfulness are sufficient. ■

William Yuille is the former president of MSC Canada.

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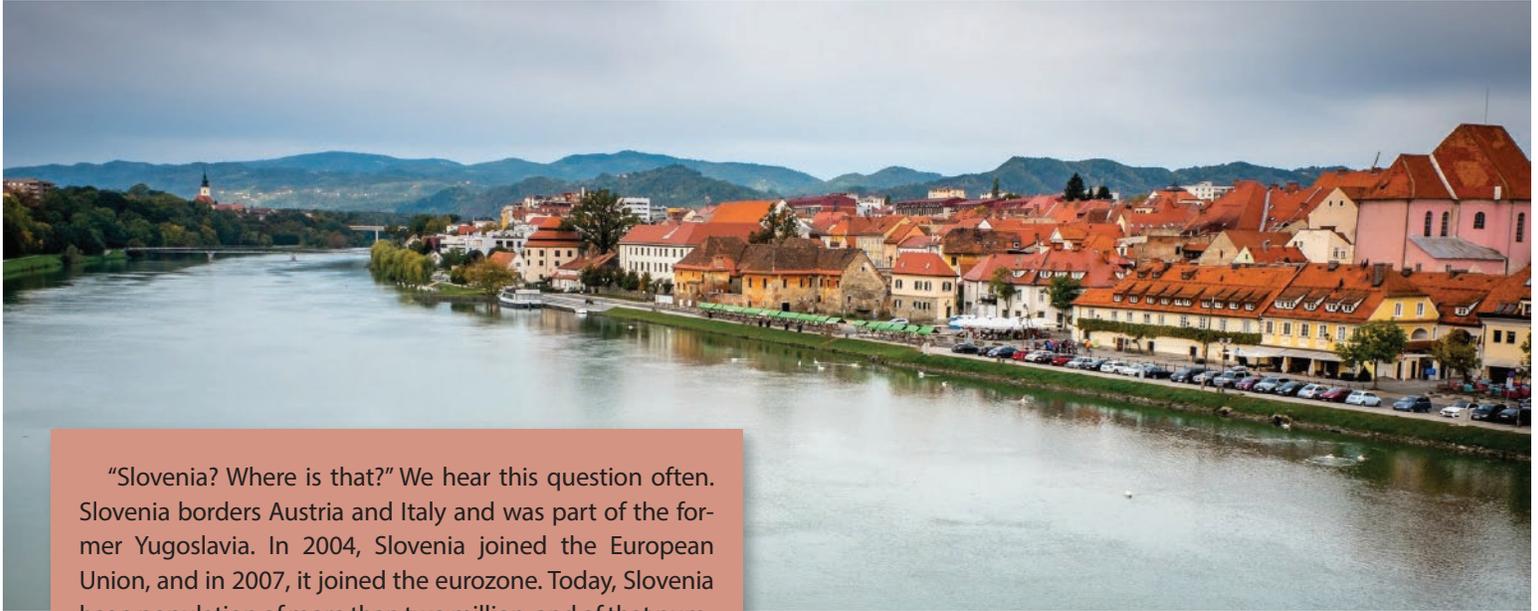
COVER PHOTO: Drava River in Maribor, Slovenia—Photo by Sandi Cijan BACK COVER: ©iStockPhoto.com/francescoch



SLOVENIA

Missionaries Encourage a New Generation of Church Leadership

BY BERND FLOCK & SANDI CIJAN



“Slovenia? Where is that?” We hear this question often. Slovenia borders Austria and Italy and was part of the former Yugoslavia. In 2004, Slovenia joined the European Union, and in 2007, it joined the eurozone. Today, Slovenia has a population of more than two million, and of that number, an estimated 1,000 are believers—that’s 0.05 percent.

Maribor is the second largest city in Slovenia, and it has a mixed-up history. Although part of the Holy Roman Empire from 1164 to 1804, it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. While under Austrian rule, Maribor’s population was about 38,000, and of that number, 32,000 were Austrians. Still today, Austrians and northern Slovenes share many similarities. After years of functioning under Germany’s control and then as part of Yugoslavia following World War II, Slovenia, including Maribor, gained independence in 1991. Presently, the city’s population is about 100,000.

A MISSIONARY’S PERSPECTIVE

In early 1993, Karin and I, Bernd, moved from Graz, the second largest city in Austria, to a village near the border of Slovenia. In spring 1994, a German missionary working in Zagreb, Croatia, held a week of evangelistic meetings in Maribor and asked me to help with the outreach. Afterward, the small fellowship, which a medical doctor previously led, asked me to continue working with it. From 1994 to 2002, we held services and led Bible studies in Austria and Slovenia. At the beginning of our work with the Maribor meeting, fewer than 10 believers attended the fellowship.

Expanding in number

In 2000, a couple from Germany were sent to do full-time missions work in Maribor and joined the fellowship. After two years, we left the work since, by that time, the meeting of 10 Slovenes had three German missionaries—the couple and a single woman in language study—working with it. Eventually, the couple had to leave, so the fellowship asked us to support and teach the believers once again. Karin led the women’s ministry, and I held evangelistic Bible studies and preached. Soon, two young Slovene men stepped into leadership roles. The church was growing!

Growing spiritually

One couple, Sandi and Aleska Cijan, who were influenced by the Seventh Day Adventist church, started attending the fellowship and committed their lives to the Lord and to serving in the church. Along with four others, Sandi was baptized in a joint service with a small church in Austria. Shortly after, Aleska was baptized. We counseled the Cijans in preparation for their marriage and, in July 2008, participated in their wedding ceremony.

With time, the Cijans grew spiritually and became more involved in the church’s workings. We were thrilled to see Sandi and Aleska take on responsibilities in the fellowship, and eventually, the church recognized Sandi and another young man, Dejan, as elders. Just as Karin and I were excited to see the Lord’s work in Maribor, so were the Slovene believers. They had their own perspective on the developments, which Sandi shares on the next page.

A NATIONAL'S PERSPECTIVE

From 2012 to 2018, two churches, one Brethren and one Baptist, met in the same building in Maribor. They were small groups, and they had similar theology, backgrounds, and teaching. Since most of the leaders and believers are first-generation Christians, church tradition did not heavily influence their church models. In 2018, the two churches decided that they could serve and portray Christ and His love as a united group. Now, our fellowship is called Evangelical Christian Church Maribor.

In July 2018, we moved into a bigger space that another evangelical church in Maribor rents. Their church model is different, so they don't use the location on Sundays. We are grateful that they opened their hearts and doors to us. Since then, worship, teaching, and Sunday school take place on Sunday mornings, except during the winter months when we meet in the afternoon due to poor heating. Currently, about 50 people gather, and we are encouraged to see a new face almost every Sunday. We've grown!

Developing unity

We are slowly developing our common identity and building unity among believers. We took some steps in developing the elders and presenting our values and vision, which are included in our joint statement. We are creating new ministries to provide our believers with opportunities to get involved and to meet their spiritual, physical, and emotional needs. We realize that the church is a living organism and that we are here to help everyone mature in Christ.

In March 2019, we had a special service at which the church appointed four men—Marjan, Dejan, Bostjan, and myself—as new elders of the church. This special service was an amazing experience for all of us, and our brothers and sisters talked about it long after. We are thankful that the new elders serve together well, working toward the shared goal of placing Christ and His Word at the center of our lives and ministry. Our church values state this goal: "We are aware that God has to be at the center of everything we do as a church as well as in the life of every member. We will therefore strive to seek God's will in every situation through His Word and prayer. We act like that to honor our Lord, who is, in everything, worthy of all glory, praise, and honor."

In summer 2019, we celebrated our first anniversary as a united church body. The year was exciting for us, filled with organizational efforts and adaptation to life as a new family. We

are grateful that our congregation enjoys each other's company and that we are starting to live as a "bigger" family.

Being a testimony

In June 2019, we baptized five young people from three churches. We were encouraged to hear the stories of how God worked in their lives, leading them to put their trust in Jesus. About 120 people from three churches—a Reformed church in Ljubljana, an evangelical church in Velenje, and our church—gathered for a joint service on a farm near Maribor. Please pray that the five believers will walk faithfully with the Lord and that they would be an encouragement and testimony to the people around them, especially non-Christians.

Recently, the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students invited Bostjan and his family to Australia to participate in a one-year training program for student ministry from November 2019 to December 2020. It is an opportunity for further development for the student work in Slovenia and for relationships with partners and supporters. Our church faces the challenge of learning how to function without Bostjan and his family this year. We have asked Bernd to preach on Sundays more often during their absence. Please pray that God would accomplish what is pleasing to Him.

More than a year and half ago, God blessed Aleska and me with our firstborn child, Noeli. The first year with her was blessed, amazing, and exciting but also tiring and challenging. Noeli opened up new friendships, acquaintances, and opportunities with whom and in which we can share our living hope. In October, Noeli began kindergarten, which was a big step for all of us. We ask for prayers that Noeli develops well and also for our family as we seek to have more contact with other families and friends. We desire to build deeper relationships so that we can share the good news of Christ with all of them.

Please pray that God would accomplish what is pleasing to Him.



Sandi Cijan is an elder at Evangelical Christian Church Maribor. Active in the leadership and programs of the Maribor assembly, Sandi and Aleska also desire to build relationships with other young families in their community.

A HOPEFUL FUTURE

In a former communist country with little gospel work, we are encouraged to see the testimony of this new, growing church. Communism left a mark of political mistrust and financial disaster, which has affected people on a deeply personal level. But God breaks through every barrier! A new generation of bold, fearless leaders is rising up, and more people are needed to spearhead evangelism and discipleship. Looking over the past 25 years that we worked in Maribor and seeing a small fellowship of 10 believers grow to about 50, we are reminded that God does build His church and, without Him, we can do nothing. Please pray that the work in Maribor will continue to be effective and that the Lord will open the hearts of many more. ■

We are encouraged to see the testimony of this new, growing church.



Bernd and Karin Flock are commended from Bendale Bible Chapel in Scarborough, Ontario, and Farrand Street Bible Chapel in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



From top: Bernd prepares to preach on the strength of unity in the body of Christ; Three Slovenian churches gather to baptize five believers; The united Maribor church enjoys a special service to recognize its first elders; Maribor's stunning buildings, including city hall, showcase its long history.

A Visit to Peru

Witnessing the Joys and Challenges of Ministry

BY JOHN PEASLAND



Every year, the CMML and MSC Canada missionaries who are commended to the Lord's work in Peru gather for a retreat. In October 2019, my family and I had the opportunity to join them. Because I grew up on the mission field in Mexico, Spanish and Latin American culture are second nature to me. My wife, Ingrid, is from Mexico, and our four kids have moved between the US and Mexico all of their lives. So, traveling to Trujillo, Peru, for the retreat was a welcome and exciting trip for us. Our prayer for this visit was, as Paul said in Romans 1:12, "That I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

A glimpse of the work

After a 16-hour, overnight trip stretched into a 36-hour, two-night journey, we finally arrived in Trujillo, Peru. Pablo and Sarah Cenepo-Torres (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 23) and their daughters welcomed us for breakfast, and a few hours later, we participated in the Lord's Supper and spoke to the local body of believers at Comunidad Bíblica Trujillo. Our son Nathan and I participated in a soccer match Sunday afternoon and found that Peruvians, like Mexicans, love *fútbol* enough to come out and listen as I shared a brief gospel challenge before the game.

On Monday and Tuesday, we recovered a little from our travels while enjoying sweet fellowship with the Cenepo-Torres family. They showed us around the area and introduced us to the brothers and sisters at the Elliot Christian School and Hogar de Esperanza ("Home of Hope"). At the school, we were thrilled to see that the students receive a quality education and, more importantly, learn the truth of the Gospel. Please pray for this school as they face difficulty from government inspectors who are extremely stringent due to the absence of bribery. Currently, the school must make multiple



From top: As the sun sets, the Peasland kids play eagerly with their new friends at Hogar de Esperanza; The Peasland and Cenepo-Torres families enjoy time together before the retreat; The Peaslands tour the Elliot Christian School and the connected Centro Bíblico Trujillo with the Cenepo-Torres family.



costly upgrades to meet the inspectors' requirements. Pray for wisdom as they deal with this opposition. Our experience at the orphanage was eye-opening and challenging for our four children as they shared fruit, which we bought at the local market, with the children and young people. We spent an afternoon getting to know each one as they showed us their home. Pray for the brothers and sisters who minister to the youth.

From Tuesday evening through Friday, we attended the retreat and got to know the missionary families from around the country. Each day, I had the privilege of sharing a series of challenges from Scripture in the morning and evening. The highlight of the retreat was the time reserved for each missionary to share about the Lord's work in their place of service. We heard reports from Luis and Crystal Carrillo (MPH Day 23) in Ferreñafe, Pablo and Sarah Cenepo-Torres (MPH Day 23) in Trujillo, Aleks and Kelly Clark (MPH Day 23) in Chiclayo, Tom and Carol Clark (MPH Day 23) in Chiclayo, Peter and Marta Hocking (MPH Day 23) in Lima, Becky Hulshizer (MPH Day 24) in Ica, Jedidiah and Shaomi Lichty (MPH Day 24) in Cascas, Jesse and Janel Mattix (MPH Day 24) in Tarapoto, Mindy and Javier Ramirez (MPH Day 24) in Trujillo, and Bob and Noel Rich in Arequipa. Each shared prayer requests for challenges they face. Afterward, we divided into groups to pray for the requests. It is critical that we in North America also bring these brothers and sisters before the throne of God as they serve Him faithfully in Peru. Dan and Peggy Covert, from near Seattle, Washington, and their friend Rocky Osborne taught the children lessons on Ezekiel and kept the kids profitably occupied throughout the adult sessions.

On Friday, we drove north to Pueblo Nuevo with Tom and Carol Clark and spent a couple of days at Morning Star Children's Home. We enjoyed meeting and loving the children and the staff. Our children quickly became involved in the games

and activities. All the young girls wanted to hug, hold, and walk with Charlotte, our youngest child. Pray for Morning Star and the Clarks as they seek the Lord's direction for the additional staff and resources needed to increase the capacity of the home. Tom shared that the home must turn down two to three children per week due to insufficient capacity. Pray for the Lord's continued provision for this ministry, as well as the Elliot School and Hogar de Esperanza in Trujillo, with the sizeable recurring expenses to maintain and operate the facilities.

A prayer for the work

This trip to Peru encouraged and challenged us as a family. Please pray that our visit might also, in some way, encourage those whom we met. We fellowshiped with wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ, and we now treasure these friendships. Every country I visit—Peru is not the exception—I leave a piece of my heart behind and come back with a true burden for the ministry there. The Lord is working in amazing ways in Peru, amid many challenges. The Gospel blazes brightly through the labor of the missionaries and Peruvian brothers and sisters who pick up the torch and carry it forward in the Lord's name. May those of us in North America do our portion as a different, yet essential, part of Christ's body to further these ministries in Peru through faithful prayer and support. ■

John Peasland is CMML's board secretary.

From left: The Peaslands visit the children and staff at Hogar de Esperanza; At the Elliot School, the welcoming classrooms create a positive learning environment; Morning Star Children's Home provides children with a loving place to live, grow, and play; At Morning Star, children get to know each other while playing together.



Angola

Providing Spiritual Refreshment for Believers

BY PETER DALEY

In 1982, my wife, Louise, and I felt God's leading to go to Angola as full-time missionaries. I had recently finished the Discipleship Intern Training Program, which William MacDonald and Gene Gibson led, at Fairhaven Bible Chapel in San Leandro, California. Subsequently, I resigned from my teaching position in Ontario, Canada, and we prepared to go to Angola as commended missionaries with CMML. In March 1983, we went to Portugal for six months of intensive language study to learn Portuguese, Angola's national language. In September, after receiving our visas, we traveled to the mission station in Biula, Angola. For the next eight months, we settled in and studied the Chokwe language.

Waiting on God's timing

Unfortunately, a civil war that was festering in other parts of Angola came into our area. The rebels were intent on taking expatriates, like us, hostage and marching them to South Africa, which was 400 miles away. At the time, we had a two-year-old child, and Louise was seven-months pregnant with our second child. Our future at the mission station did not look good. Soon, it was decided that all the missionaries should evacuate, and in May 1984, we returned to the States.

The civil war, which started in 1975, raged on for 27 years and finally ended in February 2002 with the death of the rebel leader. As a family, we were unable to return to Angola on a permanent basis. However, in 1993, we were thankful to be commended to Portugal for a two-year commitment to serve the assemblies in the north of the country, once again with CMML.

From 1994 to 2008, I made trips to Angola and visited eight times to help with projects and teach among the assemblies. On three of those trips, I traveled with Donald Cole, a veteran missionary to Angola. In 2010, I had the privilege of returning on a regular basis. For the past 10 years, God has allowed me to travel to Angola twice per year for four to seven weeks at a time. Mainly, I teach at Cassongo Bible School and among the assemblies in Lunda Norte Province.

Teaching Bible students

Marjorie Beckwith, the Canadian missionary who is now home with the Lord, encouraged Denis Calei, an Angolan full-time worker during the early 2000s, to start a Bible school. The vision for the school was to be located close to the Cassongo River, about 20 minutes from Luena. As a result, Cassongo Bible School was born.



From top: A believer shares the Gospel with a local resident; Peter enjoys teaching and fellowshipping with the students at Cassongo Bible School.

Today, the school's mission is to train and encourage rural elders and deacons regardless of their tribal affiliations. Students commit to five years and leave their villages and families to spend two months, between April and October, each year studying God's Word. The staff is comprised of Angolan and expatriate missionaries. Due to the war years and rural conditions, the students have little previous Bible training. The program is an excellent opportunity for them to study the Bible, doctrines, and subjects, such as church leadership, in an expository way. The ultimate goal is for these church leaders to teach the material to their local assemblies once they return to their villages. This model is an excellent application of the 2 Timothy 2:2 principle.

Every August through September, I teach at the school for at least four weeks. In 2019, I taught the books of Isaiah, Daniel, and Romans. Usually, I work with 15 to 20 students. The majority of the students are Chokwe, but other tribal groups, such as Luvale and Luchazi, are represented. From 7:30 a.m. to about 12:00 p.m., I teach in Portuguese and, simultaneously, am translated into Chokwe. The two languages are needed for optimum understanding of Scripture. In the afternoons, others teach classes from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Along with teaching, I help the men in practical ways, such as supplying pens, folders, outlines, and reading glasses. They are grateful for these items.

Encouraging local assemblies

Approximately 2,000 assemblies exist in Angola. Many of them are located in Lunda Norte Province among the Chokwe people. In the past, because of diamond and gold mining, foreigners, including missionaries, were prohibited from entering much of the area. As a result, many of the assemblies are poorly taught, and some have never received a missionary visit. My Angolan colleagues say, "Têm sede para palavra," meaning "they have thirst for the Word," and indeed they do!

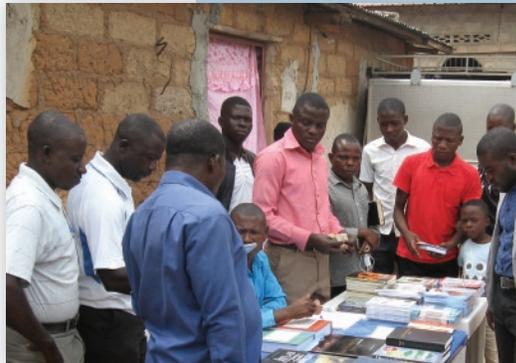
For approximately four weeks in February and March, I visit this area. I travel with Angolan colleagues named Jacó and Jordão. We borrow a vehicle and travel the somewhat difficult roads to cities or municipalities.

When we arrive at a center, the welcome we receive is humbling. Often, a contingent of 100 Christian women await our arrival outside the city. Once we reach them, they fill the road and sing as they lead us to the local assembly. We follow at a crawl, afraid of burning the clutch or injuring someone. After 20 or 30 minutes, we see a group of men outside a church building—they are waiting for us. Once there, everyone shakes hands with us and escorts us to the church guesthouse where we meet with the elders to discuss the teaching for the upcoming days. Then, I enjoy teaching God's Word to these "thirsty" people. Sometimes, believers from outlying villages walk for



Top (L-R): The students learn from Peter's classes on Isaiah, Daniel, and Romans; The school's dorms provide a place for students to live for two months each year.

Bottom (L-R): A student tests a new pair of reading glasses; While teaching in the villages, Peter sells Bibles and Christian literature at discounted prices; Believers from outlying villages travel many miles to join a local assembly for special teaching sessions.



many miles, swelling the numbers to more than 1,000. They are not satisfied with only a morning teaching time, so often, I am obliged to teach in the afternoons too. It is tiring but rewarding. After several days, we travel to the next place, and we begin the process again. At each location, in addition to teaching, we sell a large number of Bibles, hymnbooks, and Bible literature at discounted prices to the believers. I also distribute reading glasses.

Praying for Angola

Please pray for Angola and the Lord's work there, particularly in regard to four things. Pray that the Bible-school students would teach others in their villages; that the many Brethren assemblies would grow in the knowledge and application of God's Word; that the assemblies would recognize, support, and encourage Angolan Bible teachers of the Word; and that good relationships would develop between the individual assemblies and the organization that represents them to the government. ■

Peter and Louise Daley are commended from Stevensville Bible Chapel in Stevensville, Montana.



Top: Peter teaches itinerantly throughout the Lunda Norte Province, visiting a new town every few days. **Bottom:** Typically, at each village, the believers escort Jacó, Jordão, and Peter to the local assembly.



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Ask a Missionary

Missions work around the world is often very different from what friends and family at home encounter day to day. So, to learn about life on the field while getting to know our missionaries better, we asked them to share their firsthand experience or advice.

QUESTION: What do you appreciate most about the culture you live in?

NIGERIA

Steve & Patricia Phillips



We appreciate the honor shown to elders. It provides a wide platform for addressing anyone younger than ourselves and receiving a listening ear.

AUSTRIA

Scott & Leslie Walt



Scott and I appreciate the tenacity Austrians have to maintain close, long-term relationships.

ZAMBIA

David Croudace



Most people here in Zambia and in Malawi and South Africa are willing to listen when someone approaches them one-to-one to share the Gospel.

COLOMBIA

Christian & Pilar Ramirez



Colombians are warm and friendly people. They will go out of their way to help someone in trouble and will always welcome you into their homes. No matter the time of day, a cup of coffee is always ready for anyone who drops by.

ZAMBIA

Jeff & Mary June Speichinger



We appreciate everything—Zambians are forgiving, loving, kind, and pleasant to work with.

BOLIVIA

David & Ruth Sommer



We appreciate the overall slower lifestyle. Although they may be very poor, the people give their best when they invite us into their homes. And we appreciate the courtesy shown in greetings.

THAILAND

John & Abigail Harrell



In our current season of being language learners, we really appreciate the patience and gentleness that Thais show their guests. Even when we mispronounce something, our Thai friends respond with a smile and a gentle reminder of the appropriate way to say it.

MEXICO

Whitney Landis



What I appreciate most about Mexican culture is the emphasis on relationships over time and tasks. People here are mentally present wherever they are and rarely are worried about going to the next social engagement or getting the next thing done.

ASK YOUR QUESTIONS! Visit [CMML.us/askamissionary](https://www.cmml.us/askamissionary) to submit your question—it might be selected for a future issue!