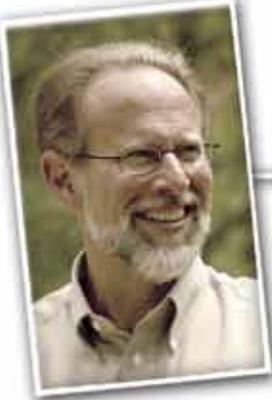


Canada: villagemissions.ca USA: www.village-missions.org

COUNTRY *Matters*

**REACHING THE OLDEST
ONE BY ONE**


Village Missions
Keeping Country Churches Alive



A View From the Country

with Brian Wechsler, Executive Director

A man once asked a pastor, “Do you know what the best day to repent is?” He replied, “Probably today.” And the man said, “No, sir.

The best day to repent is the day before you die.”

We may laugh but some people do think that way, sadly. But there’s more than one problem with that. Aside from living a life without knowing Jesus, none of us know what day we’ll die. Right now is always the right time to repent. **Today** is the best day you can trust Jesus with your life. It’s the perfect day to start down a new path. There couldn’t be a better day than today to come to Jesus.

Sometimes here in the country, things move kind of slow. Sometimes people are slow to recognize their need and they are even slower to make changes. These days in rural communities, you see a lot of folks who hung up their apron and started slowing down years ago. They aren’t getting into as much trouble as they used to, probably. Maybe more for lack of capacity than lack of heart. But they still need Jesus as much today as at any other day in their life. And there’s no better day than today to start following Him.

There’s another saying that I hear now and again out here in the country. It’s this: “**When you’re done, you’re done.**” And that’s a lie.

The hearts and lives of our senior citizens are as precious as that of a two year old, a ten year old, or a newly wed couple. And it’s our job to make sure they are not forgotten. Not passed by. Not ignored. Because they can’t repent the day before they die, probably.

We need to care. I don’t mean care for them, I mean care about them. That’s what Jesus would do. And that’s why our Village Missionaries are there, devoting their time and energy to loving and caring about the oldest in their communities.

Standing with the Country Church,

Brian Wechsler
Executive Director, Village Missions

OVERLOOKED PEOPLE IN UNREMEMBERED PLACES

THE OLDEST. Folks who’ve spent their busy lives raising kids, working hard, and loving their families, have more time on their hands than ever. And now as they look toward the sunset of life, they have time to reflect and consider.

‘What am I going to do with the rest of my life?’

‘What does life mean?’

‘What happens when I die?’

It might be the first time they’ve had the time to think about God. Now on Social Security, they’re taking life more seriously and looking at it differently than before. In spite of what many think, it just could be that these people are even more receptive to the gospel.

That’s why it’s so important that Village Missionaries are there.

Keep reading, and we’ll share with you some stories about the unexpected openness of some folks in country communities, and how God is working in their lives.

THAT NEXT SUNDAY SHE PLAYED THE PIANO, AND IT WAS ALL DIFFERENT...

One of the struggles a small church faces is that sometimes there aren't enough people with the right talents to do the regular things a church needs. This means, at times, the church has to think creatively. That's how Fieldbrook Community Church, in northern California, met Doris. Suddenly without a pianist, they weren't sure how they would continue holding worship services without one. Doris was the perfect answer for Fieldbrook, and little did she know, through her new side "gig" at Fieldbrook, she would find the Answer she didn't realize she was looking for.

Doris, an elderly woman in the community, wasn't an attender of the church, nor a believer. The church got to know her a little bit a few years prior when she bought the church's spare piano. She was surprised when Fieldbrook's Village Missionary, Eugene Horst, approached her.

"Doris, I know you don't come to our church, but would you be interested in playing piano for us?"

"I'm 80 years old, I wouldn't be any good..."

"No Doris, you'd be great!"

So she agreed to help, and they practiced every week, playing old hymns and choruses. She asked questions about the words, and they ended up talking about the gospel. The congregation loved her, and she became a special part of Fieldbrook Community Church. Lots of folks were praying for her to place her faith in Jesus. But she wasn't ready. She even said, "I'm 80. I've worked hard and lived a good life. And when I die, that's it."

Then one day, Doris called her pastor. Only she and God know quite what happened in her heart, but she invited Pastor Eugene over because she wanted to talk about Jesus. That day, she bowed her head and asked Jesus to be her Savior.

The following week Doris played the piano at church as usual, but this Sunday, it was different. She was there as a new believer, surrounded by the people who'd been praying for her all along. When her pastor asked her to tell the church about her decision, she built up her courage and raised her hand to speak. With a huge smile, she let the whole church know that she prayed and accepted Christ. Her new family went wild!

God doesn't forget the elderly – he cares deeply for them. You won't reach people like Doris as easily through social media, and you won't find a group of eighty 80 year olds. Folks like Doris, you reach one by one.



“YOU KNOW, I THINK YOU MADE ME A BELIEVER!”

Dave grew up working for his dad in the family bar. He's a rough-around-the-edges kind of guy, and he's lived life pretty hard. He's the kind of guy that you would never think would come to Christ. Dave and his wife, residents of Coram, Montana, met Village Missionary Ken Ainsworth because his wife needed some help from a pastor. Now, years after she passed, Ken and Dave are good, good friends.

Every time Dave and Pastor Ken spent time together, Ken would offer to pray before he left. Without fail, Dave would push back, “No, I don't want nothing to do with that religious stuff.” It almost became a joke between the two of them.

But then one day, Dave got hurt pretty badly and ended up in the hospital. Instead of calling 911, he called Pastor Ken (who wasn't sure why he was being called before 911). Of course, Ken

drove straight to the hospital to meet Dave.

Before Ken left, as always, he asked Dave if he could pray for him...and for the first time, Dave said, “I guess that would be alright!” Ken nearly choked when he heard that! And of course he was thrilled to pray with Dave for the first time.

That day was a turning point. Now Ken and Dave talk about Jesus when they are together. One day, Dave looked at Pastor Ken and said, “You know, I think you made me a believer!” It was a steady transition, the way God slowly worked on Dave's heart.

Even though Dave isn't well enough to make it to church, he still feels like he's a part of their

church. The church comes to him. Some of the kind ladies in the church help him with chores, and others bring him meals. He and Ken study the Bible at home. Dave didn't expect so much love, and at first it kind of confused him...in a good way!



“ARE YOU THE PREACHER? I HATE TO ASK YOU THIS, BUT...”

One ordinary afternoon, Village Missionaries Jason and Kathi Berga, were going about their day at their home in North Lansing, New York when they heard a knock on their door. Jason went to open it, and a 68 year-old man stood before them. His name was Andrew, and he had walked an entire mile to their home to ask a simple favor.

“Are you the preacher?”

“Yes I am.”

“I hate to ask you this, but can I get a ride to the pharmacy? I need my meds.”

While they were driving the five miles to the pharmacy, Pastor Jason learned all kinds of things about Andrew. He was ex-navy, survived on the family farm left to him, and was a true jack-of-all-trades. Andrew continually brought up the loss of his wife ten years ago. When they arrived, it turned out the pharmacy was closed. Andrew was distraught, but Jason assured him that they could go again tomorrow and get the medication he needed.

When Pastor Jason drove Andrew home and saw where he

lived, he was shocked! An abandoned building was caving in, and there were several old cars and campers, plus an old bus that looked like it was from the sixties. Andrew lived alone in an old eight-foot trailer with no running water, no toilet, or any other things you might need.

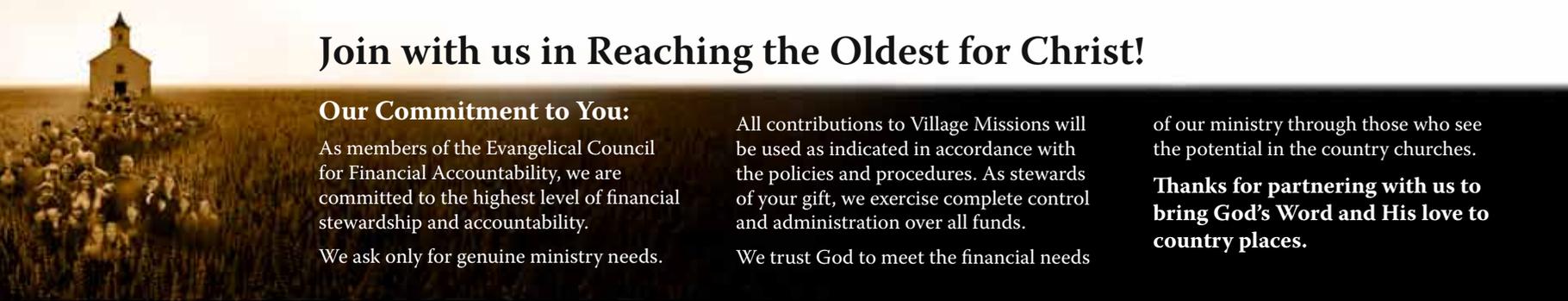
They headed to the pharmacy together a day later, and Andrew got his medicine. However, Andrew seemed very winded and wasn't holding up very well. Pastor Jason took Andrew to the doctor, who directed him straight to the ER. Thankfully, it wasn't life-threatening, and Andrew made it out that day.

The next day when Pastor Jason stopped by the trailer with some books and food, Andrew thanked him for all the help.

Pastor Jason assured him, “You'll be seeing a lot more of me from now on.”

GOD LOVES EVERY PERSON, YOUNG OR OLD, and his heart is to see each person impacted by his rich love! Dave, Doris, and Andrew are just a few examples of what God is doing in the country church through our Village Missionaries.





Join with us in Reaching the Oldest for Christ!

Our Commitment to You:

As members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, we are committed to the highest level of financial stewardship and accountability.

We ask only for genuine ministry needs.

All contributions to Village Missions will be used as indicated in accordance with the policies and procedures. As stewards of your gift, we exercise complete control and administration over all funds.

We trust God to meet the financial needs

of our ministry through those who see the potential in the country churches.

Thanks for partnering with us to bring God's Word and His love to country places.



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