

BCMWorld

An Inside Look at BCM Global Ministries



BCM'S NEWEST
MISSIONARY TEAM
TAKES THE GOSPEL
TO ECUADOR'S STREETS



PASSING THE PRESIDENTIAL BATON

By: Lisa Biegert

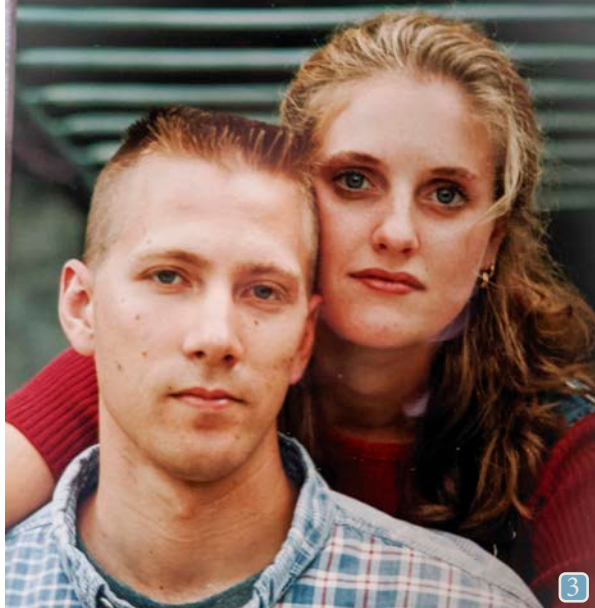
Friday evening, April 21, 2023, a celebration was held at Community Fellowship Church in Lancaster, PA, as the sixth president of BCM International, Dr. Marty Windle, passed the baton of leadership to the seventh president, Dr. Rick Rhoads. More than three hundred were in attendance, including regional leadership from Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, global children's ministry, and more. The evening commemorated all God has done through BCM for the last eighty-seven years while honoring Dr. Windle's seventeen years of service to God with BCM and anticipating all God will continue to do under Dr. Rhoads's leadership.

BCM's fifth president, Dr. Bob Evans, emceed the evening, and numerous individuals from global BCM leadership shared. This included a BCM board member, Jan Smoyer, BCM Africa-Asia director Steve King, and associate missionary Dr. Esther Zimmerman, formerly VP of global children's ministries and currently chair of church and ministry leadership department at Lancaster

Bible College and Capital Seminary (LBC). Other regional leaders offered their welcome to the new president by video.

Dr. Bob Evans told the story of BCM's origin under leadership of BCM's first president, Miss Bessie Traber, and how BCM ministry has evolved globally over the past eighty-seven years. Then Dr. Zimmerman and Pastor Kevin Brown shared the heartbeat of BCM: children and churches. After Dr. Marty Windle and others shared the past of BCM, Dr. Rick Rhoads spoke of his own call and vision for the future of BCM.

At six years of age, Dr. Rhoads made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as Savior through the ministry of a backyard Bible club at a neighbor's house. Shortly after this significant decision, his mom was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The following years were marked by physical, emotional, and financial insecurity as the family battled through hospitalizations, chemotherapy, and surgeries. Rick was twelve when his mother received the news she was in remission from her cancer.



Then at seventeen, Dr. Rhoads received an eerily similar diagnosis to that of his mother: terminal bone cancer. Within five days, his right leg had been amputated below the knee, a huge loss for an active teenager. He spent almost a year in the hospital and was given less than two years to live.

Rick recalls now, “I was asked by someone after that prognosis how I was doing. That’s not exactly the question you like to be asked during that time! But I replied, ‘I have incredible peace with God.’ And it was true! I told God it didn’t matter if he gave me one year to live or more. I was determined to use my remaining time fully focused on him. That was thirty-three years ago. I learned a long time ago that my life is His. I count my life as not my own with each day being a gift provided by God.”

Over the past thirty-three years, Rick has seen how God has faithfully prepared him every step of the way for each “next season” of life God had in store. In 1997, he married his college sweetheart Naomi. They have two adult children, Grace and Eli, and currently make their home in Lancaster, PA.

During the next decades, Rick and Naomi served in camping ministry, pastoral ministry, Christian higher education, and the global mission of training Christian leaders on five continents. They have also both worked in the health care sector, Rick as lead of an MRI neuroimaging team and researcher for Alzheimer’s Disease medications, Naomi in a Christian chiropractic practice.

Dr. Rhoads also continued his education, earning a Master of Arts from Columbia Biblical Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry from George Fox Evangelical Seminary. In 2005, he joined the faculty of Lancaster Bible College and Capital Seminary and Graduate School. As professor and director of student ministry, he traveled extensively with both

students and faculty in LBC’s education abroad and missions outreach. In 2015, he became chair of the church and ministry leadership department.

Rick’s wealth of knowledge and wide variety of ministry service over the last thirty-three years are just a few areas where God was preparing him in advance for the presidency of BCM (see also [BCM Commissions New President, BCM World, Winter 2022](#)). He shares: “As I reflect upon these beautiful seasons, I can see God’s grace in using Naomi and me throughout each season as well as transforming us for works yet to come, particularly in BCM International. Among these significant life soul preparation pieces have been a parallel passion for health care and pastoral ministry. Unique to both fields are empathy, compassion, and caring for others in need, all vital qualities for any leader of a global Christian ministry organization.”

So what brought Dr. Rick Rhoads into the BCM global family? Esther Zimmerman’s passionate heart for reaching children was one major catalyst. During a meal together, she pointedly asked him if he had ever considered working with BCM or applying for the presidential position.

His initial response was a definite “no.” But at the installation ceremony, Dr. Rhoads shared how God had been working on his heart in this area long before the opportunity of serving with BCM presented itself. During a trip to Israel while on staff at LBC, Rick heard a Palestinian Christian explaining his strategy for peace by bringing together Israeli and Palestinian youth. The strategy was simple: soccer.

Sharing a soccer ball between children of these two conflicting people groups proved a surprisingly unifying tactic. It didn’t matter if the children were Israeli or Palestinian. They could at least agree on a



game of soccer. Bringing children together through a game also allowed them to see each other as teammates and friends, not enemies. The children in turn carried this message home to their families on both sides of the racial/political divide.

“Peace,” summarized this Palestinian believer, “is possible in Israel through the children of the next generation.”

Writing about this encounter in his journal, Dr. Rhoads distinctly remembers wondering repeatedly over the following months what God was doing in his heart. “I just kept going back to this journal entry. I thought then that maybe there was something God was going to do. I just didn’t yet know what it was.”

Following that initial conversation with Esther Zimmerman, Dr. Rhoads found himself approached by three more completely unrelated Christian leaders, each of whom broached this same topic. Rick finally realized God might be showing him the next season of life for Rick and his wife Naomi. He reached out to various global BCM leaders to learn more. As he spoke with these leaders, Dr. Rhoads shares that he could “see how God was radically moving and how passionate these people were about discipling children and multiplying churches across the planet. God is moving!”

Parallel to this, it had become absolutely clear to the BCM international board and leadership, including then-president Dr. Marty Windle and president emeritus Dr. Bob Evans, that Dr. Rick Rhoads was the man of God whom God had chosen to pick up the baton and lead BCM into the next eighty-seven years of ministry, should God tarry. Five months after saying no to that question from Dr. Zimmerman, Rick Rhoads accepted the position as the seventh president of BCM International.

While excited to take on this leadership role, Dr. Rhoads humbly acknowledges that he is standing on the shoulders and reaping the benefits of all those who have gone before. He expresses: “The ministries of BCM would not be where they are today were it not for the grace of God and the faithfulness of the leadership over these past eighty-seven years.”

Dr. Rhoads asks for prayer that he will persevere in this vein of reliance on the Lord and faithfulness to God’s mission as BCM continues to reach children and strengthen the church globally.

1 2 3 4 5

1. Rhoads family picture 2. Rick Rhoads installation service 3. Young Rick and Naomi 4. Rick Rhoads, on right, on LBC missions outreach in Uganda 5. Prayer over Rhoads family at installation service

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ROAD

By: Dr. Rick Rhoads, President BCM International



We've all had moments in life where God shows up in the least expected places. In fact, I sense that is often where God shows up in my life with consistency. As I reflect upon my first seven months serving with BCM, I am struck by how God is at work globally, particularly through "the least of these" and teenagers. The following vignettes are just a handful of countless special moments where I noticed God at work as I participated with BCM ministries across India, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, and Peru.

India and Sri Lanka

In February 2023, I traveled to India and Sri Lanka with president emeritus of BCM International, Dr. Marty Windle. We were welcomed warmly and graciously by BCM Asia regional director Susiri Liyanage, BCM India director Paul Padmaker, and BCM Sri Lanka director Meashed Liyanage. The following ten days were filled with leadership meetings and land travel to numerous BCM ministries. A few highlights stand out.

The Bus Ride: Not long after arriving in India, we were privileged to share at a BCM church about three hours' drive from Hyderabad, where BCM India has its national headquarters. We took in glimpses of monkeys hanging from trees and farmers in rice and sugar cane fields before arriving at a small town where a sizeable crowd had gathered to welcome us. After shaking many hands and removing our shoes, we entered the church. The worship, passion, and worn Bibles were evident and convicting.



After the service, a woman approached me. She shared how she'd ridden on a bus ten hours to meet me and our team and to hear us give God's message. It was humbling to say the least. I couldn't find adequate words for this moment, but I managed to say, "If you came ten hours by bus, I'm not sure you need to hear from us! We probably need to be hearing from you as to how God is moving and working in your life!"

The Presence of God: Having lost my own leg below the knee to cancer at age seventeen, I am always struck by those suffering from disabilities. While walking one day around Hyderabad, I noticed a street beggar stricken with a serious disability. His left leg missing and unable to walk, he was forced to depend on others for kindness, care, financial provision, and even presence. His situation brought powerfully to mind the lame man Jesus healed in John 5. How easily this could be me!

A Mango Tree: Some days later, we spoke at a BCM church in Sri Lanka. After the service, we were introduced to the church's ministry outreach team, which turned out to be six teenagers. They asked if we'd like to visit a new area where they'd just begun an evangelistic outreach. Eyeing my metallic prosthesis, they added that it would involve a 2.5 kilometer hike up a mountain.

Not a problem! The next day we hiked the 2.5 kilometers up the mountain. Arriving at a mango tree,

we found the six teenagers and more than sixty locals, mostly unchurched, waiting for us. To witness these teens worshipping, sharing God's Word, and simply being God's loving presence to others was profound to say the least. As result of their testimony, many there entered a personal relationship with God for the first time in their life.

Peru and Ecuador

In mid-May 2023, my wife Naomi and I along with Dr. Marty Windle, his wife Jeanette, and BCM Latin America regional director Carlos Odicio spent approximately two weeks visiting BCM ministries in several regions of Peru and Ecuador.

Lima, Peru: Pennies for Peru is a program of evangelistic outreach that reaches tens of thousands of children each year. Teams made up of BCM Peru missionaries and volunteers partner with local churches. The church provides venue, date, and time while Pennies for Peru teams orchestrate the program, gospel presentation, and create connection to the local church for follow-up discipleship. At three different events in the Peruvian capital, Lima, we witnessed nearly three hundred children participating. At least half of these children responded to the invitation to follow Christ.

Iquitos, Peru: At almost a half million population, Iquitos, Peru's main jungle port on the Amazon River, is the largest city in the world with no access



by road, only boat and air. As in Sri Lanka, much of BCM ministry there is carried out by teenagers under leadership of a single BCM missionary couple. I was again humbled to see their passion, commitment, and profound impact on so many children in this great Amazon city.

Guayaquil, Ecuador: During our time in Peru and Ecuador, we held three pastoral conferences with the intent of investing in leaders, creating partnerships, and blessing God's kingdom in both countries. One conference in Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city on the Pacific Ocean, was geared specifically to creating awareness of BCM International and the children's ministry resources we have to offer the local church. How thrilling to have nearly two hundred pastors and children's ministry leaders turn out along with top leadership of the Christian & Missionary Alliance Seminary of Guayaquil.

Quito, Ecuador: Our time in Ecuador's capital began with a children's ministry outreach orchestrated by BCM Ecuador's brand-new missionary team in conjunction with one of Quito's largest C&MA churches. Nearly three hundred children attended. This was especially significant because we were there to celebrate the opening of Ecuador as BCM's newest country of ministry (see [Pointing Children to Christ in Ecuador](#)).

That following morning, I was privileged to speak at the church's three Sunday services. Long story short, nearly two thousand people were in attendance with thirty-nine new church members being baptized and almost two hundred adults making decisions to follow Christ.

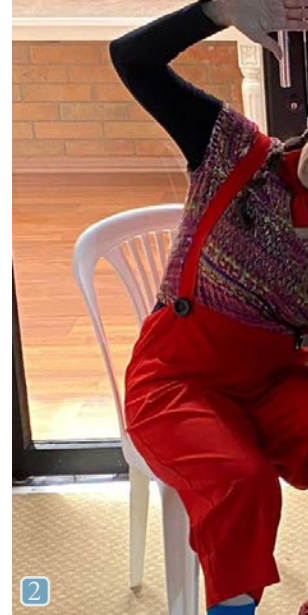
We also had the opportunity to share the ministry of BCM in multiple interviews on HCJB Christian radio stations in both Guayaquil and Quito. Final amazing moments included standing on the actual equator not far from Quito and praying over our BCM Ecuador team and their future ministry.

As I look back on these first two journeys through BCM's global ministries and look forward to many more over coming months, I find myself deeply grateful for how God consistently invites us to join Him in the work He is already doing. It is apparent God is on the move all over the globe. I pray He give us peace, grace, and passion to participate as we travel along the road.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1. Former BCM president, Marty Windle, with current president, Rick Rhoads, in Hyderabad
2. Lame man in Hyderabad
3. BCM India leaders group shot
4. Church under the mango tree
5. Marty and Rick teaching at pastor's event
- 6 & 7. Pennies for Peru event
8. Radio interview at HCJB





POINTING CHILDREN TO CHRIST IN ECUADOR

By: Jeanette Windle

In June 2023, Ecuador became BCM's newest ministry field with the commissioning of Juan Fer and Rita Sanchez from the capital city, Quito, and Jose Quezada in the coastal megacity of Guayaquil. Participating in a week of inaugural events were BCM president Rick Rhoads and wife Naomi, Latin America director Carlos Odicio, president emeritus Marty Windle, and wife Jeanette Windle.

BCM Latin America began in Peru in 1993 with a very specific vision: *"Pointing children to Christ and pointing churches to children."* BCM Quito missionary Juan Fer explains why this is so urgent for his country.

"Ecuador has become a heavily Christianized nation. But little emphasis is placed on children because there is a mentality they aren't capable of understanding the gospel. If churches have children's ministry, the focus is often just keeping them entertained until they are old enough to attend youth and adult events. Meanwhile our children are being flooded with false ideology on gender and sexual immorality. Divorce rates are over seventy percent. Extreme poverty leads parents to migrate for work, leaving children to be raised by extended family. It is imperative churches be awakened to the silent cries of hurting children in their neighborhoods."

JOSE QUEZADA

And God is indeed awakening the Ecuadorian church. It was 2016 when BCM Peru director Jonatan Odicio and his wife Shantal were invited to teach a children's ministry training conference for almost seventy pastors and children's ministry leaders at Iglesia Alianza Centenario (Christian & Missionary Alliance Church of Centenario) in Guayaquil (see [A Border Crossing for BCM Peru, BCM World, March 2016](#)). Among those attending was a university student named Jose Quezada.

By the time he was thirteen, Jose had joined four different churches. The youngest of three siblings, he grew up in an impoverished home abandoned by an alcoholic father. To keep her children from delinquency, his mother Ana Maria insisted they attend church. First, the local Catholic diocese. Then a Jehovah's Witness hall.

One day two foreign young men showed up at their door. They explained that God's real truth could only be found in the Book of Mormon. Soon Jose's entire family was baptized into the Mormon church. Jose dreamed of becoming a Mormon missionary himself until a girl his older brother was dating commented, "Did you know the Bible says if even an angel from heaven preaches a different gospel than Jesus preached, they will be under God's curse (Galatians 1:8-9)?"

This was a shock since Mormons taught that an angel had descended from heaven with a new "gospel" on golden tablets. Pulling her family from the Mormon church, Ana Maria decided it was time to read the Bible for themselves and find out what it really said. Some time later, she decided to visit just one more church right down the block which they'd been walking by for years.



Iglesia Alianza Centenario was like no church the family had ever attended. The pastor preached right out of the Bible. For the first time, Jose recognized that God loved him so passionately He'd sent His own Son to pay the price for Jose's sin. At fourteen, Jose surrendered his heart and life to Jesus Christ.

Having relinquished his goal of being a Mormon missionary, Jose never dreamed that one day he'd serve as BCM Ecuador's first full-time missionary. The 2016 children's ministry conference gripped his heart as he knew what it was to grow up in difficult circumstances not knowing God's love. He began volunteering in children's evangelism around Guayaquil. In 2020, he enrolled in BCM Peru's Center for Ministry Training. In December 2021, he attended BCM candidate orientation (see [Taking the Next Step, BCM World, Spring 2022](#)), then spent the next year learning every aspect of BCM Peru children's ministry so he could replicate it in his home country.

The last three years haven't always been easy, including trusting God for monthly finances. But as Jose expresses, "No one said following Jesus would be easy. Still, I can say with certainty that the joy of serving God has been worth all the cost."

One recent children's outreach Jose and his team held in Guayaquil was in a poverty-stricken, crime-ridden slum called La Trinitaria where shacks on stilts extend over a garbage-filled harbor and children live with flying bullets, drugs, and violent street gangs. More than fifty children were drawn by the colorful costumes, balloons, and snacks, a rare treat in their lives. They stayed to hear of God's love and promise of salvation.

At the end, one small boy approached a volunteer to ask, "I just asked Jesus into my heart. Does that mean I am now God's child?"

With a loving hug, the volunteer assured him, "Yes, little friend, if you believed in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are now a child of God."



It is such experiences that keeps Jose Quezada passionate about reaching Ecuadorian children for Christ. He summarizes, "Our Savior left us a legacy to go and make disciples, including children. My goal for BCM Ecuador is to motivate every member of every church with this vision even if that means pouring out my own time and resources until nothing is left."

PASTOR VICTOR AND CINTHYA JAME

If you ask the senior pastor of Iglesia Pradera de Dios (Church of God's Pasture) in southern Guayaquil, Jose is well on his way to accomplishing that task. Pastor Victor Jame shakes his head humorously. "Jose is like the Covid virus. He is so passionate about reaching Ecuador's children that he infects everyone to whom he shares the ministry of BCM, including my own family!"

In the early 1990s, Victor and Cinthya Jame lived in a tiny apartment on the Centenario Alliance Church property. As caretakers, they cleaned bathrooms, set up chairs, made repairs. What they didn't do was set foot in the church services. One day Pastor Walter Tapia stood in their doorway and told Victor, "I'm not moving until you agree to attend a service."

Victor and Cinthya finally accepted an invitation to an evangelistic campaign. That night both gave their hearts to Christ. Back at Centenario, Victor often answered the phone after the pastor had gone home. As callers poured out their problems, he wished he had more biblical knowledge to help them. Pastor Walter encouraged him to enroll in Guayaquil's Alliance Bible Seminary. In 2000, Victor became part of the Centenario pastoral team. In 2014, he began pastoring Iglesia Pradera de Dios.

Victor's wife Cinthya, three sons Christian, Victor, and Samuel, and daughter-in-law Leidy Giraldo all participated in the 2016 BCM training conference and became committed members of the children's evangelism outreach. Victor was deeply impressed with the new vision for reaching children he was seeing in his own church as well as other participating churches across Guayaquil.

Which was all fine until Victor's youngest son approached him about volunteering for BCM Peru's camp season. Barely seventeen, Samuel had never been so far from home. To his father, he seemed much too young to travel alone all the way to Peru. Victor shared his concerns with an Alliance prayer partner in Colombia. Instead of agreeing, the Colombian pastor commented, "Sometimes we parents are why our children don't follow us into ministry because when they do want to serve God, we don't encourage them."

Well, that can't be God's voice, Victor determined. A short time later, he asked another pastoral colleague in Guayaquil to pray about his son's crazy desire to do short-term missions in Peru. After prayer, the other pastor said thoughtfully, "You know, it was at youth camp that I first received God's call to full-time ministry."

Okay, that can't be God's voice either, Victor thought. But for peace of conscience, he agreed to speak with Samuel's school principal. Since no school would allow a student to miss a month of classes, that would be a clear answer God didn't want Samuel to go. To his shock, the principal responded, "That's not a problem. He can do his homework online. After all, this is serving God. The only requirement will be taking his exams, which he can do by Zoom."

There was one more obstacle. A plane ticket to Lima could run a thousand dollars, money they didn't have. After much prayer, Victor told his son, "If we can get a ticket under five hundred dollars, you can go."

By this point Victor wasn't surprised when a family friend found a ticket for just four hundred dollars. Today he says with a smile, "If God could take so much time to make clear that serving in BCM camp ministry was His will for Samuel, how could I say no? My son came home from that trip with a new perspective and maturity. Now we count ourselves privileged to be part of the BCM family, and as a church we will always be ready to partner with BCM ministry here in our city."

JUAN FER AND RITA SANCHEZ

Juan Fer and Rita Sánchez had a similar calling to BCM. Juan Fer accepted Christ during a children's camp at age seven. Throughout his teen years, he volunteered in church ministries and began serving as youth pastor while studying agricultural engineering. Rita came to Christ while completing a degree in architecture, the first Christian in her family. That same year, three siblings went through marriage breakups. Seeing the emotional consequences of broken homes deeply impacted Rita with the urgency of reaching children with God's love.

Juan Fer and Rita met while he was in seminary. By the time they married, both felt called to full-time ministry. While working professionally, they also began helping



with a new church plant, Iglesia Alianza Norte (Alliance Church of North Quito), which today runs 1300 in Sunday attendance. Their original plans were to serve in youth ministry. But as they witnessed the impact of soaring divorce rates and dysfunctional homes, they felt God calling them to marriage and family counseling.

They were first introduced to BCM while visiting a church that family members attended in Canada. BCM's vision of pointing children to Christ and churches to children spoke to the great need they saw in their own country. In August 2022, they attended BCM candidate orientation in Bolivia (see [Expanding Territory for BCM Latin America, BCM World, November 2022](#)). On Sunday, June 4, 2023, they were officially commissioned by their church leadership, BCM president Rick Rhoads, and BCM Latin America director Carlos Odicio.

That same weekend, the BCM Ecuador team in conjunction with Iglesia Alianza Norte held a Gospel Clown event in celebration of Ecuador's Day of the Child. More than 225 children attended, of which a third were unchurched. Dozens of children and parents received Christ during the evangelistic invitation. 170 parents also attended a panel on raising emotionally and spiritually healthy children led by IAN senior pastor Javier Silva, Rick and Naomi Rhoads, Marty and Jeanette Windle, and Carlos Odicio.

BCM ECUADOR

Other inaugural events included pastoral leadership gatherings to present BCM ministry in both Guayaquil and Quito as well as multiple interviews on Ecuador's globally renowned Christian radio station HCJB. In consequence, dozens of churches have already expressed interest in partnering with BCM for raising up children's ministries.

Jose Quezada encountered his own adventure while setting up one particular pastoral leadership conference taught by Rick Rhoads and other BCM personnel. He'd sent out

electronic invitations to pastors all across Guayaquil but hadn't received a single response. Printing invitations, he decided to visit each church and invite the pastors personally. That's when he discovered his vehicle was broken down. Without funds for a mechanic, he set off on foot across this city of almost three million. The following day, a friend drove him to some of the more distant churches. In total, he hand-delivered invitations to eighty churches, but two days before the event, only five churches had confirmed they would be participating.

The day before the conference, BCM leadership was able to announce the event during a radio interview. Within hours, registrations began pouring in. Ultimately, almost two hundred pastors and leaders from over twenty-five churches showed up to learn about God's heart for children and the potential for children's ministry in their churches.

"When it seemed there was nothing I could do," Jose expresses, "God did everything. For that I am so thankful."

The BCM Ecuador team sums up their vision for the future: *"As a new ministry here in Ecuador, we have many dreams but also many challenges. It is our prayer that through BCM's ministry local churches will become a light in the darkness of their neighborhoods where hurting children will not only hear the gospel but by God's glory find a place of spiritual protection and growth."*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. Iglesia Alianza Norte children's event 2. Jose Quezada and Gospel Clowns in Guayaquil 3. Ecuador team at the Equator 4. Gospel Clown outreach 5. Juan Fer and Rita commissioning service 6. Day of Children event with bubble canon 7. Victor and Cynthia's son, Samuel, doing street evangelism



Get Involved!



PRAY

Consider praying for all the BCM International ministries, not just the few featured here! If you decide to make this commitment, let us know so we can send you regular updates from around the world.



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Our missionaries and ministries are supported through people like you. Please consider giving towards the ministries of BCM International. You can give online at www.BCMINTL.org. Just click [Donate Now](#) from the menu.



GO

Maybe God has laid it on your heart to do more. Contact us for more information or about the possibility of joining our team! There is much left to be done. Contact us at reachndevlop@bcmintl.org

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BCM International is a global Bible-Centered Ministry dedicated to making disciples of all age groups for the Lord Jesus Christ through evangelism, teaching, and training so that churches are established and the Church strengthened.

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