

BCMWorld

An Inside Look at BCM Global Ministries



BRINGING A NEW DESTINY TO HOUSE OF FATES



By: Jeanette Windle with Damaris Grauer and Birgit Karsch

Sorsok Háza translates literally from Hungarian to English as “House of Fates.” The word “Sorsok” is used in reference to social outcasts whose “fate” or “destiny” is on the margin of society. The homeless. Drug and alcohol addicts. Those with mental or social problems. Even the elderly who may be suffering Alzheimer’s or dementia or have no family to care for them.

The concept, explains BCM Hungary missionary Damaris Grauer is “people whose lives are upside-down and need to be fixed—socially, mentally, and, of course, spiritually.”

Sorsok Háza offers a wide variety of social and mental services. Those in need can come in to use restroom facilities, a washing machine, the Internet. They can take job training courses or get help for addiction. What they can’t find is help for their spiritual needs.

Originally from Germany, Damaris Grauer and Birgit Karsch have served with BCM in Hungary since 1994. In 1999, God provided Elim Center,



a two-hectare (about five acres) property outside the town of Hódmezővásárhely, where Sorsok Háza is located (see [Here I Am, Send Me—to Hungary?, BCM World, Spring, 2016](#)). Elim serves as BCM Hungary headquarters and for special outreach events. It also hosts a small church.

Two years ago, a young man who as a child had attended Elim events and the church that met there contacted Damaris and Birgit. He was in training to be a social worker, and his heart was burdened that few of the needy floating in and out of Sorsok Háza had ever heard the Gospel or experienced God's love. A nearby ministry had begun an outreach there, but the transient nature of these "sorsok" made developing any ongoing program or relationships very discouraging. Would Damaris and Birgit be willing to help?

Damaris and Birgit prayed about the request, and both felt convicted that God was laying this need on their hearts. They contacted the supervisor in charge of Sorsok Háza, a committed Christian woman who is eager to see God's love shared with her charges. In December 2016, Damaris and Birgit began spending one day every second week at Sorsok Háza. Those who come in the morning are typically the elderly while the afternoon group is largely addicts who are either recovering or trying to get help to break away from drugs or alcohol.

For both groups, Damaris and Birgit begin with a simple handcraft, games, and a time of just visiting and talking. Then they introduce Christian songs and finish with a short devotional message. This allows them to minister to the house staff as well, who always come in to listen to the singing and devotional.

Throughout the year, Damaris and Birgit also take time to visit with the Sorsok Háza regulars individually and make arrangements for them to attend outreach events at Elim Center as well, especially at Christmas and for the summer outreach. They are also invited and very welcome in the church that meets at Elim. Since the "sorsok" are constantly coming and going, it isn't always easy to measure impact, Damaris and Birgit admit. But they have faith that God has called them to sow the seeds of the gospel and he will provide the fruit in his time.

"We try to start friendships so we can introduce

them to the only real friend Jesus, the Son of God," summarizes Damaris. "Some of them are quite open. The ladies of the staff are also interested and listening to the singing and the devotion. There may not be immediate fruit, but we have to be obedient and to trust in God's mercy for these people. We also know that God can change lives and that these people need to hear about God's love."

A divine love that can change the fate and destiny of Hungary's marginalized "sorsok" from social outcasts to members of God's household.

Photos, page 2, top to bottom: Family outreach with House of Fates at Elim - devotional message; Christmas evangelistic outreach; House of Fates outreach - Crafts
Page 3, top to bottom: House of Fates outreach at Elim - Game Time; Busy city landscape in Budapest, Hungary



STILL GIVING BEAUTY FOR ASHES



By: Lauri Barrette

When my husband Daniel and I were involved in a devastating car accident in 1984 just four-and-a-half months after we were married, God's comforting presence was palpable (see [Split Second Tragedy Becomes God's Glorious Intervention, BCM World, Spring, 2008](#)).

Though Daniel was left permanently paralyzed from that day forward, God gave us a deep sense that whatever happened from here on in would be for his glory.

God eventually led us to become BCM missionaries to those with special needs, and in 2001 Handi*Camp Canada was founded. Eighteen years later, this ministry continues to touch lives. Let me just share briefly two of those lives.

Born with spina bifida, Chelsey has been attending Handi*Camp Canada for many years. While she believes that God can miraculously heal, she has come to terms with her earthly debility. She shares,

“For me, I’ve come to realize that God has given me an identity and a purpose as a person with a disability.

Last summer at camp, Chelsey shared her testimony with the other campers. She included the story in the gospel of Luke chapter five of four friends who cared enough about their paralytic friend that they took him to see Jesus. Due to the pressing crowds, they had to break through the roof to

lower their friend down at Jesus’ feet. Jesus not only healed the man but forgave his sins.

“A lot of people I know have stories like this man’s of others going the extra mile to help us,” expresses Chelsey. “That is the way it is here at Handi*Camp where people take time out of their busy lives and jobs to help us have the experience of Christian camping we would otherwise not be able to have. Throughout my life I have



Photos, page 4 top down: Fiona's baptism; Lauri and Daniel Barrette
Page 5, clockwise starting at top left: Chelsey sharing baking talents with Handi*Camp; Chelsey in wheelchair with Handi*Camp staff; Fiona celebrates baptism with (L-R) Chelsey and staff, Herman and Jim

needed different supports. It is vital for anyone dealing with a disability to know there are others like them dealing with the same issues. One of the places where I find this support is at Handi*Camp. It was here I met my closest friends and so many other wonderful people. Each year I learn more lessons about how to be happy with the life God gave me and what he is capable of if you will trust him with your life. I owe so much of who I am today to this amazing ministry.”

Chelsey has her own baking business and contributes her delicious talents to Handi*Camp. She is also a great encouragement to other campers, including Fiona. On Sunday, January 6, 2019, we had the privilege of witnessing Fiona's baptism. This wasn't easy for her since she couldn't

lift herself from her wheelchair to the baptismal tank. But two Handi*Camp staff members, Herman and Jim, helped her through the process, and she was delighted to take this step of obedience to God. Fiona shares part of her testimony:

“I was born with cerebral palsy. I am now twenty-nine years old and have been in a wheelchair all my life. Sometimes when people look at me, all they see is my wheelchair and not who I really am. They don't get to know my heart. Sometimes I sit in my room feeling sorry for myself. It has not been easy, and I often ask God why he let me be born this way.

“A few years ago Uncle Daniel Barrette [ed. campers traditionally call camp missionaries “aunt” and “uncle”] invited me to come to Handi*Camp.

There they taught me that God will always be by my side and that Jesus died on the cross to take away my sins. Also that one day I will be in heaven with a new body that can walk. Last year at camp my friend Chelsey, who was born with spina bifida, encouraged us to trust God wholeheartedly. So I prayed to God, and he poured his heart into mine.”

Isaiah 61:1-3 promises to the broken-hearted and those who mourn “beauty for ashes” (NKJV). From Chelsey to Fiona and so many other changed lives, we praise God that out of the ashes of that unexpected devastating car accident God is still raising up beauty. That has made it all worth it!



A SPARK LIT IN GUYANA

By Lisa Biegert

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he first ISMT spark was lit in the Caribbean country of Guyana in April 2018 when BCM's children's ministry training program was introduced to hundreds of its church leadership (see [Celebrating Easter with God's People in Guyana, BCM World, Spring 2018](#)). In response to a plea for additional training, BCM missionaries Pat Black and Barb Van Valkenburg traveled to Georgetown, capital of Guyana, to teach the entire twenty-two-hour *In Step with the Master Teacher* program over the course of three weeks.

Met by BCM missionary Stan Boodie, Pat and Barb were escorted to Guyana Bible College, where Stan and BCM Guyana national director Ron Charles administer and teach. The Bible school holds classes for three months per year, enabling students to earn a Bible degree over the course of several years.

Pat and Barb used daytime hours to prepare and organize their materials. Three evenings a week, students arrived for three-hour night school modules, some coming straight from a day's work. The team had anticipated twenty to thirty students. Pat shares, "What a surprise the first night when forty eager students arrived!"

The Guyanese students came from a variety of churches across Georgetown and ranged widely in age and experience, some having never taught a Bible lesson before while others had years of

practice. Pat and Barb taught through all twenty-two sessions of ISMT, covering a variety of topics including preparing Bible content, teaching Bible memory verses, and involving the senses. Every session is designed to be interactive and immediately applicable.

During the day, Pat and Barb also taught the more in-depth course *Train the Trainer* to BCM missionary Stan and another ministry leader. This will enable them to lead future ISMT trainings in Guyana without the need of expatriate trainers.

During the ISMT sessions, everyone was tasked with preparing their own Bible lesson complete with memory verse, review game, and song to go with it. On the last Monday, they were to bring a prepared visual to use in their practice teaching and explain how to use it.



Photos, left to right: Fiona, Barb, Pat, and Muriana; Bible College classroom - Georgetown; Students showing off visuals; The ten lepers visual; ISMT training group shot - Georgetown

Creativity was on display. One particular student who had never even taught before arrived with a visual made up of empty tin cans and coconuts for a lesson on Jesus healing ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). She had used markers to make faces on each coconut, then placed them on top of the empty cans, to represent

the heads and bodies of each leper and Jesus. It was an excellent illustration of what ISMT curriculum emphasizes—teaching children’s ministry leaders to create lessons with only the Bible and what is around them instead of relying on expensive purchased or imported visuals.

At the beginning of their three weeks together, the students were asked to write on the inside of their workbooks two things they expected to learn from the training. On the last night, Pat and Barb asked whether any were willing to share if their expectations had been met. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. Here are just a few:

- *For years I wanted to teach, but I didn’t know how. You have given me the skills to get started.*
- *I have always tried to teach everything I knew in one lesson, but I have learned the importance of teaching one Bible truth per lesson.*
- *I’ve been to many seminars and thought I knew everything. I’m ashamed to say I don’t know as much as I thought I did.*
- *I hadn’t realized how differently children learn from adults.*
- *I have been particularly challenged to meet the needs of students with intellectual disabilities. We need to invest in our Sunday schools and ask our pastors for resources.*

The spark ignited in early 2018 is now a full-fledged fire in the hearts of Guyana’s newly-equipped children’s ministry leaders. *Train the Trainer* graduates look forward to offering ISMT to even more churches located in Georgetown as well as additional areas around Guyana. By 2020, BCM missionaries Stan Boodie and Ron Charles anticipate offering ISMT as a course at Guyana Bible College.

By: Jeanette Windle with Manuel, Lidia, and Mayna Dominguez



A BUMPER HARVEST IN CHIAPAS, MEXICO

On the border with Guatemala, the Mexican state of Chiapas was once best known for Zapatista guerrillas, drug trafficking, and as a refugee crossing from Central America. Today it is known for having the highest poverty rate in Mexico as well as high crime rates. The latter stems in part from lack of employment for demobilized guerrillas as well as “squatters.” These include an estimated fifty thousand Guatemalans and other Central Americans who have settled on private and public land in Chiapas rather than stay in official refugee camps (the camps themselves hold another hundred thousand-plus refugees).

Through both of these sociopolitical seasons, Manuel and Lidia Dominguez have not wavered from spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ since they first arrived as BCM missionaries in Ocosingo, one of Chiapas’ larger cities, in 1975. Both Manuel and Lidia came to Christ in their early twenties. They met while attending Rio Grande Bible College in southern Texas and were introduced to BCM through another BCM missionary couple working in Mexico. Lidia’s family was from Chiapas, and once they were married, the Dominguez moved to Ocosingo to work in children’s evangelistic outreach.



They have been joined in more recent years by their daughter Mayna and another couple, Harold and Melisa Salto, giving BCM Mexico today a team of five missionaries along with many volunteers. From the beginning, a strong emphasis has been on reaching Chiapas' next generation with the gospel. The team teaches a dozen weekly children's Bible clubs within the metropolitan area of Ocosingo as well as in several mountain pueblos (small villages). During the summer school vacation, they hold Vacation Bible School in each area where they have Bible clubs.

But children grow up, and many parents too have come to Christ through the Bible clubs. The original children's ministry in Ocosingo has now grown to a sizeable church. A second church in Guaquitepec, a small mountain town about ninety minutes' drive from Ocosingo, began in 1980 when a man invited the Dominguez to visit his unsaved relatives there.

They have been making the drive ever since. Bible studies taught by Manuel and a Bible club taught by Lidia have now grown into another sizeable congregation. Manuel Dominguez serves as senior pastor of both churches along with two other "missions"—i.e., groups of believers not yet formally organized into a church.

The majority of Chiapas residents are from indigenous tribal groups. Most members of the Ocosingo and Guaquitepec church plants come from the Tzeltal people group. In Guaquitepec especially, most are subsistent farmers among the lowest income levels in Mexico. For years, the church there met in a small wooden chapel, then a slightly larger one-room concrete building with a tin roof. But the congregation had grown to the point that they could no longer fit inside the building.

The church members committed to building a new church—and doing it themselves. They dug deep into their meager incomes to purchase cement and other building supplies. In the spring of 2016, they had enough supplies to begin building. After planting their corn and other crops, they left their fields for several week to work

full-time building the church. The women cooked meals while the men and even children helped mixing cement, making bricks, then erecting the concrete walls and roof.

The BCM Mexico team and mother church in Ocosingo contributed rice and other food stuffs to help feed the workers. They also traveled out to volunteer with the construction. But the entire church construction was paid for by the sacrifice and labor of the local Tzeltal believers.

The finished church has room for at least two hundred people to squeeze inside along with a rooftop water tank and outdoor restrooms. But for the local believers, the greatest blessing—and miracle—came at harvest time. Despite concerns that taking weeks off to work on the church would mean poor crops and tightening their belts for the coming year, the 2016 harvest was the biggest they'd seen in years.

"God blessed their sacrifice," shares Mayna Dominguez, "and I don't think we've ever before seen such beautiful, abundant crops as we saw that harvest."

Along with children's ministry and church planting, the BCM Mexico team holds pastoral and leadership training courses. This includes the training of several volunteer missionaries who help with the preaching and teaching in Ocosingo as well as in Guaquitepec and outlying missions. The team has a ministry as well to inmates in Ocosingo's correctional facility.

Photos, top: Vacation Bible school games
Bottom, left to right: Salto Family; Dominguez Family; Manuel Dominguez preaching, BCM church in Ocosingo; Building new Guaquitepec church and finished church



BCM Mexico now also owns a permanent two-hectare (five acre) camp facility just fifteen minutes' drive from Ocosingo, which permits them to hold annual youth and children's camps as well as family, women's, and couple's retreats. The camp buildings and amenities are currently very simple, and lack of water limits year-round use. But long-term goals are to dig a well for year-round running water and a sports field.

Despite the gospel fruit the Dominguez have witnessed in the past forty-plus years, Chiapas, and especially its indigenous peoples, has historically been very closed to the gospel, and sowing the seed of God's Word takes much patience. Manuel shares of one of their evangelism outreaches to a small hamlet named Nuevo Paraiso:

"People are very indifferent to the gospel. For three years we have been going every Tuesday to preach after first visiting from house to house. But there are still only two converts. We continue to go because we know we are a testimony to that neighborhood."

One of those converts was Peter, who was an aggressive drunk until he attended one of the evangelistic services and prayed to accept Christ. He was faithful in attending the weekly services but continued to struggle with alcohol. Then a team member came who could witness to him in his own Tzeltal language. That impacted him deeply, and he made a complete surrender of his life to God.

Many of the Bible club children come from extremely impoverished, difficult situations as well. Lidia was recently teaching a Bible club lesson entitled Timothy's Bad Character, applying the story and Scripture lesson to the

children. After class, one little boy named Geovanni asked her several times when she was coming again. He seemed upset, so Lidia asked him what was wrong.

He began to cry as he explained that like Timothy in the lesson, he'd been very disobedient to his parents. When Lidia probed further, she found out that at eight years old he was already having to work after school every day until late at night picking coffee beans with his parents, and he had told them he didn't want to go anymore. He was hoping Lidia would come back again soon so he could pray to accept Jesus as Savior. She prayed with him, but sadly having to work by age six or seven is not unusual among these subsistence-level indigenous farming communities.

Looking back over the decades since they arrived in Ocosingo as newly-wed Bible college graduates to start Bible clubs, Manuel and Lidia can see God's hand on their lives and ministry—especially the countless hours and kilometers traveling often dangerous and guerrilla-infested mountain roads to take the gospel to the children and mountain families of Chiapas.

"Bible clubs have been a means that God has used for many families to come to know the Lord," sums up Manuel. "And in our forty-three years of ministry, God has always been very faithful in protecting us."

To donate to the BCM Mexico camp construction or contribute to their ministry, visit www.bcmintl.org/give-mexico/.

Photos, clockwise starting at the left: Baptism in Ocosingo; Vacation Bible school group; BCM Mexico Bible Club; BCM Mexico youth camp obstacle course



Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- 2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)



PARTNERING WITH AWANA — IN BOLIVIA —

By: Shantal Artieda

BCM International has a long-standing relationship with Awana Ministries, including partnering together to create our Sharing Christ with Kids training curriculum. Awana Ministries has a long-standing relationship with Bolivia, which is where Awana's first international clubs were started in 1972. Or OANSA, as it is called in Bolivia (Obreros Aprobados No Son Avergonzados, the Spanish translation of Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed from Awana's theme verse, 2 Timothy 2:15).

So BCM Bolivia teaming up to train local Awana leadership to better minister to children is a natural partnership. BCM Bolivia director Roger Espinoza shares, "In Bolivia, Awana Ministries is one of the most known children's ministries, so it is great to be able to partner with them and train their leaders."

From January 18-20, 2019, Awana leaders from different regions of Bolivia traveled to Santa Cruz, a city of over two million in the Bolivian lowlands, for a three-day training workshop. Roger Espinoza and his wife Cesia taught the four core sessions from BCM's *In Step with the Master Teacher* children's ministry curriculum. The Awana leadership team taught a few sessions as well. BCM Peru director Jonatan Odicio and his wife Shantal traveled from Lima to present the Sharing Christ with Kids curriculum.

A total of thirty-three regional Awana leaders completed the training. A main goal for participants was not only to enrich their own leadership and teaching

skills, but to take back home to their various regions of Bolivia important concepts and information to share with other teachers and Bible Club leaders.

On Sunday afternoon, January 20th, children's ministry leadership from churches all over Santa Cruz as well as some local teachers and even families gathered to participate in a Sharing Christ with Kids training workshop presented by Jonatan and Shantal Odicio. The forty-plus attendees were challenged to write down at least two to three names of children and commit to sharing Christ with them when they returned home.

Follow up plans are for the Espinozas to meet periodically with Awana leadership across Bolivia to complete the additional twenty-two ISMT training sessions. Since Awana has more than 140 weekly clubs in Bolivia reaching almost 6000 children, this partnership between BCM and Awana contributes to their mutual vision and the great task of helping Bolivian children come to know, love and obey God.

Photos, clockwise starting top right: Bolivia Awana regional leaders with Odicios and Espinozas; Roger and Cesia Espinoza teaching ISMT; Shantal Artieda teaching at Awana leadership conference; Jonatan Odicio teaching Sharing Christ with Kids curriculum



Roger Espinoza was seven years old—and hungry—as he listened to his Sunday school teacher Wilma explaining the significance of each color in the Wordless Book. The date was June 23, 1974, and the hour was well past mid-day by the time the class ended in the Bolivian highland city of Cochabamba where the Espinoza family lived. The teacher closed with an invitation for any child who wanted to know more about Jesus to stay behind.

“I was very hungry,” Roger remembers, “but my spiritual hunger to know how God could forgive my sins was far greater. So I stayed behind to understand what this gospel in the Wordless Book was all about and to give my life to Jesus. My teacher Wilma’s example in sharing the gospel with children and a life dedicated to Christ has motivated me to the present day to the ministry of sharing the gospel with boys and girls.”

As a teenager, Roger prayed that God would show him God’s will for his life. One day while reading his Bible, he was caught by one verse in particular—Matthew 18:14: “Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones

should perish.” The Holy Spirit laid on his heart that God was calling him to children’s ministry.

Roger has remained faithful to that call ever since. He served first as an Awana (OANSA) leader (see [Partnering with Awana in Bolivia](#)), then attended a number of children’s ministry training courses. Over the next years, Roger began teaching Bible classes in his city’s public schools as well as several private ones. One frustration was a lack of materials or Bible curriculum. One day he passed by a small Christian bookstore that was going out of business. Among the sale items were some children’s Bible materials that used flannelgraph. Though it cost him two months’ salary, he purchased the set. He has never regretted that investment.

“It is still my most prized teaching material,” Roger says.

Those eight volumes were BCM’s core Genesis to Revelation children’s Bible curriculum Footsteps of Faith, translated into over forty languages over the last seventy years, including Spanish. The curriculum was Roger’s first contact with BCM. Then he learned that a BCM short-term

missionary, Susan Sanderson, had come to his city and was offering training courses and material to start children’s Bible clubs. He finished BCM’s *In Step with the Master Teacher* (ISMT) training and began establishing Bible clubs and training children’s ministry leaders across the nine provinces of Bolivia from the highland mountains to the lowland plains and Amazon jungle region.

“I prayed for two things,” Roger shares. “First, that I might reach every province in Bolivia to preach to children who don’t know Jesus. Second, that if this ministry was God’s will for my life, I would see fruit of children coming to God. More than twenty-five years later, God has abundantly answered my prayers. I have seen a generation of children who have come to Christ and have now grown up to become university professionals, ministry leaders and pastors, even missionaries outside Bolivia. There remains one province—the Pando in the Amazon—where I have not yet reached, but I am praying God will soon open that door.”



BCM BOLIVIA APPOINTS NEW NATIONAL DIRECTOR

By: Jeanette Windle with Roger Espinoza

In 2002, Roger married his wife Cesia Flores. That same year the couple completed BCM candidate orientation and were appointed full-time BCM missionaries in Bolivia. Since then Roger and Cesia have both served in establishing Bible clubs as well as training children's ministry leaders through ISMT. They also moved from their Andes home of Cochabamba to Santa Cruz in the scrub jungle lowland region, Bolivia's largest city with more than two million residents, where they have founded an active network of Bible clubs and children's ministry training.

In January 2019, Roger took on a new role of national director for BCM Bolivia. He now oversees a total of eight BCM missionary families. Their areas of ministry focus include the Bible club program, children's evangelism, and leadership training. They also have a strong vision for promotion of missions within the Bolivian church. Roger shares just a few of the unique ministry outreaches the BCM Bolivia team has been involved with recently.

A few months ago, BCM missionary and pastor Dr. Joni Marca spearheaded a conference attended by more than

ninety church leaders on the theme of developing a missionary-sending vision within the Bolivian church. The conference is now being repeated in a number of Bolivia's cities and towns. Dr. Marca is also part of a group of Bolivian church leaders traveling to Africa and Asia to minister to Bolivian missionaries already serving there as well as to seek God's guidance as to where other Bolivia missionaries might serve.

Another BCM missionary couple, Fernando and Marilyn Fernandez, both medical doctors, evangelize young people in the public schools through health education, abstinence, and pro-life courses they teach. To date, they have had more than seven hundred participants, of which they have seen forty-eight surrender their lives to Christ. They also work with rape and abortion survivors as well as single mothers, not just sharing the gospel, but helping them through emotional and spiritual healing as well as job education until the women can support themselves financially.

Another BCM couple, Freddy and Lizet, takes advantage of holiday relaxation of prison protocols (see [Remembering the Prisoner in the](#)

Photos, top to bottom: Evangelism class; Roger covering the importance of children's ministry; Cesia teaching ISMT



[Name of Jesus](#)) to hold special outreaches for parents and children who are incarcerated together in Cochabamba's San Pablo prison. More than fifty have come to know Christ. They have also headed up the translation of ISMT into Quechua, a people group of more than ten million descended from the Incas, for use in hundreds of Quechua churches throughout Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and elsewhere.

Bolivia is the poorest country in South America, and extreme poverty, malnutrition, violence, drug dealing, and a growing drug addiction problem add their own challenges. Bolivia also has the highest teen pregnancy rate in Latin America. A serious breakdown in nuclear families as well as the historic societal control of the Catholic church as a state religion has left a great void in moral instruction, especially in areas of sexual purity. Sadly, sexual abuse of minors has also skyrocketed.

Because of such needs, Roger Espinoza and the BCM Bolivia team see the value and urgency of ministering to social needs as part of their evangelism strategy. In 2018, the Espinozas were able to work with four public schools involving more than four hundred elementary students, teaching a biblical perspective on caring for their bodies, abuse prevention, abstinence, and "just say no!". Each child also received a package of school supplies and Bible material. Already other public-school administrations have asked the Espinozas to bring this program to their own schools in this coming year.

As the new national director for BCM in Bolivia, Roger asks for prayer for the BCM Bolivia missionary team to have spiritual wisdom as they plan for the future. This includes partnerships with other denominations and ministry organizations to work together in training children's ministry leaders as well as pastors.

"The church in Bolivia has experienced great growth," expresses Roger, "and with that growth has come a great need for raising up well-trained leadership—for adults as well as children's ministry—to lead the Bolivian church into the future."

He also asks prayer for the financial needs of the BCM missionary families, most of whom are working other jobs to support their families as well as to pay the costs of ministry travel and outreach. A final request is to pray for more local Bolivia volunteers for the ministry of Bible clubs, camps, and VBS, as well as full-time missionaries, whether from Bolivia or from other countries, to aid in the great task of evangelizing Bolivia's children and meeting the needs of the local church.

From long experience, Roger has no doubt God will answer these prayers. "My family and I travel to distant zones overland from Santa Cruz to help the churches that invite us. Over and over we have seen God's protection as we travel. Our resources are often scarce, especially for gas and travel expenses to reach other cities. But we have committed as Scripture tells us to 'walk by faith and not by sight' (2 Corinthians 5:7). As we have done so, we have experienced again and again the powerful provisionary hand of our God, whom we serve with great joy."

Photos, clockwise starting at top left: Bible club with Cesia; Prayer time at Bible club; Roger teaching *In Step with the Master Teacher* (ISMT)



BCM BOLIVIA MISSIONARY FAMILIES



The Camacho Family



The Fernandez Family



The Espinoza Family



The Marca Family



THINKING BIG IN EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA

By: Pat Govender and Esther Zimmerman with Jeanette Windle

“2019 marks ten years since my father and I first visited South Africa to launch BCM children’s ministry with Africa’s first *Train the Trainer*,” shares Esther Zimmerman, founder of *In Step with the Master Teacher* [ISMT], BCM’s children’s ministry training curriculum. “We were praying that God would raise up someone to take BCM children’s ministry forward in Africa. Pat Govender was God’s answer to that prayer. Ten years and at least ten countries later, God has done great things.”

BCM Africa missionary Pat Govender now coordinates ISMT Training across Africa. She was attending the global children’s ministry Equip Conference in Thailand when God spoke to her about doing more in regards to training, equipping, investing in, and supporting children’s ministry leaders in her home

city of East London, South Africa.

“I came back home and prayed much for God’s leading. Going from church to church would take too long, and I would only reach a few at a time. So I thought of a conference where I can get many children’s workers under one roof to serve them. I invited other organizations and church representatives to join us. Our first conference was held in 2016 with about eighty people from twenty-eight different churches attending.”

East London’s Children’s Ministry Conference has become an annual event. This year the conference was held Friday-Sunday, January 18-20, 2019, with more than a hundred participants from thirty-two churches. Esther Zimmerman and colleague Debbie Keyser flew in from the USA as guest speakers.

“The main reason this conference needs to happen is to Envision, Equip, Resource and *Mobilize* people for children’s ministry,” shares Pat Govender. She goes on to explain.

In envisioning, delegates need to really get a feel for what is on God’s heart for children and to understand the importance of children’s ministry. This took place in the plenary sessions on Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Saturday. Esther Zimmerman was the plenary speaker, and her challenge was to THINK BIG—about God, about children, about children’s ministry.

On Saturday, three workshop slots with fifteen different workshops to choose from helped equip delegates, strengthening and teaching skills needed for reaching children. This year’s workshops covered topics from

human trafficking and how to work with autistic children to Faith at Home family ministry and how to run a holiday club.

Various ministry organizations also had displays with a range of resources delegates could acquire to take home to their local ministries. Finally, in several of the conferences delegates could also sign up for a Sunday outreach to run a children's program in certain areas/churches. This was to *mobilize* them to reach out to children around them as well as those who are outside their communities.

"Those who have been on the outreach ministries were blown away," shares Pat Govender, "as they were so moved by this experience of going into an area not far from them and working with children there. Many expressed that they hadn't realized there were so many children in the same city who needed reaching and that this was something they could do outside this conference as an outreach from their church or Sunday school."

The 2019 conference had two additional elements—a pastors breakfast meeting and a teachers tea for Christian school teachers working in the public school system.

Pat Govender has seen the impact of this conference on the city of East London. Many participating pastors have expressed that they are making changes in their churches to serve the children better and take children's ministry more seriously.

One 2019 participant shared that just that week she had submitted a resignation letter to her pastor stating that she was quitting children's ministry. Since she'd already committed to attend the conference, she decided to fulfill that promise. During the very first session, God spoke powerfully to her, making clear that he was not done using her in ministry to children. She recommitted herself to reaching children and attended the rest of the conference with a hunger to learn more

for this ministry. Another participant left the conference convicted that God is calling her to reach out to street children and with plans to start such a ministry.

Most importantly, the churches of East London are becoming more aware of children and the value of children's ministry in raising up a strong next generation of African Christians. Many churches have followed up on the conferences by inviting Pat to their churches for further training as well as to organize children's and youth conferences. The first such took place at Mdantsane Community church in October 2018 with over two hundred children. Pat will be running a second one June 2019 with East London's Anglican church.

"For now we need to continue running this conference because there are so many people who need training and equipping and so many churches in East London who really need their children's ministry strengthened," Pat concludes. "They are recognizing this need and that BCM is able to help. I am in prayer as to how God will lead for it to continue being fresh and inspiring."

Photos:

Page 16, left to right: East London conference workshop; BCM children's ministry display; Left to right: Esther Zimmerman, Pat Govender, Debbie Keyser

Page 15, top to bottom: Worship at East London childrens ministry conference; Conference workshop; Practice exercise





MOBILIZE COMES TO AFRICA

By: Lisa Biegert

B

BCM International's children's ministry training program has three different levels. *In Step with the Master Teacher* (ISMT) trains children's ministry volunteers how to teach children. *Train the Trainer* (TTT) trains regional leaders how to teach ISMT within their churches and denomination. *Mobilize* is the third level, training designated Lead Trainers who have graduated from *Train the Trainer* to be able take the TTT and ISMT courses back to their global regions.

Each *Mobilize* intensive training event is held on a different continent. From February 21-26, 2019, *Mobilize* came to Africa. Hosted by BCM Kenya missionaries Dr. Josphat and Emily Yego in Kenya's capital city of Nairobi, *Mobilize* Africa brought together twenty-one top children's ministry leaders from Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, and Malawi. Teaching the six-day training conference were BCM regional director for Africa and Asia Stephen King and his wife Jane from the United States, BCM Africa children's ministry leadership training director Pat Govender, and Lead Trainer Ingrid Kjonstad, both from South Africa.

Denominations involved between the twenty-one Lead Trainer candidates represent tens of thousands of churches across Africa. Pat Govender shares, "As everyone arrived, we were excited to hear their collaborative stories about their ministries with *In Step with the Master Teacher* in so many different countries."

Stephen King adds, “*Mobilize* is about much more than just training. It is a catalyst for children’s ministry. We go beyond just training to encourage each of these Lead Trainers to be a force for children’s ministry in their own regions.”

Throughout the event, the participants were given time to fellowship and build relationships. They collaborated, shared ideas and strategies, and even planned together for future partnership training programs between countries.

One participant shared, “It was good to see strategic networking happening and to hear what God is doing in other countries. After meeting so many from other countries, I believe that our combined efforts will make an even greater impact. We can minister to, encourage, and support others in many different countries, right from where we are based.”

With half the population of Africa under the age of fifteen, reaching the continent’s children for Christ is especially urgent. Every morning and evening, the delegates also took time to gather as a group and pray for children. Lead Trainer from South Africa Ingrid Kjonstad, expresses, “During one prayer activity, we rotated to different stations that corresponded to the countries represented at *Mobilize* and prayed specifically for the children of that country.”

Along with *Mobilize* Africa, BCM Kenya host missionaries Dr. Josphat and Emily Yego had organized two additional training conferences in Kapsabet (February 15-18) and Eldoret (March 6-8), cities on the western side of Kenya near Uganda. During these sessions, Pat Govender, Steve and Jane King, and the Yegos taught both ISMT and TTT, equipping an additional eighty-four new ministry leaders to both teach children and train others.

Pat Govender summarized the impact of *Mobilize* Africa: “It was an intense program enveloped by God’s presence. We are privileged to equip these new Lead Trainers to see the bigger picture—a national and global vision of children’s ministry—and how to be strategic in their own training ministries. Every one of them left encouraged, inspired, and motivated to go and make a difference in their country.”



Pictures top to bottom:

Page 17: Constructive thinking and hands-Fon practice

Page 18: Group activities included praying for countries represented, working with the layout of ISMT, and reviewing material



NEVER TOO OLD TO REACH CHILDREN

By: Pam Rowntree, BCM Canada

A ninety-two-year-old senior, Francie lives in a small southern Ontario town where there was no Bible ministry to children. She had taught Bible club many years ago and was familiar with BCM and its teaching materials. One day Francie put in a call to the BCM Canada office, sharing that God had laid on her heart to start a Bible club in her town and asking for help to get started. An area BCM Canada missionary came alongside Francie to provide guidance, teaching materials, and help to put the program together. A small church in the town offered a room where they could hold the Bible club. So with one other volunteer, Lenore, Francie began the Bible club.

More than a year later, ten children in that small town are regularly attending The Checkerboard Club, as the children named it—not only for the checkered table top, but because learning to play checkers has been a fun part of the club (see photo). The club meets weekly, and their parents are thrilled that there is a Bible ministry in town for their children. Francie has now “retired” to become the assistant while Lenore has become the lead teacher.

This Christmas, the Bible club children prepared and presented a Christmas program of songs and Bible verses for residences in a local nursing home and also for a church in town. These boys and girls are being taught God’s Word and are hearing the good news of Jesus all because one senior citizen had a burden for the lost souls of kids in her town and did not think she was too old to minister to children.



Photos, top to bottom: Lenore leading Bible club; Francie and Lenore of Checkerboard Club; Bible games on the checkerboard table.

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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 reachndvelop@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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