

# THROUGH GOD'S EYES

*Nine Stories of Modern Day Kingdom Builders*

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**WRITTEN BY THE 2021-2022 FIFTH GRADE CLASS  
OF NEW COVENANT SCHOOL**



All work, no matter what kind, can be used to glorify God. There are those who are intentional about using their gifts and talents to further God's kingdom on Earth. At New Covenant School, we call these Christians, "Kingdom Builders."

This year, the fifth grade students had the privilege of interviewing nine Kingdom Builders. To prepare for the interviews, the students developed open-ended questions about the Kingdom Builder's ministry, what led them to their work, the impact of their work on themselves and the world, and their goals. Once the questions were written and organized, the students learned and practiced interviewing skills. After the interviews were complete, the students spent hours listening and re-listening to the recordings in order to write the papers contained in this book.

This project was done with the hope that the fifth grade students, as well as our community, will be motivated to respond to God's call in their own lives, as well as inspired to support the Kingdom-building work of those who were interviewed

This project would not have been possible without the help of so many people. First of all, we are so grateful for the willingness of our Kingdom Builders to volunteer their time to be interviewed. There are many people in our school community that helped as well, including Mr. and Mrs. Levy, Mr. Chaney, Mrs. Landers, Mrs. Hawko, Mrs. Burrowes, Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Utter, Ms. Mastandrea, and Mrs. Green. Finally, we are grateful to Mr. Buckley who stepped in to design the finished product. May God bless you and the work of your hands as you live lives to further His kingdom work.

***Mrs. Heather Gregorowicz***  
*Fifth Grade Teacher*

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# Nadege Esperance

*Director, Shall We Dance*

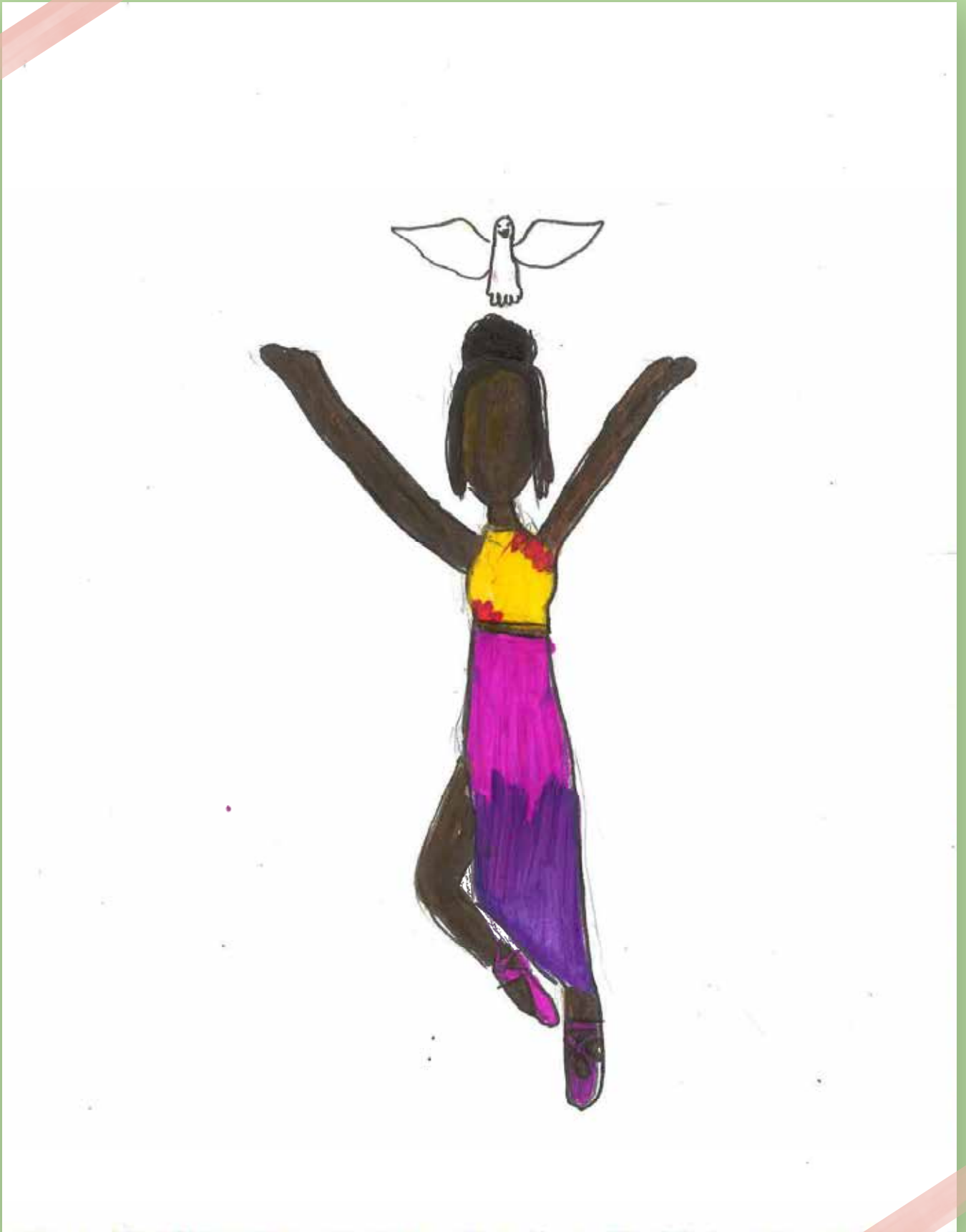
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BY PAIGE BRENNER



*“God uses everything. He uses art. He uses photography. So why wouldn’t he use dance as well?”*





*Art by Paige Brenner*

Nadege Esperance teaches liturgical dance, which is a form of prayer and worship, to young girls. Her ministry is called Shall We Dance. **Through dance, she is teaching the virtues and qualities that God wants her students to have as they grow up.** She wants girls to see themselves as God sees them. She lets anyone dance with her, those who are saved and not saved. She dances at many different places such as churches, schools, weddings, funerals, and camps.

Nadege grew up in a Catholic church and she had a lot of questions about God. One of her friends invited her to a revival at her church. At the revival, there was a minister who shared the Bible in a different way. He made the Bible more relevant, and she developed a different understanding of how God could be in her life. She went to the altar call and was changed.

When she graduated from high school, her parents divorced. It made her feel like she didn't have a family. She prayed, "God why are you doing this?" and God said, "I want you to know that you are still in my hands."



She found comfort in his words and that really impacted her ministry. Shall We Dance started when she researched how God could use dance. She found a woman who was doing a class on liturgical dance. Through this class, she understood how she could use dance for God.

When Nadege was little, her parents signed her up for dance. She loved these classes and grew up dancing. If she wasn't going to classes she would dance at home and as she got older in college she would hang out with friends and dance. In these times, she found that her relationship with God was growing. She found that God uses dance for worship and praise. She never planned to worship in dance, but one of her friends introduced her to a person who was doing an all-women's Step Team. (Step dance is using your body to make sounds). It was different from the dance that she was used to and she loved it. The step team ministered in prisons, revivals, and youth conferences. The director of the Step Team asked if Nadege danced. She told him that she didn't dance because she was embarrassed at the way she used to dance. Eventually, he told her that she would have to minister in dance in front of a few selected people. She did not want to dance in front of people, but she did. She started to teach others how to dance like she did.

**Nadege believes that everyone is on a journey and that God directs them.** This motivates her to do her work. She finds rest, peace, and comfort knowing that she is on her journey with God. God called her to her work. He has given her the gift of being able to share the gospel through it. One Bible verse that really motivates her is 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 which says, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." The part of the verse that says, "In everything give thanks," is the motivation in her life.





### **The impact of her work on the world is giving people a different mindset about dance.**

The way the world is dancing in concerts and on television is different from the way she is dancing in that it shows very different imagery. The dancing in the world provides entertainment. Her dancing does more than just entertain, it shares the gospel. She teaches the love of God and Jesus to people through dance. Preachers say the gospel of God. Dancers are the sights of God. They help people visualize what God is actually saying. The goal of the ministry is to have a praise dance concert where everybody is “jamming” and praising the Lord together and dancing. Her goal is to have “heaven on earth” encounters. Her ministry is growing “slowly but surely.” A few years ago, she did a praise dance camp at New Covenant School that helped girls overcome their challenges. She hopes to have more camps in the future.

One of her challenges in doing this ministry is she is also working as a nurse. It is difficult to manage her schedule. She has to balance being a wife, mom, and working at the clinic. She thinks one way she could overcome this challenge is by taking more time away from being a nurse so that she could dedicate it to dance. What Nadege finds the most difficult about the work she does is the fact that she is introverted. This means that she finds the most joy being alone.

Even though her ministry can be challenging, Nadege also finds her work rewarding. She has seen lives changed and young people have given their lives to Christ. What encourages her to keep going is that even when it’s hard, she sees lives changed for good, and she sees the impact the gospel has on people. The way her ministry has impacted how she spends her resources is that she needs to spend her money on banners, dresses, and props for dances. When she spends more time This work has impacted her and her family by helping them to be closer to each other and God. on this ministry, she can get more resources.

Her family is very supportive of her. Her husband and the rest of her immediate family help her when she is planning events or choosing a song. Her daughter helps her out tremendously. Her whole family is part of her administration team.

### **PAIGE’S REFLECTION**

*In New Covenant School, we have Six Words of Servanthood. One of the words is being a seeker of God. The definition is, “I can pursue an ever deepening relationship with God.” Nadege shows that she is a seeker of God by seeking him through her dance. When she is dancing she feels connected to God. She has inspired me to seek God more in my life. My kingdom builder has also inspired me to listen to God. She listened when God told her that she was in his hands. She could have made the choice to not listen, but instead, she believed that what he said was true. This interview experience has impacted me and I hope it will impact more people who read this report.*



# Robin John

*Chief Executive Officer and  
Founding Member,  
Eventide Asset Management*

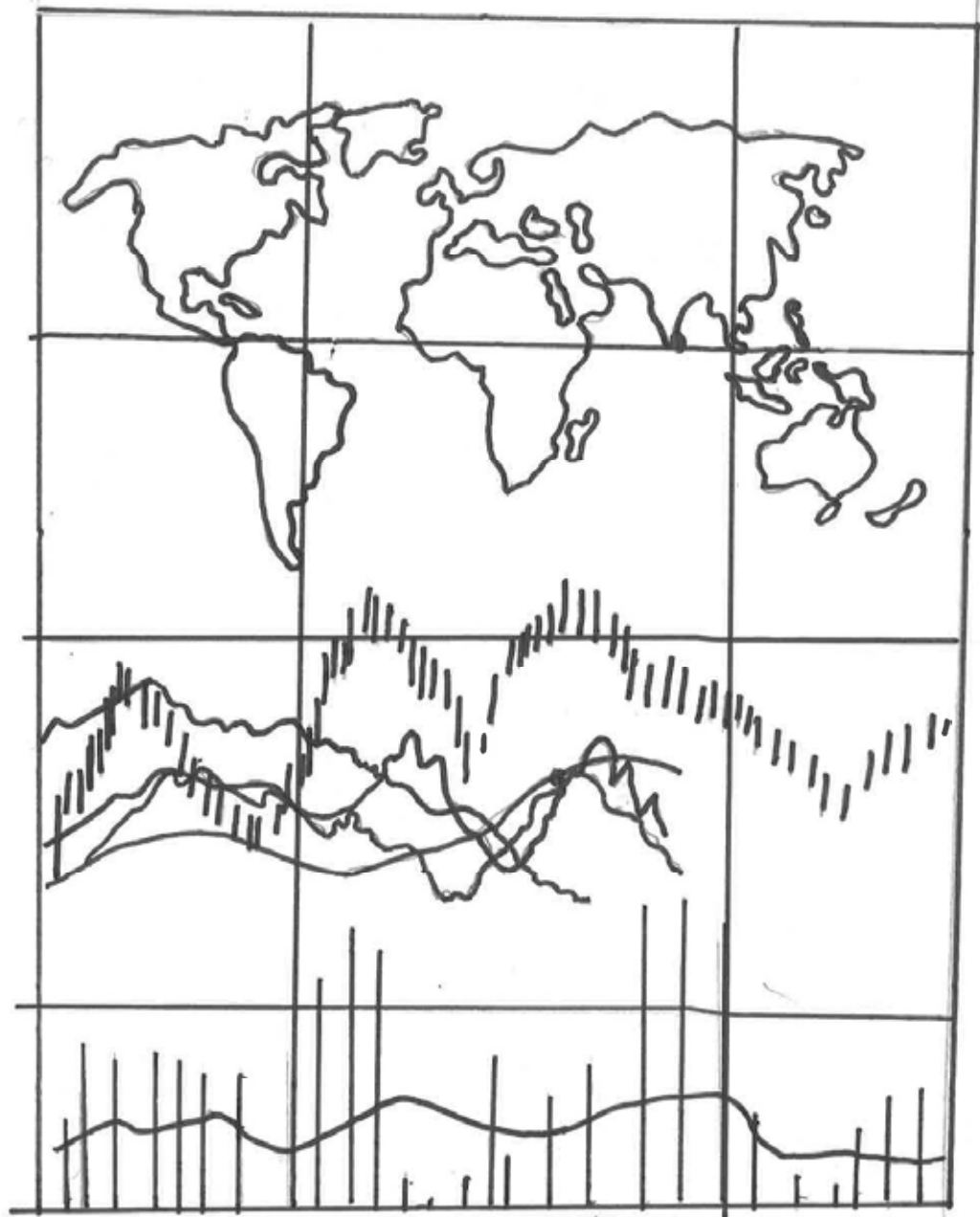
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**BY ISAAC RICHMOND**



*“Eventide’s tagline  
is ‘Investing that  
makes the world  
rejoice’”*





*Art by Isaac Richmond*

**M**r. Robin John is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Eventide, a Boston-based asset management company that strives to honor God and serve its clients by investing money in companies that do work for the global common good. Mr. John realized that many people choose to invest money out of greed, basically for themselves, to make a profit and live a comfortable life. When he sought God about the kind of work he should do, he asked, “What does the Bible say about investing, and how should Christians approach using or investing their money?” Mr. John recognizes that work matters to God and the work that we do as Christians should be focused on honoring God and loving our neighbors. There are many companies in the world that have dark or bad influences. **Mr. John, with the help of close friends, created a business that invests other people’s money only in companies that do good and reflect God’s values.** Now, Eventide is a company that manages more than 8 billion dollars and honors God by making a positive impact on how companies make decisions for the greater good throughout the world.

Robin was born in south India and moved to the USA the day he turned eight. The first time he saw a television was the day he came to America. Because he lived in a small village in India, he witnessed a lot of extremely poor people growing up. His grandfather was a pastor and a church planter, so as he was growing up, he would look out his window and see a cemetery. Being in such a poor area with very few resources, he learned about generosity by seeing how his grandparents were so willing to give what they had to help those in need. Later in his life, after college, he went back to India to a place called Mumbai (Bombay) where the rich are very rich and the poor are very poor. You can come out of places like the Leela Palace and see people on the ground with no legs and cuts on their knees with no wheelchair just sitting there. His time in India made him realize that he wanted to do work that made a difference in the world.

**Mr. John used to think that he had to be a pastor or missionary to serve God. As he got older, he realized that he could be a truck driver or a baker or any profession to do God’s work and advance his kingdom.** Robin learned from Martin Luther that our work matters and that if we are serving others, we are serving God. A lot of people think that work is a curse that God gave people. However, Robin

suggests if we look at Genesis 1 & 2 carefully, that God gave Adam and Eve work before they even sinned, so it should not be considered a punishment.

When Robin was 27 years old, he lost his job. He wasn’t sure what God wanted him to do with his life, so he prayed and asked God for guidance. In the six months he prayed, he was praying for purpose and that God would call him into “ministry.” He asked his friend, Finny, and his brother to pray with him. Initially, the prayer was about how he could honor God with his life and work. He would fast one day a week, and in that time his friends suggested that he could invest. He had some background with investing. So he made a decision to start a business of investing for people, but instead of doing it out of greed, he did it through God’s eyes.

Robin shared that he faced many challenges in starting his business. At first, there was just him, Finny, and his brother, Jason. Now, they have seventy-three employees and are expecting twenty more. And as they grow, he realizes that he also has to grow from being an entrepreneur to a business leader. He shared that one challenge is learning how to lead people. This is an area of growth for him. In his current job as CEO, he goes to many conferences, and because he is a leader in business, people expect to hear from him. Robin recognizes that being a public speaker is a skill that he is learning and developing. One example of a challenge he faced a couple of years ago in his role as a manager was when he had to tell his employees that one of their colleagues died from a hiking accident. Even though Robin John has faced challenges, he is motivated



by his ability to bless others and by scripture. One thing that really motivates Mr. John is the idea of serving people, including his clients and financial advisors. He serves his clients by investing their money, and that money goes to doing good and blessing others. Eventide's tagline is, "Investing that makes the world rejoice." The inspiration behind this is from the book of Proverbs where there is a verse that says when the righteous prosper the city rejoices, but when the wicked prosper the city groans. Mr. John hopes that every Christian (the righteous) would think about using their money in a way that honors God and can be used to change cities and nations for the good. By choosing not to invest in companies that do bad things, he helps the common good. As Christians, we are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. Another Bible verse that he used and thinks about for his life and for Eventide, is from Romans 12:2 which states, "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Mr. John is encouraged by the fact that he feels God led him to this rewarding work. He feels such a sense of purpose in his work now, and feels blessed to have people in his company that have the same vision. He and his employees are extremely generous with their resources and they enjoy their work.

In fact, this past year they were named one of the best places to work by the Boston Business Journal, which is a weekly business newspaper published in Boston, Massachusetts. One of the reasons it is such a great place to work is that they are given great benefits. For example, when people have a baby they receive four months paid leave for the mom and two months paid leave for the dad.

Robin John's goal is for Eventide to reach every Christian and values-driven investor in America with investing that makes the world rejoice. Mr. John wants to move investments away from companies that are hurting people into companies that are helping people. He sees God's heart behind investing in good things. For example, Eventide currently has three billion dollars invested in biotech companies that are doing work to cure cancer and other diseases. As a company with lots of resources, Mr. John said that they have the ability to influence decision makers in companies. For instance, in Western China there is a lot of oppression towards Muslims and Christians, especially the Uyghurs, a people

representing 10 million people. Many of the Uyghurs are locked up in camps and have had their homes taken away. Many American companies are benefitting from slave labor by Uyghurs in western China. Eventide responded by researching the portfolios of the companies and found all the companies that had any involvement or connection to the oppression of the Uyghurs through their supply chain and through partnerships with China. Eventide used their influence and gave these companies six months to get out of this problem and find other suppliers. If they did not change direction, then Eventide would divest and remove themselves from working with them. This is just one example of how Eventide's influence has made a difference and impact for good.

## ISAAC'S REFLECTION

*Mr. John has inspired me to understand that people should use their gifts and talents to do work that they love and enjoy. In my life, my family is involved in ministry to the nations by planting churches around the world. My parents' Kingdom-building work has been investing in people directly by discipleship, teaching, and pastoring. I learned from Mr. John that everyone can build God's Kingdom right where they are, by committing their work to God and lining it up with his heart to do good and serve others. I am amazed by how Mr. John sought God's will and with just three people and an idea, built a company that shares the gospel and makes an impact in the world. I am grateful to know that when I get older that I can earn money and also invest it to do good. I realize that just because I am a child, it does not mean that I can't invest in people and use the money I earn from chores to invest and do good now. I realize that the Bible warns that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. I know that, as a follower of Jesus, I can be aware of how to use money to glorify him and serve others.*



# Craig Lillehei, MD

*Pediatric Surgeon,  
Boston Children's Hospital*

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BY DAVID PAUL OWENS



*“I think that what you learn to see is what’s most important in life. That’s what Jesus taught us, and once you see that your resources are gifts that God has given you and so, [you ask] well, where do you want [to use] them God?”*



*Art by David Paul Owens*

**D**r. Lillehei's kingdom work manifests itself in many ways. **He believes that God gives everyone the opportunity to work and to reflect Him in their work.** Dr. Lillehei's full-time job is as a pediatric surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital. He specializes in organ transplants. In addition to his primary occupation, Dr. Lillehei is active in his church body. He welcomes new people to the church, studies the Bible with others, and collects food for those who need it.

Dr. Lillehei was led to his kingdom-building work by people in his life. He believes that God puts people in our lives to help guide us. For him, that was a pastor in upstate New York. That pastor showed him God's love and the way to go forward. He believes that he was called by God to the work that he does. He wasn't called in a very Biblical way, like Moses and the burning bush. Instead, he feels like God gave him opportunities along the way that helped him understand what God wanted him to do.

God prepared him for his work from an early age, by giving him the opportunity to learn in school. Dr. Lillehei originally wanted to be a physicist, but when he was in school he realized that he wanted to help people and see the immediate effect of his work. It is very motivational to Dr. Lillehei to see that he can help sick kids get better.



*Using 3D model in OR to guide surgery*

Dr. Lillehei experiences many challenges in his work. One of the biggest challenges he has is that sometimes he can't make things better for his patients. Another challenge is that sometimes people aren't receptive to the gospel, because to a lot of people, the gospel story seems foolish. A difficulty caused by the pandemic is he hasn't been able to work and share information with other doctors around the world as much. Sometimes his work impacts his family because he has to leave or not come for a long period of time. Even though it is hard for them, they understand why it is necessary.

Something that helps him overcome these challenges is the people who walk alongside him and help him when he is discouraged. He also carries a verse around about not getting discouraged. The verse is Joshua 1:9 which says, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." He has found this verse to be very helpful as he navigates the challenges of his work.

God knows that we need people to walk with us along our way. Some people that have walked alongside Dr. Lillehei are his wife, children, pastors, and colleagues. Dr. Lillehei's family has been supportive of him with their time and their love. They are also medical workers. Dr. Lillehei's son is a hospital chaplain and he encourages Dr. Lillehei by sharing insights about what he has learned with him.



*Performing surgery on premature infant*





God used his work is that God has allowed him to walk alongside families in hard times. Sometimes the kids get better, sometimes they don't. Either way, he tries to show them God's love and that He's walking beside them.

Dr. Lillehei has seen miracles firsthand. There are a number of miracles that happen that he probably doesn't even know about. Some miracles are more obvious than others. For example, he has prayed for the right organ at the right time and it was there. Other times, he couldn't help anymore and all that was left was prayer. Then miraculously the patient was healed.

Whether it is serving in his church alongside his fellow Christians, or working to save lives by conducting surgeries, Dr. Lillehei is willing to give of his time and resources to further God's kingdom and His work in the world. Dr. Lillehei feels like his resources are gifts from God and he spends them on what he feels like God wants him to. If he had to simplify his goal for his ministry, he would say that it is to show God's love to those around him. He would love to be able to do that.

Dr. Lillehei finds his work rewarding because he gets to watch up-close how God heals. **As a surgeon, he gives his patients sutures but God does the healing through the human body that he made.** One of the things that encourages him to keep going is his prayer journal. When he feels discouraged he can look back and see how God answered his prayers.

**Dr. Lillehei doesn't know the impact of his work on the world or in what way it will be used to build God's kingdom, but he trusts God to use his gifts and use the circumstances in his life.** His job is to follow God. The rest will fall into place. A testimony of how



## DAVID PAUL'S REFLECTION:

*Dr. Lillehei is an extraordinary man who has lots of humility. He uses his time to heal those who need it and uses his resources for what God wants. He's inspired me to trust God to guide me and to try to reflect Him in my life. Walking away from this experience, I will remember that everyone can help build the kingdom of God, not just doctors or firefighters. Even ordinary people can build God's kingdom.*

# Paul Malkemes

*The Boston Project,  
Executive Director  
and Founding Member*

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BY MASA PHILLIPS

*“The work we do  
is about building a  
strong community  
with our neighbors,  
volunteers, and  
churches that reflect  
what God desires for  
our neighborhood.”*





The Boston Project  
ministries

*Art by Masa Phillips*



Paul Malkemes and his family are involved in a ministry called The Boston Project. Paul is the Executive Director and Founding Member. **The mission of the Boston project is to engage and equip neighbors, volunteers, and churches to build strong communities characterized by God's shalom.** What does God's shalom look like? Shalom means wholeness, peace, well-being, righteousness, and justice. So the Boston Project believes that shalom looks like having a safe neighborhood, healthy homes, good schools, and opportunities for people to have good jobs. They do this to reflect what God desires for their neighborhood and as a way to practice how to love their neighbors according to Jesus' teachings.

The work is based out of a neighborhood ministry house where the Malkemes family lives. They use the first floor as a safe space, gathering place, youth and resource center, and a place for volunteers to meet and serve. The Boston Project Ministries does its work in Dorchester, Massachusetts, located on the south side of Boston and their vision is for God's shalom to be in every neighborhood in New England.



Paul's journey of faith began at an early age and eventually led him to the work he does today. His journey began when he was about 12 years old. He was at a summer camp when a camp counselor asked him if he knew Jesus. At that moment, Paul was overwhelmed by God's Spirit, and he wanted to make sure that other people knew about Jesus. He realized that God wanted him to have a purpose in ministry. Paul originally thought he would be a youth pastor, but God had different plans for him.

Boston Project Ministries started when a group of college students had a vision from God at the same time. Their vision was to involve teenagers in serving others and to practice loving their neighbors. He moved into a neighborhood of Boston called Dorchester because he realized the value of being a part of the community he serves. Part of his ministry is to involve teenagers by connecting them to jobs. When Paul was a teenager he had a job and it really helped him to grow, so he now offers work opportunities to teenagers.

An organization such as the Boston Project often faces challenges. One of the challenges they face is that there are a lot of needs in the community so it's hard to help everyone. Paul and The Boston Project have a lot of different ways to overcome challenges. One of the things he does is he talks to God and asks for guidance. One other thing that is helpful to him is that there is a good group of people partnering with him to help find solutions to problems. A more personal challenge is that Paul has needed to learn how to receive and not just give. An example is when they had a baby, their neighbor gave them a baby bed. They didn't have much money at that time, and he accepted the gift. He had to remind himself to be a person who can receive and not just give.





Paul finds his work very rewarding and wants to do it until he's seventy or eighty years old. **God hasn't put anything else in their hearts other than the neighborhood work they do.** Paul has people partnering with him including the city council and the mayor. Paul's work affects his resources such as time and money. Lots of his time is dedicated to Boston Project Ministries but it's not 24/7. Working in the Boston Project has affected his family income. Paul wants to make sure that he has a comparable income to his neighbors. An example of this is he will say no if someone offers him a higher salary or pay wage because it's important for them to live similarly to their neighbors. Paul's family has been supportive of him and his work. They all think of The Boston Project Ministries as their own. Paul doesn't force his kids to participate in the programs they have there, but they still do. Since the first floor of Paul's house is like a community center lots of his kids' friendships are made in The Boston Project Ministries.

During the past few years, Paul and those who work with him at the Boston Project have been able to help their neighbors. They helped some neighbors who lost their jobs, were sick or needed food. They also helped teenagers get jobs. An example of the impact of their work is when a teenager who had been supported by the Boston Project got into college and then, after college, decided to go back to The Boston Project and work there again. Paul believes in miracles. He has experienced people change spiritually which makes their hearts and lives go on a different path. **Because of the impact of his work, Paul has been well received by the community.**



Every ministry always has different goals, varying from short-term to long-term. One short-term goal for Paul's ministry is that he wants to start a middle school program for kids during the year. Another short-term goal is Paul wants to partner with more churches. One of the more long-term goals is that Paul wants to build a new youth center because the current youth center is on the bottom floor of their house. The Boston Project is growing as more young people join. This is important because they want to show everyone what God's shalom is like.

## MASA'S REFLECTION

*Paul is an amazing man who taught me how to truly love my neighbor as myself. I never really knew what it meant until I met him. I am impacted by how he models humility by dedicating himself to helping others and making his community a better place. All of what Paul does inspires me to show more love to my neighbors. As I grow older, my experience with Paul will impact the choices I make in the future. I think it will lead me to be less selfish and more service-oriented.*

# **“Sarai and George”**

*Missionaries in North Africa*

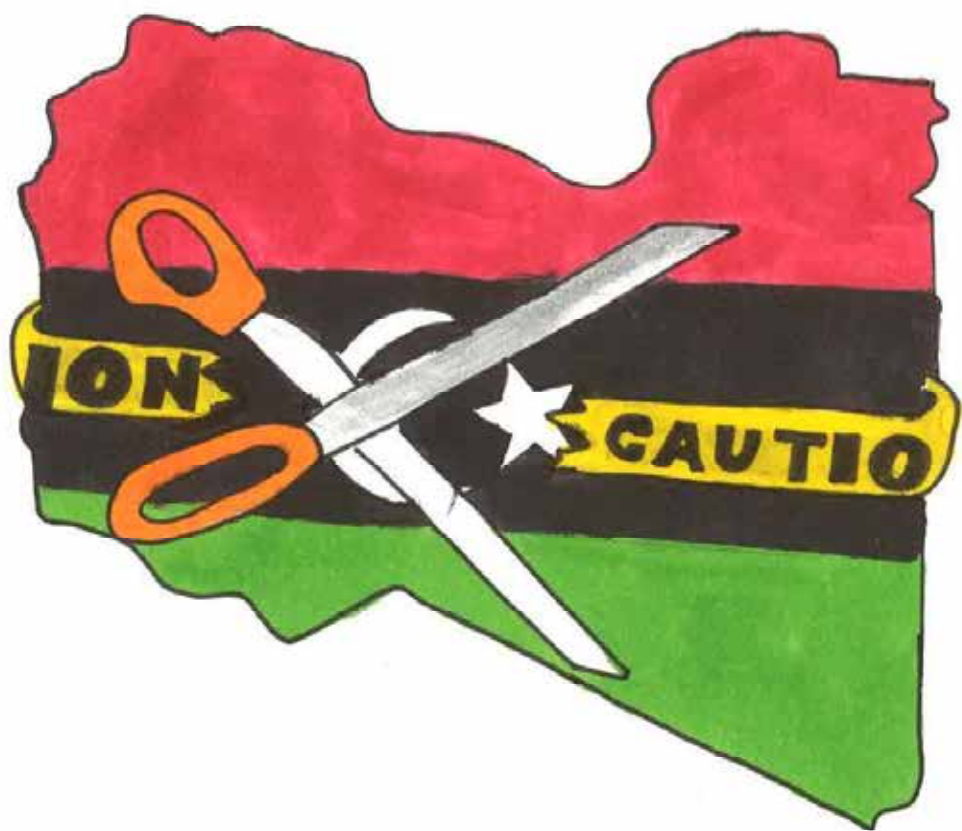
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**BY CHRISTINE HUANG**



*“There’s nothing magical or special about us as a family; we’re just simple people who were willing to say ‘yes’ to Jesus.”*





*Art by Christine Huang*

Sarai and George were regular people; they couldn't have ever imagined what God would one day choose for them to do. **It was because of their heart and love for God that they were chosen to go overseas and to do ministry in one of the most neglected places.** We call it the 10-40 window.

Sarai and George live overseas in North Africa. Their goal there is to build churches, not physical buildings, which will be filled with people. They want to build the Kingdom relationally through sharing with people. They hope that through helping these people organize together, they will see the Kingdom of Heaven come on Earth as it is in Heaven.

As a child, Sarai grew up in the church. Her parents were both believers, so from a very young age, she heard the gospel. Sarai remembers a day in her Sunday school class when she was only five years old. On that day, she said a prayer and invited Jesus to be the Lord of her life, and by the grace of God she has never turned back. She's never gone the other way or rejected her faith.

George grew up in Newton, Massachusetts. When he was in elementary school, George's parents didn't go to church and they didn't know God. But as he got older, they started going to church and after a few years, his mom came to know Jesus. Because of the transformation in her life, his dad came to Christ, too. They were in the church all the time after that, and George learned the right things to say, but he didn't necessarily know God. Later on though, George's mom made him go on a trip to Ghana in West Africa. He went to go tell other people about Jesus, even though George didn't have a relationship with Jesus. On the trip, George saw the joy that the people had even though they had nothing in the physical world. Their joy came from their relationship with God. George was deeply impacted by this and chose to give his life to Jesus on that trip. Because



George gave his life to Jesus in the nations, he's always had a heart for the people there.

Sarai never planned to do the ministry work she and George do today. She went to a university in Texas and studied elementary education. Sarai wanted to become a teacher. She thought her future would lie in America, in teaching at a school. It wasn't until after she had met George at university and they were dating that she began to think differently. George, who was also studying elementary education, started sharing with her his heart for the nations. Through this, her heart became more and more drawn towards the nations as well. Eventually, her heart changed to say, "Okay God, I want to be willing to go wherever you call me to go."

In 2012, Sarai and George got married. George knew the Lord had asked him to go overseas. One day, when he was at university, he was praying and he felt the Lord say, "You're going to go and live in North Africa." George wasn't sure where exactly in North Africa they were going to go, but he knew they were going to live there. In 2013, they attended a discipleship training school where they learned more about God and grew in discipleship. One day, they felt that Jesus told Sarai that he wanted her to go to the country that they are in now. They started a year-long church planting school where they were trained to biblically plant churches overseas. Finally, in 2015, they moved overseas and they have been there for about six and a half years now.

Scripture has impacted Sarai and George a lot. It is their motivation. Sarai and George are motivated specifically by the Great Commission,



which is found in Matthew. When Jesus was about to leave the Earth, he gave his disciples these last words, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”** Sarai and George want to be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission by making disciples in their country where many have not yet heard about Jesus.

Another part of scripture that motivates them is found in the book of Revelation. It speaks about how around the throne of God there will be people from every tribe, tongue and nation. One of the reasons that Sarai and George are motivated to serve where they do is because there are probably only a hundred people who believe in Jesus in the entire country. It is a country that Sarai and George call “unreached,” which means that less than two percent of the nation knows Jesus. Because the nation is unreached, it means that Sarai and George get to share Jesus with people who have never heard. Sarai and George want to see all the tribes in North Africa, on that day, before the throne of Jesus.

“Our ministry is our life in a very real sense,” said George. When George was a teacher in America, his job was from seven-thirty in the morning till four in the afternoon. After four, it didn’t mean he stopped being a teacher, but he didn’t have to teach anyone after four o’clock. It was his choice. In North Africa, it feels like their job never really ends. Their lives are their ministry. People are watching them saying, “George says he loves Jesus. What does his life look like?” Sometimes that is wonderful, and sometimes it’s really challenging because Sarai and George have problems just like everybody else.

One of the biggest challenges they face in



in their ministry is the language. It is hard because oftentimes Sarai wants to communicate something and she doesn’t know exactly how to communicate it in Arabic, which is a difficult language. Something else that’s hard is that many times, when Sarai and George share with people, they’re not very interested or they want to argue with them about why their faith is actually the truer one. It can be discouraging when they feel like people are not really responding. According to George, “When people aren’t responding it’s very difficult because as Americans, we all tend to be a bit result-oriented, we like to see the result of what we did.” But in this, Sarai and George are working for a heavenly reward and they don’t always get to see the fruit. Even in the midst of the discouragement, they have seen people make choices to follow Jesus who had heard the gospel ten years ago but hadn’t been ready to make a decision. The person who originally shared the gospel with the new believer never got to see the fruit of their labor. But Sarai and George got to see the fruit, years later. They have faith that there will be a return of the sowing that they’ve done by praying for people.

George and Sarai find their work rewarding even though it’s hard sometimes. There are a lot of people who haven’t yet heard about Jesus. The people there have been told something their whole lives. The story they’ve been told is counter to the truth of the gospel. Because of that, it’s not frequent that they just share with people and they make a decision to follow Jesus immediately. They find it rewarding to start peoples’ discovery of Jesus.





**Their goal for their ministry is societal transformation through the gospel.**

When Sarai and George pray they say, “What do I see around me that doesn’t look like heaven, or doesn’t look like what we see in scripture as the Kingdom?” Sarai and George then pray into those things, asking for transformation. Their main goal is not actually to effect change in the world as much as it is to change eternity; Sarai and George want heaven to be filled with people who know Jesus. Sarai and George don’t know the full extent of their impact yet, but their vision is for house churches to form and for people to come to faith. They want the house churches to multiply so that the country will be penetrated by the gospel. Then everyone will have an opportunity to hear the gospel.

Even though Sarai and George will never know the full impact of their kingdom work, God has blessed them by allowing them to see some of the fruits of their labor. One example of this is Sarai’s friend April. It has been really cool to see how God has worked in the lives of April and her family. April meets with Sarai on a regular basis, because she believed in Jesus and started following him. Sarai has also spent time with April’s mom and with April’s sister, who suffers from migraines.

One day last year, Sarai had prayed for her headache and then just a little while later, it was gone. April’s sister was just amazed; she knew that God had healed her after they had prayed. She even was telling her sister-in-law that God had healed her when Sarai prayed with her. She told her sister-in-law the Christian faith was real. April’s sister might not be a believer yet, but she seems so drawn to what she’s read about Jesus and what she’s read about the Christian faith.

Sarai is just seeing God working in April’s family and with April, too. They’ve seen God answer prayers in April’s life. April was having some recurring nightmares that were really disrupting her sleep, so they prayed. After they prayed, April said that it didn’t happen anymore. Sarai is seeing the love of God pouring out on April’s family and seeing April respond to the scriptures with such joy. April really loves the scriptures and she believes. Every time Sarai reads to her, April just receives it.

Another example of how Sarai and George’s ministry is impacting others is seen in the life of Andrew. He is a man that George and one of George’s co-workers had been meeting with for

about a year. They had been meeting with Andrew almost every week and they would read the Bible and have opportunities to share. Andrew was okay with reading the Bible, but he never seemed excited about it. George told his co-worker that he thought that they should stop meeting with Andrew because he didn’t seem interested in the gospel. George’s friend said that they should just keep meeting with him for a little while longer. Two weeks later, Andrew made a decision to follow Jesus, and George and Sarai got to see him baptized. Over the last three and a half years, since Andrew came to Christ, George and his friend got to walk with Andrew. By reading the Bible with Andrew and studying with him, they have seen his life be transformed by Jesus.

One way Andrew has changed is his willingness to walk in humility. The idea of humility is foreign in their culture; everyone wants to be right. To admit that you were wrong or to try to find a better way is not done in their country. Through the transforming power of Jesus, they saw their friend Andrew learn to walk in humility. In Philippians, it talks about how Jesus was God but he considered equality with God not something to be grasped. Andrew’s humility has grown as he has seen it modeled in the life of Jesus.





George and Sarai have been encouraged by seeing the lives of people like April and Andrew changed. They are also encouraged by knowing that God is with them. There was a season where Sarai and George were trying to move back to the country where they do their ministry, but due to a variety of things, they ended up stuck in a nearby country for about nine months. They would have never picked that, but the Lord knew it was better for them to be in that country. It was a miracle because there were relationships they built there, and things that they needed to learn as part of that time outside their country. In the midst of that, they probably would have had to leave their country anyway, because fighting had started. But during that time, Sarai and George saw the sovereignty of God, orchestrating and guiding their steps. They've also seen it through George's work, by God's provision of good jobs for George at just the right time. Sarai and George have experienced God providing for them over and over again, and they've seen his goodness to them through so many different people.

Even the house that they live in feels miraculous to Sarai. God provided a great place for them to live. Sarai and George's landlords live in

the same building as them, and they have loved and welcomed Sarai and George into their family. That is really cool, because that actually hasn't happened with a lot of Sarai and George's friends who live in the same building as their landlord. God has provided this family for Sarai and George.

According to "experts," the average time it takes for people like Sarai and George who live in the Muslim world to see their first person come to follow Jesus is seven years. But Sarai and George have been blessed to see the miraculous transformation of lives and people choosing to follow Jesus. Only about a hundred people there are Christians. But in 2019, Sarai and George (not just them, but people that Sarai and George are connected with) were blessed to see nineteen new believers come to follow Jesus. That was a big miracle for them.

Sarai and George's ministry is not about a program. But their ministry is growing in that there is more prayer being raised up for the transformation of their country and there are more people supporting Sarai and George in prayer. Their goal is to have a thousand people who will pray with them regularly at least once a week and that is surely growing. Sarai and George believe that every seed they sow is supposed to seed thirty, sixty, a hundredfold.

## CHRISTINE'S REFLECTION

*George and Sarai showed a lot of courage when God asked them to go and live in the 10-40 window because Christianity is not welcomed there. They are putting their lives in danger to do God's work by telling others about Jesus. Something that surprised me was that God gave Sarai a vision; using that to tell her that he would be with them every step of the way. The lesson I took away from this interview project was that God can use ordinary people to do his extraordinary work. It reminds me that God can choose anyone; even me.*



# Stephen Nyakairu

*Pastor, Grace Chapel, Watertown*

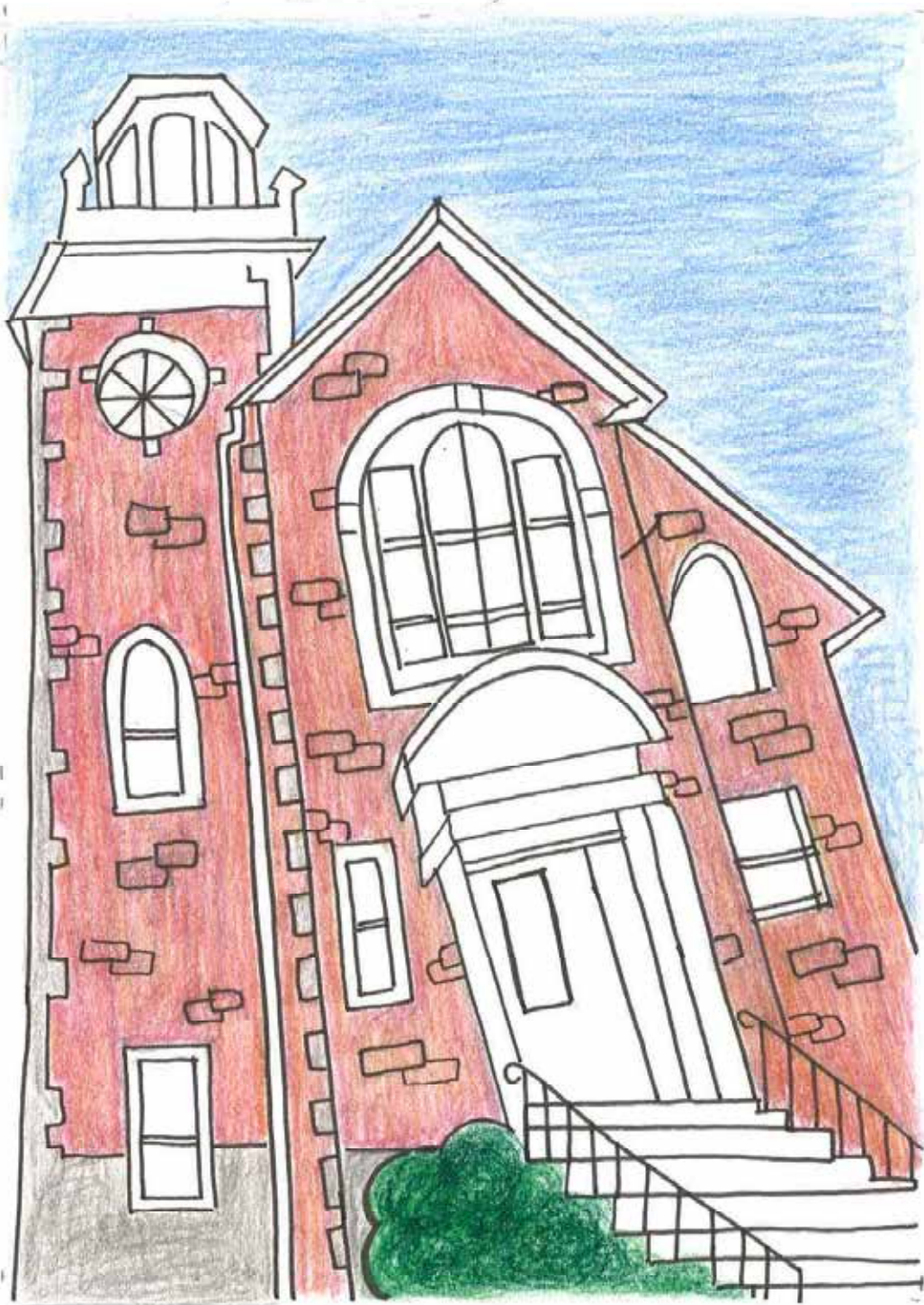
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BY JV (JOHN VINCENT) LAGO



*“God has a  
plan for you  
or a purpose  
for you and a  
future for you.”*





*Art by JV Lago*

**M**r. Stephen Nyakairu is a servant of God who always seeks to follow his word. He is a pastor who helps people to know more about God, and he cares about people's spirituality. He serves by leading his congregation and helping the people of his church to reach their community in Watertown, which is in the Boston area. He feels that God told him to do this work so that the world will be better than before. He helps people to learn more about God for the good of the world. He is a good guy and a special person for God and his family.

Mr. Nyakairu's kingdom work is done through his church, Grace Chapel. His local campus is one of Grace Chapel's five locations. He works with 80 other people to lead the campuses. Mr. Nyakairu serves a congregation that is multicultural and diverse. It has people from all over the world including Haiti, Africa, China, Hong Kong, and the United States. He loves diversity and God loves diversity; it just makes the world beautiful. He likes the creation of God, and he always thanks God for guiding him and helping him in his work.

Mr. Stephen Nyakairu's journey to his kingdom work began when he was a child. His birth father introduced him to Jesus. He used to listen to his dad talking about Jesus— how Jesus died for our sins and how Jesus loved him. That piqued his curiosity as a child and he wanted his sin forgiven, and he wanted to go to heaven. He asked if he could accept Jesus for the rest of his life when he was 5 years old. God transformed his life over time. He said, "When I grow up, Jesus will take me places that I dream of and he will show me things that I never imagined possible. He is going to use my gifts and my experiences to change the world."

At first, he thought that he wanted to be a doctor, but he didn't do well in math or chemistry. Then he thought that he would be a pilot. He really tried everything, but becoming a pastor felt like the perfect thing for him. It was perfect because his birth father was a pastor in Uganda, which is in Africa. His dad really impacted him by what he said about Jesus. Wherever his father went, he went. Whatever his father did, he did. He always traveled with him everywhere he went. **His dad used to bring him to church to learn more about God and to share his faith.** That's where his foundation started. He said that he had a call from God that said, "God has a plan for you, a purpose for you, and a future for you." It didn't fully materialize until he was older.

During his childhood, there was a dictator who was ruling Uganda who wanted to turn it into an Islamic state. He would find Christians and throw them into prison. Stephen's father was thrown into prison a few times. When Stephen was 10, his father was murdered. He was taken to an orphanage that was started by a group of missionaries from the U.S. When he was in his teens, Stephen came to the United States to travel with the children's choir that helped raise money for the orphanage. While he was in the U.S., one of his host parents asked him if he wanted to stay in the United States and they adopted him.

When he graduated from high school, he went to Seattle Pacific University. While he was there, he was able to serve as an intern at a church of about 2,000 people. After that, he went to seminary in Massachusetts. During that time, he went to Grace Chapel and taught a Bible study.

Over the years, Stephen experimented with different things until he found his calling. He was involved in many different ministry opportunities including working with youth and leading worship. He served at a Chinese church, and he worshiped with youth for years to see if he was good at working with youth. He was involved with the young adults, teaching them how Jesus loves everyone. For two years, he experienced so many things that were good for him.

**It was the example of his father and hearing Haddon Robinson preach, that eventually helped him to realize his calling.**

He was encouraged to be a pastor because he wanted to help people to learn more about God. For a time, he served as the lead pastor of a church in Shirley, Massachusetts. Then, the pastors at Grace Chapel gave him an opportunity to serve as the campus pastor in Watertown.

At all of the campuses of Grace Chapel, the mission statement is to discover life with God for the good of the world. They look for partners who will help them fulfill that mission. They try to find organizations that have needs and they see how







they can help. Mr. Stephen Nyakairu and his church have contributed to the Watertown Boys and Girls Club, Wayside Youth Family Services, Watertown Food Pantry, Watertown Helps Out, Watertown Community Foundation, and Waltham Creative Start. They also serve in the Boston Project and they have mission partners around the world.

In his ministry at Grace Chapel, Mr. Nyakairu has faced challenges because of COVID-19. He saw people who were struggling because of illness, cough, and colds. According to him, “The other thing is that when people were going through a difficult time, I couldn’t help, and that could be hard and difficult. The other thing was not seeing other people serve because of COVID.”

Another challenge of COVID was he couldn’t see the people he served as pastor. He spent a lot of time talking with the people using Zoom. It’s been a hard time for him to take care of the people because it’s hard to engage with each other.

Since February 28, 2022, he has been figuring out the COVID-19 protocols for getting back to church: what it looks like and what the communication plan is. The other thing he is figuring out is how to reach people who have not been connected to the church for the past two years. He is reaching them and engaging with them so they know that the church cares for them, loves them, and wants them to stay connected to Jesus.

Even though Mr. Nyakairu has had challenges in his work, he has been encouraged as well. It is rewarding when he sees people’s lives changed because they meet Jesus for the first time or they ask Jesus for forgiveness. He loves seeing people do this because it makes the world a better place. He loves what he does because he can see the change that happens after people make a decision to follow Jesus. **His work is so significant because it gives him a meaning, purpose, and a sense of direction.**

God and his community also encourage Mr. Nyakairu. God encourages him because he is always in his life. Studying the scripture inspires him. His church community has been guiding him, especially his small group. He and his wife

Rebekah have family that is far away from them, so his church family is always there for him. The people of God are also seeing each other “hold on to faith, inspired by what they are dealing with.” That simply helps him to keep going.

He gets to see God doing amazing things and he gets to pray. Jesus showed up in the hospital when one of his family members was there. The person was paralyzed, so he asked God if he could do something and he did. God healed them. He has also experienced a miracle by always being healthy and by being strong enough to care for his family. Even during COVID, he has not been sick.

Mr. Nyakairu’s future goal is to keep inspiring people to follow Jesus. He also wants to reach as many people as possible in the Boston area and beyond. According to him, you either invest your time, waste your time, or spend your time. He said that investing is the one thing that you need to do first. Start investing your time in others so that you spend less and waste less.

God has used his work to impact the world. Mr. Nyakairu knows that when Jesus left the earth, he said go and make disciples, meaning go mobilize and invite people into a relationship with God. By being in the community of faith in Watertown where God has placed him, he gets to introduce people to Jesus. He also serves people by loving them, engaging in the needs of the community, and praying for them. He sees that God is using him as a representative of Christ and ambassador to the world. He gets to bring hope and love to the people who need it.

## JV’S REFLECTION:

*Mr. Nyakairu inspired me by showing the courage to participate in the interview project. He also shows courage by telling people all about God in front of crowds. As I was talking to him, the thing that surprised me is that he was adopted like me when he was a child. The lesson that I learned from Mr. Nyakairu is to do what God tells me to do. I’m thankful that he showed courage to do this interview because I learned a lot of things from him.*



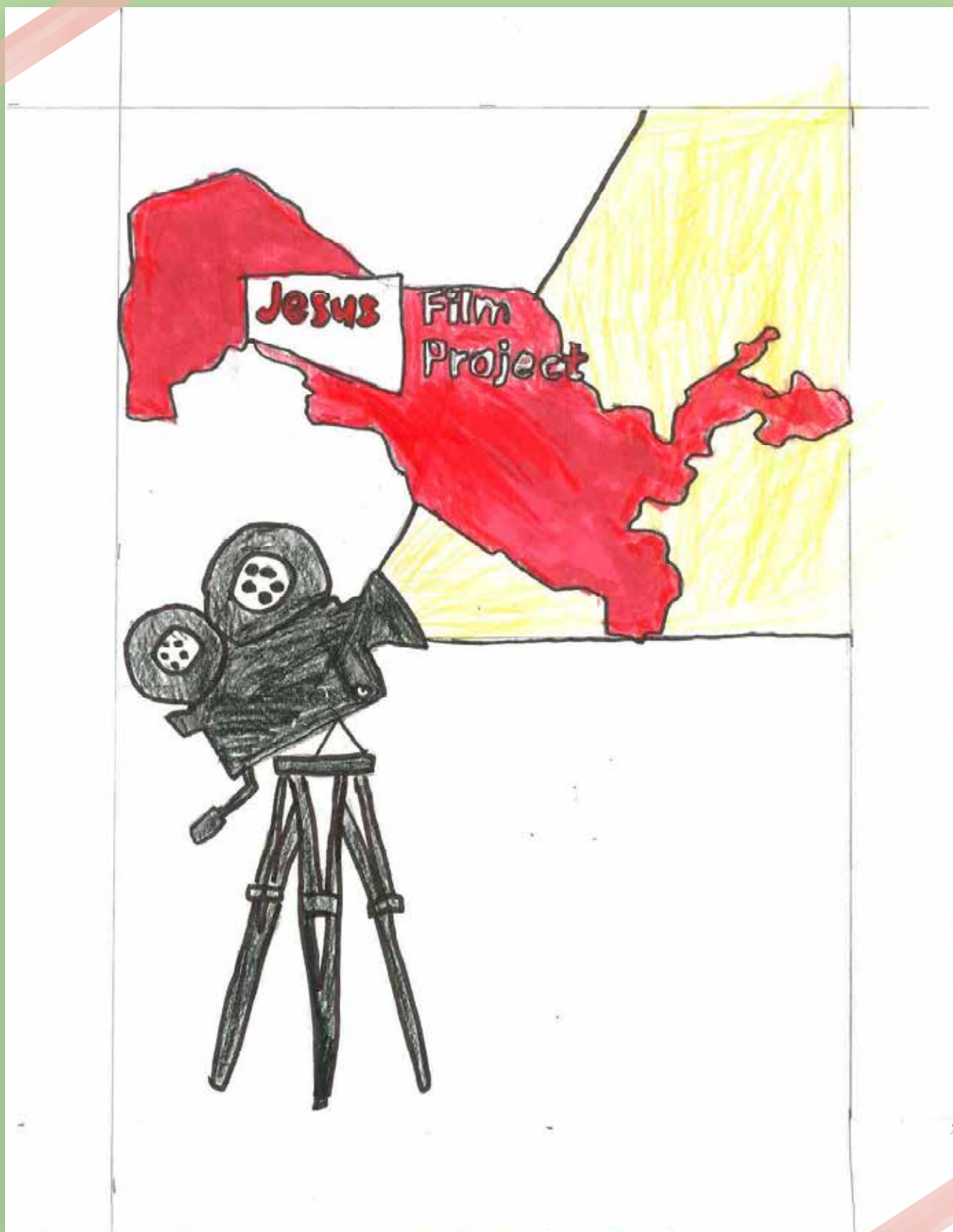
# Erick Schenkel

## *The Jesus Film Project*

BY ROMAN ARNEMAN



*“The whole history of the world shows that the most important thing going on right now is that God loves people and wants every person in the world to have a personal relationship with him.”*



*Art by Roman Arneman*

Erick Schenkel has been building God's kingdom since 1996 with an organization called the Jesus Film Project. The ministry started in 1979 when two friends, Bill Bright and Paul Eshleman, had the idea that there should be a Hollywood-quality film on the life of Jesus. This was the first movie of its kind. The film is based on the gospel of Luke. **Their mission is to give everyone in the world an opportunity to hear about Jesus and see Jesus in their own heart language.** The film has been translated into 1,937 languages. They have been able to serve about ninety-nine percent of the world's population by putting the film into their own language, with the hope of sharing the gospel with everyone in the world by 2033. They do this because God loves every person.

Erick didn't always plan to work with the Jesus Film. In fact, he didn't even know Jesus when he was growing up. He was raised in Kentucky and he came from a poor family. He didn't know what he wanted to do with his life. Erick first learned about the Kingdom of God right before he left high school to go to college when his math teacher told him about Jesus. A few months later, he went to Harvard. When he was there, he met some Christian friends. When they graduated, they started a church and he became the pastor.

Erick was a pastor of Covenant Church, and he helped to start Covenant School (now New Covenant School). He was also the chaplain and Bible teacher at Lexington Christian Academy. As he was doing his work, he wondered how to reach people in the world who didn't have access to places like New Covenant School or church. Even though he wondered, he poured himself into the work he was doing. When he was teaching his Bible class, he was looking for a way to make it more exciting for his students. He found out about the Jesus Film, and he started to show it in class when he was teaching about the gospels. He found out that the man who made the film had also written a book entitled, I Just Saw Jesus. As he read the book, he learned about the impact of the film. He was so excited to learn about the Jesus Film group because they were doing so much to reach unreached people. He felt God was calling him to work with the Jesus Film and to bring the message to people who hadn't heard it.

He was uniquely prepared for this work because he had a Ph.D. in the study of religion. He had learned a lot about Islam and about the parts of the world where Muslims live. One day, a young woman in his church stood up and said that her organization, which was Campus Crusade for Christ, was going to send a team to Uzbekistan to tell people about Jesus. They sent a team of students and he went to visit them. While he was there, he realized that he could go as a university professor and also work with the Jesus Film Project while he was there, so that is what he did.

When he and his family moved from Arlington to Uzbekistan, they sold almost everything they had. When they got there and saw the needs of the people, they used all the money they had to help. The time he spent in Uzbekistan had a big impact on his resources and on the way he viewed the world. While he was there, he learned that people in other countries live very different lives. Their clothes, food, medical care, housing, and language are completely different from what he was used to. He had to learn Russian to do his work there, and he had to learn to do things their way instead of the way that he was used to.

After he and his family were there for four years, they were attacked by people who wanted them to leave the country. His children were told to run so they weren't injured, but his wife was nearly killed and he got a concussion. They were airlifted out, but a month later he returned. This experience allowed him to show God's love in an even greater way. It showed the people there that through God's power he could do work that would be too scary without God. He continued to work in Uzbekistan for another six years until he and his family were expelled along with all other Christian missionaries.

After he was thrown out of Uzbekistan, he went to work for an organization that showed the Jesus Film and used other strategies to reach the Muslim world. During this time, they lived in France and then in Turkey. He was later asked to come back and be the director of the Jesus Film Project, which he did for 6 1/2 years. He now lives in Orlando, Florida, the headquarters of the Jesus Film Project, and he works as one of the distributors of the Jesus film to churches.



Even though there are many challenges there are many things he finds rewarding. The thing he finds most rewarding is that he has a chance to see people's lives change. His work works on people's hearts. A lot of people can hear about Jesus in a second language but when they hear about him in their "heart language" it can have more of an impact on them. What encourages him to keep going when it is hard is by starting his day with prayer. By the time he starts his day, he's not discouraged anymore because Jesus's spirit causes him to have the courage he doesn't have on his own. The power of the Holy Spirit gives him strength beyond his own understanding. **He steps out in faith to do what he feels God wants him to do and trusts God to provide the resources he needs.**

Erick's work has a big impact on the world, though Erick acknowledges that his impact has been just a small piece of the big picture. **Around 2 billion people have heard about Jesus and about half a billion people have become Christians because of the Jesus film.** There are many places in the world where people don't have televisions, so when they go to places to show the film, nearly everyone in the villages comes to watch it. At the end of the film, the people watching are asked if they want to become a follower of Jesus. Many of the people included in the count mentioned previously are those who raised their hands at the end of the film.

Erick mentioned a few testimonies of individual people whose lives were changed by his ministry. One testimony was of a Muslim man from Afghanistan who was his office manager. He was a good Muslim, but he didn't have any real faith in God. He began to work for Erick and saw how he lived. He looked on the internet and watched the Jesus film and other Christian material. As a result, he became a Christian.

Another testimony was of a man who was in jail. He asked to borrow a projector to watch bad films. The person that owned the projector said he could borrow it, but that he could only watch the Jesus Film. He agreed to watch it, but planned to watch the bad films afterward. That night the man viewed the Jesus film once and he couldn't stop looking at it. He watched it all night. The next day, the person came back to get the projector and the man in jail said he

became a follower of Jesus.

Erick learned about miracles in his ministry. For example, there was a teacher who had just become a Christian. One of her students just fell and stopped breathing for no reason. People brought him into a building and everyone was crying. The teacher knew in the Bible that people were raised from the dead. She felt that Jesus called her to pray for healing for the boy, so she did. After she prayed, she left the room and the boy was still laying there. A few moments later, students came running and said that the boy had gotten up and had walked out of the room. The whole village was aware of what happened and was astounded by the story.

Erick's work doesn't always involve amazing stories like this, but he helps to build God's kingdom by helping people to understand that change starts in their hearts. When people's hearts change, their lives change. God's kingdom is built because people start living for God and they start looking for things to do to make the world a place that God wants it to be. Erick explained that what any one of us does as a human being on this Earth is like sand that the wind blows around. One person's life is very small, but when we live our lives with Jesus every day, he gives us joy and strength. He makes our lives into what he wants them to be. God is great and we're very small, but we have the privilege of having a friendship with the mighty God.

### ROMAN'S REFLECTION:

***My kingdom builder and his wife showed me an incredible example of courage. They traveled around Uzbekistan even though it was very dangerous. One example of the danger they encountered happened in their home. At 4 am people showed up at their house with hatchets to scare them out of the country. His wife was attacked and got three skull fractures and he got a concussion. Despite this, they returned to their ministry a month later. This incredible story inspires me to show courage in my life. Something I will always remember from this interview experience is to never give up. In my future, there will be challenges, but I know God will be with me.***

# Jean Sicurella

## *Misión de Caridad*

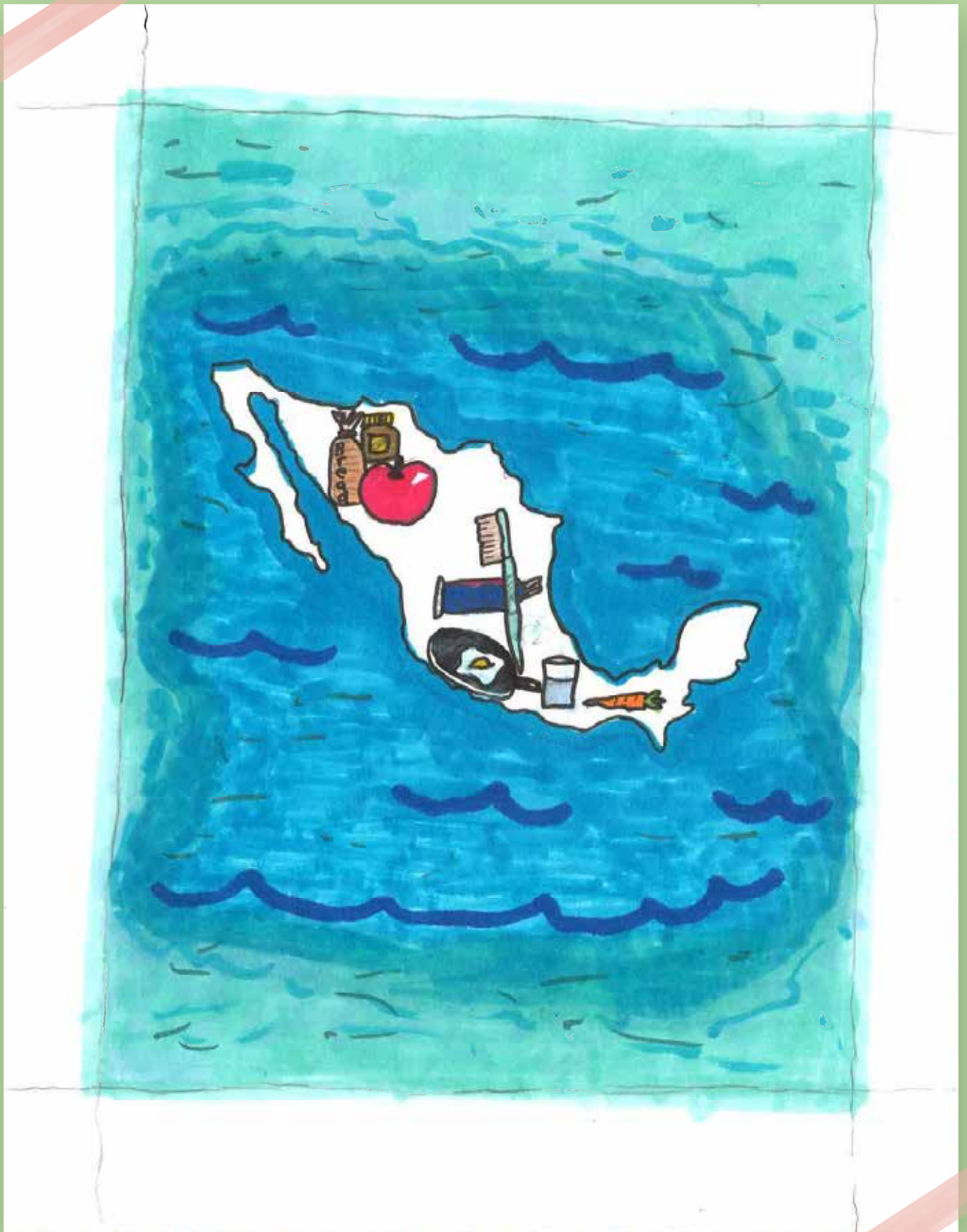
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BY KESED TURLEY



*“Changing  
people’s lives  
and seeing them  
succeed, there is  
nothing like it.”*





*Art by Kesed Turley*



Jean Sicurella is the co-founder of a ministry named Misión de Caridad, which is located in San Luis Rio Colorado, Mexico. Through this ministry, Jean and her team work to help solve the crisis asylum seekers find themselves in at the Mexican border. Jean works to help the migrant women and children that live there. These people are in extreme poverty. She helps them to earn the money needed to live and shows them how to get an education. She also runs programs that teach people important life skills such as how to care for their teeth and how to eat nutritionally.

Jean grew up knowing she was going to help people because she loved helping others, but she never knew she would start a nonprofit in Mexico. **She felt that God was shaping and leading her for a purpose, even though she did not know that she would eventually do the work she is currently doing.**

As a child, she knew there was a God, but she did not really know who he was. She would bargain with God, but she did not have a relationship with Him. It was not until college that someone really introduced her to God and she knew what it was like to truly know him. It took her a while to realize that God was in control and not her. Her purpose was to serve him and that meant



dying to herself. She felt God slowly leading her to the work she would eventually do.

A number of experiences prepared her for her ministry. One experience was working at a church. The church had to get donors to help them maintain its ministry. This helped her to understand how to run a nonprofit and to use money carefully. Another experience that helped prepare her and lead her to her work was going on a mission trip to Mexico in 2016. She went not knowing that she would one day return to Mexico. On her trip, she had a feeling that it was where she needed to be, but she did not know why. It wasn't until four years later when conditions at the border between the United States and Mexico had seriously deteriorated, that it made sense to start a nonprofit there. When she went back to Mexico, she saw children at the age of 10 who couldn't read, people who didn't know how to brush their teeth and moms who had to do their laundry in a bucket. That experience broke her heart and made her want to help and it motivates her to continue her work.

Jean faces many challenges in Mexico. For example, things move a lot slower there. Jean bought land three years ago to build a facility, but her wishes for the property are not moving along as quickly as she would like. A simpler example is that she ordered legs for a table and they didn't come. **To overcome the discouragement this waiting brings, she has to remind herself that everything is in God's timing.** Maybe the legs did not come because God wanted her to do something else for his work instead of building a table. She says that she has had to accept that things just move more slowly in Mexico.

Another challenge for Jean is that her work impacts her and her family. When she travels, she misses her family. When she is doing her work, she is missing out on having meals with her family and playing games with them. She wants to laugh, have fun, and be a part of those memories, but she can't. Despite this challenge, she has to remember it's all for God's kingdom. Even though she mostly travels alone, sometimes her family can come with her and that is such a blessing.

Even though there are many challenges Jean faces, she finds her work very rewarding. She gives people the

opportunity to do things they never would have been able to do, and that is awesome. One opportunity they get to have is they build a sense of community by playing games together. When people have such difficult lives it is such a blessing to see the big smiles on their faces as they have fun playing games and engaging in conversations. Seeing people's lives changing and seeing them succeed makes her so happy. She says there is nothing like it.

When ministry is hard, Jean is encouraged by answers to prayer. For example, one Sunday she walked past a woman and thought she might talk to her later. But then Jean felt an urging from God to go and talk to her, and she was obedient. She found out that the woman, Maria, was an educator and helped teach kids how to read. Jean knew that Maria was going to run the education program, but if Jean did not listen to the urging from God, she would not have found Maria to run the program.

Jean also has many generous supporters in her ministry. For example, her family has been incredibly supportive of her. Jean is very thankful for her husband who has given her money and other financial resources to help. Another example is her co-founder, who is a pastor in San Luis Rio Colorado. He helps manage the staff and gets people to do what they need to do to implement the programs in Mexico. Jean's ministry in Mexico would not be possible without her supporters.

Jean has a great impact on the world. She always has to watch her actions because she never knows whose heart she's touching. Jean has to be aware of what she does because some people in Mexico look up to her and follow her example. Jean's vision is to show people love that they do not deserve. She hopes they will see her example and do as she did—love others around them to honor God. God uses Jean to help people of every age. **She helps young people grow in their education, moms eat healthfully, and children learn to brush their teeth and have good nutrition.** Jean finds small miracles everywhere. For example, once someone asked for blankets and Jean thought, "I am not going to spend time buying blankets." Then later a friend said that she wanted to donate blankets.

Jean's main goal is to eradicate poverty and help teach people how to get



the money they need to be independent, buy food on their own, and get their children in school. That does not mean they are going to give them money. Instead, they provide education about what is healthy and not healthy and teach them social skills so they will know what to do in the future. Her ministry is growing so much. It is growing by more programs being added. A while back she started a Super Saturday program where women can do an exercise activity, and at the same time, there is a health class for the kids where they learn about nutrition and dental hygiene.

Something that is difficult for her is she wants to be in control, but she can't be, so she has to trust God. She wants to go into the future and see what is going to happen but she can't.

A verse she likes is Philippians 4:6 which says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in any situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." It helps her know that God is in control and that what happens is in his timing, not hers.

## KESED'S REFLECTION

*Jean has shown great humility by being willing to use her resources, including her time and money, to help those who live in poverty in Mexico. She inspires me to show humility and kindness to those who need it. Jean surprised me when she talked about the small miracles that can make a difference to the migrant women and children in Mexico. This makes me realize that anyone can help those who are suffering, including me.*



# Brooke Sulahian

*Hope for Our Sisters, Inc.*

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BY CATHERINE LANDERS



*“Women, I think,  
are inherently  
strong....  
If you give them  
the chance to rise  
again, they will  
do it.”*





*Art by Catherine Landers*

Brooke Sulahian is called by God to run a nonprofit called Hope for Our Sisters. Through this ministry, she speaks out for girls and women in Angola, DR Congo, and Nepal who don't have access to maternal healthcare, most specifically care when girls and women give birth.

Brooke's journey to the work she does wasn't simple. She was raised in a church home and moved a few times. These moves caused her to feel like an outsider. She didn't realize at the time that the experience would one day help her to better understand the women she would eventually serve. When Brooke grew up and went away to college, she used journaling as part of her faith journey. After college, she lived in a variety of places around the country. While Brooke was living in Tampa Bay, she went for a jog and felt like God told her to return home to church. She had left church (not God) nine years prior. That was her first real encounter with God. Later, she moved to Massachusetts and her faith grew even stronger.

Brooke was not planning to work in a faith-based nonprofit. She anticipated that she was going to run a bookstore or a stationary store because she loved to both read and write. When Brooke felt called to her work, it was when she and her husband had small children. During that time, she read two books which were both about injustice and oppression of women and girls all over the world.

According to the Hope for Our Sisters website, Brooke said, "Hope for Our Sisters, Inc. was born out of a profound and life-changing reaction to two powerful books. I read [The Hole in Our Gospel](#), by Richard Stearns, during the fall of 2009, and [Half the Sky](#), by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, during the summer of 2010. God used these challenging books to burst open the protective "bubble of safety" in which I lived, helped me see the world beyond my immediate vision, and allowed my heart to break due to the devastating and worldwide oppression of women



and girls. While God was doing this painful work in me, I also saw the hope God has placed in the hearts of women and girls, and as I learned of their resilience when given the chance to heal, speak, grow, fight back, learn, and contribute. God had invited me to do something for my sisters in need and, gratefully, I said yes."

When Brooke first started her ministry, she was having a hard time trying to find people to partner with her in her work. She got to a point where she was going to quit, but God had other plans. She went to a Bible study at her church, and while she was there, the leader of her Bible study asked her to share how she was being brave. Brooke told them about her ministry and about how she was going to quit because she could not find anyone to work with her. Seated across from Brooke was a lady whose eyes got as big as saucers. She said she had been wanting to do that work for three years. Her name was Mimi. She is now a part of Brooke's wonderful team.

Brooke definitely faces challenges in her ministry, some are external and some are internal. For example, an internal challenge Brooke faces is that she grieves with the suffering women she works with. God has given Brooke the gift of sympathy for others, but it does make the work more challenging for her. An external challenge she faces is helping people in the United States to understand their connectedness to women in other countries.





One of the ways she's working on overcoming that is by sharing their stories more widely. Another challenge Brooke has is that she cannot speak the women's language. It is a struggle but she helps to overcome it by communicating with the women and girls by smiling, touching them cheek to cheek, and by holding their hands. It is also a challenge to raise the funds she needs to support the ministry, but God continues to provide. Brooke has grown a lot with regard to the appreciation of her resources. When she started this ministry she couldn't understand why people gave little donations, however, she now realizes just a little donation can go a long way.

Brooke's ministry has had a significant impact on the world. **Her ministry has helped build God's kingdom by advocating for girls and women in Africa and Asia.** Brooke has seen God change people's hearts. One example is Brooke was selling cards for donations to support her organization. One woman was only willing to pay a dollar for the card. A year later, that same woman was willing to fund an entire surgery.

Another testimony Brooke has experienced is about a woman named Jenny. When Jenny was in business school, she was learning English and her instructor was running the prevention program for Hope for Our Sisters. Jenny met the woman that Brooke partners with and was helping out in the after-school program where the women can learn to read and write. Jenny was inspired to join the work and she now runs the whole program. Those are just some of the testimonies that have made a real impact on Brooke and her ministry.



Brooke finds her work to be very rewarding. **Her team helps to heal the emotional and physical wounds of women.** Once they are healed, they can socialize again and it is very rewarding for Brooke to see the women live their lives fully. Brooke travels to visit those she serves once every two years. It is rewarding for Brooke to see first-hand those her ministry serves. The board of her organization realizes the importance of Brooke having a chance to interact with both the women and girls she serves, as well as the medical and outreach teams involved in the ministry.

Brooke's family has been a great support to her, especially her husband. When Brooke said "yes" to Hope for Our Sisters, her husband also said "yes". Her husband supports her through struggles, and Brooke is very appreciative of him. She also has gotten closer to her husband which has had a positive impact on her and her family. Brooke's work can take a long time since there is a lot of work that needs to be done. She could work twenty-four hours a day, but she minimizes her hours to twenty hours a week since she also has a family to take care of. When she started this ministry her children were young, so they don't know life without it. She hopes she has an influence on them so that one day they can continue this work.

Brooke has many goals for her ministry; her ultimate goal is to rid these three countries of fistula. This will probably not happen in her lifetime, but that is the ultimate goal. Another goal that Brooke has is that the girls and women in these countries would be valued for who they are



and would be able to contribute by building awareness of fistula for other women in their country. A short-term goal that Brooke and her ministry set was to reach thirty-thousand people with their message. The people they wanted to reach included not just women and girls, but also their husbands and brothers. When the men find out that this is a physical condition, they are more likely to stay in the family group. The organization hit the goal of reaching thirty-thousand people last year, their new goal is to reach fifty-thousand people.

In addition to reaching more people, there are different ways for Brooke's ministry to grow. One way that her ministry is growing is that her team now has thirty-five people involved. Every time someone leaves, another person joins. The Board of Directors has also grown, and there are now four people on the board. **Brooke's willingness to follow God's leading has enabled her, and other members of her team, to make a tremendous difference in the lives of women. With God's help, the ministry will continue to grow.**



## CATHERINE'S REFLECTION

*Brooke has really inspired me with her willingness to go to Angola, DR Congo, and Nepal to help women that are suffering from terrible things. It was very shocking for me to hear about how much the women in these countries suffer for trying to have a child. Sometimes some of the women lose their babies, and their husbands leave them. I am inspired by the deep faith and strength these women have. Despite their terrible circumstances, when given a chance they will rise again.*

*Brooke has also taught me to be aware of the problems in the world and to help others in need. It surprised me when Brooke told me that she couldn't speak the women's language. Brooke does all this work without being able to communicate well with those she serves. She showed me that when God calls people to do something, it's not always going to be easy. Those who are called might question themselves from time to time.*

*Brooke has modeled a life of humility for me. She lives out humility because she sees how God works in her and she uses that to help women and girls. Another example of how Brooke shows humility is by helping other people she doesn't even know. She does this work for others even though she has a family to take care of as well. Like Brooke, I hope that one day I can do something to help the world see the goodness of God.*





**SPECIAL THANKS**



**TO OUR AMAZING AUTHORS**







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**Founded in 1985, New Covenant School is a private, non-denominational Christian day school that equips students to follow Jesus and serve in his kingdom by grounding them in godly wisdom and love and by training them to excel in a life of learning, leadership, and service. With two campuses, in Arlington and Lexington, MA, NCS serves children in Preschool through Grade 5. NCS is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Teach for Transformation (TfT), and is a pilot school for the professional development of invention education curriculum for elementary students in Massachusetts.**

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Main Office & Arlington Campus: 9 Westminster Avenue, Arlington, MA 02474

Lexington Campus: 480 Lowell Street, Lexington, MA 02420 | 781-643-5511 | [newcovschool.org](http://newcovschool.org)