



FROM ETEAM TO THE MISSION FIELD: A MISSIONARY'S STORY

I grew up going to a small Free Will Baptist church outside of a small town in southeast Missouri. While I often heard names like Carlisle and Marie Hanna and Ken and Judy Bailey, I knew next to nothing of anything that happened beyond our district association. But all that changed when my home church began inviting international missionaries on stateside assignment to take part in our yearly VBS. In the summer of 2003, our guest missionaries were Jerry and Carol Pinkerton. I was a teenage helper that year, but I wanted to attend all of the “missionary moments” where the Pinkertons shared captivating stories about a far-off land called Cote d’Ivoire. In a rare moment of quiet, I shared with Carol how I would like to follow in their footsteps. She then asked me a question that would forever change my life. “Have you ever heard of ETEAM?” I hadn’t!

Miss Carol went on to explain that if I felt like God was calling me overseas, a great way to confirm that calling would be to apply for ETEAM and get a small taste of what God is doing around the world. It was impossible to know then the trajectory that conversation would set me on. The next summer I traveled outside of the US for the first time, as I took part in ETEAM Panama. Our host missionaries, Eddie and LaRhonda Bowerman, showed us firsthand the fruit of the labor of pioneer missionaries as well as the ongoing need of church planting. The next two summers continued to confirm God’s calling on my life, as I was able to take part in ETEAMs Russia and Hokkaido. Those experiences serving alongside some of my missionary heroes were truly unforgettable!



My summers with ETEAM were an integral part of my journey towards becoming a church planter with IM. As we began working in predominantly Muslim villages in the Shumen Province of Bulgaria, I dreamed of one day being a host missionary like Eddie Bowerman. That dream became a reality in June of this year when Bulgaria hosted its very first ETEAM. Eight of our denomination’s best and brightest teenagers came and served alongside my kids and me. In the span of less than two weeks, they implemented our version of a VBS in two Muslim villages and impacted two other villages with the Gospel. Over 150 people heard the life-changing message of the empty tomb because they were obedient to God’s call to go forth and preach the Gospel. Because of ETEAM Bulgaria, those four villages are now so much closer to having their very first evangelical churches.

ETeam matters. It matters for the teenagers whose lives are changed forever. It matters for the local churches who are invigorated by their testimonies. And it matters for our church planters, who are able to reach out in ways that they simply could not alone.

I like to think that in some small way I am carrying on the legacy of legends like the Pinkertons and the Bowermans. And if for someone reading this I can be that person who encourages you to apply for ETEAM or can even be the host missionary who meets you at the airport, to God be the glory!

Josh Provow joined IM as a missionary in 2013. He currently serves in Bulgaria, reaching the people of Shumen and the surrounding villages with the Gospel.

FAMILY HAPPENINGS

Champions – It was a joyful moment during the National’s Wednesday evening service to be commissioned and prayed over by so many of our brothers and sisters.



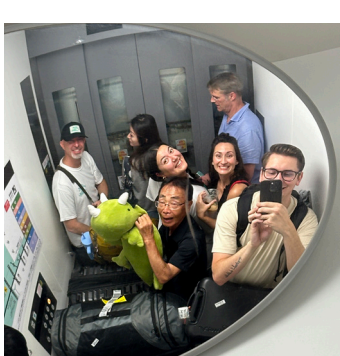
Portells – We celebrated our granddaughter’s first birthday recently and enjoyed having all four of our children together for a few days.



Carneys – Kelton and Katherine were baptized at our church in Japan on June 23! Kelton, Katherine, and Grace will be homeschooled this year, starting at the end of August.



Whites – We landed in Tokyo on July 23 and have had a great time jumping into life and ministry here! Our first few weeks were full of setting up our home, VBS at Hope Alive, and completing tasks for life in Japan. At the end of August, we began a one-month intensive language course. We are excited to continue building relationships with Japanese friends and sharing the Gospel through our ministry!



Sakamotos – Osam is near the end of his studies at seminary! He’s been busy with studying and staying involved in ministry, but we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.



Snows – We visited some churches and attended the National in Tampa this summer. We also spent time together with five of our seven children! Our son Andrew and his wife welcomed their second daughter into the world at the end of July.



Baileys – Our grandson, Lucas Delamarter, will appear in *Camelot* at Village Theatre in Washington in September and October.



Trifonovs – Our son Stefan married Vivka on July 27!



Penns – We thank everyone for praying for our son Mason. He developed blood clots this summer due to a rare anatomy syndrome. After a couple of hospital stays and a procedure to add stents, he is doing much better and will return to Arizona for his Sophomore year of college. Millie will join him this fall in Phoenix for her freshman year at Grand Canyon University.

Johnsons – We recently hosted another “A Taste of France” event at Westside Free Will Baptist Church in Johnsonville, SC. It was a great opportunity to share about our ministry and some of the “whys” behind our heart for France and the needs there.



Bishops - Willoughby Dale Kazuki (和希) was born on August 18. Pray for the Bishop family as they welcome their sweet newborn into the family!

STUDENT MISSIONS APPLICATIONS OPEN

ETEAM and the College Missions Program are accepting applications for the **2025** opportunities



through October 15! Encourage high school and college students to apply for these wonderful missions experiences. Every year, many students find God's call on their lives and grow in their relationship with Him through these opportunities. By experiencing day-to-day missionary life and temporarily living in a new culture, students are able to share the Gospel with people around the world. Apply now: www.iminc.org/go

Follow **ETEAM** and **CMP** on social media for the latest news and opportunities!

WMO CONTINUES TO INSPIRE

Thank you to all who have given and participated in the World Mis-



sions Offering! We continue to see the offering total rise as people generously give. There's still time to give on our website (www.iminc.org/wmo), by mail, or through your local church. You can also sign up for the monthly WMO email newsletter to stay up-to-date with the latest information and inspiring stories. Sign up here: bit.ly/wmonewsletter

Here's what Henrietta Brown (Alabama) had to say about receiving the WMO Newsletter: "I absolutely love the WMO Newsletter! It is such a blessing to be able to share with our church the legacy and mission of IM! As I shared with our church from the previous newsletter about the meaning and mission of this part of FWB ministry, I could see connections being made."

GIVING TUESDAY OPPORTUNITY

As the end of the year approaches, we are making financial projections for our organization. If current



trends continue, it is possible the General Fund will end 2024 with a deficit balance over \$552,000. Clint Morgan confirms our commitment to stay on mission at all times, in spite of the challenges. We are excited about the opportunity people will have to participate in **giving to IM on December 3, which is Giving Tuesday!** Giving Tuesday is a nationally recognized day to encourage generosity, whether it's through skills, resources, time, or finances. We hope you will "save the date" and plan to give back to IM this year!

PRAYER FOCUS

September's prayer focus is to pray for each of the IMpact Projects being carried out in communities around the world where our missionaries serve. Pray for supporters who will give generously to these efforts.

October's prayer focus is to pray for the leadership team and board of IM as they make decisions, create budgets, and guide missionaries.



MEET YOUR MISSIONARIES

We are **Bradley and Madison Mercer**, recently appointed as missionaries to International Students at the University of Missouri! Bradley has served in Columbia for a year now, and Madison moved here after our wedding in April. We are given the opportunity to reach the nations by reaching international students and families on the campus with the Gospel. Visit our social media (The Axis) or IM website page to see what the Lord has done already!



You can partner with the Mercers by visiting <https://iminc.org/missionary/bradley-merc>.

STATESIDE MISSIONARIES

Why not invite one of our missionaries who is in the States raising support to your church? They'd love to share about their ministry and how God is working around the world to fulfill the Great Commission.

Visit iminc.org/our-impact/im-missionaries/stateside-missionaries to view the full list of Stateside missionaries and their contact information. They'd love to hear from you!

Visit www.iminc.org
for the most up-to-date news.



Your partnership in the Gospel yields dividends around the world in lives changed and churches planted. If you would like to discuss ways to see that impact continue long-term, call 1-877-767-7736 for information on Planned Gifts or Estate Planning.