

PLANTING A CHURCH DURING A PANDEMIC

by Shalane Wellard, Independent Assemblies of God, Canada

After almost nine years on the mission field in South Africa, Pastor David and Krista Meisner of the Independent Assemblies of God, Canada, knew that Voice when it spoke to their hearts to come back to Canada. It was the same Holy Spirit voice that had led them to South Africa so many years ago. Mission Thando was thriving, but in 2017, these missionaries knew that it was time to transition things to the local leaders they had trained and to follow the voice of the Holy Spirit and return to Canada. Only months before their return in April 2018, Pastors David and Krista were offered to pastor a church in the Canadian Province of Saskatchewan, farm country.

“We felt strongly it was the right place for us. We settled, bought a house, and poured our hearts into the church.” After just two years of pastoring, some significant struggles, and then the pandemic, they found themselves in a position of needing to step back from the post.

As any Christian leader knows, ministry is hard work! When things do not go as planned or as expected, we have difficulty not questioning our call: “Did I hear the voice of the Lord right?” “What will God possibly have next?”

“We were heartbroken and really struggled with what God was doing, especially in the middle of COVID, but we also felt strongly that we were not supposed to move,” the Meisner’s shared. It is tempting to become disillusioned and stay hurt. Are you not grateful for the Lord’s faithfulness? He still has a vision; He still has a good plan, and He doesn’t regret putting His gifts and callings on our lives.

Pastor Dave and Krista’s heart has remained the same, no matter where in the world the Lord has led them—reach the community, share the gospel, win souls, disciple them, and show God’s love in practical ways.



This was the beginning of Railway Ave Mission in the tiny town of Kisbey, Saskatchewan. Who plants a church in the middle of a pandemic—only God! Backyard services began and rotated through various neighbours during the summer, and a VBS was held for the kids. By September, the core group was more than what could meet in a home, so the local seniors’ hall was rented. Freedom sessions were being held as midweek services.

The church has continued to grow and has become a place of healing for those hurt and disillusioned by churches and religion in the past. People are being born again and baptized. The redemption of the Lord is a wondrous thing.



Canada has had significant limitations on faith gatherings, and the struggle has been great for many ministries, but it hasn't stopped us from being creative in the kingdom. In partnership with another evangelist, pastors David and Krista held an online evangelistic outreach which created wonderful avenues into the local communities.

While this was a new concept to everyone, it was a great success. Four nights of evangelistic messages were

livestreamed through Facebook. The event was promoted online, and flyers were placed in more than 800 mailboxes in the surrounding communities. Prizes were gathered and donated to be given away throughout the event. Another part of the team was commenting and taking prayer requests online throughout. After the event, prizes were delivered, and many connections were made with people in the area. It stirred even greater passion for the lost in the Railway Ave Mission congregation. No pandemic can hold things back.

Kisbey, Saskatchewan, is a small community of 150 people. Railway Ave Mission now has close to 50 people and is thriving. Be encouraged! God always has the answer and will lead you to the right place at the right time, pandemic or no pandemic, big town or small, whatever continent. His good plans for us always win.

