

one ambition

"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known..." ROMANS 15:20

ON MISSION

COME FOLLOW ME

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Thus far
THE LORD HAS
HELPED US

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CUP OF TEA

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How will they hear if
NO ONE SHARES?

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*Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand has provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.*

Thomas Chisholm, 1923

COME FOLLOW ME

By Mark Cassidy

Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee. There were two brothers, fishermen, doing what they did every day, casting their nets into the sea. He stopped to talk to them. And then He invited them to come with Him, to follow Him.

And they did.

They left their nets behind and followed Jesus. And that changed everything.

In this issue of One Ambition, three of our disciple-makers share a part of their story. Each one of them describes their journey in growing and sharing Christ.

Following Jesus is the beginning of our journey as disciple-makers. Whether we leave our home country or not, whether we are full-time ministry workers or not, each of us is invited to follow Jesus.

These simple fishermen were out of their depths. They were astounded by Jesus' teaching, the power of his word to heal the sick and the controversy he evoked. Following Jesus was not always easy nor the interactions predictable. But the relationship with Jesus dramatically changed their lives and their future. Peter, a blustering, robust and uneducated fisherman became the rock on which Jesus built the Church.

That's the miracle of becoming a follower of Jesus: He uses our gifts, strengths and experience in ways we can't anticipate. He leads us into relationships, situations and opportunities we didn't imagine.

I think about Amal, a man who followed Jesus his entire life and as a mature, experienced businessman, went into full-time ministry. His life experience, knowledge of Arabic and Muslim communities and his personal maturity invite respect among leaders.



I am encouraged by Kelly's* story. She has faced multiple health challenges, ministry bumps and, ultimately, God's faithfulness. Matthew and Alison are just starting out, following God to reach some of the least reached people of the world.

When God began to nudge me into full-time ministry, I didn't think I had anything to offer. I was an administrator with the government of Canada. One day I voiced my doubts out loud in a conversation with a leader in Pioneers US. He looked me in the eye and said, "What do you mean? God calls all of us to follow Him. There is a place for you in God's mission."

And as Angelica and I followed God into full-time ministry, we discovered God did, in fact, have a place for us and could use our giftedness.

But what we also learned was that God is faithful.

God's faithfulness was a concept I understood. My grandmother lived her faithfulness and exemplified unwavering trust in God. One of her favourite songs was Great is Thy Faithfulness. The lyrics affirm God's unchanging faithfulness: "There is no shadow of turning with Thee, Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not, As Thou has been Thou forever will be."

Following Jesus is not a "missionary" calling. It's the first step to living out our relationship with Jesus. Jesus' invitation is simple: just follow and I will lead you.

Mark Cassidy
President, Pioneers Canada

* name changed.



MY JOURNEY: *Following God's Call*

Amal plays a unique role in reaching Muslims seeking the truth. In Canada, Amal encourages and challenges Canadian church leaders to reach into the Muslim community within their neighbourhoods, building friendships and opening the door to presenting the Good News of Jesus. He also teaches, mentors, and supports Christian leaders in Muslim countries; many of whom have come from Muslim backgrounds. His understanding of Arabic and Muslim communities, experience as a businessman and humility as a follower of Jesus bring respect and authority to his teaching.

I was born in Egypt and grew up in the Arab world. At the age of 14 I committed my life to missions to spread the Gospel amongst the peoples. Since then I developed my skills and became a successful COO. I had a flourishing career, a luxurious office, and a comfortable life with my wife, Sohir, and our three children. But God had a different plan.

One day, I felt His call: "Leave this place. I have a mission for you." I didn't fully understand it, but I knew I had to follow. I shared what I was feeling with Sohir, unsure of her response. To my surprise, she reminded me of her promise when we got married—to follow God's call wherever it led.

With her support, I resigned the next day, not knowing where this new journey would take us.

Soon, I found myself connected with Arab World Ministries (AWM), which later merged with Pioneers. With my background in business and my understanding of the Arab world, it seemed like a perfect match. But there was a challenge—raising funds for the ministry. This was hard for both Sohir and me. Depending on others for financial support was unfamiliar and uncomfortable, but we realized our true dependence was on God's provision, not on people. The board encouraged us to raise 5% of our funds before going and meet the rest after 2 years. Because the need to fill the position was too great and I was a strong match, they would subsidize the rest. By God's grace, we raised 10% in just a few weeks, affirming God's direction.

Since joining Pioneers, I have served in various roles, including missionary, theologian, teacher, Area Leader, and Muslim Ministry Coordinator. I raise awareness in Western nations, equipping leaders to share the Gospel with the increasing number of Muslim neighbours and immigrants. I also mentor emerging leaders in Arab countries preparing them for ministry, helping them navigate the risks of following Christ in regions where faith in Jesus can lead to persecution, shame, or even death.

What breaks my heart most is the passivity I see in many Canadian churches regarding their Muslim neighbours. As I travel and teach in Canadian churches, I have one message: love your Muslim neighbours and refute the ideology of Islam that acts against the gospel. Get to know them as people, not

the enemy. Show them your love by sharing meals with them, caring for them when they are in need and opening your life to them. Challenge them with deep, thought-provoking questions, to help them to reconsider their beliefs.

While attending meetings in Philadelphia, I took the time to visit a mosque in the city. I struck up a conversation with the Imam at the Mosque. He was interested in talking with me and converting me to Islam. I told him I was a Christian and started to display the difference between Islamic ideologies and the Christian faith and challenged him with this: "The way I see it, there are three logical options only. First, you are right and I'm wrong. Second, I'm right and you're wrong. Third, we both are wrong." Then I asked him a thought-provoking question:

“If I convert to Islam, does that guarantee me eternal life?” A crowd gathered around us, listening to our conversation. While they listened, I shared the miraculous story of grace through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His guarantee of salvation and eternal life. My only prayer is that the conversation will open the hearts of the people listening, searching for the truth and looking to the Scriptures in new ways.

I think about the Apostle Paul, who was trained in the Jewish Scriptures and convinced that Jesus was a heretic, destroying the faith he loved. He fought back, persecuting and murdering followers of Jesus. It took the miraculous intervention of God’s Spirit to turn him around. His will is that this miraculous conversion may happen to Muslims as well.

Conversion to Christianity is an extremely difficult pathway for a believer in Islam. In my Doctorate

Thesis with Tyndale University, my research showed they risk persecution, shame and even death. And when they convert, they face tremendous cultural barriers to follow Christ. They have very little support. Christians in Muslim nations must move underground, worshipping in homes in the shadows of the community. Few leaders are qualified to mentor and teach new Christians.

Yet our God is faithful.

The challenges are real, but God has been faithful. I’ve been able to speak to congregations across Canada, and I continue to mentor and equip others to engage in meaningful conversations with Muslims. Even as I balance ministry with managing my health after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 9 years ago, I’m committed to this calling, knowing that God will continue to open doors.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

- + For health, strength, and balance as I celebrate 15 years in ministry.
- + For Sohir, as she continues to support and encourage me.
- + For Canadian Christians to have a renewed passion for sharing the Gospel with Muslim neighbours without fear.
- + For strength and courage for leaders in the Arab world who face persecution for following Christ.
- + For more opportunities to raise awareness and equip Christians in evangelism and discipleship among Muslims wherever they are.



Scan the QR code to contact Amal via Pioneers' email to get training



A simple **CUP OF TEA**

“But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever.”

Psalm 52:8

I love to talk about my Father and my favourite Book. I love to share how He has walked with me even when I face unexpected challenges.

I grew up in a family whose mantra was: “If you see something that needs to be done and nobody’s doing it, you do it.” So when I heard of this specific Muslim people group in Central Asia and learned that they were often ignored and forgotten by mission groups, I thought: “That’s a job for me!”

I applied to Pioneers Canada after graduation from Heritage College and within 3 months of learning about the people group for the first time, I was flying across the world to a city in Central Asia with a student visa and a plan to study the language. I knew the Pioneers team was waiting for me, that I would share an apartment with another single team member and that I would start language classes.

To say I was unprepared is an understatement.

Within 12 hours my roommate sent me to buy six eggs from a small shop a few doors from our apartment. She told me the trade word for “egg”, gave me money in the right currency and let me go. Jet lagged, naïve and terrified, I went, bought the eggs, and was launched into a new life overseas.

My Father is faithful and the team working with me was patient, encouraging and spurring me on, helping me to understand the community, the culture and the people.

At first I was a student - studying, attending classes and meeting people on campus. God has given me an affinity for older women and I connected with retired teachers on campus, spending hours over many cups of tea as we talked about everything. God opened doors as the women asked many questions, giving me opportunities to talk about my favourite Book. At that time, the translation of the Word in the language of this specific people group was incomplete. I had the privilege of testing the translation in real-life situations, reading it with my friends and neighbours in my new community.



While there, the government discontinued student visas as tensions rose in the country. That meant I had to look for work to provide a good reason to be in the country allowing me to renew a visa. I began to work with a handicraft export company. We shipped handbags, carpets and other local handmade products. When the government shut off our internet making it impossible to send messages through email or text, I worked with the team to close down the business.

Another door closed.

I needed a job, a reason to stay in the country. My roommate and I decided to start a company together. She worked as a consultant for setting up schools to teach English and I worked as a tour guide for people who wanted to learn more about this province and people group. The province is vast. To visit the major cities is complicated, requiring hours and hours of bus travel. One week I spent 77 hours on a bus!

But God opened doors.

On every trip, I sat beside a new stranger. As we chatted through the boredom, I shared stories and, if the stranger was open to it, gave them a Book or an MP3 of the Book they could take with them. I was planting seeds of faith, praying my Father would water them, feed them and help them grow. In the sweetness of my Father's encouragement, I met one of the strangers years later. They remembered me and thanked me for the gift of the Book. They shared with me that their father listened to the whole Book. He grew to love the Book and listened to it every day.

In 2013, when my business partner left, I looked for a new role. I learned of other Christian foreigners working to open a baby food factory. I joined them in their venture. With a degree in theology and absolutely no training, experience or knowledge of food production, I became the new recipe developer. For more than a year, I tasted, tested and tasted again, perfecting the mixtures of pureed fruits and vegetables.

God was opening another door, a door where we, as foreigners, could employ local people and share our lives with them as we worked together. Local business leaders and employers treat their employees harshly. I was stunned when I visited a dressmaker and the dressmaker had made some errors in the sewing. Her boss was furious. He yelled at her, berating her. He threw things at her.

To protect the identity of our team working in an unreached people group in East Asia we're not using the full name, country or people group that Kelly is living among. Kelly has worked among this Muslim people group in Eastern and Central Asia for more than 20 years. Our Father is always faithful and often His path is unexpected.

As managers in the baby food factory, we worked hard to lead with patience, kindness and gentleness. The team I managed was dumbfounded when I apologized to them for losing my temper.

Working at the baby food factory was extremely difficult. The workday was long and exhausting. I became physically depleted. I stepped back from the factory and moved to the capital city and began teaching English.

Then, in 2018, the doors closed in our province. All our team members were forced to leave. We looked at six different cities in other parts of the country but they all shut their doors to foreigners. In 2019 I moved across the border to a small village where 60% of the population belonged to the people group I'd grown to love. The village was small, old-fashioned and rustic. The romance of coal-heated stoves, outdoor latrines and gravel walkways was short-lived. It was hard.

I have rheumatoid arthritis and my body struggled to deal with the hardships. Then I lost my voice. The doctors didn't know why. After six weeks of struggle, I flew to Thailand to see a specialist. My disease was attacking the muscles in my throat. It seemed there was no cure.

At the same time, I had to go back to Canada to renew my visa.

I landed just a week before the Covid lockdown.

It's beautiful to see how God prepared the way for me. My Medicare had run out because of the length of time

I had been overseas. But during COVID, the government renewed Medicare for all Canadians. My physician discovered that the hip replacements I had as a teen were severely damaged which could lead to them leeching dangerous metals into my bloodstream and had to be replaced.

The surgeries complete and COVID over, I returned to Central Asia, living among the people. My day job is working with social media, finding new ways to engage people with the message of Jesus. After the workday, I share my life with the people God sends me, drinking tea to the Glory of God as I find ways to engage them in conversations about my Father and His Book.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- + To guide us as we use social media to engage people in their heart language, leading them to ask more questions and engage in face-to-face conversations.
- + For discipline and patience in learning Russian, a third new language for me.
- + Pray that God nurtures the seeds planted in the province closed to our influence. We have left behind many copies of the Book in print and audio programs.



How will they hear if NO ONE SHARES?

Matthew and Alison Ja Eue are preparing to go to Northeast Thailand to serve as missionaries to the people of Isaan.

The Call to the Unreached: A Family's Mission to Reach the Isaan People

In northeastern Thailand, the Isaan people remain largely unreached by the gospel. This agricultural community, representing one-third of Thailand's population and land area, lives in cultural and spiritual isolation, with deep roots in Buddhism and animism. Only 0.01% of the Isaan are evangelical Christians. For Matthew and Alison Ja Eue and their children—Josiah, Eliana, and Mikaela—these numbers represent far more than statistics. They signify souls waiting to hear the gospel.

As the Ja Eue family prepares to return to Thailand, their mission is clear: to bring Jesus to the villages of the Isaan people.

A Journey Shaped by God's Hand

Matthew's journey to becoming a missionary began in war-torn Shan State, Myanmar. Born prematurely during a civil war, his parents dedicated him to serve the Lord in full-time ministry. At six, his family fled to Thailand, narrowly escaping violence that destroyed their village a week later. God's providence shaped

Matthew's path, and his passion for missions was ignited when he met an American missionary at his Buddhist boarding school. His calling to the unreached deepened as he pursued a Bachelor of Theology in Bangkok and later received specialized training in discipleship and evangelism.

Alison's story unfolded on a different continent. Raised in Canada in a godly home, Alison developed a passion for missions through her local church. After three mission trips to Africa, she believed that would be her mission field until God redirected her during a university exchange to Thailand. It became clear that Thailand was the place He had prepared her for. When Alison and Matthew met at the discipleship school in Thailand, God used their shared passion for the unreached to draw them together, which became the foundation of their life together.

A Ministry Shaped by Miracles

After their wedding, Matthew left the Thai church that he had pastored for two years, and together they served for two years in a small Shan village on the Thailand-Myanmar border. The village, steeped in spiritual darkness and fear of evil spirits, seemed like

an impossible mission field. But God was more powerful than the forces that held people captive.

One of the first miracles they witnessed was the healing of a woman named Sujira, who had been sick for seven years. She sought help from numerous witch doctors and hospitals, but it was through prayer that God healed her. This miracle sparked the interest of her relative Mae Tong, who would later become the first believer in their village. From there, more and more people, including teenagers, experienced the power of God. These teenagers, touched by answered prayers, began to introduce their families to Jesus.

Families were transformed by the undeniable power of the living God. He proved again and again He was more powerful than the spirits the villagers feared.

A New Calling: The Isaan People

Though their ministry in northern Thailand was fruitful, God began to stir Matthew and Alison's hearts for the Isaan people. The Isaan region suffers from deep poverty and social marginalization. Their distinct culture, language, and traditions set them apart from the rest of Thai society, often leaving them feeling like second-class citizens in their own country. More troubling, only 0.01% of the Isaan are evangelical Christians.

A pivotal moment came when Matthew and Alison saw a map depicting the unreached areas in Thailand. The Isaan region was almost entirely red, symbolizing the absence of a Christian presence. They felt an urgent call to go where the need was greatest. "Why are we here in the green when we should be in the red?" they asked themselves.

The Isaan people need Jesus, and the Ja Eue family knew they were being called to share His love with them.



It's complicated. A guy, born in Shan State, Myanmar and a girl, born in Canada, meet. They were both raised in Christian families; one in poverty and one in comparable affluence. Their shared passion for the unreached draw them together. Their journey is twisted and tangled as only God could do and still arrive at the right place, at the right time, with the right mission - the Isaan people.

Moving Forward in Faith

The Ja Eue family is eager to return to Thailand! Matthew and Alison are preparing to leave on their first four-year term with Pioneers in April 2025. Their focus will be on evangelism, prayer, and church planting in villages that have no believers. Alison will continue her language training but Matthew will be able to hit the ground running. As they prepare for this new chapter, they are deeply aware that they cannot do it alone. Yet, they are confident in the power of God to provide, guide, and equip them for the task at hand.



Almost every home has a spirit house. The family leaves gifts of food, drink and treasures to please the spirits and ward off evil.



Buddhism is the dominant religion but it's often mixed with animism and other ancient beliefs.

AN INVITATION TO PARTNER

The Ja Eue family recognizes that they cannot fulfill this calling alone. They invite others to join them in this mission, whether through prayer, financial support, or even by stepping out and going themselves. The work of reaching the unreached requires the full partnership of the global body of Christ.

1. **Pray for the Isaan people:** The stronghold of Buddhism and animism runs deep in the hearts of the Isaan people. Pray for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit to soften hearts, open minds, and prepare the soil for the gospel to take root. Pray for entire families to come to the Lord together.
2. **Pray for support:** Pray that God will provide generous partners to help them reach the financial budget required to move to Thailand.
3. **Pray for their children:** Moving to a new country and culture will be difficult for their children—Josiah, Eliana, and Mikaela. Pray for their emotional and spiritual well-being as they transition to life in Thailand and for friendships that will help them feel at home.
4. **Pray for unity and strength:** Pray for Matthew and Alison to remain strong in their faith, their marriage, and their commitment to this calling. The mission field is challenging, and they will need ongoing support and encouragement from their brothers and sisters in Christ.



We invite you to join the Ja Eue family. Together, with the Holy Spirit and the body of Christ, we can transform lives with the gospel.



PARTNER

with us...

PRAY

- + for Amal and leaders around the world who are engaging in conversations with Muslims. Please pray that God would give them compassion and wisdom as they continue to share the Good News of Jesus' love.
- + for our team members living and working in the least reached regions of the world, building relationships with people who have never heard of salvation through Jesus.
- + for team members like Matthew and Alison who are just starting their journey with Pioneers. Pray that God would open doors to raise the funds and to prepare the whole family to adjust to a new culture, a new life and new friends.
- + for our team in Canada who care for, encourage and support our field team. May God give them wisdom and discernment.
- + for our work worldwide as we follow God into the least reached regions in the world. May God bless each encounter, each friendship for the glory of His kingdom.
- + for Canadian leaders and neighbours who live among Muslims. May God open their hearts to building relationships with them that lead to conversations about Jesus.



GIVE



We invite you to come alongside Canadian disciple-makers as they leave their homes, families, and communities to follow Jesus into the mission field. Your support empowers them to share the Gospel with those who have never heard it, bringing hope and transformation to unreached people groups around the world.

Amal, Kelly, Matthew, Alison—these are just a few of the courageous individuals who are trusting God to provide Christian brothers and sisters who will stand with them, support them, and pray for them as they serve on the frontlines of mission work.

By becoming a supporter, you are not just providing financial help; you are joining a community of believers who care deeply for the unreached people groups. Your generosity makes it possible for our missionaries to serve with excellence, from the moment they step out in faith to every challenge they face along the way. Together, we can help those who have never had the opportunity to hear of Jesus Christ.

GO - STEP OUT IN FAITH!

Edge offers a summer of transformation where you'll receive hands-on training and mentorship while serving alongside an experienced field team. For 2-3 months, you'll immerse yourself in a new culture and discover how God can use your unique skills and passions to share the Gospel with those who have never had the opportunity to hear of Jesus Christ. It's more than a mission trip; it's a chance to be equipped, mentored, and challenged as you explore your role in the call to make disciples of all nations.

Venture is a 3-12 month immersive adventure in missions for those who are interested in Full-Time ministry and are exploring the next steps. We match you with a field team that needs the skills, gifts, and life experiences God has given and shaped you for. It's the perfect opportunity to explore alongside seasoned long-term missionaries, as they work passionately sharing the love of Christ with the unreached.

Full-Time Ministry invites you to take a bold step of faith by joining one of our long-term, disciple-making, church-planting teams. You will be creatively working to introduce Jesus to people who have never heard the Good News, helping to establish communities where the Gospel has never been proclaimed.

No matter where you begin—**Edge, Venture, or Full-Time Ministry**—Pioneers is committed to walking alongside you on this journey to reach the unreached people groups across the world. Let's talk!

It all starts with a conversation! <https://pioneers.ca/go>

Hear from last summer's Edge participants about the impact of their experience!

"The Lord blessed me with an incredible team. I was deeply grateful for the opportunity to receive training and mentorship, and to serve alongside others. Through this experience, I not only learned from those around me but also gained a broader perspective on different cultures and a renewed passion for serving." - Anna

"I'm really grateful that I went on an Edge trip. The Lord used it to mold me, to teach me to cling to Jesus' strength not my own because without Jesus' strength I am weak." - Nisha

"When I stepped out in faith to do Edge, I had no idea how much I would learn about God, myself, and the world. If you feel God calling you to do an Edge trip, all I have to say is; do it, and I promise you won't regret it!" - Noah

Caring for Pioneers

TEAM MEMBERS

Michael and Abby Lodge provide Member Care for Pioneers Canada personnel around the world, at whatever stage in life and ministry they find themselves. This pastoral support helps them develop endurance and resilience in their Gospel ministry.*

My wife and I had the privilege of serving with Pioneers in Central Asia for a decade before joining the Pioneers Canada team 17 years ago. That experience, as well as our experience as parents and serving in our local church, allows us to speak into the lives of global workers with understanding and insight. We recently had the opportunity to visit with field workers at three different stages of ministry where they live and serve.

We visited with a couple in a Middle Eastern country who have lived and served there for over 40 years. Travelling with them across this country to places where they have ministered and visited over the decades, they reflected on a lifetime of loving Muslims by proclaiming Jesus among the “least of these”. They have come to see that challenges to ministry aren’t barriers, they *are* the ministry, allowing God in his grace to display his overcoming power, turning death to life.

We spent time with a team in Africa working among nomadic peoples in the Sahel, a vast region of thorny scrubland bordering the Sahara. They were in a process of re-envisioning how to work and serve together. We were able to journey with them in

celebrating what God had done already in that harsh environment, determining where they wanted to grow as a team, and considering how to receive future co-workers well. They were learning how their experience of God and life in the Spirit shape and empower their ministry as a team and individuals.

The conclusion of our trip was with an experienced couple who recently began leading a team of newly-arrived disciple-makers. They help these workers with language learning, cultural adaptation, and team life. Those uncomfortable challenges create opportunities for character to be formed and fruit to be produced. This couple reviewed their first year in their role with us, acknowledging the privilege of seeing new workers learning to trust in the Lord amid an unfamiliar environment, and all-too-familiar struggles with self.

In each season of ministry life, we saw God at work in these cross-cultural servants, bringing glory to his name among the nations. What a delight to play a part in his global purposes!

They have come to see that challenges to ministry aren’t barriers, they are the ministry, allowing God in his grace to display his overcoming power, turning death to life.



**Member Care is the pastoral support Pioneers provides to our global disciple-makers. It involves training in advance for common challenges faced in cross-cultural life and ministry, as well as care in the midst of challenge and transition.*



*And how shall they believe in Him if
they have never heard about Him?*

Romans 10:14

 **PIONEERS**

51 Byron Avenue, Dorchester ON. N0L 1G2
519.268.8778 | 1.866.268.8778 | info@pioneers.ca

pioneers.ca