



WE'VE BEEN  
**surprised** by  
GOD'S GLORY

JOHN 1:16

Dear IM family,

Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We have passed the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly shutting down life as we knew it. For more than a year, many of us have lived with the latent stress of the pandemic, racial violence, political uncertainty, and economic hardship. Even as some things open back up and parts of life return to some semblance of normalcy, there are many problems that are not yet resolved.

In 2020, COVID-19 brought most of IM travel to a halt, and we sent our main office staff home to work remotely. Then, we braced for the worst of it. What will we do if giving follows nationwide economic trends? The hard thing about unprecedented pandemics is that it is very difficult to predict what is going to happen next.

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:24)

So, we prayed. We prayed a lot.

I have always found it surprising that Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. A mustard seed is small enough to get stuck in my teeth and yet it can radically change the whole flavor of a dish!

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32)

**The World Mission Offering celebrates mustard seed faith.**

Last year, through your generosity and sacrifice, IM had a strong financial year. Our auditors commended us for the efficiency with which we do mission. In other words, for the amount of money we are spending, we are doing a lot for God's kingdom. Working closely with our board, I was very glad to receive this feedback. Along with a forgiven PPP loan, we entered into this year with a much more hopeful and positive outlook than we felt when the pandemic started, and we were determined to use our God-given resources and time to take care of things that needed our attention.

We used the time of travel limitation to focus on administrative work that has needed attention for a long time, including embarking on a long-overdue finance system migration. We have been able to examine processes and improve them, and on the field we have continued to be involved in meeting human need and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We also began work on refreshing our strategic plan, Responding to the Call, so that it is adapted for mission in the next three to five years of the 21st century.

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**Just like a mustard seed starts out small but gets nourished into exponential growth, we have seen ideas burgeon into full projects this past year and relief work change lives.** Early on, an international partner said, “How do we talk about washing our hands when people here don’t have clean water to drink?”

We continue to hear words like these as invitations from Jesus Christ himself to work to bring life-giving good in communities all around the world.

We have also seen training, equipping, and relationship-building take on new and creative forms. In some cases, we celebrated how an online platform allowed far more participants than we would normally get at an in-person event. For two missionary commissioning services and a couple of IM family memorials, this was very significant.

**Similarly, when a faithful servant of Christ like you begins to pray about how to steward God’s kingdom resources entrusted to you, God’s Spirit grows your mustard seed investment into something large enough to provide rest and refuge for others.** Your partnership through the World Mission Offering means that your gift is multiplied with others’ gifts to bring economic development, theological education, health and wellness, and numerous other changes in people’s lives for the glory of God.

Our donor services office recently received a phone call from a kind lady who said that she and her husband had been praying about where to give their stimulus money, and God put IM on their hearts. The staff who received the call gratefully and excitedly relayed this story to the rest of the home office staff. We felt so encouraged by God through you, our IM family!

Thank you for your deep investment in the mission of God through IM. Your steadiness in the midst of a changing world and great uncertainty has made it possible for us to continue the discernment journey together with many who are seeking God’s call into cross-cultural mission around the world.

Please prayerfully consider how you and your community can contribute to this year’s World Mission Offering. IM continues to trust our Lord to provide for the work that God calls us to in God’s mission, and we trust that your mustard seed gift will be multiplied until it is like the mustard tree.

Together with you in God’s mission,



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