

# Update

Winter 2021



APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN  
**HarvestCall**

## God Uses Child Sponsorship to Raise Up Christian Leaders

Moses is one of the first Old Testament examples of a “sponsored” child who was called by God to lead his people back to Canaan, the promised land. Tashi Widmer is a modern-day example of the same concept. She was a student for seven years at the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf (CCCD) in Jamaica, a school sponsored by HarvestCall, and is now its Executive Director. While living millennia apart, Moses and Tashi serve the same God and were both called to serve by a “burning bush” moment.



### THE BACK STORY

Born into a Deaf family on the southwest coast of Jamaica, her language at home was sign language and she attended a local Deaf school where her mother was a teacher. After eight years, she transferred to CCCD at Knockpatrick, where she was a student for seven years. While at CCCD, she rededicated her life to Christ and



*Tashi as a student at CCCD*

was baptized. She then came to the States to pursue a Counseling Psychology degree at Taylor University and lived with an Apostolic Christian family (Bro. Steve and Sis. Linda Schrenk) in Antwerp, Ohio. She attended the Leo Apostolic Christian Church, being drawn to it as her “heart” church. After graduation, she returned to Jamaica to begin her career as a social worker in Kingston, where she also volunteered as a tutor at the Kingston CCCD campus.



*A teaching moment*

In 2004, a short-term mission trip to Jamaica involving several Apostolic Christian churches included Blake Widmer (West Lafayette, Bro. Neal and Sis. Kris). Blake began repenting and committed his life to Christ while in Jamaica that week, unaware that Tashi was a student at CCCD. A few years later, he felt God’s call to serve full-time at the CCCD campus in Kingston.

### A NEW CHAPTER

As Tashi returned to Jamaica after college in 2009, Blake was getting settled as a missionary. Through the work that only God can do, Blake was

*continued inside ►*





## Christian Leaders

### CONTINUED FROM FRONT

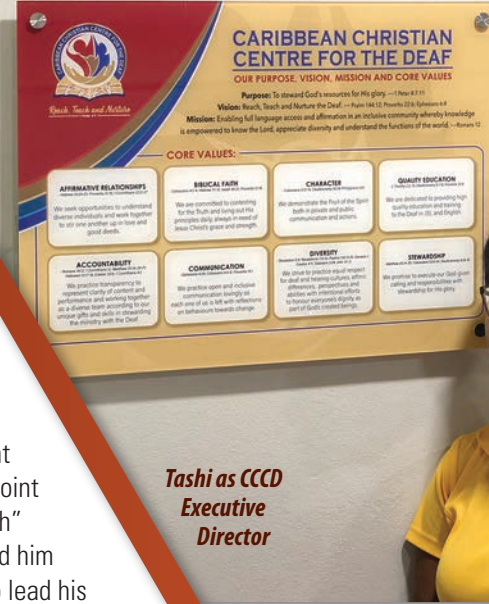
burdened to pray for and pursue Tashi. He went through the process of asking for her hand in marriage through Elder Bro. Lynn Stieglitz (Leo). The Widmers were married in July 2011. Five years later, Tashi was called to serve at CCCD.

### TASHI'S "BURNING BUSH" MOMENT

We can all read the account of Moses and the turning point in his life: the "burning bush" encounter where God called him

to lead his people out of bondage. Tashi also recalls a "burning bush" moment in 2016, when she felt called to serve her people as the Executive Director of CCCD. Like Moses, Tashi had doubts about her ability to fulfill that leadership role, and was conflicted about leaving her passion, which was teaching and counseling.

**Tashi as CCCD  
Executive  
Director**



▲ **Team Jamaica**

The night before she needed to give her answer, she encountered her "burning bush" moment in a devotional focused on Exodus 3. Having just experienced some serious health issues, the burning bush represented her illness and God's clear call to a new career direction.

From the early Old Testament days to now, God calls and places people in his service, if we are willing to follow and trust him. Praise God for his faithfulness to raise up leaders to serve his people.

**COME NOW THEREFORE, AND I WILL SEND THEE UNTO PHARAOH, THAT THOU MAYEST BRING FORTH MY PEOPLE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT. ▲ EXODUS 3:10**

## An Old Testament Sponsored Child

One of the oldest and most familiar stories in the Bible may be the first example of the success of a sponsored child.

Many of us learned at a young age about Moses being left by his mother in the reeds by the river, where Pharaoh's daughter discovered him and then raised him in Pharaoh's household, giving him resources and opportunities

that his parents were unable to provide. And we know the end of the story – God used this extraordinary situation to raise up the individual who would lead his children out of the bondage of Egypt to the promised land of Canaan.

As Moses grew up in the world of Pharaoh, he killed an Egyptian. We know from the Bible that because of this, Moses fled Egypt, went to the land of Midian, married Zipporah, faced the burning bush, and was called into service by the Lord. After some hesitation, Moses trusted God and embarked on one of the most powerful examples of God's love for his people in the Bible. The story of the physical Passover in Egypt established the spiritual reference for the plan of salvation that would ultimately be revealed through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.

While we don't expect that child sponsorship will produce a Moses, we do know that God works through his people to accomplish his will on Earth. If you are sponsoring a child, please consider sponsoring another one. If you aren't a sponsor, this may be God's call to you to "pull a baby out of the reeds by the river" and become a child sponsor.



▲ **God raised up Moses to lead his people to freedom**

**BY KEN RINKENBERGER**



# Quarantine Fatigue in Mexico, too

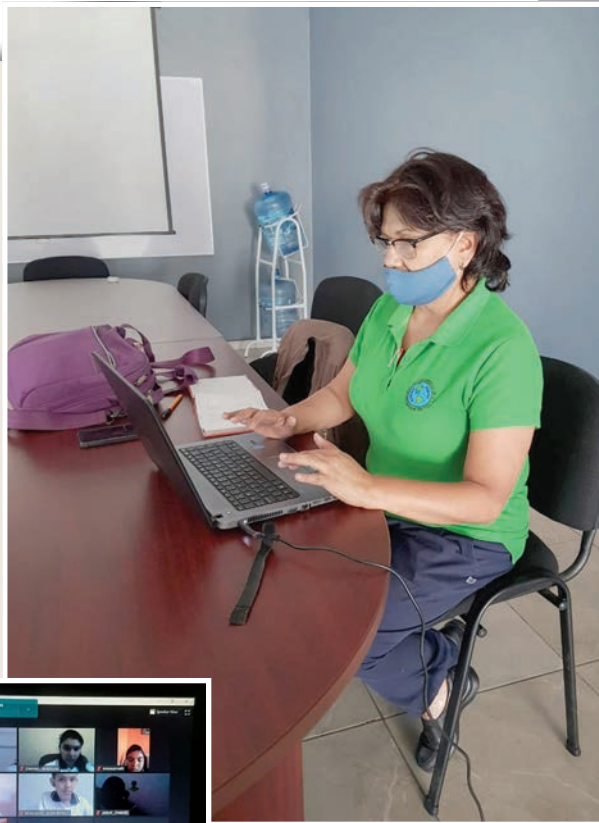
## Ixtlán School Adjusting to Remote Learning

"I miss the noise of the children—especially the little ones and the funny things they do and say. It's so boring without them!" (quote from school office secretary)

The halls are strangely quiet, the classrooms blanketed in shadows in Colegio de las Américas, the HarvestCall-supported Christian private school in Ixtlán, Mexico. All across Mexico, schools stand empty since remote learning has replaced in-person classes. Many of us in the U.S. are achingly familiar with this scenario and the challenges it brings.

And just like schools in the U.S., Colegio de las Américas is working to make the best of a tough situation.

As with most difficult life situations, God can draw out blessings if we are willing to watch for them. On the one hand, both teachers and students have been challenged to learn in new ways and to build new skills, such as using technology, becoming more flexible, and developing self-motivation.



▲ Teachers present, but no students

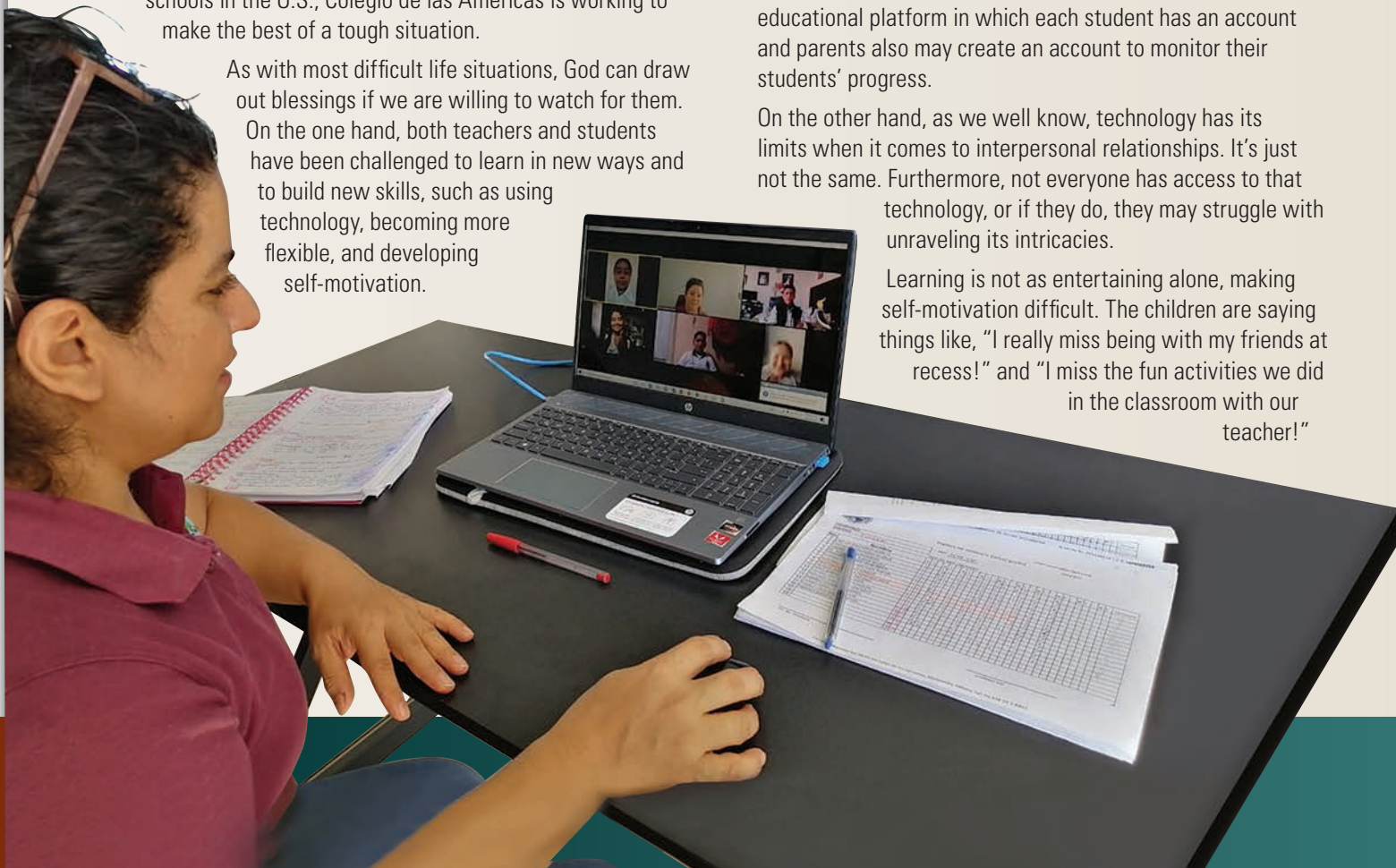


◀ Zoom classes

These skills will certainly serve them well in the future. Parents have also had more opportunity to get involved in their children's education. The school has chosen to use a free educational platform in which each student has an account and parents also may create an account to monitor their students' progress.

On the other hand, as we well know, technology has its limits when it comes to interpersonal relationships. It's just not the same. Furthermore, not everyone has access to that technology, or if they do, they may struggle with unraveling its intricacies.

Learning is not as entertaining alone, making self-motivation difficult. The children are saying things like, "I really miss being with my friends at recess!" and "I miss the fun activities we did in the classroom with our teacher!"







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◀ Committed teachers find ways to keep working



After all, God made humans to be relational beings, created in the likeness of a relational being.

Additionally, in some families, both parents work, and schoolwork becomes an added burden to already chaotic

lives. Weary parents are hard-pressed to find the time and energy to spur their children on to complete school assignments.

Looking ahead, there is as yet no date for returning to in-person schooling. In Mexico, this decision is made by the federal government for all schools, versus individual school districts implementing their own plan of action.

So, what can we do to help? Bro. Matt Gerber, school administrator, urges, "Prayers for parents, students, and teachers are needed so they do not lose heart and give up. Also, financial support is important because the economy in Mexico has been hit hard by the pandemic and it will be a greater challenge going forward for some families."

During this curious time then, as you pray for endurance for your own children and loved ones, please include prayers for the teachers, parents, and students of Colegio de las Américas.



Staff meeting ▲

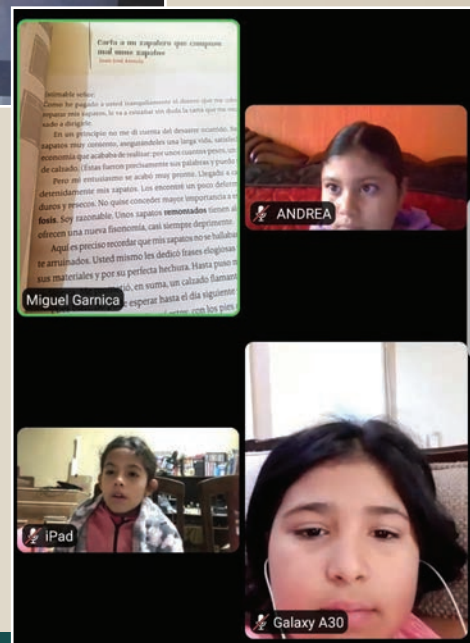
◀ Staying positive



▲ English teacher



Science teacher ▶



BY SARAH FEHR

# Providing Medical Guidance

**EMBRACING  
GOD'S  
PROMISE THAT  
"ALL THINGS WORK  
TOGETHER FOR GOOD"**

In regard to the events of 2020, we want to verbalize what everyone else is thinking: Wow, what a year! Reflecting on this past year can summon up a variety of mixed emotions that we are still trying to process. As we considered this update as well as the current events of our world, we again found answers and direction in the unchanging Word of God. James 4:14 states "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow." This verse really hits home right now.

In the HarvestCall Medical Committee, we were faced with the task of providing medical advice for the coronavirus pandemic. First of all, thank you to everyone for your prayers, mercy, and love. None of us saw this coming to the depth that we currently understand it.

So, what do we do now? Can any of us say what the future will hold or if life will ever return to "relatively normal?" No, none of us can say that. However, the reality is that no human at any point in history has ever been able to know all the details of the future. And yet, the Scripture continues to offer incredible counsel and comfort because "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). This astounding truth offers comfort to the Christian's heart in this trying time. We are not assured that "everything will be good" but rather that everything will "work together" for the good of God's children.

This foundational truth does not promise a rebounding economy, political peace, or the acceptance of Christian values in our society. Instead, let us remember the context of this divine promise. In the passage, the Christian is described as looking forward to the redemption of our physical bodies while groaning along with the entire suffering creation (verses 22-23). We acknowledge that we often don't know what to pray for (verse 26), but we have the promise of the Holy Spirit to intercede for us (verse 26) which gives us patience to both wait and hope (verse 24-25). Finally, our great consolation of future good (verse 28) is embedded in Jesus Christ and his plan of eternal salvation (verse 29). God foreknew us and predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son (verse 29), called us, gave us the gift of justification upon faith in Christ, and will one day bring us into his glory and transform us to be like him (verse 30). Surely, at this point, we can also echo the following words of the Apostle Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

The HarvestCall Medical Committee is extremely grateful for the promises of God as well as the patience and love that our church has shown to us during this time. Along with the constant changes that have accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic, the Medical Committee spent time addressing other issues such as recreational drug usage as well as seeking out potential mission fields with the current refugee crisis. We hope and pray that these areas will bear fruit in the future. It is an honor to serve you and we look forward to being used by Christ in the upcoming year.

**BY ANTHONY BAUMANN**

**Update**

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*What God is doing through HarvestCall at home & abroad*





# "It Is God's Work"

## UNPACKING A VITAL STATEMENT

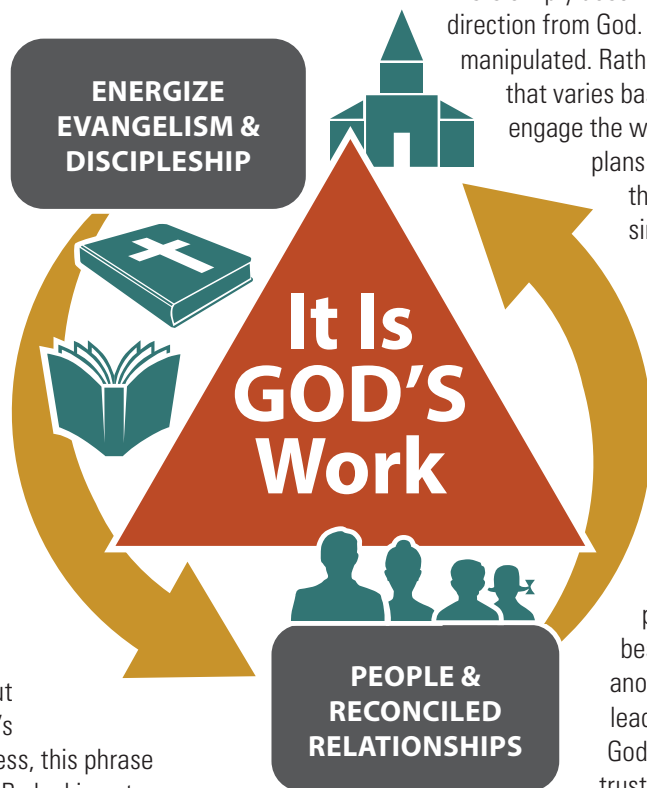
As you can see in the graphical depiction of the HarvestCall Strategic Plan, all of the intended outcomes of the plan are surrounding the phrase, "It's God's work." While it certainly looks nice, what does it mean? Is it a token phrase or a vital, actionable statement?

At face value, "It's God's work" seems simple enough, even simple enough to be a throw-away phrase. But throughout HarvestCall's strategic planning process, this phrase has had deep meaning. By looking at some Biblical precedents for how children of God have faithfully committed their lives to God's work, we can gather meaning for this phrase. Then, we will consider the ways HarvestCall is putting the phrase into action.

Think about how people received and followed God's direction in the Bible. Was there a consistent pattern? What images come to mind? Images of action or inaction? Planning for the future or decisions in the moment? Working or resting? Individual or community?

When you consider Abraham, Moses, the children of Israel, Paul, or the early disciples we don't see a simple formula for how they followed God's leading. Rather, you end up with guidance like:

- "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;"
- "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"
- "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart"
- "Study to shew thyself approved unto God"
- "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"



There simply does not seem to be a formula to receiving and following direction from God. This guidance is not prescriptive, and it cannot be manipulated. Rather, it is instruction to the heart, guidance for the soul that varies based on the situation. In examining how we as believers engage the work of God, the scriptures do not allow us to put rigid plans in place to follow exactly, nor can we refuse to plan and thus be negligent stewards. The Word does not allow us to simply work like crazy, because while we are to be working, we are also to rest. There are times to go, and times to stop. There are times to work in community and times of personal obedience. We follow and serve God in relationship.

So, what does all of this mean for HarvestCall? It means that in HarvestCall's planning process, the phrase "It's God's work," was a confession of our dependence on God and an acknowledgement that our plans cannot be set in stone. We know there will be twists and turns, ups and downs, times of rapid progress, and also no progress. So, we will pursue our best-discerned plan but allow that plan to get turned to another direction at the leading of the Spirit. "It's God's work" means trusting God, obeying God, and following

his leading regardless of where he takes us. And, in that, we apply the wisdom he has provided by discerning the way forward as best as we can, trusting the process to our Good Father.

BY KIRK  
PLATTNER

## STAY CONNECTED

Prayer support is needed in every part of HarvestCall work. Here are two ways to learn about projects, how to be involved and how to pray specifically.

**E updates** | Get occasional emails with news and info by going to the HarvestCall website ([www.harvestcall.org](http://www.harvestcall.org)) and selecting "Join our email list" on the home page.

**Social Media** | Engage with us on Facebook or Instagram for the most current information.

Facebook.com/harvestcall  
Instagram at acharvestcall



## HELP FINANCIALLY

Choosing "Where Needed Most" allows us flexibility to direct resources to ministries most in want. However, if you feel moved to support a specific project, just indicate that on the remittance envelope. If specified donations are greater than the need for any designated project, they will be rolled over to the General Fund.

An envelope is provided with appropriate boxes to check. Checks can either be given to your local HarvestCall Representative or mailed to:

**Apostolic Christian HarvestCall**  
PO Box 3797, West Lafayette, IN 47996

Or if you wish to donate online, visit the HarvestCall website at:  
[www.harvestcall.org/donate](http://www.harvestcall.org/donate)

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