

## Chapter 7

### Kingdom Globetrotters

by Donna Frentz

It was October 1992. We sat in disbelief, holding our treasured passports, which had received the final “chop.” The dreaded stamp denying our visa renewal was clearly visible, signifying our imminent departure back to Canada. *How could this be after ten years of preparation and only three years of living in our new home country of Indonesia?* If we had received this news a year earlier, there would likely have been a great celebration – but not now! Our hearts had shifted and tenderly embraced the loving ways of God in our lives. So many exciting opportunities ahead of us were all abruptly closing. In the equatorial city of Pontianak, West Kalimantan, sitting in our living room, we read His words to our aching souls from Jeremiah 33:1-3:

*While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: “This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’”*

This has become a theme in our lives, before and ever since that night. Our privilege in this journey, which has taken us all around the world, is to call out to Him. We are to cry out to the Sovereign God of creation. We have done this repeatedly in the big and small of life and have experienced His unsearchable treasures we did not previously know. This is reflected in our God story for His glory.

### The Early Years

#### Brem

My life had an extremely insignificant and unspectacular launch. I was the unplanned sixth child of Joseph and Bertha Frentz, Prairie sodbusters who met and settled into a small hamlet in southern Saskatchewan close to the Frentz family farming homestead. On May 1, 1958, I entered the world at Moose Jaw Union Hospital, about an hour from our town. Sometime later, the birth certificate,

clearly a clerical error, arrived in the mail with the name Bremwell David Frentz. The family decided they preferred Brem for short rather than Bram. So I moved forward with a name I have only found duplicated for a river in BC.

My dad was a small-town entrepreneur, a big fish in a tiny pool, with a population of supposedly 180 during its boom years. He was a hard-working man with a grade 10 education, fresh from a life-changing conversion and a year of Bible school training at the Western Canadian Bible Institute. His roommate was from Montana and introduced my dad to his sister, who became my mom. She found life full and difficult, looking after her in-laws, my dad, and five children spread out over sixteen years, as one had died after a few days of life. Amidst hard rural work, my parents were rooted in their love for Jesus and grounded our family in faith. Their prayers changed my life.

Our family finally left the dying town and settled into new beginnings in Calgary, attending Foothills Alliance Church. Having loved rural life, my early days in a fast-growing metropolis were my first cross-cultural experience and major life transition. My sister Norma and I started school living with my oldest brother and his young family, while Mom and Dad arrived in Calgary nearly two months later. I had more schoolmates in the three sixth-grade classes than the population of the town I dearly missed. I threw myself into sports, trying to fill the holes in my immensely aching heart.

The Western Canadian Revival, which launched in Saskatoon and spread to Calgary, opened my eyes to the work of the Holy Spirit at the tender age of 13. I was baptized shortly after. This faith-strengthening experience built upon my spiritual birth. One of my earliest recollections of life was when I was about three and a half, praying with my mom at the foot of her bed to invite Jesus into my life, essentially fearful of hell. I remember a plaque on the bedroom wall with Mark 16:15 *"...Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

My school years were difficult, but I never gave up my faith. Gap-year plans were to attend Capernwray Bible School in England, followed by Holsby Brunn in Sweden for the spring session after high school. Before departing for Europe, I had a profound encounter with God while alone in my hotel room during the Alliance's Life Youth Conference 1976 in St Louis, Missouri. I was moved by a message from John 10:10 articulating how Jesus came to give abundant life to those who would become His children and give complete control of their lives to Him. While on my knees, I made an agreement with the Lord, which proved life-changing, impacting my decisions to this day. *"Jesus," I prayed, "I want to experience the abundant life You have planned for me. I don't yet know what that means, but I will give this gap year to You to listen for Your direction for me and to act upon it."* This

launched me into the most intense growth up to this point in my life. Among many life-shaping teachings from the Word of God, a mission speaker called to Muslim people articulated how only ones and twos were coming to Christ. The Islamic world was underserved and needed our consideration for action.

Upon returning to Canada, my growing faith was tested while working a construction job. A visit to my pastor, Gordon Fowler, and his prayer over me swung open the doors to attend Canadian Bible College (CBC) in Regina, Saskatchewan, in January 1978. After two semesters, and still needing a clear sense of a vocational call to full-time ministry, I attended a semester at the University of Calgary (U of C), considering a possible career teaching physical education.

Before my semester back at U of C, I applied to participate in Alliance Youth Corp (AYC) after hearing the testimony of an older student. He shared his experiences in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation. It made sense for me to apply. If I were to continue with further theological education, it would result from God's clear leading toward ministry. Surprisingly, I was accepted for AYC and to Indonesia, my first choice.

Members of Foothills Alliance prayed, supported, and sent me out. My trip to Indonesia opened my eyes and heart to the needs of this vast nation of people. I could envision a life in missions, but again only if called and confirmed by God. Upon completing AYC in the late summer of 1979, I sensed God was urging me to return to CBC to finish what had been started. This continued my John 10:10 pattern with God. As He would clarify a ministry call, I would continue a posture of listening obedience, knowing Jesus' commitment was to lead me into abundant living.

Never a great academic, I became a conscientious student and continued playing soccer and hockey for CBC. I regularly prayed that God would show me His plan for my life, vocation, and whom I should marry. I answered 'yes' to wherever He was leading, which I felt was in ministry. However, I desperately desired clarity if it was in Canada or overseas. I felt more naturally wired for cross-cultural work as I loved to travel, food, and cultures and was growing a burden for the Muslim world.

A profound answer came to me during spiritual emphasis week in 1980, the details almost too sacredly personal to write. I woke up the morning of January 29, immediately sensing I was to read from the well-known devotional, Oswald Chambers' *My Utmost For His Highest*. I prayed, "Lord, is this the week that You make clear my full-time vocation?" The passage was about the Apostle Paul's call into ministry from Acts 26:12-18. I read it with great shock and enthusiasm as Chambers described it as a clear call to Paul, the nations, and cross-cultural ministry. Then, as I put the book down to bolt for my first class, I prayed, "Lord,

I believe You are speaking to me, but please confirm this so that it will be emphatically clear, and I will never doubt it.”

My class was Speech and Homiletics with Dr. Fred Sonnenberg. He opened the class in prayer and said, “I am sensing that I am to pause my planned lecture for today and instead look at the Apostle Paul’s call to ministry from the Book of Acts.” Instantly in shock, I was filled with anticipation and ecstasy and was giving razor-sharp attention. He took us through Acts 9 and then Acts 22 with some description. I was thinking, but this isn’t the actual passage of my devotions. Then he eliminated any ponderings. He explained that Paul’s vocational ministry call is described in three passages for acute emphasis on its importance; however, the clearest and fullest description of Paul’s cross-cultural call is from Acts 26! This was the very passage the Spirit of God had directed me to.

I dashed out of class, feet hardly touching the ground, full of joy and excitement. I bumped into my close friend Kim Cairns who had also travelled on AYC with me the previous summer. I learned that Kim had been praying that this might be the week God would make His plans clear to me.

In His gracious faithfulness, God indelibly stepped into my life that day and used His Word, my prayers, and His servants, past and present, to orchestrate astounding details. He miraculously gave me what I had been asking of Him. Later in the week, I shared a short version of the story with the student body. He had shown me, without any room for doubt, His cross-cultural plan for my life.

...God indelibly  
stepped into my  
life that day...  
to orchestrate  
astounding  
details.

I knew I was not wired to serve alone, and with equal focus began the second part of my request from God. I had already set eyes on a young and beautiful freshman student Donna Fair who sang like a nightingale at our Friday night missionary meetings. I wasted little time in asking her out as I wondered if this might be the person God was arranging for me. Sensing reluctance initially from her to begin a dating relationship, I moved forward on a plan I believe was stirred by God’s Spirit. I prayed, believing Donna might be the right person with the qualities to mesh with mine. She, however, was not moving in a similar direction. So, I decided that if a relationship were to emerge, I would faithfully pray and believe God would intervene, moulding and shaping her with a clear call of her own. I determined I would not influence her towards a vocation in cross-cultural missions. This was God’s work to do. With certainty, I knew what God had called me to do, so He would need to change her heart and direction.

**Donna**

Born in Edmonton, Alberta, in December 1961, I was the cherished daughter of Milt and Joyce Fair and the younger sister to one brother. At the age of three, my dad took a new job, making a big move to the city of Regina! As a chartered accountant by profession, my dad began his 30-year career with Saskatchewan Wheat Pool launching their new computer division and ultimately becoming CEO of this vibrant Prairie organization. My mom was a stay-at-home mom during my early years and then ventured into real estate following her interest and passion in housing and helping people.

My parents were faith-filled followers of Jesus and rooted our family in love for God, each other, and the church. I have many vivid memories of their activities and commitment to our Baptist church, and we often had people in for Sunday lunch. I was taken to church right from birth, and the people of this faith community tenderly nurtured me. My growing-up years were filled with stability, joy, and love, which I attribute and give thanks for to my parents. The consistency and faithfulness in their personal lives and marriage reflected their walk with God. My dad especially modelled the unconditional love of the Father, for which I am forever grateful. I truly am a cherished daughter in every way.

I was about four or five when I prayed to accept Jesus as my Saviour; I remember repeatedly asking Jesus into my heart to be sure! My certainty in personally knowing Jesus came during the Suterra Twins revival in 1971. Our Baptist church was the sister church of where the revival began in Saskatoon.

Not long afterwards, Regina also became a place where the Spirit of God broke through. I remember some Sunday morning services going long as people gave testimonies with times of prayer! As this movement of God grew, the churches in the city began holding joint evening rallies. One Sunday evening, our family went to Hillsdale Alliance Church, just down the road from our church. I remember sitting in the balcony, and at the time of the call to commitment, I felt pulled to go forward. Our whole family went forward, and our pastor prayed with us in the fireside room. While I had thought I was a Christian, from that night on, I knew deep within that Jesus was my Saviour and Lord.

During my teen years, I was blessed with good friends, an active church youth ministry, and a city-wide Youth for Christ program. I was continually given the opportunity for youth leadership and music ministry. Primarily through music, my heart's connection with a loving God became special and deeply personal. I remember many times after singing with our choir, youth music group or a solo in church, my dad would put his arm around me, squeeze me, and put his hand in mine. His affirming embrace connected me to the heart of God. I am forever

grateful for the stability and loving consistency of my growing-up years, which kept drawing me closer to Jesus.

I liked to plan and organize, so I had the perfect plan as I contemplated what would come after high school! First, I would attend one year at Canadian Bible College to further ground my faith. Then, after the year at CBC, I would attend the University of Alberta and pursue medical or dental training. My brother was in dentistry, so it all made good sense. I had done well in high school, ensuring all the academic courses were in place to pursue whatever direction I desired to go.

My best friend and I had applied to attend CBC together, live in the dorms, and begin to spread our wings! During my freshman year, I began to be exposed to other aspects of living a vibrant journey of faith. While I knew well that “God so loved the world,” I had never considered what this meant and how it could impact me. I had been exposed to missions and missionaries growing up in our church, but I had a negative perspective about “those” people and their work. I thought they were all rather strange! Also, I loved home! I had no burning desire to travel the world or live away from my wonderful family and the hopes and dreams of my plans.

With my ever-growing soft and tender heart towards God and desire to learn what it meant to follow Him, I began to grasp His heart for the world. Every Friday night at the missionary meeting and often during chapels and classes, I began to learn and understand His plan for all people.

Alongside this significant growth curve, I met a young man I had admired from a distance for a while. Through mutual friends, my path crossed with Brem Frentz. We began connecting more often during the second semester of my first year. I thought he was a great guy who loved Jesus, but ... he had recently received clarity that God was calling him to overseas ministry. He was going to be one of those missionaries! He was also planning to go far away from home. My wrestle with God began. I called out to the Lord, asking for clarity about my plans and, more importantly, His plan for my life. As I ended my first year at CBC, it became clear that I needed to put my medical education on hold to pursue two things. Was the Lord asking me to engage in His mission for the world, and was Brem Frentz to be part of this journey?

In December 1980, I heard my name read out in the CBC lounge, “Donna Fair assigned to Indonesia.” In faith, I had stepped out and applied for Alliance Youth Corp (AYC), putting Indonesia as my first choice as a fleece. Although Brem had gone in 1979, and we were now dating, I knew I needed to determine if God was calling

I had no burning  
desire to travel the  
world or live away  
from my wonderful  
family and the  
hopes and dreams  
of my plans.

me to serve overseas and whether Brem would be part of the future. So, when I heard my name and Indonesia attached to it, my heart both dropped with despair but also in amazement and gratefulness. God was beginning to reveal His plan.

My summer ministry to Indonesia in 1981 was life-changing. I met so many “cool” missionaries that my preconceived negative attitudes were erased. These “normal” and godly people lived in another land because they loved Jesus wholeheartedly and obediently followed His lead. Every time we stayed in workers’ homes, I asked them about their call and how they knew God had led them. I was filled with new-found faith and confidence in a God who delights to reveal great things to His children as we seek Him with our whole hearts. I also knew after my summer in Indonesia that even if God had different plans related to my relationship with Brem, He had revealed and confirmed His plan for my life to engage with the world by serving globally. Through reading His Word in Hong Kong and preparing to return to Canada, Isaiah 41:8-10 became my anchor and has held me close through all the years of global life.

*But you, Israel (**Donna**), my servant, Jacob (**Donna**), whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend,*

*I took you from the ends of the earth (**Regina**), from its farthest corners I called you.*

*I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.*

***So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.***

***I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.***

The image of the righteous right hand of God is intrinsically linked back to the many embraces of my earthly dad. I knew without a doubt of God’s hand upon my life, showing me new plans. While not a courageous person by nature, I had the very promise of God embedded deep in my heart.

God began to open the beautiful next chapter. From my summer in Indonesia and Brem’s summer in Europe, we returned to clarify our mutual calls to global service and how being together fulfilled God’s plan for our lives. Following my graduation from CBC, June 12, 1982, became a milestone day in the lives of a young couple. Seeking to put God first in our marriage and honouring Him above all else, we committed our lives to serve Him wherever He may lead us.

## **Marriage and Ministry Launch – 1982-1989**

Following the wedding, we moved to Calgary, embarking upon our life of transitions. Brem began serving as the first Youth and Christian Education pastor at Rockyview Alliance Church (RAC). It was an exciting time. Building relationships within the church, we desired people to know Jesus more deeply. Donna was a casual worker for a temp agency, ensuring adequate time to stay active with the youth. Brem's early morning guys' Bible study, Friday night youth events, Donna's youth choir, developing youth and sponsor leadership teams provided the perfect training ground for personal and ministry growth.

At the time, a minimum of two years of ministry in Canada was a requirement before heading overseas. This fruitful chapter in Calgary extended to four years. We were deeply blessed by the relationships made during our years at Rockyview. As a young ministry couple with a calling to serve globally, this faith community nurtured and affirmed us personally and were deeply committed to our call to missions. It was also here that we began our family with the birth of Terri-Lynn in 1985.

In the summer of 1986, RAC commissioned and sent us back to Regina for Brem to fulfill a final requirement of one year of seminary. For Christmas, we received the first of many care packages from our beloved Rockyview family, assuring us of their prayers and support. The mission fever of this church buoyed our hearts on many occasions to stay the course.

As we made our way down the missionary candidate track with Indonesia as the anticipated place of service, our one year of seminary extended to three as we awaited visas for Indonesia. We were grateful for the extra years as we added Jeremy to our family and enjoyed extended time with loved ones while allowing Brem to complete his Master of Divinity degree.

The day following graduation Sunday, we received a phone call from Peter Nanfelt, area director for Southeast Asia. The sought-after visas had just come through. We were told it took the death of a high-ranking government official to open the door for four Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) couples to finally be granted visas. Plans kicked into high gear as we had to be in the country before the end of August.

Prior to departure, we attended the one-month Toronto Institute of Linguistics course, where we met the other three Indonesian-bound couples from the U.S. C&MA. Bonds formed quickly as collectively, we marvelled at God's sovereign timing in our lives. These were bittersweet weeks of final preparation as the reality of heading to Indonesia in the summer of 1989 accelerated. The deep joy of following God's leading after years of preparation was met by the grief of leaving people we loved and the separation of miles and time that was ahead.



In those final days packing barrels, we anchored ourselves to the certainty we each had received of God's call to crossing cultures to share the message of Jesus.

## Indonesia – 1989-1999

Stepping back on Indonesian soil after our respective AYC experiences as college students was the culmination of ten years of preparation. The Father orchestrated our journeys with such faithfulness and care. Grateful for our new mission colleagues' warm welcome and the enthusiasm of four young families landing within weeks of each other, we were filled with anticipation. Commencing language school in Bandung, West Java, soon after arrival, there were highs and lows of learning how to communicate and understand a new culture and the people who called this home.

Our initial year of life overseas was marked by the safe arrival of Brendan two days after successfully passing language evaluations. The many transitions of our first year were navigated through the deepening friendships with people who were becoming like family, the assurance of prayer support from the Alliance family in Canada and the deepening conviction of God's call to this kind of ministry.

Our first assignment was to teach in the newly established Bible school in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, in Borneo. It was a joy to connect with young adults; however, teaching in a foreign language was arduous and even more challenging to grade handwritten assignments. So, Brem assisted the school's development by supplying typewriters and required his students to submit typed papers!

The real joy of ministry came outside of the classroom. With his love for sports, Brem's active involvement resulted in a student men's volleyball team playing within the community. Brem loved the adventures with a Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) colleague and the opportunities to fly into remote areas to show the *JESUS* film. He also trekked up a mountain with a team of nationals to build a state-of-the-art telecommunication tower. The tower never operated properly, but the eternal result was the unexpected birth of a faith community at the base of the mountain.



Building a transmission tower, 1990



Christmas ministry trip to the interior, West Kalimantan, 1991

While assigned to train nationals, our hearts continued to be burdened for the majority religion population. Through contact with a local bank manager, Brem was asked to teach English to bank employees. What joy it was to visit friends and family from the bank during their Ramadan celebrations.

Alongside ministry, we experienced the joys and sorrows of raising our family overseas. At the time, the Alliance still required sending children to boarding school. With great struggle, Terri-Lynn began grade 1 attending the C&MA school back in Bandung. We testify to God's grace and the faithful prayers of people during a challenging year. We prayed earnestly for a way the Lord would allow us to fulfill our global call yet allow our family to be together. As her grade 1 year ended, our special request to let us home-school for grade 2 was granted. While considered an exception to policy, we gratefully acknowledged the Lord's care for our family. This also began the much-needed shift in MK education policies.

We began the final year of our first term with a certain unsettledness. While we didn't question our global call, we asked God to meld our growing passions. It was becoming more apparent to Brem that he was a pioneer, pastor, peacemaker, and not a Bible school professor. For Donna, her prayer was to see us serve as a family intact. The year ahead was filled with opportunities to build into students in and out of the classroom, growing connections with Muslim people, and our family of five living and serving in our community. In this calm, our visas were terminated, finding ourselves back in Regina in mid-January 1993 in -30 degree weather.

For the next eighteen months, we cried out to God for all the unsearchable things we didn't know...our Jeremiah promise. We waited and prayed, exploring what God was saying and trusting He would make our next steps clear. We



The Frentz family in Penang, Malaysia 2002

were also blessed with the addition of Danae, who completed our family. As we ministered in churches, we passionately shared about Muslim people needing to encounter Jesus. We continued to deepen our commitment to seeing the world through His eyes. As visas for Indonesia remained tenuous, in dialogue with Wally Albrecht (VP of Missions) and counterparts in the U.S., the way opened for us to return to Indonesia. We were assigned to be the first full-time pastoral couple for Bandung International Church (BIC) while Brem fulfilled visa requirements as a physical education (PE) teacher at Bandung Alliance MK School, the school Terri-Lynn had attended as a first grader. Again, the Lord's redemptive ways shone through.

The next five years of ministry at BIC were exhilarating. The international church assignment was a hand-and-glove fit for us both. It was like a fast-flowing river of people intersecting with a growing faith community and encountering Jesus. Wow! So many fantastic opportunities stretched us and, in turn, impacted others.

A highlight had our family engaged within the ex-pat community as Brem became the Hash Master (aka leader) for the Bandung Hash Puppies, a weekly family running group. We had many outside-of-church friendships, allowing us to be salt and light. We were also learning and our hearts growing for Muslim ministry as we witnessed grassroots workers reaching out to the local Sunda people, a people group with a population the size of Canada but with so few believers. During those years, we helped facilitate the forming of the first C&MA team in Indonesia, focusing on reaching the Sundanese. We were grateful for God's

provision as we lived into our vocational cross-cultural call while our children lived at home. An unsearchable thing we didn't know when we abruptly lost our visas.

The intended three-year assignment in Bandung was extended to five as another shift was underway. As the Alliance in Canada continued its development as a national church, in 1998, the leadership assumed complete oversight of all Canadian personnel serving overseas which the U.S. had structurally managed. Under the direction of Dr. Cook (C&MA Canada president) and his vice-president Wally Albrecht, a new global leadership team was formed. We were asked to provide leadership for the Asia region. When we received Wally's call, we were shocked and overwhelmed. We were young and green yet affirmed and supported to step into this assignment as the first Canadian Regional Developers for Asia. The new model was to have ministry couples serve together, overseeing regional strategy, administration, and member care to Canadian workers. We loved stepping into something not yet done before! After gaining clarity through prayer, our answer was 'yes,' realizing our reach into the Muslim world would continue to be through empowering the frontline workers. In 1999, we embarked upon another significant transition as we said our goodbyes to beloved Indonesia, our home for a decade.

## Malaysia – 2000-2012

The summer of 2000 had us relocate and transition to Penang, Malaysia. We began to lay the tracks and envision how this newly formed Asia region could extend the message of Jesus. With servant leaders Wally and Bev guiding us, along with three other regional couples, we discerned our unique missional calling as the Canadian Alliance to reach the people groups of the world who had little or no access to Jesus. Especially for Brem, in line with his pioneering spirit and passionate call to make Jesus known, we leaned in with our whole hearts.

This was an incredible chapter to see what God was doing and join Him. We



Brem and Donna with the Cambodian team at the General Assembly, 2008

had the joy of seeing ministry launched among Uighur people in East Asia, the returning to A.B. Simpson's call for ministry amongst Tibetan Buddhists as well as shifting strategies from a country-based focus to a least-reached people group (LRPG) focus. Alongside strategic realignment, our pastoral hearts loved to care for, support, and nurture our 100-plus personnel.

Serving as a couple enhanced our effectiveness as Donna was fully engaged and released to lead and serve. With a growing commitment to ensuring the health of workers and a vital member care priority developed by Judy Wiebe, we saw God do more of the unsearchable things we could not have known. We were also learning what it meant to intercede for the nations and cry out to Him on their behalf. There were many exciting mountains literally and figuratively climbed along with deep valleys of loss and pain, yet the faithfulness of God's heart for the world was so evident. The Lord graciously continued to align our calling for the nations and nurture our growing family with our children attending Dalat School as day students.

Our love for the international church did not wane upon arrival in Penang. Instead, it took root as we prayerfully discerned God's leading to create a steering committee that saw Penang International Church (PIC) launch to serve as a beachhead for ministry locally and throughout the region. In December 2002, with 27 people present, PIC held its first service. With the challenge and prayer for this faith community to become like the cedars of Lebanon, this church continues

to be a beacon of light and hope to many.



Brem and Donna with Lois Belsey (l) and Mary McElhone (r) in Papua, 2011

These years were a time of significant growth and development for Global Ministries (the international side of the C&MA Canada) and were life-changing for us. Having a front-row seat at what God was doing in the world was an honour. It was a thrill to know our Alliance family, both in Canada and Asia, were deepening

partnerships to bring His light to the Japanese, Khmer, Thai, Muslim people groups in Indonesia, and Tibetan Buddhists in Nepal and East Asia, to name a few. We are forever grateful for the unsearchable things the Lord revealed to us, the people we came alongside and held their arms high, and the glory of God that shone a bit brighter through our presence.

## Toronto – 2013-2022

After fifteen years of regional leadership, another call came in September 2012. Dave Hearn, the newly elected president, asked Brem to consider assuming the role of VP for Global Ministries. The wrestle began. It had never been our



desire to be moved into national leadership, taking us further away from grass-root engagements. In addition, the role was designed for one person, Brem, which would require Donna to step away from Global Ministries and leadership. Again, we cried out to God as we didn't see the way forward. In our discernment and prayers, each of us willing to release what may be required, we continued the dialogue with Dave. Could there be a way for us to continue to both serve the global team out of our giftings and callings? Was their room within the structure to try something new? The pioneering spirit runs deep within us.

After three months of prayer and discussion, Brem stepped into the VP role, and Donna accepted a volunteer associate VP position for the initial years. This return to Canada was, by far, our most challenging transition. From our home office in Penang overlooking the Straits of Malaka to the office window in Etobicoke pointing us straight at McDonalds! Those early months were difficult, with more than a few tears shed. Internal and external challenges required us to anchor ourselves again to His call to serve cross-culturally, recognizing in fresh ways that location was secondary in following His lead.

We pressed through numerous obstacles, committed to building strong and healthy relationships across the global team while deepening the mission vision and partnership with our Canadian churches. Bringing stability and relational health in both arenas kept us deeply dependent on Him. While Brem championed the vision and message of commitment to the least reached, Donna brought her strength of organization and attention to detail, ensuring team care was in place.

While providing joint leadership to the Global Ministries Leadership Team, increasing time was spent in discernment and prayer. The committed women and men who made up this team were called gifted servant leaders. Together we affirmed our guiding values, known as the 5 Ps – Prayer, Presence, People, Proclamation, and Partnership – with prayer as the foundation. It was around these values that we committed ourselves to stay mission true to our unique part in God's global endeavour, focusing on reaching the people without access to Jesus.



Brem and Donna in Africa

While our love for Asia will always be present, our years serving the global team expanded our vision and heart for the world. Standing on a rooftop in a North African city and learning there were only about 50-75 believers in a city of over a million people gripped us. Sitting with a young Yazidi teen and hearing her story of abuse at the hands of ISIS called us to respond. The hopeless

efforts of millions of South Asians along the Ganges River looking for life after death deepened our love for Jesus, His heart for the whole world and called us to action. When the stress and frustration of mission leadership elevated, we would find ourselves back on a plane encountering the real challenges of this life when Jesus is not known. Our incredible privilege has been facilitating, coaching, empowering, and encouraging the release of people and financial resources to “bring access to Jesus where few or none have heard.”

The pandemic brought us many unique challenges in leading a global team with people spanning 30+ countries with ever-changing protocols and restrictions. There was a genuine concern that we may lose someone to COVID; the reality was limited medical resources in many locations.

One of the highlights, however, during this season was the ever-increasing commitment to prayer. When lockdown started, led by God’s Spirit, Donna began facilitating what became the global prayer room. Initially holding Zoom gatherings Tuesdays and Fridays at two different times to span the time zones, workers gathered across the globe to pray together. This provided us with what the pandemic took away. We looked forward weekly to community on Zoom, so our GM family, whether in Phuket or Dakar, Toronto or Calgary, came together. It kept us going through those difficult days. From the pandemic’s beginning until concluding in May 2022, over 200 prayer gatherings took place, uniting the team in times of praise and intercession for each other and the world. We are indelibly marked by the joy of serving alongside committed, godly and prayerful people.

We also include the honour it was to serve alongside Dave Hearn for almost ten years. We were empowered and released to lead and minister out of who we both have been uniquely designed to be. He was willing to embrace a new leadership model for the global side and for us to both serve the Alliance together. We loved the journey! When we had first stepped back onto Canadian soil, we didn’t know how long this assignment may last as we were committed to passing the baton on to younger leaders. Brem and Dave regularly had discussions about succession planning. In 2019 more regular conversations began taking place, and by the Fall of 2020, we determined it was time to step away at General Assembly 2022 to ensure a smooth transition of VP leadership prior to what we expected would be Dave’s final term in 2024.

February 2021 will always be marked in our hearts. Two days after the announcement of our planned stepping aside, we learned of Brem’s diagnosis of advanced prostate cancer. Our world was spinning. As never before, we cried out to the Lord for the unsearchable things. We abruptly entered the doors of our cancer journey, all the while knowing our faithful God was with us. Convinced



The Alliance Canada Global Ministries staff at Brem and Donna's farewell, 2022

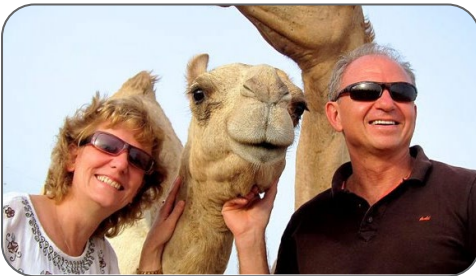
abundant living is still available amidst disease, we had nothing to fear as we held onto His righteous right hand. In our final months of leadership, a few more unexpected twists and turns came our way, but we celebrate His enduring faithfulness and lovingkindness to finish well.

Bringing our tenure of 33 years serving in Global Ministries to a close, we highlight the following for His glory and mutual encouragement as we prayerfully remain committed to bringing access to Jesus to people who have not yet had the opportunity to encounter Him.

- In 2022, focus and initiatives were underway to bring access to Jesus to 66 people groups.
- The birth of the Muslim-focused team in South Thailand in 2022 fulfilled a vision that took root during our years in Malaysia. To God be the glory!
- With over 200 workers, all personnel focused on an LRPG, directly or indirectly, with other teammates or national colleagues.
- Through launching the Jaffray Project in 2016, specific least-reached people group (LRPG) efforts were initiated and/or gained increased focus among:
  - o Fulani & Wolof (Senegal)
  - o Yazidi (Iraq)
  - o Rohingya (Malaysia)
  - o Balinese Hindu
  - o Egyptian Arabs



- o Yemini
  - o Fulani & Tuareg (Niger)
  - o Huichol (Mexico)
  - o Azeri (Azerbaijan)
  - o Spaniards
  - o South Asians (Gateway Initiative)
- The growing influence of Alliance World Fellowship is noteworthy. Being actively involved to see this fellowshiping network become a mobilizing movement focusing on the least-reached peoples has been one of the greatest highlights.



Donna and Brem in the Middle East, 2013

## Postlude

To our children who navigated the road with us, we know life as a third culture kid (TCK) brought you times of celebration but also deep sadness and loss. Thank you for the many sacrifices you made when you had little choice. We pray you will experience His abundant blessing, and as we continue

to walk together, there will be many occasions to remember His loving kindness and watchful ways. You play an integral part in our story and have enriched each step.

To our Alliance family, we say thank you for every prayer you prayed for the Frentz family, for our pictures that hung on fridges, and for the money graciously released. We are forever grateful to have been an extension of your love for the world. Let us continue to release our children and resources to bring access to Jesus, where many have not yet heard.

For future international workers and ministry leaders within the Alliance and beyond, hold fast to God's call on your life. It will anchor you through the difficult and lonely days. Remember, the work God desires to do in you is far more valuable than the work you will do for Him. He may lead you to the other side of the world or face significant obstacles to root you more deeply into His heart. The overflow of the Spirit's work in you is the source of any message you have to share with the world.

The Lord is forever faithful, His sovereign plans are trustworthy, and His redeeming love is for all peoples.