



THE CHALLENGE

MARCH 2019

NOT GIVING UP: WEST AFRICA WELL-DRILLING



It has been an amazing season so far, blessing villages and pastors in their ministry through our well-drilling efforts in West Africa. **Drilling teams in November, January and February saw the Lord's faithfulness and power as their efforts brought clean water and a chance to hear the Gospel to dozens of West African villages.**



One well site required two teams putting in 7 days (last 4 days of one team, first 3 days of the next) to complete a well in that village. After the well was completed, the pastors working alongside us shared the Gospel with the villagers there. **Using our work ethic and determination as an example, the pastor told of Jesus' faithfulness in pursuing each of us when anyone else would have given up.** Getting a well at that village was hard work. According to the pastors, many believed we would not come back after the first team left. Returning with the second team and experiencing success in striking water, sealed the mouths of those who mocked and ridiculed the God who seemed unable to get the job done at first. As water dripped off the drilling rig and the people listened, the pastor shared about the never-stopping, never-giving-up, unfailing love of God. He pointed out that even as the people were chasing after their idols' attention, Jesus was loving them so much that He kept chasing after them! **As we hadn't given up on striking water, Jesus had not given up on them either.** The pastor clarified that salvation is God's work, not ours. They learned there is no hard work we can do as a people to repay Jesus for the gift of life He alone can give. It is free... because Jesus gave it all.

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Watching people respond to God’s Word and experiencing His tangible care through clean water made a recent decision of mine very difficult. One of the hardest things I’ve had to do in a long time is to cancel a drilling team slated to minister in West Africa this month. **Growing conflict and increasing terrorism in the past few years is having ever-greater impacts in the lives of the people we serve alongside.**

Our mission, purpose, and efforts remain the same. We drill wells to support the work of national and foreign missionaries who are sharing the Gospel in hard to reach areas or among unreached people groups. Regionally however, we are able to serve in less of the country every year. **Safety concerns and in-country restrictions have currently limited our drilling range within 50 km of the capital city.**

Over the past year, when asked, “How long will you keep going back to West Africa?” I would always answer, “As long as the Lord keeps the door open for us.” **Here in this country, it seems like the door is starting to close...**



My colleague in the field and I wrestled a bit with this question of cancelling our March drilling trip. Tickets had already been purchased. Plans had already been made. From a relational perspective, I was very much looking forward to working with the men coming from Canada and the US.

I was also very excited to see the impact of our work on the local African church in the drilling region. Very quickly realizing the in-country travel limitations and heavy risk to our team, we had to ask ourselves the question: **“If we continue working and bringing teams into this situation, are we able to continue to serve the Lord and be true to our mission statement?” The answer was a quick and clear “No.”**



Does the Lord need us to grow His Church in West Africa? No. Does He need us to drill a well, so people can know who He is? No. Does He have servants able to bring the Gospel to the unreached parts of the country? Yes.

When the door was open for us to work alongside those servants in the Gospel-less parts of the country, were we effective in helping them to share the Good News? I would believe and hope so, yes.

Can we continue to support those servants in the same way when confined to working in the capital city? No.

Can we be effective in sharing the Gospel to the unreached parts of the country by only working within the confines of the capital? No.

These have been hard realizations. Not hard in the sense that it was a difficult thing to grasp, but hard for us to come to terms with. This is why we believe the door in West Africa is closing to us—**because we cannot stay true to who we are as a mission confined to the city. The unreached indigenous people are not in the city.**

For those who were going to travel with us in March, I am proud of them. They were disappointed but understood they were not just participating in an experience or a trip. If FIA was about drilling holes, we would have found work for them and continued with the trip. The reality is—all our efforts, and those who labor with us, are partners in presenting the Gospel to the unreached. **We aren't there just to drill wells.** It is not faithful to our ministry partners, to our staff, or to our supporters, if we represent our work in any other way.

I would hope our decisions speak to who we are as an organization. We so value the ministry that we cling to our identity and mission statement. **Our purpose is to accelerate sharing the Gospel in the unreached areas.** We are not there to serve in already evangelized regions. “For the Son of Man came to seek and save **the lost.**” —Luke 19:10

For the time being, the well drilling project will not be hosting more teams. February 2019 was the final team to come to West Africa with FIA to drill in support of sharing the Gospel. Although this is the case, **we are not giving up. Not even close.**

We give thanks to the One who goes before us, to the One who knows the beginning from the end. **We know wherever we are, in whatever country we serve in, we are not giving up on seeing His Glory and Name revealed to those who have yet to hear.** Pray with us to know where best to do this.

Matt Durkee - FRIENDS IN ACTION INT'L
Water of Life Project - West Africa
226-821-5399



They learned there is no hard work we can do as a people to repay Jesus for the gift of life He alone can give. It is free... because Jesus gave it all.



PRAY

PLEASE PRAY WITH US FOR:

- Please pray with us as we assess the current political and security situations in the country and this part of the world.
- Pray that we would see where the Lord is opening new doors for us. Rest assured, He already has been opening doors.
- Pray for us that we would be wise and discerning on where to go. **The WOL (Water of Life) project is still open—we don't see the Lord closing that door.** As to where we will be in a year's time—only God knows. And I'm ok with that.



Partnership Has Global Impact

Deep in the interior jungle regions of the tiny South Pacific island of Vanuatu, NiVan villagers gather their jugs to begin the more-than-one-hour hike each way to collect water.

In Pennsylvania, Douglas Flemmens, Messiah College's director of The Collaboratory, wraps up preparations for The Collaboratory's Monday night discipleship meeting with students.



Two very different worlds collide when The Collaboratory teams up with Friends In Action Intl. (FIA) to complete life-changing community transformation projects in various regions around the globe.

"Our Collaboratory mission statement boils down to two things: changing the world and changing us," shared Flemmens. "(Working with FIA), we have the opportunity to do good projects in various places around the globe. This changes our interface with our learning and the application of what we are learning. At the same time, it changes our hearts. **We see in bigger ways what God is doing in various places around the world.**"



As part of this focus, Messiah's engineering students have teamed up with FIA to provide more than 1,400 Rama Cay people with a block press to produce structural building blocks for residential housing off the east coast of Nicaragua, as storms and the elements rot wooden huts. The initial efforts on this project are slated to eventually relieve the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions of more than 200 families on the tiny island.

In June of 2018, Dr. Brian Swartz's engineering students worked with FIA to construct a pedestrian bridge above a 20-foot ravine in Rama Cay that prevented access to a proposed medical center and baseball field from the villagers' new hurricane-resistant homes. Messiah's Dr. Phillip Tan also visited the Rama in December 2018 to conduct microbiological and chemical analyses of water sources.



"We are pleased to host Messiah's students with engineering projects that **apply their learning to solving real-world problems and meeting tangible needs that demonstrate God's love,**" noted Tim Johnston, FIA's Executive Director.

The latest partnership of FIA and Messiah's Collaboratory will provide clean water through 16 miles of gravity-fed piping to more than 3,500 NiVan people in Vanuatu - covering 30 villages, two clinics, and three schools. Messiah's Dr. Thomas Soerens visited the region with FIA after learning about the need of the villagers. *"I hear your organization is a friend to the people of my village,"* wrote Alani, a NiVan villager. *"I write to you in need. The dry season is come, and I cannot catch enough rain water to care for my family. I ask you for water. Please come soon to help my family and my people. We will not make it through the dry season without help."*

The NiVan tribal leaders are already familiar with and grateful for FIA’s efforts to combine construction projects with the spread of the Gospel. **The completion of a 6-kilometer road connecting 19 NiVan villages with schools and a medical clinic in 2011 resulted in faster medical transport and supply delivery, as well as more than 240 villagers coming to know Christ.**

Since 2017, The Collaboratory at Messiah College has partnered with FIA to secure a source of water in a high mountain spring that produces 48 gallons per minute, enough to meet the needs of thousands of nearby villagers. **The scope of the project will require approximately \$435,000 and five phases to complete.** Teams of short-term volunteers are already slated for 2019 and beyond.

Please join the efforts of FIA and Messiah College by praying, providing financial support, donating construction materials, or taking part in a short-term work trip. Together we can reach more hidden places with the Gospel of Jesus Christ!



3 Ways You Can Help:

PRAY

“I write to you in need. The dry season is come, and I cannot catch enough rain water to care for my family. I ask you for water. Please come soon to help my family and my people. We will not make it through the dry season without help.”

GO

“Working with FIA, we have the opportunity to do good projects in various places around the globe. At the same time, it changes our hearts. We see in bigger ways what God is doing in various places around the world.”

GIVE

Visit fiintl.org/donate to give toward our goal to provide the \$435,000 in funding, construction materials, or taking part in a short-term work trip to provide water for the NiVan village.

From the Director's Desk

SPECIAL FORCES

Outfitted in ballistics gear, a team of Marines slowly moves toward their objective waiting behind a protective shield for the command from their unit leader to explode through their entry point to apprehend their suspect. I love watching films about the heroes behind our freedoms. I'm drawn to the sacrifice and integrity required of our service personnel and identify with their special forces slogan, **"Always faithful. Always forward."**



In a small way, **our own short-term trip volunteers are missionary "special forces" to reach very remote locations with the Gospel.** Equipped with the prayers of supporting churches, family, and friends, as well as the full armor of God, they leave the comforts of home to be part of something critically important. As they say, **"In the chaos of battle, character matters."** **It matters from the end of a shovel when rubbing elbows with indigenous people groups in the harvest fields of the world.**

We have been so blessed to have volunteers who really care, who seek to build relationships and not just structures, and whose lives speak as loudly as their talents. In 2018, **82 brave souls gave of their time and resources to travel with FIA. Fifty-two experienced God's Great Commission in a more tangible way by serving in the field for the first time.**



Why do they leave the comforts of home to serve in strange, hot, bug-infested lands among people who speak a different language and eat unknown foods? **They go because our Commander-In-Chief (Jesus Christ) has told them to go.** They go because they want to share God's love with those who live in bondage to fear, lying spirits, or despair. They go because they know time is running out to take salvation to the lost and dying. They go to demonstrate a burning compassion to reach hidden people without the knowledge of God's Word or His gift to humankind.

God is at work in the world! **Join the adventure of reaching the ends of the earth with the Gospel! Travel with us!** An FIA trip provides a new perspective of life and the needs around us, as well as a chance to use your God-given gifts to make a real difference in Jesus' Name. You can be a tremendous blessing to the people and missionaries you work with, and I can guarantee that you will come home blessed.

May God give you the courage to go and be part of fulfilling His Great Commission.

Pressing on!

Tim Johnston
FIA Executive Director



Wanna' Get Away?

"While it wasn't necessarily the "smartest" decision to miss classes for a week during my senior year, my professor encouraged me not to let this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity pass me by. I'm so glad I went." Caleb Comeaux, Messiah College Civil Engineering '18.

Caleb knew he wanted to capitalize on a chance to combine his engineering studies with a meaningful way to express his Christian faith. An FIA trip to minister to the Rama people of Nicaragua in April was the perfect opportunity to see classroom theory and design come to fruition. Caleb was part of the first work team assigned to prepare the site and pour the foundation for a bridge that spanned a 20-foot ravine, previously preventing access to a proposed medical center and baseball field from the Rama's new hurricane-resistance homes.

"It was heart-warming to work alongside the Rama. Because FIA had already been serving with the Rama, there was already trust and rapport there. The bridge project was part of a greater whole of reaching and connecting with the Rama, and they were very thankful and welcoming of our efforts. They got right down in the hole and dug alongside us."

Caleb's trip was paid in full through tax-deductible donations from family and friends. *"I would encourage anyone to go and not hesitate. I came home with a new perspective on my priorities. I'm grateful for the simple things in life and don't worry about things as much. All the things I felt were so important before, just don't require that kind of attention anymore. I was able to let go of all of that."*

Be part of being a blessing and being blessed! Join us on one of our upcoming work trips!



SHORT TERM TEAM OPPORTUNITIES



BOLIVIA

Contact Gary Ferch: 636-448-0878 or gferch@sbcglobal.net • Cost: ~\$2,000 (excluding airfare to and from Santa Cruz); Visa, \$160 upon arrival

May-June, Medical: Doctors and nurses are needed for this evangelistic team outreach to remote Amazon villages aboard El Misionero. Four different teams of two weeks each are needed throughout this time.



MOLDOVA

Contact Paul Brosey: 717-546-0208 or PaulBrosey@faintl.org • Cost: ~\$2,000

May 17-June 3, 2019: Construction/painting at UDG's summer camp facility.



NICARAGUA-MISKITO

Contact Daryl Heller: 717-507-0636 or DarylHeller@faintl.org • Cost: ~\$2,450

May 16-31: Repairs to roofs and installing doors and windows.



NICARAGUA-RAMA

Contact Tim Johnston: 717-579-7001 or TimJohnston@faintl.org • Cost: ~\$1,850

May 31-June 15: Construction work on laundry/shower room.



VANUATU

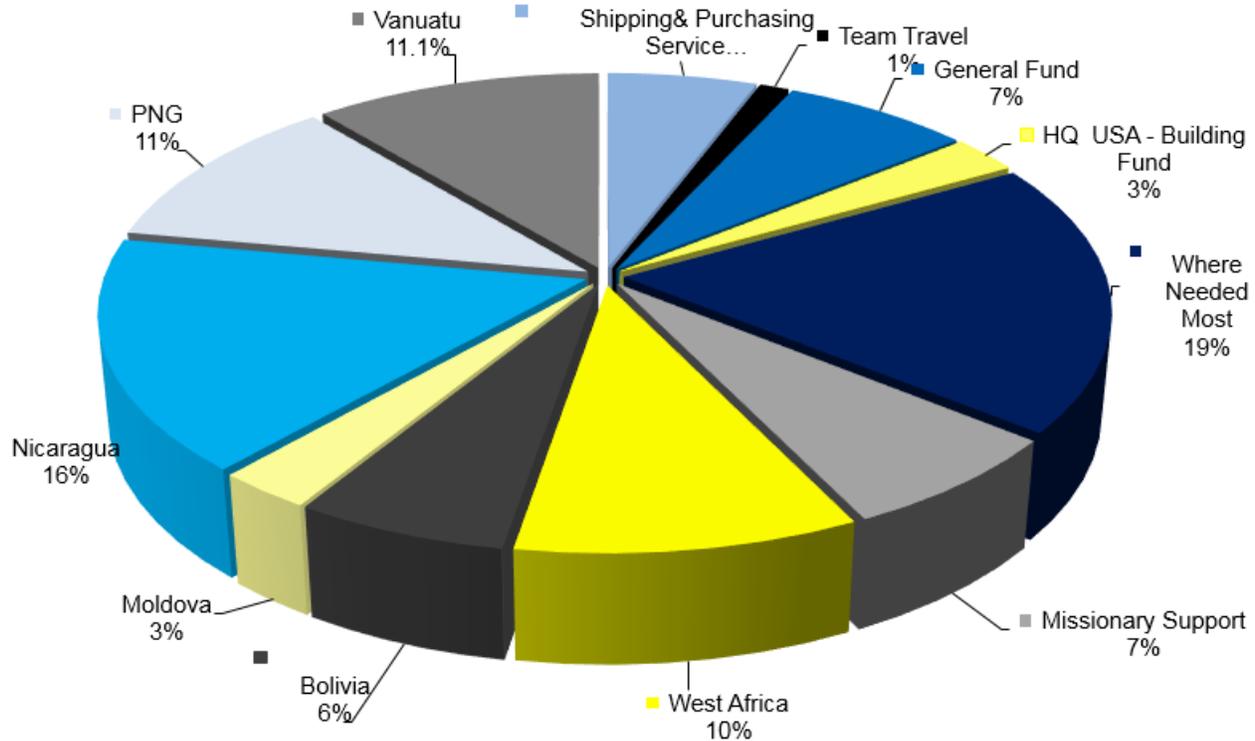
Contact Tim Johnston: 717-579-7001 or TimJohnston@faintl.org • Cost: ~\$3,500

March 29-April 20: Mechanical repairs to construction equipment.

Contact Paul Brosey: 717-546-0208 or PaulBrosey@faintl.org • Cost: ~\$3,800

August 2 -August 17 and August 17 -August 31: Construction of base camp.

2018 TOTAL INCOME \$1,234,176



2019 PROGRESS UPDATE

Location	Description	Account #	Projected	Year to Date
West Africa	Well Drilling	500299	\$59,500	\$295
Bolivia	Ministries	550299	\$22,000	\$1,545
Moldova	University "Divitia Gratiae"	530199	\$62,000	\$480
Nicaragua	Rama Ministry	550401	\$134,000	\$8,720
Nicaragua	Miskito Ministry	550404	\$31,100	\$25
Papua New Guinea	Sepik Ministries	520199	\$105,000	\$95
Vanuatu	Ministries	520299	\$71,520	\$3,758
Vanuatu	Water Project	520208	\$435,387	\$160
FIA-USA	General Operations and Project Dev.	400100	\$294,000	\$4,951
FIA-USA	New H.Q. Building Fund	420122	\$1,312,000	\$790
FIA-USA	Missionary Medical Kits and Supplies	410104	\$5,000	\$100
FIA-USA	Where Needed Most	401100	\$120,000	\$1,211



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