



# In The Way

with the St-Onges

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## Caribbean Update

It has been (another) busy month of traveling. Since the last newsletter, I spent a long weekend in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico visiting with our new missionaries there. I had the privilege of installing Rev. Matt Ruesch and Rev. Richard Schuller as pastors and missionaries to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Mayaguez, and missionaries to the island. Both the Ruesch family and Schuller family are settling in, getting internet and phone, meeting members of the congregation and also getting involved with outreach. We discussed the roles that both of them would play as a team in preaching the Gospel.

I've also been working with our missionary and congregations in Jamaica on a few different projects. We are evaluating plans for the construction of a permanent facility on land purchased a number of years ago. The cost would be around \$120,000 US, and Lutheran Hour Ministries' Rev. Peter Kirby and I have discussed raising money here in the US for the construction, and possibly supplying volunteer labor. We have also organized a deaconess training event, which will take place in the middle of May. Two of our Dominican Republic deaconesses, Sieter Ziegler and Sister Putnam, will be leading that.

The first week of April we all traveled to Orlando, Florida to be assessed for redeployment to a new field. Which leads us to the following:

## Remember That Call to Canada?

Back at the end of September 2014 the Board for International Mission of the LCMS extended me a call to serve as a missionary in Canada. I accepted that call, but our partner church in Canada was not able to find a location for me to serve. In early April I was offered a placement in Montreal, Quebec. I would be working with Ascension Lutheran Church, a very small, English-speaking SELC district congregation that houses French and Chinese ministries as well as an outreach to the blind. Ascension is the only confessional Lutheran presence in a city of close to 4 million, of whom the majority are French speakers. The church's neighborhood is one of the poorest in Canada, and also one of the most diverse, with residents from almost every religious and cultural background imaginable. We are prayerfully considering this as a permanent missionary placement for our family. Your thoughts and prayers are also greatly appreciated right now!

## Mission Moment

Deb and I met Pastor David Somers at the Indian restaurant across the street from Ascension / L'Ascension Church in Parc-Extension, Montreal. He had so much to share about mission work in Montreal and the province of Quebec that we barely had time to scratch the surface before he needed to leave for bible study.

Ascension was founded as a Slovak Lutheran Church around 85 years ago. Now, it serves people from all around the world in three languages: English, French, and Mandarin. The English congregation includes members from Pakistan, Armenia, and Guyana. The pastor-in-training of the Chinese congregation is teaching students overseas via Skype. Pastor Somers leads not only the Francophone congregation in Montreal, but also congregations in Quebec, St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, and a new preaching post in the southern suburbs of the city. He also helps with a blind mission outreach, in French, composed mostly of Haitians.

Can there be any question of the need for mission work in this city where only 2% of the population attend worship?



Why would we even consider serving in a city where winter lasts 6 months of the year, when we could be in the Caribbean? There are some things that would make us uniquely qualified to work in Montreal. First, I'm a Canadian citizen educated in English in Canada. Anyone else who moves to Québec must either try and get their kids in a limited private school space for tens of thousands of dollars, or have their children educated exclusively in French. Second, I speak English and French already and have been exposed to work in China and to Mandarin. Third, I have experience working in cross-cultural congregations, struggling inner city congregations, and with blind ministry as well. Fourth and most importantly, I have you. Lutherans have neglected work in the most unchurched region of North America, Quebec, for far too long. The Lord is providing us with an opportunity. Perhaps this time we need to pull the parkas out of the closet and take it. Again, we appreciate your thoughts and prayers as we deliberate this placement.

**TL:** Palm Sunday at Prince of Peace, Mayaguez **TR:** Chinatown in Montreal; **BL:** Chinese language service at Ascension, Montreal; **BM:** With the Ruesches and Schullers in Puerto Rico; **BR:** Installing Rev. Schuller and Rev. Ruesch in Spanish, after preaching my first sermon in Spanish as well!

## Prayer Concerns

For Pastor Ite and the work of St. Andrew and Faith congregations in Jamaica, especially as we prepare for a weekend of deaconess training in May,

For the Schullers and Rueschs as they adjust to their new roles in Puerto Rico,

For Charles, as he considers the offer of a missionary placement in Montreal, Quebec,

For Deb, Olivia and Sophia, as they near the end of our time here in Cincinnati.

## Support Us

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