



Alberta



Child Evangelism Fellowship



Saskatchewan

"It is not the will of your Father...that one of these little ones should perish." - Matthew 18:14

Hindsight is 2020!

Dear Friends,

December 18, 2020

As we reflect back on this past year it is hard to believe all that has happened. I looked back at my first letter this year that I called "Vision 2020 – A Future and a Hope"! I quoted Jeremiah 29:11, "**For I know the plans I have for you.**" Then I referred to "Hindsight is 2020". Wow!



Have you ever looked back on a time when God took you a different direction than you thought you would go? To be honest with you I love when that happens! It helps me realize that God is still sovereign and that He will guide us as we continue to seek Him. I don't think there has ever been a year like this one in ministry as almost everything changed.

In my February letter I wrote:

*I think that Proverbs 3:5-6 best describes what I believe our vision should be in 2020. **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.** I believe it is God's vision that will lead this ministry in 2020, not mine. I believe that Jeremiah 29:11 refers to God's perfect vision which is so much better than 20/20 because He can see tomorrow as it says, "**For I know the plans I have for you . . . to give you a future and a hope.**"*

Then I wrote, "In hindsight, we look back and see God's faithfulness this past year in so many ways." I was writing about 2019 but now I am going to share how this came true in 2020 where God "**directed our paths**" when everything around us seemed out of control. The amazing thing is that it was always in His control; all we needed to do is "**trust in the LORD with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding**".

In an amazing way it started with our move to Sedley just over a year ago on December 2, 2019. Little did we know how important this was to the ministry in 2020, but God knew!



In January 2020 we launched into normal preparations for the banquets that would be just a few weeks ahead. In an amazing way God allowed us to travel to all our banquets except for Saskatoon and Osler which were to be held March 16th and 17th. In many ways this was one of our biggest disappointments as we so look forward to the banquets in each community as it gives us time to reconnect with the CEF family. I just want to say to our ministry friends in Saskatoon and Warman and the surrounding area that we love you and are so thankful for how you and the rest of the CEF family has carried this ministry this past year! We do look forward to the next time we can meet together.



In my letter on April 15th I wrote, "It was time to call a board meeting and make a decision. On April 2nd we had that meeting, and it was decided, in light of all that was happening, we needed to cancel 5-Day Clubs for this summer. As I shared with the board some of the new possibilities, we were all getting excited about what God could do even in such a time as this. It was decided to take 5-Day Clubs online. This may change how we do 5-Day Clubs in the future, as in 2021 we could have 5-Day Clubs not just on the ground, but also through the airwaves."

We began filming in June and are so thankful for our four summer missionaries: Alesha Grimes, Katelyn Stone, Luke Durston, and Levi Noel who gave their summer to reach boys and girls in a brand new way!



On July 6th we launched 5-Day Clubs online a week earlier than in other years.



In a way only God could do, 5-Day Clubs did not only go across Alberta and Saskatchewan but pictures of children joining 5-Day Clubs online were coming in from across Canada, the USA, and around the world. This picture was taken in Thailand!



Some churches used the online 5-Day Clubs to run their VBS programs as well as families who hosted a club in their own homes for the neighbourhood children. Because of this opportunity we will probably offer 5-Day Clubs online from now alongside 5-Day Clubs on the ground!

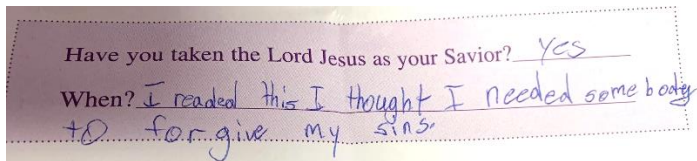
In our April 2nd board meeting we also decided to launch Sponsor a Mailbox, as we realized that the opportunity to hand out Mailbox Club lessons to boys and girls in the 5-Day Clubs was not going to happen. We set up a website to sponsor sending an adult and a child's lesson to every home and found we could do it for \$0.60 a household.



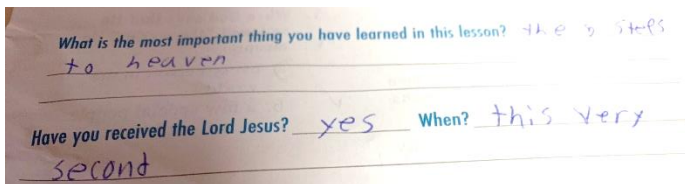
When a door closed, God opened a mailbox! Who would have ever dreamed that the old-fashioned mailbox would be back as an amazing tool to reach families in a way beyond what we had ever done before.

Since the end of April community after community and neighbourhood after neighbourhood has been sponsored, and the lessons continue to come in every day, not just from children but in an amazing way from teenagers, young parents, and seniors! I think we have had lessons coming in from ages 3 to 91! Wow! Who would have ever imagined what God would do! Not only are children coming to Christ but adults as well! Here are some of the responses:

Have you taken the Lord Jesus as your Savior? **"Yes"**
When? **"I readed this I thought I needed somebody to forgive my sins."**



Another child answered the question, "What is the most important thing you have learned in this lesson?" **"The 5 steps to heaven"** Have you received the Lord Jesus? **"Yes"** When? **"This very second"**



Back in my October 29th letter I shared this letter from a 27- year-old mother of four from a small town in Alberta. In a lesson from the Sponsor a Mailbox mailing she wrote,

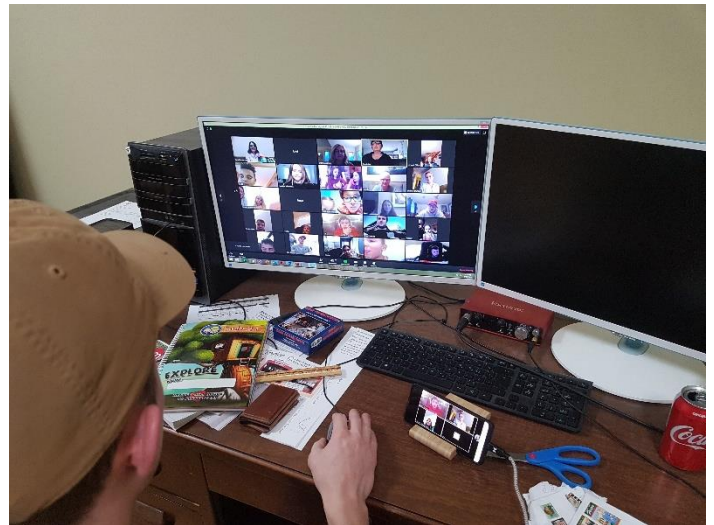
"I never exactly knew what grace meant. Thank you for explaining it so clearly!" She went on to write, "I've always had to work with patience. We have four small boys and my husband's trying to understand how to receive Jesus as his Saviour. Please pray for us!" – M

On the day of my dad's passing my sister Charlene had the opportunity to pray on the phone with this mom to accept Christ right from the hospital room. In a recent conversation with this mom, her daughter too has now accepted Christ!

Since the Sponsor a Mailbox project started there have been 655 communities sponsored throughout Alberta (148), Saskatchewan (480), and NWT (27). In total there have been **193,949 homes** sponsored including tens of thousands of homes in cities across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the NWT. Of these sponsorships **118,677 homes** have already been mailed out to 581 communities and all **10,871 homes** in the NWT! Hundreds of lessons have been coming in, many clearly from children and adults who are not from Christian homes.

So far there have been 242 individuals that we are regularly discipling through the mail as a direct result of this project, including 96 adults. Every day new ones join, even from lessons we sent out months ago. In many ways we feel like we are sowing seeds of the gospel.

Club DJ too saw changes as churches adjusted to reaching the children in their communities and beyond. Several churches were completing their year last spring on platforms like ZOOM.



But things did not stop most of the churches this fall as they figured out ways to keep this area of ministry going. Many returned to ZOOM, and some churches said that their ministry grew from last year. Others were telling us that they were now having children join their Club DJ through ZOOM from right across Canada! Wow! Again God has opened up new doors of opportunity.

Already, there are four new churches wanting to start Club DJ in the new year, including one in Ottawa which I am training via ZOOM this Saturday and three others in Red Deer County, Claresholm, and Langenburg.

I have often used the illustration of counting the seeds in an apple, but only God knows how many apples are in the seed! I was reminded of this again in this morning's mail as I read a letter we received in response to my letter last month.

I enjoyed your November (D&J) letter – a wonderful tribute to your father. I read his book that was enclosed . . . so nice to know his journey of faith, and I was blessed by it. It is an honour to make a contribution in his memory.

UB David & I'll B Jonathan is special to me. I was one of those children who received Biblical teaching through the Mailbox Club. I did not know who was behind those lessons, or that I would ever know any of the family, but I sure loved getting them in the mail. They were a very important part of my life, especially since my parents did not know the Lord. They helped me grow in knowledge and understanding of Jesus. In later years, my own children were challenged by the lessons and encouraged with the plaques and awards they received. And now, my grandchildren attend Club DJ.

What a wonderful legacy your father has left for his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. It is an eternal legacy of hope and trust and faith in Jesus, of serving Him, and bringing others into His kingdom. Your father has given you riches that will last forever.

God bless you for your part in this ministry in 2020!

For the sake of the children,

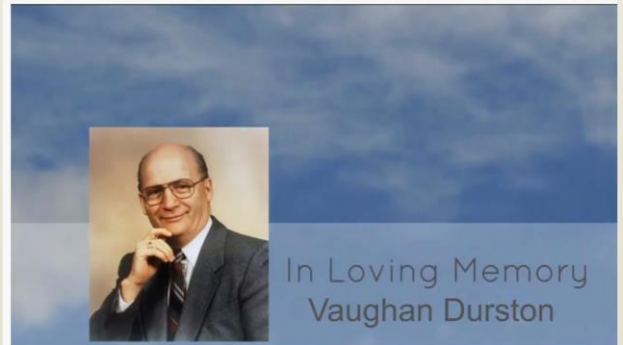


Jerry Durston
Provincial Director



Donations may be made online at any of our websites!

Upcoming Events



Watch the Memorial Service

and Tribute Video at

www.cefsask.org

Gifts in memory of

Vaughan Durston

Can be made by mail or on our website

www.cefsask.org

***Merry
Christmas!***



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