



# The Stahlman Family

## Serving as European Field Director

### Missions Camp 2024 Update

July 2024

This camp was unique in that we took 24 students on a mobile, missionary training exercise. Our usual camp experience takes place in a stationary village setting. Our first Ministry stop was Nashville. A church graciously offered us to camp in their parking lot. We arrived at 3:00 a.m. and set up some tents and hammocks. It was still 87° at 3:00 a.m. and a very uncomfortable night. We also had no access to restrooms besides a park about three blocks away. But once we got up and got underway, we had a fantastic time in Nashville. There are nearly 40,000 Kurdish people there who are nearly 100% Muslim. We planned it so that we would arrive on Friday at midday when most Muslim people would be visiting the mosque. Many of our students spent time in the mosque hearing about Islam and sharing the gospel with the Islamic leadership. We spent two days in Nashville and did outreach on the streets, and we also set up two small tents with a sign in front that says "free Bibles." We did give some Bibles away to Muslim people, but it was primarily Hispanic people that were asking for Bibles. Every Bible we gave away included a Bible study guide, essentially a long-format gospel tract. In all, we probably gave away 400 Bibles in Nashville with each person receiving a gospel presentation. On our second day in Nashville, the church that allowed us to camp in the parking lot opened the doors and allowed us to use their facility and even provided dinner for us.

In the Minneapolis area, there are 87,000 Somali refugees. I have to be honest and say that Minneapolis was very intimidating at first. There was open hostility towards us when we arrived, and as we investigated the neighborhood we found that there had been three people killed in three separate incidents over the last few weeks just across the street from where we were staying. Most of our students were homeschooled and come from a fairly sheltered background; so staying in this neighborhood was a challenge. Again, a church graciously opened their doors and allowed us to stay inside the building and even improvised a shower for us in the basement. It is hard to explain the feeling of standing in a community of thousands of Somalis and being the only representative of Christ in that place. Our students did very well confronting Islam and gained a tremendous amount of experience and a new burden for Muslims that many had never had before. Although Minneapolis was not easy, most of our students would say it was their favorite place, and there were some great connections made with Muslim people. We only set up one Bible tent in Minneapolis, even though it was on the corner of the park which is highly disputed between different ethnic groups. We still gave out 22 Bibles in one hour.

When we left Minneapolis, we headed to Fargo, North Dakota. Outreach in Fargo was difficult because the immigrants there have integrated into the community, and they were more difficult to find. When we arrived at the church where we stayed, they asked us to pray for one of their young men who had been missing for 24 hours. Our team spent four or five hours out on the streets helping this church look for the young man. After we left Fargo, our team got a notification that they had found the boy in the river. Although we're not sure what happened, our hearts were broken for his family and church. This was a sobering experience for our team and reminded us of the brevity of life and the importance in knowing Christ.

Our next Ministry stop was in Pryor, Montana on the Crow Indian Reservation. Part of our time on the reservation was focused on our practical missions training. Here we did some of our medical and survival training. We took one day to visit the small

city of Crow Agency. Although most Crow Indians claim some form of Christianity, the majority of them still hold to tribal beliefs. They told us about the spirits that come down on the mountains when they go up to pray and a host of other indigenous beliefs. We left Montana burdened, knowing that their form of Christianity mingled with traditional beliefs would leave them lost in their sins.

In Montana, we faced a dilemma in our direction. We were a little concerned about crossing the Rocky Mountains and heading into Utah to do ministry among the Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City. Our two concerns were how the bus would perform crossing the mountains and also if we would have enough time to get from Salt Lake City back to St Louis in time for camp to end. As our team began to pray about this, Rexburg, Idaho came to mind. I had heard of the city before but had never given it any consideration. Rexburg is a university city; it is home to BYU Idaho. This is a Mormon campus that has thousands of students. The city is 97% Mormon. Most of our students had not personally met Mormons, let alone confronted them on the streets with the gospel. By this point in the trip, we had already spent a lot of time studying doctrines that related directly to Islam and Mormonism, focusing primarily on the deity of Christ. What intrigued us the most about the Mormon people is how long they would spend with us discussing the Scriptures and Christ. On average, we probably spent more than 30 minutes with each person that we engaged. For the most part, they were ignorant concerning the Scriptures and did not give us strong Biblical reasons why they rejected the Christ of Scripture in favor of the Mormon Jesus. The people in Rexburg are probably some of the friendliest I have ever met, and if you wanted to live in a clean city with friendly people, this might be the place. Some of our students made their way into the temple and sat down with the temple president. During this conversation, they asked a lot of questions, and he presented his Mormon faith. Our students confronted him with the obvious contradictions between Scripture and the Book of Mormon and with the clear teaching of the Bible that Jesus is God. To these challenges, the president had no response. On occasion, he simply said, "I don't know." Our team left Rexburg with a great burden and a broken heart for the kind, well-meaning people who have been blinded to the true identity of Jesus and who will die in their sins without a Savior.

It took nearly 30 hours to make it back to St Louis from Rexburg. Along the way, we stopped and camped in Badlands National Park. It was an awesome experience to sleep out under the stars and view God's handiwork. For many of the students, this was a first for them. I heard several people comment that they had seen their first shooting star that night. We are so thankful that the Lord allowed us to take this team on such a challenging journey. We saw God's hand each day and the challenges that we faced led us back to Scripture for answers. Thank you for your prayers and financial support. Without our prayer team, none of this would have been possible.

Ben and I will be leaving in 10 days to join 4 other men as we start the Olympic outreach in Paris. Please pray for provision, safety, and receptive hearts as we endeavor to proclaim Christ to the Nations that will be gathered in France.

In Christ,  
Matt and Cathy Stahlman

Personal contact:  
Matt & Cathy Stahlman  
636.358.6365  
mattstahlman@mwbm.org  
cathystahlman@mwbm.org

Sending Church:  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Campbell, MO  
Pastor Joshua Lovens  
573.246.3276

Support address:  
Macedonia World Baptist  
Missions  
P.O. Box 519 Braselton, GA 30517  
Memo: Matt Stahlman