

Extended Ministry Overview  
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Wasilla Bible Church  
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I love a good story. I think everybody loves a good story. Picture this—my dad, my three brothers, I've got five brother-in-laws and a bunch of nephews sitting around a campfire in northern Wisconsin. We've just finished a day of a good deer hunt out in the snow, and we're tossing logs on the fire and somebody says, "Remember when..." Don'tcha love it when the 'Remember When' stories... One of my favorites that comes up often as we're sitting around a fire is somebody says, "Remember when Alex..." (that's my older brother) "...was going to go waterskiing? He's sitting on the end of a wooden pier and he didn't know that his swimming suit was hooked to a nail?" And it gets better every time we tell those stories. But my favorite stories that I started hearing when I was in Crawl Zone and up through Fishing Crew age and junior high and through high school were the stories from God's word—just awesome stories, exciting stories. I could hear 'em again and again.

And we're currently going through the story of God's grace from beginning to end. We started out in Genesis, and we talked about the Fall. And from there we went to the choosing of Abraham and the beginning of the nation of Israel. We followed Israel a little bit, and how they got into the land, and how they got into trouble, and how God got 'em out of trouble. And we're following the story of God's grace from beginning to the end. And currently, coming next week, we'll be back in Judges and hearing how God brought them judges and kept them as a nation, and prepared them for their coming king. But we'll get into that.

Last week we took a...we did a fast-forward and we talked about the story of God's grace in the lives of three of our people here in Wasilla Bible Church. LaRae Lacrosse shared, and Sarah Novak, and Willie Nelson...Willie Shelton...he wishes. Oh, he's a good singer...Willie Shelton...I'll pay for that...shared their story of God's grace in their lives with us last week. And if you missed that, I encourage you. We have, at the bookstore area you can sign up for a self-help...sign up for a CD on last week's sermon, or go online and catch that. It was really encouraging to hear how God is working in the lives of some of our people.

This week we are going to hear about how God is working in the lives of our extended ministries. And I need to give a little bit of definition about extended ministries. Really simply, extended ministries are any ministries that happen outside the walls of this building. We have...inside this building we have children's ministries, we have youth ministries, we have adult ministries, worship ministries, Stephen Ministry. But there's things that happen that we are connected to outside the walls of our building, and anything that goes on out there is considered extended ministries. And I also wear the title of Adult Ministry Pastor and Extended Ministry Pastor, and there's an extended ministry team that works with those ministries out there. And we're going to cover those today and cover a little bit of some of their stories and get them introduced to you.

But let me do a little bit of history here, too. When I first came on here, about three years ago, one of the first tasks that I was given was to help redesign and develop the extended ministries policy. I think they thought that my years of working on military regulations would help in building this policy. It did help in trying to keep the elders in line, get 'em working, but that's beside the point. But we worked on the extended ministry policy, and that gives the extended ministry team a framework that we can work off of and how we extend our ministry out beyond these walls.

And one of the things we decided early on was let's start contained. Let's have ten extended ministries for starters. Because what we wanted to do is build a really strong connection between you and these ministries. I used to watch my grandmother juggle and she would start juggling three balls, and then we'd toss her another one, and we'd toss her another one. She never let us get beyond five. She could juggle five but no more. And we figured ten would be a good number for a congregation of our size to get started with, but we want to have a really good connection with that. So we stopped there. So we're going to talk about the ten extended ministries that we have.

And you will notice that about eighty percent of what we're talking about here are missionaries. So you say, "Why don't you just call it the Missionary Program?" Well, because not all of them are missionaries. Some of them are programs that, like two summers ago as part of extended ministries we built a Habitat for Humanity house. That was an extended ministry, so we couldn't call that missionaries, necessarily. Ok? So it all falls under the umbrella of extended missionaries...extended ministries. And I'm gonna introduce them to you today.

We're gonna follow this sermon, this time here, with a potluck downstairs at one o'clock. We're gonna wait for the fishing crew to get out of there at 12:45; we're gonna patiently wait for them to get out of there. And then at one o'clock we're gonna move in, set up some tables; and if we get too many people we'll just move it up here. But it's an opportunity to get connected with a missions agency or a missions family. And we're going to have available some packets that will...we're hoping that a family or an individual will adopt a ministry or a mission family and say, "I'm gonna connect with them," somebody that you don't already know. And it's... the packet will have a bio in there—where they're working, what they're doing, they'll have the family's name in there, they'll have the children's names in there. We even went so far as to look up their birth dates, and we got helpful for you. We put some birthday cards in here. We're encouraging you to send them a birthday card or an anniversary card or something, just to let them know...and actually truly make a connection with that family or with that ministry. So we're hoping that you'll take part in that.

If you didn't read the bulletin last week and you're sitting here and going, "Potluck, huh? I don't have anything in my car," just run down and get something, some on back. If you're planning on going to one of the fast food places, just grab it and drive through and come back here and join us at one o'clock. We'll go from about one to two, two-fifteen. And we'll talk about, a little bit about our missionaries here and get you connected with them if you want that opportunity.

But let me go by way of introduction. The Klapak family...they are right here in Alaska. They serve at a Christian camp just up the road. We've been with them for about a year now. And some of you will recognize these folks. Some of you are even related to some of these folks that you will see throughout this presentation here of our missions. And our encouragement is for those of you who don't know them, this is what we're doing. Now the order that...you do have a handout in your program that talks about each of these ten ministries. They're not in the same order. They're just kind of a random order that these are getting thrown up here.

But another one that we wanna highlight for you is HeartReach Pregnancy Center. They are, again, outside our walls, but they're just up the road on Bogard. And in fact, a week ago Thursday they had their annual banquet here in our facility. The exciting thing about HeartReach...we do support them, they're one of our extended ministries...the exciting thing about them is this coming year, Lord willing, they're planning to go medical. And what that means is they're looking to install an ultrasound machine. And with that they're going to have to have a doctor on the string, and they're going to have to have a nurse on staff; and they're going to offer more of a wider medical to their clients. Last year they served nine hundred and seventy ladies in the valley here. Well, not necessarily ladies, but clients in the valley here. And we know from history of other pregnancy centers that if you have an ultrasound machine you're going to make an ultrasound machine you're going to make a drastic difference in the lives that are affected. So that's an exciting thing that's happening right here.

Dale and Debbie Kenyon—they spent about ten years, maybe more, in India. They're currently in Calgary, Canada. And interestingly enough, they're working with some of the native population there and some of the local churches there. They...also there is a contingency of people from India in Calgary. And they're putting together, this coming May, a trip back to India. And they're going to take some folks on a missions trip from some of the local churches and go back to India and reconnect with some of the folks they ministered to there in the past ten years.

The Keller family—this is one of our newest missionaries, Zach and Jane and the kids. In fact, I called down last week...they're in Arizona...I called down last week to New Tribes Missions where they were, and I asked the secretary. I said, "Have the Kellers arrived yet?" And she said, "Well, I saw some kid running through the office here that I don't know, so I...yeah, I think they're here." So that's how new they are down in Arizona. But you notice the airplane in back behind Zach. He's got a pilot's license, and his signature is his flying. And he's going to go to the Philippines. And in the process of getting connected he discovered that the best way to move around the Philippines is not necessarily by fixed-wing aircraft, 'cause it's jungle. And you want to go to a new place, you've got to cut yourself a runway. And that's all kinds of costs, all kinds of challenges. So they said, "Zach, can you get a helicopter pilot's license?" And "Sure!"

So Zach was telling me a story. He says that...he kept taking fault for this, but he built a shed with a generator in it to run the power for his home, and it burst into flames. Ok? And he says it was probably his wiring. And he told the insurance company that "probably my poor wiring that got the thing going." But the insurance company says, "don't worry about it...you're covered." See, in the process he's trying to get flight hours, and you've gotta pay for flight hours. And he didn't know how he's gonna pay for flight hours. Insurance company gives him a new generator, gets him a new shed to cover it, and then there's extra money. And Zach says to the insurance company, "There's extra money. We've got everything done and you've given me too much money." And the insurance company says, "You're covered. Spend it." Zach says, "Ok. Thank You, Lord!" So he got some flight

hours off of that. He was concerned, he said, “Lord, how am I gonna get the money?” Poof, there goes the shed, he gets money! And we can related to God can bless through a fire, can't we? We've experienced that ourselves as a church. But he's in Arizona right now getting as many hours as he can in a helicopter so that he can go to the Philippines do the ministry there with New Tribes.

The Embrees, James and Ella. Ella just finished with a surgery. She's fine. If you follow them on the web, and I really encourage you to look up our missionaries in our flier there. There's websites for them, or you can go to the website of the church and link to those. But I would really encourage you to get on...many of our missionaries that are out there, and ministries, have a newsletter that they send out every month, or bi-monthly. And I have connected with all of them that I can, and it doesn't overwhelm me. I come in on a Monday morning and it's exciting to hear what's going on in South Africa where they are, and hear what happened in the month of November, and see where God is leading. It's very encouraging, and I would highly recommend that you get on that. It's too easy; send 'em an email and say “I want to be listed on your email listing” and they'll add you to that. And this is one that'll do that. And then they have a website that you can go to, and they're on Facebook, and there's ways of connecting with our extended ministries or missionaries out there where you can really be real-time encouraging them. And he is teaching at a school, very much like a seminary. Local pastors from all around South Africa come there and they learn, and they go back to their churches having been taught how to understand God's word and to teach it. We had one of our own high school students that recently graduated from high school, she's now college-age, but in the interim between she took her summer and went to South Africa.

Now I followed...when James was here...some of you may remember James was here last winter, they were on furlough, and while they were here they collected up a bunch of books. And they put 'em in a big metal container (in the army we used to call those conexes) and they shipped that. I was following the story of how that container got stuck here, and how it got stuck here, and then it was on the ground in South Africa but they couldn't get it opened because of customs, and such and such. And eventually they got the thing opened—full of books. And it was full of books for their seminary. Well, somebody...somebody, and I'm glad it's not me, has to go through those boxes of books and catalog them, and put the Dewey decimal system numbers on there and get them on the shelf so the students can use them. Well, Katie McMurphy did that for us. She went there, she spent four weeks going through boxes of books and getting a bunch of the books cataloged and ready for the seminary use. And the last two weeks she was there she was able to get out into the villages and work a what they called a missions festival. And it's very much like what we would call a vacation bible school. So I wanna encourage high school students...if you're between your junior and senior year or you're just finishing up your senior year and you're not quite gonna go to college until the next year goes, you've got that summer time that you can make it happen to get in on some kind of a ministry like that. Come talk to the extended ministry team and we'll look for an opportunity for you to get out there. That's an experience that's life changing. I would recommend if you want to, to talk to Katie McMurphy. She'll be happy to tell you ('cause I just said that) she'll be happy to tell you all about her experience...right, Katie?...about going to South Africa. She was excited about that. It was a growing time in her life. So talk to her if you wanna look into that opportunity for yourself.

The next one we're gonna talk about it the Brubakers, Tim and Jessica Brubaker. Now, I got to know him a number of years ago. Before I came here I was a junior high Sunday school teacher over at Lazy Mountain, and we adopted the Brubaker family as our Sunday school class missionary. So Tim and I were able to email back and forth a number of times, and I learned what he is doing in Rwanda. He teaches...also teaches pastors that have come in. And he sent me a couple of stories that I'm going to share a little bit with you from some of the pastors that are in the seminary right now.

This guy introduces himself as John Hamenyimana. He's a pastor in Rwanda and he leads a church in Nkombo Cyangu. He was born in Bugarama, SW Rwanda, and this is where it gets interesting...into a pagan family. His father, and uncles, and grandfather were witch doctors. And growing up they had a spirit shrine in their yard. Every evening their father would take the children into the shrine with a small gourd filled with banana wine and a plate with food for the spirits. He would take a type of straw and sprinkle wine from the gourd into the four corners of the little house. He'd say these words as he did it: “Father, protect these children. Bless them.” He'd lift each of the children up, saying their names. This is how he grew up.

When he was a young teen he wanted to go to school, but he could not because all the...you had to pay to go to school there. And all the family money was going to try to heal his mother. His mother was sick for seventeen years—had a malady for seventeen years. They couldn't figure out what it was. They brought her to all the good witch doctors every chance they could, and they had to spend money with these witch doctors to try to cure his mother. And nothing was working, until they encountered a missionary pastor. And here's the story as he wrote it.

“The missionary pastor began to pray for the sick, and there were many there. He raised his hands and prayed. I looked, and I saw mother begin to shake. She began to cry out. The man continued praying, saying ‘God, reveal your strong hand.’ And after a bit the demons began to speak, revealing their secrets. They said they came from a man who is my uncle, my father’s brother. They said that the reason others could not get rid of them is that they did not know the source of the sorcery. They told us that the source was buried under the roots of the avocado tree in our yard. Immediately we got some workers to cut down the tree and dig it up. Digging under the roots they found a bottle filled with charms of sorcery—a piece of clothing of my mother’s, some of her hair, some skin and bones from some kinds of animals. We gave the bottle to the evangelist. He prayed over it and then threw it into the pit toilet. From that moment on my mother was well and has never been affected again.”

And after that instance, of course, he was seeking after God and was able to go to school. And now he is in the school, being taught by Tim Brubaker and others there.

Another story he sent, another man in the seminary...briefly, he grew up living on the streets. He was promiscuous and a drunkard, thinking that no person could ever love him. He started having dreams, and he couldn’t get rid of these dreams, and he thought, “Maybe if I go to the church...” because he’d heard about a Christian church, that he would go there. “I went to the church, and an older man took me by the hand and led me inside. At this time I had no idea that it was Jesus who had led me into this place.” That was in 2001. He went back to his village as a Christian and served, joined the church. And they now asked him to go get the training at the school. And he says, “Since beginning at New Creation Ministries I have changed a lot and made many, many steps forward.”

See the kind of exciting things that are happening out on exciting missions fields, and we’d like you to get connected to them and learn what’s going on and to be able to encourage your missionaries that are out there.

Pastor Enrique and Eva, and I messed up how many kids he’s got...he’s got four kids, I’m not sure, I think it’s three sons and a daughter, but I’m not quite sure about that. My communication with Enrique is a challenge. I type an email and I send it to Joel. Joel translates it, sends it back to me, and then I send that to Enrique so he thinks I can speak Spanish. I’m not trying to...but that’s how we do that. I get this email from Enrique, I open it up, I go “Joel!” And I send it over to Joel and he translates it for me and sends it back to me, and Enrique and I are communicating that way. It can be done. And it’s what I’m learning as I’m talking with Enrique that our support of him...and we do some partial support of his pastorship down in Rosarito...is...they require, he requires in order to function as a pastor well, he requires state certification. And that takes some bucks. But in Mexico you gotta do things their way, their government way. And that state certification...many pastors can’t get that. But because he is supported by us, he can get that. And he then extends himself out to other pastors in the area. And they can exist because he can exist as an umbrella. So what we’re doing not only extends beyond our walls; it extends beyond the walls of the church in Rosarito, Mexico. And it’s exciting to see the pictures that he sends of the baptisms. We do baptisms indoors in the winter time (no duh!). They walk right down to the beach on the ocean and do their baptisms right there in the ocean. It’s fun to see those pictures.

We’re sending a team that are two couples that are near retirement, that are gonna use some air miles and they’re gonna fly down to California, get a car, and drive across the border. And one of the couples is going to take their granddaughter with them because she speaks Spanish. So she’ll be the interpreter. And they’re gonna...there’s a church...they’re coming from us as Wasilla Bible Church, with the sole purpose of encouraging Enrique and the church in Rosarito. I suspect that the encouragement will go both ways. It’s impossible not to encourage somebody and not get encouraged right back at you.

That’s happened with me and Sasha. His real name is Alexander Isakov. He goes by Sasha. His wife’s name is Natasha. That’s our sister church in Vladivostok, Russia. In fact, there’s some people in this building who actually built that building that they hold church in over there in Vladivostok. But Sasha’s English, at least by email, is better than mine, so when we talk back and forth it’s really easy. I email him, and he emails me back. I don’t know if you’ve ever done an email string that’s gone on for weeks, but we’ve been talking back and forth about two to three times a week for about five weeks now. And it’s really encouraging to be able to talk to Sasha and hear what God is doing over in Russia. We help support him over there.

The thing he’s most excited about recently was that one of the guys in his church built the website for Good News Church of Vladivostok. And I was able to go to that website with the miracle of modern technology... You gotta understand, I’m one of the people who made it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a 486 computer. If that means anything to anybody, I’m just now getting up into the Pentium™ age. But I can get onto his website, on the church’s website, and I can highlight about two or three sentences, right-click on that, and have it pop up in English. And it translates

it for me. And I can show you how to do that. I was able to read their entire website in English, even though it was written in Russian. And that's exciting to be able to read what's going on, and to see the pictures of the camps that they're running, and to see the pictures of the baptisms that are happening and the challenges they are facing over there. You can be connected, and I would again highly recommend that you get connected with people like Sasha and Natasha.

I was emailing him about a week and a half ago, and the emails stopped. And I was like, "Sasha, it's your turn! You haven't emailed me back." And the next day his wife gets on and says, "He's in the hospital with pneumonia." So we asked the church to pray; we put the prayer chain out there through Shirley O'Donnell's email system here in the church, and our church has prayed for him. This morning...he sent me another email this morning saying "I'm doing good. I'm still in the hospital. I'm doing great. Thanks for praying, church." So it's great to be able to be connected in. And it's my hope that pretty soon we'll be able to send a contingency over to Russia from extended ministries, just for the sole purpose of encouraging them, and us being encouraged.

The next two ministries I'd like to talk to you about are kinda difficult to cover because they're in a closed country, both of them. By 'closed country' I mean a country that is actively hostile to the message of Jesus Christ. And because of that we're gonna keep the missionaries' names secret, off the web. Because if they come to the border you don't want their name to ping up on the "Oh, you're coming here because of Jesus." Ok. So we've given them pseudonyms. We call one of the couples "Charis", which means 'grace'; we call the other couple "Alethea", which means 'truth'. Both of them are very much involved in scripture translation. And I called one of 'em about a week ago or so, and I said, "How's it going?" Boy, that opened up a testimony! I just said "How is it going?" He just got so excited. He's sixty percent through the translation of the New Testament, and this is for a language of two million people that have never had God's word that they could hold. And he's sixty percent through translating it. He's so excited! Not only is it gonna be a written translation. They're gonna be able to put it in audio, so they're gonna be able to beam it in and get the word of God in to two million people who have never had God's word in their dialect, in their language. And just to hear his excitement in that...

And I can get you connected with these folks. You do the...you use the 'snail mail.' If you're into 'snail mail' and don't want to get into email, these are the two missionaries I recommend you connect with, because we're not gonna do this email because that could be found on the web. But just talk to 'em—by phone or do it by regular mail. In fact, when we put these packets together, we did put some encouraging cards in there so that you could mail them and encourage...a card of encouragement.

These are our extended ministry family that we have out there. And the opportunities for your connection are unlimited. But I would like to encourage you to look around. The ones that are local—you can go and volunteer right there with them and work with them. The ones that are in South Africa or Rwanda or the Philippines, you can, if you're heading that way, if you're heading through Rwanda, stop by! If you're looking for an opportunity to serve the Lord and want to extend yourself to these missionaries, come talk to us and we can talk about the opportunities that come up for that. And again, this afternoon we'll be spending about an hour, hour and fifteen minutes, getting you connected with our ministries out there if you want to take that opportunity at that potluck.

The Apostle Paul, when he was traveling around Asia Minor, was working with the nucleus of churches that were starting, and he had not made it to Rome. He really, really, really wanted to get to Rome because that was the center of the culture, and there were some Christians there that had become Christians in Jerusalem, that had gone back to Rome, that he hadn't gotten the chance to get the gospel to. And he writes, in Romans chapter 1, he says

*I long to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.*

And I can tell you from a personal experience that that's exactly what's happened when you connect with our missionaries and our extended ministries in the field. You encourage them, but you are encouraged. You are mutually encouraged by each other's faith. So if you want an opportunity to have that type of encouragement, and to be that kind of encourager, please hook up with us and get with your ministries that are out there.

It's typical at this time of the service that we sing this prayer. And in about fifteen, twenty minutes many of you are going to be outside the walls of this church. You are going to be our extended ministry. You may not be going through Rwanda; you may not be going to South Africa; but you are going outside the walls of this church. And this prayer is a prayer that you are praying about your extended ministry. And may the Father extend your hands and

confirm your words as you go out there, because it's not just the ten that we support, that are doing this. All of us are out there in this community, being a part of this.

So if you'll stand with me, we'll sing this prayer. And may it be a prayer of God working in you as you extend your ministry out beyond the walls of Wasilla Bible Church.

[Congregation sings the prayer song.]

Go in His grace. Amen.