



# THE CHALLENGE

March 2020

## TRAVELING WITH FIA: USING CIVIL ENGINEERING TO IMPACT ETERNITY

“It will stretch you and sometimes make you uncomfortable, but it will be a life-changing experience,” shared Jim Boyer, speaking about his recent short-term trip to Vanuatu with Friends In Action.

Boyer, currently the President and Managing Principal at David Miller/Associates, Inc. in Lancaster, PA, has over 30 years of engineering experience. But don't let his credentials intimidate you. “FIA is all about enabling everyone to be part of the Great Commission,” shared Paul Brosey, FIA's Project and Team Coordinator. “We need all types of skilled and unskilled laborers, those with a heart to serve, and those wanting to go deeper in their relationship with God.”

Jim Boyer and a team of volunteers visited the interior bush regions of Vanuatu late in 2019 to get a first-hand look at the terrain and conduct field topography measures for a water project to benefit the NiVan people. “I've been an advisor for the Engineering Collaboratory at Messiah College, which is how I became involved with the Vanuatu water project. As the students developed the preliminary designs, we quickly realized that more detailed



Continued on page 2 ►





topographic survey information was needed to determine the feasibility of the project and to eventually develop the final designs.”

The project was in response to the desperate need of the villagers and local pastors who reached out to FIA leaders about the severe hardships caused by water scarcity in their region. “Our children and people are sick due to disease and sanitation issues from water shortages, especially in the dry season,” reported Manuel, a nurse practitioner who serves a population of almost 2,344 villagers (500+ households and 50-60 villages).

### The top 3 health issues in Vanuatu are water-related:

1. Scabies
2. Skin diseases
3. Malaria

The villagers must walk an hour each way to catch water in containers that often previously held kerosene or oil just to have enough drinking water for one day.

**Jim and his fellow volunteers, led by FIA’s Executive Director Tim Johnston, accomplished tasks critical to getting Phase I of the project underway.** After making the strenuous climb to the top of a mountain containing a clean water source, Tim saw first-hand evidence of the NiVan’s water need. “When I turned around, what I saw just broke my heart.” Two little NiVan children, probably under the age of five, had made the same steep climb up the side of the mountain to get water. They were not off playing. They were not at school. There were no parents around to watch over them. These little ones were braving the jungle terrain alone to fetch water as their parents were busy tending their small gardens of kumala (sweet potato) or island cabbage to keep their families fed.



While working in the rugged mountainous terrain, Jim and his fellow volunteers labored alongside the NiVan men as they cleared jungle debris for the surveying efforts. During the exceptionally hot and tiring work, Jim offered one of the villagers a drink from his water bottle. The man was hesitant to take what was offered, knowing how precious and necessary water is. “I was touched that he was reluctant to take any of my water even though he needed it as much as I did. You can quickly see that FIA has developed a trust and respect with the people that goes both ways,” Jim shared.

### The WASH initiative (Water And Sanitation Health)

Boyer and his fellow volunteers have prepared the way for future workers to continue this life-changing WASH initiative. FIA has secured a source of water in a high mountain spring that produces 48 gallons per minute, enough to meet the demands of thousands of villagers nearby. Over the



course of the next five years, more volunteer teams will work to run 16 miles of gravity-fed piping from the source to 30 villages, three schools, and two clinics below, providing clean water to more than 3,500 people. “There is so much value in the work that FIA does,” reported Jim. “It’s more difficult for people to understand the message of Christ, if they are without basic needs. But if those needs can be practically met, it opens a lot of doors.”

Pastor Gabi, an indigenous pastor in the area agrees with Jim. “The water project will open a door to reach all the villages. It will be a tool to reach the hearts of the people with the Gospel. Many people don’t know who Jesus Christ really is. They believe in custom beliefs and the water that belongs to the witch doctors. When the water project reaches those villages, it will be a way to share the Gospel with the people. It will teach people that Jesus is the only true water that gives life.”

## Join Us in Vanuatu

**FIA is currently recruiting more volunteers for additional trips to Vanuatu planned in June and August of 2020.** Laborers are needed to continue progress on a base camp being constructed to house future teams working on the water project as well as a projected Youth/Bible conference center used to equip indigenous leaders to take the Gospel into neighboring villages.

“Past teams have made great progress repairing and repainting machinery, constructing cabins and bunk rooms, and beginning work on a kitchen/dining building,” relayed Paul Brosey. “But we are still in need of individuals to help with plumbing, painting, construction of kitchen cabinets, and laying of tile floors, plus electrical wiring of the kitchen/dining building.” In addition, two or three individuals are needed for two weeks each to run a dozer, track-hoe, and a skid steer to construct a road to assist the water project in August.

**Trips can be paid in full through tax-deductible donations from family and friends.**

“I would definitely go again and encourage others to travel with FIA,” assures Jim. “I find that I receive so much more than what I give on these trips, and you will too.” ■



“It’s more difficult for people to understand the message of Christ, if they are without basic needs. But if those needs can be practically met, it opens a lot of doors.”

—JIM BOYER



## PRAY

### PLEASE PRAY WITH US:

- Ask the Lord to open the hearts of the NiVan people and especially the witchdoctors to the saving knowledge of Jesus!
- Please pray that God would raise up volunteers to work on the base camp and water project during the summer of 2020.
- Join us in petitioning the Lord for the ~\$173,300 need to complete Phase I of the water project.

# I Will Build My Church!

## SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION AMONG THE RAMA PEOPLE

God is always at work, moving and orchestrating the building of His church from every nation, tribe, and language. It is exciting to watch how the Word of God and the Holy Spirit are changing the lives of Rama people.

**F**or many years, FRIENDS in Action teams have shared the love of Christ to the little island of Rama Cay, but it seemed like nothing was happening. There didn't seem like any genuine interest in Jesus on the part of the people. So....we kept praying and asking God to work in their lives.



“Tim, we are so thankful to be here in Panama because we are learning so much! We study the Bible two hours every day and we love it! Thank you so much for making it possible for us to come here.”

– RAMA CAY VILLAGER BEING DISCIPLED

After eight years working alongside the Rama on various projects like digging water wells, building the wooden boat dock, making the baseball field, and building a workshop, God answered our prayers. One day, three of the Rama leaders came to meet with me. “The people know the religious teachings, the religious regulations, and religious obligations, but they need a clear understanding of what salvation is deep in their beings,” shared one of the leaders. I was overjoyed by their initiative and said, “Why don't we have a Bible conference, and we can teach them?”

Well, they got really excited! The people came to the conference to listen with great interest to 9 hours of teaching each day! “It's a longtime dream to have this study to read and learn the Bible and to get the full understanding of what it's really saying. Every day I'm learning more and more,” said one of the Rama women. The Rama villagers' response to the chronological teaching was the beginning of big changes among the people.

**Now, almost four years and six Bible conferences later, we have seen so much transformation!**

- 1 At least 12 of the Rama people **placed their faith in Jesus Christ** after the first Bible conference...then,
- 2 Six of the Rama came to me and expressed a desire to **learn the word of God** so they could teach their own people.
- 3 All six of them went through **two years of Bible training** in Mexico.
- 4 After finishing Bible school, they **started teaching** their own people.
- 5 This past year, for over 10 months, they **taught their own people** the chronological teaching of the Bible.

- 6 Then this past summer, we interviewed the Rama who have been sitting under the teaching done by their own people, and we found **14 new believers** confident in Jesus shed blood to pay for their sins.
- 7 Last month, six of the new believers asked if they could go get more bible training too. So, in January of this year, they left for five months of special **daily Bible training** to learn and understand the Bible even better.
- 8 ***Just in the last few days, we learned that 20 new believers have come to faith!***

As we reflect on God's working and His faithfulness, we can see how all the years of helping, working and demonstrating His love to the Rama has paid off. The people who once doubted our love, genuine concern for them, and if we would stick with them have come to realize what unconditional love means and how deeply God loves them. Now, they live with a hope and joy never before experienced.

God is building His church among the Rama, and it won't be long before the Rama will start to reach out to the remaining nine villages yet without God's Word.

## Join us in Prayer

Please pray God will give them courage to withstand the opposition they face and the ridicule that comes as they live out Christ before their own people. It's very challenging and difficult for them to live on their little island with limited ways to support themselves and still go out to share God's Word on both the island and to their neighboring villages.

Over the past 14 years, God has used many of you to help this last indigenous group in Nicaragua come to know of God's great love and gift of salvation. If you are one of them, we thank you and pray God will bless you. Please remember us in your prayers, especially for more open hearts during the next Bible conference being held in July of 2020.

Pressing On!



**Tim Johnston**  
Executive Director



“What I learned –I grew up thinking that being good and trying to change my life put me in a good position with God. Now I see that all I have been is a religious person, but not saved. Now, I am free because I am trusting in God, trusting in God his way.”

– Rama villager describing her understanding of the Bible conference teachings



## Mission-Critical Cargo: FIA'S SHIPPING MINISTRY

Serving over the last 20 years, FIA's Shipping Ministry has assisted more than 140 ministries and 900 missionaries around the globe! From their meager beginnings in 1999, the shipping team works in conjunction with church volunteers to research the best prices on trucking and shipping for workers overseas.



**S**ince 2015, the shipping ministry has worked with only two couples (Mike & Sue Ward and Dick & Linda Thomas) and local volunteers. Headquartered in Mansfield, Missouri, they are perfectly located in the mid-section of the United States. Despite the small team, they make big impacts! They have gone from shipping two crates a year to shipping more than six annually, along with many smaller crates as well.

In 2019, they prepared 30 in-country trucking shipments, eight overseas shipments, and nine overseas containers. From Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, Chad, and the South Sudan to Kenya, the Ivory Coast, the Philippines, Uganda, and Haiti—mission-critical supplies have arrived safely to help advance the Gospel in the far-flung regions of the world!



Dick's expertise in automotive care has been a huge help to many missionaries by procuring parts for their tractors, cars, ATV's, boats and several other mechanical needs. Whether researching parts and prices online or traveling to shop for items in person, Dick makes life on the mission field a bit easier for selfless missionaries. Sue and Linda's efforts through finance, receipting, and secretarial tasks create the necessary paperwork to make sure everything (from household goods to ministry, building, and housing supplies) arrives safely and quickly to those waiting.

**The Shipping staff hear comments like this all the time from the missionaries they serve through their efforts:**

*"Thanks for all of your many efforts there in the U.S. and all the items you have sent us so far. The power system, appliances, and office equipment have helped us free up quite a bit of time, which makes the job out here go that much faster."*

**Another missionary shared:**

*"The previous shipment you sent arrived safe and sound and I sure appreciate the care you put into building and packing the crate. The guys that unloaded it from the truck decided that flipping it end over end was the best way to move it! From there it went on a truck to go over rough roads 3 hours north to be put on a 25'*



*outrigger canoe 8 hours down the coast and finally be drug up the beach to our house. When I opened it, everything was perfect! Thanks again!”*

More recently, the staff worked on a shipment to the South Sudan to benefit three different missionaries working less than 40 miles apart. Among other supplies, the shipment contained a complete solar system to benefit a hospital compound in the region.

World situations have put a strain on the ministry at times with new Haz Mat material regulations, customs requirements tightening, and inspections in African countries causing slowdowns. “We are getting older and trying to be more cautious with our shipments, but we would really appreciate all your prayers. Please join us in praying over our shipment decisions, as well as our health, and most of all for two younger couples to come onboard, full time, so we can train them to keep the ministry running after we are unable,” shared Sue Ward, one of FIA’s Shipping Ministry staff.

## You can help!

If you’d like to be part of this important support of missionaries around the world, we could use you!

### Reach out to us and let us know of your interest:

[fia-usa@fiintl.org](mailto:fia-usa@fiintl.org) or 717.546.0208

### Preferred skills include:

Bookkeeping and/or warehouse work (including driving forklift and/or being able to lift heavy items).

“This is a wonderful opportunity to work with bible-believing organizations to see the Word of God in Jesus Christ spread worldwide,” promises Sue.



## 3 Ways You Can Help:

### PRAY

Ask the Lord to raise up two younger couples to continue this critical ministry for years to come.

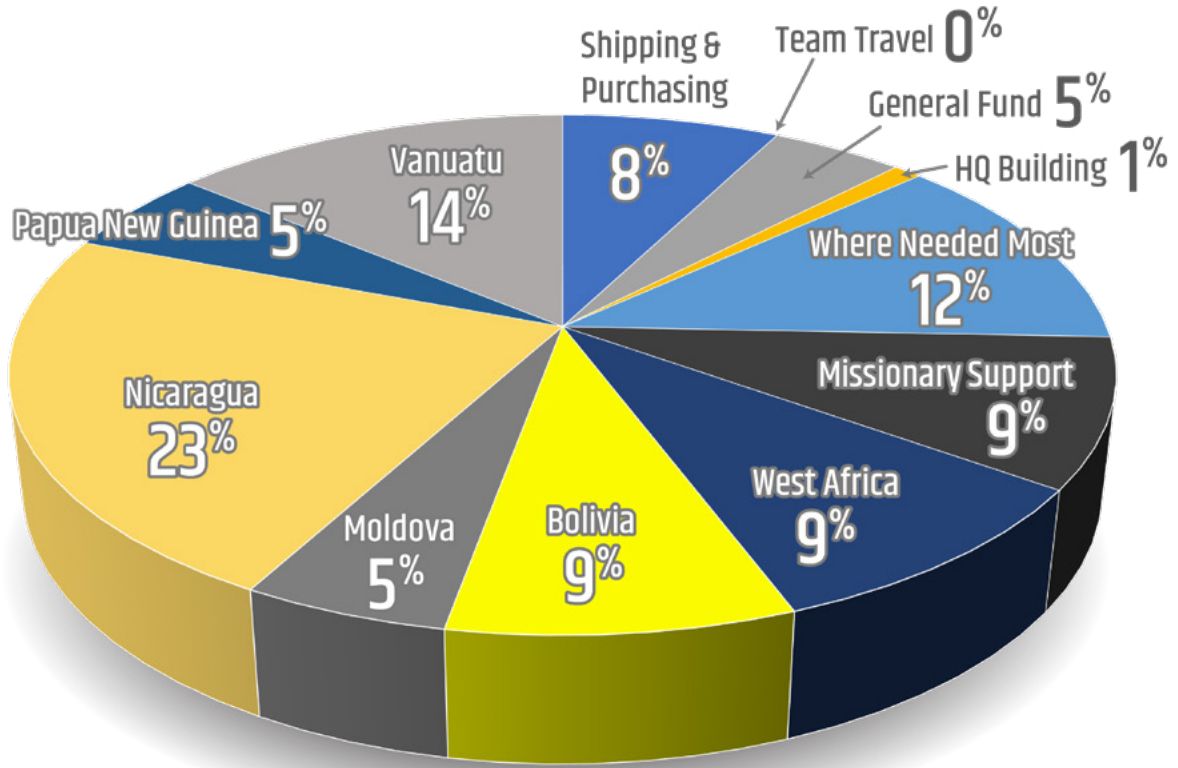
### GO

Visit our shipping team in Mansfield, MO to encourage them or learn more about how you can help assist missionaries and be part of the Great Commission through the Shipping Ministry.

### GIVE

Give toward our General Fund to support the core processes like the Shipping Ministry essential to every outreach undertaken by FIA. Bless us by using the enclosed slip or visiting us at [fiintl.org/donate](https://fiintl.org/donate).

# 2019 INCOME TOTALS



## 2020 PROJECT GOALS

Location	Description	Amount
Bolivia	Indigenous Training Center Development	\$15,000
	Ministry Outreach Vehicle	\$25,000
	Radio and Riverboat Ministries	\$10,000
Headquarters	Additional Staffing Fund	\$25,000
	Administration & Development	\$167,000
	Retiring Building Debt Goal	\$100,000
Moldova	Student Sponsorship	\$40,000
	University Administration & Development	\$10,000
Nicaragua	Village Construction	\$52,500
	Bible Training & Conference	\$26,500
	National Missionary and Bible Team Support	\$15,000
Papua New Guinea	Vehicle, Shipping, Customs	\$65,000
	Field Services & Prison Ministry	\$10,000
	Airstrip tractor and shipping	\$60,000
	National Student Education Fund	\$6,600
Vanuatu	Phase I Water Project	\$173,000
	Base Development & Services	\$35,500
	Two National Bible Conferences	\$6,600
West Africa	Well-drilling Ministry – six wells	\$51,000



**FRIENDS  
IN ACTION**  
INTERNATIONAL



PO Box 323, Elizabethtown, PA 17022  
3950 E Harrisburg Pike  
Middletown, PA 17057

Phone: 717.546.0208  
Fax: 717.546.0214  
USA Email: FIA-USA@fiaintl.org  
501(c)3 Non-profit Organization



PO Box 26057  
Guelph, ON, N1E 6W1

Phone: 905.642.9531  
CA Email: office.fiac@gmail.com  
Charity Number: 818791212RR0001



93 Carsonstown Rd, Saintfield,  
Ballynahinch BT24 7ED, N. Ireland, UK

Phone: 00 44 (0) 7775 722787  
UK Email: fia-uk@fiaintl.org.uk  
Charitable Reference: #XR59719  
friendsinaction.org.uk

FIAintl.org