

Suderman 2020-2021 Update and Overview

Multiply: Together that the world may know

Our call to Germany means partnering with churches to multiply followers of Jesus, to plant new churches, and reach the nations for Christ. Moving to a new country for Jesus is exciting, but also a great challenge, especially after the initial excitement wears off and reality sets in.

Therefore, we are completely dependent on Jesus for strength. At the outset of every year, our Multiply Member Care leadership team encourages us to listen to the Holy Spirit for a “word” for the upcoming year. Last year, the word that came to me was “persevere.” This word became especially pertinent with the unexpected worldwide spread of the Coronavirus. However, the call to persevere more deeply pertained to the encouragement to continue daily in the mission to make followers of Jesus. My reflections are organized around the Multiply strategy map, so as to reflect on our ministry from that perspective (see page 3).

Making Disciples: Learning German

In order to make disciples, by connecting with people and giving witness to Jesus, we need to learn German. This has also required much perseverance. While learning German for basic interaction is not too difficult, something we were able to accomplish in our first year (2019-2020), becoming fluent is much more of a challenge. And, of course, language is critical for our long term fruitfulness, for our children to succeed in school and for us in our ministry. Interestingly, this is where the lockdown became an opportunity rather than a hindrance. We hired special online German tutors for our children, so that they could have specific one on one coaching in speaking the language. I (Alex) continued online German courses, completing the C1 level by June. In fall we made the switch to speak German in our team meetings rather than English. This was a significant shift, since it means that we can now do our work in the German language. We still have a long way to go, but fluency now seems in reach.

Planting Churches: Gathering as PräsentKirche

As we have made connections and given witness to Jesus, we have started to gather as a new church called PräsentKirche. Despite the lockdown, our team grew. We invited Johanna Neudorf (Paraguay) and Davina Rempel (Germany) to join our team to assist us in our work. They sensed the Lord’s leading and moved here in the fall of 2020. Moreover, an opportunity came to us to rent a church building in the summer. From July to December, Germany was much more open and we were able to have services every second Sunday. It is incredible to see the Lord at work. In our services, we always give people an opportunity to respond to the Gospel. We saw a young man give his life to Jesus as well as the mother of a young woman who is a part of our church. When we see people giving their lives to Jesus and then seeking to follow him, it reminds us again of why we have been called here.

Praying for the Joy of Family

Unfortunately, with the increased infection rates of the Coronavirus, the government recommended a strict lockdown for the Christmas holiday. This is still our reality as we are now well into the new year. While still needing to “persevere,” the word “family” seems especially relevant. We were instructed that during the first term, our energy is best spent learning language and establishing the family (our first term technically ends next year, February 2022). It is a gift to be part of a growing church plant with a healthy team, but I sense that we must grow deeper in our sense of community, especially for our children. My prayer for this year is that our sense of family or community in Christ would expand and deepen. However, it is difficult to develop a community when the government encourages us to isolate! We respect the government’s recommendation, therefore, we trust that Jesus himself will surprise us with a deeper sense of family!

Planting Churches: Equipping and Growing

As we consider 2021 two things come to mind. The first is that we will continue to invest our time in establishing PräsentKirche. In the next few months, our team will be seeking to strengthen our core ministry team. That is, we will be developing leaders for ministry. I will work with our team on this, especially Walter Reimer, the pastor of PräsentKirche, and Beni Hermann. We will walk with the church in a process of clarifying our mission, the needs of our city, our values, and our ministry direction, culminating in a vision we can live into for the next few years. I am also praying specifically that God would send us a person gifted in leading people in worship through music. God blessed us last year in our fundraising project for a sound system, which we are currently setting up. However, pray for more workers to come and join us and share the load!

Reaching Nations: Partnering and Extending through *Explore*

The second area of focus is a ministry called *Explore*. I helped initiate the idea for this ministry in summer. I am part of a leadership team composed of myself, Waldy Schröder, Heinrich Rempel, Dave Berg, and Beni Hermann. The aim is to invite young people to “explore” God’s heart for the nations as well as God’s heart and love for them personally. It will be a kind of hybrid between SOAR and ACTION, whereby we will have three days of orientation, a week of ministry, whereby teams will be sent to Lithuania, Ukraine, Austria, and other church plants in Germany. PräsentKirche will host the orientation as well as a team for the week of ministry. This will help us to continue to invest in mission-focused partnerships with local churches, so as to be a catalyst for the mission of Jesus in Europe. Depending on the COVID situation, we plan to run this ministry from March 26 to April 9.

In conclusion, we are grateful for your partnership in this ministry to Europe in general, and German in particular. We pray God’s blessing on you as a church and that He would enrich you in Christ in every way. Thank you so much for your faithful partnership!

MISSION STRATEGY MAP

Partnering with local, national, and global Churches

