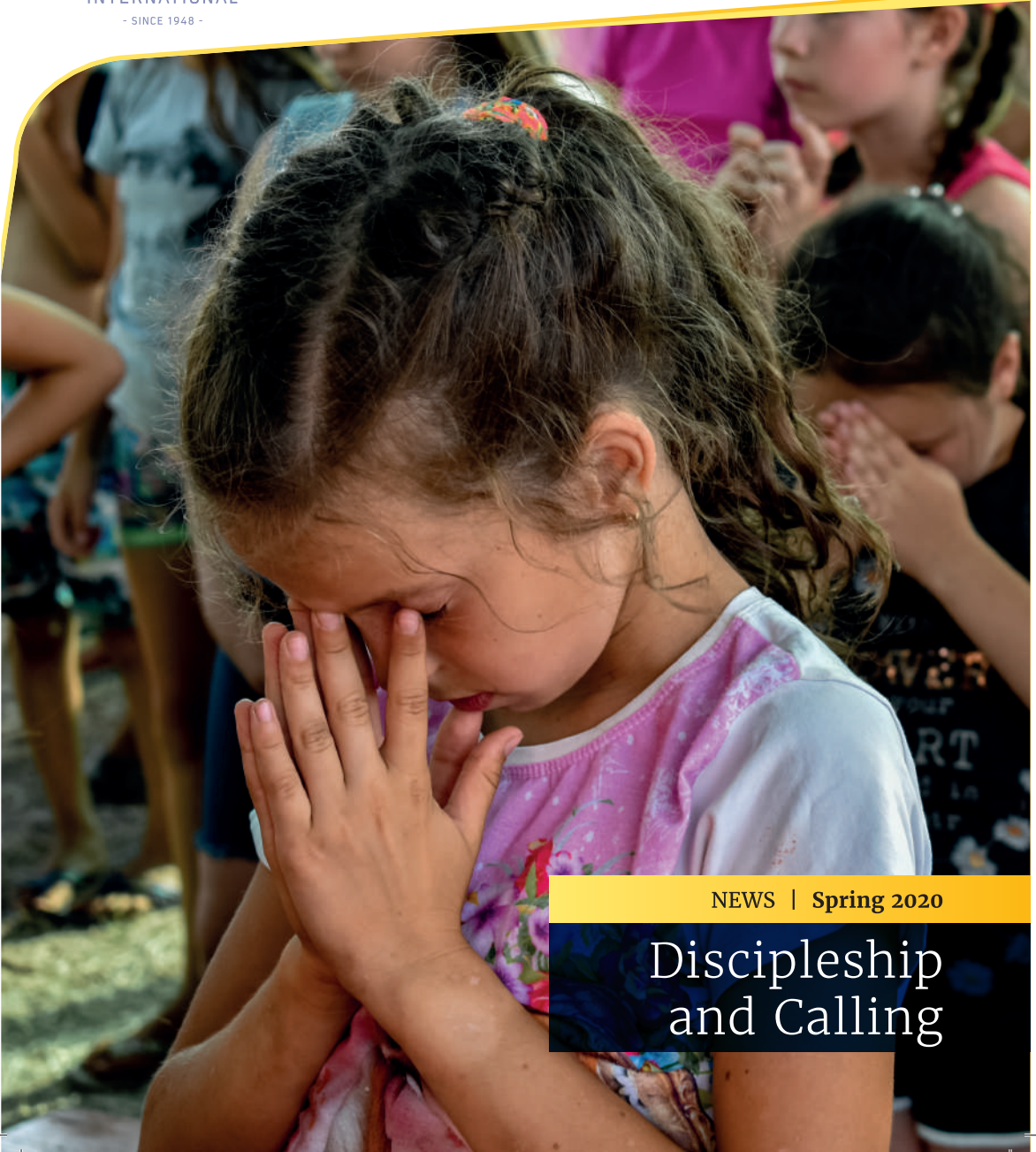




Grain of Wheat
INTERNATIONAL
- SINCE 1948 -

“Bringing hope
to children”



NEWS | Spring 2020

Discipleship
and Calling



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HOW TO SUPPORT US

To support our work among the children:

Switzerland: Wire your donation to this bank account (IBAN): CH72 0900 0000 1748 7675 5

... or send your cheque to:

USA: Grain of Wheat International,
P.O. Box 1125, Wheaton, IL 60187, USA.

UK: Grain of Wheat International,
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EDITORIAL

Dear friends,

We all know Jesus' command to *"Go and make disciples of all nations"* Matt. 28:19. Here at Grain of Wheat, this command includes children. We recognize it's not enough to just evangelize children, we also need to help them become disciples. Because discipleship training is and will be an important part of our program, we have decided to make it the theme of our 2020 newsletters.

In this edition, we will look at how discipleship begins with responding to the call of God. The way Jesus called His disciples is, of course, the best example. With this in mind, our Syrian director, Anto Assaian, has written an insightful Biblical overview. Evelyne Richir, also shares her personal story of how God's call gave her a life-long passion for making disciples of children from all nations. We've even included first-hand testimonies of several campers who clearly heard God's call to them!

In our next newsletter, you will discover how a child's faith is established through careful teaching and training, after saying "yes" to the call. Our third newsletter, will focus on how to put the practice of discipleship into action, followed by 'multiplication' as our final topic of the year.

Imagine the eternal impact your partnership by prayer will have on the lives of all the precious children God is calling to be His disciples. Disciples, who will then become His ambassadors of hope to their families and their communities!

God Bless You



Rob Hondsmark,
*CEO Grain of Wheat
International*





Central Asia



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TESTIMONY

Bachodur*, 7 years

My mother's friend told us about this special camp and here I am! It's so exciting to be in this wonderful place with big mountains and really nice people.

The name of the camp is Dusty, which means "Friendship". Our camp team is called "Heroes" and I really enjoy the sports competitions we play together. The games are cool too. Some are exciting and some are the kind that made me think and think before I make a move.

Every morning we are taught a Bible story and our team makes a little play about it. Then, at the evening meeting, we act it out for the other kids. There are very interesting studies from the Bible too. I especially liked the topic about respect. I decided I won't interrupt other people, I won't swear, fight

or beat others up, and I won't take anyone's belongings without permission. I also realize that everybody must always trust God.



One of the things I like best is talking to the counselors before we go to sleep at night. I am able to ask them any question that is on my mind and I learn a lot from their answers.

Now I can't wait to attend Sunday classes at church.

** name changed for privacy reasons.*





How God called me

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I was just 10 years old, when Jesus became my personal Savior and from that time on, I was very eager to share Jesus with my family and friends.

By age 13, I started an after-school children Bible club with the help of 2 friends along with my brothers and sister. We held it for a week in the summer and a week in autumn. We even set up the program which included games, Bible stories and Christian songs.

As I grew into adulthood, God personally trained me and brought others into my life who disciplined me in communicating the Good News of Salvation effectively. I was given many opportunities to do this at clubs, camps and youth groups in Switzerland, Belgium, England, USA and beyond.

But at age 20, when I was studying God's Word abroad and seeking a deeper relationship with Him, He asked me this life-defining question: "Who is going to lead your life?" I wanted to answer, "I'll lead my life with Your help." Yet, I knew deep down that this was

not possible. It was either God leading, or me. He was giving me the freedom to make this choice for myself and I wholeheartedly responded:

"My will is that YOU lead me ... You do what You want with my life. It is my will that YOU are my LORD. Send me where You choose, (but if possible, not to a country, with snakes, for I hate them!)"

This decision took my life in a direction that has been unexpectedly full of deep meaning and purpose. Even though my journey has not always been easy, and ministry is often very tiring, I've been embraced by the love of God and the support of my Godly husband and 4 lovely children, every step of the way.

After all these years of working in Bible clubs, kid's camps and youth groups, God was now prompting me to disciple young adults, by passing my expertise on to them through training seminars. I told the Lord that I was not the right person for this job,

as I knew the "how to", but not the theory. In spite of how I felt about this, God had a plan for me and used my husband to **push me to teach.**

Very timidly, I taught a few courses. I soon realized that the students liked what they were learning, and I found great joy in teaching them. Through this, I met other experienced and knowledgeable trainers whose insights were different than mine, but very complementary.

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Twenty-five years and 10 countries later, I am filled with inexpressible joy, that God has chosen me to disciple the next generation by sharing, teaching and training them how to minister better than me!

All because of that defining moment so long ago when I responded to God's question, "*It is my will that YOU are my LORD, that YOU lead me, that YOU do what You want with my life.*"

God calls, God pushes, God encourages!

What will your answer be?

Evelyne Richir



Moldova

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TESTIMONY

Elena*, 14 years

My name is Elena and I'm a 14-year-old girl who went to camp "accidentally". Several years ago, my parents gave their lives to the Lord, which made me hate them. When my friends found out, they made fun of me and I felt like the whole world was against me.*

I begged my parents not to go to church and threw fits that made them cry. Not knowing what to say, they began to pray for me.

So, it was no "accident", when my neighbor called me from a tent camp she was visiting. She invited me to join her because a space had just opened up. I still can't believe I said "Yes!" right away.

When I arrived at camp, I was really surprised to be greeted by friendly kids and fun leaders, as my only church experience had been rather boring. Not only that, no one was my age.

At one of the meetings, Uncle Lura and Aunt Irene shared their life's stories, and something began to happen inside my heart.

After hearing the four spiritual laws, I realized I didn't want to live without Jesus in my life anymore. Right then, I asked God to forgive me, change me and live in my heart.

When my parents heard about my repentance, they rejoiced and praised God. Now I know, it was no "accident" that my life was changed at this camp. It was all because God answered my parents' many prayers for me.

I also want to thank those who organized this camp. It was very cool to enjoy God's creation with peers and meditate on His greatness!"

** name changed for privacy reasons.*

Our First Calling

HIS LAST COMMANDMENT IS OUR FIRST CALLING!

When someone is leaving their loved ones, their last instructions are usually given at the end of their stay. Similarly, our Lord Jesus, at His final meeting with the apostles, passed "the baton" on to them with His last instructions of The Great Commission. Moreover, He provided them with eternal guidelines for His Kingdom, which were not limited to them, but also for coming generations.

As Jesus' followers in this generation, what does it look like to be an authentic disciple and how do we apply His calling to make disciples of all nations?

In the OT, prophets were called by God at a particular time, for a specific mission. In the NT, God's calling has a more distinct meaning that is almost synonymous with salvation. In this context, calling is overwhelmingly, **God calling the whole of humanity to Himself through His Only Son.** Jesus' Calling is:

1.

Personal

Jesus clearly outlined the purpose of His calling. In Greek, "called" means to be invited or to receive an invitation. Christ invited the disciples to "follow" Him first, then become "fishers of men". **You can't make a disciple if you are not a disciple.**

2.

Consistent

Jesus' calling has been always full of love, kindness and surely thoughtful. Did Jesus say, "If someone wants to follow Me, then let him follow Me" and that's it? No, He didn't stop there! Jesus' calling isn't confined to a one-time event in our life. Follow Me is for our entire life! It is not only at Sunday school or youth meetings, summer camps or church seminars, mission trips or semi-annual conferences.

Since Jesus is totally unique in His approach toward His followers, He asks us to follow Him unreservedly at home, school, university, the workplace and church for a lifetime!



3.

Always & Everywhere

When Jesus, our Master, calls us to follow Him, He isn't asking us to follow when it's convenient for us. He expects us to respond **when** we hear His voice calling our name.

As we walk with Jesus, we're in the presence of a God who is utterly supreme over any other. As our Master, He has the right to expect our prompt response to His call and leave our *filled fishing nets* behind to follow Him. Otherwise, it's impossible for us to become His authentic disciples. Why? The reason is simple and obvious:

If we are not willing to answer His call and follow Him now, we are not recognizing His sovereignty over us as our One and Only LORD.

As we enter this new decade, it is vital to understand that Christianity without discipleship is Christianity without Christ.

So, let us live this unchanging restorative truth in the midst of our chaotic wounded world, knowing that it's His calling to discipleship that empowers us.

Thus, we will continue until our last breath, to be committed disciples whose sole life's purpose is to make disciples. As we lead broken children and youth into a life transforming relationship with Jesus, we are making them disciples. By bringing separated families together and restoration to hopeless communities in the name of Jesus, we open the door to making disciples.

Today, it is our calling and privilege as disciples, to fulfill Jesus' last instructions by following in His footsteps, with the companionship of The Holy Spirit and the Omnipresent Love of our Abba Father.

Anto Assaian, Syria



Central Asia



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TESTIMONY

Ljudmila*, (mother)

My daughter has never been to a summer camp before, but because other parents told me many good things about the "Star of the East" Christian camp, I decided to send my daughter, too.

It is located in a beautiful mountainous area and kids from all over the country came, some even drove 300 miles! Most of the campers were from poor families and didn't even have shoes or clothes they could wear to camp.

It was so heartwarming to learn that Grain of Wheat helped these children by buying them what they needed and lowering the camp fees.

My husband and I go to an Orthodox Church and have some knowledge about God. But when our daughter told us what she learned about God from the Bible stories at camp, and how much He personally loves

and cares for us, we realized we only had "knowledge" about God, we didn't know God Himself!



Now we are learning how to walk with God every day and are singing simple praise songs to Him.

All of this has deeply changed our relationship with God, and we are filled with thanks for this life-changing camp and all the staff who served there.

** name changed for privacy reasons.*



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PRAY

This is a call that comes up regularly in the Bible. We are called to pray in every way, for all kinds of needs, in all kinds of situations. Pray for God's help not to fall into temptation, pray for those who mistreat us, pray for each other's concerns, etc. Does this call feel like a duty, or does it remind us that we need to depend on God every moment of our lives? I believe God wants us to pray, so we will realize how much we need Him.

Please join us in praying for the children we serve:

- That they will become friends of Jesus.
- For the Lord to keep them from evil.
- That each one will wholeheartedly follow Him in their daily lives.

If you would like to receive specific prayer topics each month, you may subscribe by sending an email to:

info@grainofwheat.org

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The Family Corner

- Begin with one dice. For each number on the dice, choose a prayer topic (thanks, family, children, school, friends etc.).
- Then everyone takes a turn rolling the dice and praying for the topic of the number they rolled.
- For variety, change the categories each week.



Acknowledgements & Contact

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SPORTS



ARTS



CAMPS



TRAINING



CLUBS



HUMANITARIAN



PRAYER

Writing:

Anto Assaian
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Nancy Sands
Rob Hondsmark

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maracudja.ch

Vision

We see every child becoming an **ambassador of hope** through Jesus Christ.

Mission

Grain of Wheat is an international Christian organization. Its mission is to encourage and equip the maximum number of children in need, to develop their potential and help them become **agents of transformation** in their community through the message of God's love.

Strategy

Grain of Wheat engages with children regularly throughout the year. We partner with local churches to train leaders, hold weekly children's clubs, camps and events. Through this, children grow morally, socially and spiritually through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

GRAIN OF WHEAT INTERNATIONAL

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