

ZMI FAMILY MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

(Zookeepers Ministries, Inc.)



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

WRITTEN BY:
BRENDA LANCASTER &
TRACI HUFF

Normally change is hard, but this is one time that I can't wait to see it happen! Twenty-three years ago, at age 51, God called me to full-time ministry to teach and train women to build families that last a lifetime through the principles found in Titus 2. I had no idea what God would do with that simple Bible study. What started out with a group of 93 women at Hunter Hills Baptist Church has grown into a ministry that reaches literally thousands of men and women across the world. Stories abound of those who have accepted Christ as their personal Savior, of whole families being restored, and others called to full-time Christian service. God has been mightily at work! Many reading this have walked by our side and personally witnessed the mighty moving of God's hand. And He hasn't stopped yet!

Now at age 74, I just can't keep up with all the Lord is doing in so many places. Therefore, it is time for me to step down as Director so that the work can move forward with greater speed than ever before!

-continued p. 2

JULY 2023

-continued from p. 1

I am so excited to announce that God has called Traci & Joe Huff to take the helm of leadership. God has given them great abilities and great vision to continue and expand the work of ZMI. They have worked with us for almost 10 years, and I know without a doubt that they have been hand-picked by the Lord as His chosen messengers for such a time as this!

Traci & Joe, thank you for picking up the mantle of ministry to those people far and wide that I love so much, many of whom I may never see again. We love you. We trust you to God. You have our blessing!

Tom & I will still be involved in the work, and on the Board, but will focus our efforts on the area of Myrtle Beach and Charleston, South Carolina, where new Bible study groups are beginning this fall.

Certainly, the current condition of our world beckons to all of us, to not slow down, but to reach out farther and to teach God's message to broader groups of people because time is short. Souls are crying out for hope, and we know The One who can give them what they need. The opportunities before us are greater than they have ever been.

Let us all love more, pray more and give more. It's all for the Kingdom!

Thank you again for all you have done to partner with us through the years! We love you!

Blessings,

Brenda Lancaster



Meet Traci

It is impossible to put into words what was going through my head and heart in February when Brenda asked me to lead ZMI. On one hand, it was somewhat of a relief because I had known for some time that God was calling me to missions. I was entering into a new season of motherhood, my four kids were getting older and I had been praying fervently about that call, especially over recent months. On the other hand, I was completely overwhelmed by MANY things. I will spare you from all of that, but the most overwhelming thing was that the Lord, and Brenda, would entrust this ministry to me. A ministry that I love dearly and have served with for nearly a decade.

I was introduced to ZMI in 2010 at Life Community Church and participated in Brenda's Living in a Zoo study shortly thereafter. At that time, it was exactly what I needed as a mother to 1 year-old twins. I began serving with the ministry in 2014 when I traveled to Nicaragua with her for my first mission trip. It was there, that I knew that God was calling me to missions, and I have served with ZMI for the past nine years in various roles, including the Board of Directors. That trip was also the beginning of a very special relationship that my family would have with Manuel and Odili, the national directors of Central America.

I have had the privilege of having a front row seat to seeing what God can do when you give Him your "yes." That is exactly what Brenda has done time and time again. She has offered her

-continued on p. 3

JULY 2023

-continued from p. 2

"yes" just as the young boy offered Jesus his five small loaves and two fish, and the Lord has used it countless times to reach thousands of hearts and homes on nearly every continent. I am thankful for all that I have learned from her, and I am thankful that she will be here teaching me, every step of the way on this side of Heaven.

Since stepping into this role, my husband and I served in Nicaragua alongside Manuel, Odili, and their family in June. I have also had the privilege of meeting in-person with ZMI Brazil's national director as well. I am blown away by what the Lord has continued to do through ZMI, and I look forward to sharing with you in a little more detail in the following pages what God is continuing to do. I am beyond excited to see how God is working things together as we move forward, and I am glad you are here for it. Thank you so much for your support of this ministry and for your heart for furthering God's kingdom. Blessings,
Traci

ON MISSION IN HONDURAS

During the pandemic, we saw areas of our ministry thrive in ways that we could never imagine, and it was all God. Unfortunately, like everything else in the world, some areas of ministry were not unaffected by the challenges caused by restrictions and travel was difficult. That's why we are especially thankful that Manuel and Odili were able to make the 10-hour trip to the department of Choluteca, Honduras in April to reestablish ministry there! They reconnected with members of past discipleship groups and established new relationships with five local churches. There is much excitement amongst the groups and Manuel and Odili are looking forward to returning in August where they will continue working with the groups and training leaders to begin multiplying groups.

In addition to training groups, they served in a local orphanage and led marriage conferences. Several families responded and recommitted their marriages to God and His design for the family. Praise God that families are being encouraged, strengthened, and restored!



JULY 2023

NICARAGUA

Written by Traci

While serving in Nicaragua alongside Manuel and Odili, Joe and I had the privilege of seeing the faithful work being done day after day and what the Lord is doing through them. The Great Commission tells us, "Go therefore and make disciples..." and that is what I saw in each area of ministry. Leading the lost to find new life in Christ and equipping them as disciples is why ZMI exists.

While there, we spent two days at ZMI's School of Hope. We were welcomed by the students with a worship performance, and we spent the rest of our time getting to know the kids, encouraging them, playing games and having a special lunch with them. You could feel their joy as they ran and played! The school serves as a welcome respite from the hardships of life that many of them endure.



We also assessed the damage at the school and church that occurred due to recent flooding. Construction costs are expensive in Nicaragua, and additional funding is needed for the repairs. We are planning another trip with a team that will include construction work to fix the damaged walls. Dates are TBD, but activities will likely include construction, VBS, soccer clinics, and men's/women's ministry. If you are interested in being a part of the team, please email tracie@zmiinternational.org to stay informed about upcoming plans.

During our time there, we also had the privilege of leading two conferences for men and women and a marriage conference. Several people shared testimonies of what God is doing in their lives through their discipleship training, and we had powerful individual prayer times with many of the women.

After a long day of travel to Leon, Manuel and Odili's church discipleship group welcomed us into their home and allowed us to lead them in studying God's word in Tipitapa. We also celebrated Family Day with their church family during an all-day event with worship, we lead the congregation through studying God's word, celebrated a wedding, **TWO BAPTISMS**, food, swimming, and games! It was an incredible day of fellowship and fun!



JULY 2023

ZMI Brazil

In the spring, Brazil's national director, Thaissa Nucci, traveled to the US, and while visiting SC, several of our team members traveled to meet her for a weekend of ministry. It was the first time meeting face-to-face since Brenda's last trip to Brazil in March 2020. It was an incredible time of ministry, fellowship, and encouragement as we learned more of what God is doing through ZMI Brazil. In addition to hearing testimonies from women who had participated in the *Taking Back the Family* study, we were blown away when we heard that 3,997 women had participated in the Bible study in the past two years! And at that time, 10 women were taking the study in a local women's prison!



She shared several testimonies about families and marriages being restored, but a particularly powerful testimony came from a recent graduate. This sister had been severely beaten by violent criminals and her body was left for dead. Before her lifeless body was found, her wounds had become infested with insects. After being treated and discharged from the hospital, she found herself in a women's shelter, and it is there that some of the women serving in the shelter introduced her to

Taking Back The Family. After completing the study she shared her testimony with the group where she proclaimed, "God rescued me and restored my life!" We look forward to hearing how God continues to work in her life!



HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

It was impossible to share all that God is doing in these pages, but I hope you were able to catch a glimpse. We are seeing tremendous growth in our men's ministry and children's ministry. Our school is currently serving 40 students with others on a wait list because we are currently operating at capacity! With growth comes the need for additional support, and if you are interested in learning more about how you can be involved, please email traci@zmiinternational.org.

An upcoming trip to Nicaragua is being planned with dates TBD. In addition to men and women's ministry, we need team members for construction, children's ministry, and soccer clinics. Let me tell you, the kids are crazy about their "futbol!"

If you are unable to go, would you consider giving a financial donation to support these projects? Additional funding is needed for printed Bible study books for women's discipleship groups, school operations, women's sewing ministry and youth soccer leagues. Please visit zmiinternational.org or send donations to:

*ZMI International
PO Box 1111
Jamestown, NC 27282*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!