





# An explosion, a connection, and a vision. This is the story of Pastor Elvis in Puerto Rico.

Do you ever look back at past events in your life and suddenly recognize how God was working in those moments? For Pastor Elvis, one of those moments happened in November of 1996, when he suddenly found himself in the aftermath of a gas explosion at a local shoe store. The accident killed 33 people and more than 80 others were injured, including a two-year old boy that Elvis was able to help save.

"When we arrived at the hospital, the press was there," Elvis remembered. "Unfortunately, some people knew me and they were calling me 'hero', and I didn't like that because I wished I could have helped many more."

It was the kind of experience that changes lives. What Pastor Elvis didn't know at that time is that the experience would be used by God as a springboard toward a greater calling. Elvis struggled with PTSD after the accident, visiting hospitals frequently for the next ten years. Even while Elvis was struggling, God was calling.

"One time, in one of those hospitals, I saw a young man," Elvis said. "He got on his knees and prayed, and I said 'that is the answer,' and I started praying."

Prayer is powerful. Pastor Elvis went from self-medicating and taking 30 pills per day to combat his health issues to God restoring his health and his mind. He regained the weight he had lost due to his health battles, his health improved, and his hands stopped shaking. But this was just the beginning of God's work in Elvis' life.

Elvis began sharing the Gospel and giving out food in the streets. He didn't have a consistent income, which taught him what it was like to have great needs like owing money on your car or needing food. With the constant love and support of his wife, Johana Fonseca, Elvis pushed through. Again, God was there.

"Two missionaries came to our house, and they said, 'We've been looking for you for a whole year,'" Elvis recalls. "They wanted to give me an offering of about \$100, and I saw how they were so excited to find me, you know? To specifically find me. And I said, 'God, I want to be like them. I want to give by grace what by grace I received.' And as God called me, I started giving food to the homeless. I started supporting rehab facilities. Then. Hurricane Maria arrived."

Maria changed many things in Puerto Rico. Some parts of the island were without power for more than six months. Pastor Elvis had already been serving in communities with great need, and he knew the damage in those communities would be immense. He estimates 90% of the homes in those communities were destroyed by Hurricane Maria.

Pastor Elvis immediately began distributing food and toys to people impacted by the storm, but he knew it wasn't enough.

"I told the Lord, 'I have food and toys, but these children don't have a home to live in.' So they are going to eat, but they only have a wet bed to sleep in. It has mold, and their clothes are ruined. They asked for help to build their homes again, but I don't have resources for that. I was heartbroken, and I prayed to the Lord."



Enter PPM.

**Disaster Response** 

Pastor Elvis became a PPM partner pastor as the organization increased efforts in Puerto Rico to respond to the island's needs after the hurricane. With Praying Pelican and other resources involved, it gave Elvis a renewed sense of hope in how he could serve the needs of his community. With tears welling up in his eyes. Elvis recalled his first conversations with PPM.

"They told me, 'We are going to help you build houses,' I thought I was alone, but God taught me so much more. He taught me that I have a big family in the faith, from multiple places that I didn't know. I got to know them through the missionary work, people that have the same vision as I do. The vision of helping, blessing, and feeding others. I saw team after team come and help us. It feels like I'm no longer carrying a cross, but a joy."

And THAT is why PPM serves alongside partner pastors, to allow them to JOYFULLY serve their communities, and to live healthier lives because they aren't alone in their calling. It is why we at PPM believe our calling from God is to serve His servants, empowering them to carry Christ's light into their communities. Pastor Elvis had not only become a long-term partner pastor, he had experienced PPM Disaster Response in the process, with God guiding his path the whole way.

"To be able to see the families move into their new homes, it's beautiful," Elvis said, "We continue to this day working hard to give these children and their families a home. I thank the Lord for giving me this family in Christ that comes all the way to Puerto Rico to help me give so much more than a house."

Mission Trips & Church Sponsorship

PPM teams continue to serve with Pastor Elvis, and he is now also part of PPM365, which helps pastors cover needs that come up in everyday life like medical bills, pastors conferences, or simply a well-earned sabbatical to recharge. When you boil it all down, Pastor Elvis and PPM know that Christ is at the center of it all, making connections and giving provisions that allow us to serve His people.

"Thank you for following my vision, and helping me bless many others," Elvis said. "I could not have done this by myself. I thank God, because I hit rock bottom once in the past and that taught me to be more human. It taught me to see necessity in a different way. Now I see life in a different way, and for all of this. I give thanks,"

PPM's God-given calling is to build-up, encourage, and assist the local Church and pastors like Elvis all across the world. We thank you for your help in reaching pastors and assisting them in making a difference for the Kingdom of God one village, city. and country at a time!



Pastor Elvis Iglesia Cristiana Cristo Redentor Toa Alta, Puerto Rico Across the 41+ locations we serve in around the world, stories like Pastor Elvis' are lived out time and time again. But none of those stories are written without you!

Thank you for allowing God to use you to **ENCOURAGE** local pastors, churches, and communities around the world.



## Thank you for making a difference with us!



## A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

On a recent mission trip, the team serving with us was traveling to their partner community deep in the countryside, far away from the paved roads of the city. As they were traveling, the Caribbean sky opened up, and the rain began to pour. Quickly the dirt road turned to mud, and just like that - they were stuck. After a few moments it became clear that if they were going to get out of this minor predicament, they were going to have to get their hands dirty.

It was time to push.

The team got off the bus, and with some good teamwork between the team and the driver, they successfully guided the bus out of the rut that it was in, got it back on the road, and headed toward their destination.

Have you ever felt stuck in a rut? It's all too easy to lose sight of our goals when the challenges of life overwhelm us. We can find ourselves in these seasons where we lose our ability to dream, to think forward, to innovate. In these moments, having a team around us can make all the difference.

This past year, the platform of PPM was utilized to encourage churches in over 400 communities across our world. We worked to lift up the arms of pastors and ministry leaders, showing them that they are not alone in this work. We helped these leaders realize their dreams again, fanning the flames that are already within them and their ministries. We witnessed the incredible impact of this important work time and time again, which we have worked to represent within this report.

To all of our donors and volunteers who have joined us in this work this past year, thank you. For every dollar you give and volunteer hour you put in, you are joining the global Church in putting your hands on the bus, ensuring that the challenges of life do not render it stuck.

Our dream at PPM is to see a united Global Church, reaching its fullest potential for the glory of God. When you join us in this work, you can have confidence that your investment is making a difference. With a heartfelt thank you, we commit to dedicating every minute you serve and every dollar you give to furthering the Kingdom of God within this world we live in. Together we move forward in unity, called according to His purpose. Let's keep this bus moving forward.

Jim Noreen President Praying Pelican Missions



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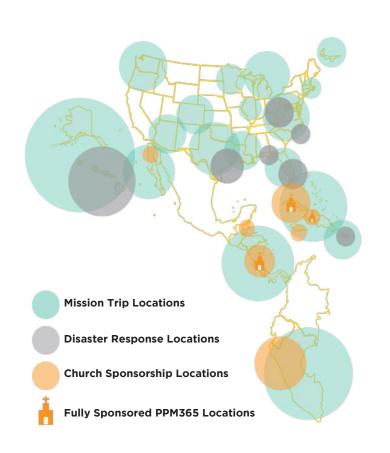
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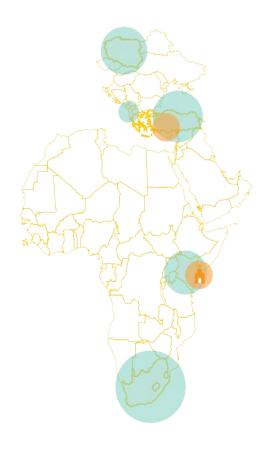
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## WHERE WE SERVE







## **OUR HISTORY**

#### Origins and Founding (2003)

Praying Pelican Missions was founded in 2003 by a pair of brothers. The idea grew organically out of a relationship with a local church in Belize and a noticeable need for missions where a team can serve alongside a local community and Indigenous church, not just a foreign-sent missionary. The goal was to create a model of missions where teams could meet real needs while cultivating meaningful relationships with those they serve in the long-term, coming back to the same community year after year.

The name "Praying Pelican" was chosen and came from the image of the pelican as a bird that is known for traveling great distances to serve others and care for its community. Mother pelicans will even sacrifice their own body to feed their young, like Christ's sacrifice for us.

### Early Years and Expansion (2004-2009)

In the beginning, PPM focused on organizing short-term mission trips for churches in the United States. It quickly became clear that there was a high demand for such trips, and we began expanding our scope of operations internationally. By 2007, PPM had started to partner with communities and churches in Jamaica.

During these early years, PPM worked to develop a model that involved supporting local ministries. Mission teams would not just show up and serve, they would also engage in long-term partnerships that promoted sustainable growth. They listened to the advice and wisdom of their local partners and continued to adjust their strategies to ensure the healthiest ministry possible.

#### Further Growth (2010-2012)

By 2010, Praying Pelican Missions began to expand to additional countries including Haiti. Not long after the initial desire to meet with local leaders in Haiti, an earthquake happened that rocked the nation. PPM pushed up the timeline and immediately began responding. The need was great, and so was the response by the rest of the world. Mission teams began serving within a few months of the earthquake. It was another example of how working through local Church leadership can set a proper foundation for sustainable ministry.

#### **Recent Developments and Current Focus**

In the last decade, Praying Pelican Missions has grown significantly and now operates in 41 locations on six continents. We offer tailored mission trip experiences that address specific local community needs which are highlighted and identified by the local pastors. These needs include healthcare, education, community development, and evangelism.

As of 2024, PPM continues to emphasize sustainable and healthy mission work, focusing on assisting the local Church through mission trips, disaster response, and church sponsorship. PPM also works to empower local churches around the world to go on missions that wouldn't be able to on their own, seeding 30+ mission trips globally on an annual basis.

### **Core Values and Mission Today**

Here at PPM, we remain committed to our original vision of mobilizing the Church while fostering partnerships between the global Church and indigenous pastors and congregations.



## WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT LOOKS LIKE

With more than 20 years of experience serving more than 10,000 churches and involving more than 100,000 participants globally, we have developed a strategy to support both sending and receiving churches year-round. Our Church Sponsorship Program, traditional mission trips, and Disaster Response opportunities aim to provide vital encouragement for churches as we strive to advance the kingdom in unprecedented times. From our president in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to our pastor advocates and trip leaders on the ground around the world, we are dedicated to fostering long-lasting, life-changing relationships. Our goal is to nurture healthy pastors and vibrant churches that will transform communities worldwide.

Here is what people had to say about the PPM experience in the last year:

"They were considerate and organized. I enjoyed getting to know them. I was confident in them and trusted them with tasks at church. I would love to work with these trip leaders again!" - PPM Partner

"The team and staff were amazing and super hard working! They were such a help to our community!" - PPM Partner

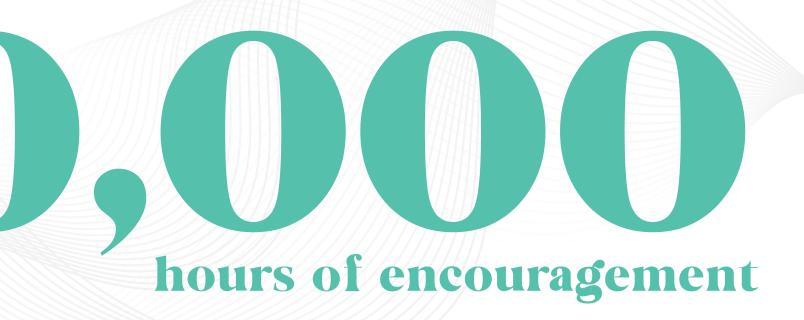


"As always, it was a very enjoyable experience and well coordinated ministry!" - PPM Partner

"I can't think of a way to improve. I really appreciate how hard the PPM staff work to support and care for our team. Thank you for all that you are doing!"
- PPM Group Leader

"Yes! Our trip leader and assistant trip leaders were great! They not only supported us as we served but they cared for our team's spiritual/emotional well-being! They jumped in as needed and were more than helpful."
- PPM Group Leader

"I feel well-supported. This was our 8th trip with PPM and we are pretty much in a groove at this point. We have had the same staff for the last few years which has helped a lot." - PPM Group Leader



## **CHURCH SPONSORSHIP**



Pastor Elvis' story captures the heart of our mission: Healthy pastors lead vibrant churches that impact communities for Christ. Through trials such as hurricanes and personal challenges, Pastor Elvis has been a steady light in Puerto Rico, showing what a local church can accomplish when it steps up as "the hands and feet of Christ." His church has become a true beacon of hope, providing vital support and encouragement to those in need. With consistent care and a healthy foundation, Pastor Elvis himself has led with resilience, showing how essential pastoral health is to making a lasting community impact. Supported by our network, he's transformed community hardships into opportunities for service and hope.

Our sponsorship program is a continuous 365-day effort to support pastors like Elvis and their churches as they serve their communities. By strengthening pastors through local and regional support, equipping churches with vital resources, and helping entire communities thrive, we believe we're investing in lasting change. When pastors and churches receive the care and support they need, they're empowered to transform lives, lead with excellence, and create vibrant, united congregations at the heart of every community they serve.

This year, our Church Sponsorship Program has reached 135 pastors across 12 countries, strengthening leaders like Pastor Elvis through local and regional support. We've held impactful conferences and regional meetings, delivered **58 respite promises**, **73 medical promises**, and **65 emergency promises**, and we've sent out more than **38 mission teams representing more than 400 people**. Yet, there's still more to accomplish in these last months of the year as we continue to invest in lasting change.

Our **CARE** framework outlines four essential promises that directly empower pastors and congregations, ensuring they have what they need to carry out their mission with strength and resilience:

**Consistent Care and Connection:** The Pastor's Advocate plays a crucial role here, building strong, lasting relationships with each pastor and offering annual medical funds, vacation support, and quarterly check-ins to ensure pastors are cared for physically, mentally, and spiritually. Through these personal connections, they understand each pastor's unique challenges and work to provide the timely support that makes a real difference.

Aid in Emergencies: Our emergency fund is available to pastors and churches facing natural disasters or unexpected crises, allowing them to respond quickly and effectively.

**Relational Network and Training:** Through an annual conference, regional gatherings, and continuous training, pastors gain critical support, skills, and encouragement to lead effectively.

Empowerment to Go on Mission: With a dedicated mission fund, pastors can lead outreach initiatives that bring Christ's love to their communities.

These commitments make sure pastors are equipped to lead healthy, thriving congregations.

By joining as a sponsor, you help support pastors and churches year-round, ensuring they receive the care they need to transform lives in Christ's name. Choose a sponsorship level and watch how your contribution makes a lasting impact:

- **1. Team Pelican-** \$7/month: Supports the overall program, providing essential resources for pastors and churches in need.
- **2. Church Encourager-** \$35/month: Joins you with a team supporting a specific church, helping it grow and serve its community.
- **3. Church Champion-** \$200/month: Covers the full sponsorship of a church, providing support for a pastor and congregation.

Each level includes quarterly updates, so you can see the tangible impact of your support. Join us today in this transformative mission!



## MISSION TRIPS

Our mission trips embody the hands and feet of Jesus, bringing volunteers from around the world to support the local Church. From renovating church buildings to staffing Vacation Bible Schools and partnering with local non-profits, PPM provides the extra hands to support these ministries as they fulfill their calling.

One of my favorite stories from this year's mission trips took place in Costa Rica. A team returned to a church they had served with the previous year. While working within the church and in the community, the Costa Rican pastor received a call from a neighbor who was ready to accept Christ. Pastor left immediately to meet with them! He had been sharing the Gospel faithfully and regularly with this community member for a long time.

This wasn't an isolated incident; another person in the community made the same decision later that week!

This story resonates with me because it mirrors the parables of Jesus. A pastor, spending time regularly in his community, investing his time where he has been planted, left the team when the call came in because two people were ready to follow Jesus. The celebration between the team, pastor, and church when they heard the news was nothing short of sacred! The pastor had a group of people who got to bear witness to people coming to Christ and celebrate alongside him. Amazing!

When times have been difficult for me in ministry, I think of the people to my right and to my left who are alongside me, and I thank God for them. My burdens feel lighter, breakthroughs are celebrated, and I am encouraged to "keep going." I aspire for every pastor and every leader within a church to have that fuel for their ministry and be reminded they are not alone. Primarily, this happens at a very local level within the congregation and community, but there is something profound when it comes from a group of people leaving their hometown and saving, "Send me,"

We had more than 11,700 people serve on mission trips in 2024 and we are praying for even more to serve in 2025. Here is what that number represents:

> 366 churches, in 41 locations, receiving a PPM mission team Local churches sending PPM participants to serve more than 120 non-profits

Here's another number that stands out to me: 140. This number represents churches in our network that do not currently receive mission teams or PPM365. They are church partners that our staff regularly speak with and pray for and we can't wait to one day serve together, arm in arm, to advance the kingdom of God.

We're committed to serving our partners, Join us as we unite the global Church on a local level.







## **DISASTER RESPONSE**

PPM Disaster Response is dedicated to providing long-term disaster relief to communities in need. Unlike many organizations that leave after the initial three months, we remain committed to helping communities rebuild and recover, sometimes for multiple years. We integrate our Rapid Response (Readiness) Teams into our traditional mission trips, ensuring a seamless transition from immediate relief to long-term support. This year alone, we expect to have at least 1,147 volunteers serving in disaster-affected areas before year-end. Most of those volunteers serve for a full week and will provide over \$4 million worth of volunteer hours in total for 2024.

Recently, we had the opportunity to provide vital assistance in Newland, NC, following the devastating flooding from Hurricane Helene. Our volunteers worked tirelessly to muck out the local school (Newland Elementary) and participate in Newland's community cleanup effort, organized by the mayor's office. This enabled the town to host its annual fall event for children of the local community. We also had the privilege of providing a new bike to a resident who lost his only mode of transportation in the flood. While they may be simple, these acts of service represent our commitment to restoring normalcy and dignity to those who have experienced tremendous loss. These are just a few small stories among dozens happening daily throughout GA, TN, VA, and NC where we are still meeting needs.

Partnering with the local Church in our effort ensures a healthy response is happening on the ground as our teams serve with a variety of skills and meet the needs of those in the community. We are passionate about meeting people where they are at and seeing them holistically, doing everything we can to restore dignity as they endure the hardest of times.

Working in disaster response is both challenging and rewarding. It requires compassion, stamina, and a deep understanding of the complexities of loss and recovery. By meeting physical needs and offering a listening ear, we share the hope of Jesus and demonstrate His grace. We are honored to walk alongside communities in their time of need, providing not only aid but also empathy and encouragement. To our friends in Western North Carolina and all those affected by disaster, we see you, we love you, and we continue to pray for you. To our volunteers and partners, when we say 'When disaster strikes, the Church shows up!' you are the Church. Thanks for showing up and extending a helping hand on behalf of the global Church!

#### **Roles in Disaster Response**

Disaster Response at PPM is uniquely positioned to serve survivors both immediately after a disaster when the need is the greatest, and in the long-term after most disaster response organizations have left. In the early response, we deploy our Rapid Response model which we call the Readiness Team. This early response engages a growing network of funders, volunteers, and PPM staff to quickly rally around the effort and get boots on the ground. We are able to host teams of participants as well as spontaneous volunteers for whatever length of time they are available. This phase of the response is free of charge to volunteers and the costs are underwritten by the generous donations of individuals, local foundations, and national partners. This phase of the response is active for about a month after the disaster event.

As the end of our Readiness Team response draws near, we begin recruiting and supporting our traditional mission trips as they register in groups of ten or more to come and serve on predetermined dates as they would for any other traditional mission trip. These teams often serve for at least a year beyond the disaster event and help kickstart long-term relationships with local partners.

You have a valuable role to play in the response!

#### **Disasters Responded to:**

Wildfires - Maui
Tornado - Indian Lake Area, OH
Tornado - Louisiana
Flooding - Waterville, MN
Hurricane Beryl - Jamaica
Hurricane Ida - Louisiana
Hurricane Ian - SW Florida
Hurricane Helene - Valdosta, GA
Hurricane Helene - Western North Carolina
Hurricane Helene - Appalachian Highlands

**2024 Disaster Stats** (as of 10/28/24):

1147 participants 125,587 hours of service \$4,205,908.63 in value of volunteer hours 10 locations 23 partners 74 groups

### Survivor's Day Out

We are excited to share a little about an upcoming program we are working to develop.

In the immediate aftermath of disasters, survivors face a plethora of overwhelming tasks: finding temporary shelter for their families, navigating FEMA assistance, dealing with insurance claims, and rebuilding their homes. As we keep a pulse on the recovery efforts of FEMA, local Emergency Management offices, and other non-profits, we see that there is seldomly, if ever, a strategy for kids. Meanwhile, the children who have survived these disasters are traumatized and need more care and support than ever before.

Our solution is inspired by the successful "Mother's Day Out" model that many churches have adopted as part of their regular ministry. We propose "Survivor's Day Out" - a program serving both parent and child. This program, much like the VBS ministries that thousands of our volunteers perform every summer during their mission trips both domestically and internationally, will offer free, safe childcare for disaster survivors. This child-free time will allow parents crucial time to focus on their family's recovery. Simultaneously, this will also allow our teams to teach the children proven coping mechanisms and resiliency skills for the days ahead.



### Pray

- Prayer is at the very center of our core values. Of all the ways to join us in our mission, there is nothing more vital than prayer.
- Here at PPM we are passionately rooted in Christ and we seek to always submit to Him in prayer to ensure that our every "yes" aligns with the Holy Spirit's leading.
- As we move forward, we do so with the confidence that while over 12,000 participants will join us on the mission field from year to year, thousands more are joining us in prayer for protection, provision, and productivity in all our efforts to build up, assist, and encourage the local Church.





- All of our efforts to support churches 365 days a year beyond the 7 day mission trip, especially in times of disaster and crisis would be impossible without the cheerful giving of people like you! Whether it's a one time gift to support disaster relief or a monthly gift to support a local pastor, your gift makes a difference in the Kingdom of God.
- This year we need your help to reach your friends and family to join in this incredible movement to see the Church encouraged everyday!
- We would love it if you and your family would consider a legacy gift to our efforts that will
  impact the Kingdom for generations to come.
- Simply scan here or call us to discuss how your next contribution can change the lives of those in need today.



#### Go

- Nearly 12,000 participants are making plans to serve with us in 2025 and your family or ministry should come along for the journey!
- Whether it is international or domestic we are confident that we have a location and partner that is ready and waiting on a team just like yours to serve alongside them.
- Our consultants are standing by waiting for your call to help you GO further and reach more people with the love of the Gospel.

## A NOTE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

As we close out the year, I find myself reflecting on the calling we share at Praying Pelican Missions - a calling that has shaped my own journey since I was young. Growing up, I had the privilege of going on mission trips with my family, and those early experiences profoundly influenced my life and faith. Now, as I take my own family on mission trips, I am reminded of the incredible impact that serving together can have, both within our families and within the communities we visit.

Our mission – To build up, encourage, and assist the local Church in serving and reaching their communities for Christ – goes beyond service; it is about creating a united, vibrant global Church for the glory of God. Living on mission means stepping into the heart of Jesus' call to serve and unite the Church, from across the street to across the sea. Every trip, every partnership, and every act of support brings us closer to His vision.

We remain deeply committed to sponsoring churches and supporting local pastors. We understand that healthy pastors lead vibrant churches that impact communities for Christ. When supported, these leaders bring light and hope to their communities in powerful ways. And when disaster strikes, Praying Pelican Missions stands on the front lines, ready to serve alongside local churches in relief efforts and rebuild hope where it is needed most.

I am grateful for the privilege to walk this path with each of you, carrying forward this legacy of service and love. May we continue, with humility, integrity, and prayer, to support and unite the Church worldwide in reaching its fullest potential. Together, we strive to bring Christ's love to every corner of the world.

Thank you for standing with us in this mission and for your dedication to seeing the global Church united in Christ.

Ryan Eldridge Board Chair Praying Pelican Missions





**Donate Today!** 



## Working to see a united global Church reaching its fullest potential for the glory of God.



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