

# Comunidades Vibrantes



**plant**  
Everyone  
can plant

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Periodical that aims to present OM ministry opportunities for the glory of God.

*Ownership of Operation Mobilization Portugal*

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## Director's Message

**Givas José,**  
Director of OM Portugal

Portugal is a country with a deep and rich history. Famous for past discoveries and the colonization of distant lands, for world class beaches and wines, for being the entry into Europe, for soulful music, loud conversation, passionate football fans, fishermen and farmers... Despite all this

cultural and landscape beauty, Portugal still needs to be reached by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The most recent survey of the Evangelical Church in Portugal, conducted in 2016, calculates an Evangelical Christian population of 0,43% with a median church size of 49 members. In fact, the most-reached area of the country (Faro, south Portugal) only has an evangelical population of 0,96%, while the least-reached area of the country (Vila Real, north Portugal) has 0,09%. These numbers show the current and real need of Gospel transformation.\*

Historically, Portugal has been, and continues to be, a Roman Catholic nation that has Mary and many saints in great focus. The aging and rural population continue to hold fast to their religious identity, while secularism is growing amongst the younger and more urban demographic. To date Portugal has never experienced revival, and while the Church exists it has never flourished and come out from being on the edge of society.

While in numbers the Church is small, this has not limited the God-given dreams of multiplication from taking root. There are a number of church planting and revitalization initiatives taking place across the whole of the country, and specific plans in place to enter into the least-reached parts of the nation. It is exciting to partner with and witness different denominations and organizations working to see God's Kingdom expand in Portugal.

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In Matthew 10:8 we read: "Freely you have received, freely give".

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This is not a calling that is unique only for me but is a universal commandment to all believers. And so, I ask you, my brothers and sisters, to join with us in prayer and lift up the nation of Portugal. Join with us in Kingdom building. May the prayers of many reach heaven's ear and may the lives of many be transformed in Portugal and that through Portugal we reach others.

\* Data provided by Portuguese Evangelical Alliance.



## OM's Church Planting Ministry in Portugal

**A**s OM, our vision is “to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers among the least reached.” Because of this, church planting and revitalization is one of OM's ministries in Portugal. There are still thousands of people in Portugal who do not know the truth about Jesus.

Therefore, very early on, OM Portugal started to partner with local churches to plant and revitalize churches together. Currently, we have partnerships in various parts of the country, from the North to the South. And we want to motivate more local churches to invest in other regions of Portugal. In this magazine, you can read about OM's partnership in Pias, Monção and Valença (Minho) and in Mora (Alentejo).

**“People living in the interior of Portugal should have the same opportunity to hear about God's love, to know that God loves them and how He**

**can give them Hope,”** shared Rosário (a church planter in Mora, Alentejo).

**You too can get involved with this ministry.**

**Go!** ! You too can be part of a church planting team where there aren't any yet. **Give!** Financially support the work of one of our missionaries, cooperating with them so that the good news of Jesus can be spread throughout Portugal. **Pray!** As Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38, “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore **pray** earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

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To learn more how you can get involved with this ministry, contact us at [info.pt@om.org](mailto:info.pt@om.org) and follow us on social media - Facebook and Instagram.

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## PLANT Conference 2021

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the grow” I Corinthians 3:6



**G**od has called us to make disciples. And as we fulfill this commandment, churches are planted. Because of this, **PLANT was born.**

PLANT is an OM ministry that aims to equip, motivate and mobilize local churches to plant, revitalize and replant other churches. It does so by promoting training in these areas.

Thus, on the 28th and 29th of May, an online PLANT Conference took place. Where Scott Breslin (Director of PLANT Europe) and Roberto Bottrel (Director of DNA Europe) approached the subject of small group multiplication.

**“There is a virus much bigger than Covid-19 that is sin, which leads us to spiritual death. But we have the cure. What are we going to do about it?”** - Roberto shared.

During these two days we were

challenged to think about the universal priesthood of all believers and the need to show more compassion to those around us. We were encouraged by testimonies of brothers who are dedicated to making disciples through small groups. And we could also share personal experiences with each other.

**“This conference gave me a greater vision and motivation for the fulfillment of the Great Commission.”** - shared one of the participants.

In the future, we will continue to hold PLANT Conferences. These are aimed at church planters and revitalizers and everyone else who is interested in this area.

**So, let's PLANT?**

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To learn more how you can get involved with this ministry, contact us at [info.pt@om.org](mailto:info.pt@om.org) and follow us on social media - Facebook and Instagram.

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Rosário has been part of the OM Portugal team since 2019. And she is committed to seeing a vibrant community of Jesus followers in Mora.

## Church Planting in Mora, Alentejo

One of the greatest challenges of the Church is to be a vibrant community - to announce the Gospel and, simultaneously, manifest the Kingdom of God in the culture where it is inserted (Matthew 9:35). And for the **Comunidade Cristã Alentejana (CCA)** in Mora it is no different.

Mora is located in the district of Évora, which has about 5,000 inhabitants and an aging population. It is an unreached municipality with an ideological outlook very much adverse to the Gospel.

The planting of this local church began in 2000, with a cross-cultural team. It is a project linked to ECM (European Christian Mission) and has already gone through some challenges - linked to economic crises, changes in the local

context and difficulties within the team.

So, in 2016, I (Rosário) was invited by the leader, and pastor of the small church, to help in its consolidation. At that time, a couple were leading the work and there were only a small group of believers. This would be the third attempt at planting.



### Difficulties and How You Can Pray

One of our biggest difficulties is that, although people may decide to start attending the church, the pressure of outside influences (family, social and work) means that not many stay.

**Living in a small and tight knit community, where the common ideologies are not supportive of biblical principles, makes it very difficult to share the gospel.**

God's grace has manifested itself in many ways, and one of them was a miracle in the life of Luís. He was in a car accident, and the doctors predicted that he would die. But God protected him and helped him recover. His faith was not shaken. On the contrary, it strengthened his beliefs and his commitment to be a true disciple of Jesus.

The pandemic also brought some difficulties in the development of the evangelism and disciple-making ministry. Because most of the population is elderly and the use of online platforms is not mastered.

However, online broadcasting has allowed us to reach people who have never come to church before. And these contacts have already borne

fruit. With the easing of restrictions, we have resumed our visits and support of people who live alone.

So, I ask that you would **pray** for us. **Pray** for the success of CCA's transition to being connected to a group of churches. **Pray** for the new converts, that they will stand firm and be baptized. **Pray** for the change in the spiritual environment of Mora.

My involvement in the church consolidation process in Mora has been very educational. It has brought a renewal of passion for sharing the Gospel and life in an intentional way. As well as a new joy for seeing love and compassion touching lives.

**God wants to transform lives and communities. Are you available to collaborate with Him? Opportunities are everywhere.**



You can watch Rosário's presentation video by clicking on the link below:  
<https://www.facebook.com/omportugal/videos/1368391443560546/>



“Through this experience, we are learning to depend on God, to pray more and to remember that He owns the Mission.” Carlos and Laura (from Paraguay) joined the OM Portugal team in July 2020, to support more local churches in planting and revitalization.

## Church Planting in Minho Valley Network

**M**e (Carlos) and Laura (my wife) have been in Portugal since December 2015. In July 2016 we decided to start serving in the north of the country, near the border with Galicia, Spain. There we started the **Minho Valley Network Ministry**, in partnership with the Portuguese Baptist Convention.

The Minho Valley consists of the municipalities of Melgaço, Monção, Valença, Vila Nova de Cerveira and Caminha. This region has about 70,000 inhabitants of which about 150 are Christians, furthermore the cities of Caminha and Vila Nova de Cerveira currently have no church presence.

**Our vision is to develop a movement**

**of revitalization and church planting in the region so that people are transformed in all dimensions: Spiritually, Socially and Culturally.**

### Ministry Beginnings

When we arrived in Minho, the churches in Pias and Valença both had congregations of less than 10 people. Because of this, we prayed to the Lord to send another family. And that prayer was answered the following year.

As of now the two churches have 35 members. One example of someone joining us begins in a laundromat. We struck up a conversation with a man there and discovered he had some biblical knowledge. After talking a while we encouraged him to join us in church the next Sunday, he did and

he is now a member of the church!

### Difficulties and How You Can Pray

The greatest difficulty we have is related to the jobs of the church members, as most of them work in factories and have no job stability. Because of that many people stopped being able to attend the church. Furthermore, we have had members who needed to return to their home countries or have had to move to different regions in Portugal.

In addition, the pandemic meant that we had to look for new ways to continue our mission. So, we began doing the services and Bible studies online. This was a benefit because it meant we could meet as a congregation at a wider variety of times.

So, in conclusion, please **pray** for us in these areas. **Pray** for the conversion of families and for the believers who are currently being discipled. **Pray** for

the finances to rent places for us to meet in the different areas of the Minho Valley Network. **Pray** also for the resources to open a daycare for the babies of those who work in the factories. Finally, please **pray** for the urgent coming of families, who can help us in the ministry of this region.

Jim Elliot, missionary to the indigenous people of Ecuador said, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

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**The Church is at the core of God’s plan for the spread of the gospel. So, it is worth investing our lives in church planting so that we can glorify God by fulfilling his purpose for the church.**

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You can watch Carlos and Laura’s presentation video by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CPQ7XeVqpYR/>





## Church Planting in South Asia

Brett's testimony

**B**rett grew up in a Christian family in Australia, and at an early age received Jesus as his Savior. He strongly believes that God has given him skills in certain areas and that it is important to use those skills for God's glory. This belief had led him into getting a degree in engineering, attending a bible study with his fellow work colleagues and, later in life, joining OM and stepping into a leadership role in a South Asian country. "What I really wanted was to impact lives. And that's why I stepped into ministry," he shared.

In early 2020, he shared with his team about **five church planting principles** that have helped his team to better obey Jesus. These principles include the way Jesus **(1)** chose 12 normal men to disciple and do life with, **(2)** based His teachings on Scripture, **(3)** modelled

His faith to His disciples, **(4)** gave His disciples assignments and **(5)** then followed up with them – principles that can help anyone who follows Christ to shape their life and ministry as Jesus did.

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**"What we've realized is that you can't just disciple someone with a few hours every fortnight or a couple times a year; you have to spend time with them – like Jesus did. So, we place our teams in villages among the people so that they can disciple them daily," said Brett. "Our teams connect with people, meet with them, share with them, study the Bible together, work and laugh together – just live life together – because when you do that, there are so many opportunities to demonstrate how Christ transforms lives."**

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In one village, a witch doctor's son was unable to be healed no matter what rituals his father did or medical treatment he received. Finally, the son was healed when a local Christian, who had been discipled by OM workers, prayed for him. After witnessing this healing power, the witch doctor and his family decided to follow Christ. As word of the boy's healing and transformation spread, four other families in the area also came to faith. "The five families came to faith in various ways," Brett explained. "One family would share with the next, and some were given Bibles to read and then decided to follow, and they saw the lives of others changed by their decision to follow Jesus." Through follow-up calls and remote discipleship, the team was able to support this new fellowship to grow in their understanding of who Christ is and what it means to follow Him.

Despite the travel restrictions and other disruptions related to COVID-19, Brett has helped his team leaders to adapt. "We moved from trying to do everything ourselves, and instead, we started mobilizing more local people and trusting that God was using them and then following up with those that were faithful," Brett shared. "I think that was a

healthy shift and God's way of saying: 'I have my people in different places, but you teach them, and they'll do well...' We have to make discipleship practical. It's not just a head thing. It's not even just a heart thing, it has to be a hands thing as well."

Since the beginning of 2020, the OM team in this country has distributed almost 1,245 SD cards containing Bibles, 129 audio Bible players, hosted 20 church planting trainings for 456 people and seen 203 men, women and children make the decision to follow Christ.

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**"God is at work, and a lot of it has been through multiplication, where we train someone who trains someone else," Brett said. "We've realized that if we train the right people, then things will multiply without us. And that follow up, encouraging people and calling them are very important."**

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Extract taken from the article "Ministry Multiplication" written by Ellyn Schellenberg on September 2, 2020.

You can read the full at:

<https://stories.om.org/resource/r67214>.

# Named

KNOWN BY HIM NAMED BY HIM SENT BY HIM



## TeenStreet 2021 Interview with Aaron Lewis



Aaron Lewis (UK) has been the Content Director of TeenStreet Europe since 2020. "God opened the door for me to join the TS worship band in 2019 and being a musician and passionate about working with young people, I jumped at the chance to get involved".

### Why ministry with teenagers?

This is a key time when many important life decisions are made. My journey with Jesus really started at 14 years old at a summer camp, similar to TeenStreet, and the people around me at that time had a huge impact on my life. My passion now is to do the same for others!

### What is TeenStreet?

TeenStreet is a global movement of young Jesus followers.

### What was the theme of TeenStreet in 2021?

The theme this year was *Named - the life and journey of Moses*. We wanted to help

equip the teens for the journey of life, helping them discover that they are known by God, named by Him and sent by Him with a purpose.

This year we ventured into new territory and planned hybrid (in person/online) events across Europe. We agreed that it was important to gather the teenagers in person, and the online program helped to connect the 45+ event sites.

### What were the main challenges and what were the greatest joys and/or discoveries?

To say that I was out of my comfort zone would be an understatement! We were using new technology, managing filming projects in 7 countries from

a distance, and we faced many other obstacles including flash flooding, and team members catching Covid, etc. Even so, I am so thankful and amazed at just how much we were able to achieve in a short amount of time, and despite many challenges. When surrounded by talented, committed and servant-hearted people, anything is possible!

### Can you share some of the fruits of this year's TeenStreet work?

Many people commented on the very high and professional quality of the event content (well done, team!). More importantly though, we have heard testimonies of teenagers coming to know Jesus and deciding to get baptised. This is why we do it!

### What about TS 2022, can you reveal some secrets?

God-willing, we will all be together again in Germany! Twenty-five nations worshipping together, growing in relationship with God, making international friends and having tons of fun!



### How can we pray for TeenStreet's ministry?

**Pray** that the seeds planted this year would continue to grow and produce much fruit in the lives of the teenagers in the years to come.

### Can you give a message of encouragement for more Portuguese teenagers to get involved in TeenStreet?

Now, more than ever, we need each other! Together we are stronger and TeenStreet is a fantastic place to meet other Jesus followers, go deep and have fun.

### Can you give a message of encouragement for more Portuguese Christians to get involved with TeenStreet ministry and teen ministry in their local churches?

There is no better investment of time than investing in others. If you had great role models when you were a teenager - be that for others. If you didn't have great role models when you were a teenager - be the role model that you wish you had!





Ezequiel Julião has been the SportsLink Portugal leader since 2021. He lives in Braga and is also involved in the church planting ministry in the Braga and Guimarães area, in a partnership between Braga Baptist Church and OM.

## SportsLink OM Sports Ministry

Through SportsLink, we want to see athletes, coaches, sports enthusiasts in general, local church members, and communities impacted with the Gospel through the universal language of sports, so that vibrant churches for Jesus are established.

We do this in collaboration with local churches by hosting sports events where we intentionally talk about the love of Jesus.

One of our most recent sports events was the **'Training Suit Day'** on the 10th of June. And we did it in collaboration with the Baptist Church in Braga. On that day, we gathered in the pavilion of a school there. And there were several sports activities - soccer, basketball, volleyball, athletics, foosball, and children's games, these were activities performed by people from 5 to 65 years old.

The teams were made up of people from various local churches and also those who do not belong to any church. Because of this, a former professional athlete shared his testimony, there was music, and a text from the Bible was shared with the focus on the new life that Jesus can give us.

After the event, some people encouraged us to repeat something like this. Some of the guests who said they were atheists, enjoyed the day and showed themselves more open to talk about God and even attended the next day at the Taipas Baptist Church.

So, **we invite you to join us**. How can you do it? You can **pray** with us and for us. You can also **contribute** financially. And you can also start a sports ministry in your local church, and **contact us to help you** in whichever way you need.

## Short-Term Missions



### Helping Refugees in Adaševci – Serbia

**Purpose** | to serve the refugees and show the love of Jesus.

**Serving in the camp includes:**

- Doing laundry for the refugees.
- Making and serving them tea and coffee.
- General duties involved in running the tea tent and laundry.

### Come and serve in Logos Hope

Whether you are a sailor or not, a college graduate, a high school student, or a worker. Use your gifts and talents to show the love of Jesus to others.

Come serve with us in the short or long term. Experience God from a new perspective. Discover what He has prepared for you!



### REACH in Moldávia and Roménia (formerly known as MDT e³)

An intensive discipleship training program aimed at equipping you for a life of mission that makes disciples wherever God calls you.

**Key areas:** cross-cultural community life and adventure, one-on-one mentoring and discipleship, spiritual growth and leadership development, and practical experience of missions and evangelism.



# Current Church Planting and Revitalization Partnerships

Pias, Monção  
and Valença

Braga and  
Guimarães

Monte Real  
and Leiria

Mora

Madeira



Açores



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