

new LIFE

Dangriga Family

Tim & Julie Groff, TJ, Simeon & Gabriel . . .

Going where the church is not . . . yet!

Dangriga was first settled by Garifuna in 1832. Formerly called Stan Creek, the city was renamed Dangriga, which means "Standing Waters" in the Garifuna language.

Belize has a colorful mixture of cultures and ethnic groups. According to the 2010 census, the Garifuna people account for 4.5 percent of the population, roughly 75,000 people.

Garifuna: There are approximately 600,000 Garifuna people scattered along the coastline of Central America and migrated to major cities like New York and Los Angeles.

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New Life!

"Because of the new life that Jesus has given us, we will: build relationships, transform our communities and change the world!"

That's the mission statement from our church, New Life Community Church, where we've been serving as a family here in Wellman, IA for the past nine years.

It's a great mission statement and we've decided we'd like to keep it as we begin the next phase of the journey with our family as missionaries in a town called Dangriga.

"Go into all the world. Preach the good news to everyone." Mark 16:15 NIV

Julie:

I have had an intense interest in being a missionary ever since I was young. Part of the draw was the adventure of it all, living in a foreign place, eating strange food, washing in the river, seeing exotic animals, but what always seemed most incredible to me was introducing people to Jesus. The life and freedom that Jesus infuses into people is amazing. This passion for missions is one of the factors that drew me to Tim Groff when we first met. It's a passion we share.

Tim:

The years I spent in Guatemala as a child were some of the best of my life. Nothing can compare with the adventures I experienced in the mountains, rivers and jungles there. My passion to serve the church began there as I watched, listened and learned from the K'ekchi leaders and from my parents.

God's call on my life to serve His church has grown deeper as Julie and I have journeyed together in our lives from place to place: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Mexico and Iowa – always focused on helping to build The Kingdom.

Why Belize?

Belize is an amazing country of beautiful and diverse people. Our attention was first drawn there by Tim's parents. Galen and Phyllis Groff have been missionaries in Guatemala for many years and are the regional representatives for Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) in Central America. In that role, they have formed relationships with some leaders among the Garifuna on the coast of Belize.



Who are the Garifuna?

The Garifuna people are of African descent and are known for their traditional drumming and for their cultural gatherings that honor the dead. Among the Garifuna along the coast of Belize, there is much economic and spiritual bondage affiliated with the practices of throwing parties for and attempting to appease the spirits of those passed.

Growing among the Garifuna:

The Garifuna leaders have come to respect the quiet leadership of Galen and Phyllis and extended an invitation to them to come and work with them in Belize. As we considered our call to missions, the idea of working alongside and learning from Galen and Phyllis sounded perfect.

What bigger blessing could we ask for than having seasoned mentors to learn from and grandparents for the children right there with us on the mission field!

Our children would attend local schools there and develop friendships with our neighbors in Dangriga.

We believe part of our call is to provide a positive family role model to those who have grown up in fractured families. That's why we've chosen to call our mission: New Life Dangriga Family.

What would we do?

We have visited the villages of Dangriga and Hopkins in the Stan Creek District of Belize. The church there among the Garifuna people has been slow to grow. There is a small band of leaders working faithfully there, and it is our vision to work beside them, encourage them, and learn what we can do to help the power of the gospel bring new life to the Garifuna people in that region.

Some of the specific goals that the Garifuna leaders have shared with us are to begin a men's Bible study group and an after-school tutoring program at the church facility in Dangriga.

New Life for Dangriga!

We, as followers of Jesus, worship God because He is great. He is Creator. He is Love. He is our Redeemer. God is worthy of our worship and praise.

We want the Garifuna to know the good news about Jesus. We want to see the freedom that Jesus will bring to the Garifuna people and the joy, peace and love He will infuse into their hearts.

Because of the new life that Jesus has given us we want to build relationships, transform communities and change the world!

From Pastor Aaron Fleming:

Since I first met Tim & Julie, they have sensed a call to missions. Some might have dismissed their passion as a youthful dream, to be set aside by family, career, mortgage, etc. Not so. As the years have passed and their family has grown, the fire of their call to missions has focused and grown brighter.

Nor is missions a glamorous escape for Tim and Julie. One wonderful aspect of their lives is that they recognize the call to missions as being part of a greater call, the call that Christ gave to all people – the call to participate in His kingdom. Wherever they've journeyed, they have served the Lord and His church in many capacities, as ones who have put their hand to the plow and are not turning back.

Tim and Julie are moving into a new season of being directly engaged in international, cross-cultural missions. It is a transition in a sense, but in another sense it is merely an extension of their kingdom-oriented lives. It has been an honor to walk with Tim and Julie as their pastor for some 10 years now, and it is an honor to invite you to walk with them as partners in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*New Life Community Church Pastor
Aaron Fleming*

What is EMM?

Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), is a missions organization founded in Lancaster, PA in 1894. Since that time they've worked to provide resources for and send workers to many places in

the world.

A mission statement on their website (emm.org) reads:

"Our mission begins with the world, ministering among those who do not yet know the good news. As new groups of believers spring up, we work to strengthen churches and empower leaders. Then, as new mission societies emerge from these circles of churches, our relationship culminates in a collaborative partnership to send more workers."

From EMM:

While the Garifuna Church are the ones doing the actual inviting, I want to communicate to you my recommendation for Tim and Julie Groff to work among the Garifuna in Dangriga, Belize.

My family was the first long term missionaries sent by EMM to work directly with the Garifuna. When we went in 1980 there were a few believers, no fellowship of believers, and no church planting taking place. We had the privilege and joy of seeing God change the lives of many Garifuna as they became believers, and small fellowships were started.

I helped facilitate the connections when Tim and Julie, along with Tim's parents, came to Dangriga to explore possible ministry among the Garifuna. I first came to know Tim and Julie when they served in Mexico years ago and was Galen and Phyllis' supervisor for years.

In light of my long and mutual love and respect for the Garifuna leaders, knowing Tim and Julie, along with his parents, I highly recommend their acceptance of this invitation from the Garifuna Church.

I recommend them to you for support in any way that you can. I know a mutual affirming relationship has already started between them and the Garifuna leaders.

*Steve Shank
Strategy Coach / EMM*

Will you Partner with us?

Our Budget:

Living in a foreign country can be expensive for a family of five. EMM has set a budget for us and we must raise support and sponsorships of about \$8,000 a month for the first two years before we can be sent.

A Donor:

A one-time donation to our mission can be made by check to Eastern Mennonite Missions (address on front), designated to Tim & Julie Groff.

Consider making your donation annually!

A Sponsor:

You can become a sponsor of our mission by pledging a recurring donation. Pledges can be set up easily for automatic account withdrawals on the EMM.org website: Click Give to find "Automatic Withdrawals" or "Recurring charitable gifts".

A Partner:

Does your Church or group want to participate in our mission with an annual fund raising project?

Contact us about how we can partner together that way!

Call us: 319-325-4237

Partnering with Tim & Julie Groff

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

- I would like to give a special gift of: _____
- I pledge a recurring donation of: _____ / (month) (quarter)
- I have a church / group that I think could partner with you in your mission! Please contact me!

Giving options: Checks payable to Eastern Mennonite Missions (designate for Tim & Julie). Credit Card donations via Paypal (emm.org/donate). Automatic Withdrawals from bank account (download a form at emm.org/autowithdraw)