



NET MINISTRIES

NETWORKS

Challenging young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church

NET MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER: WINTER 2017-18



2 MILLION YOUTH REACHED BY NET MINISTRIES

We are thrilled to announce that later this month, we will reach our 2 millionth young person with the Gospel message! Since 1981, we've conducted more than 32,000 retreats, have done much outreach and discipleship through our Discipleship Teams (formerly known as Parish/School Teams), evangelized through youth events such as Lifeline, PETRUS, and Discipleship Week, and more.

With the addition of 6 new NET teams in the past 5 years (from 10 to 16 teams), we've been able to reach out to nearly 100,000 youth each year for the past few years. We credit much of this to our generous donors who have helped us expand our ministry, and of course to God, who had bigger plans for what started out as a small and humble ministry in Minnesota.

Take a look at the pages inside for a glimpse at our journey these past 37 years.

Challenging young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church

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NET is under the ecclesiastical vigilance of the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. It is governed by a national board of directors, is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and has been audited by Lewis, Kisch and Associates, Ltd.



Dear friends,

Every week we receive wonderful emails or letters from young people who were on a NET retreat. Some of their comments are quite moving about coming to understand God's love for them, wanting to follow Jesus more closely, the power of God they experienced when the NET missionary prayed with them. But last week, one comment caught my attention: **"The NET team was so happy!"**

What caught the young person's attention was the happiness she perceived the NET missionaries to possess. Why did that stand out? Perhaps because that young person didn't experience happiness in her own life. Perhaps she doesn't perceive happiness among her peers.

According to a 2016 Harris Poll, less than 1/3 of young people consider themselves "very happy." According to the Department of Health and Human Services, more than three million adolescents aged 12-17 reported at least one major depressive episode in the past year, and more than two million reported severe depression that impeded their daily functioning. In California's largest school district, Los Angeles, where we recently opened a regional office, more than 30 percent of high school students there reported prolonged feelings of hopelessness and sadness lasting more than two weeks.



St. Augustine reminds us, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." The Church has been telling us for centuries that we will only find happiness - deep, everlasting happiness - when we are in a right relationship with God, experiencing His rich mercy and love. The above-mentioned Harris Poll suggests St. Augustine knew what he was talking about. Those who regularly practiced their faith were much more likely to describe themselves as "very happy" than those who did not (42% to 30%).

Our world is in desperate need of men and women who know where true happiness comes from and can point others to that true source. With your prayers and support, our NET missionaries are out there among this young generation as an advertisement for true happiness found in Christ. Through the witness of their life and the power of their testimony, they are providing the hope of happiness to the young people they encounter.



Thanks for your help,

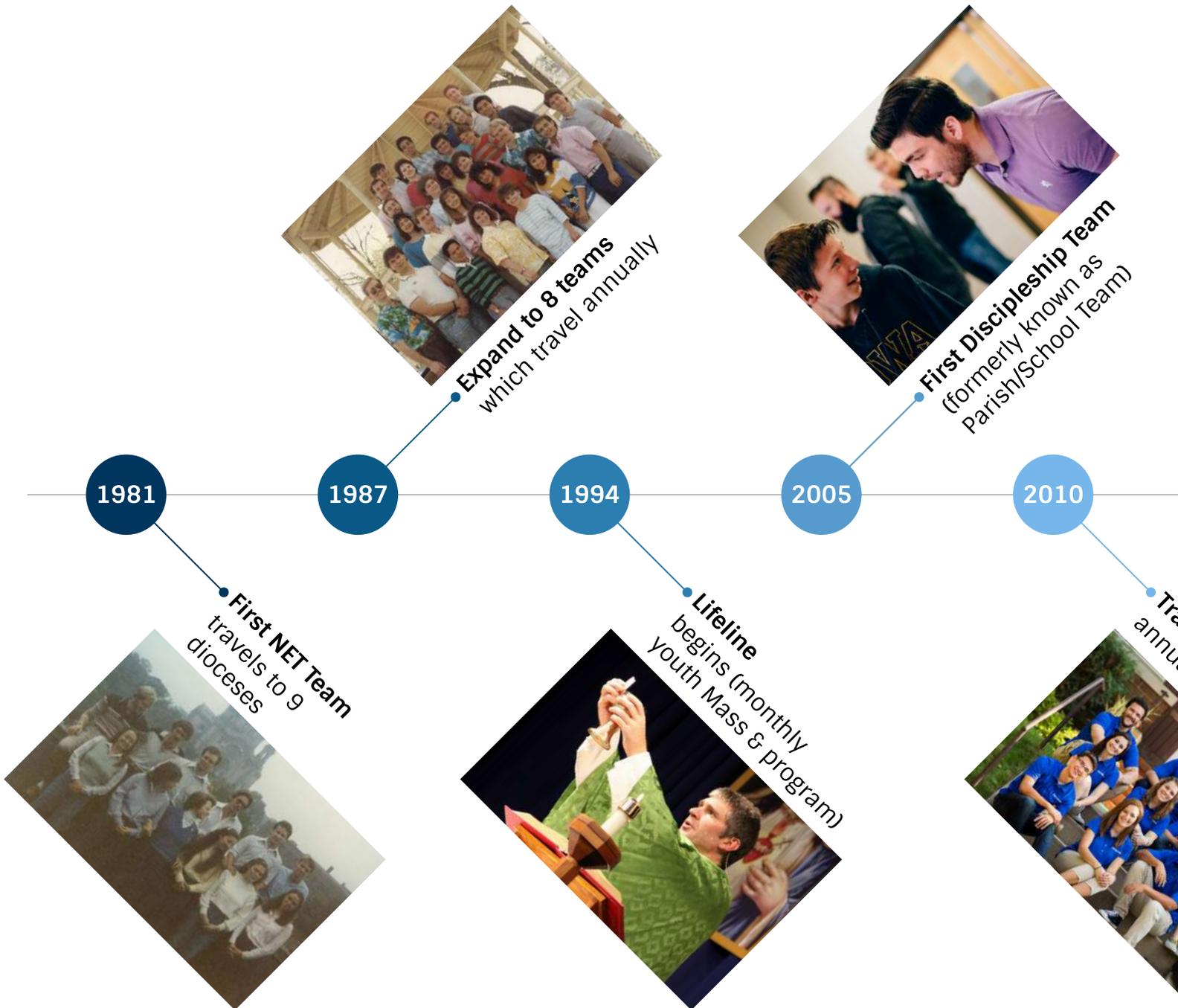
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Berchem". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Berchem, MSW, MTS
Founder and President
NET Ministries, Inc.



2 MILLION YOUTH REACHED (CONTINUED)

The actual impetus for NET came from its Founder and current President, Mark Berchem. Mark pioneered a team of 12 young adults to travel in a van around southern Minnesota, conducting high school retreats. Moving from town to town, parish to parish, this experimental team conducted 18 retreats in a three-week period during January 1980. The response to this team was extremely positive. Additional requests for this type of ministry came from Fargo, North Dakota, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The following January, three teams were sent to serve in Winona MN, Fargo ND, and Sioux Falls, SD.



In September 1981, the first year-long team was sent out, adding Wisconsin, Louisiana, and several other dioceses in Minnesota to the itinerary. In 1982, the name "NET," or National Evangelization Teams, was officially adopted. It was inspired by the scriptures: "Come after me, I will make you fishers of men," Mark 1:17, and "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch," Luke 5:4. It is by the goodness of God that our ministry has been able to reach 2 million young people in 37 years.

"[She] walked with me on the path to holiness, sat down with me one-on-one, and constantly poured out God's love to me."
 Teen, Minnesota, of a Discipleship Team

"This was the most influential thing I've ever done involving my faith. I am closer to God than I've ever been."
 Teen, Florida

"I loved the skits, activities, and small group time, but I especially loved the testimonies and prayer time."
 Teen, Michigan



DISCIPLESHIP WEEK 2018

Discipleship Week is our summer program designed to ignite teenagers' Catholic faith, help them personally experience the power and presence of our great God, and discover the mission and purpose for which they are created!

Be prepared for their faith to come alive and be set ablaze through encounters with Jesus in Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and Reconciliation. A faith-filled, energized team of NET team members, along with other outstanding leaders, musicians, and speakers lead D-Week. This amazing team will lead dynamic sessions which include worship, relevant talks, free time, small group time, fun activities, and so much more.

This year's locations include:

- Minnesota (June 18-21, June 25-27)
- Ohio (June 4-7)
- Texas (June 25-28)



Learn more and register at www.netusa.org/dweek.

MISSIONARIES NEEDED



Do you know someone who would make a great missionary? In our application process, NET desires applicants to have many qualities, but the overarching characteristics we hope to have in our NET missionaries are that they are faithful, relatable, and mature.

Faithful. There is a wise old adage that most people hear at least once growing up: “You can’t give what you don’t have.” And boy, is that true in ministry. We strive to find missionaries who know of their need for Christ, of the immense significance of the Lord’s mercy and love for them. Understanding the depths and truths of the Gospel, we hope that our applicants are on fire to proclaim the Word.

Relatable. Mother Theresa said, “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” Jesus works through our missionaries casting many ripples, and to do that we need our missionaries to be able connect with people on a human level. Personable and engaging, ready and open, NET missionaries welcome others into a life with Christ by sharing their very selves.

Mature. Our missionaries come into contact with thousands of people all over the country, running into various situations, circumstances, and conversations. With that much “people-time,” we desire our missionaries to be responsible and sensible, knowing that they not only represent our organization, but more importantly, Jesus Christ and His Church.

While the reward in Heaven is better than anything else, our missionaries also benefit in the following ways:

- Missionaries gain a greater understanding of their [personal relationship with our Lord](#)
- Team life helps foster an understanding of the good, the difficult, and the beautiful in [community life](#)
- They get to live out the call to [be a missionary](#), to be an evangelist in a very tangible way

Our recruiting team has 27 interview retreat weekends planned this year for prospective missionaries. We encourage you to share and promote our interview retreat weekends to those you believe would be a good fit to serve with this ministry.

Our upcoming Interview Retreat Weekends include:

- Ohio
- Maryland
- Minnesota
- Washington
- North Carolina
- Kansas
- Arizona
- Colorado
- Texas
- California

We encourage you to direct potential missionaries to www.netusa.org/apply to learn more.



NET BLOG

Be sure to check out our blog for inspirational Catholic articles, missionary updates, and faith tidbits! Not only will our blogs keep you up to date with our ministry, but our goal is to inspire and awaken the faith of our readers as well.

www.netusa.org/blog



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