“You wouldn’t believe such a place existed until you have seen it. I’ve traveled a lot and this is amazing!” This quote from a tourist sums up the uniqueness of Greenland. It is one thing to hear about a place or people group, but it is another thing to see it first hand. As field director for Alaska, Canada and Greenland, I am burdened that BIMI have a church planting family working in Kalaallit Nunaat (the official name of Greenland in the official language), “The Greenlander’s Country.” As we spin a globe, Greenland’s immense size gets our attention. Near the top of the world, it is the largest island on the planet. After visiting 160 countries, Don Arnold (BIMI’s videographer) states that Greenland is now his favorite place to visit.

Many know this tidbit about Greenland: “Greenland is ice, and Iceland is green.” When many start to talk about Greenland, Iceland automatically becomes a part of the conversation. One young boy readily knew Greenland received its name to entice settlers to live in Greenland’s icy mountains—it was even written into a missionary hymn. Almost 60,000 people live in this land of dog sledding (Greenlandic for dog sledding), northern lights, ice and snow, whales and pioneering people. Only the southernmost part of Greenland is actually green. One can see lambs in the pastures and potatoes being harvested. I saw a picture of a tractor in the field with icebergs floating by in the background. Erik the Red had a good idea—call it Greenland and others will join me in this wonderful place.

Ilulissat
Our survey trip was April 16–28, 2013. Don Arnold and I flew from Chattanooga to Atlanta on to Amsterdam and then to Copenhagen. There we stayed overnight. From Copenhagen we flew into Kangerlussuaq, Greenland. I asked several Greenlandic women to pronounce the name of this last town for me. They all said it a different way. I learned K sounds like G and my tongue needs to be in a different place in my mouth than it has ever been before. My first surprise was that we flew from Copenhagen to Kangerlussuaq on an Airbus 330. The former air base had a long runway to accommodate such a large plane. We stayed overnight in “K-town” (as Don named it) and flew the next morning to Ilulissat to visit the Shull and Arnold families at the first Baptist church established in Greenland.

Ilulissat is a beautiful town of 5,000 where multi-colored houses overlook a harbor filled with fishing boats. The rocky mountain is the foundation for these houses from which one can see icebergs floating in the harbor. Each day the view changes as the icebergs move out to sea. The “calving” glacier provides a steady supply of icebergs of various sizes that keep the tourists visiting from all over the world.

The highlights of these days were fellowshipping with these pioneering missionaries, preaching my first message in this country to the four adults and eight children and attending the Baptist church service where Chris Shull preached in Greenlandic. Brother Shull is praying for more laborers for the 77 other communities in Greenland. He is open to teaching the new missionary the Greenlandic language in a church setting while fellowshipping with likeminded believers. What a wonderful opportunity for the family that walks through this open door to do the will of God—sent from their local church with the assistance of BIMI’s 50 plus years of experience.

After our brief visit in Ilulissat, we flew to Nuuk, the capital and largest city in Greenland. Nuuk is described as an “Arctic Metropolis.” Here we encountered what the end of winter/first of spring can give a person at the “top of the world.” As we tried to shoot on-location video, a blizzard hit with a vengeance. Thick snow with wind gusts up to 80 miles per hour shook our rental car like a toy as we sat high on the hill at the airport. We prayed for a break in the weather to get video. We retreated to the shopping center to talk to those willing to speak to the “American with the camera.” Flights were canceled all day on Thursday.

Don had met a man named Peter through ham radio. God used this connection for us to tour the airport on Friday as we waited for our delayed flight to have enough ceiling to fly from Nuuk to Kangerlussuaq. We were able to shoot on-location inside the hanger next to an Air Greenland Dash 8. Though the circumstances were challenging to us God answered prayer and we flew out late Friday to get our connection to Copenhagen. That extra day Don had built into the schedule was a necessary blessing. After a few hours of sleep in the Reindeer Inn, we were up at 2 a.m. and bussed to the airport. What a blessing to see that Airbus waiting to take us to Copenhagen and on to Chattanooga!

Nuuk made an impression on us with over 16,000 inhabitants and more moving into the city. High-rise apartment buildings are under construction to accommodate people migrating from other areas of Greenland and around the world. There are significant numbers from the Philippines and Thailand. Mining exploration sets the stage for a greater population of workers moving to Nuuk. This city is a prime location for the next Baptist church plant. One can live in an urban setting where modern technology and ancient traditions mix into a Greenland that may surprise a person. One may get to ride on a dog sled (I should say a dog “sledge”) with a Greenlandic guide talking on his Smartphone.
Greenland is independent from Denmark. Self-rule was achieved in 2009. The political and cultural association with Europe for more than 1,000 years is seen in the life of the modern Greenlander. American influence is seen in the dress, as people of all ages wear denim jeans as a fashion statement. There is a Bible in the Greenlandic language, but the truth of it has not influenced the culture like the state church religion has for centuries. As I spoke to a retired priest, I asked him, "If I came to you and asked you how to go to heaven when I die, what would you tell me?" His reply was, "No one can know if they will go to heaven." The souls of Greenland need preachers to go and give them the truth of God's Word. They need to know the truth of 1 John 5:13, *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God* (emphasis added). As you read this, are you the answer to our prayer for laborers for Greenland? The door is open! Is God putting it in your heart to walk through this open door? As Nehemiah heard of the broken wall and burned gates of Jerusalem, God touched his heart to go. He told those around him that GOD HAS PUT THIS IN MY HEART. God put it in my heart to travel to Greenland—to relate to you the great need of Baptist church planters to go—to tell you that the door of Greenland is open. Will you go through this open door? *Open Door #5 refers to Greenland's position in the list of Open Doors highlighted at www.bimi.org/opendoor. Please browse there for a detailed explanation of the Open Door Project.*