

2016

**MISSIONARY
MOMENTS**

Prayer Guide and Offertory Statements

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Through the *2016 Missionary Moments Prayer Guide and Offertory Statements*, you will have opportunity to catch a view into the lives and ministries of missionaries who serve Southern Baptists as state Baptist convention, North American Mission Board (NAMB) or International Mission Board (IMB) servants of the Lord.

The power of prayer and gifts through the Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® or state convention missions offerings help sustain more than 10,000 missionaries as they take the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost worldwide.

Present *Missionary Moments* weekly during a worship service, in a Sunday School class or small-group meeting, at the midweek prayer service, at missions meetings or as sermon illustrations. Join thousands of Southern Baptists in prayer as we lift each featured servant to the Father.

Additional copies of *Missionary Moments* may be obtained from your state convention office, purchased by visiting stewardshipdirect.com or from the Cooperative Program office in Nashville, Tennessee. Go to sbc.net/cp, and click on Missions.

IMAGINE

By implementing the 2016 stewardship emphasis, *BEYOND: Giving Over and Above the Tithe*, you can assist your church in understanding mile markers in your journey of faith. There are currently more than 46,000 Southern Baptist churches across North America. To reach the global population of more than 7 billion, we must increase our cooperative efforts if we are to fulfill Christ's command to take the gospel to every nation. We need to allow God to refresh our burden to reach the world for Him. The Cooperative Program provides a financial base to impact the world with the good news of Jesus Christ!

The Cooperative Program enables us to partner with more than 46,000 churches to make Christ known — at home, across the nation and around the world.



QUARTERLY SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

- Utilize *Missionary Moments* weekly throughout the year. Two stories are provided weekly for church leadership to determine how to share with the church.
- Include a thank-you note when sending annual, individual giving statements.
- Use four bulletin inserts weekly throughout the month from the current stewardship series.
- Receive the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for North American Missions throughout the month of March to support North American missions.
- Use a ministry progress report that features a changed life during a Sunday service.
- Measure the progress of your stewardship plan from *Practical Ideas*, pp. 2–3.
- Stay up-to-date on available stewardship resources by contacting your state Baptist convention stewardship/Cooperative Program office, or go to stewardshipdirect.com.

JANUARY 3, 2016

Significant Prayers

[Central Asia] For the New Year celebration, ELIZA KORN* and her team were assigned a kind and gentle helper named Mehmet.* He did his best to explain traditions and activities and escorted them to a local restaurant for lunch. Traditionally, the eldest at the table offers a hastily mumbled “prayer” at the end of the meal. Instead, Mehmet asked Eliza to pray. She thanked the Lord for their time together and asked that Mehmet would come to believe in Him. Mehmet said no one had ever prayed for him before. Thank you for giving through the Cooperative Program so that Eliza can serve among Central Asians.

Mobilizing Students to Serve

[Alabama] Even as a child, BRITTANY KENT had a God-given desire to serve others through medicine. When she was 7, through the influence of an IMB missionary, she knew she was to serve their spiritual needs as well. In high school she became active in apartment ministry. Today she is a college student in Tuscaloosa, working as a NAMB GenSend campus mobilizer. Brittany mobilizes students for service in Indianapolis, one of NAMB’s Send Cities. She and her team serve alongside church planters. Because you give through the Cooperative Program, students are learning to live missionally and people are coming to Christ. Pray for Brittany as she leads students and completes her master’s degree.

Bible Reference & Statement: Colossians 3:23

The new year brings new opportunities for us to practice our faith through giving. Our giving provides the resources needed to reach the lost for Christ. Let’s resolve to work to grow in our giving this year for God’s glory. The Cooperative Program enables us to partner with more than 46,000 churches and more than 4,700 church-type missions to make Christ known.

JANUARY 10, 2016

Life-Giving Churches

[Massachusetts] DAVID and GAYLE BUTLER serve as Send City missionaries in Boston. David works to implement a church planting strategy for the city and helps mobilize churches to support the vision of planting 100 life-giving churches in every neighborhood in and around Boston by 2020. Though Boston has earned the reputation for being a world-class city, it was recently ranked as the 91st least “Bible-minded” city in the U.S. There’s no escaping the huge opportunity in this gospel-needy city. Many simply don’t know what it means to be a Christ-follower. You can partner in these efforts by lifting up in prayer those working there and by giving generously through the Cooperative Program.

Point Others to Christ

[North Africa and Middle East] Christian worker CARVER GLADDING* began a Bible-storying workshop by asking the men if they had ever had a dream they thought was from God. One man said that he had dreamt about that very workshop. Unbelievers heard this man’s story and how God used a dream to lead him. Carver was able to lead the conversation to the story of Joseph. God continues to speak to people through dreams, and because of the Cooperative Program, workers like Carver are there to point people to Christ. Pray that the truth Carver tells will take hold in the hearts of the people.

Bible Reference & Statement: Romans 5:8

Our giving should be understood in light of God’s giving to us. God’s purpose for giving—to bring people to Himself—can be our purpose for giving also.

*Indicates name change for security.

JANUARY 17, 2016

Use Your Hobbies for Jesus

[Spain] DWIGHT and MARA WILLIAMS, IMB missionaries serving in Spain, have discovered that God can use even their hobbies for great purposes. Dwight hosts basketball camps for youth, where he can integrate spiritual topics with athletic skills. Mara hosts a crafting area in her garage to make crafts with friends and share evangelistic stories while doing so. Some of these women have already started similar crafting clubs in their own homes and are sharing the gospel. These women have also started an evangelistic blog with more than 1,000 followers. Dwight and Mara are bringing Christ into everyday life in Spain, thanks to your giving through the Cooperative Program.

Pushing Back Darkness

[Michigan] MIKE DURBIN, a Michigan native, serves in Detroit as a church planting catalyst on the Send North America: Detroit strategy team. He works to push back lostness in the Detroit Metro Area and in Windsor, Canada, by enlisting, equipping and encouraging church planters to plant in places where there are few evangelical churches and among people groups who are unreached or under-reached. Despite the recent downturn in Detroit's economy, it remains the most influential city in Michigan. Pray for Mike and his wife, SHAR, as they advance God's kingdom in Detroit, and give generously through the Cooperative Program.

Bible Reference & Statement: Deuteronomy 14:22

God has always expected His people to give. Christian giving, however, is for a larger purpose than when the Israelites gave a tithe; we give to reach the lost for Christ.

JANUARY 31, 2016

Building Bridges through Sports

[Peru] TIM and JOY MITCHELL serve in the Peruvian capital of Lima, where they work among Nikkei immigrants from Japan. About 100,000 Nikkei live in Peru, but only about 100 of them are evangelical Christians. Although soccer is the top sport in Peru, many Nikkei especially love baseball. The Mitchells launched baseball clinics where athletes can improve their skills and meet former major league players. These clinics are building bridges for the Mitchells, who are supported through the Cooperative Program, with the Nikkei who are in need of the true Savior. Thank you for partnering with them through your prayers and giving.

Enjoying Life and Ministry

[Minnesota] JOSHUA and REBEKAH WHETSTINE, both passionate educators, enjoy life and ministry in the coldest metropolis in America—the Twin Cities. Joshua serves as lead church planter and Send City missionary in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. The Whetstines' church plant, The Why Church, meets in the New Hope YMCA in northwest Minneapolis, where they feel very connected with the community. Your giving through the Cooperative Program makes it possible for Joshua and missionaries like him to impact their communities for Christ by working to plant churches where there are few. Pray for new families to join in leading in ministry and church planting in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

Bible Reference & Statement: Philippians 4:6-8

When we make requests of God in prayer, we are conscious of God's giving and our dependence upon Him. Our faithful giving shows gratitude to God and verifies the sincerity of our prayer requests.

JANUARY 24, 2016

Secular Places Desperately Need Jesus

[Missouri] KEN and LYGIA LOVELACE have 10 children—five biological and five adopted. The family, from Dallas, Texas, lives in St. Louis where God has used them to plant Amazing Love Community Church. Ken describes St. Louis as a very secular city in desperate need of Jesus. God has blessed them with many opportunities to share the gospel there. Your partnership and your giving through the Cooperative Program help provide the resources the Lovelace family needs to reach St. Louis with the gospel. Pray that God will destroy the strongholds and powers of darkness so prevalent there. Pray also that God will bless the church with a permanent meeting space.

Spiritual Conversations

[Poland] IMB missionary TED HOLMES tells of a Pingsh (Polish-English) camp where 70 youth experienced daily Bible study, English classes, worship and community. Toward the end of the week, spiritual conversations were lasting long into the evening. Seventeen youth made commitments to follow Christ. Ted, members of a local church and other Christian workers continue to work with these teenagers. Some are now attending weekly Bible study. Pray that God will strengthen their faith and use them to bring others to Christ. Thank you for giving through the Cooperative Program so teenagers in Poland can have eternal life.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Corinthians 8:7

The Corinthians apparently wanted to excel in Christian living, but had fallen short in the grace of giving. Paul challenged them to grow by including generous giving. Giving helps us to grow in Christlikeness.

FEBRUARY 7, 2016

Strengthening Churches

[Montana] MARK LANGLEY serves as the state director of evangelism for the Montana Southern Baptist Convention. His task is to strengthen Montana churches to lead their communities to Christ. Mark provides tools and resources for churches and pastors to equip their people for ministry, especially evangelism. This large state has only 134 SBC churches and the state convention staff is small. Your support through the Cooperative Program will ensure that Montana churches will have the tools and resources they need to reach their communities for Christ. Pray that lostness and spiritual darkness will be pushed back in the great state of Montana.

Family Hospitality

[Central Asia] Because JUSTIN and SUE KAISE* often have guests in their home, much of their ministry is hospitality. In one year they had 270 nights of overnight guests. They also invite many Muslim friends and business relationships over for dinner. The Kaisers strive to do ministry together as a family. They have taken trips throughout the Middle East as a family, and the trips were more successful because their children were with them. You support their family and provide for their home through the Cooperative Program. The Kaise family serves as representatives for Christ in a part of the world that is desperate to know Him.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Timothy 1:12

Commitment that leads to growth in Christlikeness instills an eternal hope. Keeping a commitment to grow in giving is a testimony that "I am not ashamed" of the One "in whom I have believed."

**Indicates name change for security.*

FEBRUARY 14, 2016

Baptizing the Nations

[Deaf] "Silas* decided to follow Jesus in baptism after listening to accurate stories about baptism from the Bible," write WILLIE and BASCOM BROWN,* workers in South Africa, who are supported through the Cooperative Program. "Now two Deaf men from this group that gathers on Sundays are ready to follow the Son by faith and be baptized! Pray that when we gather again, these two men will be ready to commit their lives to Jesus." Thank you for giving so that the Word of God can be made clear to Deaf communities around the world.

Saved for Urban Ministry

[Nevada] EDWARD NEVES's life has been a preparation for urban ministry. He has been in gangs, used and sold drugs, served 30 plus years in prison and survived an execution-style shooting and multiple stabbings. His life is one of identification with those who were lost but are now found in Jesus. Edward leads an urban ministry in Las Vegas called "Homies for Christ," where he teaches Bible studies and disciples people who were formerly involved in crime, are currently involved in crime or are related to people who are involved in crime. Pray that "Homies for Christ" will be an integral, viable ministry that deploys soldiers for Christ, and support this ministry through the Cooperative Program.

Bible Reference & Statement: John 8:29

In doing what pleased the Father, Jesus knew that God was with Him. When we give to please God, we will find His presence confirmed in our lives also.

FEBRUARY 28, 2016

Perfect Timing

[North Africa and Middle East] SEBASTIAN HALAFAX* was trying to find a man named Nadim.* He had met Nadim a few times but did not have his contact information. One night Sebastian, who is supported through the Cooperative Program, walked through one of the city's hotspots hoping to run into Nadim along the way. Praying as he walked, Sebastian found Nadim waiting to catch a bus. They traded phone numbers and began a deeper friendship. As a result, Sebastian has been able to share the gospel with Nadim. "I marveled at the perfect timing that had to take place for me to meet him that night. I felt certain the Lord orchestrated our meeting."

Softening Resistance with Christ's Love

[New Hampshire] New Englanders are known for being self-reliant and resistant to new things. For them, the gospel is a new thing. SEAN and MICHELLE SIMONTON believe the most effective way to reach them is through starting new churches and meeting them where they are with Christ's eternal love. Sean is a church planting catalyst in New Hampshire, where 97 percent of the population is unchurched. Because you give through the Cooperative Program, church planters are being discovered, developed and deployed in local congregations across North America. But the need is great. Pray for more church planters to answer the call and for more churches to partner in the harvest in New Hampshire.

Bible Reference & Statement: Matthew 6:2-4

Our giving is for God, not for the applause of other people. Motive guides how much we give as surely as it guides how we give. How God feels about our giving should be our primary concern.

FEBRUARY 21, 2016

Set Free in Omaha

[Nebraska] MICHAEL O'HARA and his family minister to people who live on the fringe of Omaha—folks like gang members, inner-city youth and prisoners. They run a free, live-in discipleship program and a prison transitional living program, as well as a feeding site that serves three meals a day. They also have a theological school to train leaders, pastors and missionaries who are interested in inner-city ministry. Their church, Set Free, has baptized 300 people in the past four years. Pray for the family as they live and serve in this tough ministry. Give generously through the Cooperative Program to pour resources into North America's major cities for God's glory.

Mirroring the Early Church

[Southeast Asia] After teaching English classes, JEFF and KIM CRUSE often invite students to their home. They build relationships with them and share the gospel. One day, when one of their students was asked where he went to church, he answered "JKH." It stood for Jeff and Kim's house. During one Bible study, the Cruses read Acts 2 and asked the students if the group at their home resembled the early church. "Wow, we are a church!" said the students. Today, a second church has been planted and the students are actively involved in missions. Cooperative Program gifts help the Cruses plant churches among students.

Bible Reference & Statement: James 1:22

It is true. Evidence that we have been instructed by God's Word is seen in the way we apply God's truths to our daily lives. One obvious truth in the Bible is that God's people give gratefully.

MARCH 6, 2016

Serving to Build Trust

[New Jersey] TIM and ROBIN NUSSBAUMER have been in New Jersey for more than 10 years planting gospel-centered churches. One of Tim's goals from the beginning has been to partner with local school systems. One elementary school allowed the church to rent school facilities on Sundays, but it still took time to build trust between them and the church. To build this trust, the church cancelled a morning service to instead clean the school and do landscaping. Eventually, this relationship led to a tutoring and ESL class for the families of students. Pray for more church planters to have a heart for the Northeast and support them by giving through the Cooperative Program.

Bringing Light into Darkness

[Mali] For more than a month heavy rains prevented LAURA REECE* from traveling to her village. Laura used this time to go to different churches in town and meet with believers. She learned about the spiritual warfare going on in one area. Friends shared that nonbelievers had buried things in the churchyards to put spells on the area, make evil things happen and fight against Jesus coming to their towns. Laura asks that Christians pray for the believers who are fighting against things that we cannot even imagine. Thank you for your prayers and for giving to the Cooperative Program, which brings light to the darkness.

Bible Reference & Statement: Psalm 100:1-3

Joy and service spring from gratitude; God has made us and claims us as His own. Let us be stewards of every opportunity to praise God through our giving.

**Indicates name change for security.*

MARCH 13, 2016

Overwhelmed by God's Grace and Kindness

[Colorado] ANDY METZGER helped lead a team of 25 church planters from their homes in North Carolina to start a church in Denver. "Living in the heart of downtown Denver, raising a family and pastoring a church has been an incredible experience filled with stories of God's overwhelming grace and kindness," he says. "The artistic and educated alongside the hopeless and fatigued. At the heart of it all is a desire to see lives transformed by the gospel and power of Jesus Christ." Andy is grateful for your generous contributions and asks that you pray for the protection of leaders, the courage of members and the receptivity of friends in Denver.

Effective Prayers

[England] IMB workers PATRICK and SARAH SIMMS* ask for your prayers over the boroughs of London. During a prayer initiative for the city, they asked churches to adopt particular areas. Two years after a Texas church began praying and sending teams to join the Simms, Patrick met Rob,* a well-known man in the community. Rob became a believer and a vital part of the mission to reach the community with the gospel. Unfortunately, Rob recently died. Patrick and Sarah miss their friend and are praying for new connections to this area. You support this work through your prayers and through the Cooperative Program.

Bible Reference & Statement: Hebrews 11:4

Abel gave because he had faith in God. Even his death signaled victory. He became an example of faith for the new Israel, the church. Our giving demonstrates our faith and presents an example of faith for others.

MARCH 27, 2016

Oil Boom Leads to Gospel Sharing Boom

[North Dakota] God has called WILL and DEBRA PAGE to plant churches among the people of North Dakota. In 2012, the couple moved to Williams County, where an oil boom led to a 30 percent growth in population from 2010 to 2013. With the partnership of First Baptist Church of Williston, the Pages started a church in the dining room of a restaurant in Ray. They also helped to start a church that is reaching out to African immigrants in Williston. Thanks to your gifts, the Pages are reaching this growing community in North Dakota with the hope of the gospel. Pray that God would strengthen these two new churches and the Page family.

Christians 100 Percent!

[Middle East] JOHN and EVA VADER* will never forget the day they went to the sea for a picnic with their friend, Amir,* and his family. There, they found a place to baptize Amir and watched in awe as he also baptized his wife and children. "We're Christians now, 100 percent!" Amir declared. John and Eva were forced to leave Amir's country, but they rejoice that a Christian family remains. The Vaders have moved to another Middle Eastern country and are meeting others who hunger for the Word. Continue to give generously through the Cooperative Program so the gospel will move through the Middle East.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Paul reminded the Corinthians that the resurrection of Jesus Christ should motivate Christians to give. Easter is about God's giving to us. Paul remembered the first Easter season when Jesus gave up His riches to become poor for our sakes. The Cooperative Program enables us to partner with more than 46,000 churches to make Christ known.

MARCH 20, 2016

Truth for the Nations

[New Mexico] SCOTT WILSON leads the missions mobilization team in New Mexico, where he works with leaders who oversee ethnic and language works among Hispanics, Native Americans, Deaf, Chinese, Muslims, Russians and more. He also partners with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, WMU and church planting. Scott says New Mexicans face a variety of hindrances in accepting the gospel, including a struggling economy, entrenched beliefs from traditional Native American religion and a Hispanic culture heavily influenced by Roman Catholicism. Please support the Cooperative Program generously, and pray that missionaries in New Mexico will learn to communicate the truth of the gospel into a world that is changing rapidly.

From Planting Crops to Planting Churches

[Mexico] One morning IMB missionary, ANTHONY CONNER, grabbed a shovel to help Manolo, a man who belongs to the group that Conner and his family are trying to reach. Conner shared the gospel with Manolo and after about an hour, Conner asked him, "Manolo, isn't it time to give your life to Jesus?" Manolo said yes and in the middle of the alfalfa patch, they kneeled down and Manolo prayed to receive Christ. Today, Manolo is the pastor and church planter in the village where Anthony and his wife, MELISSA, work. Your gifts to the Cooperative Program allow the Conners to share the gospel in Mexico.

Bible Reference & Statement: Acts 3:2-6

That's exciting! Imagine having the ability to help someone dramatically enough to say that. In reality we do have such ability. When we share the gospel of Christ and give so others can devote more time to witnessing, people receive the new life that replaces spiritual death.

*Indicates name change for security.

QUARTERLY SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

Visit your state Baptist convention for the resources suggested below, or go to stewardshipdirect.com.

- Include a thank-you note with quarterly individual contribution forms.
- Celebrate Cooperative Program Day by using either a Cooperative Program tract or a drama sketch from the book titled *Restoring Hearts around the Cooperative Program*.
- Have someone share a tithing testimony during the worship service one Sunday.
- Use a stewardship drama sketch from the book titled *Spotlight on Stewardship* one Sunday.
- Encourage members to remain faithful in giving even as they vacation during the summer months.

APRIL 3, 2016

Planting Churches and Building Relationships

[Alaska] GARY and SHIRLEY BEARCE have served as associational missionaries for the Hatcher Pass Baptist Association in Alaska since 2006, after serving 17 years in Indiana. The association serves Wasilla and Palmer, but it covers an area larger than California. Shirley serves as the ministries assistant, and Gary works to catalyze the planting of new churches. Planting churches, building relationships and strengthening churches to reach a state that is more than 90 percent unchurched are the primary focuses. Through your prayers and giving through the Cooperative Program, more planters and partners are discovered and developed to effect change in Alaska. Pray for co-laborers who will start new work or join existing work to strengthen evangelism and discipleship.

Nice Because of Jesus

[North Africa and Middle East] When IMB medical missionaries CHAD and SARAH HARDY* met Anya,* she mentioned how nice foreigners were compared to Arabs. The Hardys were treating Anya for tuberculosis when Sarah took the opportunity to tell her that they are "nice" because of Jesus, not because of the country they are from. Anya began reading the Bible on her own. One night when she couldn't sleep, she wrote a poem and gave her life to Christ. She is still the only believer among her family, but is praying for them. Your giving through the Cooperative Program supports missionaries like the Hardys, who are using their medical skills to reach people for Christ.

Bible Reference & Statement: Romans 13:6-7

Our stewardship is revealed in all areas of our lives. Commitment to Christ leads us to pay our taxes and to support the ministries of our churches.

APRIL 10, 2016

Rainbows in East Asia

[East Asia] EILEEN SWARR,* a Christian worker in East Asia, was on a 12-hour train ride when she struck up a conversation with the woman seated next to her. The woman wanted to practice English and Eileen was happy to talk with her. When they saw a rainbow through the window, Eileen asked the woman if she knew the history of the rainbow. Eileen shared the story of Noah and God's promise. The woman had never even heard of the Bible, and Eileen was relieved to find that the woman lived close to her so they could remain friends. Southern Baptists join Eileen's work through their gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Meeting Physical Needs

[North Carolina] CHARLES and CAROLYN REED have served in the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association (GCBA) in Shelby, North Carolina, since 1990. The Reeds work in a community that has experienced high unemployment and poverty. Many families need assistance with heating and cooling bills, food, medicine, clothing and rent. By ministering to the community's physical needs, they get the opportunity to share the love of Christ. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program allow the Reeds to meet physical needs as they tell people about Jesus. Please pray that God will call more people in the GCBA and beyond to be part of ministry evangelism in the community.

Bible Reference & Statement: Acts 2:44-45

A distinguishing characteristic of early Christians was their cooperative giving. Today, through the Cooperative Program, we combine our gifts to reach more lost persons for Christ.

*Indicates name change for security.

APRIL 17, 2016

Providing Refuge in Jesus

[New York] JEREMIAH BRINKMAN ministers to the people of northern New York as a pastor, church planting catalyst and community helper. He and his family share God's love with the elderly, teens, families and people in need of a refuge. In particular, they work with Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered recovery program. Their ministries are aimed at helping people who have problems that are often a result of their background or social status and introducing them to the One who loves them and cares for them. Pray that Jeremiah and fellow church planters will have wisdom as they mentor church planters, church leaders, interns and people in the church, and support them through the Cooperative Program.

Salvation Is a Gift

[South Asia] In their first week of living in South Asia, STEPHEN and CHRISTINE LANSDELL* had opportunities to share the gospel. "I have done countless things wrong. Will I still be accepted?" a man asked Stephen, after hearing about Jesus. "That's the reason Jesus came," Stephen said. "We are all sinners." He explained how salvation is a gift and asked if the man wanted this gift. The man believed in Jesus and couldn't stop smiling. Gifts to the Cooperative Program sent the Lansdells to South Asia, where many more will hear and believe.

Bible Reference & Statement: 1 Peter 3:15

God expects us to be prepared at all times to give a witness about what Christ has done in our personal lives. Practicing Christian money management helps us give generously, which is a powerful witness to Christians and to non-Christians alike.

MAY 1, 2016

Leading Hispanics to Faith in Jesus

[Oklahoma] CARLOS and AURORA AGUILAR serve with First Baptist Church of Poteau, Oklahoma, and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, where they start churches among Hispanics in southeast Oklahoma. The Aguilars share the gospel with Hispanic immigrants who come to a four-county area of Oklahoma to work in chicken processing plants and rock quarries. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program help the Aguilars lead Hispanics to faith in Jesus and start new churches. Please pray that God will touch the hearts of the immigrants coming to southeast Oklahoma so they can have an encounter with Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Entertaining Provides Opportunities to Share

[East Asia] BRIDGET PENNELL* is known by her teammates as the "party person." She often uses entertaining in her home to open doors to conversations about the gospel and to build relationships. Parties are especially appealing to the university students in her city who want to get to know an American and also practice their English. Bridget, who serves in East Asia thanks to the Cooperative Program, also teaches classes in life skills and provides counseling services through a training center in the city. She is grateful to Southern Baptists for the chance to spread the gospel in East Asia.

Bible Reference & Statement: Exodus 22:21

Israel was commanded to show sympathy to needy strangers. When we give to God through the church, part of what we give reaches out beyond our church to help those in need.

APRIL 24, 2016

Sharing in the Celebration

[South Asia] JAMES and ANGELA ANDRETTI* went with their good friend and new believer, Asha,* to a river outside of town for her baptism. Much to their surprise, many in Asha's family came to witness the baptism and share in the celebration. None are believers, but all heard Asha explain the gospel message and how she had come to believe. The next day, she texted the Andrettis to say her baptism was the greatest moment in her life. Southern Baptists make these moments possible through their gifts to the Cooperative Program.

Challenges and Blessings

[Ohio] Locating pockets of the many people groups in Ohio cities, praying with a church planter as he develops a launch plan and directing new leaders toward available resources are just some of the challenges and blessings regularly experienced by BRUCE SMITH, associate executive director for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. Because you support the Cooperative Program, Bruce can coordinate funds for missionaries and their ministries and partner with associational leaders to develop strategies for reaching the millions of Ohioans who do not have a relationship with God. Pray for more church planters to be called from existing churches and church plants and for a movement of God to sweep across Ohio.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 24:46-48

To preach repentance and remission of sins to the entire world exceeds the ability of any one person. We must join forces to share Christ's love. We can reach the lost through the Cooperative Program as our church adds its missions giving to that of other churches.

MAY 8, 2016

Leading, Equipping and Developing Church Leaders

[South Asia] DENNIS and LOIS HARTNETT* work for the Leadership, Equipping and Development (LEAD) team, providing Bible training to church leaders. Because leaders may be unable to receive Bible training due to travel costs, the Hartnetts go to them. They may be on the road for a few days or a month. They model their teaching on 2 Timothy 2:2, HCSB: "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." They want those they teach to teach others. Your giving through the Cooperative Program helps train church leaders in South Asia.

Pushing Back Spiritual Darkness

[Connecticut] JOSHUA SMITH is the worship and arts pastor for a church plant in Connecticut. There is a spiritual darkness there. Mediums, psychics and healers are often the ones New Englanders turn to in their search for spiritual insight. Unfortunately, Christianity and the church are rarely considered as sources for guidance. Many consider Christianity a dying movement that doesn't relate to their everyday needs, much less their eternal needs. But with your help through the Cooperative Program, people in Connecticut are coming to Christ. Joshua asks Christians to pray for God to continue to provide resources and safety for him and his family as they serve there.

Bible Reference & Statement: Acts 9:36

Tabitha (Dorcas) is kindred to all mothers; she distinguished herself by her giving. She made coats and garments for widows in her village. As we give today, let us remember Christian mothers everywhere who reveal Christ through their giving.

**Indicates name change for security.*

MAY 15, 2016

Jesus is the Only Way

[Oregon] JOSH CARTER serves in Portland, a cutting-edge city that is directing the course of culture. Some Portlanders call their home the new Sin City, as evidenced by the fact they now have more strip clubs per capita than any other city in the U.S. Most residents claim no religious affiliation and are tolerant of any and all religions, but are opposed to the idea of an exclusive way to heaven. It has been said there are more Christians in India per capita than there are in Portland. Your support through the Cooperative Program can help change that. Pray for Josh's team as they seek church partners and strong relationships in their community to share Jesus.

Heart Language Bible Storying

[South Asia] Christian workers, DYLAN and JESSICA VILMEK,* teach South Asians to share the gospel using Bible stories and also to make audio recordings of the stories so they can be shared with others in a particular language group. Many South Asians are literate but still find it hard to understand what they read. Their education level is low and their preferred learning style is oral. During one training event, the Vilmeks' goal was to craft 200 Bible stories into a particular people group's heart language. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program help provide the gospel in many languages so that people can understand the good news of Christ.

Bible Reference & Statement: Genesis 14:17-20

When we experience victory in our lives, the natural response is gratitude to God. Just as Abraham gave tithes to the priest, Melchizedek, out of gratitude for victory in battle, we give in gratitude. The Cooperative Program enables us to partner with more than 46,000 churches to make Christ known.

MAY 29, 2016

Proclaiming the Gospel in Word and Deed

[Florida] MARC and SANDY JOHNSTON partner with Florida Baptist churches and associations through the Florida Baptist Convention to proclaim the gospel in word and deed. As lead strategist of the church and community ministries team, Marc leads his team to assist and equip believers to engage their communities through feeding ministries, a mobile dental unit, ESL classes, tutoring, migrant farm workers ministries and more. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program make it possible for nearly 20 million Floridians to have their physical and spiritual needs met. Please pray for the Johnston family, for Marc as he travels and that Florida Baptist churches will catch a vision for the ministry opportunities in their communities.

Summer Camp for the Deaf

[Deaf] JARED and NICOLE MALLET,* workers reaching the Deaf of Europe, have teamed with another worker from Canada to lead a Deaf summer camp in Hungary. Approximately 50 Deaf are attending the camp. They are from four different countries and are communicating in four different sign languages. Ask God to open the hearts of the Deaf campers as His love is shared with them. Pray for many Deaf to make a decision to follow Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Continue to give to the Cooperative Program so opportunities like this will continue.

Bible Reference & Statement: Mark 12:41-44

On Memorial Day, Americans remember loved ones who have died serving their country. Some people distinguish themselves by things they have done. Jesus singled out the widow to be remembered for her sacrificial giving as often as this Scripture is read. As we give today, we remember the faithful giving of those who have gone before us.

MAY 22, 2016

Unity in the Body

[South Africa] One hundred and fifty believers gathered in a small Baptist church. Although racially-motivated attacks were tearing their city apart, they stood together to ask God to bring peace. An elder called out the ethnic groups by name: white South African, Zulu, Xhosa and a dozen more. Everyone stood—black and white, young and old—joining hands across the aisles and singing together, "We are one in the Spirit." "It was beautiful," said IMB worker, ROSE SHEPHARD.* "We saw beautiful unity within the body of Christ today." Thank you for giving through the Cooperative Program so workers like Rose can point others to a God who unifies.

Forgiveness and Worth through Christ

[Pennsylvania] RAFAEL TORRES leads a small Hispanic church plant that is hungry for the Word of God. Many come from Catholic backgrounds that can be difficult to penetrate. He also offers counseling as a NAMB endorsed chaplain at a local prison. He often has to convince the young men that they are not worthless and can overcome addictions. Having gone through his own struggles with addiction, he can get to the heart of their lostness. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program are helping people find forgiveness through Christ. Pray for Iglesia Bautista Latina as they seek God's power to lead people to Christ. Pray for God to give Rafael wisdom to minister according to His will.

Bible Reference & Statement: Romans 12:1

God first wants us to give ourselves to Him. Reconciliation to God frees us to grow in the grace of giving. The percent of our income that we give may be used as one measure of growth in His grace.

JUNE 5, 2016

God's Love Transcends Differences

[West Africa] Three-year-old EVAN BRASHER* has never met a stranger, according to his parents, JOEL and RUTH,* who are Christian workers in West Africa. The youngest of four children, Evan doesn't even notice how different he looks from the majority of people around him. One of Evan's dearest friends is Frankie.* "Because of their friendship, we are developing a deep and open relationship with this family whose language, culture and beliefs are vastly different from ours. Evan and Frankie have taught us that the love of God transcends differences as easily as a hug between friends." Your gifts to the Cooperative Program are building relationships and turning people to God's love.

Positively Impacting the Entertainment Industry

[Georgia] DAVID and SHANITA HEAVENER serve Atlanta's entertainment and artistic community through The Revelation Studios Ministry. David began as a songwriter in Nashville and went on to Hollywood to write, produce and distribute more than 30 feature films. Their mission is to create a community where talent is discovered, nurtured and shared for the purpose of communicating the Father's love as expressed through Jesus. Through the Cooperative Program, you can have a positive impact for Christ on the entertainment industry and, in turn, the world. Pray that David and Shanita stay aligned with and sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Christ gave Himself for us. Many people have given their creativity, even their lives, that we might enjoy national and religious freedom. Giving through our church helps share the gospel that frees people from sin.

**Indicates name change for security.*

JUNE 12, 2016

Discipleship for Young Families

[South Carolina] South Carolina native JOHN CHAMBERS and his wife, CHRISTIE, started a church to reach the state's fourth largest city of Rock Hill. The church has had a significant outreach to college students from nearby Winthrop University. Many of those college students have stayed after graduation, giving the church plant a large number of young families. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program help John continue to build a church that's impacting the Rock Hill community. Pray that Remedy Church can add more seniors to their membership to help disciple the growing number of young families in the church. Also, pray that God will continue to open doors to reach college students.

Faith in Christ Changes Everything

[Southeast Asia] BETHANY and DAVID ANDERSON* work with a tribal group that had never heard the gospel until the 1950s. These tribal people were fierce headhunters who believed that a rite of passage for every boy was to kill and then take the human head. But once missionaries came and shared the gospel with them, everything changed. People came to faith and a church was established among the tribal group. The Andersons are continuing on the journey with this tribal group, helping believers reach out to other tribal people. Your giving to the Cooperative Program is making this work possible.

Bible Reference & Statement: Ezra 1:5-6

It has always been true that when God's people are in fellowship with Him and ready to serve Him, they give willingly.

JUNE 26, 2016

CP Funds Student Missions

[Tennessee] ZACHARY HUNN, a student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, served last summer as a NAMB GenSend missionary in Edmonton, Ontario. Through GenSend, he served Canadian National Baptist church plants in the city for 10 weeks. Thanks to your gifts through the Cooperative Program, Zachary got a firsthand look at what it means to serve on the front lines of ministry in one of North America's toughest-to-reach cities. Pray that God will continue to use experiences like GenSend to prepare him for a life on mission. Also, pray that God will bring other believers to Edmonton to build upon the missionary activity of Zachary and others.

Searching for God

[East Asia] LEE HENRY* was walking one day when someone called her name. It was one of her English students from years before. He told her that his family was going through a difficult time, when he realized that the only way out was through God. He found a Bible, and while he was searching for God, the Lord spoke to him, reminding him that his teacher, Lee, was a Christian. He set out to find her. Lee began training him. He now wants to move to a region to minister to Muslims. Gifts to the Cooperative Program support missionaries like Lee, who encourage and train new believers to live for God.

Bible Reference & Statement: Acts 20:35

One accomplishment that comes through using our money is helping the helpless.

JUNE 19, 2016

Tearing Down Demonic Strongholds

[Mozambique] Nearly a year after receiving Christ, Adel* made one of the most difficult choices of her life—to abandon her past as a witchdoctor and tear down the hut where she practiced. Three days later, BRIAN and BECKY HARRELL, who are supported through the Cooperative Program, received a call in the middle of the night reporting spiritual attacks in the village. They prayed for Adel's family and for the people of the village as demonic attacks continued. Finally, one man renounced his witchcraft, destroyed amulets in his home and accepted Christ. The darkness is strong, but the light of Christ is stronger.

Church Plant Gives Sacrificially

[South Dakota] JONATHAN and SHELBY LAND moved to South Dakota with their two daughters to plant a church in Sioux Falls. Connection Church launched Easter 2014 with 43 people. The church gave their entire first offering to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® and other church planting efforts. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program help Jonathan and Shelby build relationships with their neighbors and reach a thriving metropolis of 250,000 people with the good news about Jesus. Pray that God continues to give Jonathan opportunities to share the gospel in his community. Pray that God uses the Lands to develop future church planters throughout South Dakota.

Bible Reference & Statement: Proverbs 23:24

On this Father's Day let us fathers be good stewards of the responsibilities God has entrusted to us. Providing an example for our children in the way we use money and in the way we give money is part of that stewardship.

*Indicates name change for security.

QUARTERLY SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

Visit your state Baptist convention for the resources suggested below, or go to stewardshipdirect.com.

- Include a thank-you note with quarterly individual contribution forms.
- Evaluate your plan for developing the 2017 church budget proposal.
- Stay up-to-date on available stewardship resources by contacting your state Baptist convention.
- Conduct a state missions offering emphasis in your church.
- Order the churchwide annual emphasis resource titled *BEYOND: Giving Over and Above the Tithes*.
- Measure the progress of your stewardship plan from *Practical Ideas*, pp. 2–3.

JULY 3, 2016

Practice What Is Learned

[South Asia] BILLY and VANESSA GORIN* disciple nationals in their region using a specific training program. One of the groups that went through their program completed all 10 lessons and graduated. After graduation, the students began putting into practice what they had learned. A few months later, the Gorins met with some of the students who had graduated and learned that two of them had started five new churches and had seen 50 people baptized. Because of gifts through the Cooperative Program, the Gorins are able to train national believers how to share the gospel among their own people.

Ministers to the Spiritual But Unchurched

[Arizona] JEFF and JESSICA VANDERFORD are planting Authentic Life Church in Tucson. The people to whom they minister are spiritual but not churched and not followers of Jesus. They buy into the belief that says Christianity is OK for some but is not necessarily the path of salvation for everyone else. They are OK with whatever religion you want to follow, but they don't want you to share that with them. Your support through the Cooperative Program is helping to change the people of Tucson. Pray the Vanderfords will stay focused on making disciples for Jesus Christ. Pray they will boldly proclaim Christ's love to their community.

Bible Reference & Statement: Galatians 5:1

The Declaration of Independence asserted America's freedom. Freedom from the temptation to be selfish is won by choosing to be generous in giving.

JULY 10, 2016

Darkness in Paradise

[Hawaii] On the surface, Hawaii appears to be paradise. It is actually a dark place economically and spiritually. At least 50 percent of the population lives on some form of welfare. The use and selling of meth is rampant. Hawaii is a sex-trafficking hub for the Pacific, and more than 93 percent of the people have no relationship with Jesus. ZEKE TOMASELLI and his family are working to change that by planting churches all over Hawaii. Because of faithful servants like Zeke and your partnership through the Cooperative Program, lives are being changed. Pray for native leaders to be raised up and for new churches to be planted in Hawaii and throughout the Pacific.

Pay It Forward

[East Asia] When IMB missionaries DAVID and SARAH DAVIDSON* met their neighbor, Robert,* they shared the gospel with him and invited him to church. He was so excited to have the Davidsons as his friends! He attended church on Christmas and became a Christian. Within the year, he was baptized. Robert is a bicycle repairman, and through his work, he meets a lot of people and befriends them. Now he also shares the gospel and invites people to church with him, just as the Davidsons invited him. Because you give through the Cooperative Program, the Davidsons are able to share with people like Robert, who also share with their friends.

Bible Reference & Statement: Malachi 3:2-4

When God's people sin, giving is often reduced or eliminated. When we deliberately sin, we miss many of God's blessings. Robbing God of tithes and offerings is a sin (Malachi 3:8).

*Indicates name change for security.

JULY 17, 2016

Embrace a New Culture

[Sub-Saharan Africa] IMB missionaries, BRENDA and JIM BROCK, met Irina,* a girl who told them she would never become a Christian because she would lose her culture if she did. Irina began attending a Bible study with the Brocks on Saturdays, spending the night at their house and then going with them to church on Sunday mornings. Irina has now been baptized, and when Jim asked her if she understood how much God loved her, her answer was, "Of course!" Your gifts through the Cooperative Program support missionaries like the Brocks who are telling people all over the world how much God loves them.

Churches Planted in New Orleans

[Louisiana] As the Send City missionary for New Orleans, GEORGE ROSS develops and implements a citywide strategy for planting new churches and mobilizing established local churches to plant 120 multiplying church plants. He also supports and ministers to church planters and their families who are serving there. He and his wife carry a great emotional weight for the planters and their families. God is working, though, as 10 new churches have been started and 60 established churches mobilized to join the church planting movement in New Orleans. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program are making this possible. Pray for more multiplying churches to help reach the 72 neighborhoods of New Orleans with the gospel.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Peter 3:17-18

Commitments to God are very important. Unless we consciously reaffirm them, we sometimes forget them. Let us reaffirm our commitments to grow in the grace of giving.

JULY 31, 2016

Education Opportunities Open Doors to Gospel Sharing

[Southeast Asia] JOAN MCGUINESS* opens doors to the gospel through education. She works with English teachers in Southeast Asia to prepare creative and interesting lessons for high school students. She works with 38 different schools, offering much-appreciated support to teachers and faculty. She also involves volunteer teams from churches in the U.S. in her ministry. Because you give through the Cooperative Program, Joan has been able to move to a different island and offer the same kind of support to other schools. Through the relationships she builds in the schools, doors to salvation are being opened in Southeast Asia.

Miracles in Montreal

[Canada] God called DAVID POTHIER to plant La Chapelle (The Chapel) in the heart of Montreal. In one year, the church grew from zero to more than 850 in weekly attendance. Even more amazing, this occurred in the most secular city in North America, where less than 0.5 percent of residents are evangelical Christians. None of this would be possible without faithful giving through the Cooperative Program. The vision God has given La Chapelle is to serve as a church-multiplication center, but two miracles are needed: a building and the resources to purchase it. Please pray for God's favor and blessing on this vision.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Corinthians 8:12

Christian giving is always in proportion to one's income. Faithful servants will always give back to God according to the abundant blessings they have received.

JULY 24, 2016

New Life for a Dying Church

[Kansas] KRISTOPHER SMILKO's newly formed congregation was growing quickly and needed a meeting space. God led them to a church with a dwindling congregation. The two merged to form Grace on the Rock church. The church is located in Sedan, Kansas, a small community where many people grew up attending church and say they believe in God, but do not have a relationship with Jesus. Kristopher says drug abuse and subsequent poverty have become strongholds that keep people from following Jesus. Pray for Grace on the Rock as they search for another worship leader. Pray that the church continues to grow and give generously through the Cooperative Program to support this ministry.

CP Provides Much Needed Bibles

[North Africa and Middle East] A Christian worker in North Africa reports that 1,000 Bibles were recently distributed to the clergy of many rural Orthodox churches. Most of these isolated churches had never even had one Bible. Now the priests can study, teach and preach from the Bible instead of other traditional Orthodox books. You have been a part of this blessing because you give to the Cooperative Program. Please pray, along with our workers, that God will give these priests, their students and others who can read a great hunger to know God, Jesus and His truths.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 24:47

Common goals can often bring a group of people together. Reaching the lost is our common goal as Christians. A united growth in giving is needed to help achieve this goal.

AUGUST 7, 2016

Ministry among Mormons

[Idaho] When SCOTT and JENNIFER PLATH received an email challenging them to consider ministry where Christianity is seen as a cult, they thought of someplace overseas. Surprisingly, the message pointed to the Northwest U.S. They learned of the Mormon influence in eastern Idaho and of the extreme need for SBC churches. After seeking God's will, they packed up and moved from Tennessee to Rigby, Idaho, to plant Faith Baptist Fellowship. They also lead a Bible study at a nearby juvenile corrections facility. The Plaths thank you for faithfully supporting them through the Cooperative Program and ask for prayers against the enemy's deception and that the eyes of many will be opened to the truth of Jesus.

The Jesus They See

[East Asia] BILLY and SARAH FONTENOT* draw attention in the East Asian city where they live and minister. An American family with four children stands out in this town, and every day gives them a chance to shine the light of Christ. Most of the people they meet have never encountered a Christian family. As friends watch their style of parenting, they have opportunities to share biblical truth and instruction for life. They are seeing people come to faith as a result of their family ministry. Thanks to the Cooperative Program, the Fontenots are raising their family where few will ever meet another Christian.

Bible Reference & Statement: 1 Timothy 5:17-18

Giving to support those who have been called to a full-time Christian vocation is a biblical principle. Pastors and staff, denominational workers, evangelists and missionaries extend our ministries when we give.

*Indicates name change for security.

AUGUST 14, 2016

The Perfect Sacrifice

[West Africa] A sheep ran around the legs of Christian worker SAM GARDNER* while he was talking with a group of men in town. Seeing Sam's startled reaction, a man in the group said, "Sorry, we need them for sacrifices." Sam replied, "Christians do not perform animal sacrifices because Jesus is our perfect sacrifice. All our sins—past, present and future—are dealt with through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. This is a big difference between us." Thank you for giving through the Cooperative Program so Sam can clearly explain the message of Jesus in West Africa.

NAMB's Farm System

[Kentucky] JOSH and JULIA MOODY love serving the Lord in Louisville, Kentucky, through Eastpoint Community Church. Josh serves there as a church planting intern—a stage in the NAMB farm system of discovering, developing and deploying church planters and missionaries. One might think there are enough SBC churches in Louisville, but the population has skyrocketed in this area of the city and more are needed. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program are helping to discover and equip future missionaries through NAMB's farm system. Josh asks that you pray for his lead pastor, Kris Billiter, and that Eastpoint will have an eternal impact on the community.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 12:20-31

Jesus told about a rich farmer who kept an abundant harvest for his own selfish use. Without a thought of giving thanks or giving to help others, he built larger barns to accommodate his riches. Giving helps free us from such selfishness.

AUGUST 28, 2016

Sharing Bible Stories and Games

[South America] On Sunday mornings, missionaries JACOB and JESSICA JANSEN* gather 60 to 80 children from the village in a mango tree grove to play games associated with a Bible story that will follow. Jacob makes follow-up home visits to tell parents the Bible stories their children are learning. Friday and Saturday evenings are youth and family game nights, including a type of field hockey using sticks. Thanks to your giving through the Cooperative Program, Jacob and Jessica have been able to follow their call to missions and live among an unreached tribe in South America. In this remote location, they are building relationships that lead to eternity with Christ.

Reaching the Unreached

[Illinois] SCOTT COX is a church planting missionary who leads The Bridge Church in Lebanon, Illinois. The church seeks to reach people who are outside church culture and have little or no exposure to the gospel. The Bridge Church conducts numerous outreaches such as block parties, community service events and evangelistic activities in order to help church members build relationships with those in the community. "Our strategy is to show people Christ through our actions before we share our words," he says. Pray that Scott, his family and members of The Bridge sense God's protection and provision in the thick of ministry and provide for them through the Cooperative Program.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12

A willingness to work and provide for oneself and family is a good testimony for the Lord. It also makes possible giving through our church to help share the gospel.

AUGUST 21, 2016

The One God Sent

[Iowa] In 2012, GILMER MAURICIO traveled from Bolivia to Cedar Rapids to visit family. While there, he visited Immanuel Baptist Church and asked the pastor about a Hispanic church. Gilmer did not know God had placed planting a Hispanic church on the heart of this pastor or that he had been praying for four years for someone to lead that work. The pastor told Gilmer if he was the one God had sent he could start immediately. Now the whole family and the church continue to grow. Pray for Gilmer and his wife, ETHEL, as they emphasize salvation and work to restore and strengthen Hispanic families, and give generously through the Cooperative Program.

Discipleship in Action

[South Asia] MITCH and NELLIE ENGLEHART* never tire of watching new believers be baptized. In one morning, they watched as a national pastor baptized the first believer, then each newly baptized believer baptized the next. This is discipleship in action, Mitch says, and it's what brought him to South Asia. The Engleharts have spent the past nine years training church leaders. They have seen more than 1,200 new churches and more than 3,000 baptisms in the past five years. They are thankful that the Cooperative Program is changing eternities in South Asia.

Bible Reference & Statement: Proverbs 30:7-9

Managing well the material things that God provides takes maturity. Our goal should be to maintain balance between too little and too much. Maintaining balance frees us to grow in our giving, and giving helps maintain balance.

SEPTEMBER 4, 2016

Greater Things for Christ

[Arkansas] When TRENT LATHAM accepted Christ at 13, it was a commitment to do great things for Him. Trent is a college student, a college minister in his church and a NAMB GenSend mobilizer. As a student, he connects other students to the local church. As a minister, he discipled them. As a mobilizer, he mobilizes them to serve in Boston, one of NAMB's Send Cities, to share the gospel, build relationships and lay the groundwork for future church plants. Because you give through the Cooperative Program, students are being discovered, developed and deployed as future church planters and missionaries. Pray that God will use Trent and the students who serve in Boston for even greater things.

From Creation to Christ

[Central Asia] Christian workers, MAX and MELODY KINGSBURY,* share about their friend Kadir.* "During our first meeting, he told us he had watched the Jesus film with his whole family and his New Testament was full of highlights and underlines of things he found interesting or confusing. Kadir invited us to his village for our next visit. There, we shared the story of the Word from Creation to Christ and watched a film depicting John's account of the life of Jesus." Continue to support the Kingsburys with your prayers and giving through the Cooperative program so that relationships, like the one they have with Kadir, will continue.

Bible Reference & Statement: Romans 14:12

Giving an account of our actions does not have to be something dreaded. When we have followed Christ in our living and giving, accounting is a time for rejoicing.

*Indicates name change for security.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2016

Difficult Work

[East Asia] OSCAR and PEARL BURNS* are workers in East Asia, supported through the Cooperative Program. Oscar is native to the country where they serve, and he speaks the language well. He spends much of his time helping other workers learn the language. It brings him to tears to think of the sacrifice that workers make to bring the gospel to the unreached people of his home country—a work he says is very difficult. Oscar praises God for his coworkers and for the spread of the gospel in East Asia.

Ministry to Ethiopians and Eritreans

[Indiana] Three thousand Ethiopian and Eritrean immigrants live in the Indianapolis area. YOSEF and BETHLEHEM DESTA accepted the challenge of bringing the gospel to them by planting Grace Ethiopian Church. They minister to these people groups both in Indianapolis and in Ethiopia providing humanitarian aid, translation of Christian theological materials into their native language, mission trips to Ethiopia, education and Bible training for pastors and more. They have much to celebrate as they see the community embrace Christ, but the task is far from complete. Your generous gifts through the Cooperative Program are making a difference. Pray for godly men and women to come alongside the Destas as they share the gospel in Indiana and beyond.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 16:10-12

The word *steward* in the Bible means *manager*. Everything we possess really belongs to God; we just manage it for Him. Think about it—God gave us freedom to give away what belongs to Him.

SEPTEMBER 25, 2016

Beaten for Believing

[Central Asia] BOB and JOY BENTON* ask that you pray for Rose,* a believer who is undergoing persecution from her family because of her decision to follow Christ. Rose and her daughter Angel,* who was the Benton's child care worker, are the only Christians in the family. When Rose's family found out that she intended to be baptized, they beat her, destroyed her Bibles and kept her from leaving the house unaccompanied. The Bentons can only have limited contact with her now, but they were able to give her a Bible on a computer flash drive. Your giving through the Cooperative Program makes a difference to the Bentons and to people like Rose.

Debunking a False Gospel

[Utah] BOBBY and LINDSAY WOOD are church planting missionaries serving near Salt Lake City. Their new congregation of young families and college students meets in a rented performance arts theater near downtown Ogden. Nearly 98 percent of the people in Utah are lost, believing either a false gospel or nothing at all. Your support of the Woods, and other missionaries in and around the Salt Lake City area, through the Cooperative Program is changing that. Pray that the Woods will form relationships within the community through their many outreaches and that many lives will be changed by professing faith in Jesus.

Bible Reference & Statement: Ecclesiastes 5:10

Material things are a vital part of life, but not the most vital. Though we often measure our self-worth by what we possess, wealth itself cannot bring genuine meaning to life. Using wealth in unselfish ways, such as giving to God through one's church, is how wealth adds meaning to life.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2016

Sow the Gospel

[Kansas] MATT MAESTAS, a Wyoming native, grew up in an unbelieving home. He came to faith through a combination of his grandmother's love and prayers, Vacation Bible School in fifth grade and a television show called "Gospel John" that came on at 5 a.m. every morning before Scooby Doo. Now he and his wife, JESSICA, serve to recruit, resource and train church planters in Kansas and to connect planters and partner churches to under-reached people groups and areas in need of the gospel. Please give through the Cooperative Program, and pray for interns, apprentices and church planters as they sow the gospel in Kansas and for the collection of multiplying church centers in Kansas.

An Imam Hears the Gospel

[Southeast Asia] When IMB missionary, NORM STARR,* took educational supplies to Muslim and Christian families living on the run from persecution in 2001, he never imagined it would open a door to share the gospel 12 years later. In 2013, Starr went back to the area and met an imam from the community he had helped years before. Thankful to him, the imam took Starr into the mosque. Starr shared the gospel with the imam. Thanks to your Cooperative Program gifts, Starr was able to continue relationships and share the truth of God's Word with an unreached group.

Bible Reference & Statement: Hebrews 10:23-25

Perhaps many of us would consider giving more seriously if we were sensitive to the nearness of the coming Day of the Lord. This Scripture instructs us to live and give for the benefit of others.

*Indicates name change for security.

QUARTERLY SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS OF CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

Visit your state Baptist convention for the resources suggested below, or go to stewardshipdirect.com.

- Include a thank-you note with quarterly individual contribution forms.
- Promote Cooperative Program Month during October by distributing four Cooperative Program tracts.
- Conduct the BEYOND: Giving Over and Above the Tithe stewardship emphasis in your church on four Sundays during the month.
- Receive the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® throughout the month of December to support international missions.
- Encourage end-of-year giving in the church.
- Present and adopt the church budget for 2017.

OCTOBER 2, 2016

Poised to Impact the Future

[California] The San Francisco Bay area is a place of both affluence and influence—a place poised to impact the future like no other place in the U.S. This is where RICH and RHONDA JOHNSTONE call home, serving as Send City missionaries for the Bay Area, which includes San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and surrounding areas. Their job is to impact these under-reached communities through evangelistic church planting. Because of faithful giving through the Cooperative Program, you are spreading the message of Christ in this diverse and influential area. Pray the influence the Bay Area wields will be used to make Jesus known throughout the Bay Area, North America and the entire world.

In for the Long Haul

[Central Asia] In the mountains and valleys of a Muslim Central Asian country, Christian aid worker, GARY WARRIOR,* and his team are helping meet people's physical and spiritual needs. It often takes a long time for someone to come to know Jesus, and those who do face persecution from their family and community. But slowly, Gary is seeing Muslim people come to Christ and become excited to share the gospel. He is grateful for the faithful givers to the Cooperative Program who helped his team plant five house churches that still meet today. Pray for the country's key leaders to accept the truth of the gospel of Christ.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 15:21

After a change of heart, the prodigal son called his wasteful spending "sinning against heaven." Ask God to help you be a good steward of what He has provided you for spending and giving.

OCTOBER 9, 2016

Measuring Happiness

[Denmark] In a place where happiness is measured by the well-being of its citizens, Danes are generally content, says IMB worker BRAD SMITH.* They also seem generally content with the notion that there is no God. In fact, it's a rather embarrassing topic, as if they've moved on from such a story. Though Denmark is regarded as a Christian nation, postmodernism—the realization that any one system can't fix every problem—gets carried into a post-Christian thinking that there is no absolute truth. To reintroduce Jesus into this culture is a challenge for the church, one that must first be met by prayer. Your prayers and support of the Cooperative Program can bring the gospel to the Danish people.

Spiritual Rebuilding After Katrina

[Louisiana] RYAN and SEANE RICE are church planting missionaries in New Orleans. They love the city and the people. Their vision is to see a multicultural church full of disciplined believers who immensely love God, people and their city. Years ago Hurricane Katrina devastated the city, both physically and spiritually. Since that time, much has been done in the way of physical rebuilding. But much work remains to be done in the way of spiritual building and rebuilding. This can happen through missionaries like Ryan and Seané and your gifts to the Cooperative Program. Pray for the Rice family as they reach out to their community doing neighborhood cleanup, movies in the park and apartment ministry.

Bible Reference & Statement: Isaiah 55:2

Our use of money should produce a quality of life that is fulfilling and eternal. Primary in the use of money is giving to share the gospel and to help people in need.

**Indicates name change for security.*

OCTOBER 16, 2016

Evangelical Ministry on Campus

[Maine] MARILYN MCCLENDON serves as a collegiate ministry coordinator in Maine. She shares the gospel with college-aged young adults who are not part of any evangelical ministry, providing opportunities for them to connect with other students for conversation, Bible study, worship, discipleship and more. Maine has 42 higher education campuses, and less than one third provide any type of evangelical ministry. Only 3 percent of the population of Maine acknowledges a church affiliation, and less than 1 percent of those profess faith in Christ. The work, though a blessing, can be difficult and discouraging. Pray that college students would have soft hearts toward the gospel and that campus administrators would be open to evangelical ministry on campus.

Sharing the Gospel in the Amazon

[South America] When KATHY thought about the Amazon region, all she could picture were anacondas, piranhas and jaguars. She had zero interest in living in such a place. But after Kathy prayed for unreached people groups in the Amazon jungle for 10 years, God showed her that's exactly where He wanted her to go so she could reach those people with the gospel message. God has led Kathy, a single 63-year-old missionary, through a journey of obedience and courage so she could share His love with unreached peoples in the Amazon. Thank you for supporting her ministry through your giving to the Cooperative Program.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 11:39-41

After we confess our sin, accept Christ as Savior and Lord and begin to grow in Him, many God-honoring things can come forth from our lives. The way we give is shaped by our experience with Christ.

OCTOBER 30, 2016

Students Leave Sinful Lifestyles

[Maryland] MIKE MCQUITTY works alongside a team of Baptist campus ministers and church leaders to share Christ with college students across Maryland and Delaware. They utilize outreach events and discipleship groups to train students to share the gospel with their peers. Hundreds of students are currently involved in Bible studies and discipleship throughout the region. Many of the students reached come from nations around the world. Because you give generously through the Cooperative Program, many students are leaving behind lifestyles of sexual impurity, drug or alcohol use and other social pressures to pursue God. Pray for more workers, resources and opportunities to share God's love with college students.

God Answers Prayer Above and Beyond

[Southeast Asia] LAYLA MURPHY,* a worker supported through the Cooperative Program, leads a Bible school for an unreached people group. The first time she taught the class, she prayed for 20 people. Fifty people came. They were faithful for a whole year, attending class four hours a week. Today eight classes meet around the city. Students are active in sharing their faith and starting other Bible study groups in their communities. One student even came to Layla one day saying that he had accidentally started a church! He was surprised to know that a group he had met with several times had continued to meet for Bible study and worship.

Bible Reference & Statement: Colossians 4:2

We need to be faithful in prayer, alert and grateful as we communicate with God. Approaching God in this spirit, we are more likely to be sensitive to our need and opportunity to give.

OCTOBER 23, 2016

A Treasure Trove of Peoples

[Central Asia] When DENVER and TRISH EWING* were forced to leave the Central Asian country where they had served for 10 years, they didn't fully realize their new home—an energetic metropolis—would be a treasure trove of peoples from all corners of Central Asia. Settling into their brand-new life and work, the Ewings discovered Muslim men and women from all over Central Asia working in the megacity of 15 million. Thank you for giving through the Cooperative Program, which supports the Ewing's work. They are realizing many new opportunities to share the hope of Christ among Central Asians.

Reaping the Ripe Harvest

[California] KIRK OVERSTREET, in his role as a church planting catalyst, works with church planters trying to start churches and share the gospel in an area that is home to 7.1 million people in the 86 cities of the Inland Empire and Orange County associations. Riverside and San Bernardino counties are the largest in the U.S. A recent study showed that another 1.6 million people will be moving into Inland Empire by 2016. Though there has been a jump in numbers of interested church planters, clearly the need for more is great. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program can help reap this ripe harvest. Pray for more church planters and more partnering individuals and churches.

Bible Reference & Statement: Nehemiah 12:43-44

Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. The people responded to God's blessings and protection with worship. Among other things, they brought contributions, first fruits and tithes to express their worship.

NOVEMBER 6, 2016

God's Mission in Germany

[Germany] CARL NEUMANN* leads a house church of only 10 people, but those people are starting new Bible study groups among the lost throughout the city. Carl is excited about Thilo,* who started a soccer team for disabled kids, the only such opportunity in the city for kids with disabilities. As many as 20 kids have come to recent practices. "One of Thilo's goals is, of course, to get to know the parents and introduce them to Jesus and the gospel, hopefully leading to the start of another new Bible study," Carl said. Join God's mission in Germany through your prayers and through the Cooperative Program.

All In

[Wyoming] Six years ago, JAMES SCOTT decided there was more to life than being just a cowboy giving half his life to Jesus. He wanted to be all in, surrendering his whole life as a diamond in the rough for God to polish. God took a cowboy from nowhere and gave him a passion to reach the lost. James lifts high the name of Jesus with great effectiveness as a cowboy pastor, a missions pastor, through rodeo outreaches, revivals and other venues. James and his wife, REBECCA, are appreciative of those who support them through the Cooperative Program and ask that you pray God will bring more partners to join what God is doing in Wyoming.

Bible Reference & Statement: Luke 6:38

Jesus emphasized the giving nature of Christians. Of the many characteristics that distinguish new life in Christ, giving is very visible. Giving is a testimony.

*Indicates name change for security.

NOVEMBER 13, 2016

Extreme Missions

[Peru] IMB missionary JOSHUA MURPHREE takes Christians on extreme backpacking trips into the mountains of Peru in order to share the gospel with the Northern Conchucos Quechua people. Your giving through the Cooperative Program supports his ministry. Joshua says, "We are thankful for the faithful prayers of our prayer partners who covered us in prayer as we traveled. Those prayers helped us blaze trails for future backpacking teams who will serve alongside us here in Northern Conchucos." As they hiked, they found some believers and pastors of existing churches who cannot read. Your giving will help provide oral Bible stories from God's Word that will be available in their heart language.

Building Partnership Networks

[Canada] BRETT and KATHRYN PORTER have called Canada home since 2005. They moved to the Greater Toronto Area to plant The Sanctuary Mississauga. Now Brett serves as NAMB's Send City missionary for Toronto. Brett helps build a partnership network with established missional churches in the U.S. to catch the vision for churches planting churches and to provide a support system for new planters in a city where the evangelical Christian population is little better than 3 percent. Your Cooperative Program dollars are working to discover, develop and deploy church planters and partners to Toronto. Pray that people in Toronto would find the gospel irresistible and for more planters and partners in ministry to Toronto.

Bible Reference & Statement: 2 Corinthians 9:11

Being thankful to God for all His blessings shapes our lives. Thankful people please God. Giving is the response of a thankful heart, and it produces thanksgiving from people who benefit from our giving.

NOVEMBER 27, 2016

Faithfulness, Not Rewards

[Southeast Asia] MARK and LISA PATENAUDE have faithfully served on the mission field for more than 18 years, but have seen few new believers. Lisa shared a poignant story about praying and lamenting the lack of response among her neighbors. She felt God say to her, "Are you only going to serve Me if there's fruit? Is this about the 'fruit' or is it about Me?" Lisa said this insight helped her to understand they are serving among a hard-to-reach people out of obedience to God. For the Patenaudes, who are supported through the Cooperative Program, their ministry is about faithfulness and not the rewards.

Bringing Millennials to Christ

[Wisconsin] CARL GRIFFIN was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. When he was 4 years old, his mother moved them to Mississippi where Carl, at the age of 10, accepted Christ as his Savior. Today he and his wife, LINDA, serve in Milwaukee focusing primarily on bringing millennials to Christ. In 2012, Carl planted New Life Baptist Church in a racially diverse, middle-income neighborhood. Their vision is to "make disciples the way Jesus does." New members spend the first six months in discipleship training and are then assigned to a small group for continued discipleship and disciple making training. Pray God will continue to grow New Life, and support the efforts in Wisconsin by giving through the Cooperative Program.

Bible Reference & Statement: Amos 6:4-6

We spend our life's energy and money for many things—food, clothes, housing, transportation, recreation, gifts, etc. Often we are tempted to overspend for things of lesser importance. The most important thing for which we expend life and money is sharing the gospel.

NOVEMBER 20, 2016

Working the Hard Soil of D.C.

[Washington, D.C.] After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps and with IMB and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as the director of the Fusion program, SHAWN and LESLEY BRANSCUM and their four young children transitioned to serving Jesus in the influential city of Washington, D.C., by planting Pillar Church. The Branscums are grateful for your generous support through the Cooperative Program and ask that you pray they will not become discouraged in working the hard soil of this important city, that they would be satisfied in God and not the world, that they would regularly pray and share the gospel and that Shawn would be faithful in preparing and preaching God's Word.

Access to Mexican Sign Language Needed

[Deaf] Christian workers with the Deaf, ANDY and ADRIANA HALL,* report that Deaf Mexicans struggle to break away from Catholicism. Some have accepted Christ as the only way to God; however, they struggle to share their faith with others because they do not have access to the Scripture in their heart language—Mexican Sign Language. Without full access to God's Word, Deaf Christians face challenges as they answer their friends' difficult questions. Your giving through the Cooperative Program will help provide Scripture to all people groups, including the Deaf of Central America.

Bible Reference & Statement: Colossians 1:27b-28

Many things may raise our expectations, but eternal hope is found only in Jesus Christ. Those of us who have hope can give to share the gospel so others, too, can hope in Christ.

DECEMBER 4, 2016

Coffeeshouse Turned Church

[Europe] TOM and JANE BELL* opened a coffeeshouse in their city, despite resistance from locals who didn't want evangelical Christians in their neighborhood. Slowly the coffeeshouse was accepted. It became a hub for concerts and English classes, as well as a supplier of school supplies and Bibles. Today a church meets in the building that once was a coffeeshouse. You support the Bells and this church through the Cooperative Program. Please pray for the Bells and the small group as they minister in this Eastern Orthodox city.

Engaging Tough Areas of West Virginia

[West Virginia] MATT and CRISSY SHAMBLIN serve in West Virginia, where Matt serves as an evangelism missionary for the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. Matt helps churches engage their communities with the gospel. Many churches in West Virginia are smaller than average churches elsewhere. It is also a place of great physical need. Your gifts help the Shamblins share Christ in a very difficult area of North America. Pray that pastors in West Virginia will persevere through tough circumstances. Also, pray for new churches to be planted in the state and that existing churches would have a renewed commitment to engage their community with the gospel.

Bible Reference & Statement: Matthew 25:1-12

These five foolish virgins did not use their resources to prepare for the Lord's coming. When it was too late they rushed out to buy oil. Our spending influences our giving and our relationship to Christ.

*Indicates name change for security.

DECEMBER 11, 2016

Breaking Down Barriers among the Deaf in East Asia

[Deaf] The Deaf in East Asia face a difficult road in their search for Christ. Barriers crop up daily, causing problems for missionaries who are trying to share the gospel with millions of Deaf in this part of the world. Some Deaf believe Christianity has hundreds of difficult rules, making it a boring and confusing way of life. Many families also put a great deal of pressure on Deaf adults to conform to the traditional religious practices to gain financial support. Accepting Christ means losing family, home and financial support. Pray for our workers in the Deaf affinity group, as you support them with your giving through the Cooperative Program.

Church Planting Brings Transformation

[Washington] TOBIN and CHARISSA PERRY have a vision for seeing their neighborhood of South Park in Seattle transformed by the power of the gospel. As preparation for planting a church in their neighborhood, Tobin served last year as a church planting intern at Epic Life Church. Your gifts make it possible for the Perrys to be involved in their under-served neighborhood and share the love of Christ with people who may not hear it otherwise. Ask God to open the hearts of those in the South Park neighborhood to the good news about Jesus.

Bible Reference & Statement: John 3:16

The highest example of giving is God giving His Son. God gave that we might have eternal life. That others may also have eternal life is a motive for our giving.

DECEMBER 25, 2016

God Draws Hindus to Himself

[South Asia] JUSTIN COTA,* a worker in South Asia writes: "Over the past several weeks I've shared the gospel numerous times with my friend Raj,* who is a practicing Hindu. After I shared the gospel with him the second time, he began asking many questions about Jesus and the Bible. He told me he wanted me to teach him about Jesus. About a week ago, he even asked me how someone becomes a Christian. Pray that the Lord will draw both Raj and his wife to Himself." Gifts through the Cooperative Program have made it possible for Raj to have a chance for eternal life.

The Legacy of Spiritual Fruit

[Texas] CHARISSA MACDONALD served in Chicago last summer as a NAMB GenSend missionary. As a mobilizer she recruited 10 college students from her home church in Fort Worth, Texas, to serve together in the Windy City. The team learned the rhythms of the city by immersing themselves in the city and intentionally meeting and building relationships with people. Your gifts helped Charissa and her team share the gospel and help new church planters work the hard soil of this city. Pray that God would continue to use the relationships the team developed in Chicago to produce spiritual fruit even after they have returned home.

Bible Reference & Statement: Matthew 2:11

These wise men traveled a long way to deliver their gifts in person. How fortunate we are to have a workable plan through which our gifts go directly to the need. Let us give with confidence that soon our gifts will become a blessing to those who need Christ.

DECEMBER 18, 2016

Brazilian Baptists Share the Gospel Story

[Brazil] Thousands of people living along Brazil's Amazon River have never heard the gospel story. Missionary ANDREW EVANS* is committed to working with Brazilian Baptists to reach them. The Cooperative Program supports his work and allows him to dedicate his time to spreading the good news of Christ in this region. One way Brazilian Baptists are fulfilling this goal is by sending out young missionaries two-by-two to live among Amazon River peoples and to start churches in their villages. As locals farm and fish, these missionaries do the same alongside them. In the process, they build relationships for sharing the gospel.

Rising Up to Proclaim the Gospel

[Virginia] God has given JASON and NEVA LAMB a burden and a vision to raise up a body of believers in northern Virginia who will rise up in the midst of their culture to passionately seek God and boldly proclaim the greatness of Him who calls us out of darkness and into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). They seek to accomplish this by planting the Rising Church in Leesburg. Because you give through the Cooperative Program, Virginians are being transformed by the gospel, set apart for the glory of God and sent out for the salvation of the world. Pray for the Lambs as they serve and for the salvation of many in Virginia.

Bible Reference & Statement: Romans 13:11-12

Has this been a year of growth that gives witness of what God is doing in us? For many it has. Growth in giving is a possibility within reach for most of us during the coming new year.

*Indicates name change for security.



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