

MISSIONS

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MAY 2020



MORE THAN CRAFTS

Dignity restored in broken lives

WHO SAYS THERE'S NO FREE LUNCH?

Plan a sandwich giveaway

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

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contents

Missions and Me

5 INTO THE WORLD

Make a Difference—*Love in action is love on mission.*

6 LIVING ON MISSION

Who Says There's No Free Lunch?—*Plan a sandwich giveaway.*

Missions Here and There

8 GLOBAL PARTNERS

International Mission Board,
North American Mission Board,
Woman's Missionary Union

12 MISSIONS INSPIRATION

George and the Boys—
How God helped a church reach inmates and their families.

16 THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT

More than Crafts—*Dignity restored in broken lives*

Missions Matters

22 DECADE DISCIPLESHIP

A Family Affair—*Missions and ministries offer a perfect time to work together.*

23 UNWRAPPING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Gift of Discernment—*Do you have the ability to identify truth?*



24 PEOPLE TO PEOPLE

But Why?—*Show compassion to those in pain.*

25 PERSISTENT PURSUIT

Help My Unbelief—*How to deal with doubt*

Heartbeat of Missions

26 BIBLE STUDY

Major on Minors—*Haggai*

28 PRAYER

Prayer Changes Things—
Faithful habits can transform you.

30 PRAYER PATTERNS

Learning from Mature Believers

45 LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Stand by Me—*How to help the victim of a violent crime*

In Every Issue

- 3 A WORD FROM US
- 4 LETTERS FROM YOU
- 46 GIFT OF MISSIONS
- 47 ON OUR MIND
- 48 ON THE JOURNEY

This Month's Missionaries

- Wes Costello**, New York (p. 9)
Andy Greenfield, Maryland (p. 10)
Parker Hulsey, Mississippi (p. 10)
Ross and Shirley Mackin, Southeast Asian Peoples (p. 32)
Josh and Jill McCarty, Colorado (p. 34)
Walter Ludwick, California (p. 35)
David Tolliver, Missouri (p. 35)
Gary Phillips, Illinois (p. 35)
James Haggy, Ohio (p. 36)
Nehemiah Cole, Maryland (p. 36)
David Worcester, California (p. 37)
Russell Woodbridge, European Peoples (p. 38)
Nokomis Gregory, North Carolina (p. 40)
Mark Johnson, American Peoples (p. 42)



2019-20 WATCHWORD

"My dear friends, stand firm and don't be shaken. Always keep busy working for the Lord. You know that everything you do for him is worthwhile"
 (1 Cor. 15:58 CEV).

OUR MISSION

... is to inform and inspire Christians to influence their world for Christ.

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MISSIONS RESOURCE

Women on Mission Leader

Consider these meeting plans to pair with *Missions Mosaic* articles on pages 16, 26, and 28.



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About ten years ago, a missionary colleague introduced me to a young woman who was on a short-term missions assignment. My colleague's plan was for Louisa and me to have regular meetings while she was serving with their team. She believed this connection would be helpful because of my call to missionary service as a single woman. In preparing for our first meeting, I prayed God would give our conversations depth and direction.*

During those months, Louisa dealt with a major family loss. Several years earlier, I had experienced a similar loss. As we shared our journeys through grief, God directed us to reflect on the beauty of our hope in Him. Our meetings over coffee did not include Bible study, but we often discussed what God was teaching us during our individual quiet times.

Many of her questions pointed to unknown details only God could answer for her at a future time in her life. And often my only contribution was to encourage her to trust Him. God began to remind me to *listen*. What she had to say was important. Understanding her heart meant we prayed with unity while waiting for God to lead her to the next thing.

Learning from a mature believer involves our individual and shared experiences with God. We want to

make a difference, but it may not be in the way we think. The difference is accomplished by God as we encourage and pray for each other to be spiritually equipped and thank Him for the results. To be spiritually equipped, we must faithfully embrace what we believe and daily represent Christ to the world. We use our spiritual gifts while encouraging other followers to recognize and use their own. A mature believer's life is to be an example of persistently pursuing God while cheering on other believers.

This month, *Into the World* (p. 5) presents ideas for developing a community of disciples where all ages serve and learn together. Learning is necessary for maturity to thrive. *Light in the Darkness* (p. 45) reminds us meditating on God's Word changes our hearts. This change overflows into our spoken



words, which God can use to bring healing to those who are wounded.

WMU's theme for May 2020 is *Learn from Mature Believers* and is a component of the 2019–20 theme, *Unshakable Pursuit*. God has a plan for each one of us. As we persevere in following His plan, our maturity becomes a reason for spiritual encouragement for sisters on the journey.

**Name changed.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila".

Sheila Flowers, Curriculum and Content Administrator
sflowers@wmu.org



Follow us on facebook.com/NationalWMU, pinterest.com/NationalWMU, and wmu.com/adults.

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:4).



Craft Days Bless Recipients

I just wanted to share with you the projects our Women on Mission® group are working on at our local church—Western Heights Baptist Church, Waco, Texas. Our goal is to share God’s love with our community in tangible ways. We are blessed to often receive donated fabric and supplies or to find them at little cost from local agencies such as Goodwill. We then transform them into items to donate. Some of the projects we are currently working on are T-shirt jump ropes for Operation Christmas Child, crib sheets and flannel swaddling blankets for CareNet (crisis pregnancy center), crocheted or knitted hats for an elementary school near our church, and items for our pastor’s wife to give out through her job with Nurse Family Partnership. At every craft day, we pray for the recipients of our gifts and include a small card with a Bible verse and message to let them know we have prayed for them. Thank you for *Missions Mosaic* magazine. We all enjoy reading the articles and praying for our missionaries at our monthly meetings.

—Patsy Halk, Texas

Church Hosts WorldCrafts Market

The Sharon Mission Group of Parkview Baptist Church, Lake City, Florida, hosts a WorldCraftsSM event each fall. We were excited to see the new marketing materials for the WorldCrafts market this year. The downloads were wonderful! Our invitation extended to the association and community using our church website. Over 50 interested ladies, many of them new faces, attended our market with four shopping areas: jewelry, home decor, accessories, and Christmas. WorldCrafts artisans were supported with the sale of \$1,500 worth of WorldCrafts pre-purchased merchandise. Several ladies got together at the market and ordered additional items afterwards. Thank you, WMU®, for helping our artisans around the world market their products so effectively.

—Sandy Furches, Florida



Small Church Shares Its Talents

Mt. Hebron Baptist Church WMU, Cuthbert, Georgia, had a busy 2019. Our mission project was making pillowcase dresses for children in Africa. There are currently eight women and one teenager involved in making the pillowcase dresses. For a small Baptist church, we made 110 dresses. We give God all the glory for allowing us to take part in sharing missions.

—Mt. Hebron Baptist Church, Georgia

HAVE NEWS TO SHARE? We'd love to hear from you. Please send your five- to eight-sentence paragraph with two or three high-resolution photos to mosaic@wmu.org or mail to *Missions Mosaic*, 100 Missionary Ridge, Birmingham, AL 35242. The paragraph and a photo may appear on the Letters from You page in a future edition of *Missions Mosaic*.

MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS WHO LIVE ON MISSION.

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Make a Difference

Love in action is love on mission.

In a world consumed by social media, outward image, and an endless obsession to be the best you can be, God's love still holds power to make a difference and to be the difference in any life.

While society measures success through numbers and the latest stats, God's eternal plan for humankind includes stories of relationships. From Chapter 1 of Genesis to the present day, God has remained in passionate pursuit of His people. God's love powerfully reveals His character while transforming the human heart in the process.

God will always make a difference, and God will always be the difference—in any given relationship, in any circumstance, in any place . . .

Mystery Missions Excursion

On the final day of their semester break, 16 middle and high school girls from Fayetteville First Baptist (Fayetteville, Georgia) partnered to make a difference within their community by participating in a Mystery Missions Excursion. Love in action is love on mission!

The first stop was the local dollar

store. The girls were instructed to pray about purchasing an item that would bless a senior church member who was a caregiver for her husband. The girls then introduced the item to the group and shared how God led them to make their selection. Each gift was then lovingly packed into a basket.

There is no better way to disciple young people in missions than to give them the opportunity to serve alongside mature believers.

The next stop was the home of that devoted wife and her husband. They were so grateful. As tears flowed, relationships were born, and weary hearts were transformed by God's love in action and on mission.

And finally, the girls worked shoulder to shoulder at a local pregnancy resource center, enthusiastically tackling a to-do list around the facility.

How is God calling you to make a difference or be the difference within your community or in someone's life? What relationship comes to mind even now as you ponder that question?

Community Impact and Missions Discipleship

There is no better way to disciple young people in missions than to give them the opportunity to serve alongside mature believers. Here are more activities to engage the generations in your church. Provide matching t-shirts and invitations to your church as you send out the teams.

- **Serve Teams**—Assign a young person to work alongside a skilled adult as you serve your community through yardwork, pressure washing, or painting projects.
- **Conversation Teams**—Pair young and old to engage the community in conversations as the other teams work on community improvement. Pre-training helps each team know how to have spiritually encouraging conversations.
- **Prayerwalking Teams**—What better way to teach a young person to pray than to have them walking a neighborhood with an older prayer warrior? **M**

JOANIE BALLARD is most grateful for her relationship with Jesus—the One who makes all other relationships possible.



Who Says There's **NO FREE LUNCH?**

Plan a sandwich giveaway.

One of the most universally loved foods is the sandwich. Sandwiches appeal to all generations because they are easy to eat, easy to personalize to your specific tastes, and they are delicious!

The sandwich was named after John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, an 18th-century English aristocrat. Montagu didn't want to stop what he was doing, so he asked his servant to bring his meat between two pieces of bread. His food invention caught on, and soon others began ordering their meals "the same as Sandwich!"

Here we are today, still eating and loving sandwiches. But how do we mix the enjoyment of food with reaching people for Christ? We can make one of the most beloved foods and give it away as an act of Christian kindness. And we can be blessed by the bonding and fellowship we receive when prepping food together. Start connecting with the women in your church to plan a sandwich-making party.

Decide Who Gets Your Sandwiches

One of the first details to discuss is to whom you might donate your sandwiches. Your donation may target groups such as law enforcement, emergency



medical technicians, fire departments, schoolteachers, food bank distribution volunteers, etc. Random food gifts to homeless individuals or college students is another idea. Setting up a table on a busy corner near your church is yet another option. Pick one or several of these ideas to decide your recipients, then determine how many sandwiches you'll be making.

You will need to contact any groups or institutions in advance and see if a free lunch is welcome. This way they'll know you are coming, and they won't make plans for lunch. If setting up on a street corner, make sure it's okay with the city first.

Choose a date for your sandwich giveaway, and make sure church members are available to assemble sandwiches together.

Plan What Kinds of Sandwiches You Will Offer

Decide what types of sandwiches you will offer. Choose two to three different types of meat. Ham, turkey, roast beef, or chicken are all good options. A good rule of thumb is one pound of deli meat per five or six sandwiches. Next, you'll want the bread. This can be as special as submarine rolls or as simple as sliced bread. Sometimes bakeries will offer a discount to churches for quantities of bread, so don't hesitate to ask.

Select a cheese to add to your sandwiches; yellow or white American are a great choice because they taste good with all meats. You will need a piece of lettuce for each sandwich. It's a good idea to buy condiment packets, such as mayo and mustard, to put with each sandwich. You can purchase these at restaurant supply stores, or a local restaurant might sell you some.



Decide who you will make it for. ✓

Plan to Create Your Sandwiches

Sandwiches can be made the night before or the day they are to be given away. Set up in your church kitchen or fellowship hall. Assembly-line style is the best way to make food because it moves quicker when people have a specific job. Covering tables with plastic will save cleanup time. Wearing plastic gloves keeps food sanitary.

As sandwiches are made, have the last person in line put them in a baggie and seal it with condiment packets and a napkin inside. Dropping the baggie into a paper sack creates extra room for optional additions. Place a label on the outside of the paper sack showing what kind of sandwich it is.

If you would like to include shut-ins or the children of your church in your project, invite them to decorate the lunch sacks with stamped designs ahead of time.

A sandwich itself is a wonderful gift. However, your group may want to include some extra items. Consider adding a bag of chips, piece of fruit, cookie, or bottled water.

Each sack should include a gospel tract and an invitation to your church, including a weekly schedule of ministries and contact information. You want to be reachable after your giveaway is over.

Set Out on Your Mission

Stop and pray over your sandwiches, asking God to bless them for the sake of the gospel. Load your sandwiches into coolers and start delivering them. If possible, take a few minutes to engage people with conversation. Ask recipients about their jobs, volunteer work, and if they have a church home.

Never underestimate the way God can use a gift as simple as a sandwich. **M**

SHEILA GOSNEY lives in Monroe City, Missouri. She's seen firsthand how God connects people with food as she serves food on Wednesdays in her church ministry.



INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

God answers prayer for prodigal son in Southeast Asia

[**Southeast Asia**] At a church Bible study, Bopha Soeur*, a Southeast Asian missionary who partners with an IMB missionary, explained to the group the

value of sharing how the Lord is working in their lives. Soeur emphasized how this can encourage others as well as acknowledge how God is at work.

Ary Chey*, one of the Bible study attendees, shared how God worked in her life through answered prayer. Chey said she'd been praying for her son, an alcoholic who often disappeared from home for long periods of time. When Chey began attending this church, her son was in trouble with

the law. Her husband said if God performed a miracle and brought their son back, he would believe in Jesus.

I'm holding him to it, Chey thought.

God answered her prayer, their son was released, and he came back home, repentant. The Lord gave Chey boldness to share the gospel with her whole family, and they all accepted Christ. Chey also shared the gospel with her uncle who lives in Thailand, and his entire family committed their lives to Christ.

Many members of the Bible study group have been interceding for their family members to come to faith. They said hearing how the Lord answered Chey's prayer encouraged them to not give up.

**Names changed.*

—Caroline Anderson

IMB PHOTO



Faith found despite false teachers

[**Sub-Saharan Africa**] Though Imani* was seeking God, the gospel had not reached her village. There were several groups that called themselves churches, but they didn't have access to the Bible, so they made up rules and declared their leaders were the spiritual authorities over their members' lives. Imani sought God in several of these "churches," but sensed she wasn't learning truth.

When IMB missionaries started teaching Bible stories in Imani's community, she soaked up every chance to learn about God's truth. She attended lessons multiple times a week so she could memorize the stories.

As Imani learned Scripture, she realized the church leaders in her villages were behaving like the Pharisees. The strict rules and man-made regulations for church members were contrary to what Jesus taught. Imani told the Bible stories to church leaders. They were shocked as they heard about the Good

Samaritan and the sinful woman who was forgiven. Many church leaders were convicted by Scripture and repented.

Imani said, "By hearing the Word of God, many are recognizing they need to change."

Imani placed her faith in Jesus and has committed to meet with other new believers in her village to study God's Word and to teach God's Word to others.

**Name changed.*

—IMB Staff



IMB PHOTO

Since many churches in Africa emphasize strict rules and man-made regulations, it is imperative for believers to find churches that focus on Scripture.

Refugee mom is bold in evangelism and discipleship

[The Middle East] Zahara* bubbles over with energy. She loves taking care not just of her own children, but of everyone who passes through her life. Her home is a place of welcome as visitors eat her food and experience her Middle Eastern hospitality. Her joy, however, is not just cultural or personality—Zahara trusts in Jesus, and that makes all the difference in a difficult life.

As a young teenager, Zahara married an older man. They fled their war-torn home and now live as refugees in a foreign land, where they struggle to meet their family's basic needs. She has witnessed the suffering of her older children, including one daughter who has experienced grief through abandonment, abuse, and loss from two marriages.

Many refugees seeking material help are like Jesus's parable of the seeds that sprout up but fall away when persecution comes. As others fall away, Zahara's faith stands firm. She testifies to the miracles she has witnessed in her life, including a

IMB PHOTO



Hospitality is an important aspect of Middle Eastern culture. Visitors are treated with a delicious meal and warm conversation around the table.

young daughter who was healed from a disease. She disciples other women and openly shares her hope.

Zahara's husband is tolerant of her faith but has not fully embraced it. He reads Scripture during quiet moments

on the job. Pray God will open his eyes and transform his heart. Pray other women will believe and join Zahara in the work of the gospel.

**Name changed.*

—Madeline Arthington

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

Bridging the gap between hip-hop and hipsters

[New York] We first met the Lopezes* at our fall festival in October. They approached and asked questions about who we were, why we are doing this, etc. Marco talked about being hurt by the church previously but wanting to give it another chance. The family came to church the next morning, but then we didn't see them for a few weeks.

Then several weeks later, they were back — and back consistently. They started staying longer and talking more. We could really see a transformation happening. Then, the Sunday before Christmas I had the chance to co-preach. As I was talking, I kept looking at Marco and

you could see on his face he was locked in, and he just had a smile on his face. After church, we were looking through our response cards, and he had checked he wanted to become a believer and be baptized! It was just

a great picture of God being faithful through this whole story.

My wife, Ashley, and I serve at Swerve Church in Bushwick, Brooklyn, in New York City. Bushwick is a neighborhood in north Brooklyn with 120,000

people crammed into two square miles. The neighborhood is primarily Hispanic, but there also is a large African American population as well as a growing hipster population. This clash of cultures has caused some tension in our neighborhood, but as a church, we believe "the only thing that can bridge hip-hop and hipster is the gospel." Our goal is to fill our neighborhood with the love of the gospel.

Pray for us to keep gaining favor with our neighbors. We have been very blessed by great relationships with Bushwick and the people around us.

**Name changed.*

—Wes Costello, missionary



NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD continued from page 9

What the world needs now is L.O.V.E.

[Maryland] I am the pastor of a newly formed church in the arts district (station north) of Baltimore, Maryland. We are a multiethnic church that serves a culturally diverse

segment of our city. We focus on training and equipping our congregation to L.O.V.E. our city. L.O.V.E. stands for Lay down our time, Offer up our resources, Volunteer our

emotions to Evangelize our communities. We focus on five groups of people: family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and the population around the church.

In our small group, we were working out what it looks like to live lives of sharing Jesus with others. One lady in the group asked for prayer for a coworker with whom she wanted to share the gospel. Over a few months' time, she began to have conversations with her, and that led to an invitation to church. Her coworker began to come regularly. Over several months of encouragement and guidance, they began to study the Bible together. The coworker is in a small group of her own

now and volunteers to run slides and audio on Sundays. She is seeing Jesus change her in very real ways, will be getting baptized soon, and has been bringing a friend of hers to church who is now beginning to experience Jesus in some very real ways.

My greatest joy is seeing the multiplying work of lives being transformed into the likeness of Jesus and people treasuring Him so much they reach out to others to share His love with them as well.

Pray many others will begin to experience Jesus as King, Savior and treasure. Pray, too, we would find a larger place to meet soon as we are quickly outgrowing our space.

—Andy Greenfield,
missionary



To pray and serve

[Mississippi] I am a staff chaplain at the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., where I am chaplain for two intensive care units, senior behavioral health, surgical spine and a stroke unit. I also serve as a military chaplain in the Mississippi State Guard, bearing the rank of captain. I serve as Brigade Chaplain for the 1st Brigade, which encompasses the central region of Mississippi.

Each of these venues of service is uniquely different from the others. At the hospital, I minister to patients, their families, and our staff. I offer spiritual support by giving them my presence and by making sure their spiritual needs are met. My goal is to represent the presence of God to them while assuring them they are not alone. My presence offers them freedom to tell their story, knowing someone is listening.

As a military chaplain, my work is much the same, but it is not in a clinical setting. I attempt to offer a supportive presence to the soldiers while building long-term relationships with them. I make myself available to them whether in uniform or in civilian clothes. The key is their knowing I am available to them.

My work in both settings is very rewarding, and I feel the Holy Spirit going before me on many occasions as I go about my duties. I like being a representation of Christ to those I serve. The fact that God allows me to serve Him in such a way gives me a great sense of fulfillment.

Pray for my ministry in both venues in which I serve and that I will make a difference for the kingdom. Please pray, too, for my wife, Kimberly, and children, Carolanne and Graham, as they seek God's direction.

—Parker Hulsey, chaplain



WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION

Baptist Nursing Fellowship Wants You to Be a Blessing

By Debby Akerman

Touch Twice in Jesus' Name is the theme for National Baptist Nursing Fellowship (BNF) in 2020–2021.

Christ's mandate to His disciples in Luke 10:9 is "Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" This is our mandate in BNF; to use our nursing skills to heal, and as we do, to tell the good news of Jesus; to touch physically and spiritually.

Before you reached your first birthday, you were touched by a nurse. You were welcomed into the world by a nurse wrapping you in a warm blanket; you were weighed with tender hands at your first well-child visit, and you were soothed with gentle hands after your first vaccination. As life continued, the hands of nurses touched you when well, when illness came, when surgeries were needed, and when accidents happened. Pause for a moment and allow God to bring to your mind nurses who have cared for you.

Now think about the nurses you know in your churches. Do they have a tender touch God can use to reach out with healing to a hurting world? Do they have a mission's heart to share the gospel with people living and dying in a life without



BNF missions team at work in Jenkins, Kentucky, with Bessie and Lester McPeek

Christ? Nursing, a most trusted profession, is used by God to touch lost people twice, physically and spiritually, through Baptist Nursing Fellowship.

The week of May 6–12 is National Nurses Week. Be a blessing this week to the nurses in your doctor's office, or the nurses who cared for you as a hospital patient, or the nurses in your church. Show them your appreciation with a small gift or treat and share this article about Baptist Nursing Fellowship SM with those who are followers of Jesus Christ.

Baptist Nursing Fellowship has expanded over the years to include others in allied health care professions in

our membership. We welcome physical therapists, audiologists, emergency medical technicians, pharmacists, and others in health care fields to join us in BNF. Together we can do more to Touch Twice in Jesus' Name.

Earlier in Luke 10:2, Jesus told His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." Baptist Nursing Fellowship seeks new workers to join us in the harvest of souls who will hear the gospel through medical initiatives of their state BNF chapters and through mission trips provided by national BNF.

Mission trip destinations established by national BNF are Jenkins, Kentucky, with North American Mission Board missionaries Bessie and Lester McPeek, and Bang Khla, Thailand, with in-country Christian workers.

Our nurse foremother, Florence Nightingale, was a woman of faith. She spoke of her call to nursing as a divine call from God. She spoke of herself as we do in WMU®, a co-laborer with God, citing I Corinthians 3:9 (KJV), "For we are labourers together with God."

Connect with us at
baptistnursingfellowship.com
or at wmu.org/bnf.

DEBBY AKERMAN serves as National Baptist Nursing Fellowship president and WMU president emerita.

Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from The Holy Bible, King James Version.

BNF missions team in Thailand



GEORGE and the Boys

How God helped a church reach inmates and their families

What do the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers, Bethel Baptist Church, and Community Corrections Center have in common? The answer: George Darlington, former Cornhuskers assistant football coach. His work with inmates at Community Corrections was an answer to Bethel's prayer for greater use by the Lord. Pastor R. D. Fowler states, "The small group that meets on Wednesday nights had been faithfully praying that God would show us a way to utilize the new addition to our church and expand our ministry in ways we might not imagine."

While Bethel was praying, Darlington was already active in a ministry to inmates. In December 2017, the ministry needed a new place to meet. When prison chaplain and Bethel member Jim Erwin learned of the need, he approached Pastor Fowler, who gave a resounding yes to hosting the ministry. On the first Sunday, Darlington brought three or four inmates. The church embraced the men and the idea. Those men responded by inviting other inmates to join them at Bethel, and from there, the group of men, affectionately called "George and the Boys" began.

Small in Number but Large in Heart

Bethel isn't new to reaching out to those affected by incarceration. For several years, Erwin, along with his wife and another young couple, hosted a couples' night for those



George (left) is the impetus behind the ministry to inmates. A former University of Nebraska football coach, George was called by God years ago to minister to men who have made poor choices and need to know God and the Christian community haven't forgotten them.

“I am proud to be a part of a church of true believers with His love in us.”

—Jim Erwin

recently released. The church provided the meal along with love and acceptance to those in attendance.

Located on the urban outskirts of Lincoln, Nebraska, Bethel Baptist Church may be small in number, but the hearts of its members are large and loving.

As a result, Erwin comments, “The most amazing thing to me is our members. You can’t tell who the prisoners are and who the members are. We all sit together, talking and fellowshiping with the men and their families.” The heart of the commitment Bethel has made in this ministry is found in the love of Christ. Erwin continues, “The true love of Christ cannot be taught, learned, or faked. It comes from Christ, who dwells within us. I am proud to be part of a church of true believers with His love in us. It is that love and His anointing that can break the bondage these men and women have in their lives.”

Some of the men are already believers, but through the ministry have grown in their relationship with the Lord. Christopher Martin, baptized recently, said the church helped him find his way back to Christ. Calling the ministry a gamechanger in his life, Sean Thrasher reconnected with his family and grew in his relationship with the Lord. One family comes from Kansas, a three- to four-hour drive, to visit with their son. Cody Wilbur has learned to be a better person and credits the people of Bethel with opening his mind to learning about the Lord.



Top: This past summer, members of George and the Boys repurposed a flower garden to a vegetable garden, growing 40 varieties of vegetables.
Bottom: Meals, along with love and acceptance, are provided to attendees.

While Dustin Klatt likens the ministry to having 20 sets of grandparents, Mark Mayehama notes his whole state of mind has changed.

Other success stories include Fred, who came to Bethel on a friend’s

recommendation and is now a re-entry program coordinator. Another former inmate drives 50-plus miles on Sunday to worship with the men. Then there is Denise Garcia who first came to Bethel to visit with her



14 www.wmu.com | Missions Mosaic

Pray for George and the Boys

- Pray for those paroled as they transition back into society.
- Pray for Bethel to accept the men must deal with old routines, old friends, and old habits.
- Pray for the families of the men.
- Pray the Bethel family will continue to love the men, share the gospel, and disciple them.

school and worship. Afterward, they enjoy a meal with their families provided by volunteers. Those soon-to-be paroled are treated with a special celebration cake. Volunteers provide meals because the men are out when facility meals are served, but more importantly, they experience love through being served.

Unique Qualifications

Bethel isn't alone in doing inmate ministry in Lincoln. While other churches have outreach programs for correctional facilities in the area, the Lord prepared Bethel for this unique ministry through the work of Darlington, Erwin, Pastor Fowler, and his wife, Deborah, a retired corrections officer, and other sponsors who must be willing to provide weekly transportation,

complete a class at the corrections facility, and pass a background check. Churches considering a similar outreach should be near a local minimum-security work-release facility that prepares inmates for the transition back into society. Limiting the ministry to either men or women is ideal. A casual atmosphere and the ability to sponsor, mentor, and feed inmates is a must. Additionally, limiting the number of participants aids in getting to know one another. While he has to limit the number who can participate, Pastor Fowler believes one success of George and the Boys revolves around the personal aspect. ■

LYNN DURHAM is the development coordinator for a west Tennessee pregnancy help center.

A casual atmosphere and the ability to sponsor, mentor, and feed inmates are essentials for any church looking to start a similar ministry.



Celebrations

Those soon-to-be paroled are treated with a special celebration cake.



More Than Crafts



WORLD CRAFTSSM
Committed. Holistic. Fair Trade.

Dignity
restored in
broken lives

By Michelle Thompson

On a warm, muggy morning in Cambodia, uniform-clad children walk to school, and Kim watches longingly from the window, wishing she could join them.



After sixth grade, Kim's mother forbade her to continue schooling. Kim is reminded by her family members every day she is a stupid, good-for-nothing burden.

One day, Kim learns of a local handicraft group, Sak Saum, where women are paid fair wages in favorable working conditions, quite a contrast to the local clothing factories where women are overworked and underpaid in crowded, dirty spaces. *Maybe*, Kim thinks, *I can do something worthwhile after all*.

Learning to cut and sew takes some work, but she is determined, and the



director cheers her along. Perhaps for the first time in her life, someone believes in Kim and says, “You can do it!” Hard work and perseverance pay off when Kim completes her first purse and begins earning money to support herself.

Sak Saum not only offers Kim a future filled with hope but also keeps her from falling victim to local traffickers who lure needy women with false promises. Striving to be an example in her community, Kim shares her story often so other women will know they have worth too. “I am not slow and stupid. I am talented. I am smart. I have dignity.”



MODERN SLAVERY IS REAL

In 2017, the International Labor Office and Walk Free Foundation reported an estimated 30.4 million men, women, and children are victims of slavery through forced labor or forced marriage around the world. Vulnerable refugees and impoverished families live fearfully from day to day, lacking basic human needs. They are often deceived by traffickers offering them an escape from destitution.

Developing areas like Cambodia lack educational training opportunities for young people. With limited employment options, youth fall prey to offers of work abroad, unaware of recruiters’ true intentions.

WorldCraftsSM exists to develop fair-trade businesses among impoverished people around the world, offering an income with dignity and the hope of everlasting life.

In 23 countries, 56 artisan groups have been started by believers passionate about sharing the Father’s love in regions where men and women suffer from poverty and modern slavery. Group leaders train local men and women to create handcrafted items while providing spiritual and emotional support.



HOPE IGNITED

Among coastal plains, volcanic heights, and highland basins, 40 percent of Guatemalans work in agriculture for minuscule pay, unable to feed their children or send them to school. Samuel is such a laborer. After a hard day at work, he begins the long walk home, wondering how he will provide for his family of six.

Earning only \$5 a day, affording housing, firewood, food, clothing, and school fees is impossible for Samuel. Shuddering, he thinks of the thousands of local children

forced to work in coffee plantations, mines, and garment factories to make ends meet. Samuel and his wife, Dolores, agree their children should be educated. They must make a way, somehow.

Gifted with her hands, Dolores begins to create beadwork handicrafts in her limited spare time. However, local vendors pay only a small price for each item that costs her precious funds for supplies and hours of work. It’s not enough.

Through the handicraft network, she learns about Tabitha



Ministries. The artisans there are treated with respect and paid fairly for their seed bead handicrafts. Dolores races home with excitement to share the good news with her husband.

Driven, Dolores works diligently to learn the intricate bracelet design and soon completes her first purchase order from WorldCrafts. Holding her paycheck, she looks at her children, knowing there is hope for their future.

Dolores and Samuel now purchase nutritious food, medicine, and clothing to care for their children. When it's time for Samuel and Dolores's oldest child to begin first grade, they can afford the fees and necessary items. Smiling, they watch him walk into school, filled with gratitude.

As she works, Dolores listens to the directors share about the One who loves her unconditionally, while women thousands of miles away pray every day for her family to know the True Provider.

THE BROKEN MADE NEW

For over 30 years, Kay Bennett has walked the streets of New Orleans, taking in the same sights as tourists

who come to visit the Big Easy. What tourists do not see—the homeless, the poor, and the enslaved—breaks Kay's heart.

New Orleans's poverty rate is nearly double the national average. Victims of domestic violence seek safety and independence but often face homelessness, struggling to overcome the trauma. I-10, the interstate most used for human trafficking in the United States, runs right through the heart of the city. Women and young girls are bought, sold, and used as property.

Four blocks from the French Quarter of New Orleans, a beacon of hope lit the community over 70 years ago. Baptist Friendship House, where Kay has been serving since 1997, strives to meet the needs of homeless women and children through love, action, and truth. Day programs, nourishing food, showers, Bible studies, tutoring, counseling, and transitional housing equip women for self-sustainability and offer hope through the True Healer.

With the help of an artist friend, Kay established a pottery class to enrich art therapy sessions after

group counseling. While molding clay with their hands, the women start to share deeply from their hearts. Around the worktables, amid much brokenness, Kay sees healing begin to take place.

Partnering with WorldCrafts enables the women to earn a fair wage for each completed Friendship Cross, Freedom Dove, and Grace Cross. Little by little, pieces are crafted and lives are mended.

LIFE-GIVING RELATIONSHIPS

Sweaty but energized by the exercise, Alex walks home from a sports camp in New York City's South Bronx thinking about the new friends he made. "Mom, can I go to church with my new friends?" he asks. Emily doesn't see any reason to say no, so they attend the church where the sports camp is hosted.

Alex is excited to spend more time with his buddies, and he soon begins attending after-school programs at the church too. Emily feels showered with love and enjoys attending as much as Alex. Every opportunity she has, Emily takes Alex to church.

A single mother struggling to make

Graffiti 2 Works



ends meet, Emily learns Graffiti 2 Works, the artisan group affiliated with her church, has a job opening. Grateful for the opportunity, she joins the group but is shy and hesitant to sew, even after training. In the beginning, Emily keeps quiet and sticks to cutting and prepping the cloth.

Over time, Emily grows to know the other women in the center, speaking openly of her faith and continuing Bible study discussions while she

works. As newcomers enter the group, they look up to Emily, who encourages them in their development.

Emily is grateful, not only for the skills and employment gained through the partnership between Graffiti 2 Works and WorldCrafts but also for kindred spirits. “I have made great relationships with these girls. We are more than friends; we’re family.” **M**

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT WORLDRAFTS?

“And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday” (Isa. 58:10).

- **PRAY** for WorldCrafts artisans and leaders. Pray for wisdom in complex situations and perseverance through trying seasons. The severe hardships most artisans have endured leave deep scars. As artisans hear the good news, pray their hearts are drawn to the One who can bring true healing and provision through the gift of His Son.
- **SHOP** WorldCrafts. Every purchase enables artisans to provide shelter, food, and medical care for their families. Living wages earned through partnerships with WorldCrafts reduce their vulnerability to homelessness and traffickers.
- **SHARE** WorldCrafts with others. Set up an informational display at a church or community event. Create a WorldCrafts market at your home, church, or special event by ordering a variety of items to sell. Host a 30-day benefit through Baptist Children’s Home and Family Ministries, CWJC/CMJC job readiness sites, or Lifeline Children’s Services, and 20 percent of WorldCrafts’ proceeds will be donated to the beneficiary.
- **HOST** an offering for the Isaiah 58:10 Campaign, which provides the funding necessary to pay WorldCrafts’ artisans a sustainable living wage and bring their products to the United States for sale. The artisans depend on continuous orders for their livelihood, made possible by campaign donations.

Visit WorldCrafts.org/share for resources.

All about WorldCrafts

Recipes from Thailand

In the 1980s, Betty Butcher was living in Thailand when she thought of a new way to help women in Thailand earn money, enabling them to live better lives. She eventually partnered with WMU® to sell the women's crafts in the United States, and this partnership marked the beginning of what would later become WorldCraftsSM. Follow these directions to enjoy recipes from the birthplace of WorldCrafts.

PAD THAI

8 ounces rice noodles or lo mein noodles
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 clove garlic, minced
2 large eggs
1½ tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons (fresh) lime juice

2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon fish sauce
⅛ teaspoon red pepper flakes
3 sliced green onions
¼ bunch chopped fresh cilantro
¼ cup chopped, unsalted peanuts

Cook noodles in a large pot of boiling water for 7 to 10 minutes. Drain the water from the pot, then set noodles aside. Heat vegetable oil in a skillet, then add garlic and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Lightly whisk eggs before adding to the skillet. Cook like scrambled eggs. Once cooked, briefly set aside. Combine lime juice, soy sauce, brown sugar, fish sauce, and red pepper flakes before pouring into the skillet with eggs and garlic. Next, mix with noodles. Stir in remaining ingredients (peanuts, cilantro, and green onions).



Source: [epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/easy-pad-thai-51222610](https://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/easy-pad-thai-51222610)

THAI ICED TEA

1½ ounces black or Thai tea leaves
2 quarts water
½ cup half-and-half
½ cup sweetened condensed milk
ice

Boil water and tea leaves for 30 minutes. Strain tea, then refrigerate. Combine sweetened condensed milk and half-and-half. Once tea has chilled, remove from refrigerator. Put ice into glasses and pour tea until glasses are about ¾ filled. Add cream mixture to the top. Stir before drinking.

Source: [afamilyfeast.com/thai-iced-tea/](https://www.afamilyfeast.com/thai-iced-tea/)



WORLDCRAFTS FACTS

■ WorldCrafts currently partners with 56 artisan groups in 23 countries.

■ Thai Country Trim was WorldCrafts' first artisan group and, in fact, predates WorldCrafts. Betty Butcher began Thai Country Trim in the 1980s to develop relationships with the women in her community and to help them earn money and achieve a better life. The organization later partnered with WMU, and the partnership grew into WorldCrafts.

■ The organization is committed to paying artisans a fair wage. Regardless of whether a piece sells, WorldCrafts gives artisans a fair price for every piece produced and covers all expenses.

■ In addition to allowing artisans to work and gain financial independence, WorldCrafts actively fights human trafficking through its Support Freedom Campaign. The living wage the artisans earn lessens their risk and their daughters' risk of becoming involved in sex trafficking. Some artisan groups offer vocational training, therapy, or medical care to further decrease risk of sexual exploitation.

INVEST IN FRIENDSHIP

WorldCrafts aims to be holistic. The organization provides artisans work leading to financial freedom as well as “comfort, camaraderie, friendship, and purpose.” Here are some ways to promote and develop friendships in your community:

- 1. Host a brunch.** Resist the urge to sleep in one Saturday morning and instead, invite friends, family, or church members over for fellowship over brunch.
- 2. Start a Bible study or book club.** Never underestimate the power of a predetermined conversation topic. A Bible study or book club will help you understand and study the Bible or a book. As you study together, you will also learn things about your friends you might not otherwise know by focusing the conversation on something you would not usually discuss.
- 3. Volunteer.** As Christians, we are called to help others. Through volunteering, you can provide a sense of comfort and camaraderie to someone who may not often experience them.
- 4. Write letters.** In the digital age, simple letter writing is undervalued. Make someone feel loved and appreciated by sending old-fashioned snail mail.



- 5. Invite a neighbor to church.** Know someone who is struggling or just in need of a friend? Invite him or her to attend a church event with you, introducing your neighbor to others along the way.
- 6. Meet for coffee.** There is no better way to get to know someone or make a new friend than over a cup of coffee. Find someone you want to get to know or call a friend you have not seen in a while. Arrange to meet up for coffee and conversation.



PRAY FOR ARTISANS

Your prayers make a difference. God is pleased to act when His people ask for justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed.

Pray the following prayers for WorldCrafts artisan groups each day:

- 1. Ask the Father** to use fair-trade partnerships to support and encourage artisans' families.
- 2. Ask the Father** to give artisans good health as they bring change to their communities.
- 3. Ask the Father** to bless artisans' hands and eyes and minds as they handcraft products to sell.
- 4. Ask the Father** to assure artisans they are not forgotten and to help them feel the prayers of brothers and sisters around the world.
- 5. Ask the Father** to open the hearts of artisans to hear His message of eternal hope.

Visit worldcrafts.org/pray to download a free monthly prayer calendar.

MARY CLARK HERROD is a recent graduate of Samford University and was a spring 2019 intern at WMU®.

A Family Affair

Missions and ministries offer a perfect time to work together.



Our eight-year-old daughter whispered, “Invite them to church!”

We were visiting a couple who had just moved to our street. Our family established a tradition of welcoming new neighbors with something sweet, offering to help with their transition to the area, and inviting them to our church. I guess our daughter thought I forgot something. Her passion warmed my heart!

Passion is something we as adults can use every day to help children develop a heart for missions and ministry.

Help Children See Needs

We teach children by example when we reach out to others, daily reflecting Jesus. Take treats to the police or fire station, a neighbor, or their school. Offer to babysit a single mom’s children and involve your child. Visit a nursing home, an assisted-living facility, or someone who is homebound. Rake leaves, shovel snow, or sweep a neighbor’s driveway or sidewalk. Invite your child’s friend and their family to attend an activity or program at church; arrange a meeting place or drive them.

Help children see those in need by talking about how we can meet those needs together. Include them as often as possible.

Invite Children to Serve

Most children enjoy spending time with an adult they know. Check the church calendar for upcoming events and activities and invite a child to serve alongside you. Contact the parents for permission, and always ensure their child’s safety.

Ask for help with games or food for an outreach event. Our church is downtown, so children helped pass out water bottles with church information on the label to those walking by during a local festival. Invite a couple of children to help with light yard work at a single mom’s or senior adult’s home. They’ll receive satisfaction knowing they had a part in bringing joy to someone.

Encourage Teens to Share

When teens participate in missions and ministries, they may find their passion, leading to future service or a career. Involve them in the planning. Check out events in your town, and ask a teen to join you to shine the light of Jesus. The older the child, the more responsibility he or she can have, but all need adult supervision and encouragement.

Invite teens to visit someone who has shown interest in your church. Talk before and after about how to share Christ. Do they want to be involved in the conversation or just observe?

Include teens in prayerwalking the church or their neighborhood. Print a few prayer needs on cards. Encourage them to pray as they’re comfortable, aloud or silently, and follow their lead. Don’t embarrass teens or pressure them to do things your way. Listen, watch, and learn. They may show you a different approach.

Christ tells us to go in Matthew 28:19–20. A lot of children, teens, and adults are waiting to be included and invited to go. God uses all generations to reach the world with the hope and love of Jesus. **M**

GAIL VEALE and her husband, John, recently moved to a new state and church, where they hope to serve with many generations.

The Gift of Discernment

Do you have the ability to identify truth?



A quick scroll through social media can give all the answers we need for a successful, happy, and spiritual life, right? Our world is full of seemingly hopeful advice, but we would be negligent to just take in everything we read and hear as truth. I was recently confronted with the accusation I am forgetful. OK, maybe it's the truth—truth I try to deny. Then, a light of hope shined upon me, through an article shared online stating forgetfulness is a sign of high intelligence. No need to read the article; I accepted it as truth and told my accuser I was highly intelligent, which leads to my forgetfulness. I jest, but many times, we turn to shallow sources to find the truth and develop opinions. The ease of having information at our fingertips is dangerous when not discerned correctly.

But there is hope. God has granted each of us spiritual gifts that can be used to live a more successful, happy, and spiritual life. The gift of discernment is given to help us make decisions through spiritual understanding.

Discernment Defined

Discernment is the ability to spiritually identify truth. It helps the body of Christ detect falsehoods and distinguish between right and wrong and can help believers decipher the sincerity of others. In Psalm 119:125, the writer gives us words to seek discernment from God. God's understanding grows in us the more we seek Him. Discernment is practiced when we go beyond what is seen or heard on the surface—digging deeper through the power of the Holy Spirit to see and act on that truth. We seek discernment because we want God's best.

Characteristics of Discerning People

Scripture tells us God has given each of us the means of discernment through the application of His Word, which means all Christians can develop discernment. Those given the spiritual gift of discernment are characterized by higher levels of discernment meant for the greater good of the church and to point people to Jesus. This gift is lived out through characteristics like these:

A person with the gift of discernment

- regularly examines the “truths” others are teaching her (1 John 4:1–6);
- thinks biblically about all areas of life (2 Peter 1:3–4);
- uses the Bible to understand thoughts and attitudes of herself and others (Heb. 4:12);
- asks God for wisdom (James 1:5);
- seeks full understanding internally before speaking (Prov. 15:14);
- rejects evil (1 Thess. 5:21–22).

What's Next?

Don't have the gift of discernment? Don't fret. As we learned earlier, God has given each of us the ability to be discerning. Seek His Word, and ask for greater understanding. If you recognize in yourself the gift of discernment, then use it for the body of Christ. All spiritual gifts are given to profit the body and for others to come to a saving understanding of Christ, so identify ways God can allow you to use this gift for His glory. ■

CHRISTY DYER-GULTOM is a NAMB church-planting missionary in New York City who loves discipleship and encouraging new believers.

But Why?

Show compassion to those in pain.



Then it came to me—he was hurting over his home country of Congo, where there was untold human suffering, senseless violence, and injustice.



One Christmas

during our English as a second language (ESL) class, I printed easy-to-read Scripture booklets so our students could read the story of Christ's birth from the Bible. We gathered everyone together, and the teachers each read a section, while the students underlined words they didn't understand. We explained as we went along and asked questions for comprehension. Everything was going fine, with students from the Middle East and Africa, Christians and Muslims.

The question seemed simple enough: *Describe what you think their journey (Mary and Joseph) would have been like. Would you like to make a similar trip?*

I never thought, in asking a Catholic African man, I would receive the answer I got. First, he talked about how they would have traveled—walking, and with Mary on a donkey. He said he would not want to make such a trip. Then he asked,

“But why did God have to make it so hard? Why would he make Mary, pregnant as she was, go all that way on a donkey? Why did Jesus have to be born in a manger? Why could He have not made it all easier?”

I'm sure my eyes looked huge, but I tried to hear the question behind the question, and then it came to me—he was hurting over his home country of Congo, where there was untold human suffering, senseless violence, and injustice. The real question was, “Why does God allow suffering?”

I explained in sending His Son to be born in the lowliest of stables, God was making His love available to every level of humanity. Unfortunately, since the fall of Adam and Eve, we are all living under the curse of sin, and evil, many times, seems to have the upper hand. Thankfully, this is not the end of the story, and in Christ, we have hope for eternity.

As his eyes showed the hurt of his heart, his teacher encouraged him to go into the hall and talk

more privately. She later visited his home. We continue to pray he would know the peace only Christ can give in a dark and dying world.

The refugees who live among us come with deep hurt, not only for their trials but also for their countries and peoples. Most live with little hope positive change will come to the homelands they left behind. This brings guilt and deep sadness.

Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the refugees in your midst, to see them as hurting people who need Christ. How horrible it must be to flee a country of evil and violence to come into another where the welcome mat has been taken away. We have an opportunity as believers to show the love of Christ to the refugees among us. They are much more likely to accept the God who is love if they first see His love demonstrated in us toward them. What will you do today to make that happen? ■

CAROL GHATTAS loves on immigrants in her ESL classes at the Arabic Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. You can connect with her by following her blog at lifeinexile.net.

Help My Unbelief . . .

How to deal with doubt

Do you have doubts? Doubts about God? Miracles? Hell? What to do next? If your answer is yes, welcome to a group of prestigious people who doubted: Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Martha, and, of course, Thomas. All questioned God's sovereignty.

These Bible characters faced circumstances that were confusing, sometimes with fear or suspicion. We are humans, not robots. God created us to think about the world. And that is why we question everything. How big is the universe? What causes cancer? Why am I here?

When we doubt, we challenge the status quo. Yet, doubt is not necessarily a bad thing.

"Expressing doubt is sometimes the first step toward the next level of intimacy with God," according to Rick Warren in his book *What on Earth Am I Here For?*

As a college student studying philosophy and observing horrible things—war, genocide, famine, natural disaster—I questioned whether God existed. Why would God allow these atrocities on innocent children? Raised in the church since birth, I was familiar with the Bible heroes who stumbled and doubted God's authority—Moses, Jonah, Peter. I talked with my pastor and my professors but could not shake the feeling God was a nice idea but not real.

Then, I read the story in Mark 9:14–29.

A hopeful father brings his son who is controlled by a spirit to be healed. His son had been under attack since childhood—the destructive spirit throwing the child to the ground,



causing him to foam at the mouth and grind his teeth. Sometimes the spirit hurled the child into fire or water, trying to kill him (vv. 18, 22).

The father first asks the disciples to heal him (v. 18). When the disciples are unable to help the son, an argument begins between the disciples, the scribes, and the crowd (v. 14).

Imagine the scene: The desperate father with his ailing son, surrounded by the contentious crowd, but no cure, just failure. The father must have given up any confidence in what he had heard about Jesus and the miracles for other people. So, when he finally speaks to Jesus, he still wants to believe, but he prefaces his request with uncertainty.

"But *if* you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us" (v. 22 ESV¹).

I emphasize the word *if* because it is the beginning of a conditional

sentence. After years of helplessly watching his tormented son and then experiencing the fiasco with the disciples, the father doubts. Most of us would doubt too.

Jesus repeats the father's words. "If you can!"

Then Jesus says, "All things are possible for one who believes" (v. 23 ESV).

Immediately the father cries out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (v. 24 ESV).

What wonderful words those were to me, a doubter—*help my unbelief*. Like the father, I was desperate. I wanted to believe. God took compassion on the father, and He would give me the faith I needed too. ■

JANICE BACKER is a freelance writer living in Jefferson City, Tennessee.

¹Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

MAJOR on MINORS: HAGGAI

Pursue discipleship to grow your mind.

We can only wonder at the stories told around the family fires each evening during the Babylonian exile. They talked of Moses and Joshua, the wilderness, and the promised land. They remembered the fertile farmlands of Judah, and they thought of the Temple in Jerusalem. They kept the stories of faith alive in the minds of those separated from their homeland.

Background for the Study of Haggai

In 538 BC, Cyrus decreed that the Hebrews could return to Jerusalem, but when the first group of exiles returned, it found Jerusalem and the Temple in ruins and the fields parched from drought. In 520 BC, the old prophet Haggai returned with a group led by the regional governor, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua.

The people began to build homes for themselves and eke out a living from the devastated fields. They were preoccupied with reconstructing their lives in their newly found freedom, but they weren't nearly as concerned about the Temple they thought they would rebuild. The Lord sent Haggai to the people with directions to rebuild the Temple and to reignite the zeal of the historical covenant relationship.

The Prophet's Message

Haggai's message is delivered over four short months. First Haggai accuses the people of misplaced priorities. He questions their faith and accuses them of putting their selfish desires before God. He compares their homebuilding to the idolatry and rebellion of their ancestors and reminds them God is punishing them through drought and agricultural failures.

The people respond by beginning the rebuilding process, but their small efforts are disappointing in comparison to what the Temple has been. Haggai attempts to give the people a vision of the messianic promise of the New Jerusalem.

Haggai emphasizes ritual purity. He reminds them that to build the temple God wants, the people must build from their inner purity and faithfulness. There

is a correlation, he insists, between deep inner faith and the completed project. Motives are as important as execution. God's presence in their midst is dependent upon their rekindled faith.

For Consideration:

- Make a list of those things that are most important to you in the order of priority.
- What does this list say about the quality of your discipleship?
- Have you ever undertaken a task for God only to grow discouraged?
- Do you think God has ever been disappointed in the work you have left undone?
- What promises has God made to you?
- What promises have you made to God?

Case Study of a Missions Opportunity: Maintenance Tasks for the Elderly

Marilyn's mind was wandering, but the Greek letters Alpha and Omega caught her attention. The preacher was suggesting the wholeness of life in Christ, but she wondered about her old age. She looked at her teenage daughter sitting three rows up with her best friend and at her ten-year-old son. Would they move away as she and her brother had done, leaving their parents to fend for themselves as they grew older? For a moment, a pang of guilt about her older parents three states away hit her consciousness.

Leaving church that morning, she watched Mrs. Granger lift her walker into the back seat of her car. How long had Mrs. Granger been using a walker? Marilyn remembered the flower beds that were always well tended when they passed her house leaving their old subdivision. Could she still manage those beds?

"Let's drive by the old house," she told her husband, George, as they pulled from the parking lot. The paint

was peeling on Mrs. Granger's front door, and the once vibrant flower beds were bare spaces in front of the box-wood hedges. *The Omega years shouldn't be that way*, Marilyn thought illogically as their car sped past the neighborhood where their children were born.

Later that afternoon, Marilyn's mind returned to Mrs. Granger. Sitting by the phone, she began listing the bedding plants that used to flank the woman's house. Wouldn't it be fun for her and the children to restore those beds? Reason told her the project would be a season-long commitment, with weekly watering and weeding. She wondered if she was willing to take that on.

Spiritual Development: Motives for Worship

Marilyn had always believed worship to be active, so the connections she made on Sunday dominated her thinking all week. She continued to think about Mrs. Granger's flower beds. Wouldn't it be good for those beds to become her family's missions project? She reasoned that her children might gain a new sense of responsibility by devoting vacation time to serving someone else, and she thought of the gardening skills she could teach them.

They were reluctant at first, but a trip to the nursery awakened their interest as they made selections. She knew she was taking a leap of faith. Mrs. Granger might not want them in her yard, but she persisted with her plan.

Mrs. Granger was surprised when the family arrived with their supplies. Marilyn could tell beneath her polite acceptance, there was concern. As the summer progressed, Mrs. Granger warmed to the family, and she willingly accepted George's offer to scrape and repaint her front door. Mrs. Granger eventually became a vital part of Marilyn's extended family. They helped with replacing lightbulbs, carrying garbage to the curb for removal, and weekly shopping.

Marilyn realized she was getting more than she was giving to the relationship. Her children were enjoying a grandmother figure in their lives, and she was compensating for the guilt she felt about her parents. Gradually, Marilyn began to probe her motives for decisions made years earlier. That summer, when the family visited her parents, she talked with them about the distance between their separate lives. They began to consider future alternatives.

While Marilyn's family had not experienced the exile of the Israelites, her family did live in the context of contemporary mobile dispersion. She found worship had a family dimension that could be experienced in the larger family of God, that churches can function to enrich cross-generational relationships. ■

DR. ROSANNE OSBORNE, former editor of *Royal Service*, is a retired teacher of American literature at Louisiana College. She lives and ministers in central Louisiana.

Our Family Missions Project



Helping Mom



Child Mowing



Dad Supervising

Prayer Changes Things

By Gail Veale

*Faithful
habits can
transform
you.*

Oh no, Mom is waiting up for me again!”

I could see her through the front window, with her head bowed in prayer. I was hoping she would be in bed sleeping next to Dad, and I would go quietly to my room. But, like most late nights, Mom was awake praying for me to return home safely.

This scene played out more than 40 years ago. Thank the Lord I had a praying mom and a redeeming Savior!

Be Persistent

My mother was a faithful prayer warrior in our church, our

community, and even Dad’s workplace. Our family was at the top of her list, and this prodigal daughter sure needed to be there.

Mom was a gentle giant. She was always positive, seldom saying anything negative about anyone and never making me feel guilty about my sinful choices. Every time I went out with friends, she encouraged me, saying, “Make good choices.”

I had accepted Christ as a child, but when I entered the teen years, pleasing my friends became more important than pleasing the Lord. Mom continued praying, asking God to change my heart. She

believed He would answer her prayers and bring me back into a closer relationship with Him.

Each morning, she began her prayertime praying for missionaries around the world. She hung a map on the kitchen wall where my brother and I placed pins where the missionaries served. Even through my time away from the Lord, Mom instilled in me a love for missions.

In 1 Timothy 2:1–2, Paul urged Timothy, “That petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all



retirement home. He showed me his list, and I saw he had circled specific names. When I asked him what that meant, he responded, “Oh, you don’t want your name to be circled. That means you passed away!” Once on my dad’s prayer list, always on his list.

In 1 Timothy 2:8, Paul told Timothy all men should pray. Paul gave specific guidelines for men and women to follow. My dad taught me the importance of praying for particular needs, praying daily, and calling out our loved one’s concerns, knowing our faithful God hears.

Be a Partner

Being involved in a Moms in Prayer group since our children were in elementary school has taught me Christ blesses those we’re praying for when we pray with other believers. These dedicated praying mothers meet weekly throughout the school year to pray for our children (young and old), their schools, and beyond.

Partners in prayer can be older, younger, or the same age. The Lord desires we be in unity with others and our requests. One prayer partner may be led to pray for a direction or result the other person hadn’t considered, revealing greater wisdom from the Holy Spirit. God gives us such peace when we pray with another and leave our burdens in His care.

Praying moms become sisters in prayer, lifting up joys, sorrows, and concerns. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were praying together, and they were given great boldness to share their faith. Praying together creates a bond like no other. Families are changed through the power of prayer.

Be Thankful

Paul started many of his letters with thankfulness and shared he always

prayed for the recipients. In 1 Corinthians 1:4–5, he wrote, “I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way.” Paul was thankful for the believers and prayed for them often because he knew Jesus was working in their lives.

Paul also was aware of those who were not following the Lord and prayed for them. We should be thankful and pray for those God brings into our life. Our family and friends are blessings but may have needs only Christ can provide. Being grateful and praying fervently for our loved ones can renew our attitude toward those who may be hard to love and bring a change in them too.

Pass It On

Our daughter goes to a woman’s Bible study, and some of the women were having a difficult time learning their memory verses. She had read an article about Scripture memory and missions discipleship across generations in *Missions Mosaic*. She sent the link to the group.

We can learn so much from mature believers, but we also need to pass on what we have learned to others and the younger generation, those who will carry on God’s message of hope and love. “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 4).

Listen to other’s prayers, grow, and learn from them. Be persistent, consistent, specific, and thankful. Find a prayer partner or join a prayer group. Pass on what you have learned, and leave the results to the Lord. **M**

GAIL VEALE and her husband, John, just moved and are praying for God’s leading in their new community.

godliness and holiness.” As Paul taught Timothy the importance of praying for others to live godly lives, my mom lived it. She was a great example of never giving up on anyone, persisting in prayer, and leaving the results to God.

Be Consistent and Specific

My 94-year-old dad is another prayer warrior to emulate. He still wakes up early each morning and reads a portion of Scripture. He sometimes has to reread it because his memory is slowly fading. He then goes to his prayer list and prays for all by name—our family, loved ones, and the staff at his

Learning from Mature Believers

Prayer Patterns is a monthly devotional guide highlighting prayer for missionaries on their birthdays.

The Bible chronicles the stories of real people. Though they lived in a different time, place, and culture, we have much in common—we serve the same God and were created by Him for the same purpose: to bring Him glory. Their struggles, opportunities, and choices can teach us much if we choose to learn.

This month's *Prayer Patterns* will highlight a different biblical character each day. They each lead us by their example—often by what they did right, but sometimes it's their mess that becomes their message. Mature does not mean perfect. As with us, challenges and poor decisions lead us to maturity and better decisions. The people we study were ordinary human beings. They weren't superheroes or fairytale characters. What distinguishes them is what distinguishes us—the God we serve. Read along with us as we allow their lives to spur us on to live for God always and in all ways.

PRAYER CALENDAR IDEA:

Purchase pens (at least one for each person in attendance). Cut tulip shapes out of cardstock. Write the name of a missionary on each tulip. Adhere the tulips to the tops of the pens with tape or glue. Stick the pens in a flowerpot filled with small stones or some other filler to create a blooming prayer flowerpot. Invite the women to take one of the pens and pray for the missionary listed on the tulip. Encourage them to take the pen home to write notes to missionaries listed in *Missions Mosaic* magazine.

FRIDAY, MAY 1

passage: Genesis 12:1–9

Focus: Genesis 12:1, 4, 7, 8

From Abram, we learn two responses to God: obedience and worship. When God told Abram to “leave . . . and go . . .,” Abram obeyed and went. He heard God and obeyed

God. He left everything familiar, everybody he knew. He left home for a place unknown solely because He heard God's voice and obeyed His command. That is faith. Fear demands details, wants to know why, and makes excuses to delay. Faith hears and obeys. Abram's

faith was rewarded with a promise: the blessing found in verse three, “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Through Abram's line would come Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. When Abram arrived, and God again spoke, Abram's response was worship. He built not

missionary of the week

SATURDAY, MAY 2

Ross Mackin

Southeast Asian Peoples

Birthday: May 2

Passage: Genesis 16 • Focus: Genesis 16:13

Ross and Shirley Mackin have seen God at work in the part of Thailand where they serve as International Mission Board missionaries.

"We've seen God answer prayers and heal people who believe in Him," Shirley said. "God has provided hope and peace for many who believe in Him. One woman named Boua was mainly bedridden, unable to do much of anything. She is now able to care for herself, has peace in her heart, and is able to come to meetings of the believers."

Most of the Mackins' work is in countryside villages. They go door to door sharing the gospel, then follow up with a six-week evangelistic Bible study for anyone interested. They also tell them to invite their family, friends, and neighbors.

From there, they try to start ongoing Bible studies with groups of new believers with the hopes they will become a church.

Where the Mackins serve, if someone believes in Jesus, they face social pressure that pushes them to turn back to Buddhism. In their hearts, they believe, but they have a hard time standing against opposition.

"They say they cannot be different from everyone else or that they have to continue following the religion of their ancestors," Ross said.

Shirley asked for prayer for those new believers and for her and her husband as they continue to offer hope to the Buddhists where they live.

"Pray for endurance and perseverance in sharing the gospel and discipling believers," she said. "Pray for good health for us so that we can continue our work."



pray • pray • pray • pray • pray

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD
Colorado: Fabian Perea Ardilla
Illinois: Sean Stevenson
Indiana: Jose Alejo
Louisiana: Miguel Benitez
Missouri: Scott Douglas
Ohio: Brian Underwood
Texas: Santiago Rodriguez
Washington: Sabelo Mhlanga
East Asian Peoples: AB, Martha Ulmer
European Peoples: Carina Beaty, Victor Herrera

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD
Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples: SB

South Asian Peoples: AC
Southeast Asian Peoples: Ross Mackin
Sub-Saharan African Peoples: Taylor Wolfe

CHAPLAINS • VOLUNTEERS

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES

RETIRED

NAMB: Melinda Cobb, Barbara Griffis, Youn Park
IMB: Donald Copeland, Marion Hall, Margaret Johnson, Jim Malone, Sharon Peddicord, RR, Michael Walker, Jane Williams

RETIRED

NAMB: Russell Begaye, Daniel Caceres, Dorothy Hughes, James Pinkley, Gregorio Torres, William Weedman
IMB: Ellen Gill, Dan Hylden, John Johnston, Pauline Moore

TUESDAY, MAY 5

Passage: Numbers 14

Focus: Numbers 14:17–19

The Israelites witnessed miracle after miracle—the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the daily provision of manna and quail. Yet, they continued to grumble and rebel in the wilderness. In Numbers 14, they even contemplate stoning their leader. God threatens to wipe them out and begin again with Moses. After listening to their complaints and threats, surely Moses would have been tempted to adopt a that-will-show-them attitude. But instead, he keeps his focus firmly on God. His only concern is God's reputation and God's glory to be on display. He intercedes for the people by pleading with God on the basis of God's own character.

God, as we (and our missionaries) interact with whiners and complainers, help us to keep our gaze fixed on You. Let our chief aim be not for our personal safety or satisfaction, but for Your good and great character to be on display.

PRAYER FOCUS—SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES: Pray for the local Baptist churches in Malawi to be known by their love and that they would own the Great Commission for themselves. Pray they would see the churches train up and send out missionaries both within Malawi and outside of its borders.

• pray • pray • pray • pray • pray

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD
Colorado: Cholo Khongrath
Georgia: Gabe Dodd
Louisiana: Michael Conner
Michigan: Swopan Malaker
New York: Dean Mabry
South Carolina: Steven McCart
Virginia: Stephen Felton
Washington: Ryan Paterson

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

Central Asian Peoples: PC, KD
East Asian Peoples: JJ, BK

SUNDAY, MAY 10

Passage: Ruth 1

Focus: Ruth 1:16–17

Naomi lost her husband and both her sons. She was living among a pagan people. She blamed God for her misfortune and self-identified as “bitter.” But even in her hurt and pain, God could be seen in her life because Ruth was drawn to God through Naomi. Many would be surprised to learn these beautiful words often shared at a wedding ceremony were spoken from a daughter-in-law to a mother-in-law: “Where you go, I will go . . . Your people will be my people, your God, my God.”

God, we praise You for Your faithfulness. Even in our hurt and pain, we pray You would be seen in our lives, and You would use all events and circumstances of our lives to draw others to You. Reassure our missionaries today You can and will use all things for Your glory.

PRAYER FOCUS—CALIFORNIA: Walter Ludwig is a missionary serving as an evangelism catalyst in San Diego, California. Please pray for “L,” who is a believer from Afghanistan. Pray for his wife’s salvation and the salvation of the other members of his family. Also pray for “I,” who is also from Afghanistan. He is a seeker and has many questions about the Bible and Christ. Pray for the salvation of his wife and family as well. Both “L” and “I” are friends and live in the same apartment complex. Pray a home Bible study might be established as there are several other Afghan families living in the complex.

pray • pray • pray • pray • pray NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

Maryland: Robert Greenfield
Massachusetts: Itamar Elizalde
Michigan: Tony Lynn
North Carolina: Thomas Alley
Ohio: Rory Tate
Quebec: Josias Laporte

pray • pray • pray • pray • pray INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

Central Asian Peoples: AT
East Asian Peoples: MS
European Peoples: Gary Rowland
Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples: SG, DS

Southeast Asian Peoples: RT

Sub-Saharan African Peoples: Robert Lane, Nick Moore, George Smith, Matthew Stauffer

CHAPLAINS • VOLUNTEERS

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES

RETIRED

NAMB: Dora McCullin, William Pope, Fuad Shorosh

IMB: Bill Arnold, Chuck Barrett, William Moseley, June Young

MONDAY, MAY 11

Passage: I Samuel 1:1–20

Focus: Hannah 1:10

Infertility is not new to the 21st century. It has brought pain to women of every generation. Hannah’s pain was intensified because of mocking from Peninnah. Are you hurting today? Have you waited and waited for a baby—or a job, an open door, or the restoration of a relationship? Hard things can bring a crisis to our faith—we know God can, but why doesn’t He? Do we assume we need to realign our attitude before coming to God? Hannah shows us we can bring all the emotion, hurt, pain, and anguish to God. We can lay it all out, as we pray through the pain.

Oh, God Almighty, we pray for those who are hurting. We lift up those who are waiting—waiting for a baby, waiting for restoration, or waiting to see fruit from their labor. We pray pain would not drive us from You but draw us closer to You. May we follow Hannah’s example, to weep and pray.

PRAYER FOCUS—MISSOURI: David Tolliver is a chaplain serving the Missouri Department of Corrections in Jefferson City. “Please pray for me and for the Missouri Department of Corrections as we implement a new program of undergraduate Christian ministry studies for inmates. The inmates will embark on a four-year plan/program of study resulting in an accredited bachelor’s degree in Christian ministry. The offenders will then become ‘Inmate Missionaries’ throughout the

Missouri Department of Corrections, spreading the gospel and discipling new Christians. Please pray with us that the Lord of the Harvest will use this program to save thousands of Missouri’s prison inmates.”

pray • pray • pray • pray • pray NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

American Peoples: GJ

Central Asian Peoples: JB, JC

East Asian Peoples: SB, Chan-Sik Bae, BP, KT

Sub-Saharan African Peoples: Greg Freese

Global Resource Team: SD

CHAPLAINS • VOLUNTEERS

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES

RETIRED

NAMB: Roy Godwin, John Nance

IMB: La Nell Barnes, Marilyn Haines, Evelyn Pruitt, Gary Ramey, Cloyes Starnes, SV, Dick Yagi

TUESDAY, MAY 12

Passage: I Samuel 3

Focus: I Samuel 3:10, 19–21; Psalm 5:3

Samuel was given to the Lord at an early age. He served at the temple under Eli and alongside Eli’s wicked sons. The Lord protected Him from corruption, and “Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men” (1 Sam. 2:26).

Eli taught Samuel to respond to God’s voice, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” We may not hear God speak to us audibly, but we have His Word. We can let Samuel’s prayer be our prayer as we open it daily, expecting God to speak to us.

Lord, forgive us for rushing to do before taking the time to listen. Draw us to Your Word every day. Let us be hungry for it. Teach us to wait and to listen. We pray the same for our missionaries. Draw them to Your Word as they begin each new day. Let us remember to fill up first before we pour out. Speak to us, Lord—Your servants are listening!

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

Georgia: William Kratt, Kevin Riley
Illinois: Nate Frantz
Ohio: Garrison Greene
Wyoming: Rondie Taylor

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

Central Asian Peoples: KK, ER, TS
East Asian Peoples: PE, YH
European Peoples: MC, CH, ML
Northern African and Middle Eastern Peoples: CB, AR
South Asian Peoples: SR
Southeast Asian Peoples: RC, MM
Sub-Saharan African Peoples: Ashley Sparkman

CHAPLAINS • VOLUNTEERS

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES

RETIRED

NAMB: Nancy Bumpass, Barbara Casteel, Freda Logsdon, Olga Medina, Bernard Toppings
IMB: Sherry Bielinski, Harlene Dorman, JG, Gerald Hale, Carolyn Penick, Jane Roach

Focus: I Samuel 25:18–33

prayer • pray • pray • pray • pray • pray • pray • pray

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES
RETIRED
NAMB: Nancy Bumpass, Barbara Casteel, Freda Logsdon, Olga Medina, Bernard Toppings
IMB: Sherry Bielinski, Harlene Dorman, JG, Gerald Hale, Carolyn Penick, Jane Roach

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13
Passage: I Samuel 25
Focus: I Samuel 25:18–33

Abigail could be described as a saint married to a scoundrel. When her wealthy husband, Nabal, not only refused the customary blessings of hospitality but hurled hateful insults to David and his men, he endangered his own life and the lives of everyone in his household. Only the quick thinking—and quick actions—of Abigail saved the members of Nabal’s household and David, as well. She protected David from needless bloodshed. Abigail acted quickly (v. 18), assembled and provided resources (vv. 18–20), humbled herself before David (vv. 23–25), and pointed David to God (verses 26–31). Challenging

PRAYER FOCUS—OHIO: James Haggy planted Green Meadows Baptist Church in London, Ohio. "Pray the Lord will bless the preaching of His Word and convert many souls. Pray for revival in Plumwood and in our families. Pray God will raise up workers, ministries, and missionaries within our church. Pray also He will provide the funds for this church and ministry so I may serve full-time and show our members the one person with whom they can share the gospel."

NAMB: Cynthia Cook, Margaret Marcus
IMB: Charles Dixon, Veronica Erwin, Sheila Flowers, Robert Holcomb, David Johnson, EM, GP, Peggy Wakefield, Jim Wilkins, Joyce Wyatt

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

Indiana: Gabriel De Vega
New Mexico: Rodolfo Espindola
North Carolina: Noel De Asis
Rhode Island: Kenneth Long
Vermont: John Barnette
Washington: Zachary Minton
Ontario: Jose Fasolino
Quebec: Dylan Pentecost

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

Central Asian Peoples: SH
East Asian Peoples: BC, LW, TW
European Peoples: Matthew Larson,
Cameron Phillips
**Northern African and Middle Eastern
Peoples:** MS
South Asian Peoples: JJ, AK
Southeast Asian Peoples: KH, JJ

CHAPLAINS • VOLUNTEERS

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES

RETIRED

IMB: Ruth Baggett, Gaye Coleman,
Mary Ann Evenson, Kenneth
Hinton, IS, Paul Shelton, RW

See feature on page 42.

Passage: Acts 18:18–28

Focus: Acts 18:25–26

of teaching, all of us can extend kindness and love as we patiently and privately invest in a young person. Priscilla and Aquilla used their home as a place to mentor and invest in this man who would go on to do great things for the kingdom. Who might God be calling you to have over for dinner or just milk and cookies? Who can you casually and informally love on and invest in for the sake of the kingdom?

Lord, forgive for our past impatience with those who seem long on zeal and short on truth. As others were gracious to us, let us extend loving grace to others.

PRAYER FOCUS—IN YOUR CHURCH: Ask God if there is a local area in which your church could reach out to unchurched children through a Backyard Bible Club this summer. Pray for willing volunteers.

Colorado: Joshua Cook
Georgia: Howard Oakes
Illinois: Douglas Rowland
Maryland: Charlie Mitchell
New Mexico: Roland Burnett
Ohio: Donald Sallow, Hetzel See
Alberta: Beth Watkins

East Asian Peoples: SI
European Peoples: Paul Barth, SE,
Emilio Marrero
Southeast Asian Peoples: CL
Sub-Saharan African Peoples:
Jonathan Bundrick

STATE CONVENTION MISSIONARIES

RETIRED

NAMB: Aias De Souza, David Hess,
Leroy Jones, Angel Murillo
IMB: Yvette Aarons, T. Wade Akins,
Billy Colston, Willard Goforth,
Brenda Harrell, Gayle Hill,
Frances Skinner, Bill Stennett,
Norma Stimson, Deliegha
Swanson, Shirley Tye, G. Kenneth
Varner, Barbara Wyman

Southern Baptist missionaries and their spouses who are serving for more than two years are listed on their birthdays.

- **Chaplains** are endorsed by the SBC via NAMB but are not listed as they do not receive financial support through NAMB.
- **Volunteers** are individuals who are not funded through SBC mission boards; they are self-funded. They are not listed here because of the inability to compile a complete list of these people, but they do need your prayers daily. The exception to this policy is the listing of self-funded missionaries who are affiliated with NAMB.
- **State Convention Missionaries** are personnel not related to NAMB or IMB but who receive primary support through state conventions.
- **National missionaries** serve in roles related to developing strategy and providing training and support to other NAMB-endorsed missionaries.

Money given through the Cooperative Program, to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® for International Missions, and to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® for North American Missions helps support SBC missionaries.

International Mission Board: All IMB missionaries listed on the prayer calendar receive their financial support from the IMB.

North American Mission Board: NAMB missionaries listed on the prayer calendar may receive full or partial financial support from NAMB or are jointly funded through partnerships between NAMB and state conventions. In addition, missionaries affiliated with NAMB through the Mission Service Corps funding option raise their own support. Some may receive partial financial support for ministry projects.

The North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board provide missionary names and related information for the missionary prayer calendar. Should an error or omission be discovered, please address your concerns to NAMB at namb.net/contact or 1-800-634-2462, or IMB at imb.org/contact-us or 1-800-999-3113.



Stand by Me

How to help the victim of a violent crime



Exploitation, violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other crimes against the human body have escalated in the last few years. We only need to turn to any social media source to see the scope of violence in the world. The crimes may vary, but they all have one thing in common: They always leave victims.

When we think about what to say—or not say—to a victim of a violent act, we must first check our own hearts and attitudes. Blame is never appropriate. No one invites a violent crime. The crime is always wrong, regardless of the circumstances or location in which it is committed. It is the choice of the offender, not the victim.

I grew up in a culture in which many people were quick to lay some blame on the victim. “She should have been wearing more clothes.” “He shouldn’t have been at a party where drinking was going on.” These statements may be true. However, none of them give another person the right to attack anyone with violence or use him or her for personal pleasure or profit.

The second worse thing for a victim, other than the crime itself, is to become the subject of gossip, slander, or judgment. Indeed, that is the reason many victims do not report their attack to the law or tell family or friends. If they are not believed, a sense of shame may settle into their soul. Who can they trust? Who cares?

What Not to Say

Do not say the words, *You should have...* Once again, that lays some blame on the victim. Furthermore, what is done is done. It is impossible to go back and change anything.

Do not in any way minimize the feelings of the victim. Phrases such as, *You’re overreacting* or *It’s time to stop crying and move on* tell a victim she needs to suck up her emotions and bear the pain.

Never encourage a victim not to report to the law. A violent offender should always be held accountable. Not to do so is to set the stage for more victims.

What to Say

Sometimes spoken words simply get in the way. Ears to listen, arms to hug, shoulders to absorb their tears, and eyes to shed one’s own sympathetic tears go much further than words. Words will probably follow, but they should be delayed until the victim feels loved, trusted, and safe.

Above all, please don’t ignore what has happened to your friend or loved one. To say nothing causes the victim to feel shame, as if others do not want to identify with her. A victim should never need to make the first move toward acceptance.

Use only words and actions that affirm his or her pain; only those that express love; and only those that offer acceptance and support.

Perhaps the most compassionate response is to see victims with the same eyes you saw them before. They have not changed, even though their lives may never be the same. **M**

DIANNE SWAIM writes this article based on personal experience. Over 30 years ago, she encountered all these responses, negative and positive. She lives in North Little Rock, Arkansas, and may be reached at Dianneswaim@att.net.

Second Century Fund

Helping to ensure a future of women leaders

Candace McIntosh says she knows at least one young woman whose story was: “I didn’t realize there were other girls like me.” That is until the young woman came to the Emerging Leaders Forum.

“She met other girls who were committed to their faith, loved missions, and were passionate about the same things,” said McIntosh, executive director for Alabama WMU. After attending the forum, that young woman answered a missions call and is now serving with the IMB. “That’s pretty incredible.”

Each year, through the Emerging Leaders Forum, Alabama WMU invests directly in 15 to 20 teenage girls in hopes they will be missions leaders and nurture a generation who will continue to be a part of WMU®. The smaller group size allows for more one-on-one investment, McIntosh said.

Alabama WMU can keep the cost low for forum participants through a grant from the Second Century Fund, which has helped to provide women’s leadership training domestically and internationally since the first four grants were given at WMU’s Centennial Celebration in Richmond, Virginia, in 1988.

“Leadership comes in a lot of forms,” McIntosh said. “This forum gives all types of leaders an opportunity to shine.”

Melody Knox, WMU executive director for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, said she believes this kind of investment is vital.

“I think we’re going to lose the next generation of people wanting to be missionaries if we don’t keep investing in them,” she said.

Each year, Knox uses part of her Second Century Fund grant to put on a conference for women with breakout sessions that teach different ways to be involved in missions.

“We need to keep this kind of training available to women so that they do missions with their children and missions will continue to go forward,”

“Without the support of the WMU Foundation, New York would not be able to accomplish a missions program or emphasis in our state convention. It’s a gracious gift.”

—Cathy Meyer

she said. “If we don’t, when this group retires, we won’t have anyone rising up to take their place.”

Cathy Meyer, women’s missions/ministry leader for the Baptist Convention of New York, said her annual WMU event wouldn’t be possible without the Second Century Fund.

“Our convention does not budget anything for women’s ministry or WMU, so every year, the grant helps us have our annual meeting,” she said. And 2019 was a special one—it was the 50th anniversary of WMU in the state. They had speakers from WMU, along with the IMB and NAMB. Around 120 people came to learn how to fight human trafficking, get training in missions and evangelism, and learn what WMU has to offer.

“Without the support of the WMU Foundation, New York would not be able to accomplish a missions program or emphasis in our state convention,” Meyer said. “It’s a gracious gift.”

If supporting women’s leadership is your passion, you can find out more about the WMU Foundation’s Second Century Fund at wmufoundation.com/second-century-fund. ■



Alabama WMU invests directly in 15 to 20 teenage girls each year at the Emerging Leaders Forum.

GRACE THORNTON is a freelance writer living in Birmingham, Alabama, and the author of the WMU emphasis book, *Unshakable Pursuit: Chasing the God Who Chases Us*.

Mentoring Matters

Learning from mature believers can change your life.

Cate had been retired from teaching longer than I'd been alive when I first met her, yet she led our young missions group and mentored all of us. We had a lot to learn, but Cate accepted the responsibility with enthusiasm. Our monthly Bible study group morphed into meeting three out of four weeks each month. What we learned from her would fill a book.

When we decided to support Meals on Wheels on weekends, she enlisted a nutritionist to help plan the meals. When we set a goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®, she gave the first amount. Years have passed, but I've never forgotten all Cate taught us. Her spiritual maturity refreshed us as young wives and mothers. She faithfully shared what she'd learned of life, from God's Word and through service.

We don't learn just from believers older than us, do we? Debra was an extraspecial friend whose very attitude toward life encouraged others. Everyone thought Debra was her best friend! Her life was a long story of missions involvement. As a teenager, she read to patients in a veterans' hospital. She participated in local ministries, led her church to a higher level of participation, and was relentless in her commitment to missions discipleship. A life-threatening illness didn't sideline her. She continued to encourage others, plan missions events, and pray for missions efforts to the end. Debra left a legacy that has extended far beyond her life here on earth, and she's glorifying God today as she sits at His feet.

I learned patience from Onabell, who despite physical limitations was involved in missions. I learned

determination from Pearl, who struggled to read one Bible verse because of a debilitating stroke that robbed her of most of her speech. Dovie taught me about faithful service as she quietly cleaned our church as a volunteer. Paula showed me how a true prayer warrior behaves in the face of extremely difficult circumstances. Diane modeled persistence as she took leadership roles that weren't glamorous and saw assignments to the end.

We must learn from mature believers. Whether we embark on a semiformal mentoring relationship or just receive encouragement from another, the result is we find encouragement to continue, knowledge to grow, and confidence to do the difficult things. ■

LINDA CLARK is president of Indiana WMU and adult lead strategist for national WMU®.



Like Seeing for the First Time

WMU's Christian Women's Job Corps® (CWJC®) ministry helps women gain life skills and job skills in a Christian context. Shirley, a former CWJC executive director, shared this story.

Nesa made eye contact hesitantly. Years of being unable to read had taken their toll. Nesa has learning disabilities, including Irlen Syndrome, which prevents the brain from processing visual contrasts. Shirley invited Nesa to meet with her. By her own admission, Nesa was rude. Anything having to do with learning and school reminded her of her painful history. People had labeled her lazy and treated her impatiently because of her inability to read.

Frustrated by Shirley's insistence CWJC could help, Nesa blurted out, "I can't read! I can't see letters printed on paper!" Shirley is a retired elementary school teacher and familiar with scotopic sensitivity, the type found in people diagnosed with Irlen Syndrome. She told Nesa she believed CWJC could help her. Shirley even offered to find donors willing to help pay for the corrective lenses if Nesa could raise half the funds. Nesa applied and was accepted into the program.

She says she felt "terrible" her first day. "I was full of anxieties and was late that day," she says. "It was a struggle to show up. I was sick to my stomach and didn't want to be there."


Yet she persevered. Nesa credits what she learned in her CWJC money management class for giving her the knowledge she needed to develop a budget and spend money wisely. Before graduating from the program, she reached her goal of saving the necessary amount of money to purchase her glasses. She had to wait for a ride to a city four hours away where the diagnostician was located. Her glasses arrived three weeks later.

Nesa says, "I was overwhelmed [after putting the glasses on for the first time]. I went to the post office bathroom, cried, and read signs on the wall and on the paper towel dispenser. I couldn't speak

for about an hour. I took my first selfie and put it on Facebook. I didn't understand until that day what I had missed in life. Colors were different. Blue is bluer. No wonder I was depressed! I'm reading. This is life altering!" Nesa works as a sitter now but plans to become an American Sign Language interpreter.

Sandy

SANDY WISDOM-MARTIN is executive director of WMU.



*Father,
Thank You Shirley
took the time to
see a hurting
person and make
a connection.
Help us be
intentional in
valuing people
others may
overlook. Give
us transparency
to let them see
how You have
changed us and
courage to give
a verbal witness
of Your power at
work in our lives.
In Jesus' name,
Amen*



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