

“From the teeming streets of Calcutta to the dusty villages of West Africa, *Into the Darkness* takes readers on an unforgettable world tour through 75 years of Free Will Baptist Missions history. Visually stunning, with previously unpublished photographs, diary entries, and timeless stories, the volume captures the passion and persistence of men and women who gave their lives to share God’s message of redemption with the nations.”

— **Eric K. Thomsen, Editor**

*ONE Magazine*

“Here is a book that should be in the home of every Free Will Baptist. This is truly one of the great stories of all time for us. It is extraordinary to trace, from the very beginning, how our denomination began and is continuing to carry out our Lord’s Great Commission! It will both inspire you to see what has been done—and encourage you to help us do even more to reach the world for Christ.”

— **Dr. Charles A. Thigpen**

“I am so excited about *Into the Darkness*! Having served as a missionary and then as Director of Public Relations, I have been a part of this story for most of my adult life. I’ve also been privileged to assist in the book’s development. It is such a blessing to see this story told so beautifully!”

— **Don Robirds**

“As a history nut, I’m glad *Into the Darkness* is telling the story of Free Will Baptist missions for the past seventy-five years. It’s more than facts and figures, it’s history with a heart, focusing on the people who have written the record in their lives and sacrifices and results. Every Free Will Baptist who cares about taking the gospel to the lost world must have a copy!”

— **Dr. Robert Picirilli**

*Historical Commission*



# INTO THE DARKNESS



75 Years of Free Will Baptist International Missions

In 1935, God called a young woman from Georgia to leave everything familiar to her and travel 10,000 miles to share Christ with the untouchables of India. Laura Belle Barnard’s intrepid voyage of faith began a newly formed denomination’s journey in obedience to the Great Commission. Hundreds of missionaries followed her to some of the darkest places around the world. All went with the same calling—to take the light of the gospel into the darkness. Each was commissioned and sent with the conviction that the God who called would also provide.

*Into the Darkness* demonstrates the faithfulness of God by telling the story of Free Will Baptist International Missions’ worldwide efforts. The story of Free Will Baptist missions is actually an accumulation of hundreds, even thousands of stories. *Into the Darkness* tells many of them in words and photographs.

“This is a dream come true—all my missionary heroes together in a magnificent bound volume that I can add to my library, display for my friends, and use as a research tool. *Into the Darkness* is a watermark in the unfolding story of modern Free Will Baptist missions. What an honor to be associated with a movement that produces such men and women who dare the darkness, and this amazing book that will change the landscape of Free Will Baptist International Missions.”

— **Jack Williams,**

*Director of Communications  
Free Will Baptist Bible College*













# INTO THE DARKNESS

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75 Years of Free Will Baptist  
International Missions



FREE WILL BAPTIST  
INTERNATIONAL  
MISSIONS



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Managing Editor: Deborah St. Lawrence  
Project Manager: Dana Long  
Design: Richmond & Williams  
Writers: Jennifer Morgan Gerelds, Don Robirds  
Copy Editors: Beverly Riggs, Don Robirds, Eric Thomsen, Jack Williams

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of *Into The Darkness* has been to capture stories and pictures that will honor the unique contribution of Free Will Baptists who have taken His Truth to the regions beyond. It was not intended to be an exhaustive history of Free Will Baptist International Missions. Such a volume needs to be written and is being considered in the near future. Inevitably, there will be stories and materials that have been omitted. Some of those we have never heard. Others fell victim to a lack of space.

Without the significant input and advice from the editorial committee, this volume would never have been produced. The distinguished committee includes Robert Picirilli, Don Robirds, Eric Thomsen, Jack Williams, and Mary Ruth Wiseheart. In addition, the communications team at FWBIM has worked tirelessly on this and other projects related to the 2010 celebration. Special thanks is due to Deborah St. Lawrence for countless hours, over nights and weekends, to shepherd this project to its completion. It has been a labor of love and gift to the Kingdom by all who have been involved.









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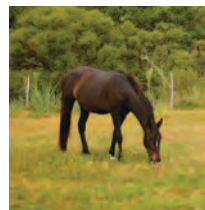
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# TEMPLO EVANGELICO BAUTISTA LIBRE

CULTOS SABADOS A LAS 5:30  
BIENVENIDOS TODOS





# WELCOME

**I**nto *The Darkness* is an appropriate title for this volume. For 75 years, Free Will Baptists from rural areas, small towns, and the great cities of the United States departed the land of their birth and voluntarily headed *Into The Darkness* to share His Light and Truth. From coast-to-coast, an unrelenting flow of men and women responded to the call to go.

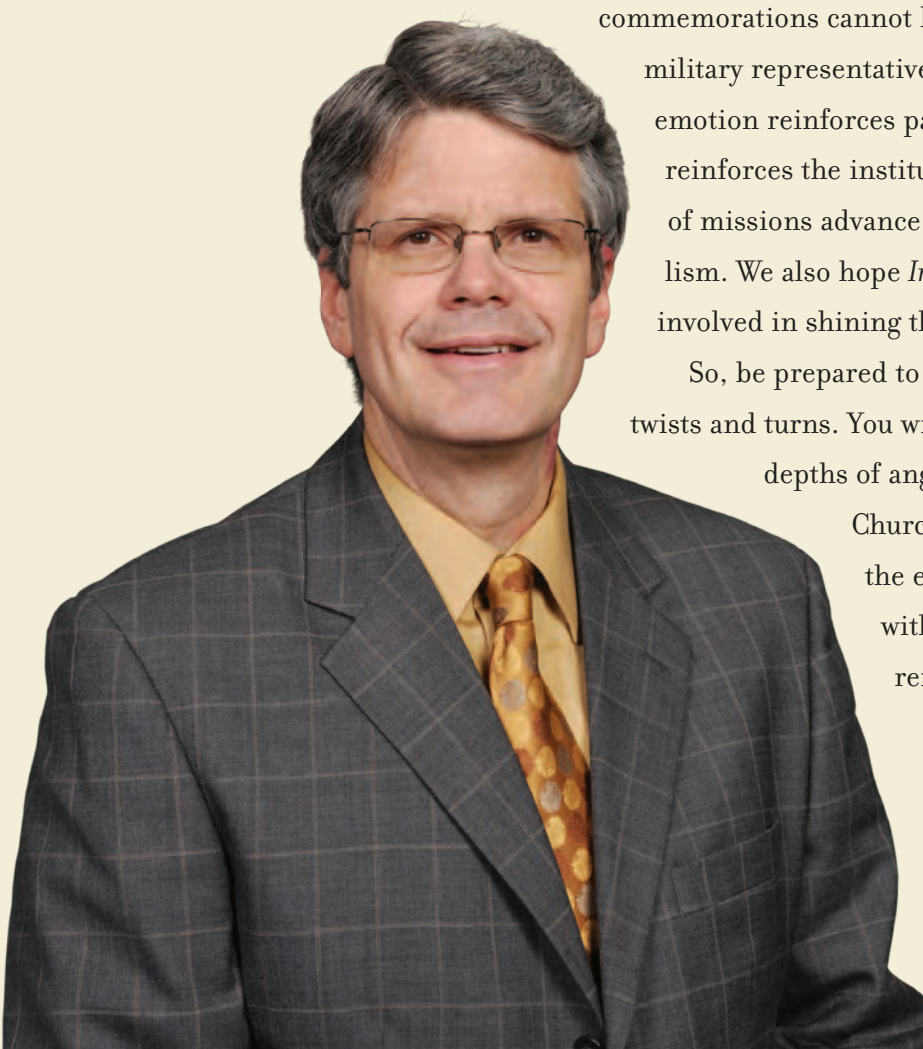
Obedience to God's call led them to tribal peoples in Africa and India. They faced spiritual darkness in the world-class cities of Europe, Asia, and Latin America. With abandon they labored in the midst of civil wars, military invasions, natural disasters, and abject poverty. These intrepid men and women battled discouragement, opposition, and the forces of evil in the attempt to bring worshippers to the throne of God.

In the midst of the darkness *He* has been their Light and Truth. What He promised, He has fulfilled, “. . . and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). *Into The Darkness*, therefore, is a book of celebration. We celebrate the faithfulness of God, and of His servants who answered His call. Celebration is important for any group of people. It can be a powerful instrument to reinforce values and beliefs. Celebration even serves as a vehicle to transfer values and beliefs to future generations.

Lloyd Kwast's model of understanding cultures states that our behavior is based on our values, and our values are based on what we believe. Ultimately, what we believe is based on our worldview. In transference of culture from generation to generation, the younger generation realizes what is considered important, worthy, and of value. A faithful reading of Scripture will always lead us to the conclusion that sharing the gospel with those who haven't heard is of ultimate and eternal value to God. We trust *Into The Darkness* will reinforce that truth.

In addition to celebration, the 75th anniversary of Laura Belle Barnard boarding the S.S. *Potter* in New York City provides us a perfect opportunity for commemoration. In any cultural group, whether a hidden tribal people, a college booster club, a branch of military service, or in our case, a denomination, the importance of rituals and commemorations cannot be overstated. We choke back tears when a United States military representative presents the flag to the widow of a fallen soldier. That emotion reinforces patriotism. A 50th anniversary celebration for a couple reinforces the institution of marriage. Likewise, this celebration of 75 years of missions advance reinforces the ultimate importance of global evangelism. We also hope *Into The Darkness* will deepen your appreciation for those involved in shining the Light.

So, be prepared to be surprised. The road *Into The Darkness* has many twists and turns. You will experience the heights of joy and victory as well as the depths of anguish and defeat. In the midst of it all He is building His Church and the gates of hell are not prevailing against it. In the end we hope that this chronicle of the journey will fill you with joy, encouragement, and a passion to reach those who remain in darkness.

James F. Forlines  
James F. Forlines, General Director



# INTRODUCTION

Ralph Winter, a missionary statesman of our generation, wrote, “[God] has given us a clear and simple task to finish: to see that Christ is worshipped and followed in every people. This is the essential missionary task. This we must do with utmost focus and passion until it is finished” (*Finishing the Task*, Mission Frontiers, June 2000).

Free Will Baptists have manifested their obedience to this task for the past 75 years through Free Will Baptist Foreign, and now, International Missions. The journey *Into The Darkness* began with Laura Belle Barnard on July 5, 1935. According to ship records that was the day she left New York City aboard the *S.S. Potter* bound for Bombay, India. Or, more accurately, we might say that the journey began again with her. One hundred years earlier, in 1835, Jeremiah Phillips and Eli Noyes departed as Free Will Baptist missionaries to a different part of India (now known as the state of Orissa).

From 1835 until 1911 Free Will Baptists had a foreign missions presence. A merger with Northern Baptists in 1910-11 left the scattered and unaffiliated Free Will Baptists without a foreign mission organization, and in many ways, without a missionary vision and zeal. Twenty-five years went by without any organized Free Will Baptist foreign missions efforts. God then sent a single, young woman in her mid-20s to awaken the denomination to this “clear and simple task.”

Former president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Dr. L. C. Johnson said it this way,

“An entire denomination was without a missionary conscience. For a quarter of a century no one had emerged to give an awareness of this responsibility to ‘the other lost sheep.’ The

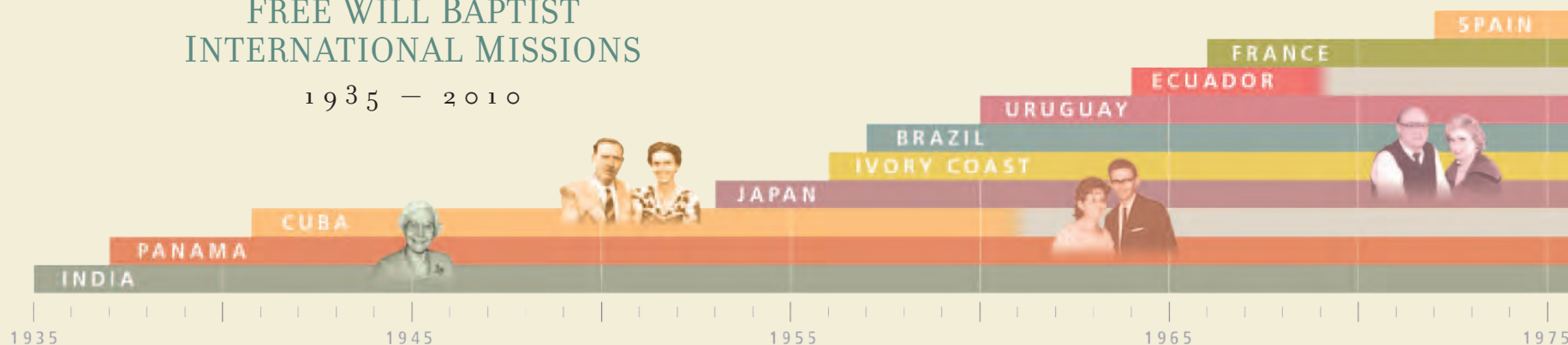
workings of God in Miss Laura Belle’s life, to prick the conscience of an entire denomination, becomes evident even though unusual” (*Touching The Untouchables*, p. 9).

The journey since the *S.S. Potter*’s voyage has been an incredible story of Kingdom advance. More than 300 Free Will Baptist men and women have followed in Laura Belle’s footsteps—leaving their home in the States to take the Light to unreached peoples on five continents around the world. Beginning in the Niligiri Hills of Tamil Nadu in South India, the Light has dispersed and now shines in over 20 countries. In 1935, Free Will Baptists had no churches outside of North America. In 2010, people in over 1,100 overseas churches and mission works worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Nearly 600 national pastors join our current missionary force of 100 in fulfilling our stewardship responsibility of reaching the unreached. Twelve Bible institutes and seminaries around the world are training an additional 400 workers for the harvest fields. This is the story we tell in *Into The Darkness*.

The purpose adopted and pursued by our early pioneer missionaries is still our purpose today. FWBIM has always reached out to unreached peoples with the ultimate goal of planting churches and initiating church planting

## FREE WILL BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

1935 — 2010





movements. In June of 1935, Laura Belle met with the Eastern General Conference in Greenville, North Carolina. She had a clear understanding of their expectations. “I was to make it a definite aim to search out a *needy field* in India where Free Will Baptists would be invited to send further missionaries, develop a work, and *establish churches*” [Laura Belle Barnard, *Touching The Untouchables*, p. 49—emphasis supplied].

The call of reaching unreached peoples (needy fields) has been a defining characteristic of the Mission. It has determined the areas of the world to which we feel called. If another evangelical group is working in an area, FWBIM has chosen to go where no evangelical effort exists. Our goal is not to simply advance the Free Will Baptist denomination, our goal is to advance the Kingdom.

We adhere to the confession of the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:20 when he said, “And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation” (NKJV). This is the origin then, of our current purpose statement: We exist to facilitate church planting movements among unreached peoples.

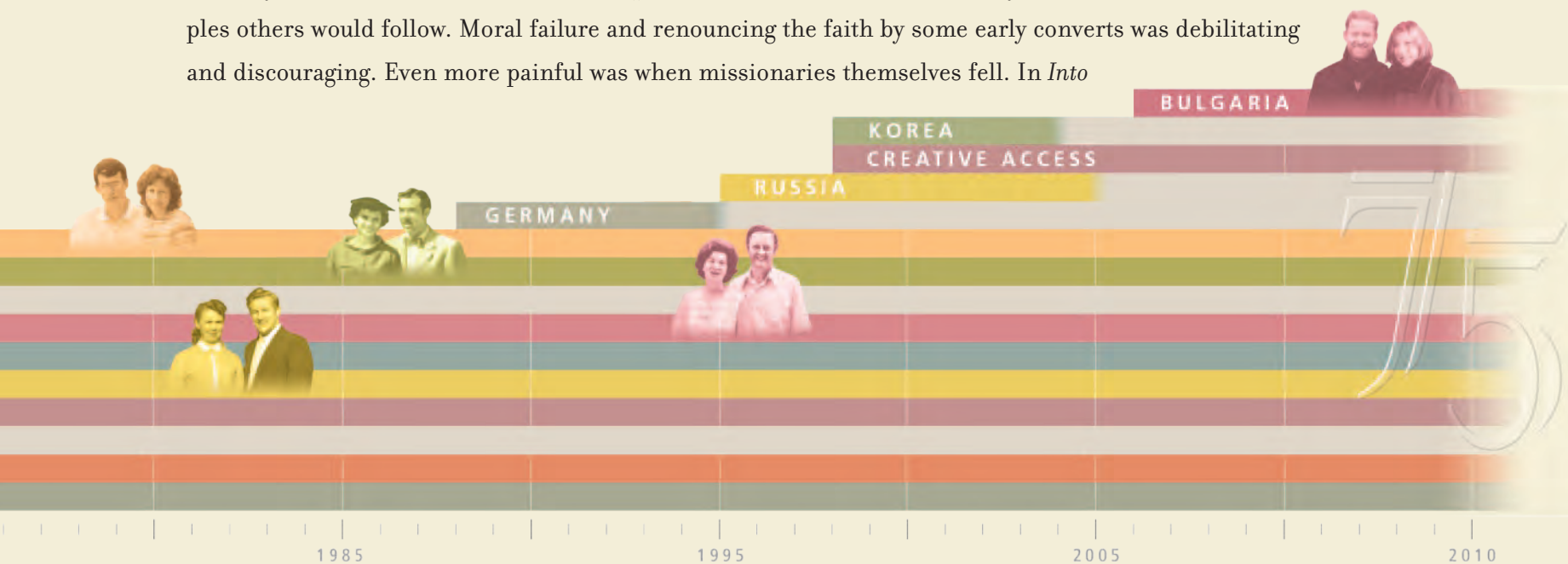
A prime example comes from the experience of Laura Belle Barnard herself. Upon arriving in Kotagiri, South India, Laura Belle learned of an earlier outreach effort to the Harijan (outcaste) people. A Scottish lady, Miss Cockburn, abandoned her outreach in the community. “Apparently, she had become thoroughly discouraged and withdrew, declaring confidently that she had found an ethnic group of subhumans who were decidedly incapable of responding to education or spiritual truth” [*Touching The Untouchables*, p. 15].

This did not dissuade Laura Belle.

When people enter our churches around the world, they usually do not come from the Nazarenes, Southern Baptists, or the Assemblies of God. They come from Animism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Islam, or Catholicism. We do not aim to rearrange the Kingdom, but to advance it.

This has been a laudable, but difficult road. Totally unreached people require much prayer and labor before harvest time. The early years were difficult as our pioneer missionaries painstakingly carved a church from the bedrock of superstition and false belief. Conversions were slow in coming. Leadership training was frustrating at times.

Early converts had few Christian examples within their own cultures. They, themselves, were the examples others would follow. Moral failure and renouncing the faith by some early converts was debilitating and discouraging. Even more painful was when missionaries themselves fell. In *Into*





*The Darkness* we acknowledge the contribution of those whose ministries did not end well. The message of their early years was true and their sacrifice worth noting.

Crucial to the cause was the willingness of pioneer missionaries who paid the price and remained faithful to the call. Wave after wave of missionaries followed the trailblazers. The promise on which they based their ministries was, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart” (NKJV).

Praise the Lord, on many of our fields it is now harvest time. The attendance in Free Will Baptist churches outside of North America has more than doubled within the past decade. Around the world, children are born into Free Will Baptist homes with parents who are second- and third-generation followers of Christ. The unrelenting faithfulness of missionaries and national pastors is now resulting in an exponential harvest.

As you read through *Into The Darkness* these are not the only changes you will recognize. Laura Belle would stare in disbelief at a sign on the front door of the church in Kotagiri which reads, “Please turn off your mobile phones.” In her day they did not even have electricity.

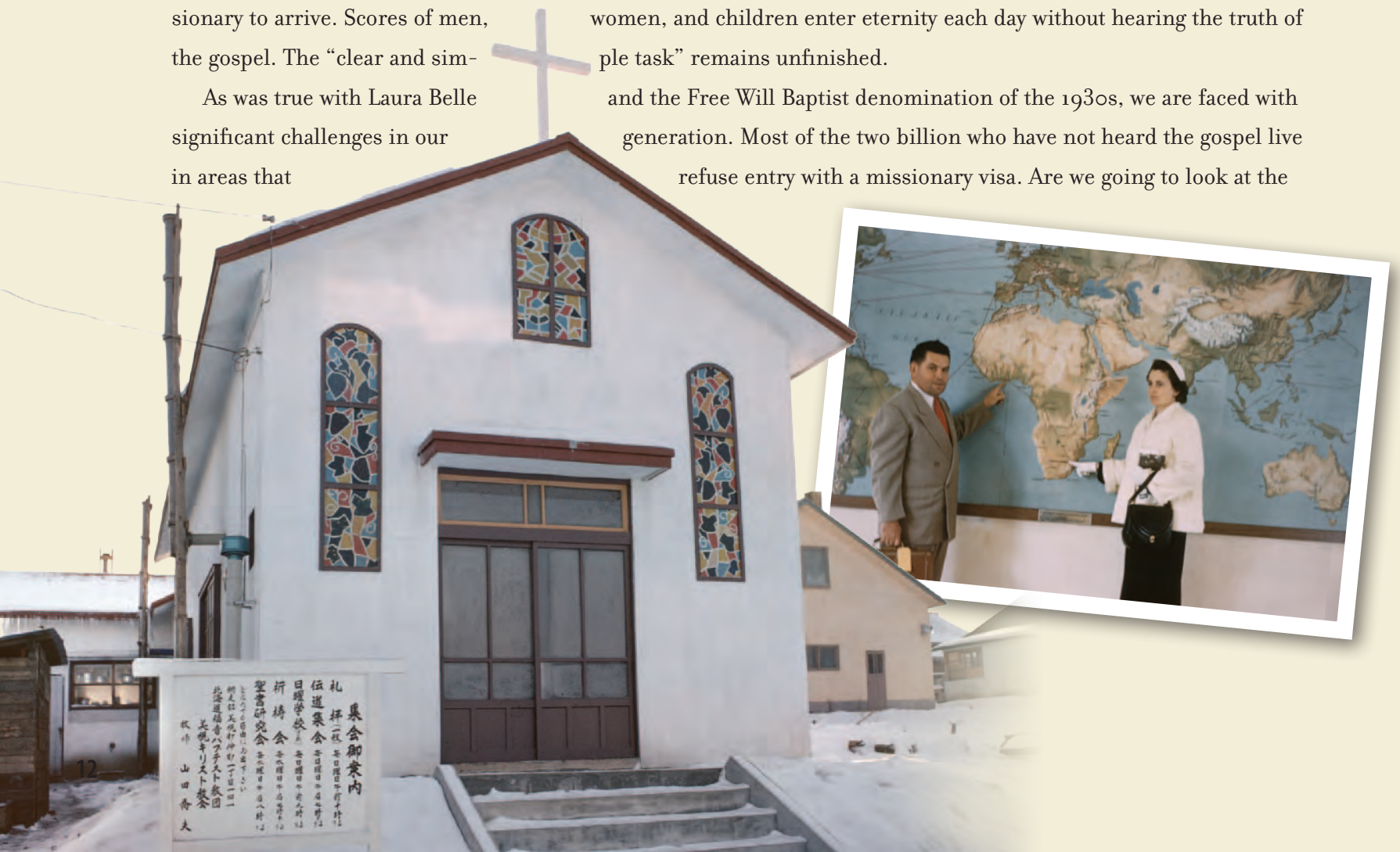
Some of our earliest missionaries served seven-year terms. It was just too expensive to make the long ocean voyages to and from the field more frequently. Visitors to the field were almost non-existent. Phone calls had to be arranged well in advance, or were only made in extreme circumstances because of prohibitive costs. Banking systems around the world were undependable and untrustworthy, making financial transactions and channeling support extremely challenging.

Things have certainly changed. Today, hundreds of Free Will Baptist teens and adults visit, see, and assist the works around the world firsthand. With the advent of the Internet, every missionary now has access not only to e-mail, but also to free video conferencing. Worldwide banking and property laws have strengthened, aiding the advancement of the Kingdom.

But, with all the changes, some things remain unchanged. Almost two billion people still have no access to the gospel. Cities, towns, and villages all over the world are waiting for the first witness, the first church, and the first missionary to arrive. Scores of men, women, and children enter eternity each day without hearing the truth of the gospel. The “clear and simple task” remains unfinished.

As was true with Laura Belle and the Free Will Baptist denomination of the 1930s, we are faced with significant challenges in our generation. Most of the two billion who have not heard the gospel live in areas that

refuse entry with a missionary visa. Are we going to look at the





challenges and say, “It’s too difficult?” or, “It’s too dangerous?”

This is *our* challenge. This is *our* calling. *Into The Darkness* is not only an attempt to chronicle the provisions of God and the faithfulness of His people in the past. The book, and the stories it contains, is meant to serve as an appeal—a challenge—to the current generation, and others who will follow, to continue piercing the darkness until the words of Jesus are fulfilled, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and

then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14—NKJV).

This task demands the same spirit, creativity, and tenacity that existed in our earliest missionaries. If governments will not allow missionaries to enter with missionary visas, we will have to find other ways. Some will enter providing humanitarian aid. Others will teach in schools or hold various occupations. Some will start businesses. Some will birth creative alternatives.

Though the means of taking the gospel has changed through the years, and will most certainly change as we head into the future, the purpose itself should not. “We exist to

facilitate church planting movements among unreached peoples.” Winning people to Christ, making them disciples, and gathering them together to form a church will always be the call.

As we face this challenging future, new colleagues are coming alongside us. Free Will Baptists from our churches around the world are sensing the need and answering the call to reach more than their Jerusalem, and are reaching into *their* Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Over the next 25 years, this may be one of the most exciting developments we will see. By the time we celebrate our centennial in 2035, more Free Will Baptist missionaries may originate from our works internationally than from North America. If current growth trends continue, more Free Will Baptists will be worshipping in churches internationally than in the U.S.A.

Perhaps before the next 25 years have elapsed, we will all be gathered around the throne of Heaven to worship the Lord together. The Apostle John had the unique opportunity to see that scene in advance. He records it for us in Revelation 7:9-10, “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”

As we look, we will see a Bengali man from India, a Lobi woman from Ivory Coast, and a Frenchman from Châteaubriant. Scanning the crowd further, we will see a former Shinto priest, a mountain villager from Panama, and a senorita from Alpedrete, Spain. Thousands upon thousands of our brothers and sisters in Christ from all over the world will be present because of the sacrifice and commitment of Free Will Baptists who were obedient to send and be sent.

*Into The Darkness* tells part of that story. Praise the Lord with us for those who will gather around the throne as a result of the labors of those whose story is contained herein, as well as those whose story is being lived today.





# INDIA

## *The Broken Cistern*

It flows down the sides of the northeastern Himalayas. It courses in currents across the heartland. It surges in cyclical monsoons across the south and inundates the low-lying plains. Water is sacred to the people of India—their very lives and livelihood depend on it. It was along the silt-laden shores of the Brahmaputra, the Indus, and the Ganges rivers their civilization first developed. Ancient traditions, religious beliefs, and social structure established thousands of years ago continue to flow in and through its culture like a never-ending spring. So why do the people languish? Why do only a minute number hold power and money while hundreds of thousands stumble naked in the streets, dying of hunger, cold, and thirst? The problem lies in the source of their hope. Longing for a better life, millions pilgrimage to the rivers to cleanse their bodies and sin-sick souls. But they drink from a broken cistern. Polluted water that does not quench. A hope that cannot save.

In addition to Islamic and Buddhist influence, India is lost in a heritage of dominant Hinduism that shapes the very core of its culture. One of the oldest religions in the world, its basic tenets stem from a variety of writings, the Vedas, considered sacred by Hindus. These ancient writings encourage polytheism in its most ardent form, leading followers to embrace and worship millions of deities. The most important are Brahma, who they believe created the universe; Vishnu, the one responsible for preserving creation; and Shiva, the great destroyer. In all, these and many other gods make up one universal spirit known as Brahman. Hindu theology teaches that animals as well as humans have souls. Animal worship often takes precedence over human well being, and the streets reek with the stench of an epic moral miscalculation.

Facing abject poverty and seeming hopelessness, what motivates a Hindu? Each wants to achieve spiritual perfection, or Moksha. They must earn their way up the spiritual ladder dictated by the Vedas. At the top of India's hierarchy or caste system are the Brahman, priests/scholars. Next are the Kshatriyas, the rulers and



**TOP:** Snake charmers still practice their art in the streets.

**MIDDLE:** The Himalayas' Mt. Everest, on the border with Nepal, is the world's tallest mountain at 29,028 feet.

**BOTTOM:** The Taj Mahal draws millions of visitors annually.





## Mission Facts

Close to 25,000 believers flood more than 300 churches in the provinces of Bihar and Tamil Nadu each Sunday as a result of the work of a handful of dedicated men and women. Indian workers have reached into Nepal and Bhutan with the gospel.

warriors, followed by the Vaisyas, comprised of merchants and professionals. Last are the Sudras, the laborers and servants. Below the rungs of the ladder, the mud beneath the feet, are the untouchables—a social class so low no other caste member can even speak to them. Rules within each caste are strict. No one breaks rank. No one marries or interacts outside his class. Each person is

destined to remain within the confines given in this life, with the hope of being good enough to be born again through reincarnation into a higher caste. Once they have been good enough in enough lives, they exit the system through Moksha, where their eternal soul simply fades into the oblivion of the universal spirit.

With beliefs that hinder health and hope for almost all her inhabitants, it seems India would be ready for change. In fact, it was the desperate cry from this land and its people that called out to missionary pioneers like Laura Belle Barnard and others. Eager to carry a cup of cool water to parched lips, they forged into this foreign land in the hope of redeeming life in every way possible. But the roots of tradition and custom run deep. Though missionaries engage the culture, exposing the lies and proclaiming the truth, conversion comes at a very high cost. To receive Christ is often to be rejected by family, community, and caste. Many Indians want to believe, but are frightened by the persecution they know will come. The harvest in India is ripe, but the fields are fraught with danger. The cost of evangelism must be counted well. God has sent stalwart servants who began the work of laying a foundation of truth. He will continue to raise up laborers to build upon it. It is time the people of India feel the cleansing power of unearned righteousness. It is time they taste and see that Jesus Christ, the only Living Water, has come to satiate their thirsty souls.



**TOP:** India's poverty, as demonstrated by the many people who still dwell in small grass and mud huts, can be overwhelming.

**MIDDLE:** The floor serves as both bed and table for millions of India's common people.

**BOTTOM:** Hindu women guard their children in hopes of guiding them to a better status in the next life.



## INDIA

CAPITAL	.....	New Delhi
LARGEST CITY	.....	Mumbai
AREA	.....	3,287,263 sq. km
POPULATION	.....	1,166,079,217
CURRENCY	.....	Rupee
PER CAPITA INCOME	.....	\$977
RELIGIONS	Hindu.....	80.7%
	Muslim.....	13.4%
	Christian.....	1.8%
	Other (Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Jews, Zoroastrians, Bahai, Tribal).....	4.1%
	Unreached People Groups.....	2,190

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project





# TOUCHING THE UNTOUCHABLES

## *The Laura Belle Barnard Story*

*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

PSALM 16:11



What possesses a young, single woman to sacrifice her life? To forfeit the comforts and companionship of home? To embrace a foreign culture where Satan's lies have ravaged its people? To call home a place of dust and death, where victims riddled with disease and despair cling desperately to false hopes in more than 300 million gods?

Laura Belle Barnard explained it simply before the 1935 General Conference of Original Free Will Baptists at Black Jack Church near Greenville, North Carolina. Her answer was Psalm 16:11, her life's verse captured the source of passion that fired her brave soul. Wherever Jesus was, Laura Belle was at home. The surroundings didn't matter. The sacrifice was never too great. Her joy, her deepest pleasure, was found in the presence of her Savior. And if He was moving in India, that's where she wanted to be.

With \$150 from the treasury and an additional \$85 from a freewill offering, Laura Belle left her Georgia roots, crossed the Atlantic, and set foot on South India's soil. She immediately began the task of learning the difficult Tamil language in Kotagiri,

a small village nestled in South India's western mountain range. Upon completing her studies, she turned to the Kotagiri community around her. A quick study of the deeply entrenched caste system revealed a point of obvious neglect from previous missionaries. Though predecessors had made inroads into some of the four predominant class systems, an enormous population characterized as "untouchable" had been ignored. These outcasts drew Laura Belle's attention and lured her merciful heart.

As Jesus walked among the lame and lepers of His day, Laura Belle Barnard lived among the world's poorest and neediest people. Though straining against opposition from Hindu priests, plagues, and dire working conditions, Laura Belle and her coworkers labored to establish hope in her community. Over the next 22 years, her efforts bore fruit in the form of two schools, four churches, and numerous Christian workers equipped to continue her efforts. In addition to the church plants in Kotagiri and Gopalapuram, Sunday schools were established to reach the overwhelming number of children in the area. Workers ministered to the children's physical and spiritual



**UPPER LEFT:** Pioneer missionary Laura Belle Barnard, in her pith helmet, and colleague Volena Wilson stand with some of the men and boys in training in South India.

**BOTTOM:** A diligent student and teacher, Miss Barnard types material for a class at FWBBC.





needs. As they grew in stature and truth, these children became leaders trained to help their own people find true life.

Laura Belle Barnard's example of obedience and self-sacrifice did not go unnoticed in India or her homeland. Her boldness pricked the very conscience of an entire denomination of Free Will Baptists. When she returned from the mission field in 1957, her vision and conviction had inspired many others to join Christ's cause, not only in India, but other strategic lands as well.

Though stateside, she continued her evangelistic calling as head of the missions program at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Drawing from 22 years of intense missionary experience, she taught, trained, and equipped many others to prepare well and to succeed in the distant places her students would carry the gospel. She became close confidant and friend of faculty and students alike, inspiring them with her obedience that flowed from love for her Savior. She authored two books, *His Name Among All Nations*—a book of missionary apologetics and history—and *Touching the Untouchables*, a tribute to her work and people among India's poorest souls. She

also established a ministry to migrant workers in her hometown of Glennville, Georgia, for which she was honored by the Glennville Chamber of Commerce.

Throughout her life, Laura Belle remained firm in her calling. She also made it clear that all of God's children bear the same responsibility. Without apology, she called her brothers and sisters in Christ to lay down their lives for Christ's sake and the souls of the lost. On March 9, 1992, Laura did indeed lay down her life after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Now in the arms of her precious Lord and Savior, her witness continues to compel God's people through the words of Christ.

*Then said Jesus unto his disciples,  
"If any man will come after me, let him  
deny himself, and take up his cross, and  
follow me. For whosoever will save his life  
shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life  
for my sake shall find it. For what is a man  
profited, if he shall gain the whole world,  
and lose his own soul? or what shall a man  
give in exchange for his soul?"*

M A T T H E W 16 : 24 - 26



**TOP:** Laura Belle dons her sari as she poses with India Christian family members while visiting several years after her retirement.

**MIDDLE:** The Kotagiri Bank held special importance for the missionary seeking to exchange dollars for rupees.

**BOTTOM:** Miss Barnard poses with students near the end of her tenure in India.





ABOVE: Well-wishers filled the pages of Miss Barnard's autograph book during her stateside ministry between terms in India.

998

யோவான் 19

யைக் கேட்டபொழுது அதிகமாய்ப் பயந்து, 9 மறுபடியும் அரமனைக்குள்ளே போய், இயேசுவை நோக்கி: நீ எங்கேயிருந்து வந்தவன் என்றான். <sup>1</sup>அதற்கு இயேசு: மாறுத்தரம் ஒன்றும் சொல்லவில்லை. அப்பொழுது பிலாத்து: \*நீ என்னோடே பேசுகிறதில்லையா? <sup>2</sup>உன்னைச் சிலுவையில் அறைய எனக்கு அதிகாரமுண்டென்றும், உன்னை விடுதலைப்பண்ண எனக்கு அதிகாரமுண்டென்றும் உனக்குத் 11 தெரியாதா என்றான். இயேசு பிரதியுத்தரமாக: பரத்திலிருந்து உமக்குக் கொடுக்கப் படாதிருந்தால், <sup>3</sup>என்மேல் உமக்கு ஒரு அதிகாரமுமில்லை; <sup>4</sup>ஆனபடியினாலே என்னை உம் மிடத்தில் ஒப்புக்கொடுத்தவனுக்கு அதிகபாவ 12 முண்டு என்றார். அதுமுதல் பிலாத்து அவரை விடுதலைப்பண்ண வகைதேடினான். யூதர்கள் அவனை நோக்கி: இவனை விடுதலைப்பண்ணினால் நீர் ராயனுக்குச் சிடுக்கிதனல்ல; <sup>5</sup>தன்னை ராஜாவென்கிறவனெவனோ அவன் ராயனுக்கு விரோதி என்று சத்தமிட்டார்கள். 13 பிலாத்து இந்த வார்த்தையைச் சிறிதும்

1 சூ. 38, 13.  
எசு. 53, 7.  
மத. 27, 12.  
14. மல. 1.  
28

\* நீ எனக்குச் சொல்ல வேர?

2 எசு. 3, 14, 15

37. 30. எசு. 39, 9. ம. 22, 53

418. 3. எசு. 14, 44

5 எசு. 23, 2. அப். 17, 7

6 சத. 29, 25. அப். 4, 19

† உட்கர்த்தனன். எசு. 1. 21: 2, 7

1

வை நோக்கி: யூதருடைய ராஜா என்று நீர் எழுதாமல், தான் யூதருடைய ராஜா என்று அவன் சொன்னதாக எழுதும் என்றார்கள். பிலாத்து பிரதியுத்தரமாக: நான் எழுதினது 22 எழுதினதே என்றான்.

போர்ச்சேவகர் இயேசுவைச் சிலுவையில் <sup>23</sup> அறைந்தபின்பு, <sup>12</sup>அவருடைய வஸ்திரங்களை எடுத்து, ஒவ்வொரு சேவகனுக்கு ஒவ்வொரு பங்காக நாலு பங்காக்கினார்கள்; அங்கியையும் எடுத்தார்கள், <sup>13</sup>அந்த அங்கி இடையலில்லாமல் மேலே தொடங்கி முழுவதும் கெய்யப்பட்ட தாயிருந்தது. அவர்கள் இதை நாம் கிழியா <sup>24</sup> மல், யாருக்கு வருமோ என்று இதைக்குறித்துச் சீட்டுப்போடுவோம் என்று ஒருவரோ பொருவர் பேசிக்கொண்டார்கள். <sup>14</sup>என் வஸ்திரங்களைத் தங்களுக்குள்ளே பங்கிட்டு, என் உடையின்மேல் சீட்டுப்போட்டார்கள் என் கிற வேதவாக்கியம் நிறைவேற்றத்தக்கதாகப் போர்ச்சேவகர் இப்படிச் செய்தார்கள். இயே <sup>25</sup> சுவின் சிலுவையினருகே அவருடையதாயும், அவருடைய தாயின் சகோதரி கிலெயோப் மரியாளும், மகதலேனா மரியாளும் நின் கொண்டிருந்தார்கள். அப்பொழுது இயேசு <sup>26</sup> முடைய தாயையும் அருகே நின்ற <sup>16</sup>தமக் அன்பாயிருந்த சீஷனையும் கண்டு, தம்முடைய தாயை நோக்கி: <sup>17</sup>என்தீர்யே, அதோ, மகன் என்றார். பின்பு அந்தச் சீஷனை <sup>27</sup> க்கி: அதோ, உன் தாய் என்றார். <sup>18</sup>அந்முதல் அந்தச் சீஷன் அவளைத் <sup>19</sup>தன்னிடம் ஏற்றுக்கொண்டான்.

கன்பின்பு, எல்லாம் முடிந்தது என்ற <sup>28</sup> ச அறிந்து, <sup>20</sup>வேதவாக்கியம் நிறைவே ததாக: தாகமா யிருக்கிறேன் என்றார். நிறைந்த பாத்திரம் அக்கே வைக்கப்பட்ட <sup>29</sup> து; அவர்கள் கடற்காளைக்காடியிலே து, ஈசோப்புத்தண்டில் மாட்டி, அவர் னிடத்தில் நீட்டிக் கொடுத்தார்கள். <sup>30</sup> ஈசோப்புக்காயை வாங்கிப்பின்பு, <sup>31</sup>முடிந்தது என்று சொல்லி, தலையைச் சாய்த்து, <sup>32</sup>ஆவியை ஒப்புக்கொடுத்தார்.

அந்தநான் <sup>33</sup>பெரிய ஒய்வுகளுக்கு ஆயத்த <sup>31</sup> நானா யிருந்தபடியினால், உடல்கள் அந்த ஒய்வுகளிலே சிலுவைகளில் இராதபடிக்கு, யூதர்கள் பிலாத்துவினிடத்தில் போய், அவர்களுடைய காலெலும்புகளை முறிக்கும்படிக்கும், உடல்களை எடுத்துப்போடும்படிக்கும் உத்தரவு கேட்டுக்கொண்டார்கள். அந்தப்படி போர்ச் <sup>32</sup> சேவகர் வந்து, அவருடனேகூடச் சிலுவையில் அறையப்பட்ட முத்தினவனுடைய காலெலும்புகளையும் மற்றவனுடைய காலெலும்புகளையும் முறித்தார்கள். அவர்கள் இயேசுவின் <sup>33</sup> னிடத்தில் வந்து, அவர் மரித்திருக்கிறதைக் கண்டு, அவருடைய காலெலும்புகளை முறிக்கவில்லை. ஆகிலும் போர்ச்சேவகரில் ஒருவன் <sup>34</sup> ஈட்டியினாலே அவருடைய விலாவில் குத்தினான்; <sup>35</sup>உடனே இரத்தமும் தண்ணீரும் புறப்பட்டது. அதைக்கண்டவன் சாட்சிக்கொடுக்க <sup>35</sup>

Bible Conference  
May 18, 1951  
Dear Miss Barnard,  
I enjoyed reading about you before I met you and now I enjoy hearing you talk as you have done in this Bible Conference.  
May the Lord bless you abundantly as you return to India.  
Bless a prayer for me sometime.  
Your sister in Christ  
Mrs. George M. S. Lavin  
P.O. Box 133, Kernan, Calif.

யைச் சுமந்துகொண்டு, <sup>10</sup>எபிரெயு பாவையிலே கொல்கொதா என்று சொல்லப்படும் கபாலஸ்தலம் என்கிற இடத்திற்குப் புறப்பட்டுப் போனார். அக்கே அவரைச் சிலுவையில் அறைந்தார்கள்; அவரோடேகூட வேறிரண்டு பேரை இரண்டு பக்கங்களிலும் இயேசுவை நடுவிலுமாகச் சிலுவைகளில் 19 அறைந்தார்கள். பிலாத்து ஒரு மேல்விலாசத்தை எழுதி, சிலுவையின்மேல் போடுவித்தான். <sup>11</sup>அதில் நடுவேயுடைய இயேசு யூதருடைய ராஜா என்று எழுதியிருந்தது. இயேசு சிலுவையில் அறையப்பட்ட இடம் நகரத்திற்குச் சமீபமாய் இருந்தபடியினால் யூதரில் அநேகர் அந்த மேல்விலாசத்தை வாசித்தார்கள்: அது எபிரெயு கிரேக்கு லத்தீன் பா 21 ஷைகளில் எழுதியிருந்தது. அப்பொழுது யூதருடைய பிரதான ஆசாரியர் பிலாத்து

24. 18

16 13, 23

17 2, 4

18 1 த. 2. 5, 2

19 16, 32

20 சூ. 69, 21

21 17, 4

22 எசு. 53, 10, 12. எசு. 2, 14, 15

23 எசு. 28, 7, 8. எசு. 21, 23. எசு. 15, 42

24 எசு. 9, 22, 23. 1 எசு. 8, 21. 1 எசு. 5, 6, 8





யோவான் 20

கிறான், அவனுடைய சாட்சி மெய்யாயிருக்கிறது; நீங்கள் விசுவாசிக்கும்படி, தான் சொல்லுகிறது மெய்யென்று அவன் அறிந்திருக்கிறான். அவருடைய எலும்புகளில் ஒன்றும் முறிக்கப்படுவதில்லை என்கிற வேதவாக்கியம் நிறைவேறும்படி இவைகள் நடந்தது. அல்லாமலும் தாங்கள் ருத்தினவரை கோக்கிப்பார்ப்பார்கள் என்று வேறொரு வேதவாக்கியம் சொல்லுகிறது.

38 இவைகளுக்குப்பின்பு அரிமத்தியா ஊரானும், யூதருக்குப் பயந்தினால் இயேசுவுக்கு அந்தரங்க சேஷனுமாகிய யோசேப்பு இயேசுவின் சரீரத்தை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு போரும்படி பிலாத்துவினிடத்தில் உத்தரவு கேட்டான்; பிலாத்து உத்தரவு கொடுத்தான். ஆகையால் அவன் வந்து, இயேசுவின் சரீரத்தை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு போனான். ஆரம்பத்திலே ஒரு இராத்திரியில் இயேசுவினிடத்தில் வந்திருந்த நிக்கொதேமு என்பவன் வெள்ளைப்போளையும் கரியபோளையும் கலந்து ஏறக்குறைய இராத்தல் கொண்டுவந்தான். அவர்கள் இயேசுவின் சரீரத்தை எடுத்து, யூதர் அடக்கம்பண்ணும் முறைமையின்படியே தைச் சுகந்தவர்க்குகளுடனே சிலைகளில் நிக் கட்டினார்கள். அவர் சிலுவையில் யப்பட்ட இடத்தில் ஒரு தோட்டமும்த் தோட்டத்தில் ஒருக்காலும் ஒருவைக்கப்பட்டிராத ஒரு புதிய கல் இருந்தது. யூதருடைய ஆயத்தகாரியினும், அந்தக் கல்லறை சமீபமாயினாலும், அவ்விடத்திலே இயேசு தார்கள்.

20 வாரத்தின் முதல்நாள் காலை இருட்டோடே, மந்தலேனா ஹையினிடத்திற்கு வந்து கட்டைத்திருந்த கல் எடுத்துப்போட்டான். உடனே அவன் ஒடி ருவீனிடத்திலும் இயேசுருந்த மற்றச் சேஷனிடத்திலும் கல்லறையிலிருந்து போய்விட்டார்கள், அவைகளுக்குத் தெரியவில்லை. பொழுது 10 பேதருவும் ஹையினிடத்திற்குப் போய் இருவரும் ஒருமித்து வைப்பார்க்கிலும் மூடி, முந்திக் கல்லறைக்குள் போய் அகற்றுவதற்கு முன்பு கண்டித்ததைக் கண்டபேளே போகவில்லை. சேஷனுக்குப் பின்னே வந்து கல்லறைக்குப் பிரவேசித்து, சிலைகள் கிடக்கிறதையும், 19 அவருடைய தலையில் சுற்றியிருந்த சிலை மற்றச் சிலைகளுடனே வைத்திராமல் தனியே ஒரு இடத்திலே சுருட்டி வைத்திருக்கிறதையும் கண்டான். முந்திக் கல்லறையினிடத்திற்கு வந்த மற்றச் சேஷனும் அப்பொழுது உள்ளே

11 பேர. 1. 1-3  
2 யா. 12. 46  
3 என். 9. 12.  
4 சம். 34. 20  
5 சம். 22. 1  
6 சர். 12.  
7 வெ. 1.  
8 49. 22; 1  
9 மத். 27  
10 மர. 143.  
11 53. 1  
12 2  
13 14  
14 6  
15 7

Web 10:31: "தீவனமான வேலனுடைய கைகளில் விசுவாசம் செய்து பயங்கரம் அடைகிறேன்."

Acts 27:41: "அமரம் அங்குள்ள பௌத்திகளும் உடைய ஆரம்பித்தது" "Began to break up" "was broken & pieces" "Works of Satan - & their consistency - & their cohesine force" "Loosen & dissolve" "Loosen"; "Break up"; "Dissolve"

13: "Love seeketh not its own" - "He that seeketh to save his life, he shall lose it" "அவன் அதை இழந்துபோனான்" "என்னிமிதமும் அந்த இழந்துபோனான்" "இரட்சித்துக் கொள்வான்" "In 12:24" "If any will be my disciple"

கோதுமை மணி புவிக்கு எதிராக சூரிக்கொக்கும் - சூரிக்கொக்கும் - சூரிக்கொக்கும்

LEFT: Miss Barnard's notes for a message in both English and Tamil rest on her Tamil Bible.  
BOTTOM: Indian musicians pose for the camera with their native instruments.





# A LABOR OF LOVE

## *The Paul and Nelle Woolsey Story*

*Now he that planteth and he that watereth  
are one: and every man shall receive his own  
reward according to his own labour. For we  
are labourers together with God.*

1 CORINTHIANS 3:8-9A

He felt he had every reason in the world not to go. Paul Woolsey had a speech defect. He did not feel like a qualified evangelist. He was past his prime, and suffered with a stomach problem that continued to plague him after 15 years. He never discussed the prospect with Nelle, his wife. Yet the urge to submit pressed on his heart. God called the Woolseys to India. The question was, were they willing to go?

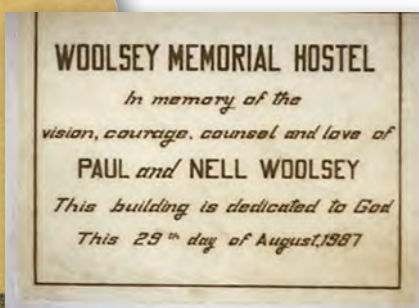
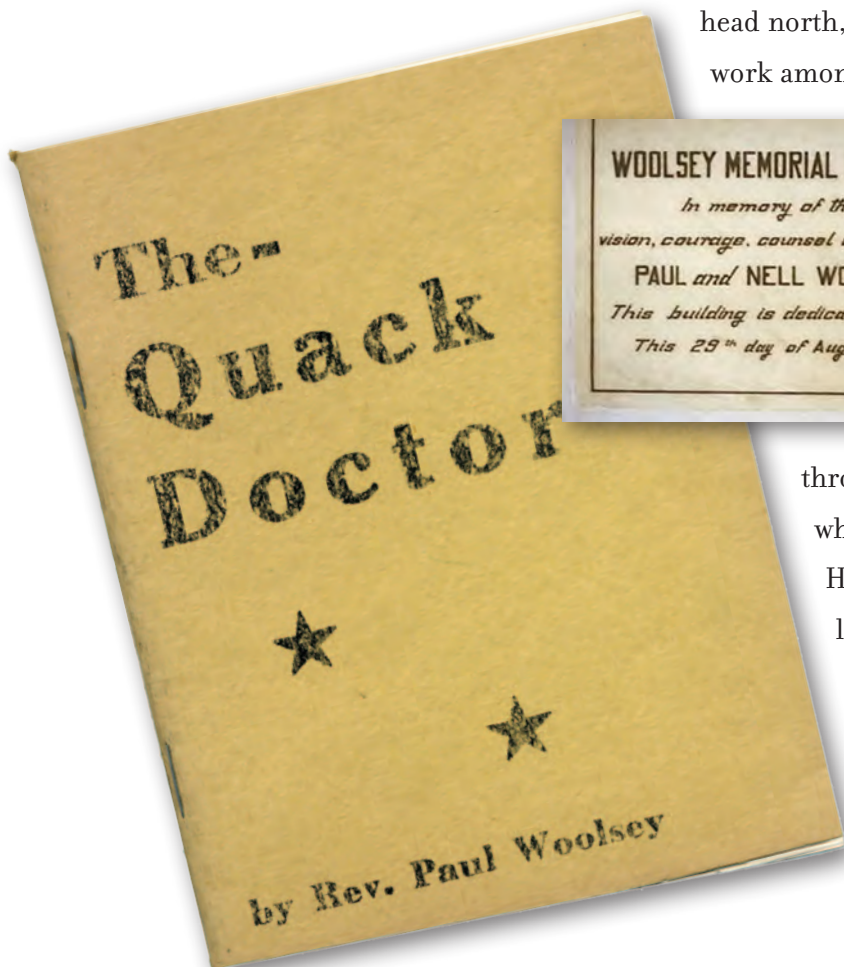
Like Jonah on the run from Nineveh, Paul tried to excuse himself from this monumental task. For three days, God pried at his heart, using compelling messages from other committed missionaries. At last, God broke through his fears, and the Woolseys prepared for India.

Fortunately, Laura Belle Barnard was already planting seeds in the southern region of India. In 1947, Paul and Nelle joined Laura Belle in Kotagiri where they stayed for only a couple of weeks. They toured the area, preaching in Sunday schools already established by Miss Barnard. After their crash course in Indian culture, they felt ready to head north, the first Free Will Baptist missionaries to do so. They began to work among the Santals in the Purnea District on the border of Nepal, an

unreached region in the northeastern part of India. They hoped to eventually cross the border and reach the unevangelized people of Nepal, but the doors were closed to that country.

It was in the impoverished Santal tribe where the Woolseys concentrated their efforts. Using a pony, a bicycle, and two well-trained feet, Paul traveled throughout the area preaching and making important contacts. But when he approached a new village, he did not hold a written agenda. His goal was never a list of accomplishments. Mr. Woolsey truly loved the people he served. His genuine friendship became his life's hallmark, drawing people from all walks of life to trust him and listen to his message of hope.

Within just five years, Mr. Woolsey built two mission stations, developed seven Indian workers, and equipped several



**LEFT:** This booklet chronicles the Woolseys' treatment of many wounds, sores, and skin diseases from their medical dispensary, even though neither had medical training.

**RIGHT:** The Sonapurhat hostel was dedicated to the Woolseys in 1987.



small Christian groups. He also established annual spiritual life conferences which continue today. But Paul Woolsey is most remembered for the compassionate way he reached out and touched the lost souls of the Santal people.

During his evangelism travels, Mr. Woolsey suffered severe effects from his allergy to milk and onions. Once he even suffered a sunstroke which weakened his health considerably. Paul and Nelle finished their term of service and returned stateside in 1952, where Mr. Woolsey received much needed medical care.

Paul returned to East Tennessee where he labored for 21 years in the ministry and the public school system. In 1982, Mr. Woolsey was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. He spent the remaining years of his life in the Durham Hensley Nursing Home. Nelle Woolsey preceded him in death after losing her battle with cancer. Both Paul and Nelle Woolsey are now home with their Savior, celebrating the great work God accomplished through their submissive spirits. These brave missionary pioneers sowed seeds that continue to grow into a bountiful harvest of souls for God's kingdom.

## GOD'S PERFECTED POWER

### *Mrs. Pushpam's Story of Hope*

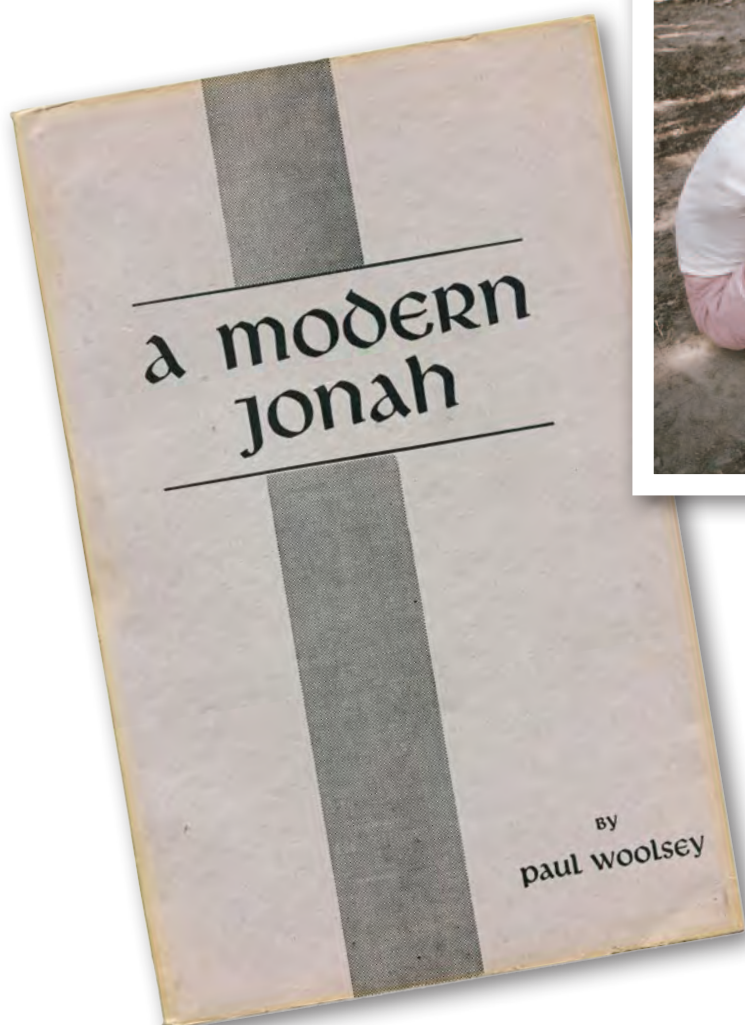
She was a poor woman with a poor education, locked in a society that largely ignored people in her caste. Though she professed Christianity, her life reflected more of the pagan influence around her. How could God ever use a woman like Mrs. Pushpam to build His kingdom?

First, God's work began in her own heart. Alone except for the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit, Mrs. Pushpam realized she was living a lie. In her emptiness, she asked the Savior

of the world to take over her life, cleanse her from sin, and lead her to godly living. Jesus was more than willing.

Mrs. Pushpam soon joined the Immanuel Free Will Baptist Church where God strengthened her faith and resolve. She began visiting villages, sharing her story of how God transformed her life. She started speaking in a village near Gopalappuram, Aruvankadu, just 15 miles from Kotagiri where Miss Volena Wilson labored for the Lord. She spoke boldly about Jesus, and saw Him perform miracles among the people who listened.

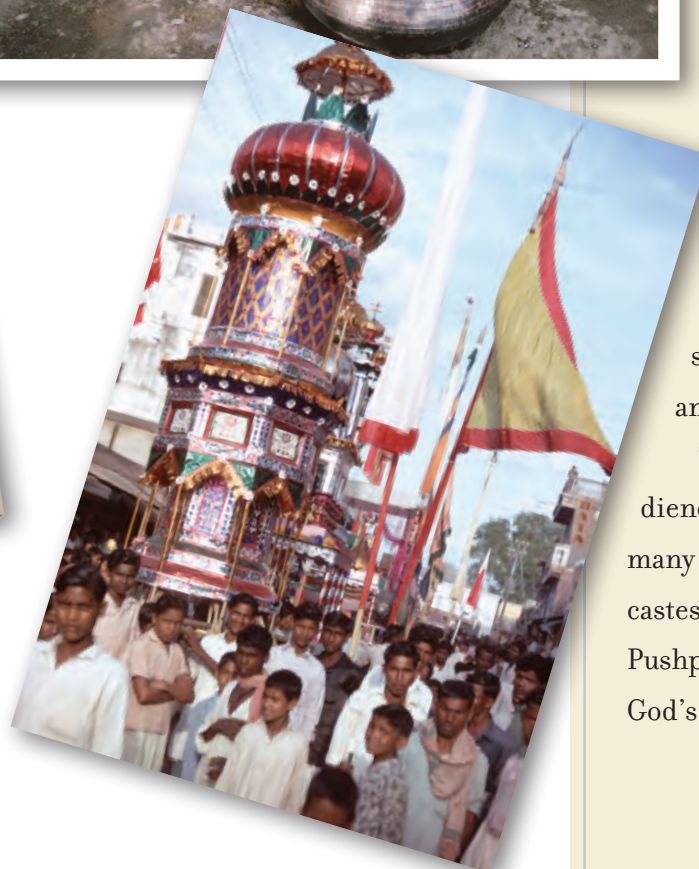
Through her honesty and obedience to preach to other villages, many others—even people in higher castes—came to trust Jesus, too. Mrs. Pushpam's life was a testimony that God's power is perfected.



**ABOVE:** *A Modern Jonah* is Paul Woolsey's account of his struggle and response to God's call to India.

**UPPER RIGHT:** This scene depicts typical daily life for many of India's inhabitants.

**BOTTOM:** People gather in the streets to celebrate a Hindu festival.





# ONE HEART, ONE HOME

## *The Daniel and Trula Cronk Story*

**T**he call was clear. Though Trula Gunter was born and raised in Greene County, Tennessee, India became her home. Her life's passion was answered in bringing the light of Christ to the dark and dismal world of despair shared by so many native Indians. But was she to go alone, as brave missionary pioneer Laura Belle Barnard did? What shape would her cross take as she obeyed the Great Commission?

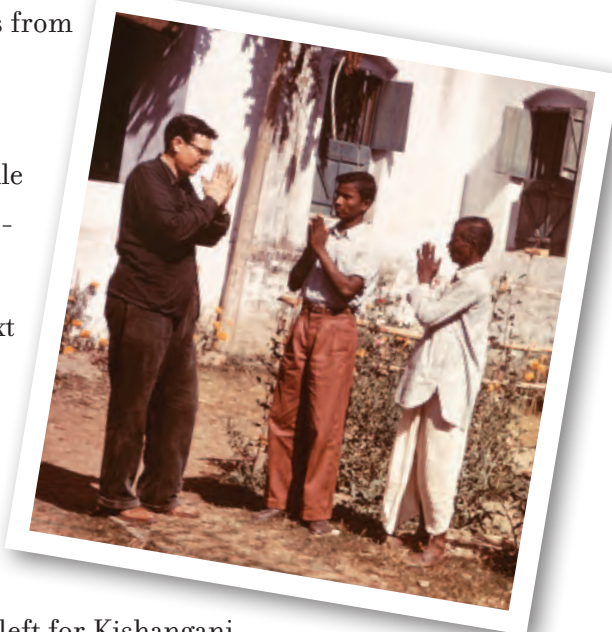


Across the Free Will Baptist Bible College campus where Trula attended, Daniel Cronk—a native of Detroit, Michigan—also studied diligently to prepare himself for missions. But the first place God led him was to Trula's doorstep. Realizing that God uniquely burdened their hearts with the same calling, they united in marriage in 1945 and finished their B.A.s at the college. Together they also received B.A. degrees from Columbia Bible College in 1947 and from George Peabody College in 1948.

After years of study and training, the couple was ready to put their strengthened faith into practice on Indian soil. In 1948 they teamed up with Paul and Nelle Woolsey, a missionary couple who preceded them by a year in establishing a foundation in North India. Together they began a camping-type ministry among the aboriginal Santal tribe, in the Purnea District on the border of Nepal. For the next six-and-a-half years, the Cronks camped in the area, lived as the Santals lived, and taught the Bible to all who would listen. Hosting Bible schools in the daytime and Bible-institute training in the evenings, they slowly broke through the Muslim stronghold that bound the Santal community.

Encouraged by the response they witnessed among the Santals, the Cronks felt the Lord leading them to another pocket of darkness in India's heart. They left for Kishanganj, and began to minister to the 500,000 totally unevangelized people in the multitude of villages surrounding the city. Dan began a fruitful work with teenage boys who were attending the local school. At first the Cronks opened up their home to host some of the boys, where they were taught doctrine, theology, and leadership principles to equip them in evangelism. As the demand for space grew, the Cronks opened a youth hostel for any teen boy interested in growing in the Christian faith as he attended school. Dan affectionately called the hostel "God's instant preacher plan." Many of the young men grew up to become strong community leaders and pastors who helped their own countrymen come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Entrenched in an intense spiritual battle, the Cronks saw the darkness around them deepen. Pakistani oppression and abuse forced hundreds of thousands of Pakistani refugees to seek harbor in refugee



**UPPER RIGHT:** Dan participates in a customary Indian greeting.

**BOTTOM:** Dan (by the jeep) and Carlisle Hanna (far right) ford a river on a ferry boat.



camps dotting the North Indian landscape. Poverty, disease, and despair settled among the fleeing foreigners, stealing their dignity and any sign of hope. Just like Jesus with the multitudes around Him, the Cronks were moved to compassion and action. They entered the refugee camps extending to each person the love and hope of Christ. Fighting typhoid epidemics, dysentery, and other diseases, the Cronks offered relief in the form of desperately needed medicine, food, and clothing. With physical needs met, the love of Christ began to take root in Pakistani hearts.

Throughout their time in India, Daniel and Trula Cronk watched God work miraculously in the people around them. In time, they opened and maintained a literature center and watched their youth hostel flourish. Annual Christian training conferences were developed, as well as a consultation ministry to Indian Free Will Baptist church groups eager to become indigenous—self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Finally, after 27 years of service to India, God called the devoted couple back to the States where Dan served as a member of the Board of Foreign Missions. He also served as a missions professor at Free Will Baptist Bible College, building vision and purpose into like-minded students who sought to follow in his footsteps.

Years later, God allowed the Cronks to return to India for a visit to the churches they helped establish and to reconnect with old friends. Flooded with memories of God's grace and provision, the Cronks began to realize the impact their years of ministry made in the lives of these Indian communities. Though God took Dan Cronk home to Heaven on November 20, 1998, his work lives on in the fruitful lives of the Indian converts he left behind. Trula moved to Thailand with her son Randy in 2006. She reunited with Dan on December 21, 2009. Dan and Trula Cronk embodied the call of Christ through the words of Paul:

*But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

2 T I M O T H Y 4 : 5 - 8

**TOP:** Trula takes a moment out for a picture with one of her classes of boys.

**BOTTOM:** Dan and Trula returned to India for a visit in 1990.



## WORDS OF LIFE

Artura Singh Gill was a devout Sikh. His uncut hair and beard, iron bangle, comb, and dagger displayed his commitment. He gathered with thousands of other Indians from every caste to commemorate the life and death of Mahatma Gandhi, one of India's most celebrated religious leaders. As he sat under the hot Indian sun, Artura listened to readings from the Koran, the Gita, and other religious writings.

Then Trula Cronk took the podium. Opening her English Bible, she read the words of the Gospel of John, chapter 14. She knew she held the Word of Life in her hands, unlike the Hindu and Buddhist priests around her. But she did not know that God used His Word to reach Artura Singh Gill's heart.

A few days later, Artura Singh Gill found the Cronks and proclaimed, "Those were absolutely the sweetest words I have ever heard. I have come to hear more." Dan gave Artura a copy of the New Testament in English and Urdu. Then he provided his home as a safe place for Artura to read. After

reading the gospel message for himself, Artura gave his heart to the Lord. The emptiness that plagued his soul was finally filled with the love and hope of Christ Jesus.







MY PRAYER  
 MORE STRENGTH TO MY FAITH <sup>DAN</sup> GUIDES  
 MORE WARMTH TO MY LOVE  
 P. MORE PERFECTION TO MY OBEDIANCE  
 GIVE COURAGE TO GO ON  
 FAITH TO ENDURE  
 PATIENCE TO BARE  
 DIRECT ALL MY ENERGIES  
 INSTRUCT MY MIND  
 SUSTAIN MY WILL  
 ORDER ALL MY DOINGS  
 SUGGEST ALL MY DECISIONS  
 INSPIRE ALL MY THOUGHTS  
 PERSUADE ALL MY IMAGINATION  
 PHIL 4:13 (T.V.)  
 Eph 1:19-20  
 2 Pet 1:3  
 Eph 3:16-18  
 THERE IS A LIVING GOD  
 HE HAS SPOKEN IN THE BIBLE  
 HE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS & WILL DO  
 ALL THAT HE HAS PROMISED

UPPER LEFT: Marie Hanna embraces one of the children for whom she invested her life.  
 BOTTOM LEFT: Trula Cronk visits with villagers during a Bible-teaching circuit.



THE WORLD DESERVES NO MORE  
 THAN THE OUTER COUNT of my soul.  
 WHAT the SON MADE POSSIBLE for me,  
 the SPIRIT MAKES REAL IN ME.  
 The ch. LIFE — MADE POTENTIAL  
 IN the SON IS MADE PERSONAL  
 By the SPIRIT

CHRIST, the Son of God,  
 HATH SENT ME  
 THROUGH the MIDNIGHT LANDS;  
 IN ME the MIGHTY ORDINATION  
 of the PIENCED HANDS.  
 God & God's WORD INSEPARABLE  
 VALUE of WORD LIES IN SPEAKER'S  
 CHARACTER.  
 God's CHARACTER IS OUR  
 MISSION GUARANTEE —  
 for IT IS BUILT ON THE  
 of God.  
 God HAS LEDGED HIMSELF/  
 HIS PROMISE  
 FAITH RESTS ON FAITHFULNESS  
 God — the LIVING God. HIS  
 NATURE & HIS attributes AND  
 HIS PROMISES



### ZYLENE LLOYD (BREEDON)

Served 1948–1950 in South India alongside Laura Belle Barnard and Dan and Trula Cronk. She resigned from the Mission and worked in an orphanage in North India for three years before returning to the States.



MIDDLE: The front flyleaf of Dan Cronk's New Testament reveals his heart's desire.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Dan Cronk poses with a group of believers in an Indian village.



# TRIALS AND TRIUMPH

## *The Carlisle and Marie Hanna Story*

The Hannas were in Allahabad, India, less than a year when their only infant daughter died. Did Marie hear God correctly as a young girl of 13, when she felt God call her to be a missionary in India? Did Carlisle, her husband, make the wrong decision to board the ship that sailed his family to India in 1952? Though husband and wife stood side by side as they buried their little girl, neither flinched in their resolve. God never promised the way would be easy. But He did promise to be with them all along the way.



Carlisle attended Free Will Baptist College and felt called to missions, but was unclear which direction his call might lead. After he met Marie at the college, his path became certain. They married and graduated from college, ready to support and increase the influence gained by the four missionaries to India who preceded them.

Carlisle and Marie's first experience with sorrow and suffering became a recurrent theme during their 50-year labor of love and obedience in the northeastern region of India. Yet time and again, God turned tragedy to triumph as the unreached Indian people witnessed the supernatural grace and peace of God that sustained the Hannas and gave them the strength to carry on God's work.

Despite the blow received when Sheila Marie died, Carlisle and Marie remained, working diligently to establish a consistent means of outreach and teaching to the impoverished community around them. Over time, they helped establish a church in the village and, like the Cronks in Kishanganj, began a hostel ministry for the children—very much like orphanages or children's homes found in the United States. Children were taught the Scriptures and became believers committed to helping spread the gospel of Christ in their own communities.

The Hannas also concentrated efforts on training men and women to grow in the Lord and share His truth with their people. Annual conferences gathered believers together for encouragement and deeper teachings of faith. They held regular religious fairs or "melas" by open-air preaching. Many people gathered to hear the missionaries tell the

Good News of the gospel. More and more Indians received God's Word and surrendered to Christ as Lord.

Village camps also proved to be an effective evangelistic outreach. The Hannas visited each village for two weeks at a time, teaching the people and winning them to Christ. Then they moved to the next village and repeated the process. Many were saved from these outreaches.

Then God opened an entirely new way to reach the masses, despite the often difficult language barrier. A movie called "Ocean of Mercy" depicted the life of



ABOVE: Carlisle and Marie visit and share God's Word with a village group.



Christ and the message of the gospel in a visually compelling way. Night after night, in village after village, thousands gathered to view this dramatic presentation of gospel truth. Through film, the Hannas reached thousands more Indians in a single night than they previously reached in a year! What an exciting opportunity God provided for His people to reach the nation of India, whose population more than tripled within 20 years of the Hannas' arrival.

While the Hannas saw firsthand the fruit from their labors, they also experienced the enemy's opposition in tremendous ways. On two occasions, earthquakes damaged and later destroyed their church building. In time, they rebuilt. Carlisle suffered severe burns on his face and arms after a refrigerator fueled by kerosene exploded. Though the pain was excruciating at times, his body healed by God's grace, and he continued his work. Later he was thrown from a train in Kishanganj. His shoulder broke in several places. He received medical help, and once again continued on in his work. The Hannas raised a family in India—a daughter and two sons. But the schools for these children were 900 miles away to the south. More tears and pain flowed as they said their goodbyes, sometimes separated for months at a time.

The Hannas knew from experience. The cost of evangelism was higher than they imagined. But the harvest they reaped was also exponentially greater. They weathered four wars, numerous parasites, Bengal tigers, diphtheria, and a host of spiritual attacks against their efforts. Yet, approximately 300 churches are established in the northern regions of India. Thousands of believers have been added to the kingdom.

Marie Hanna went to be with the Lord while still serving in India at 70 years of age. Thousands of Hindus and Christians came to show their respect and appreciation for this beloved woman who served their people faithfully for 46 years. Carlisle allowed even his wife's death to be used by God to draw more people to Himself. With 50-plus years of service, Carlisle is the only remaining Free Will Baptist International Missions missionary in India, yet he knows he is not alone. The same God who called him to India in his youth is still beside him in his old age.

During one return to the States, the state of South Carolina recognized the magnitude of Carlisle Hanna's work. South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges presented him with the Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest honor in recognition of his service to God and India. When asked about the best memory of his years in India, Hanna replied, "I think knowing that I was in the will of God."

Carlisle continues his labors at the Sonpurhat Mission in India, the longest-serving Free Will Baptist missionary.

## ON FIRE

### *Devon Marendi's Passion for God*

Devon Marendi heard news too good to be true. Who was this Jesus Devon's brother mentioned to him? Were the stories about this "God-man" right? Devon and his friend traveled 50 miles to the Catholic mission to find out, but no priest arrived to explain.

Later, Devon found his way to Reverend Paul Woolsey in the Sonapurhat market. Mr. Woolsey was more than willing to tell Devon and his entire village about Jesus. Within a few months, everyone in Junglabita received Jesus as Savior. Eventually, a church was established and Devon became the leader.

What began as a burning curiosity burst into a blaze of passion for God. Though he never received a formal education, Devon studied the Scriptures intently and attended Free Will Baptist training seminars and retreats. Preaching in Hindi, Bengali, and Santali, Devon reached more people in their native tongues than any Free Will Baptist. He traveled from village to village, holding non-stop

evangelistic services that lasted days at a time. Hundreds came to Christ.

After ministering as a lay preacher for almost 20 years, Devon was ordained in 1971. When his two sons, Kolen and Bolen, were grown, they also became pastors.



ABOVE: Devon Marendi



# CHANGED MIND, CHANGED HEARTS

## *The Volena Wilson Story*



*Did she know that walking down that aisle meant a complete change of life? Was Volena Wilson able to grasp the depth and significance this step of faith meant?*

At the moment the invitation was given, Volena knew only one thing. She wanted to obey God's call, wherever it might lead. Her commitment made public, Volena resolved to follow the Lord "to the regions beyond." Soon this young business college student from North Carolina learned that her "beyond" was India. Leaving behind friends, family, and a predictable future, Volena joined Laura Belle Barnard who was headed back to India after a brief furlough. In 1951, Volena's feet touched Indian soil, and she knew the change was just beginning.

With God, passion, and youth on her side, Volena quickly went to work learning the languages spoken in Kotagiri, India, where she worked alongside Laura Belle. Initially, she travelled from hut to hut and village to village, sharing the incredible news of salvation through Christ alone. As inroads were established, Volena and Laura Belle worked together to conduct outside Sunday schools, vacation Bible schools, and weekly village meetings. They also managed the Westfield Free Will Baptist elementary school, and later the elementary school started in Gopalapuram.

For nine years, the two women worked diligently to provide every Tamil Indian access to the gospel in his own language. God's blessing was evident through the large number of new believers filling their churches and schools.

Then Volena was asked to trust God even more. Her friend and co-laborer, Laura Belle Barnard, felt led to return stateside. Though she still felt burdened for the people of India, Laura Belle realized she might wield

an even greater impact through inspiring new generations of believers to give their lives to missions, too. In 1960, Laura Belle returned to America, but Volena remained in India. Volena understood that, through God's strength alone, she must continue the difficult work.

Capitalizing on her organizational gifts, Volena took charge of the South India work. Knowing prayer was the key to her mission's success, she soon organized prayer cells, a monthly prayer night, and a Bible memory club. As she continued all her former duties, she rejoiced to



**UPPER LEFT:** General Director of Foreign Missions R. Eugene Waddell presents Volena with a gift of appreciation for her faithful service in India.

**BOTTOM:** Volena poses in front of a mission house.



see three new Free Will Baptist churches started: Bethel FWB at Gopalapuram, Calvary FWB at Mettupalayam, and Grace FWB, now located in Coimbatore.

Long hours, endless need, and dire working conditions eventually took their toll. Volena began to suffer from extreme physical and mental fatigue. She realized God was using her own physical limitations to call her back to America. He would raise up other younger, eager Free Will Baptist missionaries to take over her mantle of leadership. In 1968, Volena's years of service in India ended, though the torch of hope she lit while there still burned brightly in the schools, churches, and lives she left behind.

Volena spent much needed time resting and recuperating in the comfort of her home in Asheville, North Carolina. Once recovered, she resumed her life of service, helping in local nursing homes and her church. She received her final call that took her home to be with Jesus in 1991. Years later, funds were raised for the purchase of a property in Conoor, South India. It became home to the Volena Wilson Bible Institute, a facility dedicated to teaching Indians the truth of Christ—the same gospel truth Volena Wilson taught.



## THE UNSUNG HERO

*Pastor Dorairaj*

*His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord*

MATTHEW 25:21

**H**is sole passion was to make God known. From the time Pastor D. Dorairaj joined Free Will Baptist missionaries in 1956, he diligently promoted Christ's cause in whatever capacity God chose to use him.

He became pastor of Immanuel, the first Free Will Baptist church in South India. He also oversaw the Christian day school related to the church, where his wife served as principal for years. During his 26 years of service to his church, school, and community, he assisted Miss Laura Belle Barnard, Miss Volena Wilson, Dan and Trula Cronk, and later Carlisle and Marie Hanna in their evangelism efforts in South India.

Then, in the absence of missionary leadership and help, Dorairaj remained faithful to the work. He and his wife even raised 10 God-fearing children in the process, all of whom became active in the church. Miss Wilson said Pastor Dorairaj was "one of the finest Christians I have ever known, a gentleman, dependable, consistent in his daily walk, and totally committed to God." Dan Cronk agreed when he said, "It would be safe to say that we would have no continuing work in South India if this Indian man of God had not been faithful all these years."

Dorairaj went home to Jesus in 1984.



**TOP:** Dan Cronk and Reford Wilson discuss Volena's effective ministry.

**BOTTOM:** Volena introduces General Director Reford Wilson to Indian pastors and leaders.



# PANAMA

## *Fishing for Men*

*And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

MATTHEW 4:19

The Board of Free Will Baptist Foreign Mission did their homework. They surveyed and studied Central American countries for three long months. They reviewed demographics, history, and the feasibility of opening a new mission field. They trekked on foot the terrain prospective missionaries might tread. They prayed for God's most strategic location. And God kept leading them back to Panama.

Panama is an Indian word for "an abundance of fish." Certainly, the snaking isthmus nation connecting Central and South America boasts a wealth of marine life. Its shores border both the Pacific and Caribbean waters, with a U.S.-made canal linking the two oceans straight through the heart of the country. Lush, tropical vegetation yields produce of rice, corn, bananas, and cacao. Heavily forested areas watered by hundreds of winding rivers provide ample timber resources. But the board members who were considering the next mission field weren't persuaded by the abundance Panama offered. They were convinced by what Panama was missing.

Panama was comprised of three primary people groups: a cosmopolitan urban group, an agricultural group, and Indian tribes. Of the three million plus people living in Panama, more than 70% considered themselves Roman Catholic, a religion most people wore like a school uniform—convenient, impersonal, and largely cultural. It was as if their souls suffocated under the weight of pointless legalism long ago, and all that was left was a shell of spirituality, devoid of any truth or power. Hundreds of bars and cantinas lined the city streets, empty promises of escape from a life that left their patrons lost and alone.

The need was clear. These disillusioned people were desperate for true hope. Someone needed to share the truth that God is more than ritual, and that He longs for a relationship with each person. The board members envisioned a harvest of souls, ripe for the picking... if they were able to penetrate the hardened defenses that seemed to surround the entire nation.



**LEFT:** Opened in 1914, the Panama Canal provides safe passage between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

**RIGHT:** Panamanians sport festival dress during one of their annual celebrations.





Tom Willey Sr. and his wife Mabel saw the same look of hopelessness some 25 years before the study was conducted. True Free Will Baptist pioneers to the field, “Mom and Pop” Willey first crossed Panamanian borders in 1936, hoping to reach the country’s Indians in the interior. A few inroads were made and relationships forged, but political turmoil forced the young couple and their two children to leave the country.

### Mission Facts

Nine churches and 10 mission works provide light to the Catholic-entrenched culture of Panama. Established churches are spreading their influence to mountain villages and other locations with no evangelical witness. A newly centralized Bible seminary provides training to those seeking full-time work in ministry.

They moved to Cuba where the Willeys perfected their Spanish and demonstrated their love for the Latin American people.

It provided the perfect training ground for God’s next call—to return to Panama. In 1962, the board solidified their decision, choosing Panama as their Central American mission field. Tom Willey Jr. and his wife and daughter agreed to go, followed by his sister Barbara and her husband John Moehlman.


The work in Panama was slow, difficult, and filled with dangers. Anti-American sentiment made it difficult to establish friendships, even though a majority of the Panamanians appreciated the missionary work in their country. An intensely volatile political environment threatened the progress of the work begun in the communities. Several times missionaries were asked to leave in the wake of turbulent uprisings. Strangely, the upheaval and suffering worked miracles in softening hardened hearts toward the gospel. As people acknowledged a need for physical, emotional, or financial help, they began to see their deficit in spiritual areas as well. God used the most difficult of circumstances to bond missionaries to Panamanians. In turn, all were drawn closer to the Father.

Over the course of time, through patient and steady perseverance, the gospel penetrated the heart of Panama. Communities, like the Isla de Cañas, turned to the Lord for hope. Churches are growing, their missions expanding. It seems as if Panama, the land of “abundant fish” lived up to its name. When the nets are lowered in God’s time and in God’s place, the nets always return full.



**RIGHT:** This was an early meeting place for evangelistic campaigns.

**BOTTOM:** The First FWB Church of Panama occupied this building for many years.

	PANAMA
CAPITAL .....	Panama City
LARGEST CITY .....	Panama City
AREA .....	75,420 sq. km.
POPULATION .....	3,360,474
CURRENCY .....	Balboa, U.S. dollar
PER CAPITA INCOME .....	\$11,700
RELIGIONS	
Roman Catholic .....	76%
Evangelical .....	18%
Islam .....	3.5%
Buddhism .....	2.1%
Unreached People Groups ..	1

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project





# A WORK OF FAITH REVISITED

## *The Tom and Emma Ruth Willey Story*

He took a deep breath as he crossed the border into Panama in 1962. Tom Willey Jr. knew the difficulties that lay before him. His own father, Tom Willey Sr., forged a path for the gospel among Panamanian Indians several decades before. Tom Willey Jr., his sister, and his mother joined the pioneer missionary the next year in 1937. But it was not long before the Panamanian president ordered the missionaries out of the country due to the Indians revolt against the government.



In a way, Tom Willey Jr. felt he was going home. At least, he was returning to complete a work his father started. Missionary work in Panama was not easy then, and conditions were still in great need of improvement. Within just a 10-mile radius of the city, more than 300 bars lured locals to spend what little money they earned on alcohol. Vice and drunkenness were so commonplace that area police were ordered to “shoot to kill” in slum areas. Open immorality flourished even in the highest circles.

As his car jostled over bumpy roads, the sights and sounds of Panama filled Tom Willey Jr.’s senses. Emma Ruth, his wife, surveyed the scene alongside him. It was clear the people were desperate for hope. Tom and Emma Ruth’s souls were stirred. They knew they were called to reach these people. But how?

The Wileys went to work just east of Panama City in Canitas, a rural area almost inaccessible during the rainy seasons. Though they faced opposition from the Catholic Church, the need for the gospel was not suppressed. Wading through rivers and hiking on foot, Tom Willey Jr. and an American friend carried the Good News in their hands and their hearts, sharing Christ all along the way. Tom coordinated special medical and dental assistance for the impoverished families in the community. He and his friend also taught the communities how to better utilize their land and water—yielding more crops, more profit, and more opportunities for education, health, and growth.

As they interacted with people who had no access to television, magazines, or newspapers, they made an interesting and exciting discovery. Even the poorest families managed to save enough to purchase a transistor radio, a relatively new invention at the time. Families eagerly gathered around to listen to music, radio broadcasts, and the

news about the tumultuous political events surrounding them. Through modern technology, God gave the Wileys the perfect platform to preach the gospel, right into the homes of even the most remote Panamanian villages. Through Christian radio programming on commercial radio stations, many Panamanians heard the gospel for the first time, and were encouraged to turn to the local Free Will Baptist church for more information.

Two years after Tom Willey’s arrival in Panama, the Estenio Garcia family joined them to start works in Panama City and Agua Buena. Bill and Barbara Phipps arrived shortly after, to develop the Central Provinces, 150 miles west of Panama City. These





three families worked together to keep the momentum of the gospel moving forward in each strategic area. They were blessed to have each other for support and camaraderie, despite the distance between the cities. The church in Panama City began to grow, and several young converts joined the Willeys in evangelistic outreaches to the rural areas of Canitas and Janene.

In 1967, the Phipps returned to the United States, giving the Willeys jurisdiction over the Isla de Cañas community. They built on the foundation laid by the Phipps, and soon saw more than 80% of the population come to faith in Christ.

But it was not an easy road. Emma Ruth and Tom mourned the death of Alicia, their 13-year-old daughter, after a battle with cancer. Not quite two years later, Emma Ruth herself fought the disease, and went to be with the Lord in 1972. Left with a 10-year-old daughter and a three-month-old son, Tom learned firsthand what it meant to lament the pain and brokenness of this world. God was faithful, though, and through friends He gave Tom and the children the grace and strength to carry on. In the course of time, Tom married Patsy Tyson who joined Tom in his relentless work among the Panamanian people.

Tremendous strides were made in Panama, thanks to the diligent labors of each missionary family who obeyed the call to go. A native pastor now serves the large and growing Free Will Baptist church in Panama City, and fruit from their work reaches into many of the communities. But the need is still great.

## SECRET MISSION

### *The Estenio Garcias' Story*

Tom Willey Jr. poured his heart and soul into the Panamanian community. He knew God was at work, but he saw so little fruit. "Lord," he prayed, "we need someone the people will respect...someone who can reach their hearts."

Tom prayed believing, but never suspected God was busy at work in Cuba, answering his prayer. A Cuban cadet who experienced the worldly life available in Havana, Estenio Garcia returned home to find his old cronies very different. They led Estenio to Jesus Christ through the work of Free Will Baptists and encouraged him toward ministry. He enrolled in the Bible institute and became a pastor within a year.

Later, as president of the Cuban Association of Free Will Baptists, his influence and position made him a target of the communist regime. He was forced to leave. His departure coincided with Tom's prayer for help.

Tom hardly believed the difference Estenio made in the community. People lowered their defenses, welcoming the News this Cuban brought. Garcia joined Willey in evangelistic outreaches to villages all over Panama, and people received the gospel.

Mrs. Garcia's recurring bouts with malaria led the couple to resign from the Mission and settle in New York City, but through Garcia's efforts and God's grace, a new church was established in Panama City.



**FAR LEFT:** Tom Willey Jr. befriends neighborhood children.

**ABOVE:** Emma Ruth Willey captures the attention of children as she plays the accordion during village ministry.

**RIGHT:** Estenio Garcia enters a village for evangelism.





# MAKING DISCIPLES

## *The Ron and Linda Callaway Story*

Everywhere they go, the Callaways find a mission field. God continues to give them spiritual eyes and compassionate hearts for all the people He places in their path.

Ron's heart for missions grew after his conversion at Fairmount Park Free Will Baptist church in Norfolk, Virginia. Though still in the navy, God began tugging his heart toward a different vocation. After his discharge, Ron began work right away—in his own home church and town. He served as a Sunday school teacher, worked bus routes, sang in the choir, went on visitations, and taught CTS. Still, he felt God calling him to more specific ministry. He enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1973, where God made clear His intention for Ron to serve as a missionary to Spain. Linda, his wife, had a heart for missions from the time she accepted Christ at the age of nine. She considered Ron's call to be her own.

In May of 1975, the Callaways left for Spain, where they began an intense, two-year study of the language. They became deeply involved in the local church during their first term. Following furlough, the Callaways focused their ministry in Mostoles. There, Ron began work translating Christian commentaries and theological books into Spanish, and developing training curriculum for national pastors and teachers.

With a growing burden for training nationals to minister among their own people, Ron began teaching in Free Will Baptist Bible institutes, first in Spain and then in Panama and Cuba, where the need for curriculum development and training was greatest. Ron equipped men and women with the skills they need for successful ministries in their respective countries. Now Ron teaches missions students at Free Will Baptist Bible College and continues to teach modular courses in Cuba, Panama, and Russia.

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.*

HEBREWS 13:20-21A



**ABOVE:** Linda Callaway works with children in a vacation Bible school program.

**LEFT:** Ron teaches a Bible institute class.





**UPPER LEFT:** Tom Willey Jr. and Estenio Garcia pose with a family in front of their home in a Panamanian village.

**UPPER RIGHT:** Stan Bunch prepares to baptize a convert while others await their turn.

**MIDDLE LEFT:** Larry Incoe leads a house church.

**ABOVE:** A postage stamp celebrates Panama's maritime importance.

**BOTTOM:** Tom Willey Jr. poses by the airplane that helped him gain access to many villages.



# LITTLE BY LYTLE

## *The Steve and Judy Lytle Story*

Steve and Judy Lytle knew their calling to Panama was not the fast track to glory. From the early ages of nine and 10, Steve and Judy knew God was leading them to the mission field. They spent several years in training at Free Will Baptist Bible College, where they both graduated. Then they married, completed their internship, and were officially appointed to the field of Panama in 1975.



Before reaching Panamanian soil, however, they spent another year in Costa Rica learning the Spanish language. In August of 1977, they began their church-planting career in Betania, Panama. They worked alongside Bill and Glenda Fulcher. It did not take long for the Lytles to recognize the stronghold Roman Catholicism held over the people. They seemed completely indifferent to the gospel, leaving the Lytles on their knees before God asking for guidance in such a difficult culture.

On October 2, 1977, they began church services in Betania with only eight people in attendance. It was a small beginning, but it was a beginning. The Lytles began teaching leadership classes on evangelism, as well as starting Bible clubs. Children began coming to Christ, and their hearts were encouraged. As the Lytles continued to pray and teach, more and more people responded to the gospel and joined their services. Attendance increased, and so did the hope.

Steve Lytle found his weeks filled with speaking engagements. To combat the confusion caused by local Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'i, and fringe charismatics, Steve initiated a Bible institute program in Panama City, where he taught classes several nights a week. The Lytles saw their first converts in the more rural areas of Betania, Agua Buena, and Las Tablas. Evangelism coupled with Bible training allowed these new believers to apply their faith to their lives, leading them to tithe and volunteer for service in the church.

As months passed, church attendance grew. More groups were sent out in creative and practical ways to reach the lost, including medical missions, Bible clubs, music, film, and radio. Women leaders from the church hosted the

first annual women's retreat. On May 18, 1985, with 73 charter members, the Betania Free Will Baptist Church was officially organized, with over 200 people on hand for special meetings, despite the fact that the building was designed to hold only 80. Eventually, money raised by the congregation was used for remodeling, expanding the church building's capacity to 125. The Lytle's motto, "little by little," paid off in large dividends.



**LEFT:** Steve prepares to baptize a convert in a local swimming pool.

**UPPER RIGHT:** Steve and Judy stand on the porch of a rural home with their son Michael and two local children.

**LOWER RIGHT:** Judy plays for the small choir at the Betania church.



With a growing church and well-grounded teaching, the Betania community was spiritually prepared for the hard times that came with the political upheaval Panama's government experienced. Banks closed, and independent vendors were forced to shut down. Cash was difficult to obtain, and food became scarce. But the Free Will Baptist churches banded together and helped the members of their congregations weather the storm.

Through the oppression and suffering, God softened Panamanian hearts like never before. The Lytles and other Free Will Baptist missionaries experienced an incredible outpouring of grace and repentance among the nationals, and watched as God brought large numbers of new believers into His kingdom and the Betania church. In time, so many new converts joined the congregation that an addition to the building was needed.

By the time the Lytles began their fourth term, the Betania church was under national leadership with Pastor Daniel Dorati. Steve continued working with the Bible institute program, preaching in the churches, and working with national leaders in training and mentoring. Judy continued her work with the women and with the Betania Sunday school.

The Lytles finished their final term in 1999. Steve's work included serving as administrator and professor at the Panama Bible Institute, promoting leadership development for pastors and leaders, and serving on the general board of the Panama Association. Judy worked with the women's leadership in planning annual retreats and serving as Sunday school superintendent. The Lytles ministered in Cuba and Columbia, as well.

The Lytles returned to the States where Steve served as director of field operations for Free Will Baptist International Missions. Judy served as candidate coordinator, guiding many career and short-term workers through the process to board approval. Though they left the mission field, God's call to missions never left their hearts. After eight years in the office, they returned to service in Latin America with a special assignment with the International Fellowship of FWB Churches missions committee. Panama serves as their base of operations, but the valiant couple

assists in Uruguay and Cuba as well. They continue to faithfully serve the One who yielded so much fruit through their efforts, little by little.

*And he shall be like a tree planted  
by the rivers of water, that bringeth  
forth his fruit in his season; his leaf  
also shall not wither; and  
whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

P S A L M 1 : 3





# BLESSINGS IN BUNCHES

## *The Stan and Brenda Bunch Story*

What does it mean to be called? To Brenda, it meant hearing the still, small voice of God's Spirit when she was only nine years old. Only a year into her new faith in Christ, she felt certain she was created to spread the Good News to a world that desperately needed to hear it.

Stan heard that same voice, only a little later in his life. During his senior year of high school, he gave his life to Jesus Christ. While a student at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Oklahoma, God beckoned him to a life of missions. He understood his gift of teaching was meant for foreign arenas.

After they married, Stan and Brenda were appointed to missionary service in May of 1983, with a focus in

Spanish-speaking countries. After completing a two-year course in Spanish, the couple departed for Panama in April of 1986.

What was objective number one? To establish a church in Parita, where they could begin to offer the education, medicine, and training the community needed. What were the obstacles? A deeply entrenched belief in Catholic doctrine, where the villagers believed that salvation was earned through works, not through Christ alone. Facility rental was costly, and the Bunches believed they needed to be better stewards of God's money entrusted to them.

So God gave them a bold new idea. At first, they were a little nervous about it. Can we really hold church in a tent? they wondered. Will the people come? Can we worship in such an unusual environment for an urban setting? The Bunches believed God gave them the idea, and the mission board approved the purchase. A church member's cousin provided land for setup, and Stan and Brenda erected

Parita's first canvas church. Brenda decorated it with live banana trees, and soon curious onlookers ventured inside for more information.

It was a modest beginning, but the Parita church grew larger. In July of 1991, they were able to purchase land and build a church with money they saved from not paying rent. In April of 1998, a national pastor took over the preaching duties.

Meanwhile, Stan continued to lead the Bible institute classes and home discipleship studies he developed over the years.



LEFT: Stan baptizes a convert in local waters.

BOTTOM: Parita FWB Church began in a canvas tent.



Brenda also stayed busy home schooling their three children, teaching English classes, teaching in a Christian school, and organizing women's ministries. Together, they started an exciting new ministry to local hospitals using clowns, drama, and mimes to communicate the gospel message in ways parents and children could understand.

In 1999 the Bunches began a new work in the town of Chitré, just east of Parita. They initiated English classes, a hospital ministry, and a ministry to university students to start a new church. Stan continued leadership development through retreats and conferences, serving as mentor to several local pastors and their families. He also served as the Regional Director for Central and South America, overseeing the work in Panama, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay.

*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*

LUKE 16:10A



## GO AND TELL

### *The Raul Sanes Story*

Raul looked around the room, waiting for someone to volunteer. Only one hand went up—only one other person was willing to accompany the missionary to tell others about Jesus. “I found it hard to believe,” Raul said, dumbfounded. “Every Christian should jump at the chance to spread the gospel!”

Once Raul accepted Christ into his life at age 17, he was not able to keep the Good News to himself. He accompanied Tom Willey Jr., Free Will Baptist missionary in Panama, on numerous trips to reach the rural areas of Canitas and Jenene. During one of these ventures, God led him to a man who led Raul to the Buenos Aires community. For the next four years, Raul preached and ministered to the community of 200 people, resulting in more than 40 new baptized believers in the church.

God eventually led Raul to seek a formal degree from the Rio Grande Bible Institute in Edinburg, Texas. Upon graduation, he accepted the pastorate at his home church in Panama

City where he originally accepted Christ as his Savior. He later married Damaris Gonzalez, who shared his passion for growing the Kingdom. The couple returned to Buenos Aires for several years, where Raul currently pastors the Las Tablas FWB Church.



**TOP:** Brenda leads a women's Bible study.

**MIDDLE:** Stan and a leader in the Parita church review music for worship services.

**BOTTOM:** Glenda Fulcher talks with Raul Sanes and another Panamanian leader.





**LEFT:** Children await a Bible story.

**BELOW:** Women of the Betania church prepare supplies for a medical ministry outreach.

**BOTTOM:** The Kuna Indians, indigenous to Panama, were recipients of evangelization through the Bowermans.







**LEFT:** The First FWB Church in Panama City used busses to reach children throughout the area.

**MIDDLE:** Typical woven baskets are often purchased by tourists and locals alike.

**BELOW:** Arrivals for a service in Parita are captured.

**LOWER RIGHT:** Tom Willey Jr. and his pilot pose with a group of villagers near the plane used to help him reach the village with the gospel.



**LEFT:** The first four students to attend the centralized Chame Bible Institute commemorate the completion of their first year with family and staff. Steve Torrison and Steve Lytle are in the back row on the right.





# ON A WING AND A PRAYER

## *The Larry and Priscilla Inscoe Story*

What does a missionary working with remote people groups need even more than an ordination certificate? A plane! And a pilot's license, of course. Larry Inscoe had both, and he knew God wanted to use them to help him reach the people of Panama with the gospel.

Larry graduated with a B.A. from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1971, just five years after marrying Priscilla Rhodes in 1966. Priscilla also attended FWBBC and obtained a nursing degree, hoping to use her medical skills to help in missions work. By 1973, they were ready to take their two young sons in tow and begin a new work in Panama.

Initially, the Inscoes spent three years in Panama City assisting other missionaries in developing that church and other ministry outreaches. Eventually, God called the Inscoes to start a brand new work in Las Tablas, while also ministering on the Isla de Cañas. The Inscoes immediately began having Bible studies and training classes on the island, in addition to regular services. They also made many contacts, using "friend-to-friend" visitation. As people heard about the Inscoes, they brought their friends to hear more. The Inscoes gladly welcomed all to their home, providing a warm and inviting atmosphere for friendships and discussion.

Within a relatively short time, they began to see fruit from their labors. Men and women from all walks of life responded to the gospel. And many children attended the daily vacation Bible school. New converts requested baptism—and were even willing to brave the rough ocean surf to do it! John and Mark, the Inscoes' children, also led several of their friends to Christ. In turn, their friends' families became believers.

Through friendships, preaching, medical assistance, radio, and gospel films, the Inscoes labored for 20 years among the people of Panama.



### PAUL & CHRISY COLLINS

were appointed as career missionaries to Panama in April 2008 and began language studies in Costa Rica in 2009.



### JUNE ARNOLD

was appointed to missionary service in 1980. She held a discipleship program for youth in her home and assisted in the Betania work in Panama City. June resigned from missionary service in 1983. She married national worker Bienvenido Perez, and they continue to help in Betania.

### JUSTIN & LESLIE BANKS

were appointed as career missionaries in 1998. The Banks were preparing to begin a ministry to the Kuna Indians. In 2000 they had to return to the States due to Justin's escalating health problems and regretfully submitted their resignation in 2001.







### DARREL & LILA NICHOLS

served 16 years in Côte d'Ivoire before requesting to be reassigned to Panama in 2003. The Nichols resigned in 2008 and continue to minister in Oklahoma.



### EDDIE & LARHONDA BOWERMAN

were appointed to missionary service in 1995. The couple began their ministry working among the Kuna Indians. After two years, their ministry transitioned into a facilitating role, working in youth and children's ministries throughout Panama. Eddie was director of the Bible seminary in Chame. The couple returned to the States in 2009 due to Eddie's severe health problems and sadly resigned at the end of the year.



### STEVE & LORI TORRISON

were appointed as career missionaries in July 2004. The Torrison's help



### JOHN & BARBARA MOEHLMAN

were appointed as career missionaries and began language school in 1961. They helped pioneer the work

in Panama. In 1965 they transferred to Ecuador to pioneer a work there. The Moehlman's were released from active status in 1966.



### BILL & GLENDA FULCHER

began their missionary service in Uruguay in 1960. They relocated to Panama in 1970. The Fulchers resigned in 1979 and returned to the pastorate in the States.



### TOM & MABEL WILLEY SR.

were sent to Panama in 1936 as the second missionaries sent under the newly formed missions board. They were ordered out of Panama in 1938 due to an Indian revolt and pioneered work in Cuba. Mabel returned to work with her son and daughter-in-law following Tom Sr.'s death.





# CUBA

## *No Crisis in Christ*

Children played happily in the streets. The sounds of street vendors and the smell of rich Cuban food led to luxury hotels over-flowing with the rich and famous—Cuba in the 1940s. Cuba was an island paradise like no other.

Though poor in material possessions, they boasted a community of the richest relationships around.

Such was the Cuba Tom and Mabel Willey encountered when they first arrived in 1941. It was easy to work with such an open people. The field seemed so ripe. Churches were planted. Missions started. The gospel spread, and missionaries were excited. The first Cuban Association of Free Will Baptists was formed. God was certainly working there.

But evil lurked around the corner. The unseen spiritual battle around them took on a physical face. Communism arrived with talons that tore into Cuba's heart and hope. In 1959, Fidel Castro led a revolution that overthrew the old, corrupt Batista regime, then established a socialist government in its place. The first few years of takeover were marked by a sellout of all luxury products, including cars, radios, record players, and more. The government tried to convey a positive spin on the new laws by raising certain salaries, but the rising inflation dwarfed the modest pay increases.

Within three years, Cubans began to feel the shock of deprivation. Contraband sales rose sharply since consumer products were in such limited supply. At one point, a single bar of soap sold for 80 American dollars. Each person was allowed exactly five and one-half pounds of rice, four ounces of beef, and one quart and a half of cooking oil—for a month. Only one dress or pair of pants, one pair of shoes, and one towel were permitted for the year. Twenty gallons of gas were allotted for every three months. Whatever medicine was available was watered down so that several doses were required to achieve results typically gained with one normal dose. The regime took over many small farms, and anyone caught stealing was sent to the firing squad.

Christians felt the noose even more tightly than others.

Though religious establishments were permitted to function, the



**TOP:** Fidel Castro and his regime are celebrated on a 1974 postage stamp.

**LEFT:** A lone American-made car is reminiscent of Havana's hey-day when cars and tourists lined its streets.

**BOTTOM:** Havana's once bustling harbor sparkles quietly in the sunlight.

**FAR RIGHT:** A typical 1940s farm with thatched-roof homes and palm trees dot the Cuban landscape.





government harassed church leaders. Intelligence agents were placed in every congregation to monitor preaching. Anyone who spoke an unapproved message was arrested. All religious activity outside the church was banned, including selling Bibles. Churches were required to submit a list of members' names, and pastors were permitted a limited number of personal visits to members. Children were not to be invited to services, and no one under 18 was allowed to join the church membership.

Due to the growing persecution, many believers were forced to leave the country. Missionaries once so eager and hopeful, left in sadness, hoping the churches begun might continue to survive.

But as God said in His Word, victory is “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit” (Zechariah 4:6). In place of defeat, Christians drew strength and confidence from God. They learned how to work around socialist agendas. They utilized radio and printed literature in new and effective ways. They banded together to form a network of support for believers. They called on brothers and sisters in the United States to join them in prayer for courage, protection, and success.

God heard.

In fact, God was working all along. Though the communist regime hoped to stop the gospel's spark in Cuba, it fanned the people's fervor into flame. Stripped of everything, Christians realized they needed only

Christ. Told He was the answer to life, they now knew the truth by experience. They were willing to tithe what little they had, offer their service to God—and the churches began to grow exponentially.

By 1977, Cuban churches experienced 200% growth, rebuilding congregations back to the state of church affairs in 1961, when 15 organized churches and 25 mission/house churches existed. Though the socialist state

of the government persisted, so did the determination of Cuban believers. As of 2004, there were 40 established churches, 96 missions, and 10 house churches across the island.

What does it feel like to lose everything, and why did God ordain it? Just ask a Cuban believer. He is likely to close his eyes and smile, reminiscent of the words of Jesus:

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

J O H N 12 : 24



### Mission Facts

Undeterred by communism, more than 5,300 men and women gather weekly in more than 90 FWB churches and almost 200 smaller gatherings dotting the island nation. Cubans are sharing the gospel message in Spain, Panama, and the United States, as well as throughout their country.



### C U B A

CAPITAL	Havana
LARGEST CITY	Havana
AREA	110,860 sq. km.
POPULATION	11,451,652
CURRENCY	Cuban Peso
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$9,500
RELIGIONS	
	Roman Catholic . . . . . 42.3%
	Non-religious . . . . . 35.5%
	Ethnic religions . . . . . 17.2%
	Evangelical Christian . . . . . 4.6%
	Unreached People Groups . . . 2

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project



# CHRIST IS THE ANSWER

## *The Tom and Mabel Willey Story*



A tropical paradise spread before their eyes when Tom and Mabel Willey first looked out across the island of Cuba in 1941. Towering palms swayed in the breeze, silhouetted against an azure sky. Crystal blue waters reflected the impressive Havana skyline. Though the homes dotting the villages were modest at best, these pioneer Cuban missionaries were delighted to find a warm reception among the Cuban people who seemed so eager to help and to listen. Where they lacked money, the Cuban people compensated in hospitality and kindness.

It did not take long to make inroads into the community. In 1943, the Willeys opened their work in Pinar del Río in western Cuba. They also purchased property nearby, where they built the “Cedars of Lebanon,” Cuba’s first Bible institute. In the same year, the Willeys organized the Cuban Association of Free Will Baptists, with a small membership of 76, though 200 more were awaiting baptism. Within one year’s time, five more churches surrounding Pinar del Río were developed.

Impressive statistics, to be sure. But the growing number of converts represented more than simply persuasive speaking. The Willeys’ warmth and love touched Cuban hearts at every status of society. Whether visiting a lowly field hand or an upper-class dignitary, Mabel and Tom had a unique gift that made each person feel important, loved, and respected. Their beautiful blend of compassion and determined purpose, powerful speech, and empathetic listening melted even the toughest resistance.





Before long, Cubans everywhere referred to Mabel and Tom as “Mom” and “Pop” Willey, affectionately welcoming them as a part of the Cuban family. The Willeys’ own children, Tom Jr. and Barbara, grew up as a part of that culture, following in the loving footsteps of their parents.

In 1960, the Cuban climate changed dramatically. Fidel Castro and his army overthrew the existing government and established a communist regime. New policies demanded that all missionaries exit the country—Mom and Pop Willey included. Not to be outdone, the Willeys moved to Miami where hundreds of Cuban refugees sought shelter. They continued their work developing Christian leaders and establishing churches among the Cubans, in the political safety of the United States.

Six years later, the Willeys faced a personal crisis that rivaled anything experienced in Cuba. Tom Willey Sr. was diagnosed with cancer. Though he fought his disease as tenaciously as he preached, he was unable to resist God’s call home in 1968. Mabel, equally determined, continued her work in Miami as she prayed for the church in Cuba, hoping that one day she might return.

At last, 17 years after leaving Cuba, Mabel Willey was invited to return to the country that still held her heart. Her visit was both wonderful and sorrowful at the same time. It was a joy to see old friends and visit places she and Tom experienced together. But she noticed that the spirit of joy and friendliness had been replaced with a colder, more task-oriented culture. Despite communism’s harsh impact on the community, she was thrilled to find the churches growing and the believers eager to continue God’s work, not only on their own island, but all around the world as well.

After a long life of dedicated ministry, “Mom” Willey went home to Jesus on January 16, 1998. Her legacy—her children and the many lives she touched—live on to continue the work God began through her and Tom.

*I have no greater joy than  
to hear that my children  
walk in truth.*

3 JOHN 4

**FAR LEFT:** Rolla Smith stands with a group of Cuban church leaders and Pop Willey (kneeling).

**LEFT:** Dressed for church

**UPPER RIGHT:** The Willey family (Barbara, Tom Sr., Mabel, and Tom Jr.) take a moment to pose for a family picture.

**RIGHT:** The Willeys’ home still stands on the property of the Cedars of Lebanon Seminary in Pinar del Río.







**LEFT:** A small group of faithful believers stand before their church.

**BELOW:** Pop Willey traveled throughout the denomination sharing his missions vision. He stands here (third from left) with John Lee, Cornelius Vause, and Evander Robinson of South Carolina.



**BELOW:** Many young ladies benefitted from training at the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Tom Willey Sr. loomed over the average Cuban, but his genuine love for them quickly won them over.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Mabel Willey was well respected by the Cuban pastors and lay leaders.





## LOS CEDROS DEL LIBANO (THE CEDARS OF LEBANON)

Ariel was hanging out with his friends in a dark alley of Havana—as usual. Smoke swirled around their heads as they lit cigarettes and downed a few more drinks, waiting for some action. Suddenly, a group of people appeared around the corner. Ariel was determined to block their path. But before he reached them, a young girl approached him, instead, and held out a tract. “God loves you,” she said sweetly. Then the group walked past.

Despite the taunts of his fellow gang members, Ariel was intrigued. He kept the tract and referred to it for weeks as he tried to understand its content. At last, he found a Free Will Baptist church where members were happy to explain. Through the girl, the church, and the power of the Holy Spirit, Ariel became a dedicated Christian, eager to reach out to his own community with the hope of the gospel that saved him.

Fortunately for Ariel, God was already at work in Cuba preparing the way for young men like him to receive the training they needed to reach Cuba for Christ. In 1941, Tom and Mabel Willey, Free Will Baptist pioneer missionaries to Cuba, purposed to establish a training institute designed to reach and train local Cubans for missions. After much prayer and searching the Scriptures, the Willeys contacted the West Indies Mission located in the middle province of Cuba to ask for teacher recommendations. They quickly suggested Rafael

Josue, a young and gifted teacher who was willing to make the sacrifice required to start the new school near Pinar del Río.

The institute was launched in 1943 with seven students and Rafael teaching. God used Rafael greatly to transform that first, meager building into a beautiful campus where young men and women trained for service. Rafael and Tom Willey Sr. were opposite personality types that complemented one another perfectly. Tom provided vision, while Rafael filled in with details and follow-through effort.

Ariel and many other native Cubans attended what became known as Los Cedros del Libano, or the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute. While attending classes, students were given work on the institute grounds to help with upkeep, and on weekends they were assigned to a church or mission where each student served. Classes were taught by various pastors who made up the faculty. Every week two different pastors

rotated through the teaching schedule for the semester.

After the standard three-year term for seminary training, students spent six months exclusively in the ministry assigned to them. Following their internship, a final semester of classroom work was completed before they served a minimum of two years as a local pastor. If all went well, the student was then eligible for ordination.

The road to equipping the saints was long and hard. Tom and Mabel Willey, Rafael Josue and his family, and many others gave of their time, energy, and comfort to see the vision fulfilled. But each institute pioneer strongly believed that no one wielded a greater influence in the Cuban community than Cuba’s own youth who sought to change their homeland for Christ. It was a deep, life-long investment. But the dividends of so many souls saved and ministries multiplied were well worth the price.



ABOVE: Tom Willey Sr. (lower right) poses with a group of Cedars of Lebanon students.



# COMING HOME

## *The Tom and Emma Ruth Willey Story*

*The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save,  
he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love,  
he will joy over thee with singing.*

ZEPHANIAH 3:17



Tom Willey Jr. considered Cuba home, though born to American missionaries “Pop” and “Mom” Willey. Missionary life was what he knew best. As a matter of fact, it was all he knew. Yet God used a near-fatal accident in Cuba, when Tom Jr. was 13, to personalize God’s truth. Injured so severely they feared he might be an invalid the rest of his life, Tom witnessed God’s mighty strength at work in his life and limbs. He soon regained full use of his body, in spite of doctors’ predictions. He realized that God spared his life for a purpose, and he intended to live his entire life for God’s glory.

Though Tom went on to complete his studies stateside, attending both Free Will Baptist Bible College and Columbia Bible College, his heart always turned toward Latin America. Emma Ruth Bennett, a fellow student at FWBBC, also felt drawn to missions and joined Tom Jr. in his commitment to evangelize the Latin world through God’s strength. They married in 1955, Tom graduated, and they were appointed to Cuba in 1956.

He was delighted to be back home, and even more excited to see what God was doing in the churches begun years earlier. “What a thrill it was to see the number of new faces in the churches there,” Tom remarked. Tom and Emma Ruth immersed themselves in ministry, reaching out to Cubans through radio, church programs, and an emphasis on the training ministry through the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute. The churches flourished, and large numbers of Cubans came to Christ and trained for ministry.

Unfortunately, Christianity was not the only ideology on the move. Communism reared its ugly head, and by 1961 was overtaking the island. Missionaries were ordered to leave the country. Churches were placed under tight governmental



**ABOVE:** Tom Willey Jr. visits members of a rural church.

**RIGHT:** Tom Jr. returned to Cuba in 1997 and addressed the Cuban Women’s Auxiliary Convention. During that visit he was honored to baptize several new converts.





reigns, and Cuban Christians were often persecuted in large and small ways.

Sixteen years passed. Tom spent the time in Panama, developing a beach-head of Free Will Baptist churches along the coast. Tom was enthusiastic about the Board of Foreign Missions' invitation for him to return to Cuba in 1977 for a

visit and report on the country.

Tom returned to a very different Cuba. The people were colder and more aloof under the communist regime. The island itself showed significant progress, with many paved roads replacing old dirt paths and new buildings and facili-

ties where shacks once stood. Electricity reached even the most rural homes, and activity and governmental prosperity seemed evident, even in the countryside.

Most surprising were the flourishing churches. Though only one-third of the members remained faithful through the communist oppression, their work multiplied and produced bountiful fruit. "From that remnant the Lord has built His church back to what it previously was," Tom commented. "So you might say the church has had a growth of 200% in the last 16 years."

How did they succeed? A layman explained: "We exhorted each person to never lose an opportunity to give the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every soul that needed it...going ahead with the church no matter what the situation was. Each of us, united as in the primitive church, was endeavoring to be a missionary and to let Christ be the center of his life."

In 1988, Tom joined the Cubans again to lead the dedication service for the reopening of the Cedars of Lebanon Seminary. More than 400 people crowded into the facility built for 200 people. Again, Tom was amazed! God was truly building His house—even through pain and persecution—and the gates of hell could not prevail against it.

## FAITH IN ACTION

### *Militino Martinez's Story*

**M**ilitino Martinez was unable to figure them out. Why did a nice couple from the United States come to his country? Why did they act like they loved the Cuban people? What made them give up their lives to serve someone else?

Militino knew the answers to his questions must lie in the Willey's message. This beloved couple, affectionately called "Mom" and "Pop" Willey, taught the people about the love of Christ and His provision on the cross. Then they actually proved their belief through consistent, godly living.

Militino was convinced. Jesus must be real if He could cause people to love like the Willeys did, he concluded. Militino Martinez gave his life to Christ and became an avid student at the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute where Tom Willey often taught. In his new enthusiasm and joy in Christ, Militino helped start several new churches on the island, even while completing his studies.

God used the Willeys and the institute training in major ways through Militino. When Cuban officials forced him to leave his island, he started a church in Miami, Florida. Later, God led him to serve as director of the Hispanic Department of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission, work with the New York Bible Society, pastor a church in New Jersey, and eventually travel to Spain to assist a church in Tarragona.



**TOP:** Tom Jr. and his sister Barbara provide music for street ministry.

**BOTTOM:** Emma Ruth, an accomplished musician, delighted in playing for church services.





# GOD'S SERVANT

## *The Bessie Yeley Story*

*And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.*

1 SAMUEL 3:10



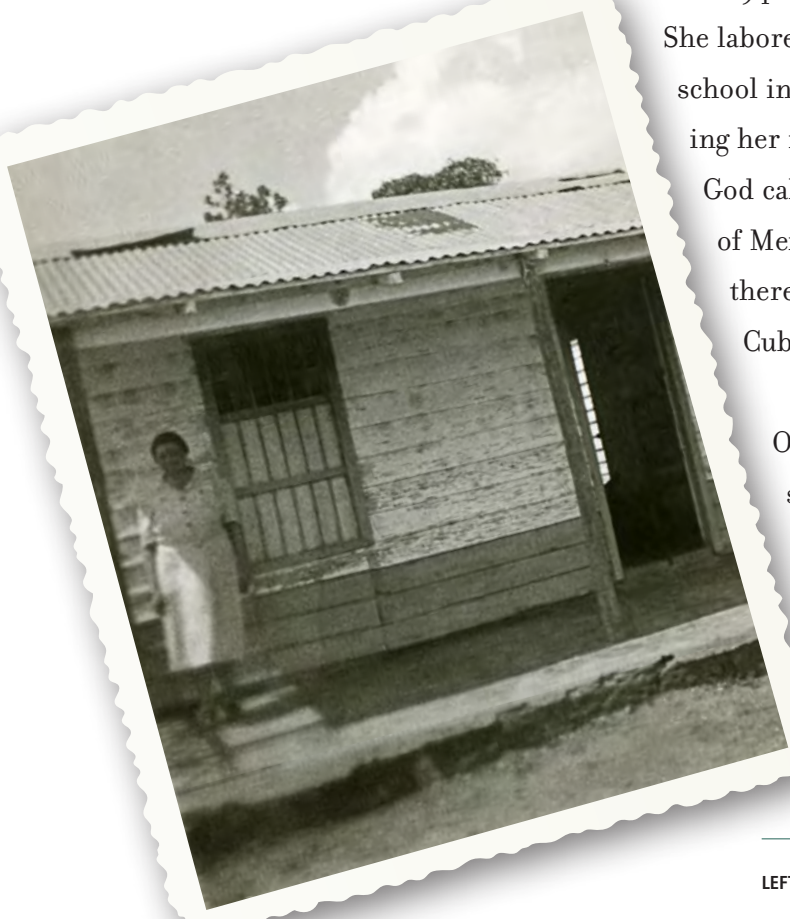
Bessie Yeley was used to serving. Born November 26, 1895, into a family of 10 other children, she knew almost instinctively what work was required to manage people and the logistics of living. She grew up working in and caring for the Porter Free Will Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Ohio. To Bessie, no task was too small or menial. Did the lanterns need to be carried? She did it. Was it time to empty the stove ashes from the center aisle of the church? She complied on time. She also taught Sunday school, played the pump organ, kept the church books, and did whatever was needed when the opportunity arose.

So when a missionary from Bolivia, South America, came to a nearby church and told the congregation about the great need for more workers, Bessie was touched. She went home immediately and began to pray for God to raise up workers to help those missionaries. Just as she was about to rise from her knees, she heard God whisper, “Why don’t you go?”

This was no menial task. It was the biggest calling of her life. Bessie was humbled and excited to accept. She studied at a Bible college held in Temple Baptist Church and finished her training in Kansas City, Missouri. Then she left the states for Venezuela under the Faith Baptist Mission, and finally found her home in Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions in 1938, with the full blessing of her home church.

In 1942, Bessie left Venezuela and joined Tom and Mabel Willey in Cuba. She labored for 12 years in the Bible institute and faithfully taught Sunday school in the villages on weekends. Children gravitated toward her, sensing her nurturing spirit and Christ-born love for each of them. Eventually, God called Bessie to leave Cuba and begin working along the border of Mexico in Nogales, Arizona. She served immigrants and refugees there for three years before she moved to Miami to help work with the Cuban refugees.

At age 60, Bessie Yeley finally returned to her home state of Ohio where she organized Bible clubs and taught Bible classes for senior citizens in the Portsmouth area. She never considered herself retired because she knew God’s call to missions was for life. When a Christian’s heart is surrendered to the Lord, evangelism happens—no matter the place. Until her death on January 23, 1969, Bessie spoke to others on behalf of missions. She challenged young and old alike with the same words God spoke to her: “Why don’t you go?” And many did.



LEFT: Bessie Yeley stands on the porch of her humble, tin-roofed house in Cuba.



## CUBAN REFUGEES FIND SAFE HAVEN IN CHRIST

**M**iami residents had no idea. Neither did anyone else in the U.S. To think that just 90 miles south of Florida's tip was an island of desperate people starving, suffering, and fighting disease was almost incomprehensible. But Cuba's nasty secret was not kept for long.

Fidel Castro and his socialist regime overthrew the Cuban government in 1961. Although Batista's regime was corrupt, Castro added a new component—a miserable bondage under atheism. As he sought to establish power, Castro destroyed factories, fields, and families who opposed communist ideology. Food rations were so scant people became malnourished, even emaciated. Each person was allotted one banana per day, and one egg and a half of a pound of beans for an entire week. Medicines sent from America were confiscated, and only severely diluted, inferior medicines were allowed for the poor.

It is not surprising that thousands of Cuban refugees fled to neighboring Miami when Castro permitted certain people to leave the island. Each week, more than 2,000 people arrived on American soil with nothing but the clothes on their backs, grateful for the chance to start a new life in a free country. Many refugees risked their lives in inadequate boats as they crossed the stretch of treacherous Caribbean waters to the Florida Keys. Often the American Coast Guard found rafts packed with refugees who were

without food and water. Some died, but others were taken to American hospitals where they received the care they so desperately needed.

Free Will Baptist missionaries and church members were also eager to help in the dire circumstances. Tom Willey Sr. and others immediately helped establish CERF—the Cuban Emergency Relief Fund—to meet the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and medical care for refugees as they arrived. They called on churches across the nation to assist financially, in prayer, and through clothing donations. The response was truly miraculous.

After meeting their physical needs, church leaders were surprised and delighted to discover an increased openness toward the gospel message. Cubans who once professed atheism under the communist regime experienced the reality of God's presence during their harrowing escapes. In the midst of utter weakness, they craved to know the God

who promised to sustain them. Willey and others formed teams to go through the refugee communities distributing tracts and sharing how Christ provides true freedom. In addition, they helped establish several Spanish-speaking churches throughout the Miami area to disciple the rapidly growing number of new believers.

Even though Castro attempted to replace Christianity with communist sentiment, God was greater still. Oppression actually opened more opportunities for the gospel. Through pain and suffering came tremendous triumph. As Joseph said to his brothers who betrayed him,

*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

GENESIS 50:20



**ABOVE:** Cuban pastor Benito Rodriguez and Mabel Willey lovingly welcome Cuban refugees to Miami.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

### *Cuban Missionary Support: the Dodds, Wilfongs, Phenicies, and Miss Wisehart*

*W*o role in missions is particularly glamorous. It takes commitment, obedience, and hard work to carry out the Great Commission. Even then, only a handful of missionaries receive mention back home. But God is also at work in the lives of the lesser known—the faithful few who labor diligently, often without any recognition, seeking simply to serve the God they love and to make Him known.

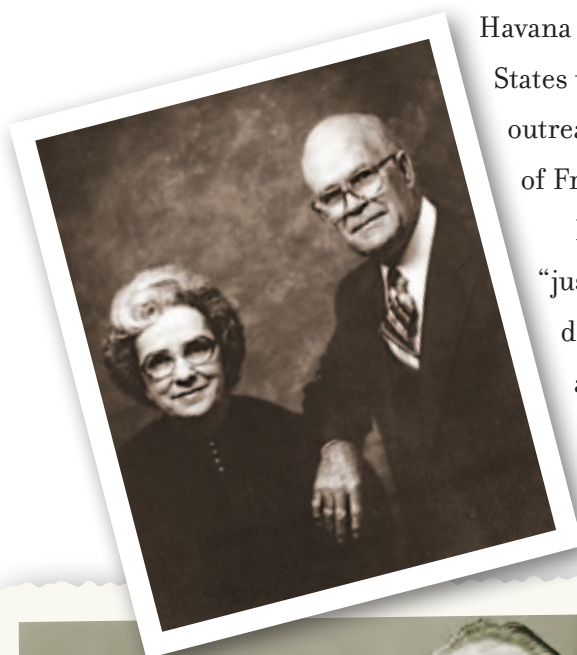
Damon Dodd and his wife, Sylvia, are such a couple. The Dodds went to Cuba in 1944 to labor alongside pioneer missionaries Thomas and Mabel Willey. Damon served as business manager and bookkeeper for the mission and taught in the Bible institute. He also traveled to different preaching points between Havana and Matanzas. When Sylvia became ill in 1946, the couple returned to the States where she received proper treatment, and Damon continued his evangelism outreach as pastor, and later as promotional secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Bob and Jerri Wilfong joined the Willeys in Cuba in 1949. Bob helped in “just about everything” at the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute. He taught, did mechanical and repair work, acted as chauffeur, helped with the music, and assisted “Pop” in many ways, while Jerri performed secretarial work for the school.

Herbert and Edith Phenicie also served in Cuba in 1948 under “Practical Missionary Training” with Christian and Missionary Alliance, working intermittently with the Willeys. By 1953,

they returned to Cuba on a full-time basis as Free Will Baptist maintenance missionaries. Herbert’s chief job was to keep the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute property in working order. Though he spoke only a little Spanish, his rapport with students helped the team work together to accomplish goals.

Miss Lucy Wisehart also had a heart for Cuba and left the States for service in 1953. She worked for three years as secretary-bookkeeper for the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute. As she learned Spanish, she worked in



**UPPER RIGHT:** Damon and Sylvia Dodd’s ministry was cut short by her illness.

**MIDDLE:** Bob and Jerri Wilfong served three years in Cuba.

**BOTTOM:** Herbert and Edith Phenicie helped to keep the institute property in order for six years.

**RIGHT:** Lucy Wisehart frequently used the accordion in her ministry.



daily vacation Bible schools, with the young people, and in the music ministry. Later, she married Cuban pastor Felix Lima. Together they served two different churches in Cuba until they left in 1961.

What was the net result of their daily obedience in the minutia of missionary life? Hundreds of changed lives. A Bible institute that continues to equip national Christian leaders today. And most importantly, the smile of God who saw every act of service and said, “Well done, good and faithful servants.”

*His lord said unto him,  
Well done, thou good and faithful servant:  
thou hast been faithful over a few things,  
I will make thee ruler over many things:  
enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

M A T T H E W 2 5 : 2 1



### ESTHER RUEHLE

left the States in 1957 to serve as a nurse in Cuba. The need for nurses in Brazil was greater than in Cuba, so after two years she returned to the States and then later departed for Brazil.

**TOP:** Mom Willey and Lucy Wisheart stand with Cuban Christians on the porch of a house on the institute property.

**MIDDLE:** The Cuban Association meets in the newly built Thomas H. Willey Tabernacle at Cedars of Lebanon.

**RIGHT:** Mabel Willey stands with Raymond Riggs, the first general director of Foreign Missions.





# JAPAN

## *Land of the Risen Son*

*I*t is the dawn of a new day. Rays of light creep over the horizon, casting a golden hue over vibrant green rice fields. The reflection of a towering volcano ripples in the shallow waters. A humid wind blows gently over the grasses. At last, the silhouette of a small man in a broad hat bends down, waist deep in water, working the land. He is one of the few farmers still loyal to the fields of Japan.

Since her unconditional surrender in 1945, at the close of World War II, Japan continues to shift from its agricultural roots to urban development. In fact, more than 78% of Japan's 127 million people left the rural areas of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu—Japan's four main islands—to stuff themselves into its fast-paced, western-faced cities. Regimented education systems produce a 100% literacy rate among students. Materialism and affluence lure the masses to work ever harder, always producing better, faster, and stronger than before. In defiance of defeat, the Japanese are an industrial power with one of the world's strongest economies.

At first glance, Japan seems to be the paragon of forward progress. Every child is an educational success. Countless businesses are booming. Life is as good as it gets for the Japanese, isn't it? A second glance at the culture tells a much different story. Just look along city streets. Near the Eki (train) stations. In front and inside of homes. In the temple shrines. An archaic homage to idols is paid daily, sometimes hourly, by even the most technologically advanced individuals. Bizarre superstitions and rituals dominate the culture, affecting old and young alike. Despite their power and prestige, the Japanese people are still haunted by an ancient quest for something more.

What more do they need? They need Jesus. Less than 1 percent of the Japanese population are Christians. The vast majority—at least 83%—follow Shintoism and Buddhism.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** This huge statue of Buddha illustrates the enduring influence of Buddhism on the Japanese people.

**ABOVE LEFT:** A farmer tends his rice crop, a staple on every Japanese table.

**RIGHT:** Mt. Fuji, an active volcano and one of Japan's three holy mountains, rises in splendor above Lake Kawaguchi.





Soka Gakkai, another Buddhist sect, continues to seek political power while stamping out what little Christian influence currently exists. Students seek desperately to assuage feelings of emptiness and hopelessness by either denying God's existence and serving themselves or by enslaving themselves to insatiable deities who they believe hold the key to their happiness.

## Mission Facts

Deeply entrenched belief systems and ancestor worship form barriers difficult to overcome; yet 14 mission works and churches are impacting their communities under the leadership of six Japanese pastors. Japanese believers are seeking ways to reach China, supporting mission work in India, and desiring to send missionaries to other countries.

It should be a missionary's dream field. The Japanese government allows any religious group to come and go as they please. The people themselves seem polite and attentive. But the truth betrays the strength of Satan's stronghold in Japan. Most missionaries leave the country jaded and frustrated with the lack of fruit despite intense effort. Decades are poured into preaching and reaching out to the lost Japanese people, with only a small response. It takes a very long time to dislodge the errant

teaching deeply entrenched in Japanese culture.

Understanding they are sinners who need a Savior may take years to communicate. Even when people comprehend, social scorn and family pressures are often too strong for most to defect from the status quo and turn to Christ. Those who do make the leap of faith find themselves and their families ostracized. It is a long, hard road for Japanese converts—though they themselves emphatically proclaim that the sacrifice pales in comparison to the hope of glory they've found in Jesus.

Japanese Christians are not giving up. Free Will Baptists aren't either. Missionaries from various denominations join together in different outreaches to break hell's grip on this island nation. And slowly, more and more Japanese people are discovering Jesus. Japan is not just the Land of the Rising Sun. It is the land over which the Son of God reigns, and He is raising up a people for Himself.



**UPPER:** This rented building in the Tokyo area served as a church for many years.

**BOTTOM:** Thousands of Japanese visit Shinto shrines and "cleansing" smoke altars daily, erroneously seeking to be purged of evil.

JAPAN	
CAPITAL	Tokyo
LARGEST CITY	Tokyo
AREA	377,915 sq. km.
POPULATION	127,078,679
CURRENCY	Yen
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$34,000
RELIGIONS	
Buddhism	69.9%
Evangelical	0.4%
Non-religious	4.3%
Unknown	24.4%

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project





# GOD CAUSES THE GROWTH

## *The Fred and Evelyn Hersey Story*

*Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*

1 CORINTHIANS 3:8

Evelyn Hersey gasped. Her husband, Fred, simply held his breath. But how long could the couple stand the overpowering smells of fish and seaweed—and who knows what else—swirling around them? After a wonderful day in Honolulu, Hawaii, the Herseys at last stepped foot on Japanese soil for the first time on April 23, 1956. Fred remembered, “The smells of Japan in those days were so foreign to us that they would almost make us faint or quit breathing altogether.” He added, “We soon learned to hold our breath for long periods of time.”

The Herseys acclimated to much more than just smells. Foods all looked and tasted strange, tainted by fishy flavors. Fred, who stood over six feet tall, towered above the Japanese whose average adult height resembled that of young teenagers back in the States. Quiet chatter in Japanese taunted the young couple who were eager to understand this very different culture. One look inside the homes or simply along the streets revealed a deep-seated reliance on ancient idolatry and superstition. Japan proved to be foreign in every way; its harsh spiritual climate left many frustrated missionaries in its wake. But not the Herseys. They were committed for the duration, no matter the challenges that lay ahead.

Evelyn and Fred held firm resolve as a result of the work of God in their lives prior to His call to missions. Evelyn grew up in a Christian home and received Jesus as Savior when she was 13. Fred, too, was raised by Christian parents, though he did not take his relationship with Christ seriously until he was older. During his time at Free Will Baptist Bible College, he recommitted his life to God and worked toward answering the call to missions. He pastored two different churches in North Carolina before God finally led the Herseys to the shores of Japan.

During their first term on the field, they served in Bihoro, Hokkaido, though they also held services in Abashiri, Shari, and Tsubetsu. From 1963 to 1966, they founded the Irumagawa church in Sayama on the outskirts of Tokyo, while working hard to develop the Iriso church at the same time. Like other FWB missionaries near them, the Herseys concentrated on teaching English and cooking classes to build relational bridges into the Japanese community.



**ABOVE:** Fred Hersey leads a Bible study at the Iriso Church in a suburb of Tokyo.

**RIGHT:** Fred and Evelyn return to the U.S. with their first three children following their first term of service in Japan.





During their time in Japan, Evelyn discovered another mission field God intended for her. Fred and Evelyn became the parents of five children: Philip, Samuel, Stephen, Vivian, and Paul. While Evelyn's commitment to the Japanese people remained firm, she was even more devoted to her family. She considered everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and running the home to be her ministry to the Lord and to her family. Her faithfulness at home led to children who were well-grounded in the Word and strong in the Lord.

In 1986, God led Fred and the Iriso congregation to buy land for a church building. The hope that even more people might hear the gospel once the building was complete encouraged them all. The congregation voluntarily raised over \$2,000 at once to get the project underway. The building still stands as a testimony of God's grace to and through the believers at Iriso.

Then God revealed a new plan for the Herseys—a harder, more difficult path lay ahead. In 1988, Evelyn was diagnosed with cancer. They returned stateside for surgery and treatment, and then returned to the field. They worked with the Abashiri and Bihoro churches until Evelyn's cancer returned in 1993. God took Evelyn home to be with Him the next year.

Surrounded by the support of friends and family, Fred persevered. He continued working to raise up national laborers for Christ and assisting the growing churches in every way possible. In time, God blessed him with a new wife, June Wilkinson, who served as a missionary in Brazil with her husband for 20 years before his death.

## FOREVER FRIENDS

### *Paul and Hideki's Story*

His parents did not let him go to Sunday school or church, but they were not able to keep little Hideki from the cookies or the playmate he discovered next door. The Herseys were more than happy for their son Paul to play with Hideki whenever possible. Though the Japanese family rigidly refused the Herseys' invitations to church, they allowed the boys' strong friendship to grow.

Through the years, the toddlers grew into young men. Even when the Hiyashi family moved, Hideki and Paul remained close friends. Just two weeks before Paul returned to the States for college, he urged Hideki to attend church with him. Taking silence as a potential "yes," Paul persisted—and Hideki came.

In fact, even after Paul returned to America, Hideki continued to attend and eventually became a Christian. Paul's father, Fred Hersey, baptized Hideki.

Hideki became deeply involved in the Iriso Free Will Baptist Church, and married a young Christian woman named Chiyomi. He often leads the services and Chiyomi serves as a pianist. When Fred visited the Tokyo area years later, the servant-hearted couple invited him to stay in their home. "Little did I realize when Paul and Hideki began playing together, that I would be a guest in Hideki's Christian home," he exclaimed. "What a blessing!"



ABOVE: The Iriso church building stands as a testament of God's grace.

RIGHT: Evelyn Hersey plays the organ for an Iriso church service.





# THE SOUND OF FREEDOM

## *The Dale and Sandra Bishop Story*

*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

J O H N 8 : 3 1 - 3 2

*T*he gospel sounds different to Japanese ears. Immersed in idol and ancestor worship, the Japanese culture spins a web of spiritual darkness that traps almost every native in the nation. Though they are

open to hearing new religious ideas, the concept of Christ is as foreign to them as their food is to outsiders. The Japanese have no notion of sin. They do not believe in heaven or hell. Because they do not see themselves as sinners, they do not understand why they need a Savior. Even if they did, they are prone to trust their shelf-gods or ancestors for help, not Christ.

Dale and Sandra Bishop encountered these cultural and spiritual challenges when they first stepped foot on Japanese soil in 1972. At the time, they were single students traveling with the Good News Team to work and witness at the Winter Olympics. That first mission trip united them in purpose and in heart, and they married after they returned to the States. Both were determined to find the key to unlock Japanese hearts from their spiritual prison.

It was a calling both felt from their youth. Dale received Christ at age 14 during a revival meeting in the church his father pastored. Sandra also grew up as a preacher's kid and was saved at age seven. Both attended Free Will Baptist Bible College, where they first met. God joined their calling to reach the Japanese with the good news of Jesus.

After completing missionary internship training in Detroit, Michigan, the Bishops were appointed to Japan in 1974. During their first term, they labored at Kita Hiroshima Chapel, as well as Airin Chapel. By 1978, Dale preached his first sermon in Japanese. As the couple learned the difficult Japanese language, they grew stronger and more effective in their witness. They began teaching home Bible studies, English classes, and cooking classes. Dale found

great joy in singing the gospel to people who otherwise were not interested.

Every Friday night he sang with an evangelistic Japanese group, The Gospel Sounds, in a local coffee-shop ministry. Music became God's special tool





to turn Japanese hearts and attention toward Him. In addition to their personal ministries, the Bishops were a great source of help and encouragement to Japanese preacher Ben Abe at the Higashi Tsukisamu church.

During their third term in 1985, the Bishops started a new work in Nopporo, Ebetsu. They purchased a building in town with help from members of the growing congregation and named their church “Koinonia.” While developing Koinonia, Dale also assisted four other churches and continued his work with The Gospel Sounds. He also assisted Pastor Kawasaki in the construction of the Ai No Sato church.

As time marched on, the Bishops deepened existing relationships and forged new ones. Through the years God gave them four children: Jeffery, Kevin, Douglas, and Jennifer. In addition to the responsibilities of raising a godly family, their fourth and fifth terms were spent developing Koinonia Free Will Baptist Church and training leaders through the Bible institute sponsored by the church. Sandra snatched an opportunity at a local high school to teach English. They continually looked for new inroads to reach the community.

Free Will Baptist missionaries eventually strategized together to increase their effectiveness. Two teams resulted, and the Bishops became a part of the Hokkaido team. They worked with the Miharashidai FWB Church in Ebetsu, begun in 1995. Dale also became Asia Regional Director for International Missions in January of 2004.

Today their song goes on. It rings out through the lives they touched in the past and the ones yet to hear. The Bishops continue to sing, speak, teach, and equip with the joyful sound of gospel truth. They know that, as God’s Word accomplishes His purpose, spiritual bondage will break. God’s people in Japan will know the truth, and the truth will indeed set them free.

**FAR LEFT:** Dale Bishop receives a gift from a Koinonia church member.

**LEFT:** Sandra extended her sphere of influence and opportunities to share the gospel by teaching English classes in local schools.

**RIGHT:** Dale and several young leaders enjoy a good laugh during a Bible study.



## AMAZING GRACE

### *Yoshikazu Ishii's Story*

**Y**oshikazu knew what his life was supposed to look like. He was the rare Japanese born into a Christian home in Japan, and faith was an integral part of the Ishii family. Yet Yoshikazu led a double life—one to please the people at church, and one indulging his sin nature when Christians were not around.

The hypocrisy haunted him. How long did he plan to remain an impostor? God answered his dilemma through a camp evangelist. He said, “Even though you are not lovable in your own eyes, God still loves you.” Stunned by God’s grace, mercy, and love, Yoshikazu left the summer camp changed and wholeheartedly devoted to the God who loved him.

After high school, Yoshikazu attended Kansai Bible College, confident God was calling him to ministry. He served the Koinonia Free Will Baptist Church, working as their youth pastor, and later at the Ai No Sato FWB Church in Sapporo. With

his wife Emi and two young children, the family formed a fellowship group called Friends in Christ (FIC). In 2000, Yoshikazu became an ordained Free Will Baptist preacher and assumed the pastorate of the Bihoro FWB church on eastern Hokkaido. Today, the church remains missions-minded, sharing the hope of God’s amazing grace with their community and the world beyond.



# THE WEIGHT OF GLORY

## *The Wesley and Aileen Calvery Story*

*H*e sat in the pew of his church, listening intently to the message. Wesley Calvary decided to no longer resist God's call. Though only 15 years old, he knew he needed Jesus. By age 18, he felt called into ministry and enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Near his sophomore year, he realized God was calling him to missions, and he was not going alone. God was also at work in Aileen Mullen's heart. She accepted Christ as her Savior at age 13 and also attended FWBBC. She and Wesley joined in marriage and missions commitment in 1949.

The young couple set off for the islands of Japan in October 1952, eager to see how God might work through them. They knew over 90 million people were crowded into the 142,000 square miles of clustered islands. The Calverys were Free Will Baptists' pioneer missionaries to an idol-ridden land.

They began work in Tokyo, where they trained in the difficult Japanese language. During their short stay, they ministered to local Japanese people, and a few came to Christ. They formed the first Free Will Baptist church in Tokyo. After language training, the Calverys felt called to Hokkaido, an island in northern Japan.

Ministry in Hokkaido was no easier than it was in Tokyo. Wesley once wrote, "Interest in religion is very low, and it takes planning and hard work to interest people." English training, cooking classes, literature, music, meetings, and other venues became platforms to cross the cultural barriers and expose the Japanese to the gospel. They opened their own home for people to come, visit, learn, worship, and ask questions. In time, the Calverys adopted two Japanese children, narrowing the cultural gap.

After years of prayer and hard labor, they began to see fruit. Wesley wrote, "It is nothing short of a miracle that God is working here. One by one the people attending our chapel have begun making definite decisions to accept Christ. There is a refreshing air of newness and youthful vigor and childlike simplicity."



The Calverys resigned January 1, 1976, at the request of the Board. The Board of Foreign Missions cited a behavioral pattern in Wesley's life inconsistent with the Official Handbook of Foreign Missions. However, the Calverys continued living in Japan until Wesley's death in 2002.

*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-17

**LEFT:** Aileen Calvery's skill with the accordion enthralled many Japanese children and helped them learn about Jesus.



# ALL THE WORLD

## The Herbert and Geraldine Waid Story

*H*erbert Waid was not satisfied. “Even a casual, honest observer will realize that since almost 90%

of the Christian workers are serving about 10% of this world’s population,” he explained, “we are not being faithful as ambassadors of Christ representing Him in ‘all the world’.” Waid was determined to follow God’s call to take the gospel of Christ to those yet unreached. “The Captain of my soul has commanded; I am able (in His strength) to obey His command,” he said passionately. “So the question is not why should I go, but rather why should I not go?”

It was a call he heard in his teens, when he received Christ as Lord at his home church in Royal Oak, Michigan. He followed the Spirit’s lead when he enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1951, where he met Geraldine Gay—his future wife. As a couple, they participated in practical work groups throughout their college careers. Once graduated, Herbert pastored in North Carolina for two years. By 1958, the Waids were certain their call to missions went beyond the States’ borders. They applied for missionary service, and within the year, Herbert and Geraldine were headed for Japan.

Language study took the major portion of the first two years of service. Following that, the Waids became the first Free Will Baptist missionaries in Tokyo. They immediately began reaching out to the middle-class urban residents around them, as well as to university students. They assisted four different mission works in Tokyo through teaching and ministerial support. Fifteen Japanese workers came alongside to help with this strategic work.

During their time in Japan, the Waids established the first Free Will Baptist Church of Irumagawa. When asked about their most effective evangelism tool, Herbert was quick to reply, “Love. The way to win people to Jesus is to show them God’s love.”

*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

J O H N 13 : 35

**MIDDLE:** Mika prepares for baptism by Nathan Snow.

**RIGHT:** Herbert Waid consoles a young girl following her bicycle accident.



## STANDING WITH CHRIST

### Mika’s Story

*My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*

P S A L M 73 : 26

*S*he wanted to follow Jesus. Despite her Buddhist upbringing, Mika spent years researching Christianity’s claims. Faithful Free Will Baptist missionaries patiently pointed her toward the truth. After an intense study using *The Purpose Driven Life*, God opened

her spiritual eyes. She understood sin—a concept that the Japanese language provided no word to describe—as well as her need for a Savior. She knew Jesus was the only way. But she had one huge obstacle

looming in her path to freedom: rejection from her people.

Mika wrestled with her life’s decision. To follow Christ meant dishonoring her parents. It might estrange her from her boyfriend, identify her as an outsider, and erect social boundaries. But during her struggle, Christ proved sufficient.

Mika defeated her fears and approached her parents and boyfriend with her desire for baptism. To her shock and delight, they respected her wishes. “God answered the prayer!” she exclaimed excitedly. In 2006, Mika was baptized. Now, she leads other young Japanese girls in Bible study, pointing them toward the Truth, and encouraging them to take a stand with Christ.





# A DIVINE APPOINTMENT

## *The Ken and Judy Bailey Story*

Ken was not sure he was going to make it. En route to the hospital after a terrible motorcycle accident, the thought struck, What if I die? Where will I spend eternity? Ken repented of his sins and turned his life over to Christ. When he recovered from his injuries, he did not forget his decision.

Judy had a different experience. She grew up under the godly teaching of her father's ministry and gave her life to God as a little child. Active in church music and teaching ministries, as she matured in age and faith, she desired a stronger personal relationship with God. At age 21, Judy recommitted her life to the Lord, ready to do His bidding.

According to God's plan, Ken and Judy met, married, and in the course of time had two children, Tracey and Benjamin. While attending Free Will Baptist Bible College, the Baileys worked in a local church. Both avid students as well as teachers, Judy attended Pensacola Christian College, FWBBC, and Ft. Wayne Bible College. Ken holds a B.A. from FWBBC, an M.A. in Intercultural Studies and TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) from Wheaton, and is pursuing a doctorate from Biola University.

When appointed to Japan in August of 1982, they were well equipped for service, lacking only a grasp of the language. They spent two years in formal language study in Tokyo while assisting the Adachi and Iriso FWB churches, under the leadership of Fred and Evelyn Hersey.

After the Bailey's return from furlough in 1988, they arrived in Tokyo to face a new challenge. Some missionaries and church leaders left their positions, leaving a large gap in the national leadership Japan so desperately needed.

The Baileys relied on God's grace and their training to tackle immediate needs, as well as to equip more nationals to join the Tokyo work. God's grace is evident through their efforts, as He continues to grow their ministries and change Japanese hearts through the power of the gospel message.



**ABOVE:** Ken and Judy Bailey pose with a multi-generational Japanese family.

**RIGHT:** Dale Bishop, Ken Bailey, and Mr. Nomura rejoice in the dedication of the Kamifukuoka Church in Tokyo.





# THE JOY OF SUBMISSION

## *The Don and Ruth McDonald Story*

It was not an easy decision. Ruth knew from experience that mission work was a difficult calling. She grew up as part of a missionary family, and gave her life to Christ at the tender age of five. She learned from godly parents what it meant to submit to the Lord's leading, and she sought to obey God's call, no matter what.

Years later, God tested her commitment. She met Donnie, a young man on fire for God. They married, eager to serve God wholeheartedly as a couple. Then Donnie dropped the bomb: he believed God was calling them to be missionaries...to Japan. Idol worship and superstition enshrouded an entire nation of people with different customs, ideology, and language. Was her husband possibly right?

Ruth chose to rely on Scripture instead of emotions. She knew God purposed her to marry Donnie, and that God was at work in his heart. If Donnie felt called, then God must be calling her, too. She submitted to God's will and embraced the call. By His grace, God changed Ruth's heart, and she soon became passionate about the Japanese people and their need for the gospel.

The McDonalds were appointed to career missionary service in Japan on November 27, 1984. They began their first term two years later in Tokyo, where they studied the difficult language for two years. The couple then moved to Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, to assist and strengthen existing churches.

As interest in Christ grew, so did the McDonalds' enthusiasm. In 1996, the family—which by then included three of their four children, Katie, Evan, Amy, and Caroline—settled in the Sapporo area to begin a new church. The Miharashidai Chapel was established, and they initiated an English program and women's and children's ministries.

Upon their fourth term of service, the McDonalds relocated to Tokyo, where they worked with members of the Tokyo team and the Iriso church to establish the Good News Chapel. Donnie handled preaching and follow-up visits to new converts, while Ruth worked with church music and neighborhood evangelism. To their delight, they discovered a huge interest in gospel music among the Japanese. They quickly turned interest into opportunity by providing a music choir for the Japanese to attend. As they learned classic hymns and gospel music, the McDonalds taught them the gospel message through the lyrics they sang.

Now, together with an ever-growing body of believers in Japan, the McDonalds continue to sing about God's great faithfulness, from beginning to end!



**RIGHT:** Donnie McDonald displays the lyrics of a song.





## SHANNON LITTLE

was approved as a career missionary in April 2004. She departed for Hokkaido in 2007 and spent two years learning the Japanese language and culture. Shannon assists at the Miharashidai Chapel in Ebetsu.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Evelyn Hersey and her cooking class were featured in a magazine spread.

**RIGHT:** Wesley and Aileen Calvery and their children were members of a Christian musical group that traveled in the USA to raise funds for their ministry.

**FAR RIGHT:** Wesley Calvery with his adopted children in the Airin Chapel Church.







### JUDY SMITH

was approved as a career missionary to Japan in 1974. She was involved in music ministry and outreach projects in the Kita Hiroshima community. Judy used her ventriloquist skills as a means of outreach. Miss Smith resigned from mission service in 1992. She lives in Texas and is active in children's ministry.



### FRED AND JUNE HERSEY

departed for Japan in 1995. They worked in churches in Sapporo and Hokkaido, and taught English. The Hersey's retired in 1998. Fred served in Japan for 42 years while June served in Brazil for 20 years and Japan for two. The couple currently resides in Dothan, Alabama.





# ACTIVE DUTY

## *The Mirial Gainer Story*

*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

LUKE 17:10



“*I* sensed it from the moment my mother led me to Jesus,” Mirial Gainer remembered. “I knew this incredible gift of salvation was not meant for just me. I needed to share it with everyone else, too.” God began a great work in nine-year-old Mirial, opening her eyes to the need and her heart to the call of missionary service.

Peace Free Will Baptist Church in Florence, South Carolina, proved a fertile source of spiritual growth. As Mirial read about and listened to pioneer missionary stories she was challenged to surrender her life completely.

She began her service stateside, in her home community, teaching Sunday school and Good News Clubs, working with the church choir, and ministering to youth groups. She also worked with the Salvation Army, assisted a United Methodist church, worked in a tent crusade, counseled with youth, and taught evangelism.

By the time Mirial Gainer felt called for overseas work, she was ready. Upon arriving in Japan in 1977, she jumped into ministry serving the Hokkaido International School as a teacher and librarian, teaching English classes at Airin Chapel, helping in the church’s coffee-shop ministry, playing the organ for worship services, and assisting in Sunday school.

Eventually, Mirial felt led to work with the YWCA teaching English and Bible, and began a ministry at Hokusei University as a member of the English faculty. She assisted the Abashiri and Bihoro churches in Eastern Hokkaido as a Bible teacher and evangelism trainer. In 1997, Mirial’s missionary status changed from associate to career, as she continued to pour her life into the Japanese people.

While working in Tokyo, Mirial suffered from severe back pain, leading to surgeries and extensive therapy. Despite the pain, Mirial took every opportunity to share Christ with her doctors, therapists, nurses, and other caregivers throughout her ordeal. Her “thorn in the flesh” became an open door for the gospel.

Mirial transitioned back to Hokkaido where the climate and environment better suits her health. She immediately began serving the Hokkaido team through several outreach ministries, and continues to work in the Miharashidai Chapel in Ebetsu.



ABOVE: Sandra Bishop helps Mirial acclimate to her new home.



# A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH

## *The Debbie Griffin Story*

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.*

PSALM 119:105

When Debbie Griffin gave her life to Jesus in seventh grade during a Bible class, she had no idea what God had in store for her. But as the years of her life unfolded in His grace, so did the path God chose for her to walk.



Debbie attended Free Will Baptist Bible College, where she caught a glimpse of God's passion for missions. In 1981, she experienced overseas evangelism firsthand as a student missionary in Japan. Debbie wrote, "Each week I teach two adult classes and one junior high English class. I'm surprised at how quickly the Lord has given me a real love for these people." Though she spent the next few years serving at a home missions church and her home church in Colquitt, Georgia, Japan was never far from her mind.

Her desire for the Japanese to know Christ compelled her to service in Japan. Following graduation from Japanese language school, Debbie immediately assumed responsibilities in the Iriiso Free Will Baptist Church in a suburb of Tokyo, joining the Ken Baileys in ministry. Eager to help in every way possible, she taught several English classes and Sunday school, led prayer meetings and a women's Bible study, and taught junior high Bible school.

In March of 1991, Debbie moved to the northern island of Hokkaido to work with Pastor Kawasaki and Don and Ruth McDonald at the Ai No Sato church, teaching English classes and performing women's ministry.

Debbie then transitioned to Ebetsu, an industrial suburb of Sapporo, on the island of Hokkaido. She continued ministering to women, coordinated short-term missionary ministries, and oversaw the English program in five churches on the island of Hokkaido.

Debbie is investing in the lives of Japanese women, men, students, and children. "Can you imagine what it is like to learn for the first time that God IS? Such knowledge is priceless!" Debbie exclaimed. "Millions have never heard of the one, true path to God. I am privileged to have enjoyed a lifetime walking that path, but I live in the midst of a people who have been taught any path will do," she continued. "Many voices invite them down various paths. How can they know Jesus is the right path?"

Debbie is answering her own question with her life's work. "Amazingly, the same God who loves sacrificially has given you and me the responsibility of sharing His love, no matter where we are in the world."



RIGHT: Debbie ladles food into a plate during a fellowship time.



# CONFRONTING THE DARKNESS

## *The Jerry and Janice Banks Story*

Jerry and Janice Banks invaded the spiritual darkness of Japan in August of 1974 and confronted religious captives to Shintoism, Buddhism, and a new sect called Soka Gakkai that flourished after the devastating defeat of World War II. Shortly after language study the Banks targeted Kita Hiroshima, a suburb of Sapporo, on the northern island of Hokkaido to begin their ministry. At first they utilized their home, then the home of a deacon of the Airin Chapel church.



With the help of co-workers Jim and Olena McLain, Jerry and Janice employed Christmas programs, children's ministries, Bible clubs, and weekend evangelistic services to reach people. They witnessed slow but steady growth of Kita Hiroshima Chapel, and Jerry baptized their first convert in November of 1977.

Missionary Judy Smith, with her ventriloquist doll, along with a national preacher and a Bible school student added impetus to the Hiroshima work. When the Banks ended their second term of service, a national preacher assumed responsibility for the ministry. The Banks' began their third term began working with the Koinonia church, a church started by Dale and Sandra Bishop. Later they resumed work with the Kita Hiroshima congregation.

In 1991, Jerry developed health problems, which led to their departure from the field. Janice accepted a position as professor of missions and Christian education at Hillsdale FWB College in Moore, Oklahoma. Jerry entered the pastorate, but an automobile accident on an icy, Oklahoma interstate claimed his life in January 2005.

# MINISTERING TO CHILDREN

## *The Nathan and Linda Snow Story*

Teaching missionary children in Japan for two years (1991-92) led Nathan and Linda Snow to apply for full missionary status. Both Nathan and Linda hail from the state of Georgia. During and after their studies at Free Will Baptist Bible College the couple was involved in teaching. In Japan, Nathan taught physical education and music while Linda taught and supervised students from kindergarten through grade 12 at the Hokkaido Christian Learning Center for MKs, an alternative to home schooling. Their hearts were challenged, and the Snows were appointed as career missionaries in April of 1995.



Following language study, the Snows joined the missionary team of Dale and Sandra Bishop and Debbie Griffin in a church-planting effort in Sapporo. Nathan's rich family music background produced a fruitful ministry in music in the Miharashidai church and in other churches in the Hokkaido region.

English clubs and Bible studies provide occasion for adults to build relationships with the Snows. "Joy Club" events, similar to vacation Bible school programs, effectively reach out to children in the community. Ministering to children comes natural to Nathan and Linda; they love children and have seven of their own. Many Japanese students, attracted to the Snows' children, accept invitations to attend church, opening doors of opportunity. The Snows are an example of God using personal interests to direct ministry.



## A SUPPORTING ROLE

### *The Jim and Olena McLain Story*

Japan beckoned to Jim McLain, who wondered why so few were responding to the challenge of an island sporting more than 100 million people who had never heard the gospel. Jim married Olena Filkins, a student and part-time administrative secretary at Free Will Baptist Bible College, and they set plans for missionary service. After a two-year stint in the pastorate, the McLains were appointed to missionary service in March 1966 and departed for Japan the following year.

Following language study, Jim and Olena joined missionaries Wesley and Aileen Calvery in Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido. Jim assumed leadership of the church in 1970 while the Calverys were in the United States. Since the language was still difficult, Jim relied on Japanese laymen to meet the needs during this time. When the

Calverys returned, Jim aided in the construction of a larger sanctuary for Airin Chapel.

Teaching English classes proved a good method of contact for missionaries, and the McLains utilized this avenue effectively. At one point, Olena even taught a class of about 100 young women at the local university. Later, Jim and Olena worked in a kindergarten ministry in the Higashi Tsukisamu church in another suburb of Sapporo and took turns with other missionaries making regular trips to the works in Abashiri and Bihoro on the other side of the island. They retired in 1996 after 29 years of missionary service.



LEFT: Jim McLain participates in a discussion.



### RUSTY & BRENDA CARNEY

were approved as career missionaries in 2007. They departed for their first term of service on January 13, 2009. They will spend two years in language school before beginning their full-time ministry.



### JOSH & ALICIA CROWE

were approved as career missionaries in 2007 and departed for their first term of service in May 2009. They will live in Hokkaido for language school and then hope to be involved in university ministry.

### LARRY & JOAN CONDIT

were short-term missionaries in Japan for one year. The Condit's were sent on a special assignment involving youth evangelism, building a church, music, and assistance to the Good News missionary team. Larry and Joan currently live in California.





# CÔTE D'IVOIRE (IVORY COAST)

## *A Light in the Dark*

*That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

JOHN 1:9

Welcome to Ivory Coast—West Africa's most magnificent and diverse showpiece. Also known as Côte d'Ivoire, the country rests in Africa's western bulge, with coastline facing south, and its borders touching Ghana to the east, Burkina and Mali to the north, and Guinea and Liberia to the west. Just beyond its rocky beaches, lush rainforests stretch for more than 200 miles. Forests give way to savannah grasslands, with occasional trees, creeks, and rivers cutting across its more primitive terrain. During the rainy season, temperatures and humidity soar. Yet farmers work undaunted, yielding 80% of the country's exports. It is the world's third largest producer of coffee and cocoa.

Unlike most African countries, a few regions of Côte d'Ivoire boast refined architecture, exquisite homes, and regal palaces. French influence permeates the country. Amid skyscrapers and bustling city life in Abidjan, it seems impossible that utter poverty and ancient animistic rituals prevail only a stone's throw away.

Côte d'Ivoire's deep history reaches back into darkness like the many rainforests that blanket its interior. Before Portuguese traders discovered the land in the 15th century, her story grew unrecorded. As trading posts took root along the coast, French activity increased. After sporadic wars with African states and extensive military operations, the French gained complete rule just before the start of World War I. Under French leadership, Côte d'Ivoire developed into a French overseas territory, allowed to elect a territorial assembly. Eventually, in 1960, the country gained full independence.

More than 15 million Ivoirians from five principal ethnic groups call this land home. High living standards lure more than 25% of its population from surrounding countries. Literacy rates are rising from the meager 42.5% scored in years past, and industrial output continues to increase.



**UPPER RIGHT:** Coffee beans are one of Ivory Coast's main export crops.

**ABOVE:** Women prepare a traditional Ivorian meal for a large group of people.

**RIGHT:** Women typically transport groceries, harvests, and other items on their heads, as shown.





In spite of its modern façade, most of Côte d'Ivoire remains enslaved to archaic forms of animism and ancestor worship. Aware of a creator, but ignorant of the one true God, Ivorians find themselves constantly placating a spirit world they believe surrounds them and threatens to wreak havoc on their lives. An animistic form of Islam, the fastest growing religion in Africa, grips the Ivory Coast as well. Muslims hold 25% of the religious market. Roman Catholicism takes on a more idolatrous role as Ivorians use its symbols and rituals as charms to ward off evil spirits. Animal sacrifices and food offerings are believed to absolve guilt and restore goodwill between deceased ancestors and the living. The process of guilt and atonement continues until death, a depressing and hopeless state-of-flux in which most natives spend their entire lives.



It was into this climate of darkness and despair that Free Will Baptist missionaries first ventured in 1956. Work began among the Koulangos in the Gouméré area, and later among the Agnis in Koun. Eventually, a medical ministry was launched in Doropo, where Free Will Baptists operated a hospital and clinic to serve

### Mission Facts

Over 6,000 people crowd into 19 churches and more than 70 other locations each week to joyfully worship God. Standing firm in the face of civil unrest and persecution, the Ivorian church is reaching into neighboring countries like Ghana while continuing efforts to evangelize remote villages within their own country.

more than 30,000 Lobi. A Bible institute program began in Bouna in 1985, and leadership training classes began in Bondoukou. By 1996, the Free Will Baptist staff in Côte d'Ivoire numbered 24 missionaries, 6 ordained pastors, and more than 30 lay preachers.

It took decades to loosen evil's deadly grip on the Ivory Coast. But the light of Christ is breaking through the deception. God's Word is going forward among dif-

ferent tribes and tongues, through the written Word, cassette tapes, films, neighborhood outreaches, and other creative methods missionaries devise. One soul at a time, captives are released into Christ's glorious freedom. While there is still much work to be done, missionaries laid a solid foundation for future growth. Now, alongside our workers, African workers hold high the flaming torch and are taking the light of Christ to all the darkened corners of the Ivory Coast.



**TOP:** At great personal risk, a missionary captured this Lobi dance on film during the early days of ministry in Doropo.

**LEFT:** General Director Raymond Riggs sits among village elders and chiefs with two missionary families in the early days of work in the Ivory Coast.

COTE D'IVOIRE	
CAPITAL	Yamoussoukro
LARGEST CITY	Abidjan
AREA	322,460 sq. km.
POPULATION	20,617,068
CURRENCY	West African CFA franc
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$1,640
RELIGIONS	
Muslim	38.6%
Christian	32.8%
Indigenous	11.9%
None	16.7%
Unreached People Groups	34

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project



# SEEDS IN FOREIGN SOIL

## *The Lonnie and Anita Sparks Story*

*And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying,  
This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to  
the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

ISAIAH 30:21

She was faithful. Lonnie Sparks' mother planted gospel seeds in her son from earlier than he was able to remember. By age 11, those seeds began to take root. Lonnie understood what it meant to have Jesus as his Savior, and he asked Him to come into his life.

As years went by, Lonnie's faith in Christ deepened. So did his sensitivity to the Spirit's call. "It was such an internal struggle, at first," Lonnie remembered. "I felt so strongly God calling me to preach, both here and abroad, but I was afraid. I wavered, hoping God would call someone else. Eventually, I had to face the truth: be happy and fulfilled knowing I was in God's will, or be miserable the rest of my life wishing I had obeyed," he concluded. "I am so thankful God gave me the courage to follow His lead!"

Indeed, God was leading Lonnie to missions, with his first stop at Free Will Baptist Bible College and on to Winona Lake School of Theology. While attending as a student, God confirmed his direction through Dr. Oswald J.

Smith's message one night. "Why should anyone hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard it once?" Good point, thought Lonnie.

Little did Lonnie know that God was also at work in another person's heart. Anita Kaminsky, a student at Free Will Baptist Bible College, felt God calling her to missions. The two met and were married in 1954, ready to start a life together following God's lead to spread the gospel throughout the world.

Lonnie pastored several Free Will Baptist churches stateside before their first appointment overseas. Ripe with experience and passion, the couple left for Switzerland to complete a two-year, French language training course. By 1958, Lonnie and Anita felt ready and eager for all

that Africa had to offer.

"Where to begin?" they prayed. God answered, "The heart of the country." Gouméré was a central and pivotal place for outreach, but certainly not an easy environment. Bizarre insects, stagnant heat, and an entirely



**TOP LEFT:** Anita Sparks diligently typed the manuscript for the Koulango New Testament.

**LEFT:** As curious eyes observe the white man, Lonnie Sparks converses with a Koulango villager.





Baptists' pioneer Ivory Coast missionaries.

Over the course of the next 13 years, the Sparks witnessed God at work in their personal lives and among the people of Gouméré. In addition to being blessed with two sons, Paul and Noël, several churches were planted and numerous villages opened to the gospel. Lonnie reduced the Koulango language to written form, and then translated the New Testament into their native language. Anita worked alongside, typing manuscripts for the Bible and other primers to help teach the Africans to read. At last, the Koulango were able to read the good news of Jesus with their own eyes. Many hearts were turned to Christ.

Eventually, Lonnie and Anita felt their groundwork in the Ivory Coast was complete. They applied for a transfer in 1973 to begin a new work in Spain along with the Dock Catons. After a year of Spanish language study in Madrid, they began a new adventure sharing Christ with the Spaniards around them.

In reflection, Lonnie remembered the feelings he had when he first heard God's call to missions. "I realize now that every step of faith brings feelings of fear and uncertainty. I'm convinced that's why God calls us to do His work. He wants us to trust Him entirely—not just for our salvation, but for every moment of our lives," he said. "When we step out in faith, we find that the road may not be easy. But the pleasure that comes from knowing God's presence far outweighs the comfort of the predictable."

**TOP:** Young Ivorian believers study the Bible with Lonnie Sparks.

**RIGHT:** Lonnie prepares to baptize several Koulango converts in the muddy waters near Gouméré.

different culture awaited them. Supplies were difficult to obtain. Food had to be carefully prepared, and water—particularly during the dry season—had to be hauled long distances and then boiled to kill bacteria and parasites. Despite the difficulties, Lonnie and Anita pressed on as Free Will

## A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

A funeral seems a strange place for a revival. Nonetheless, God chose this difficult venue to accomplish a mighty work in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. Mr. Bini Kouamé Daniel, beloved president of the National Association of Free Will Baptists in Côte d'Ivoire, was killed instantly in a freak motorcycle accident en route to the home of a Bondoukou church member. His wife, riding with him, was only slightly injured.

As a result of his death, many people heard the gospel. Almost 300 people were on hand for the three-hour service the night before Bini's body was removed from the morgue. The following night, 1,000 people heard Jerry Pinkerton's message, and finished the service with singing and prayer. Later that night, between 3,000 and 4,000 people gathered in the village square for a government mandated service. Jerry again spoke,

declaring to the masses that true peace and hope can only be found in Christ.

Mr. Bini Kouamé was a beautiful testimony to the community through his life and service. Through his death, God continued to use him to lead others.





# A FIRM FOUNDATION

## *The Dan and Margaret Merkh Story*

*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*

MATTHEW 7:25

Some might give up after the first or second breakdown. Or maybe after the first lost tire. Or the second. Or the broken trailer hitch, or the failed generator. Perhaps the collision of neighboring missionaries might thwart their intent. But Dan Merkh did not give up. Through sludge and sand and twisted jungle floor, he labored for more than a month and a half, simply to haul needed building supplies from Ghana to Doropo, where the local village desperately awaited a medical facility.

It became Dan's life focus during his term in Ivory Coast, West Africa. When he and his wife Margaret first arrived, he realized the most immediate need. "There were no mission facilities available," Dan remembered. "It was pivotal to provide a physical place—a platform from which future missionaries could work." He had some construction experience, coupled with a lot of heart and a good sense of humor. "You just cannot control the circumstances around you, but you can always be content in the will of God," Dan said. "The most important part is just getting the gospel out there, no matter how off-schedule or unconventional the methods seem to be."

Dan Merkh's rock-solid faith stemmed from the firm foundation he received from his Christian home. The last of four boys, Dan had more spiritual depth in his youth than many others years ahead of him. Directly out of high school, Dan found himself in the Marine Corps, stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

It was there he discovered Fairmount Park Church, the channel which led him to the Board of Foreign Missions of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.



**ABOVE:** Dan Merkh lays the footing for the foundation of the Doropo clinic.

**RIGHT:** Bill Jones, Dr. Miley, Lonnie Sparks, and Dan Merkh.





After his discharge from active duty and just before entering Free Will Baptist Bible College, he met and married Margaret Johnson in 1948. In 1957 the couple left the states to study the French language in Switzerland. They joined Lonnie and Anita Sparks in Ivory Coast the following year.

The Merkhs moved in with the Sparks while Dan constructed a colaborer house for the Sparks' ministry. Through trial and error, he erected a fine facility for the family in Gouméré. His first work complete, the Merkhs moved next to Koun

where Bill and Joy Jones were stationed. For 15 months Dan labored to build the Shepherd's Station at Koun, where the Jones ministered to the tribal groups around them. From there, he and his growing family moved to Doropo, where he built the shell of an important medical clinic and a house for the Mileys. By the time the Merkhs arrived stateside on furlough, their family included

four boys and a girl, and their construction repertoire was complete with several useful mission stations.

After furlough, the Merkhs felt led to open a work in France, planting churches and teaching Scripture. An original thinker with energy and enthusiasm, Dan understood the clash of cultures with the gospel and worked quickly and creatively to build connections with the French people.

Eventually, the Merkhs returned stateside where Dan pastored in South Carolina and Virginia for 20 years, most of that time at First Free Will Baptist Church in Richmond.

Whether building facilities, a family, or a mission field, the Merkhs were certain about one thing: Their lives were given to Christ as tools in the hands of the Master Carpenter. And God fashioned beautiful lives and works through their obedient service.

**TOP:** Margaret washes clothes with a kerosene-powered machine.

**RIGHT:** Lonnie Sparks and Dan Merkh pose with a group of children in the African bush.



## NATIONAL STABILITY

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

EPHESIANS 6:10-11

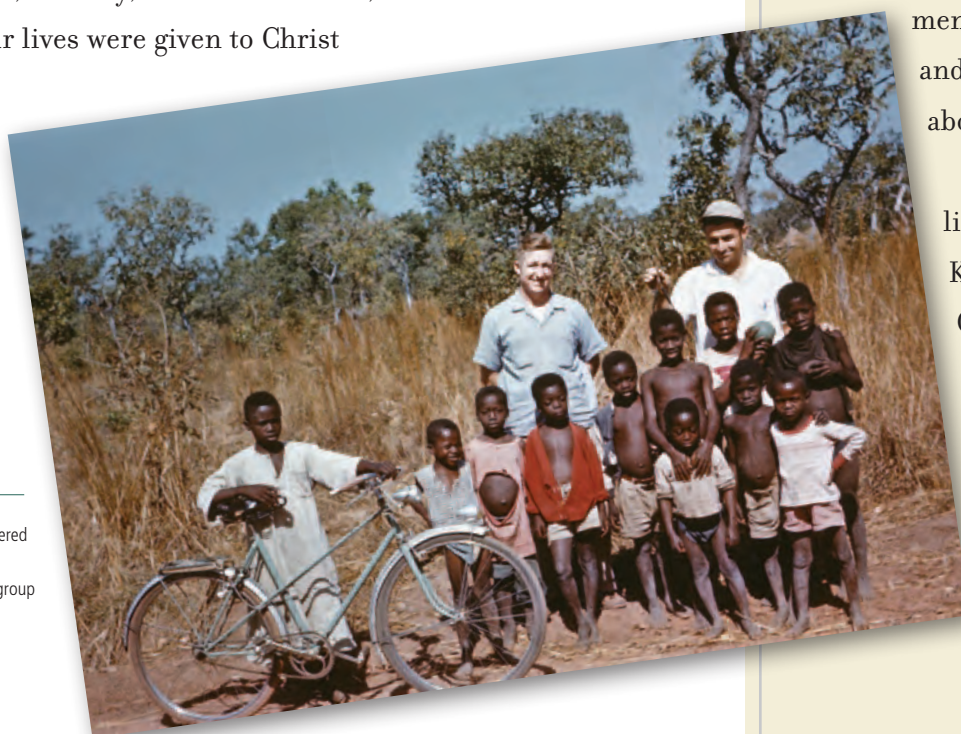
**R**ebel forces ransacked their way into Bouna, the northeastern region of Côte d'Ivoire where Ivorian pastor Jêromé Kambou faithfully served. Kambou kept close to his flock. He did not desert them, even under trial.

Kambou was falsely accused of being a spy and incarcerated for 11 days in June 2003. He was stripped, humiliated, and treated roughly. His wife and three children had to pay to visit him. But like Paul of the Scriptures, Kambou rejoiced in his sufferings.

"They thought I was the captive, but they were my captive audience," Kambou asserted. "I believe God allowed my arrest so that I could share the gospel with men I ordinarily could not reach."

After his release, several of the men returned to visit Kambou and ask more questions about Jesus.

"Living behind rebel lines is certainly not easy," Kambou admitted. "But God is more than faithful. It is an honor to serve Bouna, the city of God's choice for my life's work."





# AFTER GOD'S HEART

*The Dr. LaVerne and Lorene Miley Story*

*“the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”*

ROMANS 11:33



“Can anyone help explain God’s love?” the teacher asked his church class in the town of Doropo, Ivory Coast. One lady spoke up, “It’s the way Dr. Miley loved Moussa.” Moussa, the town drunk, was deposited dirty, drunk, and comatose in a wheelbarrow at the Doropo hospital. With patience and compassion, Dr. LaVerne Miley took him in, cleaned him up, and helped restore his health. As a result, Moussa prayed to receive Christ. It was a modern-day Samaritan story. It was also a scene repeated all day, every day as the lone doctor worked tirelessly to meet the overwhelming needs of more than 30,000 Lobi tribe members.

Although challenging and tiring, the work was the very reason LaVerne trained to become a medical doctor. His heart turned toward helping people in body and soul, so they might have the same hope in Jesus that he found at age 10.

After LaVerne gave his life to the Lord, it became clear God had unique plans for this child prodigy. He finished high school at age 14, ranking third in a class of 124, and purposed to use his God-given gifts for the Lord. By the time he earned his B.S. degree at age 18, he felt called to preach. He enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College where he met his wife, Lorene Norris. Sensing more training was needed, he enrolled at Northern Baptist Seminary. After graduation, he returned to FWBBC to serve as a professor of Greek and science.

Then it was time to settle down and have a family, or so the young couple thought. But as God showed the Mileys numerous times in their lives, God’s plans are unpredictable, and His ways are unsearchable. Encounters with Laura Belle Barnard left LaVerne unable to shake the picture of need in remote, unserved places. Eventually, the Mileys became convinced God was calling them to medical missions, a scary decision to make with three children to support.

Yet LaVerne and Lorene trusted God. “If God calls His people to do a work, then God can and will make it happen,” LaVerne asserted with confidence. Within five years, LaVerne earned his doctorate of medicine and completed a stateside internship and surgical residency. Miraculously, all bills were paid and they were ready for the Ivory Coast.

In January 1962, the Mileys arrived in Doropo. Immediately, the medical clinic was built and put into operation. Eddie and Sandra Payne arrived shortly to assist, with Sandra serving as a registered nurse. “It was amazing to see how God placed medicine as a tool in our hands to introduce the multitudes to Jesus Christ and His love,” Dr. LaVerne mused.



LEFT: An injured man waits while Dr. Miley and Archie Mayhew discuss the best treatment.



The Lobi people thought the Mileys were amazing, too. At first a trickle, then a flood of people began pouring in for help. After two years of service, the Mileys experienced some relief when Dr. Ruby Griffin arrived to help carry the load. However, less than two years later, she returned stateside to care for an aging, widowed mother. Again, the Mileys remembered that God's ways are different from His servants'.

When the caseload climbed to over 30,000 patients annually, LaVerne realized he needed a better health strategy. He trained in preventive medicine at Columbia



University School of Public Health in New York City. When he returned to Ivory Coast in 1977, he was pleased to find the Ivory Coast Health Services implementing new preventive strategies, and Sherwood Lee, his medical assistant, helping the African workers understand the importance of prevention through nursing classes.

Over the years, the Mileys watched God perform miracle after miracle. Facilities were provided, medicine obtained, and thousands of lives were touched by the good news of Christ. So when Dr. Miley began to hear that still, small voice again, he wavered. This time, he felt God was calling him back to the States. But how could that be? Why would God ask him to leave such a vital and important work? After much prayer and fasting, again the Mileys recognized that God's ways and plans are very different from ours.

Dr. Miley stated, "Just as picks, shovels, and even bulldozers are necessary tools in preparing to lay the foundation of a building, so the medical work, it seems, was necessary to prepare the hearts of the people in the Doropo area for the building of His church." He knew God initiated the work. God sustained it. And God used the seeds planted through the medical ministry to accomplish His plan—in His way, in His time. The Mileys just needed to obey.

During the next 18 years, Dr. Miley served as a Bible college professor rather than entering the more lucrative medical field. He touched thousands of lives, encouraging new generations to risk obeying God's call to missions. As friend Don Robirds said, "Through his faith, LaVerne exalted the Lord without calling attention to himself...truly, LaVerne Miley was a man after God's own heart."

**ABOVE:** Lorene Miley teaches a sewing class to village women.

**RIGHT:** A Christian convert watches fire devour his fetishes, signifying his release from control of the spirits.



## FETISH PRIEST TURNS FERVENT PREACHER

*The Story of Kontin Paul's  
Changed Heart*

The fetish priest had no choice. His son was dying from a parasite, and his idols proved ineffective. He turned to the medical clinic at Doropo. His son was treated and told to return to the clinic three times each week for a month. At each visit, the fetish priest heard the gospel. By the time his son was healed, the fetisher's heart was changed. Joseph, a clinic worker who spoke Dissoumate's native language, led him to Christ.

The effect was immediate. The priest asked Dr. Miley to accompany him to his village where one by one, he burned and destroyed the idols that kept him and the villagers so far from the truth. Miley said, "People have come to consult you for a long time because you had the power of the fetish. I want them to continue to come to you, because now you can point them to God."

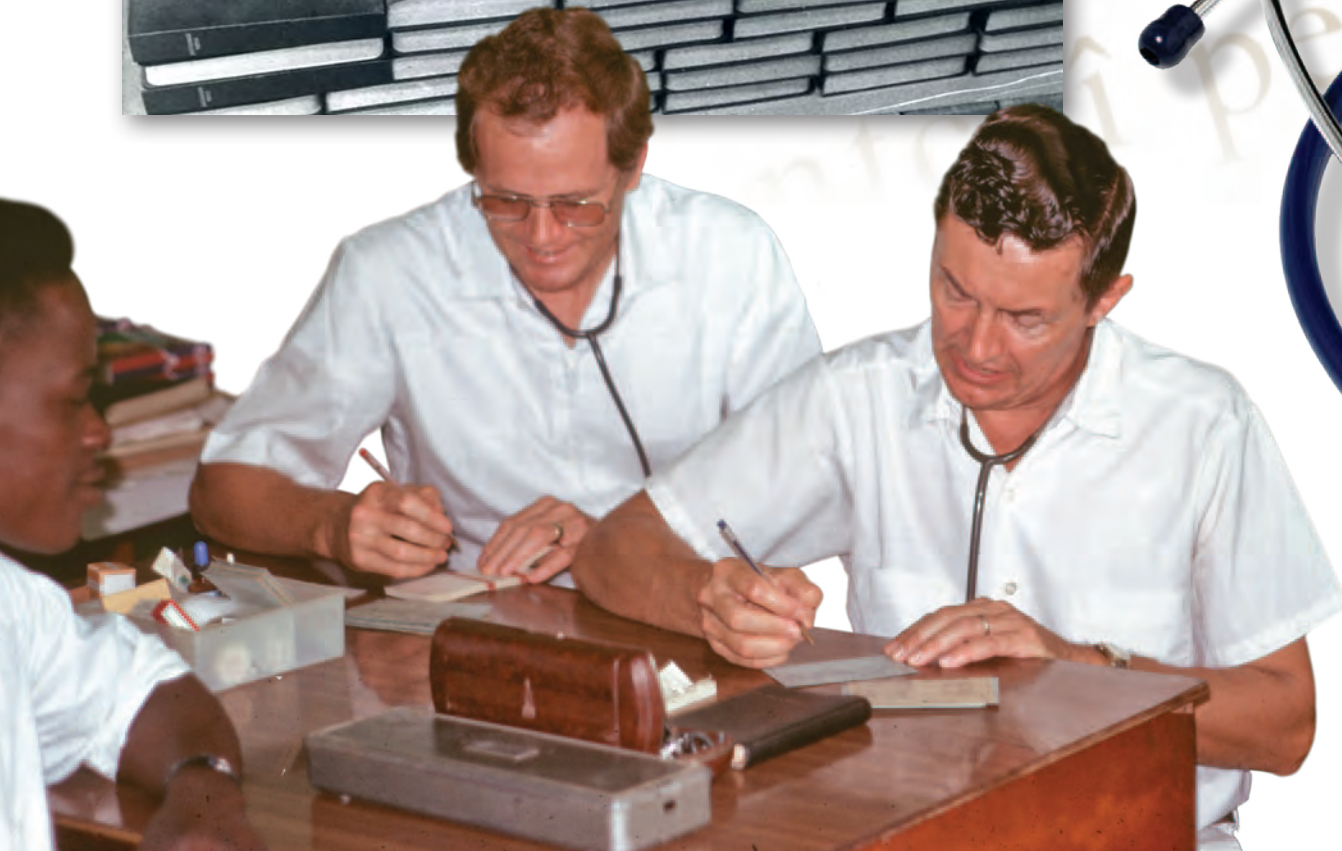
And the ex-priest did, with more fervor and passion for lost souls than any other missionary. After he was baptized, he officially changed his heathen name to Kontin Paul—

meaning, "Paul, the aged." His son also accepted Christ and took the name Moise (Moses). He later became a nurse in the Doropo clinic.



**RIGHT:** The Evangelical Publications Center in Abidjan served as the main source of Christian literature for French West Africa.

**BELOW:** Koulango New Testaments, translated by Lonnie Sparks and printed in the United States, gave villagers the opportunity to read God's Word in their own language.



**ABOVE:** Sherwood Lee and Dr. LaVerne Miley write prescriptions and make notes for patient files at the Doropo clinic.





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**TOP:** Dr. Paul and Tammy Gentuso and Dr. Mark Paschall pose with hospital staff and workers in Doropo.

**ABOVE:** Dr. Miley reviews the list of medications received and needed at the Doropo hospital and clinic.

**LEFT:** General Director Rolla Smith and missionary builder Dan Merkh pose together.



# KNOWN AMONG THE NATIONS

## *The Jimmy and Janie Aldridge Story*

*Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.*

ROMANS 15:20



*A*s red dust swirled up from the roads and the raw, earthy smell of warm meat and fresh fruit filled their nostrils, Jimmy and Janie Aldridge knew they were exactly where they wanted to be: in the center of God's will.

Saved at age 13, Jimmy was conscientious, ambitious, and sincere in his pursuit of Christ and the kingdom of God. Janie gave her life to God at an even earlier age, and desired to become a medical missionary some day. Her acquaintance with Carlisle Hanna, coupled with a godly mother, cemented her spiritual resolve. When Janie and Jimmy married, they were excited about the missions adventure they knew God had in store for them.

After graduating from Free Will Baptist Bible College and pastoring for two years, the couple was appointed to the Ivory Coast. Their hearts were moved with compassion as they first stepped foot in Koun, the southern region of the Bondoukou circle. The Aldridges realized most of the people they saw knew nothing about Jesus, and they were eager to bring them the good news.

Jimmy and Janie shared responsibilities in the French-speaking Bible institute in Bondoukou. Jimmy worked to establish preaching points throughout the area, while Janie used her training as a registered nurse to help the many hurting people at the small medical clinic.

At first, the results seemed slow in coming. "After nine years of preaching in the area of Bondoukou, we finally saw the first converts in the villages," Jimmy said. "Fourteen young men made decisions for Christ during the last school term." Jimmy taught them a new converts' course. He also taught them how to fight off temptation and opposition as the first believers in the village. Persecution did come, as the witch doctors

and fetishers tried to discourage the villagers from turning to Christ. But the powers of darkness were no match for the Light.

After 22 years, the negative impact of the climate on Jimmy's health led the couple to return stateside. Jimmy was appointed as Overseas Secretary for Foreign Missions. Joined by his wife, their new role included counseling, advising, and troubleshooting for the various mission fields.

Like Paul, God used the Aldridges to take the gospel to unreached people, to build churches and train Christians, and, in the end, to travel around the globe, encouraging Christians and missionaries. God proved Himself faithful, and the fruit of His work overflowed from the Ivory Coast to all the world.



LEFT: Jimmy and Janie Aldridge visit with a Christian couple and their baby in Bondoukou.



## CREATIVE FORCES

### *The Archie and Sarah Mayhew Story*

**S**arah Mayhew laid the Bible on her bed. She was finished reading through the New Testament for the first time, at the age of 26. With her whole heart, she desired to belong to the Jesus she grew to love as she read each page. She asked Him to be her Lord and Savior, and prayed for her husband, Archie, to be saved, too. Three weeks later, Archie also bowed his knee to Christ after reading through the New Testament. Within two years Archie felt God's call to preach and to missionary service.



Archie enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College. With a family to support, he entered night school. By God's grace and the Mayhews' teamwork, Archie graduated, and the family left for the mission field in 1969.

The Mayhews spent their first year in Lausanne, Switzerland, studying the French language. An innovator at heart, Archie saw an opportunity for the gospel before ever reaching Ivory Coast. God gave him the idea for a tape ministry, with readings of the New Testament recorded in French on audiocassettes and distributed worldwide to French-speaking communities. It proved a tremendous success.

The Mayhews continued creative approaches to evangelism when they reached Bondoukou, Ivory Coast. While studying the Koulango language, they started a Sunday school and worship service in their home near the marketplace. Despite opposition, they slowly won the hearts of the villagers around them.

The Mayhews returned from their first furlough with a renewed emphasis on village evangelism. Utilizing the cassette tape ministry, they traveled from village to village preaching the gospel. When it was time to move on, they left tapes of the messages for the new converts. "We only hear the missionaries once," one of the men said. "With the tapes, we can listen again and again to the message, and understand it better." Archie also teamed with an African pastor to record 16 messages in Koulango, that were broadcast over radio in Abidjan.

Then God gave the Mayhews another creative outlet for ministry. They opened a reading room in Tanda, where nearby students were welcomed to come and read a wide assortment of Christian literature. "God sent us these students," Sarah said. "We just made ourselves available to answer their questions and give them directions on how to find Christ. We are standing and witnessing the salvation of the Lord."

In time, God led the Mayhews to focus on training African leaders to reach their own communities for Christ. Archie enlisted help from supporters in the States by coordinating prayer warriors with specific villages.

They eventually returned stateside where Archie pastored several churches and served on the Board of Foreign Missions. After a brief battle with colon cancer, God took him home at the age of 71.



**ABOVE:** Archie Mayhew presents the plan of salvation to two Koulango students at the Tanda reading room.



# DIVINE VISION

## *The Sherwood and Vada Lee Story*

*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

ROMANS 10:15



The young man was determined to find Sherwood Lee, the missionary who shared the gospel with him during a service in Kholaanyodouo. For three years, Lee's message of truth haunted the man's thoughts. Like Jonah, he tried to run. But he simply was unable to escape the relentless love of Christ and prayed to receive Jesus as his Savior. What relief! What joy! What hope he now had! All the man wanted now was to tell Sherwood Lee how his faithful witness saved his life. "When this young man approached me at the hospital and told me his story—and that he walked 10 miles on foot to tell it to me—I was deeply touched by God's goodness," Sherwood said. "Then we went with him to his village and watched him burn his idols. Our hearts rejoiced!"

It was just another strong confirmation that Sherwood and his wife, Vada, truly heard God's call to Africa. In 1969, the Lee family arrived in Doropo, Ivory Coast, to begin a new ministry among the Lobi tribe and to assist the Mileys in the medical clinic.

The medical clinic served hundreds of patients each week, with only one doctor on staff. Lacking any official medical training, Sherwood and Vada learned fundamental skills quickly and offered help in every way possible. Meanwhile, Sherwood worked closely with the Lobi people to learn the language and share the gospel in their native tongue. Opportunities to witness within the clinic abounded. As missionaries translated the Bible into the peoples' languages, Lee recorded them onto audio cassettes. As a result, both illiterate and literate Africans heard the Word of God in their own language.

In addition to their cassette ministry, the Lees shared the gospel in the Bouna prison. They were delighted to find men eager to learn. Inmates gathered around Sherwood to show him portions of books worn to fragments. "There is truly hunger for the Word," he observed. And he was happy to feed them the Truth.

During their third furlough, Sherwood earned an associate's degree

in nursing. Even better equipped than before, he returned to Doropo to help manage the ever-growing patient load. He also began a training program for nationals. His vision was to educate the Christian Ivoirians to one day take over the hospital and medical clinic. The Lees had to leave Africa before his vision became reality, but others saw trained Africans take over the responsibilities and successfully manage the hospital's operations.



LEFT: Sherwood Lee and a Lobi aide administer an IV to a patient.



# THY WILL BE DONE

## *The Jerry and Carol Pinkerton Story*

*After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

M A T T H E W 6 : 9 - 1 0



*M*uch like other days, Jerry Pinkerton was riding in his car telling the two men with him about Jesus. The difference on that particular day in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, was the gun the

robbers were pointing at his head. “I knew that they wanted to steal and sell my car, but I had no idea what they were going to do with me,” Jerry said. “So I just told them about Christ.” By God’s grace, he was released without injury.

Jerry and Carol Pinkerton’s bravery stemmed from their unwavering focus on Jesus. Where they lived, what they did, and how they did it seemed inconsequential as long as they remained in the center of God’s will and work. Their sensitivity to God’s Spirit led the couple on adventures in numerous African regions. Their flexibility led to involvement in a variety of work with different people groups.

Both of the Pinkertons became Christians before their teen years. Both attended Free Will Baptist Bible College and Columbia Bible College. Carol earned a degree as an LPN, Jerry studied missions. They were completely committed to taking the gospel to the ends of the world.

Their first assignment began in Nassian, visiting villages and learning the language, customs, and habits of the people. Just when their work in Nassian was underway, God changed the Pinkertons’ plans. A great need developed at Ivory Coast Academy, the school for missionary children. The dorm parents had to leave unexpectedly for medical reasons. After prayer, Jerry and Carol sacrificed their agenda and ideas to follow God’s call to mentor 20 teen boys. In the end, God’s ways proved better for their family, as they were allowed to serve at ICA until their son graduated.

Later terms led them to Bondoukou, where they trained local leaders in the doctrines of the faith. Their next stop was Gouméré, followed by Tanda, where they labored to reestablish the local church. Time in Doropo followed, where they maintained equipment and buildings, freeing doctors to concentrate on medical needs. Eventually, the Pinkertons found themselves in Bouna, teaching at the Bible institute and happily serving in the rural villages.

Again, just as the Pinkertons acclimated to their latest home, God uprooted them and placed them in Abidjan, the economic and crime capital of Côte d’Ivoire. Though initially disheartened at leaving the rural region they loved, they joined the Bryans in an intense effort to build churches in the thriving metropolis. In all, four churches were planted in Abidjan before the Pinkertons retired.



**RIGHT:** Jerry Pinkerton gives a young boy an object lesson.





**LEFT:** Sherwood Lee shares the gospel in a Lobi village.

**MIDDLE:** General Director Raymond Riggs (right), Dan Merkh (left) and Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) missionary Gordon Timyan listen as the village chief (in white) explains he will donate land for a mission clinic.



**RIGHT:** Dan Merkh dons African garb and proudly displays an African musket.

**LOWER RIGHT:** Participants gather in front of the Bondoukou Free Will Baptist Church during an annual Côte d'Ivoire association meeting.





# THE WRITE OUTREACH

## *The Robert and Judy Bryan Story*

“If, by God’s grace, we can’t start a ministry that will seriously impact this city, neither the Pinkertons nor Judy and I want to waste our time,” Robert Bryan declared. “We want to change the face of Abidjan!”

Abidjan, sometimes referred to as the “Paris of Africa,” is a bustling city of skyscrapers and six-lane auto routes, home to more than three million people. The dichotomy of living standards is staggering. “Tar paper shacks border four-lane boulevards. A hundred yards from an expensive, four-star hotel, entire families crowd into one- and two-room apartments where the monthly rent is the same as one buffet meal at the hotel,” Robert explained. When they began, roughly one-third of the population was Roman Catholic, over a million were Muslims, and only a slim five percent claimed Christianity. Animism is predominant. Its fetish practices and rituals permeate lives, regardless of the religion claimed.

Robert and Judy Bryan spent their first term serving in Bouna, using their linguistic skills and Robert’s master’s degree in journalism to study, learn, and write literature for the Koulango and Lobi dialects. Within a relatively short time, they prepared evangelistic manuscripts in each language and photocopied them for circulation.

The Bryans’ emphasis on literature and relationship evangelism intensified. Robert edited *Champion* magazine, printed by the Evangelical Publishing Center (CPE), served on the CPE board, and as director for a time. Judy worked alongside Robert, designing book layouts on computer. She also worked extensively among Abidjan’s children. Neighborhood outreach coupled with relevant literature, films, and cassettes formed the Bryans’ primary evangelism strategy. By demonstrating God’s love to the people in tangible ways, darkened minds were opened to the light of truth.

Then, God called the Bryans to serve as temporary house parents at Ivory Coast Academy. In just a day, their family of four grew to include 17 teenaged boys! Monitoring and discipleship became a full-time job.

When their time at ICA was finished, the Bryans turned their focus to Abidjan once again. As the number of Christians in the city began to grow, they sought a centralized meeting place. By January of 1997, the first weekly service was held with 65 people attending. Even though most of the members were unemployed students, they pulled together \$1,800 to pay the bills—more than 10 months’ salary at minimum wage. What a testimony to God’s work of grace and provision!

The couple also continued work for CPE, including editorial oversight, administration, and book layouts. During those years, CPE published over 30 new books and maintained a list of more than 125 titles sold throughout French-speaking Africa. Through their diligence, God’s Word will continue to yield fruit for years to come.



**RIGHT:** Robert Bryan confers with African Christians concerning materials to be published.



# GOD'S SOLDIERS

## *The Mike and Deleen Cousineau Story*

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

MATTHEW 5:10



*H*e endured being pistol-whipped, interrogated, and bound. He watched in horror as the two armed burglars fatally shot the security guard dead. Then, turning to Mike, they ordered him into the car. An amalgam of Scripture, prayer, and adrenalin surged through him as he prepared himself for what might possibly be the last few minutes of his life. Mike Cousineau knew that serving as a missionary in Ivory Coast, West Africa, was a total commitment to Christ. He gladly answered the call, knowing that God's path is not always easy—or safe—but it was where Mike wanted to be.

Then the moment came. The attackers were distracted, and Mike flung the car door open, catapulting onto the jungle floor below. Running in a zigzag pattern, miraculously the hail of bullets firing from the enemies' semi-automatic weapons missed him. He escaped with injuries, but at least he had his life.

His wife Deleen, safely in another location, marveled at God's kindness and grace when she learned of her husband's harrowing encounter. They all gave praise that none of the students at the Ivory Coast Academy were present during the burglary attempt.

Of course, most days at ICA were filled with learning, Bible training, and evangelism. After Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College graduates Mike and Deleen Cousineau arrived in Bouaké, Ivory Coast, to help with the school for missionary kids, they labored in every capacity to further the ministry. Mike maintained the grounds and buildings, including painting and construction. He built two facilities to house ICA teachers. And he hosted mission teams who labored to build churches in other areas of Ivory Coast. Deleen worked diligently to establish a team of counselors to handle the various emotional and spiritual needs of students.

"The ministry at ICA is truly amazing," said Mike. "In one month alone, 105 messages were preached, 59 lessons were taught by students, and 36 people were saved." In some of their adventures, they came face-to-face with demonic opposition. Once again, their lives were spared through prayer and grace, but the evil surrounding them was still apparent. In spite of the village witch doctor, the gospel was preached and many seeds were planted.

Prior to ICA duties, Mike helped establish the Bible institute in Bouna, serving as director and chief financial officer. During their time in the Ivory Coast, the Cousineaus learned about God's faithfulness through good and tough times. They pressed on to serve, because they knew the God who called them to the task is faithful to complete the work.



LEFT: Mike Cousineau discusses the Bible institute program with a student.



# LIFETIME FOCUS

## *The Clint and Lynette Morgan Story*

*Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

God was relentless. Since his conversion at age eight, Clint Morgan was unable to elude God's distinct call in his heart toward missions. Fueled by godly parents and an upbringing characterized by youth camps and missionary conferences, he was driven to know Christ and make Him known in whatever capacity God chose. After time spent under the tutelage and example of missionaries at Free Will Baptist Bible College, Clint began to grasp the direction of God's leading.

Similarly, God burdened Lynette's heart, bringing her to a saving knowledge of Christ at age six. As the daughter of missionaries LaVerne and Lorene Miley she also grew under the influence of godly leaders with a bent toward missions. When she and Clint met, they knew they were God's answer to the other's prayers for a partner with a lifelong call to missions. Clint was ordained, and Lynette completed nursing school. Both waited for God's timing and direction for missionary assignment.

At last, the young couple was appointed to the Ivory Coast in 1976. Following a year of language study, they arrived in Doropo to assist with the medical station and local evangelism.

In addition to learning the difficult Lobi language, the Morgans encountered significant spiritual opposition among the tribes. "It seemed they had a lot of information about the fetish, but very little information about Christ," Clint noted. So he sought to build upon what little information they had, painting the full picture of hope offered by the gospel.

Working through special seminars, Bible studies, and even a soccer team, Clint worked diligently to distribute God's Word. Lynette labored faithfully in the medical station while also mothering the three boys and one girl God gave them.

Eventually, God developed a strong network of believers through the efforts of the Morgans and other missionaries. During a 1984 field council meeting, the missionaries noted that 30 Free Will Baptist churches were meeting throughout Côte d'Ivoire. Yet only two ordained pastors served those 30 churches. Lay laborers were heavily depended upon. It became clear Ivory Coast needed a place for training Christian workers.

Clint worked with the team to establish the Bouna Bible Institute, creating not only a centralized location for education, but also developing an adequate curriculum for even the remotest parts of Africa. Leadership training became available in the bush as well as in the cities.

Ten men enrolled in the first class at Bouna Bible Institute in 1987. Those 10 and many others since that time graduated to become influential leaders in the churches of Côte d'Ivoire. "Now these trained servants are laboring alongside missionaries," Clint said with a smile. "It's God's plan, come to fruition."



**ABOVE:** Lynette Morgan enjoys playing with the child of an African Christian.

**BOTTOM:** Dr. Mark Paschall, Clint Morgan, and Dr. Kenneth Eagleton discuss the hospital ministry.



# YOUNG AT HEART

## *The Eddie and Sandra Payne Story*

*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

I T I M O T H Y 4 : 1 2

Though most of boys his age were dreaming of becoming professional athletes or top executives, Eddie wanted to preach. Since his conversion at age 13, he knew God was more important than anything else. By age 15, he declared himself a preacher for life, and set his focus toward fulfilling his calling.

Sandra also heard the call in her early years, responding to Christ's salvation at age 12. At age 15, she, too, made a commitment to missions. While at Free Will Baptist Bible College, the two godly young people met and married. Eddie graduated from FWBBC in 1962 and attended Wycliffe Summer Institute of Linguistics that same summer. Sandra graduated from St. Luke's School of Nursing in Jacksonville, Florida, hoping to use her skills to further God's work on the mission field.

God answered her hopes and Eddie's desires. God called the couple to Ivory Coast, where they served in Doropo assisting the medical station, studying the Lobi language, and evangelizing surrounding areas. During their first term, Eddie concentrated on construction, building their own home and other buildings needed for meeting space. They also participated in the rapidly growing youth ministry, assisting the national pastor with work in the local church. Whenever time allowed, Eddie penned the beloved "Payne's People" cartoons for *Heartbeat* magazine, sharing his humor and life lessons with supporters at home and around the globe.

Over time, Eddie and others were able to translate books of the Bible into the Lobi language and record them on audio cassettes. Armed with cassette players and tapes, Eddie took the gospel into Lobi homes where the Bible was not known. Thanks to the cassette ministry, Eddie was able to leave copies for the families and villages to hear the gospel message over and over. It became an integral part of African evangelism, offering the people an incredible opportunity to hear God's Word in their own language as often as they needed to hear it to understand.

Then God intensified Eddie's evangelism trips even more.

Inspired by the people's needs, Eddie asked Dr. Laverne Miley to travel with him once a week into the villages. As a team, Eddie preached to reach the villagers' spiritual needs. Dr. Miley addressed their physical concerns. When the villagers realized the missionaries truly cared for all their needs, they responded in ever-increasing numbers.

In addition to raising their two daughters, Eddie and Sandra parented hundreds of God's children, as new believers were added to the kingdom regularly. God used their efforts to produce lasting fruit that continues to yield dedicated laborers for the Lord.



ABOVE: Dr. Miley and nurse Sandra Payne discuss a medical procedure.



# LABORERS TOGETHER

## *The Norman and Bessie Richards Story*

*For we are laborers together with God.*

I CORINTHIANS 3:9

Norman and Bessie Richards swept into Côte d'Ivoire in 1969 with a fervent desire to reach Ivorians with the gospel. Since Dr. and Mrs. LaVerne Miley were ministering alone in Doropo, the northern-most region of the country, the Richards joined them for a short time in village evangelism. Soon, they headed south to the area of Koun-Mao to work among the Agni-speaking people.

Norman and Bessie met in 1963 when Norman officiated the wedding of Norman's brother and Bessie's sister in Searcy, Arkansas, their hometown. Norman graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1961, and went on to Columbia Bible College for further study. The two were attracted to each other and married on September 28, 1963. Bessie enrolled at FWBBC and Norman began pastoring a nearby church.

The Richards were appointed to missionary service in March of 1966 and studied the French language in Switzerland, prior to proceeding to Côte d'Ivoire. The short ministry in Doropo led them toward village evangelism in Koun-Abronso. They began evangelizing through various means, including the use of filmstrips and films. Laboring alone, they carried the gospel to many villages throughout two terms.

In 1979, the couple moved to Agnibilekrou where their ministry flourished. They anxiously sought means to expand and meet the needs of the growing number of believers. On one occasion a crowd of nearly 3,000 watched the *JESUS* film. With the numerical growth, Norman sensed the need for training leaders in addition to pastoring the church and extending village evangelism. Bessie was busy pouring her life into the women and children as well as home-schooling their two sons. Alice Smith joined the Richards in Agnibilekrou in 1982 and helped in the reading room, teaching the women, children, and public school classes.

When Norman faced a serious medical crisis with diabetes and a severe kidney infection in 1994, the couple returned to the States. Norman underwent surgery to correct a kidney problem. Due to an ensuing infection which severely damaged his kidneys, Norman and Bessie were unable to return to the field. They resigned in December 1994 after 27 years with Foreign Missions. In 1995, they were accepted for service with Home Missions to start a church in Louisiana.

Although the Richards left Côte d'Ivoire before seeing their dream of a church building in Agnibilekrou, they helped raise funds and were able to return in 1997 for the dedication of the new building constructed under supervision and labor of missionary Darrel Nichols. They praised the Lord for His continued blessings on the church under the leadership of Pastor Jérôme Kambou.



RIGHT: Norman Richards and Bill Jones speak with villagers in a street meeting.



# A SERVANT HEART

## *The Alice Smith Story*

*Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child,  
the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

MATTHEW 18:4



A country girl from West Virginia, Alice Smith was saved as a 15-year-old and, just a few months later, responded to a missionary's challenge. She surrendered to God's call and set out to do His will. Alice attended Free Will Baptist Bible College, graduating in 1973. She ministered in a hospital and nursing home during college, so she returned to her home area and began working with a Christian doctor.

After her appointment to missionary service in 1975, Alice studied French in Albertville, France. From there, she proceeded to Ivory Coast in September of 1977. She began her ministry in Doropo, working with Dr. LaVerne Miley and Sherwood Lee at the hospital. She also taught Sunday school, worked with the church's children's choir, and taught in vacation Bible school programs.

Alice moved to Agnibilekrou in 1982 and began working with Ledgel and Sharon Ferguson who were filling in for Norman and Bessie Richards. She taught Sunday school and women's Bible studies in addition to working in a Christian reading room. Opportunity also opened to teach Bible classes in public schools in Agnibilekrou. This ministry grew and, in 1985, Alice taught in four primary schools with over 150 students enrolled in her classes. At one point, she indicated that one-third of those enrolled had accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

Working with the Richards and then with Darrel and Lila Nichols, Alice was able to expand the children's ministries. Together they reached into surrounding villages and more distant areas with special VBS programs. God blessed these efforts with many converts.

In 1995, working with Pastor Jérôme Kambou, Alice broadened her ministry to include teaching new convert and baptism classes for girls and women. She also assisted in counseling sessions.

Following stateside assignment, Alice returned to Agnibilekrou and worked part-time in the reading room ministry while helping Pastor Kambou organize departments in the church. When missionaries adopted the Community Health and Evangelism (CHE)

program, Alice assisted Dr. Kenneth Eagleton and Verlin Anderson in launching it in the areas of Bouna and Gouméré. Before they could make much progress, civil war broke out in 2002. Missionaries were forced to leave the unstable country.

In May 2004, Alice returned to Ivory Coast, with Verlin and Debbie Anderson and resumed CHE efforts in several areas of the country.



ABOVE LEFT: Alice Smith helps a young girl deliver a Sunday school lesson.

LEFT: Alice (left) and Carol Pinkerton (kneeling, right) participate in the annual Côte d'Ivoire women's meeting.



# THE MUSTARD SEED

*The Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton Jr. Story*

*If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed...nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

MATTHEW 17:20B (ABRIDGED)

Dr. Miley was tired. As the only doctor, he served more than 100 patients every day in his Doropo, Ivory Coast clinic. He knew he was unable to continue such a heavy load. But who else was willing to accept such a daunting task? Was another qualified physician willing to sacrifice money and prestige to serve in the African bush?

Years earlier, God gave Brazilian missionaries Ken and Marvis Eagleton a son who grew to become a godly man. With a heart bent on missions, Kenneth Jr. began praying for God's direction. Even while Dr. Miley was working in Africa to train natives in preventive medicine, Kenneth Eagleton Jr. was training in Brazil to become a doctor. As a practicing physician, young Eagleton learned about the great needs among the Ivorians. With wife Rejane and their three boys in agreement, the family pulled up their roots and replanted themselves on Doropo's mission field, immediately feeling the weight that burdened Dr. Miley for so long.

"The needs were overwhelming. We could have kept five doctors busy," Eagleton lamented. "It was frustrating to only be able to spend about five minutes with each patient." But they served as many as the hours in each day afforded them—averaging around 11,000 patients each year—binding wounds and souls as they ministered the gospel to each patient.

As the medical needs grew, Dr. Eagleton labored to meet them. Through stateside donations, they were able to purchase desperately needed x-ray equipment and build a facility to house it. But who was qualified to set it up? Dr. Eagleton was trained to read x-rays, not wire the machines. So again, they prayed. In a short while, Kenneth learned of a lab technician who was servicing another area. He quickly located him and convinced him to set up the x-ray lab in Doropo.

In time, the clinic added surgical facilities and established routine vaccinations for the villagers. Through the years the hospital experienced a number of setbacks, including a devastating fire. But the ministry continued, and the hospital was rebuilt. A Christian Ivorian doctor trained in family medicine and surgery was added to the staff. In God's time, the hospital was fully transferred to national workers.

Concerning the transition Dr. Eagleton stated, "From 1960 until 1998, Free Will Baptists in the USA sent medical and support missionaries to the hospital in Doropo. These missionaries treated the sick, trained national workers, and opened up an unreached area to the Good News of salvation in Christ. Now, our converts are carrying on the work that was begun."

The harvest of souls, reaped from decades of love and labor, continues to multiply and grow.

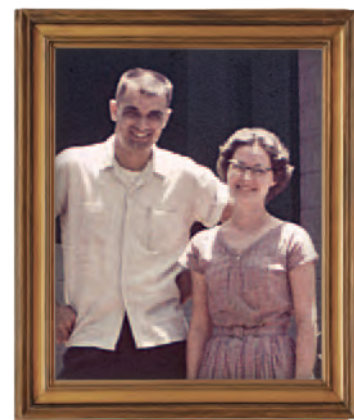


RIGHT: Dr. Kenneth examines a child at the Doropo clinic.



# A TWO-PRONGED ATTACK

## *The Bill and Joy Jones Story*



It was no ordinary day. For the first time in history, the people and tribal leaders of Koun, Ivory Coast, were presented with the gospel in the Agni language. It was a singular moment of God's revealed glory, the result of literally years of effort transforming the difficult, tonal language into written form. Bill and Joy Jones, Free Will Baptist missionaries and linguistic experts, marveled at God's goodness.

But they were not surprised. God called them to reach the world with the good news of Christ. Bill felt the call to missions just two years after his conversion as a youth. His soul was stirred following a Billy Graham crusade in which a missionary secretary spoke on the need in France. Both Bill and Joy were attending Free Will Baptist Bible College when they met. Joy was certain about Bill, but unsure about missions. God changed her heart, though, and they were soon united in marriage and purpose. They both wanted to bring God's Word to people in their own dialect. So they obtained special training in linguistics to enable them to translate the Bible into tribal languages.

Because of their efforts, the Agni people of Africa can read God's Word in their native tongue. Stories come to life for them in their own dialect, warming their hearts and minds to God's truth. The Jones translated Scriptures and literature into both French and tribal languages, hoping to reach both old and new generations of Ivorians. A French literature center was also opened in Abidjan to produce and promote the type of literature the missionaries needed most. "Producing literature on two fronts," Bill explained "strengthens our work, giving us a solid foundation. It makes possible a double-pronged attack on the bastions of darkness. The two languages complement each other, and together they will get the job done."

The African climate took its toll and Joy's health demanded a return to the States in 1969. This did not end the dedicated couple's service however. Bill joined the Mission staff as the director of communications and editor of *Heartbeat* magazine from 1970-1971. In 1980 he was elected to the mission board, serving 12 years. After a one-year hiatus, he was reelected and served another 12 years, many as chairman. This diligent couple extended their effective ministry overseas by meaningful service stateside. Another two-pronged approach.



### RON & LINDA MOORE

served as church planters in Bondoukou from 1986-1995. They live in South Carolina where Ron pastors.

### DR. PAUL & TAMMY GENTUSO

worked in Doropo as medical staff and church planters from 1991-2000. They live in Tennessee where Paul is a family practitioner.



### FRANK & MARIE COUSINEAU

were church-planters in Gouméré and Nassian from 1968-1973. Marie lives in Texas; Frank is deceased.





### VERLIN & DEBBIE ANDERSON

use CHE (Community Health and Evangelism) to plant churches. Since 1997 the family has worked in Gouméré and Bouna and are currently based in Bondoukou.



### TANYA HART

taught at ICA in Bouaké from 1993-1997. She lives in North Carolina.



### ALLAN & LARUE CROWSON

were church planters in Bondoukou and Nassian from 1975-1980. They transferred to France in 1982 where they served until 1995. They now live in Tennessee.



### DR. RUBY GRIFFIN

served as a medical missionary from 1965 to 1968. She lives in Mississippi.



### NEIL & SHEILA GILLILAND

served as ICA dorm parents from 1980-1988. After receiving his doctorate in psychology, Neil was hired to serve as director of member care for the Mission, a role he continues as a consultant. Sheila is a pediatric nurse and they live in Tennessee.



### DAVID & SHARON FILKINS

served from 1983-1987 as church planters in Tanda. They are divorced.



### ARILLA WODE

ministered to children, youth, and women in Doropo and Agnibilekrou from 1976-1989. Her 1992 resignation followed an extended medical leave as she sought to recover from a strain of tuberculosis indigenous to Ivory Coast. She lives in Oklahoma.



### GLENNDA LEATHERBURY

served as a medical missionary in Doropo from 1985-1994. She died and is buried in Ivory Coast.



### PAUL & RHODA CREECH

served as dorm parents at ICA in Bouaké from 1989-2001. They reside in Georgia where Paul pastors.





### DARREL & LILA NICHOLS

were appointed in 1983. The couple centered their work in Agnibilekrou and Gouméré, establishing outreach to villages near these towns. Working with African Christians, they saw several new churches begun. Following the coup in Ivory Coast, they transferred to Panama in 2003. They resigned from the Mission in 2009 and live in Oklahoma.



### TRACI EPPS

taught from 1995-2001 at ICA in Bouaké. She lives in Oklahoma.



### KIM ZEGELIEN

served as a teacher at ICA in 1995-1999. She lives in North Carolina.



### LYNN & RAMONA MILEY

served as church planters in Doropo from 1973-1980. They transferred to France where they served from 1980-1986. They reside in Alabama.



### TERRY & D.D. VANDIVORT

were dorm parents at ICA from 2000-2002. D.D. lives in Tennessee.



### DR. MARK & KATHY PASCHALL

served as medical and church-planting missionaries from 1992-1998 in Doropo. They live in Michigan.



### MARK & DONNA DANIEL

were church planters from 1983-1992. They moved to Kentucky after resigning.



### PATRICK & SUSAN DICKENS

served in Bondoukou and Damé as church planters from 1975-1985. They minister to the elderly in Arkansas.



### HOWARD & JOAN FILKINS

served from 1972-1982 as ICA dorm parents in Bouaké and as builders in Doropo. They live in Oklahoma.





### LEDGEL & SHARON FERGUSON

served in Gouméré, Tanda, and Agnibilekrou as church planters from 1977-1989. The couple are currently involved in a short-term ministry in France.



### JALAYN MARTENS

served as a medical missionary and worked with women, children, and youth ministries from 1985-1994 in Doropo and Bondoukou. She resigned in 1994 and lives in California.



### GINGER HARRISON

was approved as a medical missionary in 1996. She pursued training in tropical medicine, but due to unrest in Ivory Coast never made it to the field. She lives in Missouri.



### LONNIE & BERNICE PALMER

were church planters from 1963 to 1977. After resigning, they moved to Arkansas.



### ROBERT & PAM WEST

were initially appointed as maintenance missionaries responsible for maintaining the buildings, equipment, and vehicles at the Doropo hospital compound. Pam also served as bookkeeper and administrative assistant for the hospital.

In 1999, they moved to the unreached bush village of Kafalo to focus on evangelism, planting a church, and training leaders to continue the work.

They resigned in 2003. After an extended battle with cancer, Robert died in 2009. Pam lives in North Carolina.



### DAN & NINA HUDDLESTON

served as maintenance missionaries in Doropo from 1989-1990. They live in Oklahoma.



### ERNEST & ELAINE HOLLAND

began missionary service as a married couple in 1984. Prior to that, Elaine served as a nurse at the Doropo medical station from 1979-1983.

After serving four years together in Doropo, the couple moved to Bondoukou to help form an organized, national youth program. They also took responsibility for the youth center in Bondoukou and Ernest assisted in leadership training. They resigned in 2004 and now live in Oklahoma.



# BRAZIL

## *The Spiritually Waking Giant*

*Upon this rock I will build my church;  
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

MATTHEW 16:18B

With one of the fastest growing populations in the world and a land mass occupying almost half of South America, Brazil—once known as the waking giant—is now fully alert and actively becoming a major player in the world’s industry and influence.

Many decades ago, Free Will Baptist missionaries spied the spiritual potential for harvest when they first arrived in the lush, tropical region. Latin Americans speaking Spanish and Portuguese welcomed them with smiles and typical Latin hospitality. The slow-paced life and laid-back persona seemed conducive to relationship-style evangelism. But the more missionaries pressed to the heart of life’s issues, the higher they found the wall separating Brazilians from salvation.

The culture then, as it does today, possessed a laissez-faire attitude toward life, with a contagious passion for celebrations and frivolity amid often-turbulent political and economic environments. In fact, it was the general epicurean philosophy pervading the culture that kept villages and industries pressing on for a better turn of events, even in the face of third world conditions.

Unfortunately, the same lackadaisical stance toward life made mission work even more difficult. Self-reliant people who remained content with the status quo and coped with life’s brokenness through materialism and entertainment were difficult to reach. To make matters worse, most Brazilians identified themselves as Roman Catholics, yet less than five percent actually attended church. They clung to a religious façade, but lacked any true knowledge of what they believed or why they believed it. In reality, Spiritism dominated the culture, claiming millions of followers in its satanic grip.

Spiritism first arrived on Brazilian shores through African slaves. The Catholic Church required all slaves to be baptized and adopt Catholic doctrines and saint-worshipping rituals. The slaves accepted the church’s saints but gave them African god names and concluded that Brazilian saints were simply gods they didn’t know while in Africa. The convergence of the two religions—Brazilian



**FAR LEFT:** The brilliant, decadent festivities of Carnival give Brazilians an excuse for self-indulgence before the self-denial of Lent.

**LEFT:** Picturesque Sugar Loaf Mountain rises from the bay in Rio de Janeiro.

**FAR RIGHT:** Converts line up to be baptized by Dave Franks Sr.

**RIGHT:** Members of the first Free Will Baptist congregation in Brazil—Campinas First FWB—gather for a group photo.



## Mission Facts

Almost 2,000 people gather each week in more than 25 locations for worship in the states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo. In 2008, 126 new converts were baptized. Brazilian believers are also sending workers to China, Ireland, and indigenous peoples.

Catholicism and African Spiritism—form the Brazilian Spiritism prevalent today.

Spiritism consists of three active groups: Macumba (also known as Voodoo), Umbanda, and Alto Espiritismo (High Spiritism). Macumbaists sacrifice chickens, goats, and even buzzards to the evil spirits. They inflict physical harm to those under their curses by invoking spirits

of the dead to help them. Umbandans claim to do only good deeds, making their religion one of good works with reincarnation as a doctrinal cornerstone. More than 40% of Brazilians hold to this tradition, hoping their good works in this life will earn them something better in the life to come. While they do not believe in a personal devil, they acknowledge spirits and consult them regularly for counseling and healing. High Spiritism, founded by Frenchman Alec Kardec, blends reincarnation with Darwinian evolution. Taking a more scholastic and scientific approach, this third group champions charity work as a means to ensuring a positive reincarnation experience.

Free Will Baptist missionaries were up against more than just a different culture and language. They were confronting the powers of hell that raged unabated for centuries. Yet God had already claimed the victory. Through preaching points, Scripture recordings, reading rooms, neighborhood evangelism, films, Sunday schools, churches, radio and television programs—even ice cream socials—missionaries explored endless creative avenues to reach the lost. Praying for guidance and grace, they forged a way for the gospel to reach and change lives.

Over time, churches were planted. Souls were saved. Hospitals, jail ministries, and English classes met people at the point of their need. Bible institutes were established to train national leaders. And God continues to uproot the weeds of false religion that threaten to choke out seeds of truth. Through consistent teaching, counseling, and studying of Scripture, Christian Brazilians are being equipped to put on the full armor of God, fight the enemy, and set other captives free. Amid its rapidly rising population numbers, so the kingdom of God is advancing. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.



## B R A Z I L

CAPITAL	Brasilia
LARGEST CITY	São Paulo
AREA	8,514,877 sq. km.
POPULATION	198,739,269
CURRENCY	Brazilian real
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$10,200
RELIGIONS	
Roman Catholic (nominal)	73.6%
Evangelical	15.5%
Ethnic Religions	3.7%
Non-religious	4.3%

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project





# DOERS OF THE WORD

## *The Dave and Pat Franks Story*

*But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

LUKE 11:28



“Sure, I will go anywhere you lead, Lord,” Dave Franks told God after attending a challenging Bible conference. It was only a few years earlier, at the age of 18, that he surrendered his life to Christ. His subsequent years at Free Will Baptist Bible College deepened his awareness of Christ’s love for a lost world. Who was able to argue with the basic teaching that Christians should follow God’s lead?

“The problem,” Dave explained, “is that it is much easier to say than do. Writer John Milton once said, ‘The road to hell is paved with good intentions.’ I intended to do well, but sat around for a year before I acted on those intentions.” In God’s good time, Dave’s heart softened. He spent a month in Cuba and witnessed the great physical poverty and spiritual ignorance there. His experience, coupled with the gentle urging of God’s Spirit, compelled Dave—as a single man with a single purpose—to become Free Will Baptists’ first missionary to Brazil in 1958.

A far cry from his hometown in Marion County, Alabama, Campinas, Brazil, presented a host of physical, cultural, and spiritual barriers he knew he must overcome. Dave prayed and worked tirelessly, reaching out to the community through evangelistic outreaches, sharpening his Portuguese, and battling the spiritual forces opposing him.

Fortunately, God decided that for Dave, it was not good for man to be alone. During his first furlough, Dave met and married Pat Sturgill, a young registered nurse who gave her life to God at the early age of eight. She joined Dave as he returned to the field as director of activities, filling in for Ken and Marvis Eagleton who were on furlough.



**LEFT:** Dave Franks Sr. lectures at the Bible institute in Jaboticabal.

**RIGHT:** An early aerial view shows the farm purchased to accommodate youth camps and the Bible institute in Jaboticabal. The property was later named Evangelandia.





Pat studied the language and assisted nurse Eula Mae Martin in the medical clinic at the Campinas church Dave helped establish during his first term.

Over time, the Franks had three children: Dave Jr., Suzanne, and Regina. In addition to raising a family together, Dave and Pat served in many capacities in several regions of Brazil. Much of their time in Jaboticabal was spent teaching classes at the Bible institute and in the local public schools. They pastored a church there, then one in Pirassununga and later in Conselheiro Lafaiete. Brazilian students responded well to Moody Institute Science films, which the Franks showed regularly on outreaches. In 1977, they began a new work in Belo Horizonte, but were needed in Barbacena to strengthen a struggling church there. They returned to Belo Horizonte in 1990 and completed construction of a new building for the growing congregation. Jim and Vicki Sturgill teamed with the Franks to accomplish the work in this mega-city.

Dave's resolve started slowly, but it did not take long for God to multiply his impact once he fully surrendered. The Franks continue to live full lives in obedience to God, although they retired to Alabama in 2000.



**TOP RIGHT:** The Free Will Baptist church in Belo Horizonte rests on a hillside in a rapidly growing community.

**ABOVE:** Dave, the first FWB missionary in Brazil, investigates a cake marking 25 years of ministry in Brazil.

**LEFT:** Dave and Pat were blessed with a son, Dave Jr., during their first term as a couple.



# THE GOOD FIGHT

*The Ken and Marvis Eagleton Story*

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

I T I M O T H Y 6 : 1 2

The Holy Spirit spoke to Ken Eagleton. God's Word confirmed it. "As I studied the Bible and read that all men are lost and doomed to an eternal hell without Christ as their Savior, that they cannot have faith in Christ unless they hear the gospel, and they cannot hear without a preacher," Ken explained, "I then knew God would have me personally go tell them that Christ saves."

Ken's growing conviction, wrought by Scripture, a summer spent in Cuba, and encouragement by Tom Willey Jr., fueled a life's passion. Marvis Anderson, whom he met and married at Free Will Baptist Bible College, watched God work in both their hearts as He prepared them for a life of mission work. Winona Lake School of Theology and Bob Jones University also helped equip Ken for the tasks ahead. At last, Ken and Marvis Eagleton arrived in Brazil with one son in tow as Free Will Baptists' second missionaries in Brazil. They quickly found a need to fill in the Campinas

church and Bible institute. Over time, Ken took over responsibilities at the Campinas church, leading a construction campaign to build a new sanctuary for the congregation.

Following their first furlough, the Eagletons settled in Jaboticabal, Brazil, where they purchased land for youth camps and a Bible institute. Through much prayer and labor, both were established, and Ken



**LEFT:** Ken expounds the Word—a task he loved.

**BELOW:** Visitation and tract distribution were routine activities of Ken and other early missionaries.





was named president of the new Brazilian Bible Institute. Through their many years of ministry, Ken Eagleton continued to teach Bible classes at the institute, training workers in the area. Marvis assisted at the library when she was not busy with their four boys: Kenneth Jr., Terry, Andrew, and Stephen. Whether working with family or for the church, Ken sought to encourage and train believers according to the gifts God gave each one. Together, they pooled resources and strengths in order to develop churches, preaching points, youth programs, and outreaches in Campinas, Jaboticabal, and Araras.

As months stretched into years the Eagletons watched God's plan unfold in and through them for the Brazilians to whom they ministered. Especially encouraged by the youth, they personally prayed for, taught, and mentored the young men who felt God's call on their lives for preaching the gospel. As Don Robirds, fellow missionary, stated about Ken, "His keen insights into God's Word made him a valued consultant for students and preachers alike."

Although the couple retired from career service in Brazil in 1992, they were far from retiring from ministry. Ken, certain Free Will Baptist students exposed face-to-face with the mission field would respond in service and support, proposed TEAM (Teens Equipped and Active in Missions). With the approval of the Board, a new era in student missions blossomed. Bringing together teens and cross-cultural ministry, TEAM proved an immediate success. Dozens of students continue to train and travel each year as a living legacy of Ken's vision.

After 42 years of service, Ken Eagleton went to be with the Lord in 1999. Marvis joined Ken in 2001.



**ABOVE:** The Eagleton family labored faithfully on the youth camp/institute property.

**RIGHT:** Ken takes time for one-on-one instruction with a young student.



## TEAM: TEENS EQUIPPED AND ACTIVE IN MISSIONS

*Not just another summer vacation.*

**T**wenty-four hundred dollars and nearly a month of time...long days and short nights...a week of grueling training...tiring travel to third world countries. What kind of summer break is this? It is the kind former missionary Ken Eagleton envisioned, a chance for teens to investigate God's call to missions.

Each summer TEAM sends groups of dedicated youth to places like Cuba, Japan, Mexico, France, Brazil, Chicago, and Panama. Following a week of intensive training, the teens arrive at their destination with a heightened sense of excitement and a growing knowledge of what teamwork requires.

TEAM members engage the culture through literature distribution, drama performances, and construction assistance. They eat, live, and share with the people they are visiting. Teens with different backgrounds

and personalities might create a breeding ground for trouble. Yet through TEAM's focused training, they learn how to unite strengths and overcome obstacles together, the way God designed Christ's body to function. The program was renamed E-TEAM following Ken's death in honor of him and his vision.



# TIME WELL SPENT

## *The Bobby and Sue Aycock Story*

*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

EPHESIANS 5:15-16

Can a film change a person's life? If it is coupled with the Holy Spirit it can. The missions film "Letter to Melitino" had a profound impact on Bobby Aycock and Sue White, even though they saw it in different places at different times in their lives. "Every time someone asked me what I planned to do, the mission field always came to mind. I simply could not get away from it," Bobby remembered. Sue, who married Bobby after his graduation from Free Will Baptist Bible College, added, "It seemed as though I would be standing idle if I did not give myself to go to those who have never heard."

Sue and Bobby married in 1960, and following a period of pastoral work in North Carolina, departed for Brazil where they began language training. By 1962, they were ready to open a work in Araras, a rich farming area with a population of over 40,000. Though they were strongly opposed by the Roman Catholic clergy, they succeeded in establishing a church and a growing number of converts through various methods of evangelistic outreach. A national worker assisted them and greatly helped them penetrate the cultural barriers they faced in reaching the Brazilians.

As the Aycocks grew in familiarity with Brazilian thought, culture, and people, their ministry expanded to new

regions. Works in Pirassununga and Piracicaba developed, and later the Aycocks spent much time working in the Bible institute of Jaboticabal as well as nurturing the church started there.



LEFT: Bobby interacts with students in Barbacena.

BELOW: Baptisms were frequent in Bobby's ministry.





During their third term, the Aycocks moved to Minas Gerais and began a new work in Barbacena. Home to more than 70,000 residents—less than 500 of whom were evangelicals—Barbacena required a broader evangelistic approach than traditional door-to-door ministry. After much prayer for guidance, the Aycocks turned to film and radio. Through the broadcasts alone, hundreds of lost people heard God's Word from Monday through Friday. Both mediums stirred thoughts and directed listeners to the Free Will Baptist church nearest them for answers. Many people came to Christ as a direct result of this effective outreach. In time, they established the Free Will Baptist Seminary and Bible Institute of Barbacena.



After 40 years of field service and five years of teaching missions stateside, the Aycocks felt led to resign. David, the Aycock's son, took over the radio ministry. He interviewed all the Free Will Baptist pastors in Barbacena on the radio, using their testimonies to connect with listeners. In a true cross-generational effort, David's son Andrew edited the tapes and readied them for broadcast.

At the goodbye service held for Bobby and Sue, more than 400 people attended to let the couple know what a great impact they had on Brazil and in each of their lives. Through tears and heartache, God used Bobby as he delivered his last salvation message in Brazil. "How were they able to do so

much?" David later asked the congregation. "God worked through them because they took advantage of the time God gave them and did everything they could to witness, share, preach, love, and give." Then he turned the challenge to the crowd, "How are you using your time?"



**ABOVE:** Sam and June Wilkinson (back row) started the church in Jaboticabal in this rented hall.

**UPPER RIGHT:** Bobby Poole (left) and Bobby Aycock began their ministries in Brazil at the same time.

**RIGHT:** Bobby and Sue worked effectively with young Christians, seeking to involve them in the Lord's work.





# FOREVER FAITHFUL

## *The Bobby and Geneva Poole Story*

*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

When does God's call to make disciples of every nation end? To Bobby and Geneva Poole, the mission ends in heaven. After returning to service in São Paulo, Brazil, in 2009, the couple continues to build on 49 years of mission work, united with Brazilians to bring the lost to Christ and to develop the body of Christ through discipleship and training.

Scripture says that before a man begins a work, he must consider the cost. For Bobby Poole, considering a lifetime of missions began in childhood. "It seems that the seed was sown back in my early boyhood days," he said. Likewise, Geneva's conversion at age 13 came with a strong conviction for heeding the Great Commission. "My call was not an emotional one made after hearing a missionary tell of conditions on the field. It came as I studied God's Word in search of His will for my life," she explained. She said that ever since she became a Christian, "It has been an abiding conviction that God's place of service was to go tell those who have never heard about the Lord Jesus."

Certain of their calling, the two joined in marriage in 1960 and arrived on Brazilian soil only three months later. "We loved God and each other, and had committed our lives to share the gospel with the people of Brazil. Each day we were learning to allow God to have His way in our lives," Bobby remembers affectionately.

God's first agenda for the couple after completing language school was to locate a meeting place in Ribeirão Preto for the church—the church they knew God intended to organize through their outreach. House-to-house visitation, tract distribution, Bible studies, preaching points, daily vacation Bible



**LEFT:** Bobby Poole offers a tract to a boy, talking to him about the need for salvation.

**ABOVE:** Bobby and Geneva stand on the steps of the rented hall that served as the beginning of the First FWB Church of Ribeirão Preto.

**FAR RIGHT:** Geneva teaches an open-air, neighborhood vacation Bible school class.





school, and camp ministries supplied their arsenal to break through the barriers that held Brazilians in spiritual captivity. Soon the new church outgrew their first facility. Over the course of time, the First Free Will Baptist Church produced pastors, pastors' wives, missionaries, and lay leaders, and was even instrumental in planting three other churches in the Ribeirão Preto area.

As the Pooles recognized emerging needs within the church, they prayed and worked to meet them. As new converts grew in their faith and dedication to Christ, several expressed a desire for better training in evangelism. The Pooles developed a seminary-Bible institute to better equip future leaders. The institute was designed for those without a high-school diploma, while the Bible college trained high-school graduates. In time, extension classes were offered to congregations throughout Brazil. For those who were unable to take extension classes, the Pooles used the "Source of Light" home Bible study course. Making the Bible accessible to all, the Pooles rejoiced to see hundreds of individuals utilize the different study methods to learn more about God's Word for their own growth and to share the gospel with others.

"Evangelism involves reaching individuals, building them up in the faith, encouraging them, loving them, feeding them, and disciplining them when necessary," Bobby said. "All these lead to Christian maturity."

Through many different venues, the Pooles labor to build spiritually mature Brazilians who, in turn, minister to their own people. A fruitful ministry through literature development and distribution, radio, street meetings, films, home Bible studies, English classes, public preaching, vacation Bible school, family camps, and four established churches stand as a testament to 50 years of dedicated ministry. The Bible college and institute ministry they began in 1973 continues to flourish as it produces more laborers for the harvest. John Poole, one of the Poole's two sons and pastor of the First FWB Church of Ribeirão Preto, commented, "They will leave a very important legacy by producing so many spiritual descendants. Many who are active in the harvest today—pastors, missionaries, lay workers—are faithful because of their investment. What a blessing to know that the work God has begun through my parents will continue through the lives they have touched. To God be the glory!"



## YOUNG WITH HEART

*Jeancarlo Achê*

The shy and nervous Jeancarlo Achê accepted his classmate's invitation to the local Free Will Baptist Sunday school taught by Geneva Poole. Immediately, Jeancarlo sensed a difference in this group of believers. "It was unlike anything I had experienced in school, the club, or at home," Jeancarlo remembered. "There was a love in the group, a real friendship and happiness."

Soon young Achê gave his life to Jesus at a youth camp. Excited about his newfound faith, he returned home and shared the gospel with his family who also became believers. In time, Jeancarlo attended the seminary in Ribeirão Preto, studying at night while maintaining a full college load in business administration during the day. He excelled at both. Even before graduation, he began preaching at the Jaboticabal church. Anyone skeptical of Jeancarlo's spiritual maturity was immediately relieved. God's hand on him was clear.

"I appreciate the vision the Free Will Baptist people from the United States had in sending the gospel to Brazil," Jeancarlo asserted. "Through their ministry we were reached for Christ and trained. Now we are ready to continue the work: to win souls, train workers, and reach out with our own missions program." And continue the work they have, both in Brazil and as missionaries to Ireland.



# OPEN HOME, OPEN HEARTS

## *The Jim and Shirley Combs Story*

*Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not,  
to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

MATTHEW 19:14



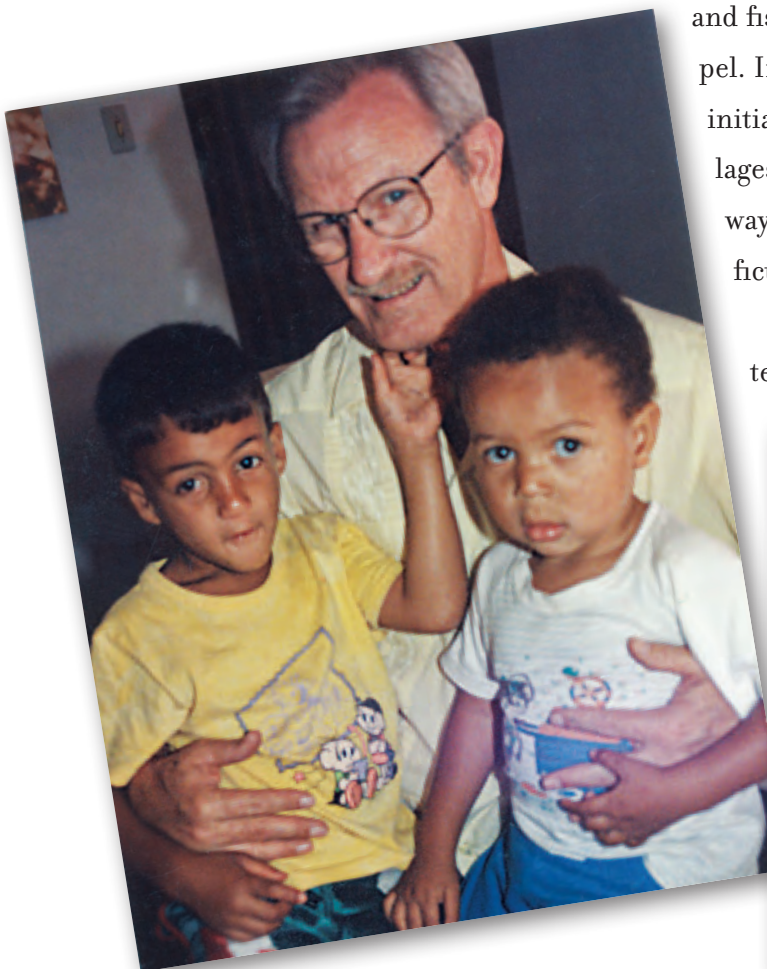
**H**e heard the gospel presented throughout his 19 years. Surrounded by 13 brothers and sisters and two godly parents in his hometown of Crab Orchard, West Virginia, Jim experienced a wonderful upbringing. But it was not until his best friend drowned that God's message penetrated his heart. With a new appreciation for life's brevity and the incredible need for others to hear about Jesus, Jim Combs gave his life to the Lord and committed himself to God's kingdom work.

Out of high school, Jim entered the United States Navy as a technician. After he completed his service, he enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College to prepare for the work to which God called him. It was there he met Shirley Roberts of Crowder, Oklahoma, who felt called to missions since her conversion at age nine. After graduation, they married and were appointed to Brazil in 1964.

After language school, the Combs served in Araras, São Paulo, relieving the Aycocks who were leaving for furlough. Diving into an existing work, Jim and Shirley labored together to further develop the church, including leading a campaign to build a new sanctuary. They also began a work in another location within the city.

Following their first furlough, the Combs transitioned south to Tubarão, Santa Catarina, where God began to open many new doors for ministry. Located on the southern coast of Brazil, Tubarão was central to several municipalities and fishing villages. For the most part, no one there had heard the gospel. Immediately, the Combs teamed with the Crafts and Wilkinsons to initiate new works in Gravatal, Braço do Norte, and several fishing villages. Utilizing English lessons and radio broadcasts, they worked their way into the people's hearts and homes—though it was a slow and difficult process.

Trial and tribulation came midway through the Combs' second term when floodwaters rose and decimated almost 90% of the area.





By God's grace, the Combs family was able to seek shelter on the second floor of a school building where they rationed food and caught rainwater for drink. When the flood receded, their home and everything inside was a total loss. They were forced to leave the area until public utilities and other health hazards were corrected. They returned in 1976, and worked to develop a church for another three years before returning to São Paulo.

They left Brazil in 1980 to teach missions at Hillsdale FWB College in Moore, Oklahoma. Brazil continued to tug at their hearts, and they returned to the field in 1985. After working for a short time in Ribeirão Preto Jim was named director of the Central Bible College in Jaboticabal, where both he and Shirley taught classes. Shirley also taught home Bible studies and English classes and produced literature for the Brazilians. They moved back to Araras in 1990 and assumed leadership of the First Church which needed a pastor. For a time their three children—Kemper, Cindy, and Tania—lived in Brazil and served as tent-making missionaries.

Brazilian youth and children seemed most open to the gospel message. Jim and Shirley noted an immediate need for a children's home and searched for a facility to house the effort. God provided a local hall that rented for \$30 a month, and New Life Children's Home began with five children enrolled. Over time, the number of orphans grew, requiring new facilities. Though the home was moved four different times for various reasons, God always provided what was needed through donations stateside, as well as through local donations and government assistance. Shirley Combs said, "Our 'miracle scroll' of answered prayers continued to grow with God's many provisions as we received more and more children." She added, "Please pray for the salvation of all our children!"

After 40 years of ministry, Jim and Shirley Combs felt it was time to retire from the Mission. Yet their passion for Brazilians burned unabated, and they returned to Brazil for continued ministry. Jim said, "It is truly our home and where our hearts are turned—until we reach heaven."

The Combs lived in Brazil until 2009, when they returned to Oklahoma.

**FAR LEFT:** Jim holds two of the children from Lar Nova Vida.

**LEFT:** The Combs family and Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilots Junior Travitzky and Lolis Fochina of Araras are shown by one of the planes.

**RIGHT:** Children gather around Shirley in the courtyard of Lar Nova Vida.



## HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

### *Lar Nova Vida Children's Home*

*He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.*

DEUTERONOMY 10:18

"Come quickly! It's the children," Shirley Combs shouted excitedly. "They've come to serenade!" In the courtyard, safely secured at Lar Nova Vida, 15 children sang praises to God at the top of their lungs. As she watched God's miracle unfold, she thought, ex-street children. No signs of bruises, burns, skin ulcers, runny eyes, rotten teeth, lice-infested hair, or bloated stomachs. Just beautiful, healthy children.... She said aloud, "Our children!"

Even before the home officially opened in 1991, Araras police brought street children to Jim and Shirley Combs for care. Without their intervention, the abandoned children likely faced severe abuse or even assassination funded by the government to take care of the city's "pests."

Over time, Lar Nova Vida grew to include three buildings housing over 20 street children of various ages, plus house parents and their children. As stateside and Brazilian Free Will Baptist churches donated clothes, supplies, and money, the Combs added classrooms, an infirmary, bedrooms, space to play, and developed a fish farm for continued income. Under their care, the children grew to understand how loved and special they are to God. The home continues to provide safe haven for abused and abandoned children.



# KINGDOM BUILDERS

## *The Tom and Nancy Hughes Story*

*I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints.*

PHILEMON 1:4-5

When is it a good time to leave a church? For Tom and Nancy Hughes, the answer is only when the first church plants another one that needs a little help. Though the members of First Free Will Baptist Church in Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, Brazil, were sad to lose their founder and pastor of 15 years, they knew it was God's will. They also knew it was all a part of God's plan to spread the Word throughout Uberlândia.

When missionaries Tom and Nancy Hughes first heard God's call to missions, they had no idea what wonderful works God had in store for them. Tom realized his need for Christ at age 12, and Nancy became a believer at age 18. Both felt compelled to share the gospel with the lost. After graduating as valedictorian from Free Will Baptist Bible College, Tom married Nancy Crotzer in 1960. They spent the next several years pastoring churches in Tennessee until they were appointed to Brazil.

The Hughes arrived in Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil, in July of 1971 where they began studying the Portuguese language. During their first term, Tom pastored churches in Araras and Pirassununga and grew to understand the Brazilian culture and people in a deeper way than books can impart. Within their first months in the community, they became heavily involved in missionary activities, including teaching their two children, teaching Sunday school, leading youth meetings, and preaching.

After their first furlough, Tom and Nancy and their children, Tom Jr. and Lori Ann, settled in Uberlândia—the northernmost point of the country served by Free Will Baptists. Little did they know that this thriving city of more than 250,000 was going to become their passion and life's work for the next several decades. They immediately began to lay the groundwork for a new church by hosting neighbors in their own home. Eight people responded to the initial invitation.

It was a slow start, but the Hughes remembered what Jesus did with just a little bread and fish.

Soon the First Church of Uberlândia was established, and its membership grew. Nancy affectionately remembered their first few Wednesday night meetings saying, "It was a precious time of study, prayer, singing, sharing, and fellowship. Several mentioned that one good thing about meeting on Wednesday, was not having to wait a week to see each other again." Quickly the congregation



**ABOVE:** The Hughes began the work in Uberlândia September 4, 1977, and the building for the First FWB Church was completed in 1985.



realized the need for larger facilities, and Tom piloted a construction campaign to build a sanctuary and educational building.

As the building grew, so did the spiritual lives of those inside. Many people came to Christ and eight men signed on for the first class at the Bible institute the Hughes developed in 1977.

Then a new invitation came. A young couple who lived in the outlying area of Jardim das Palmeiras (Garden of the Palms) asked the Hughes to help them start a neighborhood Bible class. Not even one Sunday school existed in that community to share Jesus with the hundreds of children who lived there. Tom and Nancy petitioned the First Church for help, and the congregation unanimously decided to assist the effort.

In just a short time, the outreach to neighborhood children became an open door to share with parents, and entire families came to Christ. It was clear God wanted another church to begin in Uberlândia. “When we won teens to the Lord in the First Church, we had no idea that some would become cofounders and helpers in the Second Church,” Tom remarked. Yet God used a motley crew from many walks of life to plant this new work. “Praise God, others are also using their talents to glorify Him and build His kingdom in Uberlândia, currently boasting around 600,000 people,” he exclaimed. “The harvest is plenteous!”

God blessed the second work in Uberlândia with record numbers of conversions. Innovative outreach programs, including a volleyball team, camps, vacation Bible schools, and others continued to grow the congregation. After laboring between both churches, Tom and Nancy realized God no longer wanted their efforts divided. They were to pastor and shepherd the Second Church, allowing God to raise up new leadership for the First Church. Eventually, Tom was able to hand over the Second Church to Brazilian national Ruí Xavier, an ordained minister eager to lead his own people in the ways of God. The Hughes retired in August 2005 and live

near their son  
in Arizona.



**LEFT:** Brazilian children and adults crowd around as Nancy Hughes displays an anniversary cake.

**RIGHT:** Tommy Hughes baptizes a convert in an outdoor baptistery.



## HIDDEN HURTS FIND HOPE IN CHRIST

### *Joaquim's Story*

**H**e whistled all the time. His construction buddies worked to the rhythm of his tunes. How was anyone to know that under Joaquim's happy exterior lay a sad and greatly burdened heart?

He grew up on a farm in central Brazil where poverty and scant work dictated his parents' lives. Determined to do better, he married an urban girl named Maria, and moved to the city. Yet Joaquim's life of hardship, poverty, and unemployment did not change. He received some help from a charismatic preacher who taught him how to lay bricks, but the lack of integrity within the supposedly Christian circle disillusioned him toward religion.

Then, God took Joaquim to the First Church of Uberlândia. While laying bricks for the new facility, Nancy Hughes got to the heart of the matter. Like a shaken soda bottle, Joaquim spewed out his pain, revealing con-

cern about his depressed wife in the process.

The Hughes alerted the church, and many members began ministering to Joaquim's family. A competent doctor helped Maria recover from mental and physical illness. Then the hope of Christ penetrated their hearts. Joaquim, Maria, and three of their four sons were saved, and baptized in the baptistery that Joaquim built.



**RIGHT:** Earnie Deeds and Pastor Sebastian talk with Christians at the gate of their home.

**MIDDLE:** Ken Eagleton hands out tracts and pocket-sized gospels from the back of his car.

**BOTTOM:** Missionaries and Brazilian pastors gathered for a retreat and training program.







**LEFT:** Eula Mae Martin teaches a Bible institute class.

**MIDDLE:** Tom Willey Sr. shares the Scripture during his survey trip to Brazil.

**BOTTOM:** Bobby Aycock greets arrivals in front of the newly constructed church in Antônio Carlos, a suburb of Barbacena.





# THE SOUNDS OF TRUTH

## *The Earnie and Jean Deeds Story*

*Declare his glory among the heathen;  
his marvellous works among all nations.*

I C H R O N I C L E S 16:24

Earnie Deeds felt challenged. Not only did he hear a stirring message from a Chinese Christian regarding world evangelism, he also heard the sound of the Holy Spirit's voice. "I knelt by my bed one day while at home and yielded my life to the Lord to use me wherever he wanted me," Earnie said of that pivotal day between his first and second years at Free Will Baptist Bible College. "Of course, the fact that eight out of 10 missionaries were women also convicted me. God needed men on the mission field, too."



But God did not intend for Earnie to work alone. Before he graduated, he met and married Willie Jean Barker, another FWBBC student, in 1957. She gave her life to Christ at age 18 when she heard the testimony of a FWBBC quartet in New Edinburg, Arkansas. Both Earnie and Jean graduated in 1958, and after four years of stateside ministry, they departed for Brazil in 1963.

Initially, the Deeds worked together to develop the Campinas church, the first Free Will Baptist church in Brazil. Earnie pastored the church while Jean played music and developed a variety of ministries to women and children. When they returned for their second term, they felt even more equipped to serve the surrounding people according to their needs. They settled in Jaboticabal where Earnie taught in the Bible institute and Jean played the organ. God also initiated a radio ministry through Earnie, who labored to write 10-minute sound bites for a prime-time national broadcast each day—a ministry that lasted 14 years.

In addition to his work with the radio ministry, Earnie also pastored the Jaboticabal FWB Church and led the congregation to acquire property and construct a building. Jean stayed busy raising their five children, in addition to leading a small church choir, teaching Bible studies, helping in visitation, and ministering to local women.

In 1974, the Deeds were led to Conselheiro Lafaiete to found a church. Again, Earnie developed a radio ministry, organized the church, and purchased property for a building. He exclaimed, "Radio has been a wonderful tool to reach Brazilians. More than 100,000 inhabitants of the Lafaiete region have had the opportunity to hear a portion of God's Word in their own homes." Sadly, due to the nation's sharp rise in inflation, the radio ministry was forced

to close.

At last, after 35 years of faithful service to Brazil, God called the Deeds to return to the States. They wrote, "Moving to the States, we experienced lots of mixed feelings—sadness at leaving Brazil and so many people we have come to love." But they knew that the same God who called them to this great work in Brazil was faithful to continue and finish what He began. Earnie and Jean Deeds were simply grateful to be an integral part of His plan.



LEFT: Earnie Deeds conducts a home Bible study in Campinas, Brazil.



# SKILLED LABOR

## *The Jim and Vicki Sturgill Story*

*He that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.*

M A T T H E W 2 5 : 2 0



*H*e grew up in church. As an adult, Jim Sturgill felt called by God to help build the church—in Brazil. His wife Vicki, whom he met while attending Free Will Baptist Bible College, was also convicted about missions. They married, graduated, and began language study in Campinas, Brazil, in early 1973.

With language school completed, the Sturgills moved to Barbacena in Minas Gerais where they teamed with the Bobby and Sue in evangelism and home Bible study courses. When the Aycocks left for furlough, Jim was happy to assume the pastoral and radio ministries. As a licensed ham radio operator, Jim had technical radio training and hoped to develop radio broadcasts and a better communication system. God indeed worked through Jim's skill and talents as he wrote and recorded 68 radio programs to be used as "The Word of Hope" broadcast on a station near Barbacena. Jose Pedro Mendez, a national from Tubarão, helped secure the broadcast free of charge for the Sturgills.

Despite the successful launch of their ministry, the Sturgills returned from their first furlough to find the Campinas church in desperate need of leadership and legal assistance. Vicki said, "Jim just took that bull by the horns and got things in order." They also realized how important it was to train nationals in strong leadership skills so they might better serve God's kingdom. They both taught classes in the Bible institute. Vicki trained teachers and musicians at both the Barbacena and Campinas churches; she also worked with children and teens through several ministries, including a school for missionary children.

The training program produced a national pastor who took over the leadership of the church at Campinas, freeing the Sturgills to move to Jaboticabal. There they served as administrator of the camp property and taught in the central Bible college.

The Sturgills moved to Belo Horizonte, Brazil, in 1994. In addition to the preaching and teaching ministries, Jim continued the church's construction until it was completed. The following year, Jim's sister, Pat Franks, and her husband Dave returned to Belo Horizonte after their furlough and joined the Sturgills. It was a blessing to work with family as they labored together to build up the family of Christ. They enjoyed each other's company as iron sharpens iron, and witnessed God at work through numerous converts. Though the Franks retired from service in 1999, the Sturgills continue on their important work, seeking new ways to reach the lost for Christ and to train leaders for the church.



LEFT: Jim and Vicki sign their commitment to missionary ministry during their commissioning service.



## HOLLANDS' HOPE

### *The Curt and Mary Holland Story*

Since the time they came to know the Lord—Curt at age 12 and Mary, 16—God burdened their hearts for the lost. Both attended Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Oklahoma, where they met, married, and accepted their call to missions.



But their short-term mission trip to Campinas, Brazil, touched their hearts more deeply than any classroom. The incredible need for hope, for truth, loomed before their eyes. Brazilians needed to know Jesus, and Curt and Mary Holland were eager to show them the way to Him.

Appointed to missionary service in 1990, the Hollands left for the field in 1992. After completing Portuguese language study, they arrived in Ribeirão Preto and plunged headfirst into existing ministries.

The Hollands returned to Campinas in 1998, where they felt strongly led to begin a new church. “These couples lived about an hour from the other FWB church,” Curt explained. As they prayed, held open-air meetings, showed the *Jesus* film, and invited the community to church activities, spiritual interest grew. What began as a four-couple Bible study blossomed into a second, thriving church in Campinas. Soon Brazilians trained through institute classes were equipped to take on stronger leadership roles in the church.

After several years of training, teaching, and equipping, the Hollands felt God’s call to turn their focus onto their family. They tendered their resignation from overseas ministries, wanting to make the most of their time before the girls graduated from high school.

## STABILIZATION AND GROWTH

### *The Jim and Karen Cowart Story*

When Jim and Karen Cowart landed in Brazil in January of 1979, they discovered many ministry opportunities and needs. They were driven toward evangelism, planting churches, and utilizing their unique gifts. But the need for a leader in the Free Will Baptist church in Jaboticabal as well as for an administrator over the youth camp ministry took precedence over personal goals.



The Cowarts helped stabilize the church and even launched a building program. Evangelandia, the mission-owned farm designated for youth camps and family camp ministries, needed oversight and development. Jim’s artistic abilities were put to good use in designing and producing vacation Bible school materials.

Sensing they should pursue an aviation-centered ministry, the Cowarts resigned in 1987 to seek aviation training. When this didn’t materialize, the couple sought reinstatement to missionary service and returned to Brazil in 1990. They initially worked in a suburb of Campinas, São Paulo, then moved to Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, to strengthen the church in that city. After achieving a level of success in this effort, the couple left the church in the hands of a Brazilian leader.

Following a leave of absence to meet family needs, Jim and Karen returned to Brazil in October of 1997 and assumed leadership of the Ipiranga congregation in Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo. They enjoyed a fruitful ministry and led a building renovation program before health issues led to their return to the States and resignation.



# OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS

## Literature Ministry

*Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

A C T S 8 : 3 0 - 3 1



What must life be like without the ability to read? Many people around the world experience the frustration born from their inability to decipher words on the printed page. But when they learn to read, a new world awaits them. Exposure to thoughts and experiences previously closed to them opens. Literacy becomes the porthole to changed lives.

Missionaries in Brazil recognized this golden opportunity as the giant nation slowly awoke to its need for greater literacy. As more and more citizens learned to read, Free Will Baptist missionaries labored to produce evangelical materials to expose the people to God's truth. An organization comprised of several evangelical missions worked together to produce Portuguese Sunday school curriculum for use throughout Brazil. Headed by journalism major Don Robirds, a Free Will Baptist literature committee also laid groundwork for tracts, Christian magazines, books, booklets, and other materials to interest non-Christians as well as train new believers.

"In Brazil, the time is ripe," said Robirds. "Gospel tracts are accepted eagerly on most occasions; other reading material is sought by old and young; bookstores stay busy; and the cry is for more and better literature and for dedicated laborers to distribute it."

## THE HEALING TOUCH

*Eula Mae Martin Fornel, R.N.*

The people were superstitious about their health. Ancient, misguided beliefs made Brazilian patients wary of Eula Mae Martin's intentions. Were her bizarre suggestions truly able to bring relief? Was there any truth to this young nurse's words?

Eula Mae was patient. She knew the people around her needed spiritual healing just as much as physical healing. She devoted her life to meeting both areas of need, gaining their trust through medicine and winning their souls through the gospel.

In addition to working with the sick, she also harbored deep love for the children and taught Sunday school classes for them. Lives of all ages, genders, occupations, and walks of life were touched by her love.

Then God touched Eula Mae's heart. As she followed God's lead to Ribeirão Preto to help with the church started by the Bobby Pooles, she met and eventually married Helio Fornel, a Brazilian Christian of Italian descent. Though she resigned from her official missionary service after 10 years of ministry (1958-1968), she continued serving God in the area for several decades.

In God's time, Eula Mae was diagnosed with cancer and went home to be with her Lord just three months later. Though her husband, son, and friends grieved their loss, they celebrated Eula Mae's life of submission and service to her Savior.





# LIVING TESTIMONY

## *The Sam and June Wilkinson Story*

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

G A L A T I A N S 2 : 2 0



Sam and June Wilkinson's life story reflects not only the impact Christians have on the lost, but also the influence they have on one another.

Sam remembered Laura Belle Barnard, a Free Will Baptist pioneer missionary to India who returned state-side to teach and inspire students at his grammar school. "When she returned to India, I never forgot some things I learned," he explained. "When she came home later and urged more people to go to the mission field, it seemed that the Lord was speaking to my heart."

God was working in June Goode's life in a similar manner. "I heard Wesley Calvery give Galatians 2:20 as his testimony," she said. "I began to realize that obedience is not just about avoiding worldly activities, but it also means crucifying the self and living for the Lord." By age 16 she understood she was to go into missions.

Both Sam and June enrolled at Free Will Baptist Bible College where they met and united in purpose and marriage in 1955. Due to Miss Barnard's influence, the Wilkinsons felt drawn to India. So they prayed and petitioned for their visas. They were denied...twice.

Facing true discouragement, they remembered Galatians 2:20. Dying to self also meant dying to personal dreams. With surrendered wills, the Wilkinsons were elated when God opened the door to Brazil. They arrived in Campinas in December of 1959, ready to begin language study and assist the developing church already established.

It did not take long for the Wilkinsons to acclimate to the surrounding culture. After they completed language study, they moved to Jaboticabal where they organized a Free Will Baptist church before their first furlough.

While on their second furlough, Sam earned his master's degree in education, further equipping him to teach and train Brazilians. The Wilkinsons served the people of Brazil for over 19 years before God led them to resign from missionary service in 1979.

After a few years in the pastorate, God led them to Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College where Sam taught missions, general psychology, and English composition. June taught English literature and introduction to education, and also served as school cashier. They became the mentors—the influencers—of a new generation of Christians. Through their testimonies, God raised up new laborers for His harvest, just as He used Laura Belle Barnard and Wesley Calvery in their lives.

Then God opened another door—the door that led Sam Wilkinson home to be with Jesus in 1988. His sudden death came as a shock to his family and friends, though they understood heaven was where Sam always longed to be.



LEFT: Sam Wilkinson enjoyed both preaching and teaching.





## DON AND CAROL ROBIRDS

were church planters and were in charge of producing and distributing literature in Campinas and Piracicaba from 1964-1971. Don worked as the director of public relations at the Mission from 1971-2003. Don and Carol live in Tennessee.



**UPPER RIGHT:** Jim Combs distributes tracts to children who are eager to receive something to read.

**ABOVE:** All missionaries gather annually for a field council meeting to plan, strategize, fellowship, and encourage one another. As this gathering (left to right, standing) Jim and Shirley Combs, Dave and Pat Franks, Geneva and Bobby Poole, Tom Hughes, Paul and Amy Robinson (Uruguay), and Linda and Rick Bowling (Uruguay). Seated: Regina Franks, Marvis and Ken Eagleton, Florine and Louis Coscia, Nancy Hughes, and Jean and Earnie Deeds.

**RIGHT:** Ken Eagleton baptizes a convert in the outside baptism of the First FWB Church in Araras, São Paulo, Brazil.





## LOUIS AND FLORINE COSCIA



Louis Coscia had his life planned in agriculture, but God burdened his heart for the mission field. Louis responded and sought training at Wheaton College, Mid-South Bible College, and Free Will Baptist Bible College. While at FWBBC he met Florine Faulkner. The two were married in September 1963 and were appointed to serve in Brazil the next month.

Language study proved difficult, but in 1965 they moved to Pirassununga, São Paulo, to work on developing an infant church begun by a missionary colleague.

A new church-planting ministry in Uberaba, Minas Gerais, awaited the Coscias during their second term. Though the city proved extremely difficult to penetrate due the strong influence of Chico Xavier, Brazil's leading spiritist medium, Louis and Florine were undaunted. Confronted almost daily with the darkness of satanic opposition and demon possession, they actively witnessed, taught, preached, and visited door-to-door. Exhausted from the intense spiritual opposition to the gospel, the Coscias left the field in 1992 after 18 years of faithful service.



### KENNETH AND REJANE EAGLETON

After 18 years of ministry in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton received permission to transfer to Brazil in April 2003. The couple grew up in Brazil. Kenneth's parents,

Ken and Marvis Eagleton, were the first Free Will Baptist missionary couple to Brazil. Kenneth accepted Christ as Savior at the age of eight. Rejane, a Brazilian, lived in Araras and became a Christian as an 11-year-old. Missionaries Bobby and Sue Aycock and Jim and Shirley Combs influenced her greatly.

In March 2004, they moved to Belo Horizonte, Brazil, to work in the mission church during Jim and Vicki Sturgill's stateside assignment. Kenneth was also involved in training pastors and other church leaders through Bible institute classes. In 2006, they relocated to Campinas, São Paulo.

Kenneth teaches at the Campinas Bible Institute and heads up leadership training for local churches. He also serves as coordinator of the field literature project. Rejane assists Kenneth in translating and editing literature. The couple has been instrumental in uniting churches to form a regional association for the eight churches and mission works in Campinas and Araras.



### DAVID AND ANNETTE AYCOCK

Saved at the age of seven in Goldsboro, North Carolina, David spent much of his life as a missionary kid in Brazil.

His commitment to missions deepened while attending Free Will Baptist Bible College. Annette received Christ as a 15-year-old in Greeneville, Tennessee. Exposure to missions at Free Will Baptist Bible College influenced her as she committed her life to serving Christ.

Following college graduation and marriage, the couple engaged in pastoral ministry and service in South Carolina. Annette served Women Nationally Active for Christ on local, district, state, and national levels.

David and Annette received appointment as short-term missionaries in August 1996. Following their assignment, they were appointed as career missionaries in December 1999. In December 2000, the family—including four children: Autumn, Breeana, Andrew and Destanie—located in Campinas, Brazil, for Annette to attend language school.

A year later, the Aycocks moved to Barbacena and joined David's parents in ministry. The couple trains church leaders and those who feel God's call to preach. Annette homeschools the two children still at home and provides hospitality in their home. David and Annette also direct the regional youth camp ministry.





### ANDY AND ANDREA MOORE

have worked in Barbacena and Conselheiro Lafaiete as church planters since 1999.



### NORMAN AND LAURA MCFALL

were church planters in Belo Horizonte from 1985-1994.



### KIMBERLY JOHNSON

served as a short-term missionary from 2001-2003. She was appointed as a career missionary in April 2007 and works in Araras.



### JOHN AND CONNIE CRAFT

were appointed in 1968 and served until 1973 in Jaboticabal and Tubarão. John is deceased.



### JOHN AND KAY METCALF

were appointed as career missionaries in 1983. John and Kay never made it to the field due to a deadly auto accident.



### KRISTEN WILSON

was appointed as a short-term missionary in 2004. Unable to receive a visa Kristen never made it to the field.



### JIM AND SUSAN MOSER

were church-planting missionaries in Uberlândia from 1976-1984.



### TERRY AND JAMIE EAGLETON

Appointed in 1983, Terry and Jamie Eagleton served as church planters to Araras and resigned in 1984.



### MARY ELLEN RICE

was involved in children's ministry and the seminary in Jaboticabal from 1962-1969.



### ESTHER RUEHLE

transferred from Cuba and worked as a medical missionary in Londrina from 1959-1961.



# URUGUAY

## *The Lord's Battle*

Sometimes dubbed “Little Switzerland of South America,” its setting seems ideal. Uruguay, a small country about the size of Missouri, lies sandwiched between colossal neighbors Brazil and Argentina on South America’s eastern coast. Rolling plains and hills cover most of the land, which enjoys a moderate climate. Home to more than 3,000,000 Uruguayans—over half of whom live in the nation’s capital of Montevideo—this little piece of South American paradise boasts a predominantly Spanish heritage, mixed with a 25% Italian influence. Centuries ago, Spaniards from Argentina built the capital city, and political control volleyed between Brazil and Argentina for many years. Eventually, in 1828, Uruguay threw off outside control and became an independent nation, enjoying a long history of democratic government since.

The stable political climate, coupled with the government’s open policy toward religious efforts, made Uruguay a prime candidate for a new Free Will Baptist work. In 1962, missionaries Bill and Glenda Fulcher and Paul and Amy Robinson answered the call and began work in Rivera, a small town in Uruguay that lies adjacent to its sister city, Livramento, Brazil. Though the cities belong to different countries, only a monument in the center of town divides the regions, and their communities remain intertwined in culture and language, mixing Portuguese with Spanish. The first church began in Santa Teresa, about three miles outside Rivera.

At first, opposition to their efforts seemed nominal. Missionaries found Uruguayans who held primarily Catholic or atheistic beliefs relatively open to traditional evangelistic tools. However, gaining a favorable response was much more difficult. Community apathy stemmed from the education system. “In high schools and universities,” writer Jerry Ballard explained, “atheism and agnosticism are both popular and prevalent and are generally considered to be quite acceptable intellectually. Those in the middle- and upper-class sections of society consider it a weakness to commit oneself to a personal God.”

Satan had a secret foothold. Uruguay’s shaky economy nosedived, shooting inflation up over 9000% between 1956 and 1971. Discouraged Uruguayans gave up hope



**ABOVE:** Uruguay’s farmland yields abundant agricultural products for exporting.

**RIGHT:** This lighthouse located in the small fishing community of José Inácio on the southern tip of Uruguay provides light and direction for sailors.





in meager jobs that no longer paid enough to sustain their families, and many resorted to illegal trades and stealing. Growing poverty became the perfect platform for communist philosophy to seize the nation, as well as to empower several other leftist groups and the Tupamaros, a guerilla movement that brought murder, kidnapping, robbery, prison breaks, and countless other heartaches to the country.

### Mission Facts

This hard country has experienced a scarcity of missionary workers in recent years. However, perseverance is paying off. Four national pastors lead five churches, and 13 Uruguayan workers are in training. Last year, 28 people received Christ as Savior.

By 1979, sufficient communist influence changed the face of Uruguayan government, and, systematically, churches begun by Free Will Baptist missionaries years before were shut down.

Satan seemed to be winning the battle, but

Uruguayan Christians knew God ultimately wins the war. They grouped together as never before and prayed for each other and for their country. Free Will Baptists worldwide joined them in their petitions for peace. As God often does, He used the persecution and trials to strengthen the believers and unite them more tightly in their cause to exalt Christ and His kingdom.


Missionaries, along with a core group of 20 church members from the interior, moved to Montevideo where evangelical worship was still permitted. As a result, the church there grew, expanding its influence from the rural areas of Rivera to the half of Uruguay's population living in Montevideo.

Kingdom work in Uruguay continues, though the progress often comes under fire from sources more sinister than guerilla warfare. The spiritual battle over Uruguayan hearts still rages fiercely, but God declares victory,



*For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.*

ACTS 18:10

 URUGUAY	
CAPITAL .....	Montevideo
LARGEST CITY .....	Montevideo
AREA .....	176,215 sq. km.
POPULATION .....	3,494,382
CURRENCY .....	Uruguayan peso
PER CAPITA INCOME .....	\$12,400
RELIGIONS	
Roman Catholic .....	43.9%
Non-religious .....	24.6%
Ethnic religions .....	14.7%
Evangelicals .....	4.5%

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project

**UPPER:** Paul Robinson and his son Kenny point out a sign indicating the communist party headquarters.

**BOTTOM:** The Santa Teresa FWB Church in Rivera proved to be a fruitful early work.





# FAITH IN MOTION

## *The Paul and Amy Robinson Story*

*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

ISAIAH 55:11

God works in mysterious ways...like when he used Tom Willey Sr. to preach the gospel in Cuba. Tom's message pierced Benito Rodriguez to the core, and he surrendered his life to the Lord. God led this newly converted Cuban into full-time Christian work. After becoming an ordained minister, Benito made his way to a speaking engagement in Detroit, Michigan, where a young man named Paul Robinson listened in the audience. An American missionary to Cuba disciplined a Cuban Christian, who came to America, and another American was touched by God and called to become a missionary to Uruguay. Simply amazing grace in action.

God used the time between Paul's conversion and appointment in Uruguay to grow him up in the Lord. Under the tutelage of his pastor Raymond Riggs, Paul developed a heart for missions. "I was elected teacher of the young married couples Sunday school class," Paul remembered. "This proved to be a real challenge to me and became one of the greatest helps to my Christian life because I was forced to really study the Bible," he continued. "As my knowledge of the Word increased, so did my vision of a world in need of the Savior."

Paul met Amy Lucaciu, a young Christian woman who was burdened with a desire for missions since her conversion at age 12. They married in 1950, and both felt called to share God's Word with the lost. The couple believed God was leading them toward Uruguay. At first, Paul was uncertain about the direction, since he lacked a formal degree from a Bible college. However, Reverend Riggs encouraged him to attend a year at Free Will Baptist Bible College and a year at Detroit Bible College. This training coupled with his natural ability to reach people for Christ made the

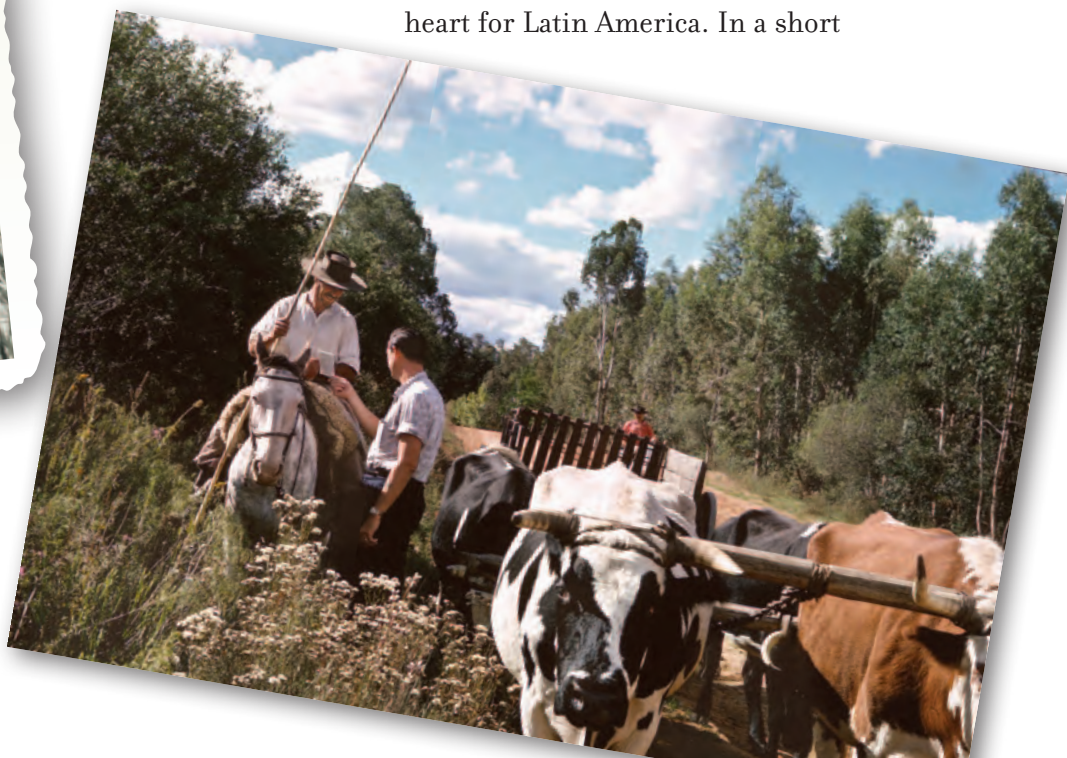
Robinsons Free Will Baptists' first lay missionary couple in Uruguay.

The Robinsons were excited about their appointment, but believed they needed more missionaries to accompany them. Paul then learned about Bill Fulcher, a Bible college graduate with a heart for Latin America. In a short



**ABOVE:** Paul Robinson greets arrivals as he grips his Bible and prepares to enter the Aqua Bueno church in Rivera.

**RIGHT:** Paul stops an oxcart to talk to the driver about Christ and share a gospel tract.







nationals, carrying on the work. “I, just a layman, was left with the work of pastor, coordinator, visitor, plumbing repairman, and everything else. In addition, I had a health problem that really jarred me,” Paul remembered. But God, Who called him to the work and qualified him as an effective witness, worked through the Robinsons’ limitations to continue building the kingdom in Rivera. “I actually think my status as a layman doing ministry encouraged the nationals in the area to help. They were laymen, just like me. They knew if God could use me to save souls, God would use them, too.”

God did use the Robinsons and the growing band of believers around them to bring many people closer to Christ and to establish a solid church base for their continued growth. Time flew by as the family faithfully ministered to Uruguayans for 30 years. It was difficult, often painstaking work. Paul said, “Looking back, I recall some of the problems, heartaches, climatic changes, parasites, flies, life in a leftist society, and on and on. I asked myself, ‘Was it worth it?’” He knew the

time, they agreed to team together. Both families studied Spanish in Costa Rica, and then God led them to Rivera, Uruguay, where they soon opened a work, the Santa Teresa Church. Together, the Fulchers and Robinsons worked in the rural areas outside of Rivera and developed a camp for the church members.

Several times, Paul felt God stretching his faith as he tackled the many obstacles facing him in these communities. Once, the Fulchers had to make an immediate departure from Uruguay to help one of their children with a schooling need. The Robinsons found themselves working alone with the

question answered itself. “Emphatically, I say, it most certainly was!”



**TOP:** Amy Robinson prays with a child during a youth camp outside Rivera.

**BOTTOM:** Amy proudly stands with the children's choir following a presentation.

## CLEAR VISION

### *Building a Vision for Missions in Uruguay*

“**Y**ou can build your church and have your services, but I wouldn’t count on any men coming,” Alvaro said in blunt, Uruguayan style. His disbelief voiced missionaries’ experiences. Women and children responded favorably to the gospel, but men refused to participate. Yet the goal remained: gather a nucleus of men in each church willing to take on leadership roles such as pastor, deacon, or teacher.

To make matters worse, the Malvin Free Will Baptist Church in Montevideo lost their meeting place. Was Alvaro right? Was the church plant going to fail?

In addition to their small group strategy, God gave missionaries the vision for Fondo Pro Templo, meaning Church Building Fund. They gathered significant funding from stateside Free Will Baptist churches. Added to the pool was money ordinarily spent to rent facilities. But the key strategy lay in the third component: Uruguayan churches set aside tithes and offerings for the fund. They realized their role in planting churches, creating a new wave of enthusiasm and support. Through God’s grace and the people’s generosity, the building fund doubled the size of one church, paid legal fees to save another, and purchased a church building for the people in Malvin.

Alvaro was amazed...and changed. He gave his heart to Christ, becoming an integral part of the Malvin FWB Church.



# MISSION POSSIBLE

*The Walter and Marcia Ellison Story*

*Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.*

MATTHEW 19:26



The Brazilians have a curious quote: “If you do not have a dog with which to hunt, hunt with a cat.” Walter and Marcia Ellison, Free Will Baptist missionaries to Livramento, Brazil, and the cities of Rivera and Montevideo, Uruguay, found this philosophy to be the most effective outreach strategy in these unique Spanish communities. Commenting on the obstacles they encountered in these countries, Walter said, “I’m sure each new missionary goes out with his plans but eventually, if he stays long enough, he begins to realize he must learn to adapt many of his concepts to the culture where he labors.”

Walter and Marcia learned the art of flexibility over time and experience as God trained and raised up their family—five children included—to win souls for Christ. Their passion for missions stemmed from childhood, after Walter, also known as “Dub,” became a Christian at 13 and Marcia received Christ at age nine. But when the Free Will Baptist Bible College quartet visited Walter’s church and challenged members to deeper spiritual growth, Walter was changed. “I never wanted to be an ordinary Christian again,” he remembered. Following two years of service in the Air Force where Dub’s vision for overseas missions sharpened, he and Marcia enrolled in and graduated from FWBBC in preparation for ministry. They married and served two years pastoring a church in Tennessee. At last, they felt equipped and ready for the challenges God had in store for them in the Uruguayan border town of Livramento, Brazil.

The Ellisons knew the tools of the trade. They were ready for literature distribution, church services, and door-to-door evangelism. They learned the language, officially called “Portuneo,” a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish since the city rests on the Brazil-Uruguay border, separated only by one stone monument.



ABOVE: Walter Ellison teaches a class in the early days of the Bible institute in Montevideo.

LEFT: Marcia Ellison and Pastor Baglietto sing during a graduation ceremony of the Sower Bible Institute.



But language proved to be the least significant barrier. “Those problems which have given us most difficulty include cultural differences, local and national laws, limited financial ability on the part of nationals, extremely difficult circumstances for the education of our children, tremendous governmental ‘red tape’, deep-seated religious and pagan traditions, and limited numbers of potential leaders,” Dub cited. To further compound the problem, a large percentage of Brazilians came from a low educational and income bracket.

Sound impossible to conquer?

They just needed to hunt with a cat, instead of the usual dog. Marcia Ellison said, “I believe the single most important factor in our getting a work going and maintaining it, humanly speaking, has been our children’s love for the Lord and their lives as Christians.” Where relational barriers between adults stood strong, the Ellisons’ children felt free to mix and play with the other community kids. As those relationships grew, the Ellisons were invited into homes. Doors were opened. The Uruguayans saw that Dub’s great six-foot-two stature was dwarfed by his immense love for their people. Through God’s love poured out by the Ellison family, lives were changed.

In time, the Ellisons established the first Free Will Baptist church in Livramento, Brazil. Once they gained a strong foundation, including national leadership for the work, they felt called to return to the States to help strengthen their own family. Following a leave of absence, they returned to Montevideo, Uruguay, to work with the Sower Bible Institute and start another work. Walter spent much of the last term in construction of the Central FWB Church in Rivera.



In all, the Ellisons devoted 30 years of service to God and the people of Brazil and Uruguay. Countless lives were touched and changed for eternity through their ministry. Unfortunately, following their retirement, Dub made choices that negatively impacted Uruguayan Christians and ended the couple’s marriage.

**TOP:** Walter Ellison, a national pastor, and Paul Robinson lay hands on a young preacher during an ordination service.

**BOTTOM:** Marcia Ellison tends to a child during children’s Bible class.

## PLANTING THE WORD

### Danubio’s Story

*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*

I CORINTHIANS 3:6

When the Ellisons heard Danubio declare he would never relinquish his idols for the Lord, they prayed and waited like faithful farmers of the Word. Every time they found an opportunity, the missionaries, Christian neighbors, and friends invited this hardened, sub-official military mayor to church. Like the effects of drops of rain on dry soil, his tough resolve against God began to soften. He followed his wife’s lead and attended his first service at the Central Free Will Baptist Church in Rivera. Gospel seed planted that night began to grow. Three months later, Danubio surrendered his life to Christ.

Danubio was a changed man, and he wanted others to know the hope he found. Through many trials his family faced, Danubio shared with the community about God’s faithfulness. Then, his thoughts turned homeward. He explained the gospel in a letter written to his aging father. His family received the good news just like Danubio did, and his father made a public profession of faith. Burdened for his father’s city, Danubio then began a work in Melo, where many responded to his faithful witness.

With Danubio, some planted, others watered, but the growth God initiated sprang up yielding a bountiful harvest of souls.



# SERVANT SPIRIT

## *The Molly Barker Story*

*Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:17



“A person who loves souls can win them to Christ or at least help plant the seed even if he or she is not a pastor or evangelist,” Molly Barker, missionary nurse in Uruguay said cheerfully. Indeed, even after 40 years, Molly Barker continues to serve as God’s evangelist to the Uruguayan people through the variety of platforms God provides for His precious servant.

It was as she listened to Reverend J.C. Griffin at the First Free Will Baptist Church of Morehead City, North Carolina, that Molly realized her need for Jesus to be her Savior. She sensed even then that God had a special work in

store for her, but it was not until her enrollment at Free Will Baptist Bible College that she understood her calling to reach people who needed to hear the gospel. Upon graduation, she served in Mexico as a home missionary for two years. Seeing firsthand the poverty—both physical and spiritual—fueled her resolve to choose missions as a lifelong work. She also realized that proper training in medicine was needed to increase her effectiveness. So she returned to Nashville, Tennessee, to obtain her R.N. degree before her appointment to Uruguay in 1964.

When Molly arrived in the Uruguay-Brazil border town of Rivera, she immediately joined efforts with missionaries Bill and Glenda Fulcher, Paul and Amy Robinson, and Walter and Marcia Ellison.

Together they planted a work that quickly sprouted into three churches headed by national leadership. Molly stayed very busy tending to the church members’ medical needs, and discovered that she held a strong love for the community’s children. She became deeply involved developing daily vacation Bible school programs for the kids, entertaining them with her accordion skills and teaching them about Christ’s love for them. Many children gave their lives to the Lord as a result, often opening doors for Molly and other missionaries to





witness to their parents. In addition to serving children, she also served a short time as dean of women at the Bible institute in Jaboticabal, Brazil, and taught some Bible institute classes.

Back in Uruguay, as other missionaries were called to other areas of the country Molly remained alone in Rivera to assist the lay pastors and continue her strong ministry among the women and children of the community. According to Jaimie Lancaster, “Molly Barker remains an example of one who had committed herself to the Lord and was determined to be faithful to the end—even in a time when missionary attrition was a recurring missions theme.” Molly simply took her work in stride. “It is by God’s grace that I have had the health and strength to do the work God has called me to do here,” she explained. “Also, God’s goodness through my faithful supporters over the years has made this labor possible.” After 45 years of service, she continues her work to bring souls to Christ and to strengthen the faith of growing converts. A large legacy of lives touched by Molly’s servant spirit testifies to God’s grace poured out through her love and life.



**LEFT:** Mario da Conceição plays the accordion at the Central FWB Church in Rivera.

**BELOW:** Molly delights in showing off “her” children during a class.

**FAR LEFT ABOVE:** As the children sing during a Bible school class, Molly accompanies them on the accordion.

**FAR LEFT BELOW:** Molly teaches a song to the children during a VBS service in one of the Rivera churches.



## SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Mario da Conceição*

**E**leven children and two parents struggled to survive. Plagued with illness, the family was barely able to make ends meet. In search of hope and help, they investigated umbanda, spiritism, witch doctors, and cults. The day Florimundo, the father, came home to tell his children about the Free Will Baptists he met that day, his son Mario was more skeptical than ever.

The father’s heart was already softened, however. He read the Gospel of John given him by Bill Fulcher, who preached in the first service Florimundo attended. Later, a neighbor invited the wife and mother to hear the gospel message. She, too, returned home a changed woman. God provided work for the father, and the whole family began to attend church. For the first time, Mario also learned about Christ’s provision for his sins. The gospel transformed his heart.

The family became an open door for other Uruguayans to meet and learn about the Lord. Mario took intensive classes through the Bible institute and assumed leadership responsibilities in the Barrio Recreo work. He also began witnessing door-to-door, bringing many to the kingdom. Eventually, Mario completed courses and was officially ordained into the ministry.



# BUILDING GOD'S FAMILY

## *The Bill and Glenda Fulcher Story*

*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

MATTHEW 6:10

It is one thing to hear about them in Sunday school. It is quite another to personally witness the desperate need of lost souls who have never even heard about Jesus. Bill Fulcher, who received Christ at age 12, spent two years in the armed forces after high school. He saw the people of Korea and Japan work to appease gods who simply did not exist.

Following his service, Bill enrolled in Free Will Baptist Bible College to prepare for ministry. Glenda Barks, a young FWBBC student, shared a similar heart. As a gifted soloist and musician, she enjoyed sharing Christ through song. But through her college courses and missionaries, Glenda began to see how God wanted to use her in foreign fields for His kingdom. Bill and Glenda married in 1957 and spent the next two years in North Carolina where Bill pastored. By 1961, they left American soil for language study. From there, God led them to Rivera, Uruguay—a small town on Uruguay's border with Brazil—where a surprising mix of Brazilians and Uruguayans lived without the knowledge of Christ.

Bill and Glenda teamed with Paul and Amy Robinson to evangelize the area. Through traditional outreach methods, including literature, open-air meetings, door-to-door evangelism, and a radio broadcast ministry, Bill and Glenda were able to lay a foundation for the gospel among the people. Soon, three church groups were established in the area, forming a base for a new Bible institute. In time, other missionaries joined to further develop the work.

In addition to planting churches, the Fulchers were busy growing a family. They were blessed with five children: Billy, John, Timothy, Susan, and Michael. God used the special needs required by one of their kids to change their ministry's course. The Fulcher family relocated to Panama to open a new work in Agua Buena. In time, their efforts developed into Betania Free Will Baptist Church.

In 1979, the Fulchers retired from official missions service in order to return stateside where the family's

educational needs could be met. Yet God continued their cross-cultural ministry as they worked among the rapidly-growing, Spanish-speaking population in Houston, Texas. Bill also served on the Board of Foreign Missions for six years following their return to the States.

Bill and Glenda Fulcher and their family served as a blessing to many people in Uruguay, Panama, and the United States. They committed their lives to kingdom work, and trusted God to use them in each arena to accomplish His purposes. Bill died of a massive heart attack on March 23, 2004, in New Bern, North Carolina.



LEFT: Bill Fulcher and a deacon prepare to baptize a girl in a river outside Rivera.



# A NETWORK OF FAITH

## *The Dennis and Trena Owen Story*

*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

COLOSSIANS 4:5

*I*f you were to die tonight, would you go to heaven?” Dennis Owen asked Jorge Abella, his new acquaintance from Montevideo, Uruguay, where Dennis was serving as a Free Will Baptist missionary. Jorge did not like the question. It bothered him enough to keep him from attending the Sunday service. Then, Jorge almost died from a bleeding ulcer. When Jorge recovered and saw Dennis again, he half-joked, “Well, I almost put your question to the test.”

Dennis’ personal encounter and bold witness changed the course of Jorge’s life. For another year, Dennis simply befriended him and answered questions whenever they surfaced. God eventually grabbed Jorge’s heart and transformed him into a strong believer.

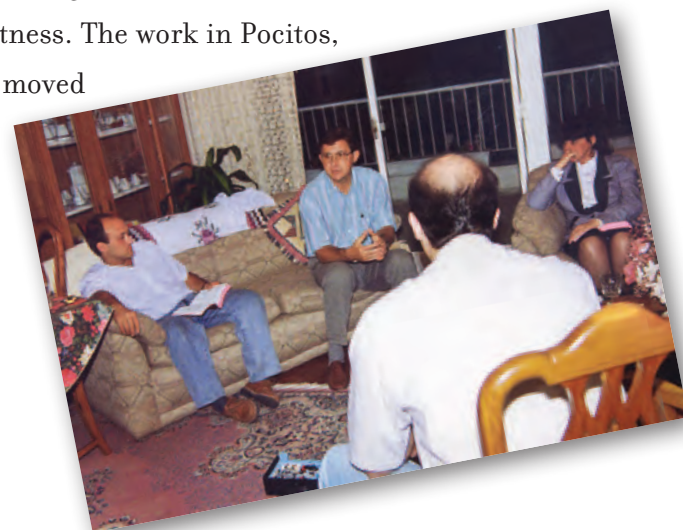
Reaching others requires patience, love, and perseverance. God began forging these traits in the Owens’ hearts when Dennis came to Christ at age 17 and Trena at age nine. God burdened their hearts with a passion for the lost. As they attended Free Will Baptist Bible College, they surrendered to God’s will for their lives—including marriage to each other.

In August 1980, the couple left for Mostoles, Spain, where they worked with Ron and Linda Callaway to open a new work. Later, they joined Jeff and Susan Turnbough to begin the work in Villalba. Lack of national leadership led them to rotate among ministries in Alcálá de Henares, Mostoles, and Villalba, where they witnessed the gradual growth of churches.

In 1990, when the Owens transferred to Uruguay, they had a deeper understanding of the culture that stems from Spanish roots. Dennis commented, “Uruguayans do not respond to how much one knows, nor how good one is; but on the basis of who one knows.” God was gracious to lead the Owens to an evangelical Jewish woman eager to introduce them to the people around her. Through her contacts and God’s leading, they developed a network of people to whom they ministered.

“Everything in our ministry was geared to showing people personal attention,” Dennis explained. “For years, our ministry flowed from person to person.” Just like Dennis’ interaction with Jorge led to his conversion, fellow Uruguayan converts won their families and friends to Christ through bold witness. The work in Pocitos, a suburb of Montevideo, soon outgrew the house where it began. The Owens moved the work to the center of the city where members met in the larger Bible institute building. Dennis taught institute and extension classes.

From the United States to Spain to Uruguay, God used the Owens and their two children to bring Christ’s light into a darkened world. Just as Jesus entered among the crowd and met needs on a personal level, so the Owens sought to win souls one relationship at a time.



**RIGHT:** Dennis Owen leads a home Bible study in Montevideo.





**TOP:** Bill and Glenda Fulcher, Marvis Eagleton of Brazil, and Paul and Amy Robinson stand with a mission church group.

**MIDDLE:** Paul Robinson (left) and Bill Fulcher (right) visit a country house to witness and distribute literature.

**BOTTOM:** Mario da Conceição, Gerardo Acevedo, Oscar Baglietto, Paul Robinson, and Walter Ellison stand at the entrance to the Sower (El Sembrador) Bible Institute in downtown Montevideo.





**TOP:** Paul Robinson demonstrates the love of Christ by helping a local farmer.

**MIDDLE:** This rented building housed the first FWB church in Rivera.

**BOTTOM:** The Santa Teresa FWB Church was one of the first groups of believers in the Rivera area.



# PREACH IT, BROTHER

## *The Jaimie and Tammy Lancaster Story*

**H**e was nervous. Jaimie knew the gospel message well. He was an experienced preacher. Yet, he prayed for this moment as he looked at the Uruguayan crowd. It was his first sermon in Spanish, his first real reach across cultures to testify about God's saving grace through Jesus. "God make it effective. Help the people understand."

The Spirit of God did His work. Mauricio, a young man from Montevideo, listened intently. Amazed by what he heard, he returned to hear Pastor Gerardo preach. Convinced of the truth, Mauricio talked with Dennis Owen, and then met with Pastor Gerardo and Jaimie to accept Christ as Savior.

Jaimie grew up in a Christian home and received Christ as an eight-year-old. Missions played a regular role in his church life, and following his sophomore year at Free Will Baptist Bible College he served as an overseas apprentice to Japan. Tammy, his wife, became a Christian when she was 10. In 1995, God used Dennis Owen's moving description of the Uruguayan people to turn the Lancasters' hearts toward South America.

Both studied language in Montevideo where they became involved in the Nueva Vida church's youth program. Jaimie taught courses at the Bible institute. Tammy reached out to the community by initiating an after-school Bible club program. Through Jaimie's teaching and Tammy's service, many people are coming to know the Lord and grow in their faith.



**ABOVE:** Paul and Amy Robinson (center) and Walter and Marcia Ellison sit at the head table with a Uruguayan couple at a Bible institute banquet.

**RIGHT:** Bill Fulcher plays guitar and Amy Robinson plays a pump organ as Paul Robinson joins them in song during a brush arbor service.







## DAVE JR. AND BECKY FRANKS

were approved as missionaries in 1990. Dave, saved at the age of eight, grew up in Brazil where his parents, Dave and Pat Franks, served as missionaries. Becky was raised in a pastor's home, accepted Christ as Savior as a five-year-old, and assisted in ministry throughout her youth. Once the couple arrived in Uruguay, Dave pastored churches in Malvin Norte and Montevideo and taught classes in the Bible institute. Becky aided in training teachers and taught Bible studies, English, and feminine ministry classes. In 1999, the Franks returned to the States for medical reasons. Following a medical leave-of-absence, Dave and Becky regretfully submitted their resignation in 2001. The Franks live and minister in Alabama.



## RICK AND LINDA BOWLING

were appointed to missionary service in 1983 as church-planters. Rick accepted Christ as Savior at the age of eight. Linda was saved as a 10-year-old. During the early years of their marriage, Rick and Linda realized they were not fully committed to the Lord. Together they rededicated their lives and, subsequently, answered the call to missions. After attending Free Will Baptist Bible College and language school the couple settled in Uruguay. They were active in starting a work in the Montevideo suburb of Malvin Norte. The Bowlings tendered their resignation in 1990 due to medical needs. Rick entered the pastorate and the couple has a successful stateside ministry to Hispanics.



## DAVID & KENDRA DODSON

were appointed as career missionaries in 2008.



## SUSAN BUMPUS

was approved for missionary service in 1991, but later resigned.



## NEIL & MANDI MORGAN

were appointed as career missionaries in 2008.



LEFT: Amy Robinson and Molly Barker join a group of women for a retreat.



# FRANCE

## *The Art of Evangelism*

*God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee,  
my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.*

P S A L M 63 : 1

The Greek colonists found their paradise. One look at the snow-capped mountains and the lush, rolling terrain inland of Gaul convinced the explorers in 602 B.C. they were in paradise. Greek influence in architecture and philosophy began to unfold until Rome claimed the land's beauty for its own in 51 B.C. Hundreds of years passed under Roman rule before greed for gain surfaced again. Invading Franks coveted the land. In victorious conquest, they changed the land's name to France, literally, "Land of the Franks."

Over time, France developed into a sophisticated society comprised of people from the bordering nations of Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain. Following the French Revolution in 1789, it also became the most powerful nation in Europe. Today, literacy rates soar around 98%, with a population over 64 million strong. World-renowned art galleries line picturesque streets, while culinary and fashion giants set new industry standards for the world on a regular basis. France is a modern nation, steeped in artistry, philosophy, and pride with a cultural trend toward intellectual elitism that rebels against most spiritual ideologies.

It is no wonder French people today seem spiritually jaded and disinterested. Along with their heritage of cultural advancement comes a history of bloodshed and violence wrought by spiritual differences. Roman Catholicism held preeminent political and spiritual power over the people for many centuries. During the time following the Reformation, 25% of the population declared themselves Protestant. A horrific battle over spiritual rights ensued, with the Roman Catholic Church leading the persecution and slaughter of thousands of Protestants. On St. Bartholomew's Day



**ABOVE:** The Arch of Triumph, constructed in 1806 to honor those who fought for France, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars, is a popular tourist attraction.

**RIGHT:** The countryside is filled with grape vineyards to supply France's renowned wineries.





alone, more than 10,000 Huguenots (Protestants) were slain. Though the Edict of Nantes in 1598 granted religious freedom to Protestants, it was revoked shortly thereafter. More than 2,000 church buildings were destroyed and thousands more believers killed.

### Mission Facts

With three established churches and two mission works, the Brittany area of France is showing signs of revival. Several Frenchmen are responding to opportunities to lead in their churches. A new association of churches is uniting the congregations. Outreach to young people has proven effective.

Today, less than two percent of France's booming population claims to be evangelical Christian. Church buildings serve as historic museums and architectural tourist attractions. France's Protestant foundation quietly dwindled, as missionaries trended toward more "pagan" societies in Africa and Latin America. France is now a true mission field, with doors both open and closed. Politically, the government ensures religious freedom for

any group that abides by French law. But French hearts are typically closed. Most people never read a Bible, and many never even see one. Weary of the Catholic Church's manipulation and empty ritual, they abandon what little they hear about God.

Free Will Baptists faced quite a challenge when opening a new work in France. Little to no evangelical work existed in most towns. Not only was the gospel foreign, so also were the concepts of sin and salvation. Past efforts by other mission groups had failed due to lack of funds, prayer support, and personnel, leaving the French with confusion and distrust.

Yet God was at work. In this spiritual desert, a large contingency thirsted for more. In 1966, when Free Will Baptist missionary Dan Merkh and family began a Bible study in Nantes, a city of 400,000, several residents attended. Within a very short time, the church outgrew the Merkh's living room, with 50 people in regular attendance. The Haas family soon joined them but the missionaries longed for more laborers. The need was so great they needed as many as were willing to come.

Over time, more missionaries joined the team and helped establish churches in Nantes, Rennes, St. Nazaire, and St. Sebastien. Though they still battle intellectualism, rationalism, widespread involvement in the occult, individualism, and growing socialist sentiment, God's people are overcoming the powers of darkness one relationship at a time. France is not neglected any longer. It is time

to shed the light of truth—the beacon of God's hope and love—to this embittered and disillusioned people.



ABOVE: Missionary Joe Haas purchases vegetables at a Rennes street market.

FRANCE	
CAPITAL	Paris
LARGEST CITY	Paris
AREA	643,427 sq. km.
POPULATION	64,057,792
CURRENCY	Euro
PER CAPITA INCOME	\$33,200
RELIGIONS	
Roman Catholic	66.9%
Non-religious	19.8%
Islam	10%
Ethnic religions	1.2%
Buddhism	1.0%
Evangelical Christian	0.8%
Unreached People Groups	33

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project



# THE JOY OF SACRIFICE

*The Joe and Barbara Haas Story*

*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

I S A M U E L 15 : 22

From his time spent at Free Will Baptist Bible College and Taylor University, Joe Haas felt sure God was calling him to further the kingdom. His future wife, Barbara Norris, agreed to his call, knowing the sacrifice it implied. So when Joe and Barbara married in 1951, they did not settle down to build a life for themselves. Instead, they followed wherever God led.

Joe and Barbara spent the next 15 years pastoring four churches in four states. They also began raising five children: Joe Jr., Trudy, Beverly, Melvin, and Christy. Then, with their hands full with family and ministry, God called them somewhere new: France.

Joe and Barbara, with five children in tow, packed their bags and headed for Switzerland where the whole family began their great adventure, trusting Christ in far-off places with foreign languages to bring the French people hope.

In 1968, the Haas family completed language study and arrived in Rennes, France, to begin their first appointment alongside Dan Merkh. Within a short time, they immersed themselves in student ministries, literature distribution, Bible clubs, and regular church activities. When Dan returned to the States for a short furlough, Joe took on the ministry reins. He experienced his first French wedding, and the thrill of sharing the gospel through the French language. “The house was full and running over!” Joe exclaimed. “It was a wonderful privilege to give them

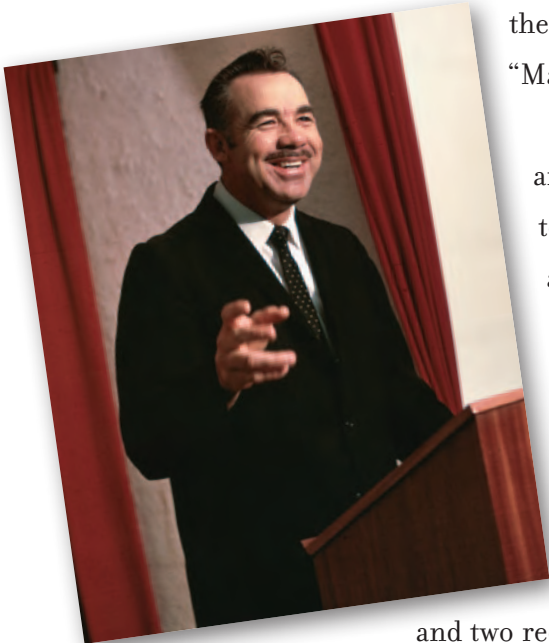


**ABOVE:** Barbara Haas teaches a children's Bible class in Rennes.

**RIGHT:** Joe Haas teaches a course at the Bible institute sponsored by the Rennes FWB Church.







the gospel, and the Lord gave me great liberty in preaching His Word,” he continued. “Many people heard the gospel for the first time in their lives.”

The Haas family found many more opportunities to share Christ with the lost around them, having immediate and long-range impact. One young French school teacher heard Joe’s testimony and was moved. In time, Joe led Gerard to Christ, a conversion which inspired and invigorated his home church in Rennes. Later, Gerard felt called to use his teaching skills in Bondoukou, Côte d’Ivoire, where his positive attitude and witness greatly helped missionaries Jimmy and Janie Aldridge for several years.

In addition to Gerard, many French men and women responded to the gospel through the ministry in Rennes. “At times, it was like a revival atmosphere in the church,” Joe said of the week they saw seven new people receive Christ and two rededicate their lives. New efforts, including a church fair to garner youth interest, as well as a telephone and tape ministry, were launched. As the church prospered, Joe helped locate a building to house worship and the new initiatives. God provided a storefront in a prime shopping center. More than 30,000 people lived within walking distance of the location.

Once situated in their new location, the Rennes church experienced a rapidly-growing Bible club ministry, and a well-received English Bible study developed to reach university students. Simply having a renovated building in the area generated local excitement, prompted questions from the community, and opened doors for evangelism. More than 30 children from the neighboring apartment complex began attending Sunday school, while their parents investigated the services.

The Haas family knew they were taking a risk when they left the security of the States for an unfamiliar country filled with lost souls. But their faith in Christ led to countless conversions, not only in Rennes, but also in every part of the world where their children in Christ continue to go.

They saw and tasted the truth of God’s Word, “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”



**TOP:** Joe joyfully shares the message of Christ from the pulpit in Rennes.

**MIDDLE:** Many young men received Christ and were disciplined through Haas’ ministry.

**RIGHT:** Joe and Barbara and some of their children take a moment to pose with student missionaries.



# HIS KINGDOM FIRST

## *The Jerry and Barbara Gibbs Story*

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;  
and all these things shall be added unto you.*

MATTHEW 6:33



Jerry and Barbara Gibbs beamed with joy. Nothing gave them greater pleasure than discipling believers and adding families to the church. On this day, they watched one of their newest converts in the St. Nazaire Free Will Baptist Church soak in the teachings during missions month. But following one of the sessions, Olivia seemed dazed and confused. When Jerry asked her what was on her mind, she replied, “Everything, just everything—I’ve heard so much this morning that I’ve never heard before.”

Jerry and Barbara were first appointed to France in August of 1972. Though both received Christ early in life—Jerry at a revival at age 14 and Barbara when she was only seven—God called them to missions during their time at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Jerry married Barbara Pate, who graduated with a B.S. degree in Christian Education and music. Jerry worked in the circulation division of the Foreign Missions Department while Barbara served the Sunday School Department as a graphic designer for three years before leaving for France.

After a year of language training, they arrived in Rennes, France. They joined Joe and Barbara Haas in an “Operation Mobilization” campaign to rally the city’s youth for a special three-week ministry. Jerry and Barbara were drawn to the French children and teens, and began an effective Bible club in their basement. Though their ministry focused on children, older siblings and parents took notice. Through the mouths of babes God brought the gospel to even more people, as curious onlookers visited the church for answers.

When the Haas family returned to the States for furlough, Jerry assumed the responsibilities at the Rennes Church. Head knowledge quickly translated to experience, as he witnessed God working out several new “firsts” for him in his ministry. “I baptized three new converts for the first time during my ministry. I performed my first communion service, first wedding, and I had my first son,” he remembered. “Considering that I was in my first pastorate, it was a lot of firsts. I even started my first garden,” he said with a smile.







sensation, neighborhood Bible clubs and Bible studies, and relationships forged through purposeful networking, the Gibbs were able to reach the neighboring communities with vital information. Little by little, people who placed the calls or received the mailers came by to investigate the new church.

In time, the congregation grew to more than 50 members. Jerry baptized new converts from all stages of life. Though conversion for these French believers was difficult—many of their family members disowned or ridiculed them—they found a new family within the body of Christ. In turn, they began sharing with their friends and family members, and the gospel work continued. Jerry and Barb enjoyed another first as the church grew. They led the church to construct a new church building—a rarity in France.

For over three decades of ministry, the Gibbs witnessed the gospel's power to resurrect dead marriages. They saw teens, including their own three sons, dedicate their lives to Christ for service. Sadly, they also saw families divided, when some members came to Christ while others turned away.

Jerry and Barb continue on, knowing the God Who called them to this mighty work in France, will build His Kingdom in His time.

**FAR LEFT:** Jerry Gibbs prepares to baptize a convert from the St. Nazaire Church.

**LEFT:** Jerry leads the small choir in the St. Nazaire Free Will Baptist Church.

**ABOVE:** New church buildings in France are rare. Jerry, a few coworkers, youth, and children commemorate their new building by gathering around their new church sign.

**RIGHT:** Book and literature stands often offer the opportunity to make new contacts and distribute the gospel. Jerry converses with a potential buyer.



With each new experience, Jerry gained more access to the French souls surrounding him. By their second term, the Gibbs were ready to open a new work in St. Nazaire. Utilizing literature distribution, a new biblio-bus (bookmobile) in the market areas, an automatic telephone answering machine that delivered a three-minute gospel pre-

## J'CROIS

*"I Believe!"*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

EPHESIANS 6:13

Over several centuries, French sentiment toward God and Christianity was soured through a long history of abuse by errant clergy. Once home to French Huguenots willing to die for their faith, today's French culture finds little worth fighting for. Government leaders, academia, and media push toward a godless society, and many youth are inclined to listen.

But not all. J'Crois, French for "I Believe," is an annual conference held in August for young believers and seekers to learn more about their faith. Each year, many Christian teens from St. Nazaire, Nantes, St. Sebastien, and other suburbs and small towns attend the conference to hear influential speakers, participate in training seminars, and fellowship with other Christians who share their struggles of living out their faith in an apos-

tate society. As they learn how to defend their faith against the humanism and evolution taught in their schools, they eagerly share what they are learning with others.

Through Free Will Baptist missionaries and French Christians teaming together, God is reclaiming lost ground in the battle over teen minds and souls, and changing the community in the process. Will God win the war? J'Crois!



# SINGLE PURPOSE

## *The Patsy Vanhook Story*

*For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.*

ISAIAH 50:7

She was brought up in church. She knew the truth, yet she suppressed surrender. Then, at the tender age of 11, God turned her heart toward Him. Patsy Vanhook was never the same. She belonged to the Lord, and she was determined to give Him her whole life.

Following high school and active participation in her home church in Rogers, Arkansas, God led Patsy to Free Will Baptist Bible College. Focused on her training, she graduated in 1970 as a member of the Delta Chi honor society. Although she spent the next three school years teaching at Pensacola Christian School, her summers were reserved for short-term missions work in France, where she assisted missionaries and gained personal evangelism experience. After missionary internship training in Michigan, Patsy felt ready and eager to begin her own full-time missionary career in France.

Saying goodbye to parents, seven brothers and sisters, and the host of friends she held dear in the U.S. was not easy, but Patsy set her face toward what God had in store for her. She completed language training in Albertville, France, and then headed for the mountains—not of France, but of Switzerland! Not distracted, just determined to be fully equipped for her heart's passion, Patsy studied in the Child Evangelism Institute where she gained invaluable tools and skills for effective children's ministries.

Her full-time ministry began in Rennes, France. Patsy joined the Haas family in their efforts to develop and strengthen the Rennes Free Will Baptist Church, and to kindle interest among the youth. She spent many hours organizing and implementing Bible club programs for neighborhood children, and



**ABOVE:** Patsy Vanhook teaches a children's class at the church in Rennes.



**RIGHT:** Patsy makes change for a sale at the Free Will Baptist-sponsored Christian bookstore in Nantes.



teaching and visiting on behalf of the church. Yet with all the effort, little abiding fruit showed. “A wall of unconcern and indifference seemed to prevail,” she said.



minds and hearts. She also began teaching adult women, and forged strong and lasting friendships with many who came to Christ.

Patsy grew accustomed to the long months and sometimes years it took to see conversions take place. Yet the excitement over changed lives never grows old. “I remember that wonderful September when Jacqueline, from St. Nazaire, finally believed in Jesus as her Savior,” she said. “It had taken a year of faithful witnessing and explaining before she was ready. But now, she has expressed the peace and calm she feels when she spends time with the Lord each evening. What a miraculous transformation!”

In 1997, God led her to St. Sebastien where she became involved in Bible studies for women, children’s ministry, and visitation ministries. Then, He opened her eyes to the growing need for Christian literature in Nantes, France, where more than 800,000 people—mostly non-Christians—resided. She concluded that God wanted her to open a Christian bookstore, and God paved the way. Patsy opened her Christian bookstore in 2003, eager to share Christ with her community.

Patsy never knows who will next enter her store or her life. But one thing she knows for sure: she will share the love of Christ her Savior with whomever He brings her way. It is her single purpose until she can see Jesus face-to-face.

“We knew God had to raise up prayer warriors at home to help further our efforts here.”

In God’s time, Patsy did witness the miracle of changed lives through the preaching and hearing of God’s Word—not only in Rennes, but also in St. Nazaire, where she helped open a new work. Bible clubs reached over 100 children at a time, planting seeds of truth in young

## EACH ONE TO REACH ONE

### *The Yannick Kermovan Story*

**Y**annick Kermovan was ready to give up. His family—Catholic by name but not by practice—smiled condescendingly at his innocent questions about God, but always steered him in other directions. Even after marrying his wife Dominique, Yannick yearned to know the Creator.

Meanwhile, another man not far from the Kermovans also felt like giving up. A Free Will Baptist missionary, Don Sexton, sacrificed the comforts of home and years of energy to learn French and initiate evangelism efforts. Despite his efforts, he saw almost no fruit. “God, please send your discouraged servant a sign!” he pleaded.

The doorbell rang before the prayer on his lips was finished. Yannick Kermovan waited on the threshold to sell the Sextons a car. Don invited Yannick inside. After working out a car deal, Don turned the conversation toward God. As Don read Ephesians 2:8-9, Yannick’s world changed. He realized God saves man through faith in Christ, not by man’s works. Yannick was freed by the power of God’s Word.

He faithfully relayed all he learned to Dominique, and both soon became Christians.

In time, Yannick and Dominique felt led to leave their lucrative careers to enter into ministry. Like the Sextons, the Kermovans committed their lives to liberating the lost people around them.



**TOP:** Outdoor vacation Bible school classes attract a wide range of ages.

**RIGHT:** Using a whiteboard, Patsy teaches a children’s Bible story.



**BELOW:** The construction of an evangelical church in St. Nazaire was a strange sight for French people.

**RIGHT MIDDLE:** Jerry Gibbs stands in the doorway of the completed Free Will Baptist church in St. Nazaire.



**ABOVE:** Joe Haas and several fathers gather with their children in front of the Rennes FWB Church.

**FAR RIGHT:** Don Sexton prepares to baptize a convert from the Lorient church.





**RIGHT:** Dan Merkh preaches in Nantes.

**RIGHT MIDDLE:** Children proudly participate in a Bible lesson.





# FOCUSED ON FRANCE

## *The Dennis and Carol Teague Story*

*And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

J O H N 10 : 4

She grew up in a Free Will Baptist church, gave her life to Christ at age 10, and even enrolled in Free Will Baptist Bible College. But Carol Fowler was still not sure that God was calling her to overseas missions...until she met Dennis.

Dennis Teague, who also attended FWBBC, accepted Christ at age 15. Though his spiritual life languished for a few years following his conversion, he recommitted his life to God when he was 19. God began to burden his heart for missions. During a campus revival, Dennis felt confirmation of God's leading. Following graduation, he spent nine months in France as a student and two summers as a student missionary, working with Joe Haas at the Rennes Free Will Baptist Church. In 1973, Dennis and Carol married, and Carol took her husband's calling as her own.

Dennis pastored a church in Oklahoma for a year before their appointment in 1974. He was excited to rejoin the Rennes church, teaming with Joe Haas again as they worked together to strengthen and build the members and their outreach. The Teagues spent the next three years in Rennes, assisting with youth ministry, Bible clubs, literature distribution, visitation, and general hospitality to new converts and seekers.

In 1978, the couple resigned to further their education. While attending the School of World Missions in southern California, Dennis worked with youth at Sherwood Forest FWB Church. The Teagues returned to France in 1983 to help open a work in St. Sebastien, a suburb of the large city of Nantes. Dennis initiated an annual youth conference

to strengthen young Christians. He also seeks non-traditional ways to engage French culture, including coaching a girls' basketball team at a local school. Teaming with other missionaries in the area, these servants of God diligently work to advance the gospel throughout the vast communities around them.



**TOP LEFT:** Dennis and Carol Teague returned to France with their three sons in 1983, following a hiatus for further education.

**LEFT:** Dennis preaches at the St. Sebastien church which he and Carol began.





# PLANTING SEEDS

## *The Steve and Becky Riggs Story*

What could be more natural than becoming a missionary when you grew up in the home of Raymond Riggs, considered by many to be “Mr. Foreign Missions” among Free Will Baptists? Steve Riggs and his wife Becky served a short term of service in France during the fall of 1980 and were appointed as career missionaries in May 1983. Following language study, the Riggs joined a mission team working in Lorient, France.

Steve and Becky continued in Lorient until 1989, when they teamed with Allan and LaRue Crowson and Charolette Tallent to work in Nantes, the largest city in Brittany. At the time Nantes sported a population of approximately 600,000 people and about 30,000 university students. The gospel message was completely foreign to most of the population. Steve assumed the pastoral role and utilized various programs of outreach, including Charolette’s ministry to university students and Allan’s teaching skills. Fruitful evangelism campaigns were also conducted in cooperation with Operation Mobilization in 1991, and the ministry team from the ship *Logos II* in 1995.

In 2001, as the church grew, Steve led the Nantes congregation to purchase a building. He sought assistance from former Nantes missionary John Murray as well as teams from Spain and the United States to refurbish it. The building was officially dedicated in February of 2003. Fittingly, “Mr. Foreign Missions” himself was on hand to preach the dedicatory message with son Steve translating for him.

Steve and Becky continue to serve faithfully in France. Working with French Christians, the couple seeks to plant new churches in towns surrounding Nantes—towns with no other outlet for the gospel.



**ABOVE:** Steve Riggs entertains missionary colleagues and MKs during a Christmas gathering.

**LEFT:** Becky Riggs teaches a children’s Sunday school class in Nantes.



## FORGING NEW FRONTIERS

### *The Dan and Margaret Merkh Story*

It was a new frontier for Free Will Baptists, and Dan and Margaret Merkh headed the challenge. In 1965, the missions-minded couple with four years service in the Ivory Coast was commissioned to open the first Free Will Baptist work in Europe. More than 36,000 towns and villages in France lacked any regular gospel ministry. Most French people did not even own a Bible.



Once the Merkhs completed language school, they decided to begin their work in Nantes, because “it was more advantageously located to reach cities around the area.” They found a home just outside the city, secured legal permits to distribute gospel literature, and began the work of evangelizing an enormous community far removed from its Protestant heritage.

The Merkhs distributed literature, held home Bible studies, networked in the market, and prayed. They realized how much they needed God to not only to work in French hearts, but also to move Americans to answer the call to serve in France.

In time, they began the Nantes Free Will Baptist Church. Other missionary couples came to strengthen the work and encourage each other through the slow, tedious evangelism process. Slowly, relationship by relationship, the people of France began to respond. As the Nantes church grew, Dan began works in Rennes, St. Nazaire and later in Lorient, as well. Though the church in each city faced its own obstacles, God used the trials and persecutions to strengthen the new believers. His work continues today.

## STUDENT HEART

### *The Charolette Tallent Story*

She often reminded herself, “Judge each day not by the harvest, but by the seeds we plant.” It was a quote that encouraged Charolette’s heart through the long, difficult evangelism efforts she made in a French culture that seemed impervious to truth.



Every once in a while, God reminded her of His hidden workings. University students to whom she witnessed and ministered for years would finally see the light. Slowly, God was adding to His kingdom. And Charolette acknowledged the other truth she learned: “God’s harvest often comes in His tomorrow and not our today.”

Charolette chose France as her ministry focus while serving as a student missionary in the summer of 1974. Later, she spent a year at the University of Rennes, working with Joe and Barbara Haas where her vision as a career missionary in France crystallized, and where she spent most of her time during her first term. Her second term led her to the port city of Lorient, where she teamed with Lynn and Ramona Miley and Jerry and Janice Webb. For the next two terms, Charolette worked with Allan and LaRue Crowson and Steve and Becky Riggs in Nantes, where she counseled and led university outreach.

After 20 years in France, Charolette felt God leading her back to the States. In 2008 Charolette joined the Mission staff, serving as the stateside manager for field operations—a role that combines her vast administrative skills and missions experience to assist new and current field personnel.



## MAKE DISCIPLES

### *The Cathy Crawford Story*



Ohio native Cathy Crawford was saved at age 13. Following a time of trial in 1973, she committed her life to Christ for missionary service. After graduating from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1977, she spent seven months as a short-term missionary in France. Assured of God's leading, she applied for career missionary status and was appointed to France in April of 1982.

Following language study, Cathy spent a short time in a Child Evangelism Fellowship training program to enhance her abilities to evangelize children. Her first ministry in France was in the city of Nantes working with John and Pansy Murray. In 1989, she joined Dennis and Carol Teague in starting a new work in St. Sebastien, a suburb of Nantes. Personal evangelism, writing and distributing tracts, conducting Bible studies, counseling, and youth work keep her busy.

Cathy's efforts in personal evangelism and teaching individual Bible studies are particularly noteworthy. On one occasion she even invited a woman to live with her and study the Bible for a period of time shortly after her conversion. In 2009, Cathy joined missionaries Steve and Becky Riggs and Ledgel and Sharon Ferguson in an effort to start a new work in Châteaubriant, France.



## FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

### *The Tom and Patty McCullough Story*



When Tom and Patty McCullough volunteered for missionary service, they had no idea what difficulties they would face. Soon after their appointment and commissioning, Patty was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, yet they determined to answer God's call and received approval from doctors and the board to continue. The McCulloughs moved to France, attended the University of Rennes, and started a student ministry in addition to English Bible studies.

When Jerry and Barbara Gibbs left the field for stateside ministry in 1982, Tom and Patty moved to St. Nazaire and assumed the pastoral ministry of the church. Working with missionary Patsy Vanhook, Tom and Patty saw steady

growth. Patty suffered an attack of MS in December of 1985 which temporarily impaired vision in her right eye, yet she and Tom continued.

The church purchased property in 1987, and Jerry and Tom worked on preliminary plans before the Gibbs left for stateside deputation and fund-raising. Tom oversaw construction, and Jerry returned for a short trip, bringing a building crew. They finished the inside of the building in one week. Patty underwent cancer surgery in the States in November of 1991, and her health led to the couple's resignation in 1995. Her physical battles ended in 2004 when she met her Savior. Tom extended his ministry stateside by teaching missions at Free Will Baptist Bible College for several years and serving on the mission board.



ABOVE: Tom McCullough reads scripture to an ill elderly man.





### ALLAN & LARUE CROWSON

transferred from Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, to Nantes, France, in 1982. The Crowsons worked with the church in Nantes and were responsible for leadership training for French FWB churches. They resigned from missionary service in 1995 and are currently living in Tennessee.



### DON & BILLIE SEXTON

(1971–1979) assisted in the Nantes church upon arrival in France then moved to Lorient to pastor the work there. During their second term they started a new work in Nantes. Due to health problems the Sextons did not return to the field after their second term. Don went home to be with the Lord in 1997, and Billie lives in East Tennessee.



### K.C. & LIZ KOHN

were approved as career missionaries. Due to challenges of support-raising the Kohn's submitted their resignation never making it to the field.



### STEVE & DONNA OLSON

were appointed as career missionaries in 2004. Unable to raise the needed funds, they submitted their resignation in 2007.



### ROBERT & JUDY BRYAN

were approved in 1968 to work in Côte d'Ivoire. They transferred to France in 2004 to begin a ministry of leadership development. They currently assist in the St. Nazaire church.



### LEDGEL & SHARON FERGUSON

began a support ministry in France in 2006. They are involved in personal evangelism, discipleship training, and concentrated, focused prayer. The Fergusons are currently involved in a new church-planting effort in Châteaubriant.



### TIM & DI KEENER

began language study in 2003 and moved to Nantes in 2004. The Keeners are involved in planting a church in Couëron. In 2009, Tim was appointed to serve as regional director for Europe.

**FAR RIGHT ABOVE:** Joe Haas, Dan Merkh, "Mom" Willey, and J. Reford Wilson congregate with members of the Rennes FWB Church.  
**FAR RIGHT:** John Murray poses with his bookmobile—a vehicle equipped to sell Bibles and Christian literature.





### JOHN & PANSY MURRAY

were approved as career missionaries in 1977. They worked in Nantes where John led the people in renovating the church building. The Murrays took charge of the work in Nantes from 1979-1989. They currently reside in Tennessee.



### MATT & CRISTINA PRICE

began their ministry in France at the Nantes FWB Church. Currently, they are working to plant a new church in Couëron and are involved in youth and children's ministries.



### JERRY & JANICE WEBB

(1974-1984) assisted in starting a work in Nantes. During their second term they worked to reopen services in Lorient. The Webbs returned to the States in 1983 and submitted their resignation the following year.



### LYNN & RAMONA MILEY

transferred from Côte d'Ivoire to France where they served in Lorient from 1980-1986. They reside in Alabama.



### DAWN SWEENEY

was appointed in 1983 and served briefly in Lorient. She resigned in 1987 due to health issues.





# SPAIN

## *A Mighty Fortress*

*For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for  
thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.*

P S A L M 31 : 3

Loria and Mercedes Hernandez, native Cubans and Free Will Baptists, were distressed. Displaced from their home during Cuba's communist takeover, they relocated to Spain in 1969, where they hoped the same language and similar culture might become an opportunity for the gospel to penetrate Spanish souls as well. It did not take the Hernandez family long to discover that Spanish hearts seemed as impenetrable as the austere castles built there almost a thousand years earlier.

As a constitutional monarchy, Spain stands like a fortress, proud and strong, on land that rises sharply above the Mediterranean and Atlantic waters that all but surround the Iberian Peninsula. Much of Spain rests on this plateau, crossed with mountains and cut with deep valleys. It is a dramatic, colorful, and exotic presentation of life. Nearly 40 million people call this land south of France and the Pyrenees Mountains home. Most of the population inhabits Spain's urban centers since farmland is poor, rocky, and generally unsuited for agriculture. Though the land produces enough food for the country, with 50% of its exports being food and wine, the people are growing increasingly dependent on imports and the ever-flourishing tourist industry. Spaniards are proud workers—many from an affluent background with a high literacy rate and emphasis on education and success. Their families form the bedrock of their society, placing moral premiums on family duties and relationships.

While Loria and Mercedes Hernandez appreciated the important role family played in shaping the Spanish culture, they learned the source of its strength stemmed from the country's strong Catholic roots. More than 90% of Spaniards claim the state religion as their own, though fewer than 27% actually practice it. In fact, spiritual apathy plagues the Spanish people as a whole, with individuals disillusioned by empty ritual and promises promoted by the Roman Catholic Church over the centuries. Though an influx of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other cults attempt to infiltrate the culture, the greatest barrier to Christian growth is hearts turned cold to spiritual matters altogether.



**ABOVE:** The Aqueduct in Segovia, Spain, was built without mortar or cement by the Romans during the first century.

**RIGHT:** The Alcazar (castle) of Segovia served as the frequent residence of monarchs during the Middle Ages.

**FAR RIGHT:** The Alcazar of Toledo has served as a fortification since Roman times. Almost totally demolished in 1936 by artillery fire, it has since been rebuilt and serves as a museum.





## Mission Facts

Spain has five churches with three non-missionary pastors. The country's vast immigrant population has presented some challenges, but even more opportunities. Social outreach ministries are thriving. Strategies for reaching North African immigrants are being implemented.

It was the desperate need for evangelism and spiritual help that led the Hernandez family to petition the Board of Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions for assistance in May of 1971. They shared the gospel with some neighbors and friends, and a few accepted Christ. But no evangelical support group other than their home-based Bible study existed to strengthen the new converts. To make matters worse, the Hernandez family


faced another relocation—this time to Australia—because of financial difficulties. Uruguayan missionary Paul Robinson made a trip to Spain to survey the situation. The need was more than obvious, but so were the difficulties facing any prospective missionary. He concluded, “A tremendous ministry is awaiting somebody who has the courage to go and do a lot of planting.”

As God began to move, Free Will Baptists stateside and around the world began to pray for Spain. Though the Hernandez family was forced to leave, God called Dock and Norma Jean Caton of Oklahoma and Lonnie and Anita Sparks, who transferred from Côte d’Ivoire to begin working in Spain. The Catons began working on the western side of Madrid while the Sparks worked the eastern side in Alcalá. Through trial and error, these and other missionaries who joined them slowly discovered the keys to best reach Spaniards. Through the years, literature, home Bible studies, outdoor evangelistic campaigns, and children’s classes were used to reach the lost. However, they found the most effective outreach to simply be friendships and participation within the community itself. As Lonnie Sparks said, “We certainly visited people and invited them to come, but many times it has been clear that their coming was God’s doing.”

God continues to work in mysterious ways. Free Will Baptist and other evangelical churches planted in the past decades have experienced slow, difficult growth. Even Christian Spaniards were difficult to motivate toward kingdom mindsets and action. So God brought movement and energy through an unexpected group: immigrants. Thousands of refugees from communist-riddled countries in Central and South America, as well as Eastern Europe, flooded the once secluded peninsula. Some immigrants brought with them a strong Christian faith, and eagerly sought out friendship and support from local evangelical churches.

Missionaries are encouraging Spaniards to embrace their brothers and sisters in Christ as welcomed members, instead of viewing them as a threat to their culture. Jeff Turnbough, missionary to Spain, explained it best: “For years we asked God to move in Spain. We thought that would be through Spanish believers. But as often happens, we may not have been looking where God was working. No doubt immigration in Spain is a problem for the politicians, but it may be one of the greatest praise items the people of God have seen in recent history.” Through the immigrants’ weakness and dependence on Christ, God demonstrates to the proud Spaniards what true strength really is. May they all find refuge in Him, the Mighty Fortress Who never fails.



 S P A I N	
CAPITAL .....	Madrid
LARGEST CITY .....	Madrid
AREA .....	505,370 sq. km.
POPULATION .....	40,525,002
CURRENCY .....	Euro
PER CAPITA INCOME .....	\$34,700
RELIGIONS	
Roman Catholic .....	65.2%
Non-religious .....	30.9%
Islam .....	1.2%
Evangelicals .....	0.4%

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Joshua Project



# INCREASING BORDERS

## *The Jeff and Susan Turnbough Story*

*And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.*

I C H R O N I C L E S 4 : 1 0

The young, Christian family was nervous and excited at the same time. They searched all over Villalba, Spain, for a new home. At last, the Lord led them to one with an especially large living-room area. “We felt God might use the space as a gathering place for Christians,” the husband explained. “Of course, we did not have any idea how to invite or even find evangelical Christians around us to start up a group. So we began to pray that the Lord would send us some help.”

Meanwhile, Jeff and Susan Turnbough were ministering on the other side of Madrid during their first term of missionary service to the country. Both attended the University of Madrid for language study, and moved into the Dock and Norma Caton residence while they were on furlough.

Jeff and Susan had great expectations for what God was going to do through them in Spain. Both came from Christian families, and both had fathers who pastored in Free Will Baptist churches in the States. Both came to know the Lord at age nine. Both felt strongly called to the mission field during their tenures at Free Will Baptist Bible College, where Jeff earned two degrees: a B.S. in Music and Christian Education and a B.A. in Biblical Studies and Missions. Susan earned her degree in Bible, Christian Education, and Missions. Over the years, Jeff furthered his training with an M.A. from Grace Theological Seminary and a Doctorate of Missiology from Biola University. Susan spent two summers volunteering in the Ivory Coast, and gained experience through initiating children’s churches in Tennessee and Alabama.

Fully equipped for the good works God called the couple to do in Spain, they looked expectantly for signs of God’s movement among the people. They were surprised to find it on the opposite side of Madrid from where they were initially stationed.





“We decided to buy some Christian books, literature, cassette tapes, and other media to sell or distribute in the weekly open-air markets we were having,” Jeff remembered. “When we set up our stand in Villalba, we were encouraged by several different Christians who approached us and told us how glad they were we were in the city. Four or five non-Christians actually asked us what we believed and stayed to listen to the whole gospel presentation,” he continued. Then God led the family with the large living room right to the Turnboughs.



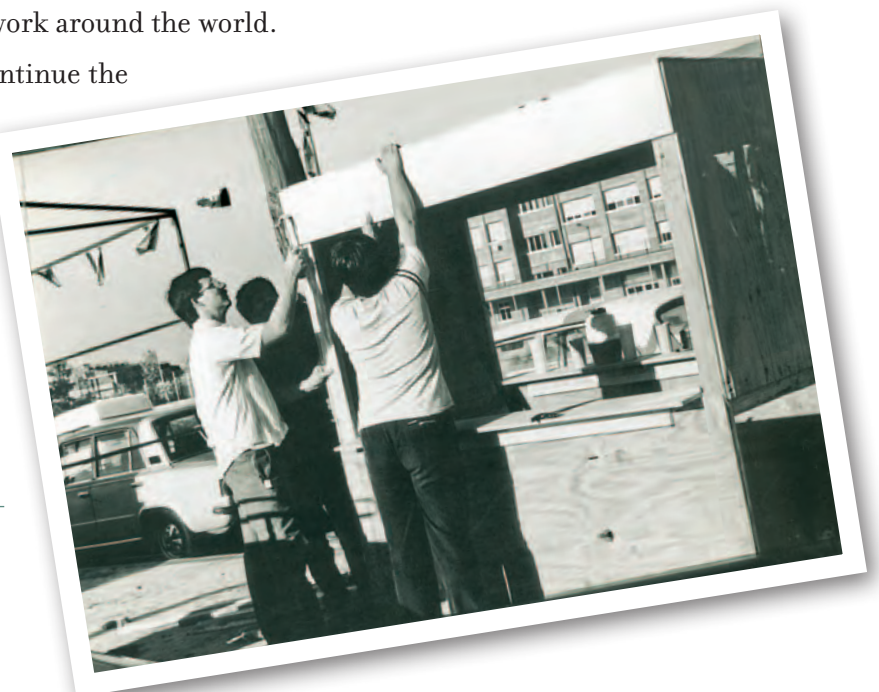
“We expected three to come to our Bible study the next day,” Jeff said. “Instead, eight came. We began meeting in the home of the young Christian family who had visited us the day before. And right before our eyes, God began building the first Free Will Baptist Church of Villalba.”

Over time, more converts were added, and the church began to outgrow their facilities. As they made plans to purchase or build a sanctuary, the Turnboughs were thrilled to transition the church to national leadership. They were eager to repeat the experience in Majadahonda, Spain, where a previous outreach attempt by other missionaries failed to take hold. But God simply had other plans.

“The Villalba church began to struggle and asked us and the McVays to return and assist them,” Jeff said. Surprised again at God’s direction, both families immediately returned to help strengthen the church and work through a 13-year court battle over the new sanctuary’s construction. In God’s perfect time, the church was stabilized and a new facility was acquired, becoming the very first Protestant free-standing church building in the one-million-plus population of Villalba, Spain. Jeff completed his dissertation for his doctorate degree by conducting a large research effort into the lives of first-generation Spanish converts. His work provided keen insight into more effective outreach strategies for the Spanish communities around them.

As the Turnboughs grew in knowledge, experience, and the love of Christ, God expanded their influence from Spain to include France, Bulgaria, and Russia. Jeff became regional director for Free Will Baptists in Europe and Russia, and worked diligently to unite efforts in these countries, providing needed cohesion, accountability, and leadership. After two years, he was promoted to deputy director for field operations where he works with regional directors and field leaders to develop strategy and to oversee Free Will Baptist work around the world.

The Turnboughs’ two children, Matthew and Melissa, continue the legacy of leadership forged by their parents. Both earned Biblical Studies and Missions degrees from Free Will Baptist Bible College. Matthew and his wife Brooke labor as career missionaries in Spain, and Melissa serves as a nurse at a New York City hospital, where her husband Mason is a doctor.



**FAR LEFT:** Jeff Turnbough baptizes several converts in the Mediterranean Sea.

**LEFT:** Short-term missionary Mark Riggs greets Jeff and Susan Turnbough.

**UPPER RIGHT:** Jeff Turnbough preaches to the Villalba congregation.

**RIGHT:** Jeff and members of the Villalba church put together a book and literature booth.





**TOP:** Missionaries and Christian laymen prepare for an outdoor evangelistic campaign.

**MIDDLE:** Ron Callaway prepares to baptize a young girl in a swimming pool as Jeff Turnbough stands by to assist.

**RIGHT:** Pastor Juan Carlos of Cuba preaches at the church he began in Colmenar Viejo, Spain.





**TOP:** Anita Sparks plays the organ as the choir sings at the Alcálá de Henares church begun by the Sparks.

**MIDDLE:** A Christian layman faithfully shares the gospel message with someone on the street.

**LEFT:** Ron Callaway teaches a Bible class at the Alcálá de Henares FWB Church.



# HERE AM I

## *The Dock and Norma Caton Story*

**D**ock and Norma Caton had a heart for missions. After years spent in study at various colleges, Dock felt prepared to take his knowledge and passion to places where the message of Christ was not heard. Their first missions experience occurred in Brazil. “Long before we realized it, God was preparing us to go to Spain. Even as far back as high school, God prepared us through Spanish language classes,” Dock explained. “In Brazil we found it easy to respect and deeply love the Latin lifestyle which we felt would be greatly similar to that in Spain. God was directing us to those open doors.”



The Catons began working in Majadahonda, an urban center on the western side of Madrid. High property costs led them to use home-based churches and Bible studies to begin their efforts.

The Catons spent the next two terms faithfully ministering in Majadahonda, but little visible fruit resulted. Centuries of bad theology mingled with bitterness toward the Church created a hostile environment for typical evangelism strategies. It was a long, slow process, but the Catons were committed to plowing the field. As God saw fit, He raised up even more laborers to plant, water, and harvest.

After their second term, God called the Catons back to the United States where they worked with the growing population of Spanish-speaking residents in the Wheaton, Illinois, area.



**TOP LEFT:** Norma Caton plays the organ for a church service.

**LEFT:** Dock Caton uses a whiteboard to illustrate a Bible class lesson.

**ABOVE:** Norma and Dock Caton stand with their daughter in front of the Alcálá de Henares church building.



## THE SPIRIT IN SPAIN

*The Lonnie and Anita Sparks Story*

*The king's heart is in the hand of  
the LORD, as the rivers of water:  
he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

PROVERBS 21:1



Three terms—almost 18 years—were spent among the Koulango people of the Ivory Coast. Lonnie and Anita Sparks weathered enormous difficulties in language, culture, and spiritual opposition to witness a tremendous moving of God's Spirit among the Ivorian people. So when God began calling the committed couple to a new work in a new country, it is no wonder the decision came only after much agony and prayer. Lonnie asserted, "Missions is God's work. He has said: 'I will build my church' [Matthew 16:18b]. We are His vessels, living sacrifices in His hand. He will do the work!"

Yet the Sparks realized that God's kingdom work was never the easy path. Nor was it a comfortable one. With their two sons, Paul and Noel, the Sparks family left the African coast to initiate a Free Will Baptist outreach in Spain. Within two years, God used the Sparks family to begin a church in Alcalá de Henares.

While Lonnie preached and ministered to families, Anita worked alongside him handling the music, children's ministries, and visitation, and serving as a general hostess for all new contacts. The Sparks also initiated a letter campaign, explaining to the community who they were and sharing the gospel message. Lonnie said, "We have marveled at the way God has given us contacts in a land where this is often difficult. He's kept us busy doing meaningful things. We've been thrilled time and again at how the Lord has brought people out to hear the Word."

Just as God worked in the Ivory Coast, the Sparks witnessed His hand at work in Spain. They labored for three more terms, strengthening the Alcalá de Henares church and in another area with Mark and Juli Riggs.



**RIGHT:** Lonnie Sparks questions a young convert before baptizing her.

## HEART FOR GOD

*The José Manuel Parrón Story*

José saw and experienced enough ritual; he was ready for something real. Upon his first visit to the Free Will Baptist Church in Alcalá de Henares, he realized the search was over. Through the Sparks' teaching, Jesus and His gospel of hope became more real than any of the empty Catholic doctrines he learned as a child. He wholeheartedly gave his life to Christ.

Though only a teenager, young José felt the mighty Spirit of God in his life. Fueled by a passion to share Christ's gospel with other Spaniards, he actively visited homes, distributed literature, and obtained permission to show the *JESUS* film, preaching whenever given the chance.

As a young adult, he enlisted in the air force, where his faith remained firm. Despite the peer influence to attend mass before induction into the service, José opted to remain outside. Military leaders and friends marveled at the strength of his convictions.

After his time in military service, José dedicated his life to preaching.

A bivocational pastor, he served the Alcalá church where he first heard the Good News of Christ. Later, he began a new work in the city. José Manuel's wife Carmen and son and daughter work faithfully beside him, shining Christ's light and love in a spiritually dark place.





### SAM & JUNE McVAY

(1996–present) formed a church-planting team with Jeff and Susan Turnbough after completing language school. The McVays are currently involved in various ministries and praying for God to lead them to the right area to begin a new work.



### ANTHONY & LEA EDGMON

were appointed as career missionaries in 1997. They began their ministry in Villalba then joined the Alpedrete team in 2005. The team chose Alpedrete as one of the many towns in Spain whose history has never included a Protestant church.



### TIM & KRISTI JOHNSON

Appointed as career missionaries in 1997, Tim and Kristi Johnson began their ministry in Villalba. In 2005, they and the Edgmons formed a team to plant a new church in Alpedrete. They host a variety of events and classes at the outreach center and began worship services in February 2006.



### MARK & JULI RIGGS

(1989–1993) worked with the Sparks to start a church in Santurce. They returned to the States in 1993 and submitted their resignation. However, they returned to Spain independently to work among the Basque people.



### MATTHEW & BROOKE TURNBOUGH

were appointed as career missionaries in 2005. They assist in the music program, teaching English, and leading discipleship classes at the Villalba church. They also coordinate an outreach program for immigrants.



### DWAIN & DEBBIE CROSBY

(1987–1996) began their ministry in the Mostoles church. When the Spain field council approved the opening of a work in Majadahonda, the Crosby's moved to this suburb to begin a new ministry.

**FAR UPPER RIGHT:** Lonnie Sparks assists a convert down the steps of the pool for her baptism.

**FAR RIGHT:** Norma Caton holds a child while a home Bible study group sings.





### DENNIS & TRENA OWEN

appointed in 1979, helped open the work in Móstoles. During their second term they moved to Villalba and worked in the Villalba, Móstoles, and Alcalá churches. In 1990, ministry opportunities led them to Uruguay. Dennis' health led the Owens to resign in 2007. They live in Florida.



### STEVE & LINDA REEVES

(1985–1994) ministered in Villalba after finishing language school. Steve was involved in teaching at the Bible institute, and he and Linda worked with the children and youth. The Reeves resigned in 1994 due to Steve's medical needs.



### LYNN MIDGETT

was appointed to missionary service in 1982. She began her ministry by working in the Mostoles and Villalba churches, and later moved to Majadahonda to begin a ministry. Due to her father's failing health, she decided to submit her resignation in 2005 to help care for him.



## DIVINE STRATEGY

### *The Carmen Bolano Parrón Story*

The seven-year-old girl was devastated. Her mother, Petra Bolano, searched for words to comfort Carmen after learning her father suffered a horrific accident on the construction site where he worked. He was not coming home.

Carmen, her six brothers and sisters, and Petra realized they faced a difficult life ahead. But Petra, true to her name, was a rock of strength. Finding any work available, she labored alone to provide for her large family.

For a while, they lived near Petra's parents in a small village. But when she realized the children's education was suffering, Petra moved the family to Alcalá near her sister and

better schools. She was unaware the sovereign hand of God was gently guiding her to Him.

At the same time, God was moving in the hearts of Free Will Baptist missionaries to start a work in Alcalá. Eventually, a friend of Carmen's sister invited them to a Bible study. Not long after, she attended the church started by the Sparks family. Starting with Carmen, the entire Bolano family turned to Christ, including Petra.

In God's providence, Carmen went on to marry José Parrón, the first young man from the Alcalá church to answer the call to preach. Petra's third daughter, Juli, married Mark Riggs, missionary to Spain.



# OTHER WORKS

The larger story of the global missions movement includes heroes like Hudson Taylor, Adoniram Judson, Jim Elliott and dozens of others whose well-chronicled achievements are often shared. This is true of the story of

Free Will Baptist International Missions as well. Many people know the familiar names of certain Free Will Baptist missionary heroes and can easily connect them with recognizable, if not difficult to pronounce, places. Yet, the International Missions narrative is incomplete without the inclusion of lesser-known people and the places they served.

In many ways, the story of missions is a collection of life histories of people with willing hearts. When made aware of a place immersed in sin-induced gloom, missionaries set out to shine the Light—even when an established work was unavailable to receive them. The biographies of early Free Will Baptist pioneers follow this same line. They traveled to an unreached place where, through hard work and sacrifice, they established the foundations for longstanding and familiar works.

This same pattern is true of Free Will Baptists who sacrificially labored in lesser-known places. Whether the work became an established place for Free Will Baptists or not, workers were sent and went with passion to share the love of Christ. Some of their stories are lost in the pages of publications long out of print. Yet, they are part of His story—an important part of the team of people who took His light into the darkness.

Other stories are just beginning to be written. Workers are laboring in countries opened to Free

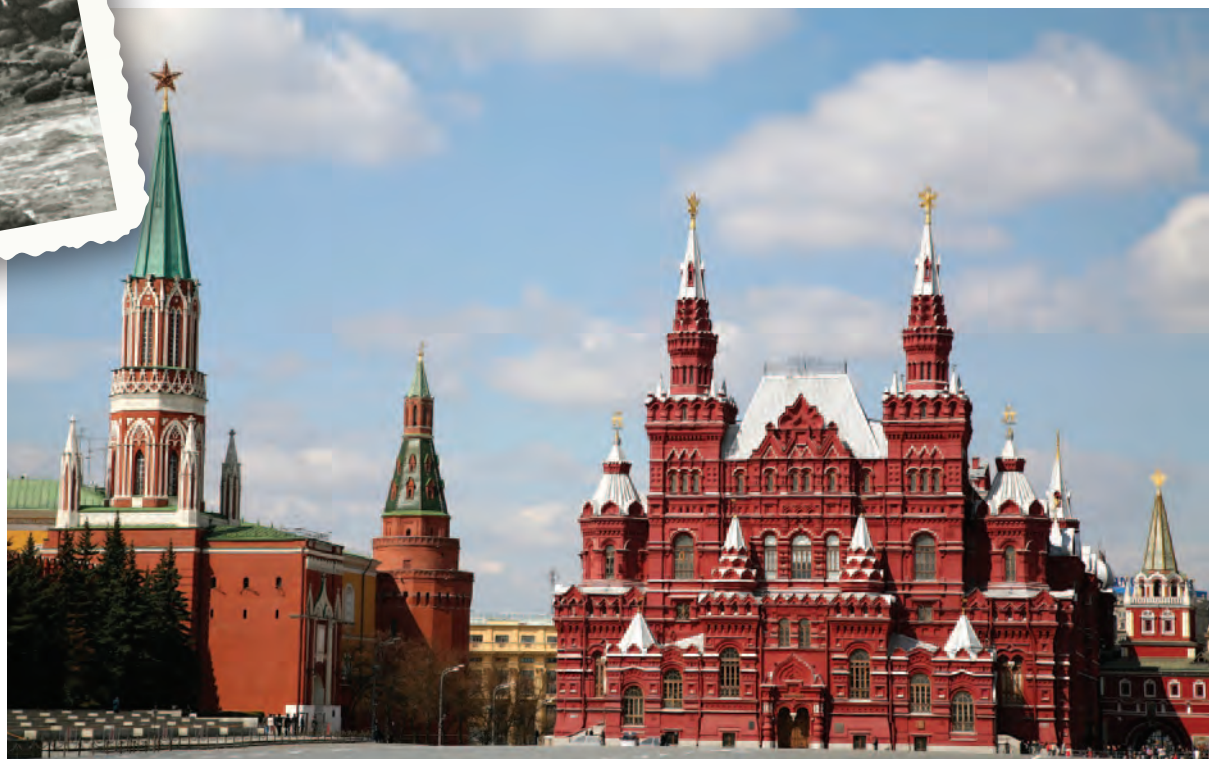
Will Baptists in recent years. These Light-bearers face many of the same trials and difficulties of pioneer missionaries from decades ago. Yet, lives are being changed as the truth of the gospel penetrates darkened hearts. New churches are being planted; new foundations laid for enduring works.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** A Bulgarian street scene is livened by a rare Christmas tree. Most Bulgarians do not celebrate Christmas.

**ABOVE LEFT:** Travel conditions in Ecuador's remote areas required four-wheel drive and determination.

**RIGHT:** Red Square, site of massive military parades during the Soviet era, is located in Moscow. Spires hail the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church, but offer little to aid people in finding Christ.





# GERMANY

## *On a Mission*

Technical Sergeant Dennis Heath and his wife Mary Jo had a special mission. For his career, Dennis served the United States Air Force in West Germany. He quickly became known for his high morals, and was recognized in a military periodical for an incident where he demonstrated “good Samaritan” behavior to a fellow serviceman. A dedicated soldier, Dennis recognized a higher calling. His true mission was to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dennis was a Free Will Baptist minister whose passion for God permeated his work and off time. He and his wife Mary Jo sought to establish a work at the Langerkopft Radio Relay Site, as well as one in the Ramstein Village, located two miles from the largest American military base in Europe. They soon secured a small facility in the village to house the new church, optimistic about what God wanted to do among the Germans and Americans living there. “Everything was falling into place,” said Dennis. Growth was slow but sure.

In time, Kim Zegelian arrived in Germany under the missionary affiliate program to assist the Heaths. They labored together to strengthen the Kusel church in Ramstein. Kim taught physical education at a recreation center when not carrying out church duties. A new facility in 1991 helped increase attendance from 10 to 22 members. A room was added for Bible studies and other outreach efforts.

Then Dennis and Mary Jo were transferred back to the States. Though the Kusel church’s closing was necessitated, all three affiliate missionaries asked God to raise up other laborers to continue a strong biblical foundation for the new believers’ growing faith.

**BELOW:** View at dawn of the famous Quadriga atop the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.



### DENNIS AND MARY HEATH

were appointed as affiliate missionaries in 1988.

Dennis was an ordained pastor serving in the Air Force stationed at Kapaum Air Station, Germany. He and his wife planned to

establish a FWB church in Germany. The Heaths resigned in 1994 due to Dennis’ reassignment.



### KIM ZEGELIEN

was appointed as an affiliate missionary in 1991. She assisted the Heaths in Kusel. Kim ministered to the children and wives of the military in Bible clubs, Sunday school, and monthly home Bible studies. Kim

left Germany in 1994, was appointed as a short-term missionary to Côte d’Ivoire in 1995, and became a career missionary in 1999. After much prayer Kim resigned in 2001 and took a teaching job in North Carolina.



# ECUADOR

## *Light in the Darkness*

*Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them:  
for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee;  
he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

DEUTERONOMY 31:6

Ecuador, literally “equator,” is a country the size of Nevada that lies sandwiched between Columbia and Peru and borders the Pacific Ocean to the west. Famous missionary martyrs Jim Elliott, Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Pete Fleming, and Ed McCully helped put this dark, jungle territory on the map, graphically depicting the savage heritage and great need held by the Indians within its terrain. Home to the Galapagos Islands and some of the most diverse animal and plant life in the world, scientists also find Ecuador to be a perfect place for pursuing research. With a population of 13.5 million people, more than 95% of Ecuadorians consider themselves Roman Catholic.



Clearly, Ecuadorians needed to hear gospel truth. But who was willing to venture into the vast poverty and backward culture to bring the light of Christ? God raised up two single women to tackle what seemed to be an impossible task. In April of 1964, the Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions Board appointed Ella Rae Jones and Patsy Tyson as medical missionaries to Ecuador, teaming with World Radio Missionary Fellowship which operated the two hospitals where the women were assigned. After completing a year of language study in Costa Rica, they each served a year in a hospital in Quito, the nation’s capital city, and another year in Shell Mera, situated on the edge of the Amazon jungle.

While in Ecuador, Ella Rae and Patsy were overwhelmed with the number of orphaned or neglected children, as well as impoverished families trying to make ends meet. In addition to caring for their medical needs, both women



ABOVE: Ecuadorian pastors prepare to baptize a convert in a swirling river.  
RIGHT: Ella Rae Jones teaches a Bible story to children in Shell Mera.





worked diligently to share the gospel through teaching Bible studies and clubs, training leaders, and instructing the community about preventive medicine. As they tended to Ecuador's physical needs, the light they brought with them illuminated the darkness and many souls were saved.

Burdened for the lost Indians in the eastern jungle areas where the gospel was not penetrating, the ladies requested the mission board grant them appointment to this area following furlough. However, the board felt the danger of sending single women to such a hostile area was too great a risk. Undaunted, the women returned to serve Ecuador anyway, sponsored by their home churches and independent of the Board of Foreign Missions.



Another missionary, Sheila Williams, experienced the same obstacle to her calling. Since the board placed a moratorium on sending single missionaries to the field, she served with Child Evangelism Fellowship under Christian and Missionary Alliance for five years, while also being supported by two Free Will Baptist churches in the States. Sheila focused her attention on the nation's children, teaching classes, training teens and adults to teach classes, and conducting three-week training courses in practical open-air evangelism to enable Ecuadorians to return to their hometowns and effectively share the gospel with family

and friends. She also held vacation Bible schools in public schools and trained school teachers to teach the Bible.

Through Ella Rae and Sheila's faithful witness, countless lives were changed, including the Villaci family. Of the 10 children in the family, all were converted from hopeless, futile lives and went on to work in various ways to strengthen churches in Ecuador. Luz, the sixth in line, became a career missionary, carrying to other children the same truth of Christ that so dramatically changed her own life.



### ELLA RAE JONES

was appointed as a medical missionary to Ecuador in 1964. After one year of language school she served in a hospital in Quito and Shell Mera, at the edge of the Amazon jungle. The board decided in 1969 that they could not feel comfortable with sending a single lady into this type of ministry. Ella Rae served independently with the support of her church from 1969–1981.



### PATSY TYSON

served under the foreign mission board from 1964–1969. When the board would not approve her return to Ecuador she decided to serve independently with the support of her church (1969–1974).

**TOP:** The Villaci family pose for a family photo. They came to Christ as a result of Miss Jones' ministry. Each of the children ended up in ministry as adults.

**ABOVE:** Sheila Williams, a Free Will Baptist from Detroit, Michigan, worked in Ecuador under Child Evangelism with Christian and Missionary Alliance.



# RUSSIA

## *Iron Sharpens Iron — Behind the Curtain*

*Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.*

ECCLESIASTES 4:9

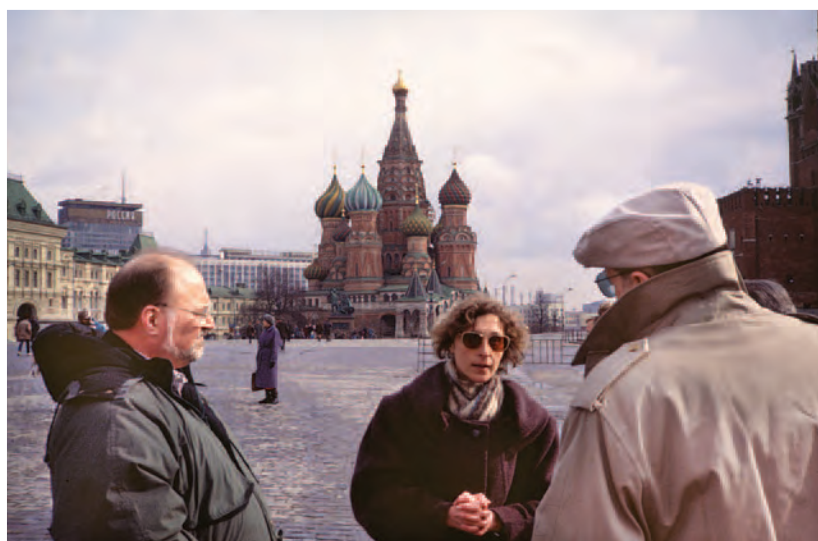
*I*t is one of the largest harvest fields on earth. Stretching over 6,200 miles and across 11 time zones, Russia stands as a formidable former communist country more than two and a half times the size of the United States and occupying one-ninth of the earth's land surface.

Through the centuries, a variety of governmental regimes have ordered life in Russia's borders. But it was the rise of communism that darkened her visage and scarred her land and people unlike any other. For more than 70 years, Russia lay captive to its own deception, saddling its people with governmental control too heavy to bear. "It is true that our country has had many problems; however, the greatest problem we have is that God does not live in our land any longer," said Andrew Rietveld, a Russian Christian. "We must put God back into our country," he concluded.

Free Will Baptists agreed. Less than 0.56 percent of the vast Russian population—more than 149 million people—knew Christ as Savior. Most Russians had never seen a Bible or heard about its message. Many Russians were ravenous for the Bread of Life.

God moved the mission board to join efforts with Baptists in Russia who hold a very similar doctrinal perspective. Peter Konovalchik, president of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia, was elated, "I cannot express deeply enough my heartfelt thanks for the participation of Free Will Baptists helping Russian missionaries reach out in church-planting and discipleship." He was also grateful for Leroy and Fay Forlines, sent from the States to help teach and write literature for their people. In an unprecedented effort of unity, Konovalchik and Pastor Nikolai Sobolev organized a pastors' conference with more than 130 pastors in attendance. The conference provided the training, encouragement, and theological teaching they needed to grow their own flocks in their hometowns.

Though persecution and opposition still exists for Christians in Russia, and no one knows when the religious freedom currently available will end, the church of Christ is multiplying rapidly and strongly. Several seminaries, institutes, and churches have developed and flourished. Certainly the harvest is ripe.



**ABOVE:** Mike Corley (left) listens in on a conversation in Red Square.

**RIGHT:** Baptismal candidates await their turn on the banks of a river in the Ukraine.





# JOY IN THE JOURNEY

## *The Mike and Cathy Corley Story*

*I*t was not much, but it was a start. The Good News Church in Chelyabinsk, Russia, housed the Bible institute where Mike and Cathy Corley labored to train and equip national leaders. Every school day for three years, students set up sawhorse desks in the morning and replaced them with cots at night.

“Women from the church cheerfully volunteered their time and talents to prepare and serve meals,” Mike Corley remembered. “The church had no shower, so the men took care of personal hygiene in the church’s four sinks.” Despite the meager facilities, 11 young men diligently pursued theological studies in three-week increments to equip themselves for evangelism in their home country.

The Corleys knew equipped Russian workers were key to fostering the kind of growth capable in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Appointed as missionary affiliates in 1999, they eagerly began work in Chelyabinsk where many in the community were hungry for truth.

God blessed their united efforts and quickly grew the church and strengthened the institute. Then, in 2002, God provided a fantastic facility to house all the institute’s needs. “We were thrilled with the Free Will Baptists’ purchase,” said one of the students. Though it required renovations, the 1,000-square-meter, two-story building had plenty of potential. New classes, a church plant, and summer camp for children were possible because of the large space. A student explained, “We have a kindred spirit and believe the same basic doctrine. We would like to see more Free Will Baptist missionaries here like Mike and Cathy, who have been so helpful to us.”

All 11 students from the Chelyabinsk Affiliate of the Moscow Theological Institute (CAMTI) graduated with a ceremony in Moscow, celebrating the men’s discipline over the five, arduous years of training. Each appeared before a committee of Moscow Theological Institute representatives to defend their final papers. “Very few pastors in Russia today have a formal theological education,” Mike Corley explained. “The Chelyabinsk Bible Institute makes it possible for many men to receive the education they need and desire.” Many of the students already served as full- or part-time pastors in their home churches, but now were ordained and fully equipped to share the gospel in their hometowns and beyond. And the process is replicated again and again.

The Corleys repeated their efforts in Krasnodar, a city on the Black Sea, establishing a Bible institute and camp property for continuing to equip national leaders in that oblast to reach the wide expanse of souls waiting for the Word.



**ABOVE:** Mike and Cathy Corley stand with Steve Lytle in front of the Good News Baptist Church in Chelyabinsk, Russia.

**LEFT:** Mike Corley and a team from the United States hand out New Testaments to Russians in a hospital in Kopeysk.



# CREATIVE ACCESS

## *Smuggling Hope*

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

MATTHEW 5:10

Does God call missionaries into harm's way for the sake of the gospel? For all those who are coming to Christ because of missionaries brave enough to enter restricted areas with God's truth, the answer is an emphatic, "Yes!"

The International Missions department of Free Will Baptists recognized the need and the potential for growth in these restricted areas. Due to difficult logistics and networking, the agency teamed with like-minded Baptist Union churches in some areas, in order to reach the lost, despite inherent dangers and opposition. The most difficult part of the challenge lay in heeding governmental ordinance while creatively distributing the gospel where it was most needed.

With cautious and strategic planning, the board created a non-governmental organization designed specifically to operate where mission agencies cannot.

Small groups of missionaries braved parts of Central Asia, followed by several workers laboring on the coast of southern France and in Spain. Thanks to the help of other concerned Christians in pivotal locations, the gospel is now being carried into China, Laos, Viet Nam, Mongolia, and North Africa as well.

Though always cautious, Free Will Baptists believe firmly that through creativity, compassion, cred-

ibility, and commitment even the most intimidating obstacles can be overcome. Casting fear at Jesus' feet, they look expectantly beyond iron doors to the ripe harvests that lay waiting behind restricted borders.

*Any information on Creative Access ministries and workers should not be published elsewhere.*

**ABOVE:** Clint Morgan (right), his wife Lynette, and Craig Portell meet with leaders in Central Asia to discuss how Free Will Baptists' involvement can be most beneficial.

**LEFT:** James Forlines (left) and Clint Morgan meet with Russian leaders to discuss ministry roles of missionaries.





## CONSIDER THE COST

*H*is mother described him as violent. Involved with drugs, he grieved her constantly. What was to become of Sergej Besarab?

In God's hands, Sergej became a born-again believer. His transformation occurred so dramatically that his bewildered mother gave her life to Christ, as well. And his ministry of evangelism began with a whole-hearted intensity born out of gratitude for God's forgiveness and grace.

Sergej applied himself to studies and soon became a missionary pastor of a small Baptist church in Tajikistan. Pouring himself into the community,

he braved the inherent dangers of a closed country and boldly shared his faith. Many listened, and joined him in his pursuit of Christ. However, the powers of darkness reigned strongly in that city.

On January 12, 2004, it seemed evil was winning the battle. Following a youth meeting at the church, Sergej and his wife met with another missionary couple. After they worshipped the Lord together, Sergej went to the meeting hall for his private devotions. Just before the 9:00 p.m. curfew, shots rang out across the grounds. A shooter murdered Sergej, hoping to silence his message forever.

Instead, Sergej's tragic death bolstered the believers. At his funeral, the gospel was delivered clearly, and with hope. Though steeped in pain and loss, Sergej's wife and daughter clung closely to Christ. The price of following Christ in Tajikistan is high; believers there—now more than ever—know He is worth the cost.

**LEFT:** *Bloodstain on the Silk Road* tells the story of Sergej's life and martyrdom in a 30-minute video.



### SHANE & JOY DAVISON

were originally appointed as career missionaries to Côte d'Ivoire in 2003. They were reassigned to France in 2005 due to instability in Ivory Coast. The Davisons work with immigrants in France.

### MICAH & BECKY DERBY

were individually approved as single career missionaries in 2000. They married in 2003 and began their ministry together. Health issues forced the Derbys to resign in 2009.



### DAVID & ANGIE OUTLAW

were approved as career missionaries to Central Asia in 2006. The Outlaws and their five children departed for the field in 2008. David and Angie are involved in English camps and classes.





### DARREN AND DANA PORTELL

were appointed in 2002 as part of the team ministering to immigrants in France. The Portells moved to a restricted country in 2009. Darren and Dana are teaching at the international American school in their city.



### CLINT AND LYNETTE MORGAN

began their missionary career in Côte d'Ivoire, where they served for almost 30 years. In 2005, the Morgans moved to France and Clint became the regional director for Creative Access countries.



### KEVIN STACY

was appointed to serve in Eurasia in 1997. He was involved in teaching English in Uzbekistan. Kevin returned home in 2000 and submitted his resignation.



### MICK AND RACHEL DONAHUE

were appointed to career service in 2003. They serve the immigrant population in Spain.



### CHARITY VANWINKLE

was approved to work in Central Asia in 1998. She returned to the States in 2000 and requested a year's leave of absence to weigh her future ministry options. Charity remained in the States and married a pastor in 2003.



### ANGELA EMERICK

was appointed as a career missionary in 2004. She was assigned to Central Asia in 2005. Angela was involved in English camps, women's conferences and helped open an English library. Angela resigned in 2009 due to personal issues. She currently lives in Virginia.



### SEAN AND JILL WARREN

were appointed as career missionaries to France in 2001. The Warrens were the leaders of the team serving immigrants. They returned to the States in 2006 serving as Missionary-in-Residence at Free Will Baptist Bible College. In 2008 the Warrens submitted their resignation, following a one-year leave-of-absence. Sean and Jill currently live in Missouri where Sean serves as the Director of International Missions for General Baptists.



# SOUTH KOREA

## Mission Springboard

*And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

ACTS 16:5

**S**ix new churches are started every day in South Korea. Literally hundreds of thousands of proclaimed evangelical Christians flock to mega-churches each Sunday, and the potential for further exponential growth remains strong. Compared to almost every other Asian and Pacific

Rim country where less than one percent of the population knows Christ as Savior, more than 21% of South Koreans claim to be Christians.

With such a large believing demographic, why open a new Free Will Baptist work in South Korea? After much prayer, God answered the question through Dr. John and Esther Chang, South Korean evangelists whose vision for the gospel extended far beyond their country's borders. "God gave us a vision, a plan," Dr. John Chang said. "We desired to plant a strong, Bible-teaching church with an emphasis on training young people. We wanted to develop a Bible-training institute where we could send Free Will Baptist missionaries from Korea to Asia and other parts of the world in the twenty-first century."

Born in Seoul, Korea, Dr. Chang was raised Buddhist, but converted to Christ through the Navigators' ministry while in the Korean Air Force. He began preaching when only 21 years old and was later ordained. He met his wife Esther at church, and together they raised three children who are now grown. Both John and Esther earned several college degrees from reputable institutions and felt prepared to undertake the responsibility of planting several South Korean churches, including a Bible institute to train national leaders.

In time, Dr. Chang was thrilled to report that the Free Will Baptist Association of Korea was organized with 32 ministers and 10 churches. In addition, nationals implemented the new Asia Free Will Baptist Theological Seminary in Seoul with the purchase of two buildings in Kyonggi-do. What was to be a training facility became a church and is no longer affiliated with Free Will Baptists.



ABOVE: Dr. John and Esther Chang.

LEFT: Dr. John Chang (front row, second from right) and many of the pastors and leaders who joined the Free Will Baptist Association of Korea. They later moved to another denominational affiliation.



**FAR RIGHT:** Russian leaders join Mike and Cathy Corley to dedicate the building purchased to house the Chelyabinsk Bible Institute.

**RIGHT:** Russian Federation coin.

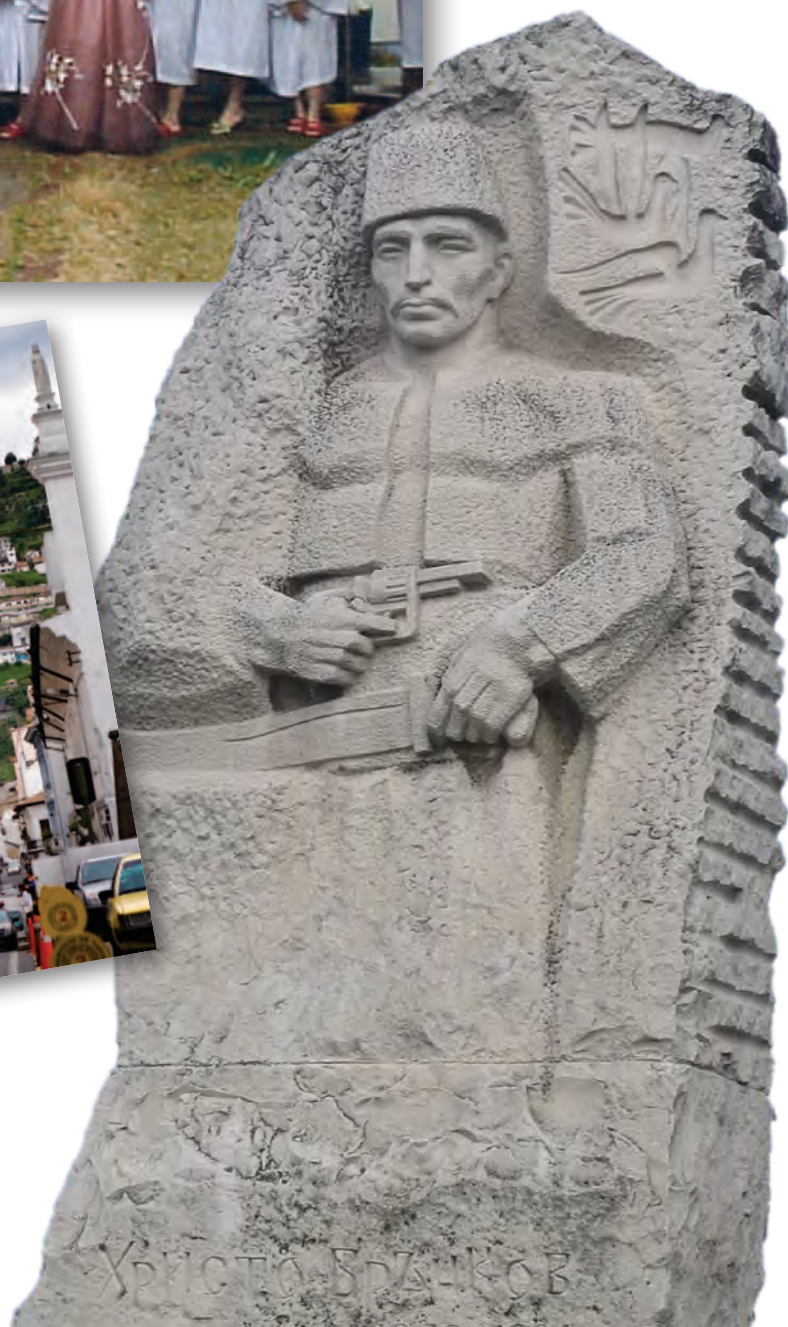


**ABOVE TOP:** Dr. Chang baptizes new Korean believers.

**ABOVE:** German Democratic Republic postage stamp featuring philosopher and poet Frederick Schiller.

**RIGHT:** View down one of Quito, Equador's, crowded streets toward the winged virgin statue at the top of Panecillo Hill.

**FAR RIGHT:** A tribute to all who helped liberate Bulgaria from the Turks, this statue sits on the banks of the Danube River in Svishtov—the first Bulgarian city freed from Turkish slavery.





# BULGARIA

## *Broken and Beautiful*

*Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.  
Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands;  
thy walls are continually before me.*

ISAIAH 49:15B-16

Ever since communists took over Bulgaria in 1946, the country sagged under the weight of its oppressive regime. Beautiful, rolling mountains with quaint villages tucked between them lost much of their allure. Sadness, disillusionment, and a pervasive fear hung over the people like a sunless, consuming fog. The new Bulgarian government declared that God was “Enemy Number One.” Members of the communist party purposed to eradicate any idea of Him.

They began with fires—huge bonfires to devour all Bibles and religious materials. Owning Bibles became illegal. Pastors and priests were captured and convicted as American spies. Most were imprisoned, tortured, or murdered. All churches were closed except for the few government-sanctioned Orthodox ones, where government-appointed pastors taught a dead and useless religion. Elementary schools taught that God did not exist, and colleges required all students to take and pass an atheism test.

No Christian was allowed higher education.

The government owned houses and jobs. They researched genealogies to locate those with a Christian heritage and forced them to live in remote areas. In time, the communists succeeded in their mission. Bulgarians began to believe that not only was belief in God wrong and dangerous, it was also foolish. Christianity practically disappeared. Without Bibles or teaching, the future grew darker with each passing day. But in 1988, the Berlin Wall fell, and with it communism’s fortress of spiritual oppression came crashing down. Introducing God to people who do not believe He exists is an arduous process. Less than one percent of the 7.5 million people claim to be Christian. In a significant move, the Free Will Baptist International Missions Board approved Bulgaria as a new field for missionary efforts in December 2005.



ABOVE: Each of the rooftops shown in this hillside view of Svishtov represents dozens of people who have never heard the gospel.

LEFT: The Church of the Holy Trinity in Svishtov is a beautiful emblem of the emptiness of the Orthodox church.



# BURDENED FOR BULGARIA

*The Tim and Lydia Awtrey Story*

*I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

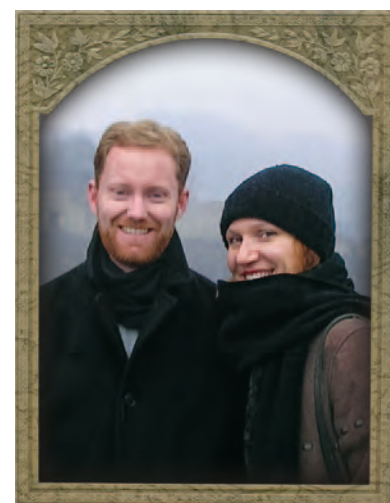
ISAIAH 49:6B

She knew she was missing something, but Lydia was unable to put her finger on it. She was a good student at a reputable medical college, and her future prospects seemed hopeful. Friends abounded, and she worked to balance an active social life with successful academics. “But I was miserable on the inside. In my heart, life was meaningless,” she remembered. “It seemed there was no one I could really count on. I became depressed, even though it seemed I had everything going for me.”

Then God brought light to her darkness. In her hometown, she ran into an old friend who seemed strangely changed. He told her about Jesus and the difference He made in his life. At first, she laughed at the gospel, but when she attended the youth retreat he recommended and saw the gospel in action through the lives of other believers, she was changed too. “The people at the retreat demonstrated un-manipulative love—something I had never witnessed. All I had ever known was love given to gain something in return,” she explained. “They loved me simply because Christ loved them. And I wanted to be a part of that.”

Meanwhile, God was at work in a young man’s heart halfway around the world. Tim Awtrey, who was raised in a Free Will Baptist church in California, became a Christian as a child but lost interest in serving Christ. He chose the University of California at Santa Barbara because of its secular atmosphere, but God placed him in a dorm room with a strong Christian. His roommate invited him to attend a summer missions meeting. Convinced good food awaited

him there, he attended. Intrigued by the opportunity, he signed up for a summer in Bulgaria. He had no idea how



**ABOVE:** Lydia teaches several women’s Bible studies.

**RIGHT:** The fortress in Veliko Tarnova is an amazing presentation of medieval architecture.





strong an impression the Bulgarian people were going to leave on his soul.

Eager to return to Bulgaria the following summer, God solidified Tim's passion for the lost. When the trip came to a close and the team returned to the States, Tim stayed behind and began a six-year student ministry. "While I made some initial inroads through games, the real goal moved slowly. We had leadership challenges and little growth," he said. "For three of my years, I felt like the work was just barely progressing."

God, however, knew where hearts were stirred. God raised up a Bulgarian staff member named Trif who traveled with Tim throughout Bulgaria starting and developing student discipleship groups. "We saw unprecedented growth as students were saved and more campus groups were added. Within a year, we went from nothing to 14 groups with more than 250 students attending!" Tim said excitedly.

Despite the progress, Tim noted a growing need. Students who graduated returned to hometowns devoid of any churches or training. It became apparent that without grounded churches to help further their spiritual growth and train future leaders, new converts might flounder and possibly fall away.

So God stirred hearts again—this time by uniting Lydia and Tim in marriage. As a native Bulgarian, Lydia had a natural inroad to her people. After several years in the States, Tim and Lydia became the first Free Will Baptist career missionaries in Bulgaria, and soon opened the Good News Free Will Baptist Church in Svishtov on the Danube River where a small group of believers needed leadership. People are coming to Christ as a result of their ministry, with

church services and Bible studies overflowing with attendees. "After many years of dreaming, hoping, and praying, it is great to finally get up on a Sunday morning and have the opportunity to worship in a Free Will Baptist church in Bulgaria!" Tim exclaimed. "It is still a little baby of a church, but we have great expectations that in time it will grow."



**TOP:** Balcony view at the Rila Monastery in Bulgaria.

**LEFT:** This horse-drawn cart is a reminder of the merging of the past with modern life in Bulgaria.



# STATESIDE

## *Send the Light*

*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

ACTS 13:2-3

The first missionary commissioning service, recorded in Acts 13, introduces the concept of sending missionaries to reach the nations. Sending requires both someone to go and someone to stay and support. From the genesis of Free Will Baptist missions, God called both missionaries and supporters.

The story of taking the Light into the dark places of the earth is certainly incomplete without telling of the stateside pioneers who championed the cause at home—men and women who traveled throughout the denomination sharing their burden for multitudes without Christ. Before a zeal for missions spread into Free Will Baptist homes, churches, and schools, it began in the hearts of a few individuals sensitive to God's plan for the nations. God stirred embers in a handful of advocates and their efforts ignited an ardent flame for missions among Free Will Baptists. The denomination owes a great debt to these pioneers on the home front—preachers, laymen, single men and women, and moms and dads who gave of themselves to set the fledgling movement and missions agency on a solid footing. Once again, this chapter of the story clearly demonstrates God's hand at work—raising up leaders, creating connections, nurturing workers, and establishing a foundation to set in motion a 75-year advance into the darkness.

Recognizing the need for an organized approach to sending and sustaining missionaries, denominational visionaries established a stateside plan soon after Laura Belle Barnard was commissioned in 1935.

Over time, God raised up lay-champions in churches, whose zeal led others to see the nations unreached with the gospel of Christ and to act in support of the work. Many missions-minded pastors, often trained in Free Will Baptist colleges, helped create supportive churches. These churches not only funded the movement, but they also supplied the missionary force. God was accomplishing His eternal plan, using ordinary people with an extraordinary commitment as His tools.

As the denomination's missions fervor grew so too did the missionary force. As the missionary force grew, so did the need for staff in the Nashville office. Led by a succession of passionate general directors, the stateside missions office staff has backed and provided for the overseas missionary force—confirming their call. Together, this vast stateside support system—a team that includes every individual participant at every level in the denomination—ensures a foundation for sending “the blessed gospel light” into some of the darkest places on earth.

**RIGHT:** Foreign Missions staff gather in front of the national offices' sign on Murfreesboro Road, Nashville, TN. From left to right: Rolla Smith, Ruth Ann Hall, Shirley Lauthern, Thelma McNew, Willie Midgett, Joyce Walker, Don Robirds, Harold Critcher, and R. Eugene Waddell.





## A VISION FOR HOPE

### *The I. J. Blackwelder Story*

It was time. The offering collected, the newly-formed National Association of Free Will Baptists of 1935 handed I. J. Blackwelder \$28 dollars and declared him to be the national secretary-treasurer for Foreign Missions. Fifty-four years in the ministry later—including 24 different churches in his lifetime—Isaac Joshua Blackwelder had changed his denomination’s perspective on foreign missions forever.

In a day when Free Will Baptists were on the verge of losing their vision for evangelism, Blackwelder saw God’s power. Not limited by money, power, prestige, or even convention, he believed God intended to share His message with the world through His faithful followers. When Laura Belle Barnard volunteered her life for missions, I. J. Blackwelder supported her calling, even against initial opposition. Impassioned for God’s cause, he challenged, “See this young woman under the call of God on her way to the mission field. She has prepared herself and now is having to look to other than her own people to get her to the field.”

Free Will Baptists across the nation responded to his outcry, and Laura Belle set sail in June 1935 as the first missionary under the Eastern General Conference. A union of vision forged by Blackwelder’s influence, the Eastern General and the Cooperative General Association joined to form the National Association of Free Will Baptists in November 1935, adopting Laura Belle Barnard as their first missionary. Thanks to Brother Blackwelder, Free Will Baptists everywhere were challenged to embrace foreign missions as a personal calling, either going themselves or sending others in obedience to God’s command.



## HOSTING A MISSIONS HEART

### *The Winford C. Davis Story*

Like a seed in fertile soil, the Free Will Baptist missions program took root in 1935, planted in the home of Winford C. Davis, the newly-formed denomination’s first assistant moderator. Always committed to God’s Great Commission, Winford and his wife Bernice welcomed every opportunity to grow the program and pave new ways for missionaries to reach the world for Christ.

Initially, Reverend Davis served as the second secretary-treasurer, but in 1947 he became the promotional secretary for foreign missions. In this role, he discovered the depth of his love and passion for fellow missionaries and worked diligently to create a missions platform within the Free Will Baptist denomination that perpetuated a missions interest and financial support.

In fact, it was Davis’ labor that led to establishing the mission work and Cedars of Lebanon Institute in Cuba. Winford affectionately recalled days of “precious fellowship” with Cuban pastors and with Thomas H. “Pop” Willey.

In all, Reverend Davis spent more than 16 years working with the foreign missions program while also pastoring in Missouri. God finally took Winford home at the age of 93 after he labored as a Free Will Baptist preacher for more than 70 years, serving in 13 churches, preaching over 9,000 sermons, and leading more than 2,100 people to Christ. His wife, three children, and countless other people he touched will always remember him fondly as God’s faithful servant.





# MR. FOREIGN MISSIONS

## *The Reverend Raymond Riggs Story*

*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world,  
and preach the gospel to every creature.*

MARK 16:15



Can one man change the course of an entire denomination? Can a single life yield a global impact of such magnitude that its reverberations are felt generation after generation? For anyone who had the pleasure of knowing Raymond Riggs, “Mr. Foreign Missions,” the answer is a resounding “Yes!” As a man of God fully surrendered to his Savior, the Reverend Raymond Riggs will always be known as the man who helped place foreign missions on the Free Will Baptist map.

The oldest of 11 children, Raymond was raised to know the Lord and make Him known. In his hometown of Pocahontas, Arkansas, Raymond first encountered the Lord’s call on his life through a powerful evangelistic meeting held at an old brush arbor. As his relationship with Jesus deepened, so did his desire to reach the lost. His growing burden to help save souls led him to Detroit, Michigan, where he taught in a public school and joined a gospel quartet headed by N. P. Gates.

Through this connection, Raymond became acquainted with Winona, Gates’ daughter. The two were married, both intent on loving the world to Christ. “I can assure you, there were very few dull moments in our home!” laughs Ken Riggs, one of the couple’s six children. “Dad’s full life included not only his family but his ministry. In his early days, he preached in the streets off the back of a truck. Mother would play a pump organ, and Daddy would lead singing. He started his first church in a grocery store. When the church grew too large for the store, Daddy found a Muslim

mosque in Highland Park, Michigan, and the church bought it. He was a radio preacher long before that became popular. And I even remember from my childhood that the old Highland Park Free Will Baptist Church had a band. That was in the early 50s!”



**ABOVE:** Benito Rodriguez translates for Raymond Riggs as he preaches to students at Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute in Cuba.

**RIGHT:** Dr. LaVerne Miley observes as Raymond Riggs demonstrates a “talking record” player designed for use in the bush.







Raymond and Winona found ingenious ways to broaden the scope of the gospel message. The church begun in 1938 quickly grew into what is now Central FWB Church of Royal Oak, Michigan, once the largest church in the denomination. One by one, Raymond and Winona spoke truth and love to the lost around them, and hundreds were saved.

Elected to the Foreign Missions Board in 1944, Riggs began to see the great need for Christ not only in his community, but around the world, as well. He served as chairman of the board from 1945 until 1950, when he was elected promotional secretary.

In 1953, he resigned his first and only pastorate to devote his attention to foreign missions. He inherited a stagnant department, with its seven missionaries three months behind in receiving allowances.

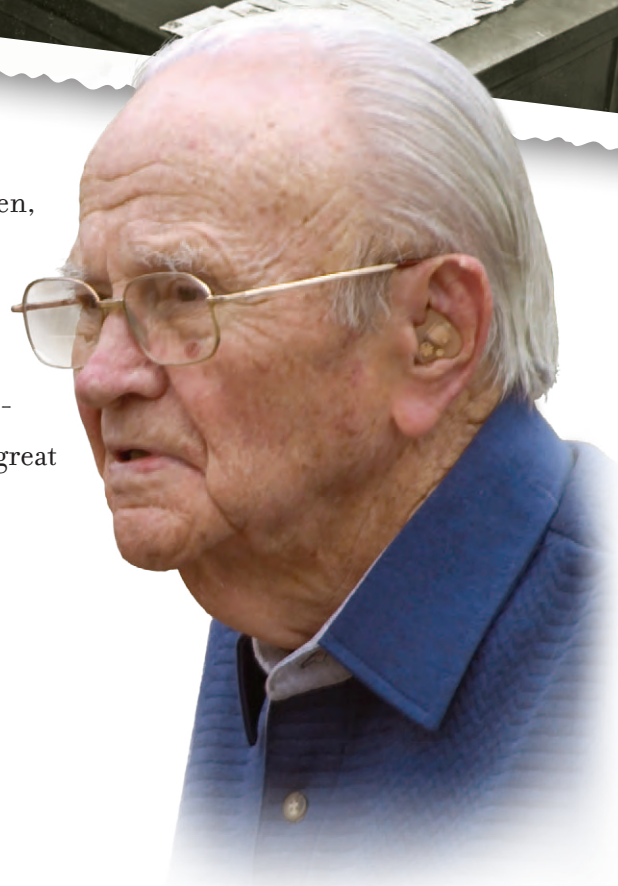
When Raymond resigned in 1959 to return to the pastorate, 30 mission-

aries served in six foreign countries. Receipts climbed from \$70,000 to more than \$170,000 annually. New frontiers, including Brazil, Ivory Coast, and Japan opened to Free Will Baptists under his leadership. Missionaries were trained, equipped, and well supported by church members stateside who were learning under Raymond's tutelage about the importance of foreign missions.

After his role as general director ended, Riggs served on the board for another 20 years. Throughout his service, Winona labored faithfully at his side until the Lord called her home. After her passing, Raymond married Bernice Davis who was a great help and encouragement to him in his closing years of life.

The Lord took His servant home at age 93. As Dr. Charles Thigpen, former president of Free Will Baptist Bible College said, "Few men have made such an outstanding contribution to the work of the Lord. He was an excellent preacher, pastor, evangelist, and promotional director, as well as husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. I will always be in debt to this great man of God."

So will all the family of God.



**TOP:** Raymond preaches a message during a missionary commissioning service.

**MIDDLE RIGHT:** Riggs signs receipt letters during the early days of the Mission.

**RIGHT:** Riggs' quest to spread the gospel was undiminished in his later years.



# A MAN OF VISION

## *The J. Reford Wilson Story*

*The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous.*

PSALM 146:8

*I* saw the Guaymi Indians with their colorful beads in the marketplace. I saw the girls dressed in San Blas costumes. I saw the Japanese gardener irrigating his garden with river water. I saw young people parading in the streets in carnival attire. I saw the poor living in crowded tenement buildings, and I saw the fine-looking university students. I saw the farmer winnowing his rice, and I saw the boy coming from the river with an iguana in his hand,” Reford Wilson said, remembering his many travels to distant lands across the years. “These are souls to whom we are responsible for preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

J. Reford Wilson possessed vision—divine sight for seeing needs around him, and a heart impassioned to meet them. As a teenager, this thin, lanky Oklahomian gave his life to Christ during an evangelistic service at his home church in Lexington. Shortly after, a missions drama further challenged him. Exposure to missions through his time at Free Will Baptist Bible College sharpened his sights on the mission field. Elected to the Board of Foreign Missions in 1951, he served for 11 years, visiting missionary families and fully comprehending their struggles and triumphs. “The greatest reward for services came from receiving reports of souls saved through the ministries of our missionaries and in hearing of pastors across the country experiencing missionary awakening in their churches,” Reford said.

God opened his eyes to the need right before him—not in a foreign field, but serving all foreign fields as the general director of Foreign Missions. “I accepted this position in 1962 firmly convicted that God would have me expend my energies for this worthy cause,” he explained. Reford served as liaison between the board and missionaries, helping both see issues from the others’ perspective and building a unified spirit among them all. “Numerous speaking engagements, weighty problems on the field, and directives from the board must be balanced and executed with wis-

dom,” a board member explained. But with God at the helm and his wife Jean (Lane) at his side, Reford welcomed the challenge.

What compelled this man of God to cross countless borders, counseling missionaries and tackling the toughest obstacles to their work? It was his vision for the lost and God’s loving heart poured out through his soul to those who needed to know the truth. After serving for more than 13 years, God called Reford to serve as a professor of missions and Bible at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, where he inspired many more to see the world through God’s eyes, and render their lives in service to save the lost. He also served another six years (1978-84) on the board. Reford died in 1995 at the age of 70.



LEFT: General Director J. Reford Wilson preaches in Rennes, France, as Joe Haas translates.



# OBEYING THE CALL

## *The Rolla D. Smith Story*

*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

I S A M U E L 15 : 2 2 B

It was on a farm in southern Missouri where Rolla D. Smith first heard God's voice. He surrendered his life to the Lord and began a life trusting His lead. After high school, Rolla attended Southwest Missouri State Teacher's College and taught for four years in rural public schools. Then he heard that familiar voice—the same one that called him out of a life of sin and into a relationship with Christ. This time, the call was to preach. In obedience, Rolla enrolled in Free Will Baptist Bible College, later married Agnes Scott, and eventually began the first of several pastorates in Missouri.

The voice came again. With Raymond Riggs' resignation as general director of the Foreign Missions department, someone was needed to lead the more than 30 missionaries under his care. Having served on the mission board from 1952-59, Rolla knew Riggs' shoes were rather large to fill. Yet he also knew that when God calls a servant to a task, God completes the work. In 1959, Smith assumed the helm as general director of the Board of Foreign Missions, beginning his tenure with only the help of Mrs. Gladys Sloan. Jerry Ballard joined the team in 1960, but it was a massive venture for so few laborers. Two years later Rolla returned to the pastorate with 43 missionaries enrolled on the team.

Rolla spent the next several years pastoring in Tennessee, Georgia, and Missouri, as well as serving on the mission board (1962-1975). God spoke to his heart again and he served a second term as general director of Foreign Missions. Rolla explained his rationale, "My family responsibilities had decreased, and I had gained knowledge and experience I believed would benefit the program." Along with a larger staff, his responsibilities included heading a larger group, with 89 missionaries in place and seven more approved for missionary internship. "Time was running out," he said. "I wanted my life to count most in the years that were left."

Passionate for God and for helping missionary families, with a particular focus on loving missionary kids, Rolla was welcomed into the foreign missions community. His jovial spirit and light-hearted personality put everyone at ease, even during difficult transitions and trying times. Known as "Uncle Smith" or "Uncle Rolla" to MKs around the world, he bolstered the faith and families administering the gospel in difficult regions.

Rolla's life and work did count, forming a strong foundation for future missionaries as well as serving the ones already in place. In 1986, after running an 11-year leg of the race, he passed on the baton. Rolla said, "My sincere desire is that the foreign missions enterprise of Free Will Baptists will be advanced and blessed of God as never before under the direction of my successor."



ABOVE: Rolla Smith looks over the globe, considering strategic places of ministry for Free Will Baptists.



# A LEGACY OF LOVE

*The R. Eugene Waddell Story*

*The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.*

L A M E N T A T I O N S 3 : 2 4

**R**obert and Rena Waddell knew that God's Word never returned void. It always accomplished the work God intended. In their son, R. Eugene Waddell, the Scriptures took deep root. "My parents exerted a profound influence on my coming to Christ," Eugene said. "They encouraged respect for character, placed a premium on integrity and honesty, plus instilled the value of hard work and diligence in trusting God."

In his senior year of high school, Gene answered the call to preach. He wanted those around him to know the hope each person has in Christ. While attending Free Will Baptist Bible College, God exposed Gene to mission-hearted greats like Dr. J. P. Barrow, Raymond Riggs, and the Thomas Willeys. After graduation, he married Leah Nichols, his childhood sweetheart, and together they travelled to Cuba for a missions trip. A firm conviction solidified: God wants His people to go into the entire world to preach the gospel to every nation.

In 1954, Waddell enrolled in Columbia Bible College's graduate school while pastoring in South Carolina. He earned his M.A. in missions in 1956 and continued to pastor. Then God put his faith to the test. Lifelong companion and mother of their four children, Leah was diagnosed with cancer. Fifteen months later, God took her home and Gene was left to raise four children under the age of six.

God, who works all things for the good of those who love Him, had prosperous plans yet in store. Gene met Genevieve Johnson, whom he later married and with whom he added two more children to their dynamic family. Gene continued to pastor and served 19 years on the Board of Foreign Missions. God led him to serve as associate director of Foreign Missions under General Director Rolla Smith. Making the most of the opportunity, Gene said, "I tried to listen without bias to be able to feel what missionaries were feeling. I tried to understand their needs."

With his own faith refined by trial and a heart that always sought to encourage, Gene was the perfect fit for the general director position when Rolla Smith retired.

During his 12-year tenure (1986-1998), Gene witnessed the annual budget almost double, the appointment of 56 new missionaries, and the opening of new frontiers in Russia, Mongolia, China, and Central Asia. "I believe in team leadership," Gene said. "Someone has to be responsible, like the captain or quarterback, but you don't win without a strong support team. The Lord has given us such a team." Though Eugene Waddell went to be with Jesus in 2007, his encouragement, passion, and love for the lost continues to thrive in the lives and legacy he left behind.



**LEFT:** R. Eugene Waddell shakes hands with a church leader on one of his last visits to Côte d'Ivoire.



# GOD'S TEAM PLAYER

## *The James Forlines Story*

*And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him;  
and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

ECCLESIASTES 4:12

No other kids accompanied him. James Forlines simply wanted to go. Even as a 10-year-old boy, he was mesmerized by Miss Laura Belle Barnard's incredible missionary stories. "I remember just visiting her apartment, sitting down, and listening to her share a strong vision for those who had never heard the gospel," he said. Her experience sharpened his vision, and began shaping the future course of his life.

Born to Leroy and Fay Forlines in 1958, James grew up surrounded by family and friends who loved the Lord and sought to serve Him. Since Leroy served as a professor at Free Will Baptist Bible College, James spent much of his formative years on campus feasting from the exposure to missionary heroes who often taught there. After he graduated from high school, he himself attended FWBBC where he earned his B.A. He also enrolled at Anderson School of Theology in Indiana and in the graduate program at FWBBC. During his studies, he met and married Anita Ganey. James served as a youth pastor in North Carolina, then as a pastor in Indiana and Arkansas.

In 1994, James was elected to the Board of Foreign Missions. Using his experience and training, God equipped James to lead the Department of Foreign Missions in 1999 as general director. During his tenure, James led the department in the development of a non-governmental organization. Designed to minister to humanitarian as well as spiritual needs, the NGO is able to gain access to countries closed to the gospel message. He also spearheaded the movement to restructure the funding system, returning it to a non-designated system of support. As overseas converts sought an outlet for mission service, James encouraged the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptists to come up with a plan for North Americans to partner with Free Will Baptists in other parts of the world to take the gospel to unreached peoples. "I could not give my attention to Kingdom work in the way that I do without Anita's willingness to sacrifice," James declares warmly, "or her ability to manage the home and family while I travel extensively and work long hours in the office."

James' mission strategy revolves around a team approach, requiring assistance from everyone on the field and off. "We need one another," he asserts. "I think it's time for our denomination to join hands and determine there is a cause—the cause of Jesus Christ as set forth in Acts 1:8—reaching Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth."



**TOP RIGHT:** James Forlines preaches in a Russian Baptist church as a board member.

**RIGHT:** Clint Morgan (left), James Forlines, and Mike Corley (far right) stand with church leaders during a research trip to Central Asia.



**RIGHT:** This seven-member mission board included three men who also served as general director. From left to right, Gene Rogers, Guy Owens, J. Reford Wilson (general director), Rolla Smith, Joe Ange (chairman), Raymond Riggs, R. Eugene Waddell, and James Murray.



**LEFT:** Gene Waddell joins missionaries Sandra and Dale Bishop and Nathan Snow in song during a service in Hokkaido, Japan.

**BELOW:** Four of the five men who have served as general director of the Mission—James Forlines, R. Eugene Waddell, Rolla Smith, and Raymond Riggs— together in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2000.



## REVEREND LOUIS MOULTON

joined the stateside staff in March of 1958 as the first promotional secretary of Foreign Missions. He continued in that capacity, traveling and raising funds, until October 1960.



## TELLING THE TRUTH

### *The Don Robirds Story*

When the position for director of communications fell vacant, General Director Reford Wilson did not worry. He and the Board of Foreign Missions knew just the man to fill the spot. But, was Don Robirds willing to accept it?

A journalism major with a contagious smile and delightful wife and family, Don Robirds followed God's call through a variety of publishing-related positions. Following graduation from Free Will Baptist Bible College while also working as a professional printer, God led the Robirds south—all the way to Brazil. Immersed in foreign culture, Don translated the Free Will Baptist Treatise, soul-winning books and other evangelistic materials. He also participated in an inter-mission effort to translate and publish the Gospel Light Sunday school curriculum.

It was Don's marriage of mission-mindset and strong communications skills that led Reford Wilson to approach him about the director of communications position. Don admits, "Our first response was 'no,' but after prayer we felt compelled by the Lord to come to Nashville that we might challenge others to commit their lives to the program of world evangelism."

Thirty-two years later, Don retired as editor of *Heartbeat* magazine, where he produced 262 issues totaling over 2,850 pages during his tenure. He served as an excellent writer, editor, photographer, and graphic designer, perhaps known best of all for his strong prayer life and commitment to following God's lead. As James Forlines said, "Very few men I know have faced more personal obstacles, but Don has remained undeterred and faithful."



## THE PERSONAL TOUCH

### *The Gladys P. Sloan Story*

Just how does the dollar in the offering plate translate to more Bibles on the mission field? Who ensures that missionaries are paid while the missions office stays in the black? For more than 22 years, one feisty, energetic woman kept the foreign missions bookkeeping afloat. Gladys P. Sloan, with an eye for detail and a heart for missions, labored diligently to make Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions finances resolve. For years, she drove over 100 miles a day to work and back, handling correspondence for language school candidates, along with their transportation, visa, and passport requirements—all this in addition to bookkeeping.

Mrs. Sloan first came on board when Reverend Raymond Riggs took the role of promotional secretary for the department. Over her 22 years of service, Gladys witnessed the annual income increase from around \$28,000 to over one million dollars. As the office and budget grew, so did her organizational skills. She developed all the records and receipting systems used by the department, managing multiple accounts and keeping everyone on track. Best of all, she managed the details with a beautiful smile that made visitors to the office feel welcomed and important.

Foreign Missions is indebted to Mrs. Sloan for the diligence, expertise, and loving care she extended through her years of service. Even in an age of fast-paced computer programs and data-processing, nothing can replace the love and personal touch of Gladys Sloan.





## A BLEND OF BLESSINGS

### *The Shirley Lauthern Story*

*S*urt and Mary Holland hit the nail on the head. “Who is Shirley Lauthern? She is the perfect blend of Mary and Martha—always willing to listen and yet busy serving others.” It was a refrain of praise hailed by seemingly every missionary who came to know Shirley in her 35 years in the missions office. Always professional, dependable, and submissive to authority, Shirley served as executive secretary and special assistant to four of the five general directors of Free Will Baptist International Missions. But to the hundreds of missionaries and MKs she served, she was known simply as “mom” or “Aunt Shirley.”



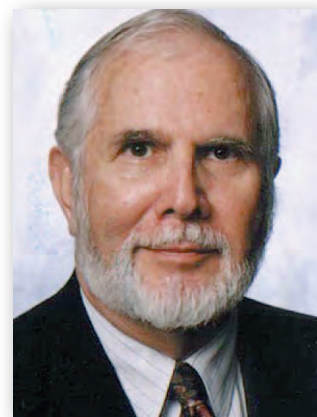
It is sometimes said that behind every good man is a great woman. Shirley Lauthern certainly stood behind the scenes, graciously serving as hostess for visitors, meeting missionaries’ needs, busily working to balance multiple schedules while always making time to listen to those who expressed a need. No matter where the general directors went or how long they were gone, each knew the mission rested securely in Shirley’s capable hands.

Darren and Dana Portell said to Shirley, “One of our most precious memories of the office will always be your smiles and greetings as we came through your door. We will never forget how you loved our children and us.” Jaimie Lancaster in Uruguay agreed, “I truly believe that each missionary is special to Shirley, and that is the reason everyone loves her.”

## CREATIVE COMMISSION

### *The Jerry Ballard Story*

*“I*f we had not increased our readers’ conviction that missions giving was both the biblical and responsible thing to do, we would have failed,” Dr. Jerry Ballard stated matter-of-factly. By God’s grace, *Heartbeat* magazine—just one of Ballard’s successful achievements—accomplished his mission.



Jerry Ballard served the communications department of Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions for more than a decade, pouring his talents, energies, and passions into his unique brand of evangelism. In the end, Ballard developed a media-oriented information program—including the award-winning magazine, as well as two motion pictures, 11 sound/color filmstrips, three major works on mission philosophy and policy, and the written biography of the late missionary Thomas H. Willey Sr.

Ballard’s intense efforts stemmed from his fundamental belief that mass media should play an integral role in disseminating the gospel. Dr. Joe Ange, one of the board members during his tenure, commented, “Do you realize you preach to more people about missions every month than I do in six?” Encouraged by his insight, Ballard witnessed a surge of financial and prayer support for missions commensurate with the media’s success.

In God’s time, Jerry accepted the director of communications position with World Vision International. Though his ministry focus shifted faces, his passion for spreading God’s truth remained. “I thank God for placing me here during the most exciting 10 years in the history of the foreign ministry of our denomination...and I thank Him for the caliber of men He has given me to work with on the board, in the home office, and on the fields.”



## MAN WITH A MISSION (CONFERENCE)

### *The Rufus Coffey Story*

“Without an evangelistic vision that embraces the world, a church fails to function properly in its spiritual responsibility,” said Reverend Rufus Coffey, Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions director of conferences and itineraries. As a pastor with a heavy burden for the lost, Rufus understood the importance of motivating local congregations to active participation in missions. “There is no greater need among Free will Baptist churches than a great missionary revival that will enlarge our vision, inspire giving, enlist laborers, and challenge people to pray,” Rufus asserted. “A world missions conference in every local church will enable us to see such an awakening.”



Coffey’s vision for missions began during his time in the Navy following high school. Seeing the great need for evangelism, he followed the call to preach and attended Bob Jones University where he became active in the missionary prayer band. His passion for Christ’s cause led him to rally his home church to quadruple their giving toward missions. Even during a local recession, the church still responded to his persuasion.

From 1962-1967, Rufus was employed by the board as director of conferences and itineraries. Rufus channeled his energies toward organizing conferences to help inspire and motivate Free Will Baptist churches across the United States to become more missions-minded. His work during those five years, followed by his service as executive secretary of the National Association, helped mold today’s missions focus of the Free Will Baptist denomination. Unfortunately, personal choices ended his national ministry.

## UNITED WE STAND

### *The Henry VanKluyve Story*

Director of Conference Ministries Rufus Coffey felt the strain. He longed to work exclusively in the field assisting pastors and local churches in missions education programs, but the administrative demands inherent in his job description split his affections. The board, however, resolved the problem by calling Henry VanKluyve from his pastorate in Savannah, Georgia, to a newly created position of deputational director for the Foreign Missions Department.



In short, the position was created to help meet demands for greater coordination of an expanding missions-conference program, and itineraries of an increasing number of furloughing missionaries as well as new appointees.

It was a difficult task, with seemingly endless intricacies and obstacles as each missionary family brought its own unique challenges. Henry VanKluyve embraced the work wholeheartedly, firmly believing that church support for missions was essential to fulfilling the Great Commission. He led in one of the greatest efforts to gain missionary funding in the history of the Mission.

VanKluyve’s heart for missions began at his conversion in 1950 while serving in the U.S. Navy. He later attended and graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College, where he met his future wife, Virginia Hales. He began pastoring churches while in school, and continued in that ministry for 12 years until his calling as deputational director. “The local congregation must learn of their coworkers’ activities on the foreign field,” Henry asserted. “In this way ‘those who have planted’ and ‘those who have watered’ may rejoice together in the harvest.” Henry VanKluyve united congregations with their missionaries for 14 years.



## UNSUNG HERO

### *The Charles Hingst Story*

Some people want to travel. Others tend to their gardens. For retirement, Charlie Hingst thought working suited him best. When Rolla Smith and Don Robirds propositioned Charles about working for the Foreign Missions department, he did not think twice. “I don’t remember hesitating at all,” Charlie said. “I was looking for something to do.”



However, the task ahead was a large one. Willie Midgett, secretary to the director of deputation at that time, warned him that his job description was boundless. Charlie, eager to serve, accepted the challenge. As a former WWII Merchant Marine radio officer with a B.S. and M.S. from Georgia Tech, the transition from manager to missions ministry was not too difficult.

Charlie discovered a niche God uniquely created him to fill. “His kindness, helpfulness, and smiles make checking the mail a joy,” said missionaries Bobby and Geneva Poole of Brazil. “He always makes us feel special when we see him,” assert Ledgel and Sharon Ferguson from France. Determined to serve God wholeheartedly, Charlie even turned down the part-time pay offered for his services. “The people I worked with were such a delight, and I saw this as my service for the Lord,” Charlie said.

After 23 years, Charles continues to give of his heart, soul, time, and energy to support the international missions work of Free Will Baptists.

## A PICTURE OF HOPE

### *The Ken Turner Story*

Ken Turner tilted the angle of his lens. The shutter snapped. “A perfect shot,” he said to himself as he raised his head above his camera. “How can anyone deny the need?” Ken took his still and movie cameras with him on his first mission trip to the island of Cuba. In addition to helping Thomas Willey Sr. decide on a location for the first Free Will Baptist mission on the island, Ken had high hopes of capturing the heart and soul of the local Cubans he met. Visions of church-wide involvement danced in his head as he dreamed of showing his movies and photos to Free Will Baptist churches across the States. It was his irrefutable



proof that the beautiful people of Cuba needed to know the Savior, too. “Surely Americans will join the Mission’s cause in prayer and financial support.”

Little did Ken know that God’s plan included using his photos and his heart for Cuba to change Free Will Baptist sentiment for their Latin brothers and sisters. Many churches received Ken and his message. Ken’s pictures were worth more than a thousand words. They were used to save countless souls.

LEFT: Ken travels via modern bus transportation in Cuba.



## THE WRITE TOUCH

### *The Eunice Edwards Story*

**T**he redhead from Desloge, Missouri, was the perfect fit. Never mind that the positions required three persons to fulfill its demands. Eunice Edwards was up for the task, and in 1956 she assumed responsibility for promotional and literature chairman and executive secretary-treasurer of Woman's National Auxiliary Convention.

The oldest of four children, Eunice experienced a strong desire for salvation, despite the lack of spiritual leadership at home. In 1937, God explained the urge to Eunice through the pastor and wife of Park View Free Will Baptist Church in Desloge. She was elated to accept Christ and began a new life in Him, standing firm even when her husband walked away from the faith and their family a few years later.

During her years of ministry, Eunice served as local, district, and state president of the woman's auxiliary. She also volunteered at a youth camp and wrote manuscripts. When called to served as executive secretary of WNAC, she represented the organization at the Cuban FWB Convention. Utilizing her gifts to the fullest, she brought out the first issue of the quarterly magazine *Co-Laborer* in 1961. She also introduced the concept of a Provision Closet supplying household needs for missionaries, led women to raise \$10,000 in 1957 for work in Ivory Coast, and raised funds to build a missionary residence in Japan.

Concerning her work and achievements, Eunice always reminded, "I am only an ordinary person, but my God is extraordinary."



## GOD'S LITTLE PISTOL

### *The Fannie Polston Story*

**S**he was the "strongest and most consistent force used by the Lord in bringing women to realize their vast opportunities of service to God in the church and causing them to rally around her," Stated Mrs. Mary Ann Welch. Intelligent, courageous, and armed with a firm grasp of business politics, Fannie spurred her fellow female members at Cofer's Chapel, in 1907, to expand its expectations. In time, Fannie formed the National Woman's Auxiliary Convention, encouraging women of every gift mix to courageously offer their services to the Lord despite stereotypes.

Fannie's resumé ran as long as her energy and enthusiasm. She served as vice-president to the Cumberland District in Tennessee, as well as field worker, president, treasurer, superintendent, and vice-president of stewardship. Even when she held no office, she supported the work of the Cumberland District and aggressively promoted its causes, including the Tennessee Free Will Baptist Home for Children and raising money for missions. In the last stages of her life, she gave all that she owned to Free Will Baptist Bible College. Her life and legacy spoke of tenacious courage, sacrifice, and total surrender to God's call. As Mrs. Welch said, "She was indeed a strong force used and blessed of God to encourage, inspire, and unite Free Will Baptist women in WNAC and in God's Work." Free Will Baptist mission efforts owe her a great debt of gratitude.





## PREACH IT, SISTER!

### *The Lizzie McAdams Story*

Lizzie McAdams listened. She just did not listen to the skepticism around her. Instead, she focused on God's voice alone, and lived out a remarkable leadership and faith that united thousands of Free Will Baptists.

Warm, aggressive, and in love with Jesus, Elizabeth Lawliss McAdams was no ordinary woman. In 1918, Sister Lizzie enjoyed a short-term mission trip to Barbados with her husband Hiram and six-year-old daughter Naomi. Once back stateside, she devoted her efforts to uniting Free Will Baptists from the west and east. When the National Association of Free Will Baptists became a reality, Lizzie led the group in praise and rejoicing over the work God was doing among His people.

Lizzie remained active, contributing service wherever needed. She served as field secretary for the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention, where she conceived the "Jehoida Chest" concept for offering collections. Her vision and creativity collected funds for several important works. Later, she and her husband Hiram began a Free Will Baptist church in Desloge, Missouri. Jesus called Lizzie home at age 80, after 54 years in ministry. Damon Dodd, one of her many converts, said, "She was a trailblazer, a missionary, a prayer warrior, an angel of mercy. She used every method she could to win the lost. She preached from the pulpit, exhorted crowds under a tent, went from house to house, business to business, and changed the lives of thousands."



## TENACIOUS GENEROSITY

### *The Lucille Steward Story*

"She makes no apologies," said Don Robirds. "Missions and missionaries are her heart-cry." Ever since she became a Christian at the age of 12, Lucille Steward felt particularly burdened for those whom God called into active missions work. Though she remained stateside her entire life, she devoted her passion and energy to providing for missionaries' needs.

Lucille Steward did not take "no" for an answer. Traveling to churches and charity groups, she challenged thousands of people to give money and other necessities toward missions. In 1982 alone, she gathered more than \$20,000 worth of supplies to stock the Missionary Provision Closet held in Nashville, Tennessee. Her husband Wendell fully supported her efforts, driving a large trailer across their state to gather donations and deliver them to Nashville. Whenever missionary interns stayed in Farmington, Michigan, the Stewards took them under their wings.

Fueled by her passion to reach the lost, Lucille's fervor continued despite a cancer diagnosis received in 1980 and ongoing health problems from then. Though in tremendous pain, she made place mats, house shoes, spice ropes, and canned food for elderly neighbors. She visited the sick and shipped medical supplies to the Ivory Coast medical clinic.

Lucille's tenacious generosity and heart for missions challenged, convicted, and spurred many others on to action. She said, "Mission work is just like eating. It's an everyday thing—don't ever back off."

Lucille Steward never did.





## VOICE FOR MISSIONS

### *The Fred Warner Story*

North Carolina born and bred, Fred Warner was serving as an Arkansas state missionary in Siloam Springs when he received the call to come to work for Foreign Missions. His pastor's heart challenged to expand his "congregation," Fred moved his family to Nashville in 1987. Although his title changed from director of church ministries to director of missionary-church relations to director of stateside development over the course of his 13-year tenure, Fred's commitment never wavered.

Already well known as an evangelist and pastor, Warner tackled the task of serving as a liaison between missionaries and stateside churches with zeal. He assisted missionaries with deputational ministries, coordinated countless mission conferences, worked to establish financial and prayer support for missionaries, promoted missions education, networked with state leaders, and advocated planned and deferred giving programs. Prior to his position with the Mission, Fred pastored churches in Tennessee, Georgia, and Arkansas. From 1961-1965 he labored as a full-time evangelist, and by 1987 had held over 250 revivals. He served Arkansas Free Will Baptists as promotional director for five years. Fred also completed 12 years (1974-1986) on the Board of Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions.

A favorite saying of Fred's, "Never mind the mule, just load the wagon," summarizes his diligent work ethic. In August 2000, he resigned from the Mission to respond to an appeal to return to the pastorate in Arkansas.



## ACCOUNTING FOR EXCELLENCE

### *The Robert Conley Story*

Robert Conley joined Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions as treasurer in 1995. The 1990 graduate of Lake Forest College grew up in New Castle, Indiana, and married his high school sweetheart, Jennifer Foster.

An avid sportsman, Rob enjoys basketball, cycling, hunting, and racquetball. The tenaciousness with which he pursues sports carries into his job performance. Rob seeks to balance budgets, supervise financial and business activities, and handle financial details for missionaries with resolute attention to detail and untiring excellence.

For over 15 years, Rob has provided financial guidance for the Mission. He was named Director of Financial Operations in 1999 and has helped guide the organization through rough financial waters. He and his team were instrumental in directing the Mission through financial reorganization and the restructure of the way the Mission is funded—moving the denomination from a account-based donation system to a general fund system that supports all missionaries.





## BOARD CHAIRMEN

The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions (formerly Foreign Missions) is integral to the Mission. Although the general director and other personnel guide the day-to-day operations, they do so under the directives set in place by the board. Missionaries are sent out after board approval. Projects are given legitimacy by the board. Policies are defined and mandated by the board. Over the years, the board has grown from five to nine members elected by the National Association to govern the operations of the Mission.

Sacrifice, a passion for global missions, and wisdom characterize the faithful men and one woman who have served since 1938. Space does not allow listing all their names, but the chairmen are recognized below.

**I. J. Blackwelder**  
1935-1941

**Winford Davis**  
1942-1950

**Raymond Riggs**  
1951-1953  
1976-1978

**Mark Lewis**  
1954-1963

**Joseph Ange**  
1963-1976

**James Murray**  
1978-1982

**Bill Jones**  
1982-1992  
1998-2000

**Norwood Gibson**  
1992-1993

**Bob Trimble**  
1993-1994

**Joe Grizzle**  
1994-1998

**Douglas Little**  
2000-2003

**Milton Worthington**  
2003-2006

**Danny Williams**  
2006-2010

**ABOVE:** 2009 board members listen to a report. Clockwise: Rob Morgan, Paul Creech, Rob Conley, Jeff Manning, Nelson Henderson, and Jerry Norris.



**ABOVE:** Board members carefully review General Director Waddell's report. Clockwise: Bill Reagan, Milton Worthington, Bill Vanwinkle, Joe Grizzle, David Shores, Gene Waddell, and David Williford.

**LEFT:** Board members were gifted with African robes in 1998. Left to right: Bill Vanwinkle, Bill Jones, Milton Worthington, David Shores, incoming Director James Forlines, Doug Little, Bill Reagan, retiring Director Gene Waddell, David Williford, Terry Eagleton, and Sherwood Lee.



# INTO THE DARKNESS

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## AFTERWORD



**T**his riverboat carried passengers through the night on an Indian river during the early years of Free Will Baptist mission work. Much as the dusk blurs the line between sky and river, so sin shrouds the line between truth and deception. Like the riverboat, those early torchbearers penetrated the darkness taking the Light of the World into sin-darkened areas. They held the torch high, shining the Light, revealing deceit and illuminating truth. Today, unknown thousands of men, women, and children have joined the throngs about the throne of God because faithful servants carried the Light.

*“Go ye into all the world and  
preach the gospel to every creature.”*

M A R K 1 6 : 1 5



## TORCHBEARERS

With every movement, people of vision pave the way for others to follow. This book has highlighted many of those. It has been impossible to tell all the stories or show all the wonderful photos. In this section, a little more of the story of Free Will Baptist men and women who have dared the darkness, holding high the Light of the World, is revealed. These photos of the valiant torchbearers of the past serve as reminders of God's goodness and encouragement to those who carry the Light today.



**ABOVE:** Tom "Pop" Willey (far left) and missionary-aviator Bill Phipps (third from left) visit with villagers in Jenene, Panama, in 1964.

**RIGHT:** Missions conferences on the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee, gave students the opportunity to rub shoulders with missionaries and hear firsthand accounts of God's work around the globe.





st's command...our concern"









1935 75 2010



**ABOVE:** Lizzie McAdams and her husband Hiram made mission trips before the denomination had a missions vision. She, and many women like her, promoted missionary efforts throughout the denomination.

**LEFT:** A Lobi man converses with General Director Raymond Riggs (left) and Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary Gordon Timyan while setting rice. Timyan facilitated Free Will Baptists' efforts to establish work in Ivory Coast.



1938 75 2010

# Freewill Baptist Mission

REV. PAUL WOOLSEY  
SONAPURHAT, PURNEA DIST.  
BIHAR, NO. INDIA

MISS L. B. BARNARD, DIRECTOR  
"SHAMROCK" KOTAGIRI  
NILGIRIS, S. INDIA

REV. D. R. CRONK  
KISHANGANJ, PURNEA DIST.  
BIHAR, NO. INDIA

Glenville, Ga,  
Jan 2, 1951

Dear Mary Beek,

I'm so sorry about your accident and I do hope you are getting over it now. Be careful!

I'm writing this after going to bed, so please try to decipher it. I had a letter from Trula which reminded me of a prayer need for our young Sikh, Singh Gill, and I felt I must dash it off to you for Prayer Band. This is the man with beard and turban shown in picture with Dan, remember? The whole story seems a bit complicated, but it has to do with some money which he lost (stolen from him, I understand) of Mr. Woolsey's. Woolsey had sent him to Calcutta and the money was lost - a thing that has happened to several of the missionaries as well as to Singh. Woolsey was kind to let Singh Gill wish in order to do it. something. Aunty decided to leave him somewhere, a house for them (a said he was leave Dan & Trula return in the letter, but I don't know).



ABOVE: Pioneer missionaries' letters to friends in the States were the only way to keep people informed of the needs and victories on the field for many years.

RIGHT: Dan Cronk visits an Indian village in 1972.

...a word from him, and it is



DIOS  
ES  
AMOR

BUSCAD A DIOS  
MIENTRAS PUEDA  
SER HALLADO.

DIOS  
ES  
LUZ



ABOVE: Pastor Cigoni of Spain prepares to dispense communion.

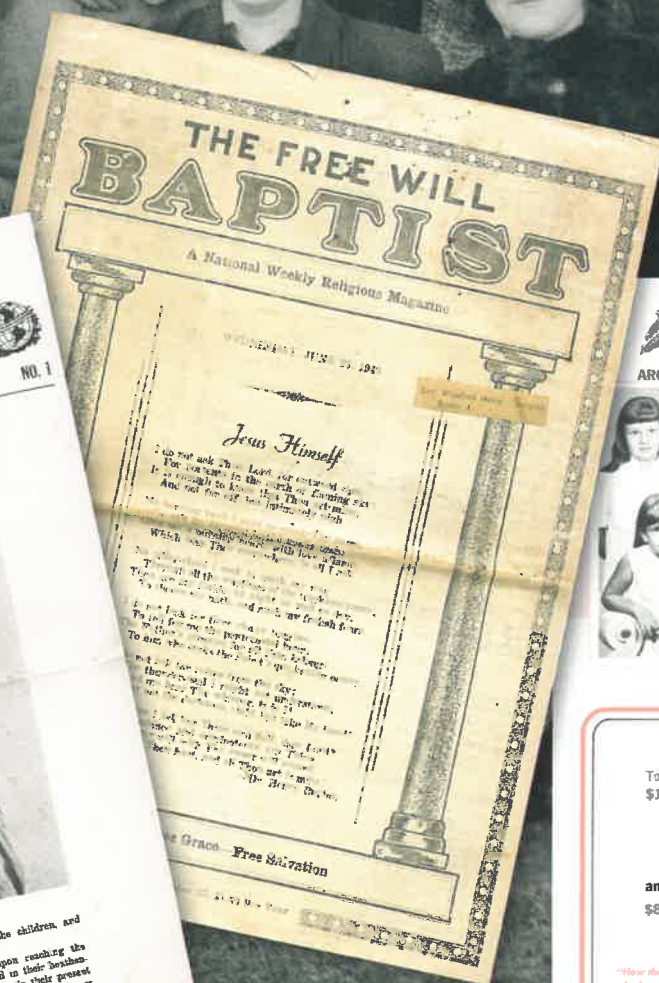
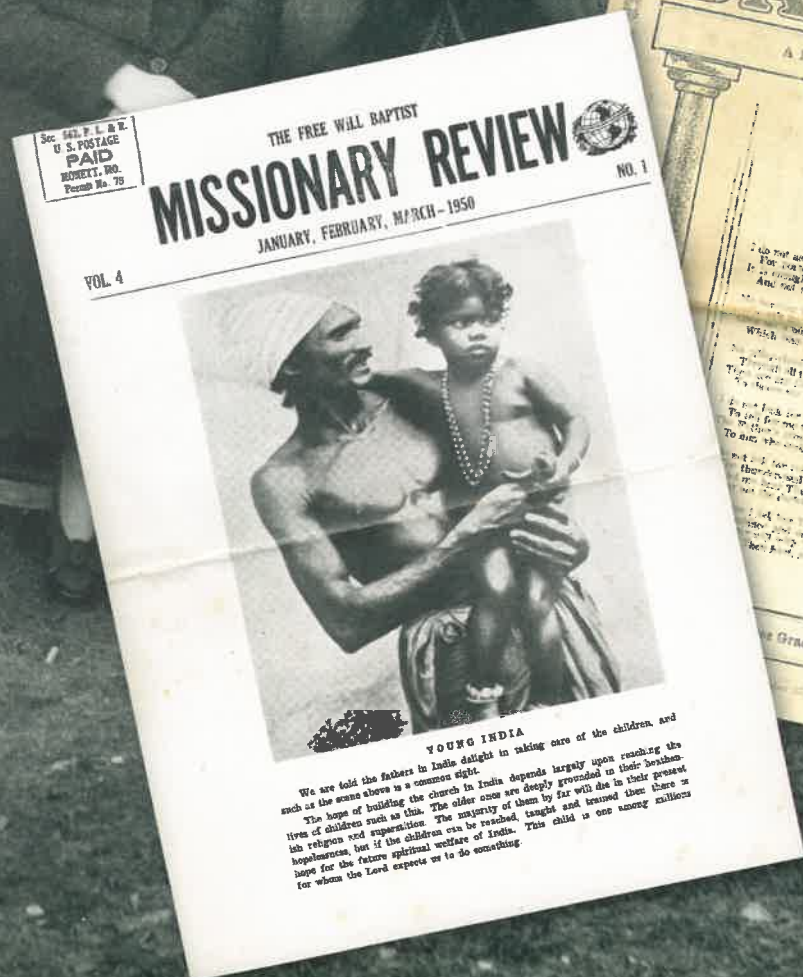


1935 75 2010



**RIGHT:** The Free Will Baptist and The Free Will Baptist Missionary Review preceded *Heartbeat*, helping inform the denomination concerning missionary endeavors. Prayer cards continue to remind people to pray for missionaries.





### DAILY PRAYER NEEDS

- Spiritual victory in personal lives
  - Good physical and mental health
  - Effective witness that will lead men to Christ
  - Development of believers into strong indigenous church
  - Faithfulness of prayer and financial supporters
- "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept thy word, and hast not denied my name" (Revelation 3:8).

*Fold Back for  
Table-Top Reminder*

### WILL YOU SHARE IN THEIR MINISTRY?

To return to Ivory Coast, Archie and Sarah need **\$1,062 in monthly faith promise commitments** to provide basic salary allowances, mission travel expenses, medical and dental allowances, maintenance of mission station, and other costs of the Mayhew's ministry.

**\$8,500 cash in their missionary account at departure**  
to cover costs of transportation back to the field  
and other essential equipment.

*"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?" (ROMANS 10:14-15)*

USE REVERSE SIDE TO MAKE YOUR FAITH PROMISE COMMITMENT





**ABOVE:** Sunday school was often held outdoors in the early days of missions. This afternoon class is outside an old factory converted to apartments in Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil.



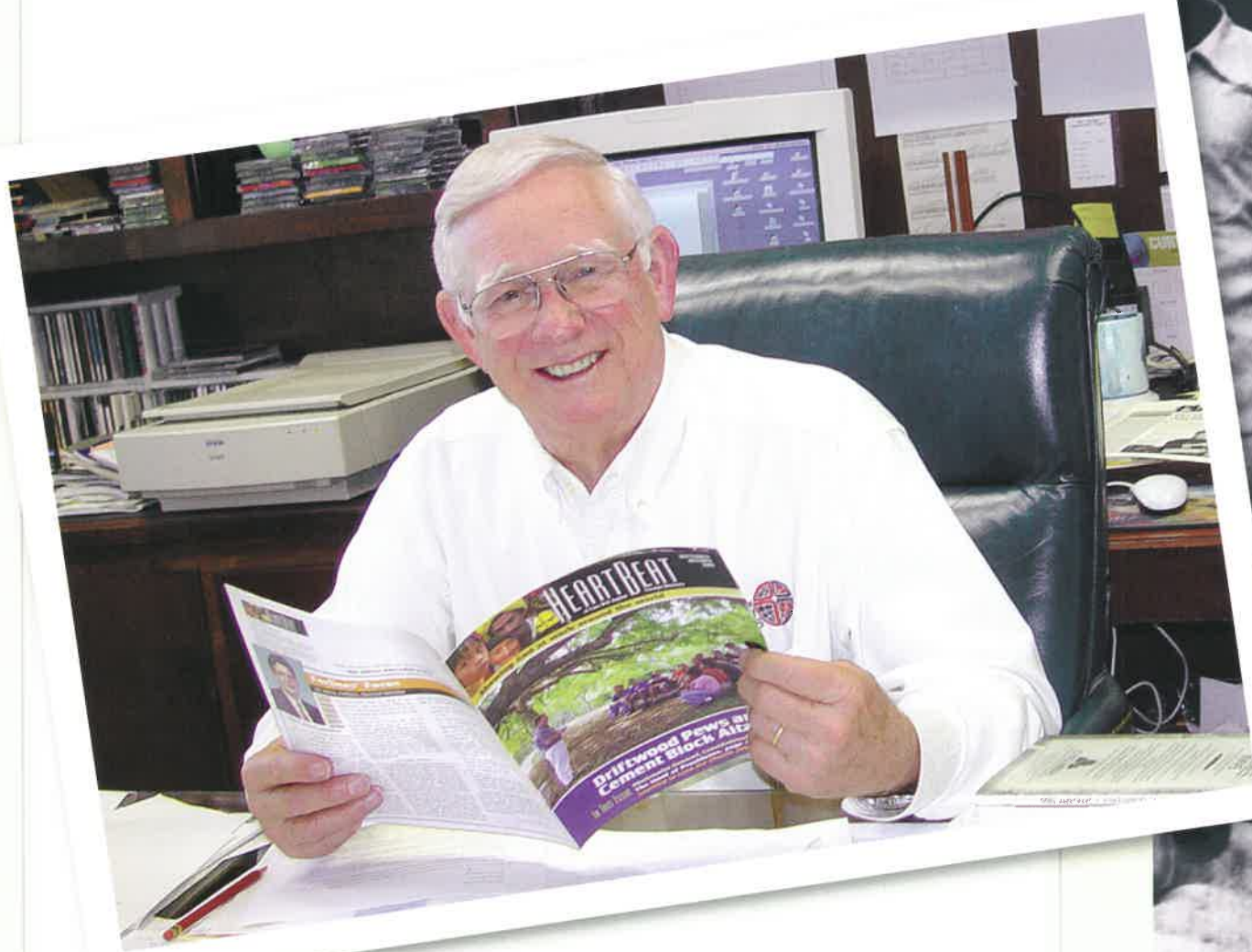


**TOP:** Dan and Margaret Merkh with their oldest children: Daniel, Elizabeth, and Timothy. The Merkhs served in Côte d'Ivoire and France.

**BOTTOM:** Rolla Smith and Mabel "Mom" Willey stand with a church group in Cuba prior to the Cuban Revolution.



*H*earbeat magazine played an integral role in promoting missions awareness among Free Will Baptists for 44 years. Begun in 1961 by Jerry Ballard, the magazine's premier issue received an award from the Evangelical Press Association. Ballard served as editor for 10 years before relinquishing the task to Bill Jones. After a year, Jones accepted the presidency of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College in Oklahoma and the board asked journalism major and missionary to Brazil Don Robirds to take the helm. Robirds guided Heartbeat through 32 years of change, four general directors, three magazine redesigns, and a variety of significant crises, world events, and Mission transitions. Retiring in 2003, Robirds passed the torch to his assistant, Deborah St. Lawrence. She served as editor for one year, before national convention delegates voted to unite various denominational publications under the banner of *ONE Magazine*.



**ABOVE:** Robirds reviews the September/October 2003 issue of *HeartBeat*, the next to last issue he edited.

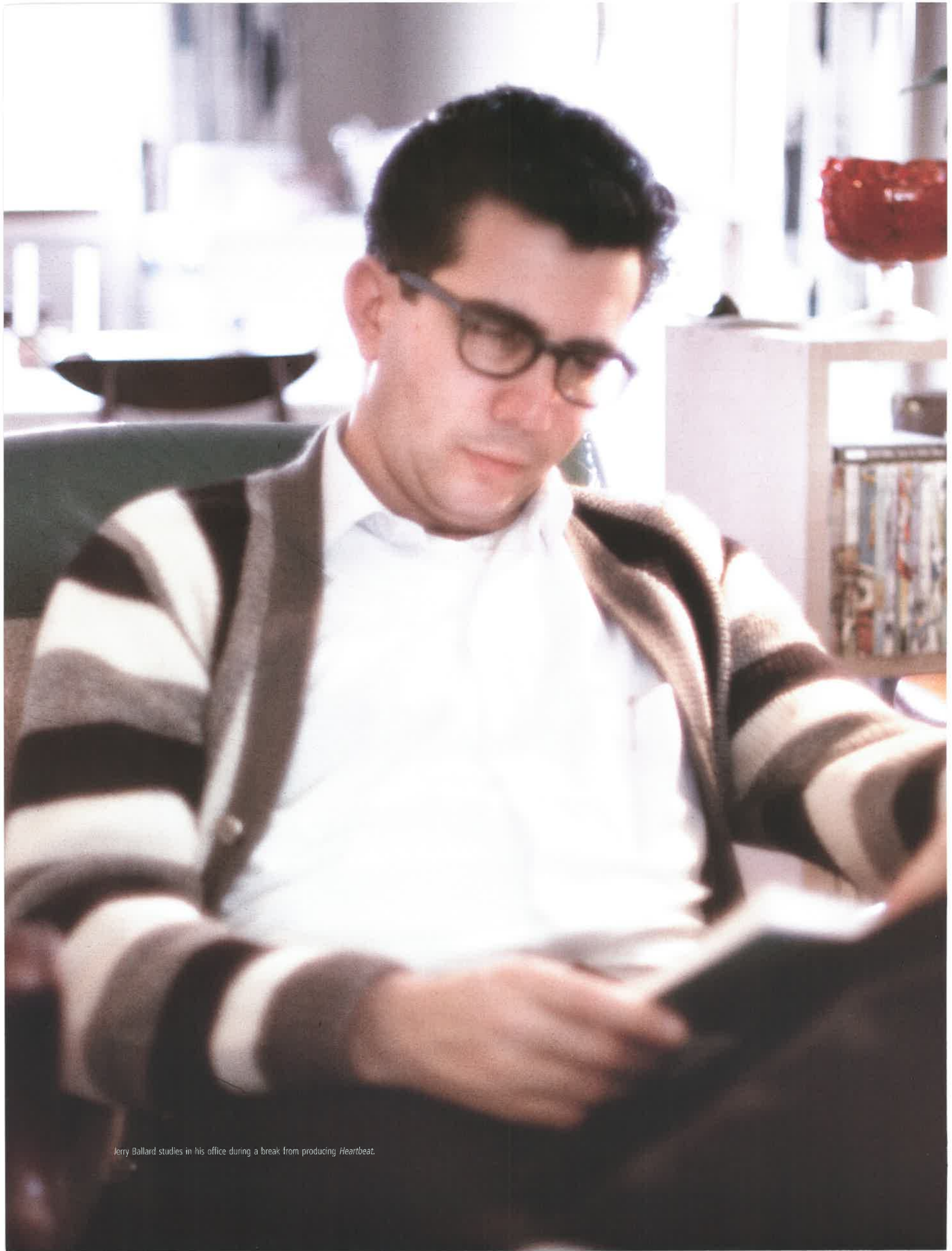
**RIGHT:** Robirds perches precariously, with Allan Crowson standing nearby, to capture footage for *The Good Chief* filmstrip during a trip to Côte d'Ivoire in 1978.





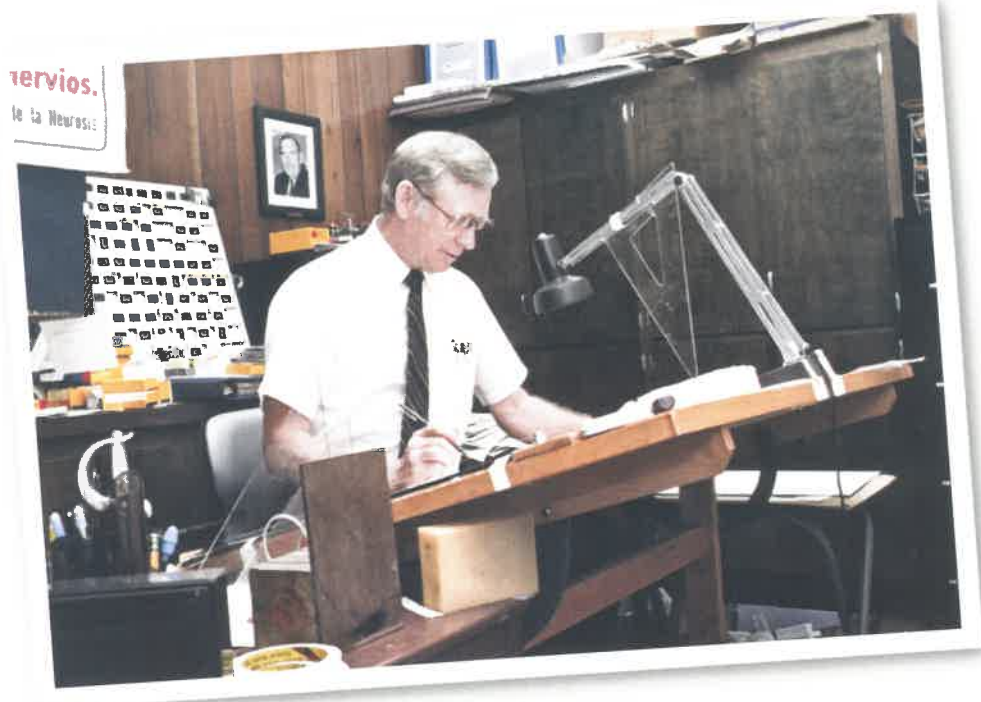






Jerry Ballard studies in his office during a break from producing *Heartbeat*.





**ABOVE:** Don Robirds works on the magazine layout, before desktop publishing made the job much easier.

## FORMER EDITORS OF HEARTBEAT MAGAZINE



**JERRY BALLARD**

1961-1970



**BILL JONES**

1970-1972



**DON ROBIRDS**

1972-2003



**DEBORAH ST. LAWRENCE**

2004-2005





**LEFT:** Carol Robirds served as her husband's assistant for several years.



**RIGHT:** Jerry Ballard, the Mission's first director of communications, types sermon notes with his Bible close by.



**RIGHT PAGE:** These covers highlight some of the changes in design over the 44-year history of *Heartbeat*.

**LEFT** Don Robirds served 32 years as director of communications and editor of *Heartbeat* magazine.

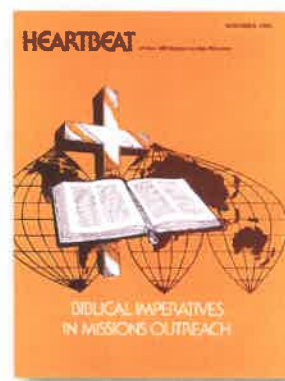




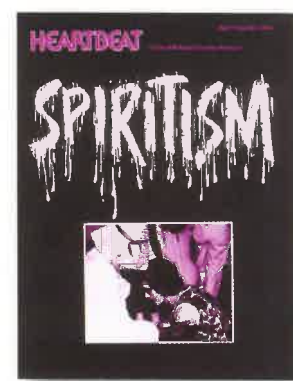
January/February 1978



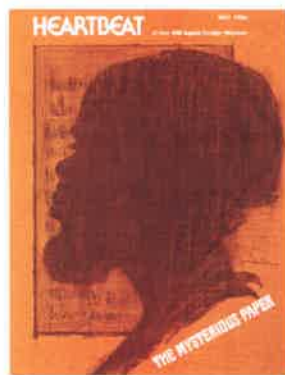
March/April 1978



November 1981



July/August 1982



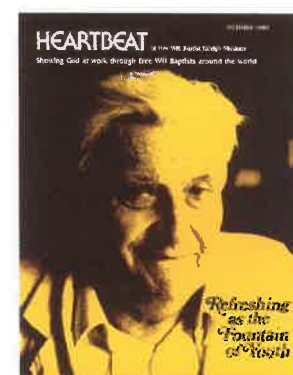
May 1984



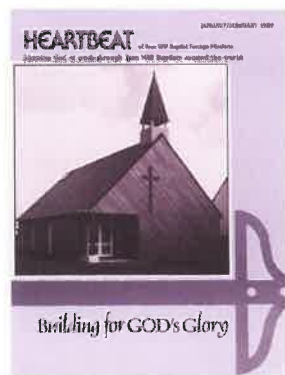
December 1985



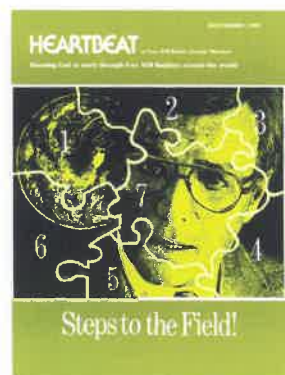
July/August 1986



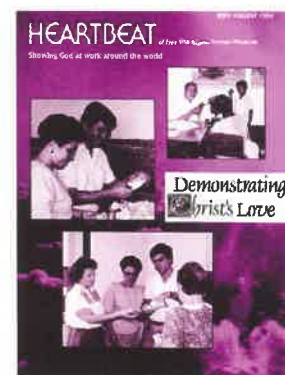
October 1987



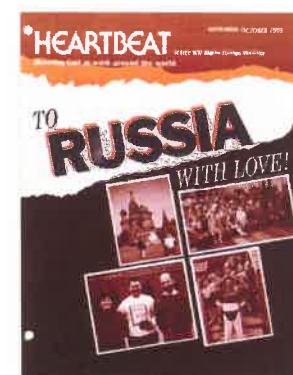
January/February 1989



July/August 1990



July/August 1991



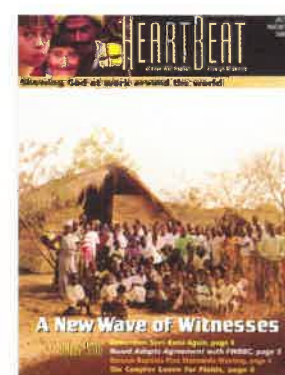
September/October 1993



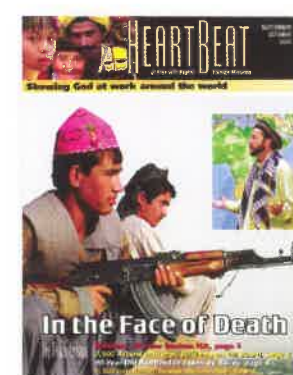
November/December 1995



July/August 1998



July/August 2000



September/October 2002



## MAKE DISCIPLES

When a person responds to the call of the Great Commission—“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19)—he knows his commitment to take the Light to dark places will entail a great deal of time and effort. Building a congregation one person at a time is no easy task. One-on-one relationship building, evangelism, and discipleship are required. Pouring himself into individual lives and families necessitates diligence and perseverance.

Teaching the Bible to a new Christian or baptizing a convert celebrates not only new life in Christ, but also the multitude of hours poured into countless other lives and the innumerable seeds planted in limitless evangelistic encounters.



**ABOVE:** Jeff Turnbough studies Scripture with a Spanish man.  
**RIGHT:** Tom Willey Jr. baptizes a young convert in Panama.











**ABOVE:** Missionaries Eddie Bowerman and Steve Torrison (far left) join Panamanian leaders in an intercessory prayer for Pastor Daniel Dorati as he and his family dealt with his young daughter's battle with cancer.





ABOVE: An Indian pastor baptizes a convert during the annual convention. It is not unusual for Christians to be ostracized or persecuted by their families or villages.



**BELOW:** Steve Lytle baptized Dorotea Hernandez, a rare older convert, March 6, 1983, in a borrowed baptistery.

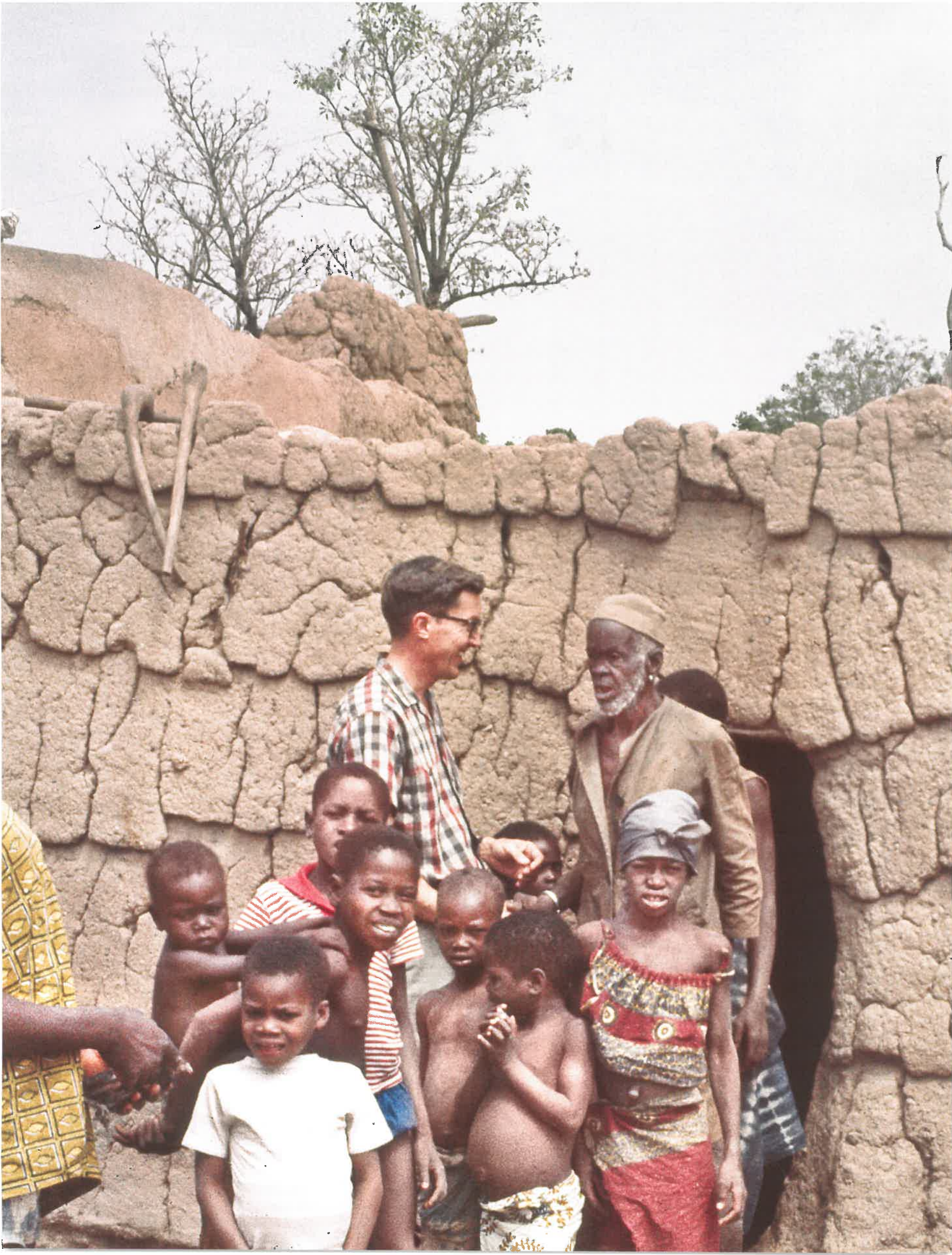
**BOTTOM:** Archie Mayhew shares the gospel with an Ivorian man. Capturing impromptu moments for witnessing are important to spreading the Light.

**RIGHT:** A witch doctor's initiation mask from Côte d'Ivoire.

**FAR RIGHT:** Dr. Miley speaks with a village chief, seeking opportunities to meet both physical and spiritual needs.









## PLANTING CHURCHES

Shining the light of the gospel in darkened corners of the globe more often than not illuminates the understanding of one or two people at a time. Yet, the mission is to plant a church and facilitate a church planting movement among the targeted people group. These churches seldom resemble the North American idea of church. The buildings themselves are different from the idyllic building with a white spire stretching into a blue sky.

A myriad of languages may be heard praising and worshipping God. These voices emanate from people boasting a kaleidoscope of skin tones. Sometimes the only instrument is the voice itself; other times, native instruments supplement worship. Occasionally, photos might convince us we are witnessing a service in our home church. Regardless, an indigenous church is founded, strengthened in the Word, and God is glorified.



**RIGHT:** A Brazilian nut with holes carved in it, revealing twelve smaller nuts inside.

**ABOVE:** Gary Fry of Missouri (left) and General Director James Forlines (right) stand with the congregation of a church in Nepal. Saifal (next to Mr. Forlines) is the Indian pastor who took the gospel across the border into the Hindu country of Nepal.

**FAR RIGHT:** Several leaders stand in front of the First Free Will Baptist Church of Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil. Although still under construction, members gathered to worship. Begun by Dave Franks, this was the first FWB church in Brazil.





IGREJA BATISTA LIVRE  
DE CAMPINAS  
ESCOLA DOMINICAL AS 030 HORAS  
LICENCIADURA DOS DEBECOS AS 1800  
CULTO 2000  
CULTO AS VENTAS FERRAS 1950  
ENTRADA LIVRE





# JEEVAN-JYOTI FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH BURIBALASON - BHUJIAPANI BAGDOGRA DARJEELING JUNE 2002

This church, built in June 2002, in India is representative of many of the buildings erected throughout North India.







**ABOVE:** Leadership retreats, like the one pictured, help church members to grow and expand their understanding. This retreat was held on the Chame Seminary property in Panama and conducted by Dr. Doug Earls.

**BELOW:** Students at the Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, take a test. Most of these young men are preparing to be pastors and evangelists.





## SHORT TERMERS

The cause of fulfilling the Great Commission has been greatly enhanced by the enthusiasm, expertise, willingness to learn, and servant spirit of those who have committed to serve overseas for short periods of time—usually a minimum of two years. Short-term missionary efforts have proven effective for support of field initiatives and missionary efforts.

In Japan, short-termers have taught conversational English to children, teens, and adults. Many people who might otherwise never hear of Jesus have heard the gospel through these classes. In Côte d'Ivoire, short-term workers filled the academic needs of International Christian Academy in Bouaké. Workers often served as surrogate parents or older siblings to missionary kids swelling the ranks of the boarding school. Professors, skilled in imparting theological tenets to seminary students, have accepted assignments ranging from two weeks to nine months in places as diverse as Cuba, Panama, and Russia. Others have served well in an assortment of roles and places.



**ABOVE:** Howard and Joan Filkins served two years at Ivory Coast Academy in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire.

**RIGHT:** After her retirement, Mrs. Juanita Thompson used her 35 years' experience teaching school to teach missionary kids at the Hokkaido Christian Learning Center in Japan.







Friends in Christ group members join short-term English teachers Hollie Hubbard (left) and Bethany Crowson (right) for a group photo opportunity.



**RIGHT:** Shirley Williams plays creative games with English students to help them learn. Shirley served two years in Tokyo, Japan.

**BELOW:** Missionary kid Benjamin Bailey returned to Japan to teach English for two years. In 2010 he was pursuing his Master's degree in TESL (teaching English as a second language).



**ABOVE:** Howard and Willie Gage pause for a moment for a photo with Dona and Nathalie Allen. The Allen's volunteered to help build the boy's dormitory at ICA in Bouaké. Howard was in his mid-50s when the couple responded to the need for missionary builders in Ivory Coast. They served from 1966-1973.

**LEFT:** Jon and Cindy McNay worked with the Bailey's in Tokyo, Japan, while Jon was stationed at Yokota Air Base in Fussa. When the Bailey's were on stateside assignment Jon, with the aid of an interpreter, filled the pulpit once a month.

**FAR LEFT:** Handmade drum from Côte d'Ivoire.





**LEFT:** Lloyd and Betty Plunkett (shown with their son Daniel) served in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, as dorm parents at International Christian Academy from 1993-1995. After a year at home they returned for another two-year assignment (1997-1999).



**ABOVE:** Tim and Deanna Thompson served a nine-month assignment in France with Lynn and Ramona Miley, working primarily with university students.

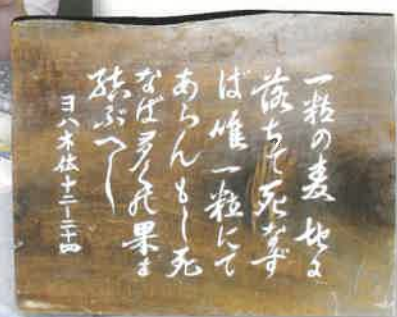


**MIDDLE:** Vivian Waller served as an associate missionary teaching elementary school at the Hokkaido International School in Sapporo, Japan. She also participated in the Kita Hiroshima church.



**LEFT:** Short-term English teachers in Japan work with a variety of age groups. Shirley Williams taught children and high school students. Each English lesson ends with a Bible study.

**BELOW:** A wood plaque carving of John 12:24 in Japanese.





# INTO THE DARKNESS

## Postscript

Although this is the last page of the book, the story is not ended. Miss Barnard, the Willeys, the Mileys, the Hannas, and scores of others marched valiantly into the darkness, carrying the light of the gospel into lands full of poverty, superstition, false religion, and fear. Humanism, materialism, affluence, and, ultimately, hedonism obscure the understanding of men and women around the world. God is still calling courageous men and women to take the Light to dark corners of the world. The mission is not complete. God's story of love and redemption continues. So, too, must the story of Light-bearers who plunge into the darkness with the Light of the World.

*My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me,  
and to finish His work.*

LAURA BELLE BARNARD,  
quoting John 4:34 in her resignation letter (below).



Foreign Mission Board  
Tomb, U.S.A.

(COPY) L.B. offered 10/21/94  
January 4, 1935

Dear Bro. Riggs:

I have written you already a letter of resignation of the Directorship of the Missions. I am now writing a further resignation. I do apologize for writing the two at once. It was not planned so. The former letter had been planned for nine years, and particularly for the past year; but it has been only the circumstances and loadings of the past one year that have brought me to feel it right and wise to write this one. And I write it now, rather than later, because I feel it will be a distinct advantage to all concerned to be able to work and plan with this resignation in mind.

I am hereby requesting the Board to endeavor to secure a replacement for me here as a missionary in India, so that as I return to U.S.A. for my next furlough I shall not need to look forward to returning. This is not to say that I shall never return. But I feel it right to make a clean break now as soon as is feasible, and to look forward to returning later on only if the Lord should give outstanding leading both to our self and to me in the matter. It will give both the whole work in India and my a change of work or location is practically impossible. Under existing regulations in India and hill climbing, under with the years. And, as I discussed with you previously, the work in Mysore needs a change in leadership, a man if at all possible. While Miss Wilson is entirely capable of leading this field's activities, and while I certainly recommend her to the task if a man cannot be produced, I am surely in a position to feel that this is not a work which a woman can conduct singlehanded without tragic results. This, quite apart from the question of whether or not one ought to be left isolated in our denominational work. For this reason I surrender my privilege of recommending to the work after furlough, and request you to take application for some suitable candidate as a replacement for me. I do realize that, in view of the many refusals, it may seem heartless in me to take this step now. But, feeling that replacement is now our only chance, and feeling it is strongly advised, I feel it up to me to urge you to replace me.

I need not tell you that my heart will never leave India, nor cease to beat for our own Free Will Baptist witness here. During my early years here I was fully conscious of our denomination's interests. God put into my heart and spoke into this land; and will keep those who have spoken to me in my trying time, and confirmed those of. From the day I first came there until I have been under a deep conviction of having been given a definite task to accomplish in this country, and it has been my one goal and purpose to "finish" the work. I had accepted India for life. So I do want to be careful not to leave one day sooner than his appointed time, and not to leave now accomplishing what which he had spoken to me as in earlier years. As I am ready to withdraw permanently the moment we can feel he has cleared the way. I shall upon the Board to do all possible to bring this to pass.

May the God of all wisdom and grace guide you, giving you access to His mind and to His power to fulfill His plan in this matter.

Laura B. Barnard