

INTO THE DARKNESS



75 Years of Free Will Baptist
International Missions



FREE WILL BAPTIST
INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS

WELCOME

Into *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.

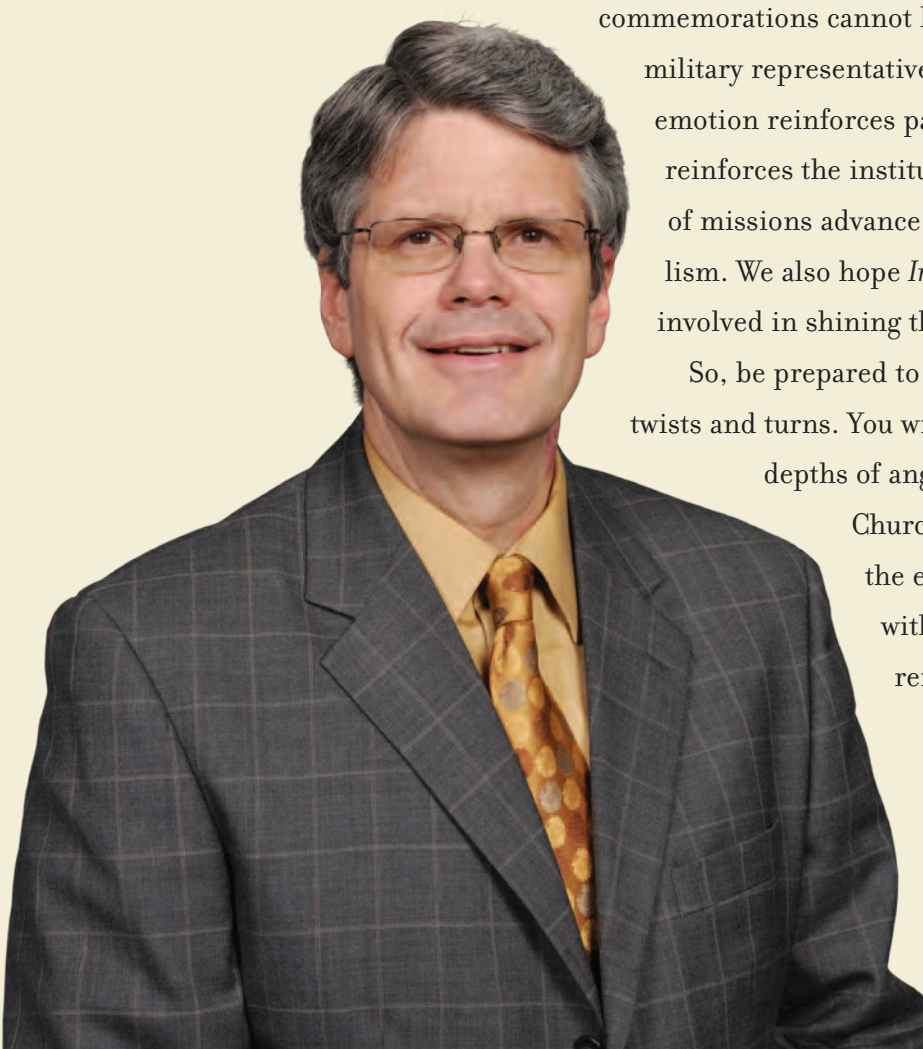
Obedience to God's call led them to tribal peoples in Africa and India. They faced spiritual darkness in the world-class cities of Europe, Asia, and Latin America. With abandon they labored in the midst of civil wars, military invasions, natural disasters, and abject poverty. These intrepid men and women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

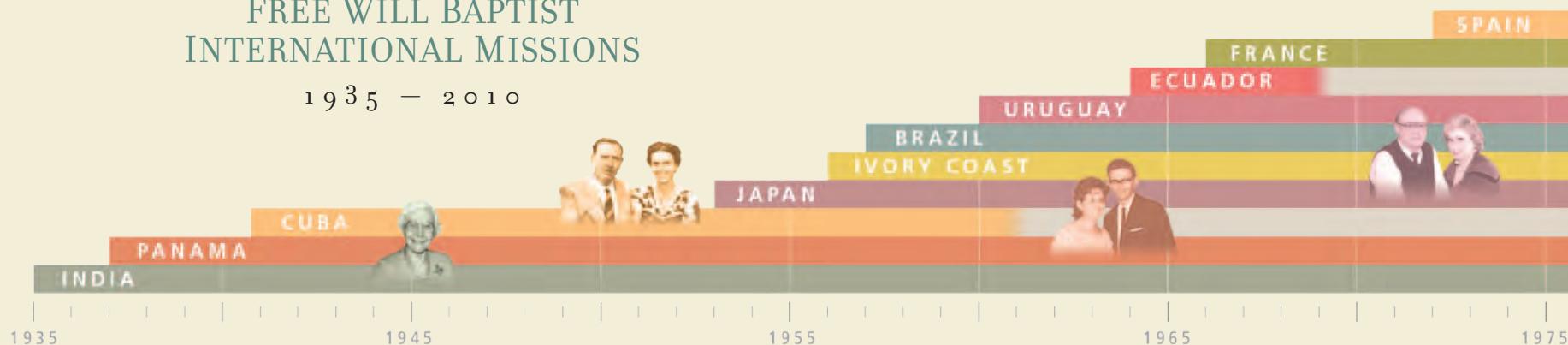
workings of God in Miss Laura Belle’s life, to prick the conscience of an entire denomination, becomes evident even though unusual” (*Touching The Untouchables*, p. 9).

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.

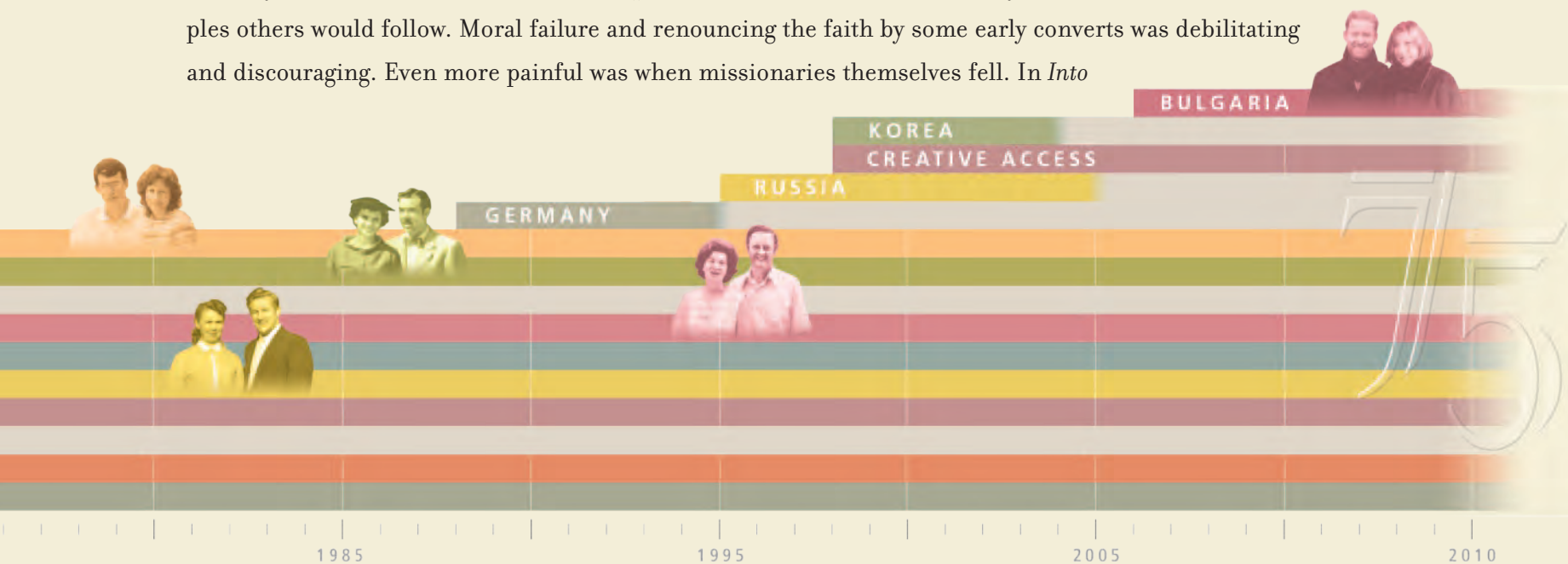
A prime example comes from the experience of Laura Belle Barnard herself. Upon arriving in Kotagiri, South India, Laura Belle learned of an earlier outreach effort to the Harijan (outcaste) people. A Scottish lady, Miss Cockburn, abandoned her outreach in the community. “Apparently, she had become thoroughly 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.

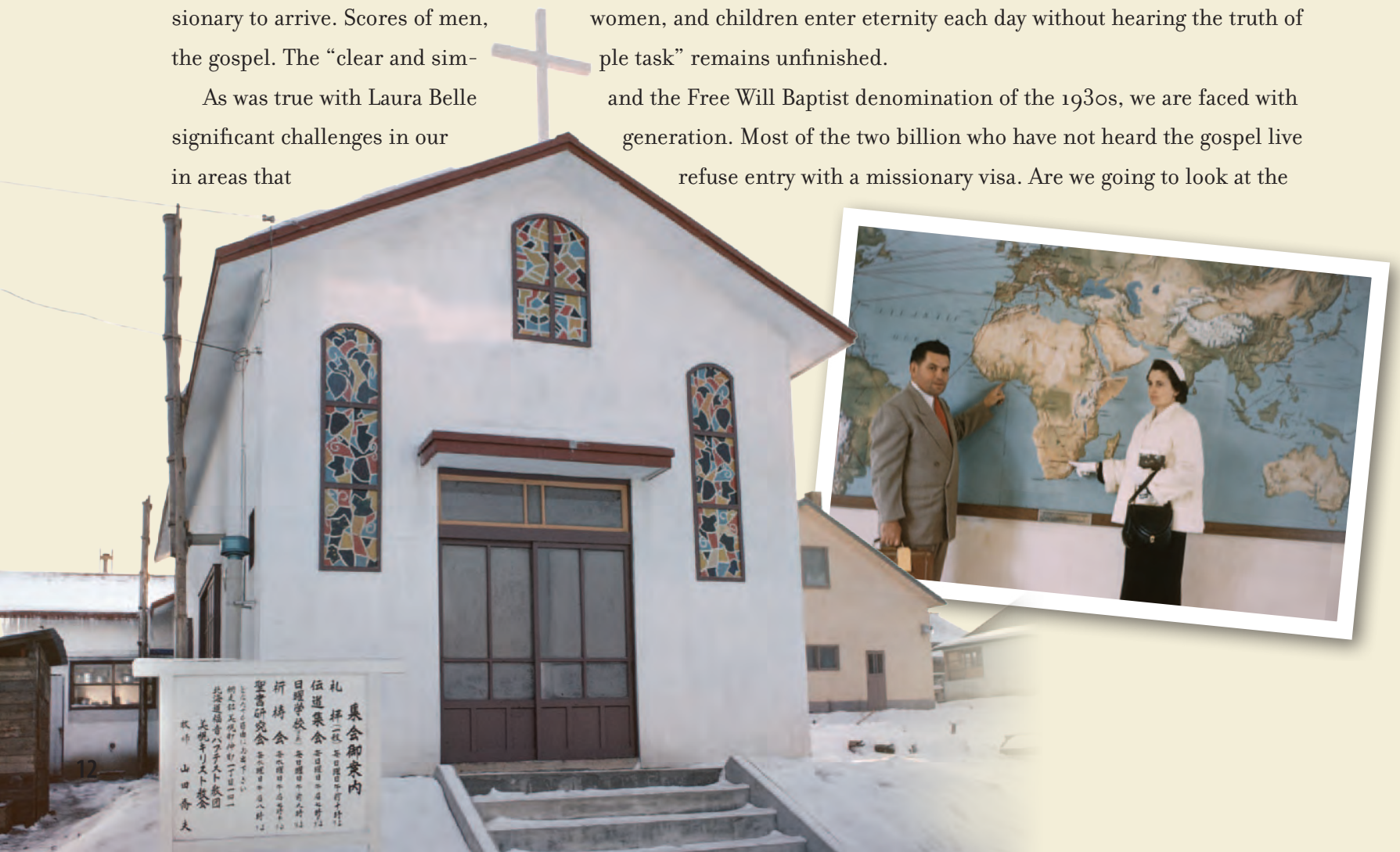
Some of our earliest missionaries served seven-year terms. It was just too expensive to make the long ocean voyages to and from the field more frequently. Visitors to the field were almost non-existent. Phone calls had to be arranged well in advance, or were only made in extreme circumstances because 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

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.



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.

Twenty-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

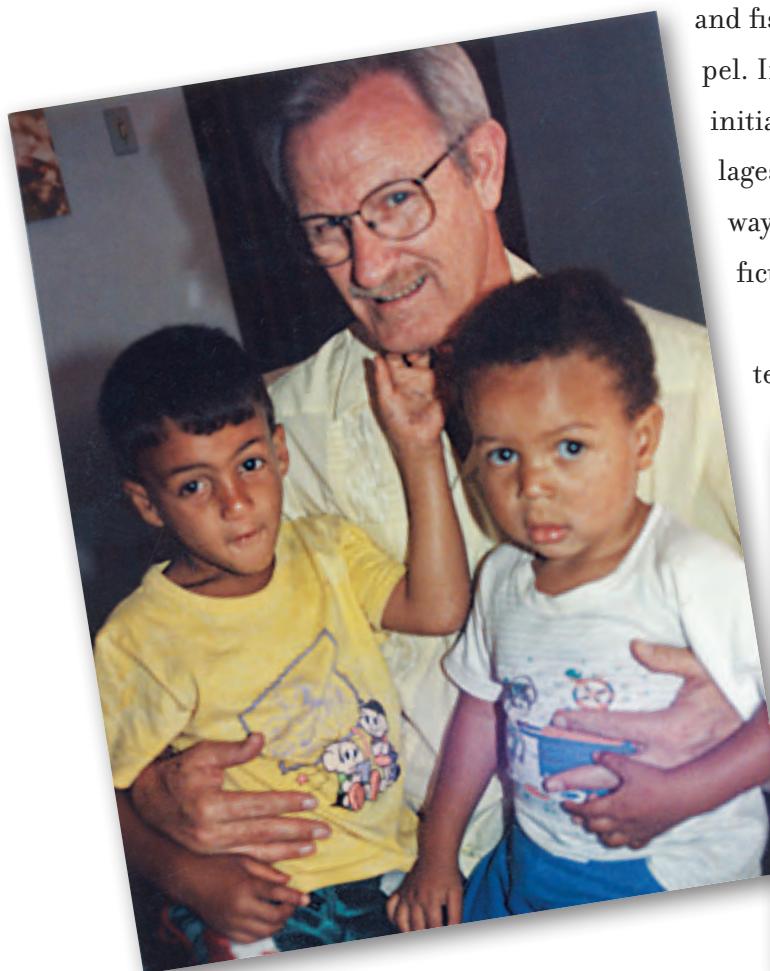
*H*e heard the gospel presented throughout his 19 years. Surrounded by 13 brothers and sisters and two godly parents in his hometown of Crab Orchard, West Virginia, Jim experienced a wonderful upbringing. But it was not until his best friend drowned that God's message penetrated his heart. With a new 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

He 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.