Perhaps the title of this editorial caused you to ask, “Is there any such thing as a good roadblock?” Some would say that a good roadblock is an oxymoron. Nonetheless, not all roadblocks are bad. As a matter of fact, many of the roadblocks along the pathway of life are extremely good. Having the proper attitude is the biggest determining factor as to whether a roadblock is detrimental or beneficial.

No matter what road we travel in life, we will experience roadblocks. However, in this editorial, I would like to consider three good—and essential—roadblocks that God places in front of young people who surrender to full-time missionary service. The excitement of having been called to the mission field often produces a sense of need to be there now. However, God places good roadblocks in their paths that seem to—from a human perspective—add time to their journey.

The Education Roadblock is one of the first roadblocks that a young person encounters on his way to being a church planter. Paul wrote that Israel had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (Romans 10:2). If an Israelite remained in that state, the result would be destruction. Likewise, if a missionary candidate has a zeal for missions but not according to knowledge, the results can be detrimental. Too many young people crash through the Education Roadblock and cause damage to themselves and others. It is important that a future missionary receive a proper education in order to be prepared and equipped. The local church is God’s center for educating and preparing someone for the mission field. This is where the future missionary learns about ministry and the operation of the local church. Additionally, there are other institutions that God uses in the lives of Christians to prepare them for missionary service. For example, Bible colleges are places where students gain book knowledge as well as countless other life lessons found only in the college setting.

The Deputation Roadblock is the second good roadblock I would like to mention. Although there are many today who think of deputation as an antiquated necessary evil, I truly believe it is a modern-day, beneficial roadblock that God continues to use in a tremendous way. Deputation allows the missionary candidate to raise his necessary financial and prayer support. Too many missionaries hurry past the Deputation Roadblock and arrive on the field under-supported. Sadly, a good number of those missionaries leave the field discouraged and deep in debt. Deputation is a tool that God
uses to develop and support missionaries, to expand the missions outreach of local churches, and to call more laborers into His harvest field.

Finally, the Adaptation Roadblock is essential to effective ministry in a foreign culture. Cross cultural adaptation entails innumerable aspects of missionary life and is a learning process that never ends. One of the most important parts of adapting to a new culture is learning the language. Sometimes missionaries go around the language school part of the Adaptation Roadblock and try to pick up the language as they continue traveling down the road. Others hire a part-time tutor and learn just the basics. Sometimes a husband learns the language well but fails to get the same level of training for his wife. Again, too many missionaries leave the field discouraged because they ignore the Adaptation Roadblock.

There are some who consider the three roadblocks mentioned above as unfortunate obstacles rather than unlimited opportunities. They reason that rather than spend four years in Bible college, two years on deputation, and a year or two in language school, they should instead be on the field winning souls. However, God’s Word teaches that roadblocks are not only allowed by God but also ordained by Him. For example, Moses did not spend just four years in Bible college but, rather, 40 years in “Wilderness University” before leading the Israelites out of Egypt (Acts 7:30). Later in his life, while hearing the desperate cries of dying Israelites who had been bitten by serpents, Moses took the necessary time to properly prepare a brazen serpent and put it on a pole—a process that most likely took a great deal of time and effort (Numbers 21:9). Additionally, even though the laborers are few, Paul admonished Timothy to lay hands suddenly on no man (1 Timothy 5:22).

I mentioned earlier that attitude plays a large part in whether or not a roadblock is good or bad. There is much truth to the saying attitude determines outcome. We can view roadblocks to be something negative—obstructions, restrictions, distractions, or simply a waste of time. Or, we can consider roadblocks to be something positive—divine delays, providential pauses, heavenly hindrances, or simply God’s guidance. So, it is important that we have a biblical attitude toward roadblocks. As we do, we will find that
good roadblocks are actually directional signs
that God uses to safely and efficiently lead us to our final destination.
On January 24, 1848, James W. Marshall was building a lumber mill called Sutter’s Mill in Coloma, California, when he saw some shiny flakes glistening in a streambed. Marshall and his employer, John Sutter, tried in vain to keep the discovery a secret. However, by late 1848, the news had spread, and in 1849, the California Gold Rush became the largest civilian migration in United States history as approximately 300,000 people from the United States and 12 other countries rushed to the gold fields. In 1847, California was an obscure place, hardly known to most people. The population of San Francisco was around 800 persons. The bay was known as a sleepy little harbor. The lure for gold and fast fortunes changed everything. It determined the destinies of men, did much to shape the course of our nation, and forever altered the state of California. Today’s home of the NFL San Francisco 49ers (as the miners were called) is the place where Levi Strauss denim jeans, Wells Fargo bank, and Ghirardelli chocolates became famous as entrepreneurs found their gold in the selling of goods and services to the miners.

I liken the opportunity God has given us in Botswana to that event, except we are engaged in A GOLD RUSH FOR SOULS. We are prospecting in a land of unlimited opportunity and among a people who are eager to hear the true Gospel. The 49ers risked it all, leaving homes and families behind, hoping that Lady Luck would lead them to gold. As we mine for souls in Botswana, we are not hoping to get lucky. We have the Lord’s command to “Go” (Matthew 28:18–20). By faith we have staked our claim upon His promises with prayer and hard work. Botswana is, as California once was, a remote and little known location. The African nation has a modest population nearing 2.4 million people. Yet, as Billy Sunday would say, “It is not necessary to be in a big place to do big things.” William Carey said, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” It is in that spirit that Ephesians 3: 20–21 became the theme verses for our ministry—Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

In 1966, Botswana became an independent nation. The discovery of diamonds in 1967 has financed its modernization as a developing country. The mines supply one quarter of the world’s diamond market and boast the world’s richest mine by value. Botswana today is known for its wildlife management, safaris, cattle industry, and Kalahari Desert. It is also known for being the Gem of African democracy and early death rate as 25 percent of the population is HIV positive. Previously inhabited by the various Bantu tribes that comprise the Tswana people, present day Botswana is populated with people from all over Africa and large concentrations of ethnic groups from India.
China, Asia, and the Middle East. Most foreign residents reside in the capital city of Gaborone (population 232,000), where Islamic mosques, Buddhist and Hindu temples, and churches of every kind are being erected alongside modern shopping malls, apartment buildings, and middle class housing developments. Jet planes landing at the small international airport fly daily over the ruins of David Livingstone’s mission at Kolobeng, where 172 years ago he built the first church in Botswana. The beauty of Botswana is that one can drive 30 minutes out of the capital city and see the yesteryear way of life in rural villages, where modernization has had minimal impact on the traditional way of life.

In answer to God’s call, we landed in Botswana on January 20, 2017, as the first (and only) BIMI missionaries serving here. The work God is doing, like the California Gold Rush, will determine the eternal destinies of men. The work of God is vital to help shape the course of this developing African nation. Most Batswana are hungry for the truth found in God’s Word. The incredible opportunities that exist to evangelize and plant churches in this country are like nothing I have ever seen or been a part of in over 30 years of ministry. Let me briefly list a few of the main accomplishments of the past 27 months:

- **Established legal recognition of a recognized association for BIMI through which we and future missionaries can secure the permits needed to live in Botswana**
- **Established Grace Baptist Church through soul winning and discipleship with 50 saved and baptized and a weekly average of 80+**
- **Established a Bible institute to train faithful men for ministry—expanded this ministry and are now a registered international school using the Faith Bible Institute curriculum with 14 students registered to begin the fall semester**
- **Distributed over 70,000 copies of the Scriptures—ready to print in country an additional 50,000 New Testaments in the Setswana language**
- **Preached to many thousands at colleges and schools, government offices, police stations, military bases, etc., witnessing many professions of faith**
- **Conducted Bible Time Clubs each week in two schools with approximately 1,500 students and in outlying villages on Saturdays**

More could be added to the list, not to boast of ourselves but only to highlight what can be done when someone with a willing heart goes to that place where God has prepared a harvest. He gives the increase! Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will use this article to prompt someone to answer the call of God on his life to just sell out for Jesus, pull up whatever stakes one must, and by faith take God at His Word to come here to Botswana or to wherever God is calling.

Mining for gold in California was more difficult than expected. The 49ers faced a lot of hardships and hazards. Mining for souls on any mission field is not an easy task. As blessed as it is to hit pay dirt, there is the reality of the required daily digging that is not so enjoyable. Missions work is certainly not for the fainthearted or those who are quick to quit when disappointed or discouraged. In missions, one finds out quickly that “all that glitters is not gold.” There are some places where God asks a missionary to suffer long seasons of digging before even one soul is saved. In Botswana, we are constantly contending with undercurrents of demonism as Charismatic false prophets deceive the hearts of the simple with their lying signs and wonders. New Christians have to be taught to abandon sinful traditions and cultural practices that are engrained in them, choosing rather to embrace biblical convictions and a godly way of life. It is very much the case in much of Africa. To put it in perspective, we are not as discouraged by the lack of fruit as much as we are burdened, wishing we could do more to recover the treasure that lies in waiting, with few laborers here to help us recover it. Dr. Snyder once said that we must live life and approach ministry every day with a divine dissatisfaction in our hearts. That divine dissatisfaction has morphed into an
Any undying burden to see God call co-laborers into this harvest field. In the mid to late 1800s, a newspaper writer issued a public challenge that is still familiar to us today, “Go West, Young Man, Go West!” And they did! I often wonder, “Where is that spirit today?” Thank you to every pastor who has a heart for missions, but where are the parents, professors, and pastors who dare our young people to believe God and GO to the ends of the earth in response to our Lord’s command? Why is it that more missionaries are leaving the foreign fields instead of going to them? Is the rush over? No! We live in a moment of time when literally around the world fields are ripe unto harvest! Do not succumb to the doom and gloom faith of the naysayer. God is doing a mighty work in our generation!

Not all who came to California found gold as miners. Some made their fortune supporting the efforts of the diggers. I appreciate our supporting churches and prayer warriors back home. You are vital and we could not do it without you! However, we must have some co-laborers in the field if we are going to hit the mother lodes in our mission fields. In addition to church planters, we need preachers and Bible teachers, Sunday school and Christian school teachers, children’s ministry workers, people to help with music, tech guys (or gals), and craftsmen, etc. A Christian business owner or investor could start a lucrative company to employ the unemployed and underemployed masses of young people in Botswana (think of Levi Strauss and his impact on the world). Our main goal will always be to train national church planters and the lay leaders who help them, but what if we had an army of skilled diggers helping us to do it?

Gold rushes are exactly that, a rush to get to the gold before the opportunity is gone. No matter how great, they soon become a part of history. No one knows how long they will last. Every Bible-believing Christian knows Jesus will come soon. We must do whatever we are going to do with a sense of urgency, knowing our opportune time will come to an end.

As the 49ers journeyed across the country to the gold fields of California, they would sometimes be asked why they were going. One man’s reply became a famous idiom, prompting songs and movies even to this present day, “There’s gold in them thar’ hills.” I can tell you that there are souls here in Botswana, precious people waiting for someone to tell them of Christ! Would God have you to come? If you cannot come, please pray and ask God to send someone in your stead, then do all you can to help them get here. There is gold in this land and we need to get it while there is still time!

Dr. Roy Ackerle went Home to be with the Lord on February 1, 2019. Roy and his wife Marjorie (who went Home to be with the Lord in 2008) were missionaries in Cuba from 1948–1961, establishing churches that continue to this day and training preachers in the Bible school. A radio broadcast was begun that reached all the Caribbean and portions of Central and South America.

After joining BIMI in July 1970, Roy continued the radio broadcast La Capilla del Aire (The Chapel of the Air), which reached into remote areas where there was no one to tell them of the Gospel. Requests from the radio believers led to the establishment of the Chapel in the Home. These were complete church services that were printed and mailed to believers who had been following the radio ministry. Countless souls have been saved through these innovative methods. As a missionary with BIMI, Roy served as South America Director and Candidate School Director.

Roy married Carol Philips (2009) and they have been involved in Bible correspondence courses for Spanish-speaking prisoners. Over 900 prisoners have received the courses with scores being saved.
Dr. Mike L.E. Sweitzer III, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Secane, Pennsylvania, went Home to be with his Lord on February 27, 2019, at the age of 69. Mike and Karen joined BIMI in 1980. He was in a group of 19 men that Frank Rosser and John Bailes took to Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston to show the needs of church planting. He was one of nine who went back to plant a church. In 1982, he and his family moved to the Philadelphia area as church planters. Mike lovingly and faithfully served as senior pastor for 36 years, ministering and sharing the Gospel with everyone he met. He dedicated his life to leading others to Christ and living for the Lord. Mike was a true example of Christ's love and a servant's heart.

Russell Turner Jr. went Home to be with the Lord on February 21, 2019. Russell and Bobbie Turner always had a heart for missions, personally supporting many missionaries from the time they married. After God called them to be missionaries, they joined BIMI in July 1968 and left for the field of Cayman Brac with their six children on February 8, 1969. The Turners celebrated their 50th year of being on the field this month.

While ministering to his local mission field in the Caribbean, Russell also traveled to scores of countries, giving out thousands of Gospels of John and other Gospel literature in the language of each country. In the English-speaking countries, he included an offer of a free Bible study course, which hundreds of people completed. After their children were grown, Bobbie accompanied him on these literature distribution trips to countries all over the world, including the Middle East.

The government of the Cayman Islands recognized Russell and Bobbie through the years with several awards, thanking them for their service to the youth and the population in general of the islands.

BIMI Missionary Christian Dogor (84) went Home to be with the Lord on Friday night, May 10, 2019. Christian and Emma Dogor always had a heart for missions and came to the States to study missions at a Christian university. They joined BIMI in July 1980. Brother Dogor has labored for over 35 years in his home country of Ghana, West Africa, establishing three solid churches in the capital of Accra to the glory of God. Brother Dogor worked in the Ghana Baptist Theological Institute as well.

Martha Kunberger, one of God’s choice servants, was ushered into the presence of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Sunday morning, May 26, 2019. She was a long-time servant of her Lord. Martha started for the mission field in 1956 aboard an ocean liner, which took 16 days to arrive in Africa. Martha was one of those who would make up that first group of BIMI missionaries. After Martha served four years in the Congo, the missionaries had to be evacuated. God closed the door there and opened another door of opportunity on another continent and with a new language to learn. For 18 years she served God faithfully in Nicaragua, Central America, until a government uprising forced all foreigners to leave. Once again, she sought the Lord’s direction and joined a work in Guatemala. Martha served four years before this country also underwent a political uprising, and Martha was among those missionaries evacuated. Nothing would cause Martha to lose her heart for missions and God was not finished with her. In 1985, BIMI asked her to work at BIMI’s Home Office where she assisted with Spanish-speaking ministries and Bible correspondence courses.
My wife, Christina, and I are first-term missionaries, which is a nice way of saying we do not know what we are doing! When we took our survey trip to Cape Verde in 2014, it was the first time my wife had left the United States. The only experience I had abroad was a two-week missions trip 16 years before. We were not exactly dripping with experience. By God’s grace, we finally moved to Cape Verde with our family of seven in April 2018.

When one arrives in a new country, everything is different such as smells, sights, sounds, tastes—everything! Our small-town Midwest lifestyle in the States that we left behind has very few similarities to life in Cape Verde. We have now become accustomed to so many things that we would almost never experience in the States.

The stress of moving to a foreign culture can be overwhelming. Culture shock is real! I have read articles where experts compare culture shock to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I am not the expert in the area, but I suppose there are some similarities. After the novelty of the first several weeks wears off, reality begins to set in. Different people deal with this stress in different ways. I have heard people say, “God will never give you more than you can handle.” In my experience, God always gives you much more than you can handle—so you learn to trust Him. His grace is more than sufficient in our weakness. The truth is we will forever be different because of the time we have spent overseas. If we allow the stress to push us closer to Christ, we begin to understand a new level of fellowship and dependence we never have experienced before. I can say with certainty that my walk with the Lord is stronger because of my life here.

As a new missionary going to the field, there is a high level of anxiety about many things. One of my biggest fears was that we would not be able to learn the language. What if we just could not figure it out? What if the message of the Gospel is not received or is distorted because we fail to adequately grasp the language? After all, the very reason we go to the mission field is to communicate the message of God’s Word.

In my mind, we could deal with a lot of inconveniences and the different lifestyle, but learning a whole new language truly had me terrified.

During our time on deputation, we received valuable training to aid with our language learning. I highly recommend any missionary heading to the
field to take advantage of all the tools that are available. It is possible that many who come off the field do so because they did not properly prepare. Long-term ministry requires a certain level of preparation. We took classes in Phonetics, Phonemics, Morphology, Syntax, Cultural Adaptation, First Aid and took a one-week Jungle Camp. It proved to be some of the most valuable training we received. After receiving this training, we were a lot more confident to tackle the tasks of language learning and life on the mission field. It was like having shiny new tools and anticipating the first chance to use them.

We arrived in Cape Verde eager to begin learning Portuguese. Cape Verde is a former Portuguese colony and has retained Portuguese as their official language. All education, government functions, and official business are conducted in Portuguese. Portuguese is a very common language around the world. I suppose it is not the most difficult language to learn, but its verb conjugations will make one dizzy! If one has never heard European Portuguese, it sounds a little like the swish swish sound of someone washing clothes by hand. It can be difficult to pick up some of the important sounds that distinguish words.

Cape Verde also speaks a unique creole language—Kriolu. Kriolu has some similarities with Portuguese, but in other ways it is substantially different. Many African countries have languages that are official but also local languages that are spoken in everyday situations. Some missionaries go to the field needing to learn two languages—this was our case.

When we arrived, we only knew a few basic words and phrases. We are grateful for missionary friends who were able to help us rent our first apartment and get us settled. Within a matter of days, we were starting lessons with a tutor coming to our house several times a week. A traditional language school is not available here. As our schedules and circumstances have changed, we have had to find a few different tutors, but we are grateful for the helpers whom God has put in our path.

I am certainly not an expert in learning languages or adjusting to life on the mission field, but I have had many helpful friends along the way. We do not know much, but we are learning more every day. Below are a few tips we have found especially helpful:

1. Do not be overwhelmed by the language hurdle.

We have come to understand how unusual the United States is in almost every way. We began a rather humorous list of things that are almost strictly American, like peanut butter, ridiculous warning labels, self-serve gas stations, and automatic transmissions. We have also come to learn that the United States is very near the top of the list for the most monolingual nation. I would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to learn a second language to take the opportunity! Perhaps your church has a Spanish ministry or you work with bilingual people—take the opportunity to learn another language. Generally, these folks are more than willing to listen to you practice. Maybe you homeschool and it could be a fun family project! I think if you give it a legitimate effort, you will be amazed at the way the different word order and structure changes the way you think about English. My only warning—learning another language will not help your spelling!

2. Determine to be a learner, not just a student.

To have success in learning a language and adjusting to life on the mission field, you must have the attitude of a learner. A student can
learn in a structured classroom setting, but to a learner, the world is the classroom. There is certainly nothing wrong with the classroom setting, but we must be able to learn from common every day circumstances as well.

3. Make lots of mistakes, and learn to laugh at yourself.

A learner is humble. Pride is often the biggest hindrance to learning. Children learn to speak a language by constantly being corrected on their sentence structure and pronunciation. As adults, we must humbly become like little children and be willing to be constantly corrected. I was told “Anybody can learn Portuguese, you just have to be willing to make 500,000 mistakes, so try to make your first 1,000 mistakes today!” I think there is wisdom to this statement.

Anyone who learns a language will have funny and embarrassing stories. You quickly learn to laugh at yourself. Some words sound very similar, but they mean totally different things. I remember soon after we arrived, I passed a man on the street who had a freshly caught octopus in a clear plastic bag. He was trying to sell it. I stumbled through a few pleasantries with him and learned the word for octopus was polvo. A few days later, I was sitting in church listening to our missionary friend preach. At this point in our language learning, we were just listening for any words we recognized. He was talking about the people of Israel in the wilderness. He kept saying the povo of Israel. Povo is the word for people. It made me laugh that the words for octopus and people are so similar: polvo and povo—that sure makes the Bible stories a little different. Ha!

4. Any exposure to your target language is helpful.

We have learned that any exposure to our target language is helpful. We get lots of practice at church functions. We try to watch the local news every evening. We have found some helpful resources online. Our children even have a few favorite children’s programs they watch on television. We are amazed at how much they pick up from watching. Taxi drivers, store cashiers, the waitresses, the butcher, the women selling goods on the sidewalk, and the people we wait in line with to pay bills are all more opportunities to learn and practice our language.

5. Take time to learn all you can about the culture.

We are blessed with the opportunity to learn the culture and language at the same time. I know if we would have shown up in Cape Verde already fluent in the language, we would have been tempted to jump headlong into every opportunity. As we learn the language, we intentionally are examining the cultural context. We have observed that one of the blessings of having to slow down and learn the language is having the time to observe the culture as well. Clear communication is the goal of the missionary, and without linguistic and cultural understanding, clear communication is impossible.

With the thousands of languages in our world today, language learning is a vital part of reaching our world with the Gospel. Please pray for us and for other missionaries who are learning a foreign language that God would give us the courage and determination to continue to the uttermost.
She was curious. She wanted to know. She knew she was missing something but she did not know what it was or how to find it. She approached my wife and me one Sunday afternoon with questions about salvation and how she could be sure of her eternal home. My wife and I talked with her for the next hour and shared the truths of the Gospel. When she left that day, she had not made a clear decision for Christ. Yet, little did we know the impact that conversation would have on her life as well as the lives around her.

Several months passed, and it was evident that she was different. Something had clearly changed inside of her. Finally, a friend of ours asked her, “When did you accept Christ?” She replied, “It was the afternoon I talked with Dan and Rachael. After our conversation, I went home and asked Christ to be my Savior.” This was the first time she had placed her faith in Christ instead of her former church or faithless experiences.

After learning of this, Rachael soon began discipling her and teaching her the basics of the Christian life. Her hunger for the Word of God was insatiable. Then came the lesson on baptism. Before Rachael could even ask her, she expressed her desire to be baptized and follow the Lord’s Word and will. Just before Christmas 2018, I had the wonderful privilege of baptizing this dear lady. Her face beamed with joy as she took this public step of obedience.

Everyone who knew her could see that an evident change had swept over her life. The one who noticed this change the most was her husband. As the months passed, he quietly observed the many wonderful changes in his wife. On the day of her baptism, he could contain his longing heart no longer. He approached me and said, “I want what she has!” He did not know what it was that had made his wife different, but he knew he wanted it.

Later that week, we met. He explained that he had been trying to have the same change in his own life. “In fact,” he explained, “I used to smoke 10 cigarettes a week, but now I am only smoking 5!” I tried to conceal my smile as I began explaining that it is not our efforts that save us but rather our faith in Jesus Christ alone. He listened intently as I explained the Gospel and how he, too, could have the wonderful change of heart and life through Jesus Christ. That day, without hesitation, he bowed his head and accepted Christ as his personal Savior.

It is hard to put into words the change that sweeps over a new believer when he accepts Christ. There is a new joy, a new peace, and a new purpose in life. Perhaps the greatest change is the new burden for the souls of his lost friends, relatives, and neighbors. Since accepting Christ, Jacqueline has been a faithful witness and has invited many people to church, and Norbert (her husband) has attended weekly soul winning. Truly, there has been a great change since they have been born again!
Who were the people who influenced your spiritual life? Do you remember the Sunday school teacher who made the Bible come alive, the youth worker who took a personal interest in your life, or the people who rejoiced with you over your salvation and rejoiced again when you led your first soul to Christ? I, like every Christian, am indebted to so many others who have influenced me. Since I grew up on the mission field, most of my spiritual influences outside of my family were the Kenyan Christians.

It was my Kenyan Sunday school teacher whom I looked forward to seeing every Sunday. I loved the Swahili songs, the many Bible stories, and the fact that she took time for me. She was the first one I wanted to tell of my salvation.

One of my playmates growing up was the daughter of our church secretary. As I grew older, I got a burden to share the Gospel with her. One Sunday afternoon, I asked her if I could share some verses with her—and she accepted Christ! I remember being awed by the fact that God had used me to bring a soul to Him and thrilled with the joy of those around me who rejoiced with me and my friend.

I still remember learning memory verses in teen class. I looked up to the teacher as an example, and my peers encouraged me to a greater walk of faith. Although my family traveled more and more to start other churches in different regions of Kenya, whenever we came back to the already established churches, our Christian family was always there, and their testimonies ministered to me.

During my recent survey trip to Kenya, I had the opportunity to revisit the area I called home for most of my life. What a joy to reconnect with so many who had an impact on my life and to see how they are still faithfully serving the Lord and expanding their ministries to different areas and to different lives! Some had moved to new regions, and other dear friends had gone ahead to Glory. Remembering their legacy of service to the Lord challenges me to do more for Christ, and I can rejoice in the fact that I will one day see them again!

In a special sense, I can say with Paul I am [a] debtor (Romans 1:14). Much of who I am is due to the Kenyan Christians who invested in my life and due to Kenya—the country that gave me my first taste of the ministry.

Now, as a missionary on deputation to Kenya, I look forward to giving back to the country that gave so much to me. While the Gospel has transformed many lives in Kenya through the works of missionaries and national Christians,
there is still much to be done. To my knowledge, there is only one independent Baptist missionary currently working in the western portion of Kenya, where a large majority of Kenyans live. There are very few working along the coast or in the south and almost no one working with the nomads scattered across the north of Kenya. Although several missionaries are working in the populous central region, the need is far greater than the current number of workers can meet.

I had known the statistics, but experiencing the reality was entirely different. On my survey trip, I was able to visit my future co-workers Luke and Tonya Shelby. They drove my dad and me up a tall mountain to a vantage point that overlooked the region of Kisii where they work, the most densely populated area outside of the capital. The landscape below was honeycombed with thousands of small compounds, from wooden structures with tin roofs to towns with crowded apartments. It was exciting as the Shelbys pointed out “We have a church here, and over here…and a new one starting there.” However, with a population of over two million in Kisii and the surrounding areas, there is still much work to be done!

Any time a society suffers, those who are most affected are the children. The same is true in the spiritual realm. While Gospel-preaching churches in Kenya are few, children’s ministries are much fewer. However, nearly half of Kenya’s population is under the age of 15. When a throng of children crowded around me the next Sunday eager to recite their memory verses, I realized that those smiling, jostling children who had come to church were Kenya’s hope for the future! On my trip, I also had the opportunity to visit in several schools. Each class was filled with students who only heard the Gospel when the missionary came, and I saw so many other schools where the missionaries had not yet had the opportunity to visit.

Although Kenya’s spiritual need is very evident, there is hope! God, Who is rich unto all that call upon Him, is building His church in Kenya. I am excited to be one of the laborers He has sent to Kenya to meet the need! Perhaps I will be the Sunday school teacher who can make the Bible come alive to a little child or the youth worker to take a personal interest in someone’s life.

Missions, in some form, is the means by which each of us was reached with the Gospel, whether it was through preaching, visitation, or the witness of a friend or family member. Someone gave us our first Bible, greeted us at church, and answered our questions about salvation. Truly, all of us are debtors, not only to missions but also to our Savior. I have often heard my dad say, “May God help us to not let missions stop with us but to go through us to reach others!”

Erica & Washera still friends today

Washer’s mom

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Imagine being invited to a place where winter daytime temperatures can be minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit and colder. That was our recent experience as we visited BIMI missionaries in Mongolia in January. What a great blessing to see what God is doing through His faithful servants!

Not too many years ago, the plea was made for God’s people to consider this needy field. Some had gone, but we had no one with our Mission, and the need was great. Now, to God be the glory, we have three families serving in Mongolia.

The Lord put it on the hearts of Jason and Mary Ritchie to go to Mongolia about ten years ago. They were the first BIMI family in that part of the harvest. On my first visit in 2014, Brother Jason showed me around the capital city of Ulaanbaatar (oo-lan-ba-ter) and spoke of his vision to see churches established in that bustling capital city of one and a half million people.

The modern city before me completely changed the image received from documentaries viewed previously about this country. Of course, the nomadic life of many Mongolians remains, yet in the capital city there was a great need of Gospel-preaching churches. The culture of many Asian countries is quite different from what we are accustomed, but I was moved most by the warm reception I received from the people.

On that first trip, I saw a missionary family, the Ritchies, very active in ministry and pouring themselves into learning the difficult language of Mongolian. They served in ministries already started by others, awaiting the day the Lord would allow them to start a work of their own. Jason showed me the location and spoke of his dream to see a church established on the south side of town. What a joy to return with my family this time to see what God has done in a few short years!

What we saw is amazing! God has blessed the Ritchies’ ministry with a growing church, the Khan-Uul Baptist Church; a Bible college, Faith Baptist College of Mongolia; and the Traditional Text Bible Translating Project to help provide a Bible for the Mongolian people.

The church is growing! They started in a basement room in the same complex where they lived. In a short time, it became evident that more room was needed. Recently, God opened the door for them to rent the third floor of a building in the middle of the city. This facility was vital for the future growth of their church. In fact, their current location gives them room to grow to double or triple their current size while providing room for other ministries. Along with the blessing of added room to grow comes a huge financial need until the church is able to carry the burden.
Training their people was a need that birthed Faith Baptist College of Mongolia. From this training base within their church lays the hopes and prayers to see future church planters trained and sent out. Along with this ministry comes many hours of preparation of curriculum and texts in the Mongolian language as they prepare laborers for the harvest.

If this were not enough for their busy schedule, they also head up a Bible translation project that resulted in the completion of the New Testament and the beginning phase of the translation of the Old Testament. A team of translators headed by Jason is working diligently toward the much needed completion of a Bible for the Mongolian people.

Memorial Gifts have been received in memory of

Sue Gillespie by John Gillespie
Deborah Ross by John Gillespie
Bella Serino by Bible Baptist Church
Mrs Swegler by Bible Baptist Church
Robert Jordan by Lisa & Kris Feldhake
William Godfrey by Philadelphia Baptist Church
Helen Frey by Joyce Bradley
Helen Stone by Patricia Henderson
Betty Edwards by Patricia Henderson
Clyde Simpson by Jorge Noriega
Terry Kunselman by Teresa Kassebohm
Gloria Alger by First Baptist Church of Streetsboro
Joyce Wallace by Friendship Baptist Church
Peter Kester by Sandra Kester
Dr JB & Betty Buffington by Sandra Kester
Shep Hill by Mr. & Mrs. James Robson Jr
Ray Williams by Patricia Henderson
Cora Ann Fugate by Patricia A Henderson
Joyce Montalvo by Mr & Mrs Victor De La Cruz Jr
Oren Reed Hahn by William & Virginia Shawley
Harold Rikard by Harmony Baptist Church
Joshua Kelsey by Jerry Kelsey

Sandra Willoughby by Sonlight Baptist Church/Sunday School
Glenna Turner by Gailen & Margie Abbett
Roy Ackerle by Terry & Kaye Abbett

Merlin & Velma Applegate by Patricia Newell
Gloria Biely by Joan Newell
Jenny Moneyham by Kathryn Biederman
Pastor John Petgen by Mr. & Mrs. Ray Thompson
Caroline Knox by Westgate Baptist Church
Russell Turner Jr by Terry & Su Cawthon
Benny Hughes by Billy & Sue Cawthon
Seiju & Ine Miyagi by Lakewood Baptist Church/SS class
Catherine Haynes by Patricia Henderson
Deborah barley by Bible Baptist Church
Wayne Smith by Patricia Henderson
Alfred Garrison by Patricia Henderson
Roy Kelley by Patricia Henderson
Marion Wright by Patricia Henderson

Mary Paulus by David & Suzanne Kofoed
James Tressler by Bible Baptist Church
Kenneth Blumenschein by Bible Baptist Church
Kathryn Kinslow by Earl Kinslow
Catherine Hayes by Friendship Baptist Church
Sherman Miller by Mr & Mrs Larry Welch
Sherry Lough-Sweet by Mr & Mrs Larry Welch
Harold James by Jerry Kelsey
Martha Kunberger by Faith Baptist Church

In recent months God has brought two new missionary families to join the ministry in Mongolia. Chuck and Tammy Weber arrived in the fall of 2017 and Bradly and Ashley Kubik arrived in the fall of 2018. While they are learning the language, they are a great help in the ministry of Khan-Uul Baptist Church and Faith Baptist College. It is the prayer of the Ritchies, Webers, and Kubiks that God will continue to bless the ministry in Mongolia with souls saved, believers strengthened, and the multiplication of church planting efforts for the future evangelization of the three million people of Mongolia.

Join us in prayer for God’s richest blessings upon His work in Mongolia. Please pray for the Ritchies and the needs of their ministry.
We present to you our December 2018 and June 2019 Missionary Candidates who have been approved as missionaries with Baptist International Missions, Inc., (BIMI). The Lord has called this group of missionaries into full-time service, and they are preparing to move forward by faith!

As Paul and Silas in Acts 16 heard their Macedonia Call and moved forward by faith to Philippi, these candidates have heard the same Holy Spirit call them to their prospective fields. Please pray for them as they are Moving Forward by Faith for the cause of Christ.
Considering the abundance of statistical information about evangelistic outreach, reaching out to the elderly would seem a wasted effort. On the other hand, we could acknowledge that the time to reach people in their golden years is quickly concluding!

What do they have to offer? In the past, I have rejoiced with the readers of *BIMI World* over the longevity of some of God’s faithful servants who are missionaries. Now it is my desire to encourage missionaries, pastors, and congregants to reach out to a harvest that is white—unless maybe they dye their hair!

A missionary recently told me a statement made by a pastor more than 40 years ago. “One of the things of which I am sure is that fifty percent of our congregation is unsaved.” That same missionary recently heard the statement repeated. We would all want to think better of our own congregation. However, I submit that the potential of an unsaved congregation is real. “Approximately 76% of American adults consider themselves Christians. Only about 40% consider themselves as having been saved or born again. That is because the concept of being saved is largely restricted to Fundamentalist[s], other Evangelical[s], and other conservative mainline denominations. Many members of Roman Catholic [churches], mainline/liberal Protestant denominations, and followers of other religions do have religious conversion experiences. However, they do not necessarily involve being born again in the religiously conservative sense. Barna Research, the largest religious polling agency in the U.S. found that the overwhelming percentage of those who are saved have experienced salvation before reaching their fourteenth birthday.”

Many sincere and moral people are without Christ. The conversation of Nicodemus and Jesus sheds light on this simple fact: Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again. The Scripture clearly tells us man’s part in salvation. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:14–15). Unfortunately, as Satan continues his deceit, many sincere people, including the elderly, are trapped in religious deception.

Nonetheless, there remains hope for the salvation of those who confront the proverbial downhill decent of life. That hope is Truth. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6). And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32). I want to tell the story of missions through the lives of three seniors, two of whom are now in Glory.
Titus by Mark Lockhart

It was more than four years ago that I invited Connie to church, and it was more than three years before she responded to the invitation and trusted Christ. This past February Connie invited Titus to attend the Grace Baptist Church in Ecatepec, Mexico, where I am the pastor. Titus had faithfully been attending our Wednesday Bible Study when he inquired of Connie why no one called him Brother. She told him that if he wanted to be a brother, he needed to become a child of God by being born again. On April 3, a visiting pastor, Kenneth Walters, preached our evening service and spoke on the subject of compassion. Titus, who is 74 years of age, understood the compassion of Christ for him. He stated that he wanted to be a child of God. One of the men of the church shared the plan of salvation with Titus. He bowed his head and accepted Christ.

Genoveva by Ron Goodman

Genoveva Magallanes Garcia, January 10, 1939 – December 4, 2018, died one month shy of her 80th birthday. Genoveva was baptized as a baby and raised Catholic, just like most of the people in Mexico. She married and had five children. She had three girls, and being devoted to her faith, she named them all María (Mary) and then gave them a different middle name by which they would be called. María Guadalupe, or Lupita, was her middle child. As a young girl, Lupita was sent to a convent to live with the nuns. She was very devoted to the Catholic faith, and she was the pride of her mother.

In 2003, Lupita, now grown and with a family of her own, was faithful to the Catholic faith that her mother, Genoveva, ingrained in her. However, there was something wrong. She felt empty. She felt that something was not right—that something was missing. On a Sunday in late May, Lupita went to the church she had attended since she was a child. After the Mass, she got down on her knees and asked God to show her if what she believed was the truth. Three days later, I had the privilege of knocking on her door. I patiently explained the Gospel to her detail by detail, but she did not accept the Lord that day. However, I returned that Saturday and was able to lead her husband to Christ. As Lupita watched her husband, with tears in his eyes, pray to accept the Lord, she knew that God had answered her prayer and had sent someone to tell her the truth! That day, Lupita also accepted the Lord with all her heart!

Lupita and her husband, Salomon, were saved on the last Saturday in May 2003. They began to faithfully attend our church in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico, and were baptized on July 31. They were both excited to know the Lord and to share their new faith with others. Many of their family members and friends were saved and began attending church with them. Not everyone was happy about this wonderful change. Genoveva was tolerant when her daughter Lupita told her that she had been saved, but she was absolutely devastated when she followed the Lord in believers’ baptism! Genoveva totally cut her off. For three difficult years, Lupita tried to communicate with her mother, but to no avail. Genoveva would not talk to her daughter. This was very upsetting for Lupita, but with the encouragement of her husband and...
by the grace of God, she remained faithful. As time passed, Genoveva came to accept that her daughter would not change her mind and began to reestablish their relationship. However, they would have to stay off the subject of religion.

At the end of 2018, Genoveva, who had been living with her oldest daughter, returned to Morelia. She seemed to be healthy for her age and was active and lively. However, Genoveva was very sick. The doctors said she had only months to live. Lupita and Salomon talked to her about Christ and she was much more open to listening. She came to church with them in September, where she heard the Gospel plainly preached. In October, I went to see her and very thoroughly shared the Gospel with her and prayed with her. She was not totally convinced at that moment, but she was having doubts about her Catholic beliefs. On November 28, her Catholic priest came to visit and to administer the sacrament of communion. To everyone’s surprise, she did not want it! She began to ask her priest many questions, but she was not satisfied with his answers. She told him he should be telling people the truth! The next morning she lay awake talking with Lupita. She told her daughter, “I am not scared to die. I’m prepared!” Lupita asked her, “Do you accept Jesus Christ as your only and sufficient Savior?” She replied, “Yes!” Lupita asked, “If you were to die at this instant, where would you go?” She said, “I will go to heaven with my Lord Jesus Christ.” She then said, “The pastor explained it to me very well.” She began to laugh and said, “The pastor is very patient.” As the conversation was ending, Genoveva said to Lupita, “Keep on going to church.” Just six days after that conversation, Genoveva entered into eternity. She is now in the presence of the Lord!

Elenita

We were just finishing a visit on Saturday afternoon when I got a call from a lady in our church who was also making visits. “Come quick! Elenita fell off the steps!” My first question was “Where are you?” When she told me where they were, my heart began to sink. My soul-winning partner and I raced to get there. The crooked, broken, concrete stairs are very steep down the side of a 200 foot embankment. Elenita, 81 years old, was trying to come up those stairs and fell about 10 feet. When we got to her, she had no vital signs and we began CPR immediately. We called 911 and nobody answered.

Despite our efforts to revive Elenita, she went to be with the Lord two years from the day her husband died of cancer. She passed away while sharing the Gospel. We stayed with her body until the coroner came five hours later. They did an autopsy and found the cause of death was a stroke. It could have happened in her kitchen or in front of her house, but it happened while she was serving the Lord! I later asked what in the world they were doing there and her soul-winning partner said that she insisted on seeing the family and nothing was going to stop her. Elenita went home to be with the Lord after making that last visit only a few feet away from their house. Elenita was a soul winner. We have several families in our church because of her.

We were all shaken by her sudden death. Her children told me that it was her wish to die while serving the Lord. Elenita gave her all for our Lord up until the end. At her age, she could have rightly had a good excuse for not going out and telling people about our wonderful Savior, but she decided she only had one life to spend for Jesus.
We serve a God of the impossible. Our God can take a situation, a life, and a series of events and completely change them for His plan, in His way, in His timing, and for His glory.

That is the truth in the story of Osvaldo and Maritza Díaz. When we arrived in El Salvador, there was a little boy in our school named Michael. He was a happy lad who never caused any trouble. We were pretty overwhelmed our first years here and were busy dealing with the BIG problems and trouble kids in the Christian school. For a good while, we did not even know who Michael was.

About two years passed and it came to our attention that Michael was VERY sick with a rare disease. We went to visit in the home, and his mom, Maritza, would be okay with us when talking about him and school, but the moment we even mentioned the church and tried to invite her, she became very rude. However, she did allow Michael to attend our children’s program for a little while and he accepted Christ as his Savior on one of our Kid’s Days.

After he spent some time in the hospital, he went on to heaven to be with Jesus. Maritza was heartbroken, but we were there for her. Our church and school family helped provide everything needed for the funeral and we were there in body and spirit for days and weeks. Through that tragedy and love felt from our church, she began to come with her little girl, Nicole. She started into discipleship with Mayra (our assistant pastor’s wife) and received the assurance of her salvation. Immediately, she began praying for her husband, Osvaldo.

Osvaldo came from a very strong Catholic background and wanted nothing to do with the “Baptist church down the street.” But prayer works! After about two years of praying, we received a call at 10:30 one night. When I asked who it was, he said, “Martiza’s husband, would you be willing to meet and talk?” He was crying. My husband, Adam, met him and found out he had lost his job that day and everything in his life was going wrong. He needed answers. Adam presented the Gospel clearly to him, but he was not ready to accept anything yet—he just needed a friend and support. However, from that day, he began coming to church.

Every service he was there—no smile, no expression—listening and thinking. A year passed. Finally one night in August, Walter (Adam’s assistant) could not stand it any longer. He met with

1 www.religioustolerance.org/chr_savy.htm

What is the work of missions? Soul winning and discipleship! We cannot give in to the idea that investing in the elderly will not give results. Are the elderly worth the time? After all, their time may be short. Indeed, the time is short for us to reach them. It is a joy to see those same saints reaching out to others. Although their time may indeed be short, I am reminded of James 4:14, Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

We must all be aware that our time to serve may be no longer than the time we have to reach one of these dear elderly people for Christ. Additionally, we must be conscious that many of them will be willing to give their precious little time in service to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Young or old, we are called to participate in the Great Commission, and we are called to reach the world—young or old. Remember, while there is life there is hope!
It was a chilly night for Honduras. I shivered in the cozy green sweater I had borrowed, once again scolding myself for forgetting that the weather here can be unpredictable. It was my fifth trip to this country, and I was still learning how to pack for it. This trip was special; this time I knew for sure that I was coming back. Years of prayer and searching for the slot that God wanted to slide my little peg into had finally settled here, in this place, helping this church. I only needed to return home to start deputation.

Honduras had stolen my heart since I had seen the sparkling blue and white shoreline from the air three years ago. Knowing now that God was allowing me to work in this country made my heart sing. Underneath that song, however, was a hovering question that matched the chill in the air and the cold metal chair under me. Flickering florescent bulbs lit up the fellowship hall of the church. It was the only part of the building that was finished, and the night air floated through the glassless grated windows in gentle puffs, carrying with it the sound of voices of those who were coming to join the circle of chairs and the crunch of gravel under several pairs of feet. I was eager for the Bible study to start, but my mind wandered for a moment. “Do they even need me here? Am I any help at all?” I fell into the trap of asking God the question I had been asking Him frequently since telling everyone that I was going to be a missionary in Honduras. The devil had begun whispering that old lie into my ear: “You are responsible for this. You have to be good enough, you have to be smart enough, you have to work hard enough to make it turn out well.” I was scared to death that everyone would find out just how unspiritual I was and how little I deserved to be standing in this white harvest field, calling myself a laborer.

I was trying to use English-teaching to help this church. I was a language geek—but could language really change souls? One pair of Osvaldo to explain the Gospel yet again. This time Osvaldo was ready and asked Christ to be his Savior.

Their family has been transformed. God has changed their lives; Nicole has also trusted Christ as Savior (in first grade), and they are expecting another little girl. Osvaldo is our maintenance man, and Maritza works in our snack shop. Maritza has finished discipleship; Osvaldo is almost there, and they are starting to disciple another couple. They are going to graduate soon from their second year in our Bible seminary, and one can tell that God is working on Osvaldo’s heart for other things in the future.

Do not give up on people. God has a plan and His plan is for us to faithfully love, go, and give the Gospel over and over and over again until all come to know HIM in every corner of the world!
of feet entering the fellowship hall was unfamiliar. I looked up and saw one of my students. I had been teaching English classes this trip. In preparation for opening a school, we were testing out the potential for using English as an evangelism tool, and the response had been more than I had even dared to hope. Close to 40 students had packed the classroom, and I had invited each of them to attend our Bible study the next night. I was not sure if they would come. Now the next night was here, and one of the students was walking through the door. He was 17 years old, wore a turquoise T-shirt, and had a fine sheen of nervous perspiration across his brow. As we began the meeting, I watched him encouragingly from across the room as he carefully copied what everyone did and breathed nervously from his mouth. First was prayer request and praise time. We took turns around the circle, sharing our requests and thanksgivings. As he realized his turn was coming, he breathed harder and harder, grabbing his T-shirt and fanning it back and forth from his chest to will himself to relax. I wondered if he would speak or simply wave his turn past.

He did speak. After an audible gulp, he spoke without wavering, “This is my first time ever being in a church, and my prayer request is that God will take all the bad things out of my life.” The Spanish words mi primera vez en una iglesia (my first time in a church) hit my ears, and I was thankful that in another two minutes we were bowing our heads to pray because I could not hold back my tears. He had come to church for the first time in all his 17 years on earth because of a little English class. I missed the prayer that night; I did not hear a word. Instead, God was speaking to my heart, and He said as He had to Moses, “What is that in your hand?” I began to cry harder. “English classes?” He said, “So what if they are not a mighty weapon? I can use anything I want to use—including you—to bring people under the sound of My Word.” I know now that He was just beginning to teach me that lesson. As I have followed Him on deputation, the Lord had to show me repeatedly that my failures do not faze Him a bit. He has a plan, and He can use me to work out that plan. All He wants is for me to give Him whatever is in my hand, without holding back. When I gave it—He let me see what He could do with it. How fitting that He asked me to surrender to be an English teacher in Honduras before proving to me that He could use that, rather than the other way around. God wanted to teach me obedience by faith, not obedience based on sight. It is a lesson that is sweet in the learning, but I will never forget that particular lesson—on that particular chilly night in Honduras—because it was the first time God let me use English to bring someone to the Gospel. It was the first time someone came to that church because I had invited him. It was the first time I dared to hope that God could use my little English classes. I hope and pray it was the first time of many that there will be a “swish of my sickle” in a Honduran field white unto harvest.
The world is coming to Canada, and many who are settling there are arriving from 10/40 Window nations. From 2017 through 2018, 80 percent of Canadian population growth came by way of immigration, and about one in five Canadians are immigrants.1 With a current population of approximately 37 million people, the Canadian Parliament is looking to welcome more than one million immigrants through 2021.2

The major metropolitan areas across Canada are populated, in large part, by foreign-born immigrants. For example, 47 percent of those living in Toronto are foreign-born, 34 percent in Montreal, 31 percent in Calgary, and nearly 43 percent in Vancouver.3 While these people are flooding in from around the world, nearly all of the over 50 countries that make up the 10/40 Window are represented in vast numbers of immigrants arriving in Canada.

Canada’s eagerness to welcome immigrants from the 10/40 Window provides missionaries and churches an awesome opportunity to aid the Gospel ministry in places that are very difficult and sometimes nearly impossible for missionaries to access. As mass immigration becomes commonplace, Christians must be strategic in their efforts to get the Gospel around the world. We must seize the opportunity to reach the regions beyond through faithful Gospel ministry toward those who are arriving from places not so easily accessible through conventional missionary efforts.

Think of the impact that can be made in the 10/40 Window and around the world by reaching the millions of immigrants already in Canada with the Gospel! As missionaries and churches are faithful to preach the Gospel and engage in personal soul winning, there will be immigrants who receive Jesus as Savior. As these new Christians are discipled and as they grow in grace, they can be used of the Lord to further Gospel efforts in their homelands in ways that may be impossible for foreign missionaries.

Imagine the effect of thousands of immigrants across Canada being saved and then turning their attention not only to their neighbors in Canada but also to those back in their homelands! Many will have contacts and resources in those regions beyond that would take a missionary years, even decades, to acquire. Imagine the phone calls, texts, emails, and visits with friends and families in their places of birth as they tell them that while they came to Canada looking for a new home, they were introduced to Jesus, and by receiving Him as Savior, they now have an eternal home in heaven. Imagine as they then present the Gospel to those same people in their homelands, and many are saved. Imagine immigrants in Canada who become
Christians and use material resources they still possess in those regions beyond for missionary efforts back in their homelands. Imagine the potential to impact missions around the world and in the 10/40 Window by reaching the millions of immigrants who are arriving in Canada. Actually, you do not have to imagine because in this issue of BIMI World, you can read the accounts of BIMI missionaries who are presently reaching these precious souls with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and seeing these new Christians become actively involved in world evangelism.

The Lord has given us a great door and effectual in the Far North that opens paths to the regions beyond around the world, especially in the 10/40 Window. Will you consider asking the Lord if He would have you to go to the Far North and reach the world with the Gospel? Will you pray for those missionaries and churches across Canada that are presently doing that? The world is coming to Canada, and there is a tremendous need for more laborers to preach the Gospel to those who are arriving. We must reach them now. What part would the Lord have for you?

If you would like more information about reaching the world and the 10/40 Window with the Gospel through missions in the Far North, please contact me at farnorthdirector@bimi.org. At BIMI we stand ready to assist missionaries and local churches to take full advantage of this incredible opportunity the Lord has given us. May He find us faithful!  

2 abcnews.go.com/Politics/canada-million-immigrants-years/story?id=60306973
3 https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_born

Certain missionary sayings seem to take on a life of their own and become part of the vocabulary of missions. They often convey a missionary truth or thought in a simple yet poignant way. Some great ones have been set to music and have become popular missionary choruses or songs.

One such saying is “Around the Corner, Around the World.” I have used it, said it, and sung it. Now, I get to experience it daily.

In Canada’s metropolitan cities, that missionary cliché describes everyday life. Going around the corner is like going around the world because many of the people whom you meet literally came from around the world. In some neighborhoods, most of the people you meet have moved here from far away.

Recent years of ministry have put our family face-to-face with new challenges in the Montreal metro area. I have frequently had to seek counsel from fellow missionaries who serve in other parts of the globe. The reason? People from those lands have come to my part of the world, and local ministry challenges often become similar to those over there.
French-speaking Canada used to be a field where one ran into zealous Catholics. One still might, especially in smaller towns, but truthfully, most of the zeal we personally encounter comes from North African Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, or other immigrants who have chosen Canada as their home. On a week-to-week basis, I have to deal with African animistic beliefs, Asian ancestor worship, and Caribbean religion. As an example, a couple of years ago at Easter, a voodoo practitioner wanted to disrupt our service.

Many who read this article could drive to visit us. We are around the corner, so to speak. But if you come to visit, you will see that you have also gone around the world. Suppose you come to visit our church next Sunday, you will meet believers from Haiti, Togo, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Rwanda, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, United States, Canada, Senegal, Portugal, Congo, and Cameroon. The next Sunday there may be more countries to add to the list. The vast majority of our visitors come from the countries where we are sending missionaries. Take a moment to reflect on that and to think of the global opportunity we have in the cities of the Far North. The people we have the opportunity to reach for Christ hail from countries that are in great need of missionaries. I praise the Lord for every laborer heading to those people groups, but as we reach the immigrants who have come our way, a door opens wide for them to take the Gospel back to their countries. We can literally reach the world by reaching our own city.

Jacques was a young man from Senegal who moved to Montreal. He was already a committed Christian, and after Jacques spent a couple years with us, the Lord moved in his heart to abandon his engineering career to go prepare for the ministry. As of this writing, he may very well head back to West Africa in a few years as a missionary to his own people. Our prayer is that we will see many more young people do the same. We can reach them here, and they can return to their homelands with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Immigration is a political hot topic in the Western world. However, looking at it through the lens of missions, it is a gold mine of missionary opportunities. Almost all of the countries where missionaries cannot easily go are represented in our cities.

They come here and learn our language. They become our neighbors; they visit our churches. They hear the Gospel and call upon Christ. Our prayer is that some of them or their children will take the Gospel back around the world with an access we might not have as foreigners.

Please, come over into Canada and help us! Should you come to our major cities, you will be simultaneously going to Canada, Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America, all at once. And with faith and persistence, you may be sending trained nationals to the 10/40 Window or any other area on earth you can name.

In these parts, around the corner truly is around the world. Would you please pray and consider the part that the Lord of the harvest would have you play in this opportunity? The world is awaiting your answer, and it seems to have gathered at my doorstep in the meantime. ☝
Imagine being able to preach the Gospel and disciple people from the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Ghana, Zambia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Venezuela, Ecuador, Canada, and the United States all at the same time in one city at one local church! That is exactly what we have the privilege of doing every Sunday at the Metro Baptist Church in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. Imagine hearing the stories of people from 18 different countries and then having the opportunity to serve the Lord with them! In addition to our current attenders, the Metro Baptist Church has also welcomed individuals from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Brunei, Russia, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, Trinidad, Malaysia, Jamaica, Haiti, Germany, Poland, South Africa, Mozambique, and Nigeria. That is another 18 countries! Some merely visited the church, but others became a faithful part of the congregation while they lived in Burnaby. Recently, we met and witnessed to individuals from Albania and Turkey, bringing the total number of nationalities we can remember encountering to 38! There is no way we could visit that many countries in one lifetime to share the Gospel, yet God has given us the privilege to meet and minister to people from all of these nations on a regular basis. This is a reality in Burnaby because so many people have chosen to leave their home countries and immigrate to the Greater Vancouver area.

Burnaby is in the heart of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia. This area ranks fourth in the world for foreign-born residents. The 2011 census reported that 45 percent of the residents were born outside of Canada.1 This can be seen wherever one goes in Greater Vancouver. No matter where we shop or eat or tour, we can hear languages we are not accustomed to hearing, and then meet the people speaking those languages and discover another part of the world. What an incredible opportunity to impact the world with the Gospel from one city! We are seeing our ministry begin to have a global impact in some ways, and we pray God increases this worldwide influence. One of our Ethiopian members recently felt burdened to
allow his house in Ethiopia to be used for a new independent Baptist church plant. Another member from Hong Kong is serving as a BIMI missionary in Grenada. Throughout the year, we challenge people to write or call their family members back home to share the Gospel with them. Whenever our people travel home, they try to witness to their unsaved family and friends in their home country. The possibilities of impacting other nations is mind-blowing. Most of those who have immigrated to Canada do not desire to return to their home countries to live, but they certainly love their people and long for them to be saved.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, has a slightly higher percentage of foreign-born residents and gives churches in that city these same amazing opportunities. Montreal, Ottawa, and Calgary are additional Canadian cities with growing immigrant populations as well. All of these Canadian cities need more independent fundamental Baptist churches, and the already-existing congregations in these cities need more help to reach the masses coming to them. Take a few minutes to ponder what is happening in these cities—the world is literally coming to them. We can reach people from all over the globe by evangelizing these extremely diverse, densely populated, multicultural cities.

Would you pray for God to send more laborers to Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and Calgary? We desire to give the Gospel to the masses of this city in their own languages. Thus, the Lord led us to design a tract that directs people to a website where they can do just that! With the help of others, we organized a website that has the Gospel given in 19 different languages. The URL is understandjohn316.com. During a four-day marathon in June, thousands of understandjohn316.com tracts were distributed throughout the Greater Vancouver area. Would you pray for many to hear the Gospel in their own language and accept Christ as their Savior?

What an incredible opportunity God is giving Christians who live in these cities! They have the privilege to share Christ with people from every corner of the globe. It is a small glimpse of what heaven will be like when every kindred and tongue and people and nation are assembled to worship the Lord Jesus! ¹

¹ https://vancouversun.com/news/staff-blogs/vancouver-fourth-for-foreign-born-residents-but-is-it-cosmopolitan
Whenever there is a change of command in a military unit, a Change of Command ceremony is conducted. The formal ceremony represents an official transfer of leadership and responsibility from one leader to another. Usually the outgoing commander is promoted or transferred to another place of service and the incoming commander assumes command of that particular unit.

Here at Baptist International Missions, Inc. (BIMI), there are times when a similar change occurs. One director moves on to another responsibility and a new director is installed. On June 4, 2019, the BIMI Board of Trustees voted to move Dr. Jeff Alverson, Military Director, to the position of International Representative of Military Missions. Bryan Baggett, Assistant Director, was moved into the position of Military Director. The transfer officially took place on June 8, 2019.

Bryan Baggett and his wife, Kris, are former BIMI missionaries who served in Venezuela until the Lord led them to leave in 2003. Hugo Chavez and his regime were in power and this eventually led to the expulsion of all missionaries. Since that time, Brother Baggett has been in pastoral ministry in the States. In November 2018, he and his wife were reinstated as BIMI missionaries to the military.

As International Representative of Military Missions, Dr. Alverson will continue to work in a different capacity with military missions. He and Joyce are looking forward to their new assignment, as this will give them more time and opportunity to spend with the missionaries on the field.

We are confident Brother Bryan Baggett will be a great director, and he and his wife will serve our military missionaries faithfully and efficiently. We encourage our readers to pray for them as well as for the Alversons.
Starting an independent Baptist church has its challenges and even more so when one targets a specific group of people. My wife and I served in China for over 22 years, starting Chinese independent Baptist churches. We were asked by the Chinese government to leave China in 2016. The Lord led us to start a Chinese independent Baptist church in the Silicon Valley of Santa Clara, California. There are over 100,000 Chinese in this area and over 600,000 in the entire Bay area! We worked with an independent Baptist church who had Chinese people come to their services. They would eventually leave because their English was not good enough to understand the preaching. The Chinese liked the church, the pastor, and the church’s programs for their children, but it was difficult for them to understand all that was going on. Connecting with the other people proved difficult.

As God opened the door for the start of a Chinese-speaking church, we ran into many challenges. One of the first was finding a place to meet! Silicon Valley property is like gold. Tech companies hire engineers and give them high salaries that cause the property values to skyrocket. If one is not in the tech industry, it is a real challenge to live here and meet living expenses. We knew that if the Lord was in it, He would help meet this need. A Christian businessman has allowed us to use his building for our Sunday and Wednesday services! God is so good!

Another challenge that I did not realize until coming back to America is that sharing the Gospel with the Chinese people here is not so well received as it was in China. Being an American in China had its advantages because many would like to become a friend to get help to get to America. Those already in America have made it and do not need as much help. Many are well educated and have money. They feel their spiritual needs are met and they are not interested in coming to church or hearing the Gospel. It takes much time to visit and to become a friend to them.

I praise the Lord for the people God has given us. One family who has been a real blessing is the Wang family. They had accepted Christ when they were in college in China. Through an independent Baptist Chinese pastor, the wife accepted Christ and then later her husband came to Christ. They have really been a help in going soul winning and helping with our church.

Another family is the Ling family. They too received Christ in college before coming to America. They have a 7-year-old daughter who is going to a Christian school. Brother Ling was an orphan and yet God was with him. He heard the Gospel for the first time when
he was 20 years old. Now he leads our singing and helps with our church services. His wife and daughter are a blessing as well.

A lady who comes faithfully is Mrs. Zhao. She is 94 years old and has been a Christian for over 80 years. She has seen much persecution in China and has many stories and testimonies of how God led her and her family. Once as a young girl, she had to go through the woods to find her father who had been kidnapped by bandits. She was very courageous and told the bandits to let her father go and they released him to her. She has been a spiritual pillar in our church.

Finally, I want to share about a young lady named Wendy. She is a little person. She came to know Christ in America at the English-speaking church, where a dear Filipino lady led her to the Lord. She went to the English classes for a while but was not able to truly connect with those around her. She and her dad started coming and I was able to lead her dad to the Lord. He had been a Catholic. He is helpful in checking my Chinese and correcting my sermons.

After a year, I am able to see the people beginning to come together. Starting a Chinese church in America is not without its challenges but it is also full of blessings!
Maineville, Ohio, is one of the outer northeastern suburbs of Cincinnati. It is in Hamilton Township, the second fastest growing township in the state. The township has grown from 9,000 in the 2000 census to nearly 30,000 today. Maineville Baptist Church, where I pastor, is trying to reach this area and surrounding communities. There are over 70,000 people in a five-mile radius and more than one million people within a 15-mile radius.

When we came to Maineville, we had just departed Japan in the weeks following the tsunami in 2011. I was a military missionary, pastoring Yokosuka Baptist Church. We knew God was moving us but did not know where. The Lord led us to visit Maineville Baptist Church in Ohio. We stayed on the third floor of the church building that used to be the assistant pastor’s quarters. I fellowshipped with the pastor and his wife who were doing their best after a long ordeal with the pastor before them who had given the church a bad name and testimony.

As I was praying for direction from the Lord, He was burdening me with this area and the need of church planting and reestablishing or restarting older churches. Maineville Baptist Church was in such need. Here was a small flock and a faithful but tired pastor who needed to transition. I counseled with my pastor and the directors at BIMI and became a part of Reseeding America in order to help this ministry with the potential of reaching multitudes in this area.

The church of eight members voted me as their new pastor. We quickly got busy. We scheduled a restart date of September 11, 2011. Materials were printed and outreach was organized (soul-winning and flyer distribution). The church will be able to support me as their full-
time pastor within the next few months. For the years that I had support and then partial support as part of Reseeding America with BIMI, I learned some valuable lessons about the importance of supporting church planters and reestablishing old churches.

When one supports a church planter, there is a great underestimated value of their contribution to missions. In the years following the restart of this struggling work, our church has been able to give about $70,000 to missions. Our 2019 missions commitment is just over $14,000. It is not a huge amount, but one of the first things Reseeding America church planters do is teach their people to support missions. Hundreds of these churches start from the beginning with a burden for missions. Some argue it is not good for a struggling or young work to give to missions. I have several arguments to refute that reasoning, but the greatest reason is “When is it right to disobey the Great Commission?” “Never!” Whether it is a large established church, a struggling church with a bi-vocational pastor, or a church plant, all must fulfill the Great Commission.

When one supports a church planter, the restarting church has an opportunity to establish itself physically in the area or to make repairs to the old building they could not otherwise afford. Maineville Baptist Church has invested over $150,000 in the property itself (maintenance and remodels). This could not have been done if the church had to support me in those early days. Several people told me: “I thought that building was not inhabited!” I was shocked, but I counted 28 broken or cracked windows, most of which would not open or if they were open, they would not close. The front of the building was covered with some kind of mold. We invested $23,000 in the window project alone. The outside of the building was professionally cleaned for just over $1,000. None of these things were possible without the support of churches giving to the church planters.

When one supports a church planter, his church has a mission field they can give to and pray for and contribute to with their physical labors.

Our church has had help with remodels from supporting churches, help with supporting meetings, and especially help with outreach. Mount Vernon Baptist Temple, Greater Cumberland Baptist Church, and Ashland Baptist Temple have all come to help with our outreach efforts to restart Maineville Baptist Church. We have had help with remodels from people from Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama. What an encouragement all of these have been!

We held our Friendship Sunday on April 14. Dr. Shelton Smith of the “Sword of the Lord” was our speaker. It was a great day. All of this is the result of the giving, prayers, and helpful support of many churches who have a burden to plant churches in America. Thank you for your sacrifice.
My wife, Judy, and I have been missionaries with BIMI since 1994. For over 18 years we were missionaries in Crimea, Ukraine. That changed in February 2014 when Crimea was seized by Russia. Our mission field changed without our address changing. Immediately it became a struggle to stay in Crimea. Direct oppositions, constant struggles of the Russian occupation, and new laws made life very difficult for American missionaries. New laws prohibited witnessing and preaching. We spent thousands of dollars trying different types of visas and flying in and out of the country. In March 2018, with tears and heavy hearts, we said good-bye to our beloved churches.

It did not take long for God to reveal our next assignment. One week after returning to the States, Berean Baptist Church in Newville, Pennsylvania, called us to candidate. It was a small church (10 members), striving to survive. They had been without a pastor for over nine months and were meeting once a week in a rented storefront property. The warm welcome and eagerness of the people were what we needed. We so desperately wanted to be used by God in a place that needed us. The following Sunday, they voted 100 percent for me to be their pastor. A weight was removed from our shoulders. We found immediate peace and joy from God that this is where He wanted us and where we could continue to serve Him.

We contacted BIMI. After meeting with the directors, we were able to move our status from foreign missionaries to BIMI’s Reseeding America program. We cannot begin to write in this article how God lovingly directed our move to Pennsylvania. BIMI has been helpful and encouraging all along the way. BIMI Reseeding America Director Bob Larson and his wife, Jennifer, came to our church in October and helped mail 4,000 flyers to the Newville area. We had visitors and gained one family. We are still getting feedback from that effort.

What is the difference between starting a church overseas and restarting a church in the States? There are actually quite a few. Most of the people who attended the seven churches in Ukraine (and Russia) were saved in our ministries. They only knew what we taught them from Scripture. Throughout our time there, we passed out Bibles and Gospel tracts by the thousands. People stood in lines just to get a copy of God’s Word. We saw people cry and kiss their Bibles while hugging them to their hearts. There was a real hunger for God and His Word. Hundreds were saved as a result. Then the ability to buy on credit came to the country. Stores were loaded with products people desired but could not afford. As communism slipped away and capitalism abounded, the people had little time for Christianity. The desire for the things of God was replaced with a desire for the things of this world. Evangelism became a one-on-one experience.

Whether we are starting a church on a foreign field or planting a church here in the States or restarting a church, our desire and our number one goal have always remained the same—reach the lost and dying world (Mark 16:15). However, when restarting a church, the challenges are different. Berean was extremely close to closing its doors permanently. The previous pastor abandoned them by taking a church in another state and not even informing them. There were trust issues to deal with. Some members had given up and quit altogether.
Because of what the church had gone through in its brief history, our primary goal was to help the people to function as a unit and to think of themselves as one body in Christ. The zeal for souls had been lost and many had become discouraged. We have seen personal growth, an increase in faithfulness to God and to the church, a true love for one another, and a desire to reach our community. We are close to filling our 35-seat auditorium. The church is well on its way to meeting the goal for a new place to worship. A Wednesday night prayer service and a Sunday school class for children were started. Judy also started a monthly ladies’ Bible study and fellowship time.

In the past, a few missionaries had come to Berean but nothing was being done on a regular basis for worldwide evangelism.

The church now actively gives and prays for missionaries in the States and abroad.

Restarting a church in the States seems more difficult than starting one in Russia. A pastor once told us it is easier to give birth than to raise the dead. In some ways this is true. However, where there is a desire to live, there is a desire to thrive. We are seeing this at Berean. We are trying to live out Christ’s message in our neighborhood and around the world. For where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18). We are committed to Reseeding America—one church at a time!
What has been done?

- Bibles shipped into Papua New Guinea (PNG) – 770,000
- Majority already distributed to secondary and primary schools

What is left to do?

- Door of opportunity still open to distribute 230,000 more Bibles
- Additional $300,000 needed to complete project

770,000 + 230,000 = 1,000,000

Help us make it to a million!