Presenting the Class of 2019 the newest members of the BMM Family
In the last seven issues of Advance, we have been recounting Baptist Mid-Missions’ continuing story, decade by decade, in the feature “Great Is Our God” (see pp. 12–13). In real time, we are only months away from our 100th anniversary year: 2020. We are planning 100-year events to remind ourselves, as a Mission Family, of God’s faithfulness through the decades.

Baptist Mid-Missions was founded October 15, 1920, and every year we remember our anniversary with the BMM World Day of Prayer. Our 100-year celebration will kick off with the 2019 BMM World Day of Prayer. A special feature will be our President Emeritus, Dr. Gary Anderson, sharing those salient moments, events, and decisions that formed the fabric of Baptist Mid-Missions throughout our history. This year’s event will be live-streamed so that others can join us in celebrating God’s protection and faithfulness over the last 100 years. (Watch for details at www.bmm.org.)

During the coming year, other emphases will highlight the 100th anniversary, but two large events will be focal points. Our July 2020 BMM Family Conference will be a time for our Mission Family to celebrate God’s longstanding provision for our ministry. Then in October 2020, we will host a more formal event in the Cleveland area.

We are looking forward to 2020 with great anticipation as we launch into our second century of Great Commission ministry. Through looking forward, we celebrate God’s faithfulness during the first 100 years in anticipation of His faithfulness long into the future.

“We are planning events during the 100th year to remind ourselves, as a Mission Family, of God’s faithfulness through the decades.”
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The road that led this year’s class to unite with Baptist Mid-Missions has been long and winding but guided by God’s hand every step of the way.

You may wonder, what does the road to missions look like?
It’s different for every person, which you’ll read about in our new appointees’ stories.

For anyone serving with Baptist Mid-Missions, we exercise great care to vet each and every candidate to ensure that their missionary DNA is the same as those who have gone before. And because BMM serves churches, we work in conjunction with and under the authority of their sending churches. Read more about this process in the article, “Our Unswerving Commitment” found at www.bmm.org under Learn-Articles.
Inviting missionaries over for a meal: It’s one of the strongest missions influences parents can have on their children, and it’s what Michael’s parents did regularly. As Michael absorbed the missionaries’ stories, God gave him a heart to follow in their footsteps. In his teen years, he became a summer missionary to children, holding local day clubs and participating in mission trips to Chicago and Honduras. His plan was to continue children’s ministry as a career, but in college a burden for the spiritual needs of Europe began to press on his mind …

At the same time, God was working on Jessica, the daughter of former BMM missionaries Bob and Deb Thompson. While serving in Brazil, the Thompsons thoroughly involved their family in the work, which Jessica loved, especially kids’ ministries. The Thompsons taught their children to always head toward ministry, and if He closed the door and led somewhere else, follow Him there. In high school, Jessica moved with her family to Michigan, where Bob and Deb served at Bibles International. Each time Jessica heard Europe missionaries, she thought about Europe’s secular worldview and about how few missionaries seemed to be going there. After a trip to Luxembourg, Bob told Jessica, “You’d love it there!”

Michael and Jessica’s paths crossed in college, and their mutual burden for Europe united them. Michael desired to teach at some level, and they investigated European fields with theological education opportunities. In 2017, the Dunlops settled on France after surveying a BMM ministry near the Luxembourg border.

God continued to mold the Dunlops’ focus as Michael grew in his love for God’s design for the local church. Michael and Jessica now anticipate their central ministry to be church planting, with theological education as a possibility for the future. Their pastor, BMM Council member Jason Ormiston, often speaks of “fishing holes”—developing hobbies and other avenues to build connections with people who need the Lord. The Dunlops have found numerous fishing holes as they meet people at parks, libraries, and through Michael’s coffee-roasting hobby. Their home is always open for the people they meet, and they hope to use hospitality to cultivate contacts in France.

Sending Church: Palmetto Baptist Church—Powdersville, South Carolina
Children: Amelia—4 in October, Jack—16 months
As a child, Andrew startled his parents by discussing apologetics with people in grocery store checkout lines. It only seemed natural to him. As the oldest of 10 children in a pastor’s family, Andrew grew up in a home and church where the Bible’s teachings were central. His parents took time for the hard conversations about life issues and to help their children discern biblical answers.

Andrew’s burden to share what he was learning grew stronger. At a Sunday night service when he was 12, he heard a church planter tell how many cities in their state had no churches. It was then that Andrew felt called to be a church planter, a call that expanded into a concern for global missions.

But as a country kid, Andrew had no use for city life. It wasn’t until he was studying for his master’s degree that he realized how strategic cities are for gospel missions. When BMM missionary Bill Edmondson visited Andrew’s campus and presented the Boston and Beyond ministry and the global impact of cities, Andrew was already interested. He signed up for a four-month internship with Bill, and within no time he was hooked.

At Bill’s suggestion, Andrew lived in a Chinese apartment complex to immerse himself in cross-cultural relationships. Through this connection, Andrew met a Chinese man at a party where he was the only American invited. The two formed a friendship that led to Bible studies, and the man was saved. Andrew also developed relationships with people from India and Syria.

Andrew was amazed at the opportunities he found in a mere four months. In China or Syria, he would never be able to have such open discussions, but the door was wide open in Boston’s melting pot of cultures. Andrew has developed a theology about such ministry: “The cities of the world have become microcosms of the world, and by ministering to the various civilizations within these cities, we have the potential to disciple the world.”

As he joins the Boston and Beyond team, Andrew will work alongside Bill and Deb Edmondson and BMM church planters Toby and Susan Stevens (International Baptist Church) as they not only cultivate relationships in Boston but also train disciples who have returned to their home countries. The team will strengthen them to make new disciples, even in the face of persecution. In the meantime, Andrew is serving as a pastoral intern in a cross-cultural church plant in Washington State. He looks forward to the day he can return to Boston full-time to invest in relationships for worldwide impact.

WHAT IS BOSTON AND BEYOND?
Right here in North America, we can multiply our global outreach. Learn more at www.bmm.org under Where We Serve>North America.

Sending Church: Manchester Community Church—Port Orchard, Washington
For Trevor, a watershed moment came during his and Amelia’s short-term ministry in England as he watched a chain-reaction story play out: one man’s salvation led to another’s, which then brought the gospel to their families at his baptism. **Trevor knew then that missions wasn’t just something he wanted to do; it was something he had to do.** Amelia had a similar experience in England when she saw a young boy and his mom running across the beach. Realizing how small the boy’s chances were of ever hearing the true gospel, Amelia sensed God sending her to reach people like this.

**Those pivotal moments fixed a call to the United Kingdom in Trevor and Amelia’s hearts,** but their burdens for the lost had been developing since childhood. Growing up as the son of BMM UK missionaries Glen and Tammy Galbraith, Trevor knew firsthand the needs and joys of missions. Amelia’s parents were heavily involved in ministry, and at age 14, Amelia publicly declared her call to missions during summer camp.

As high school drew to a close, Trevor knew he wanted to reach British people for Christ, but he thought it might be as an engineer or a graphic designer. But after a year of Bible college in the US, he was struck by the comparative abundance of spirituality in the US. In the UK, the majority of people don’t give God a single thought. A mission conference speaker clinched it for Trevor when he said, **“If you’re called into vocational ministry, you won’t be able to do anything but his calling and be happy.”**

After Trevor and Amelia married in 2012, they spent two and a half years working as tentmaker missionaries alongside Trevor’s parents in England. Their plates were full caring for the endless needs of a mission church: Trevor served as a deacon, filled the pulpit, taught systematic theology, led a small group, and served in evangelistic events. Amelia concentrated on Bible studies and counseling with women. One of her favorite memories is of the two children she led to Christ through a kids’ club. The Galbraiths also saw the church’s VBS attendance rise from 20 to 60 by their final year.

As they become career missionaries, Trevor and Amelia anticipate greater freedom to build Christ’s church in the United Kingdom, whether through starting churches or revitalizing struggling churches found throughout the UK. **The Galbraiths plan a strong emphasis on building indigenous church leadership to replicate gospel ministry.** Using Trevor’s training in counseling and Amelia’s gift of hospitality, their discipleship work will undergird all they do to keep churches healthy for the long haul.

**Sending Church:** North Point Baptist Church—Winston-Salem, North Carolina

**Children:** Evelyn—4 in October, Vera—23 months
Although Jonathan grew up in France, he sensed early on a spiritual darkness in that country that surpassed that of the US and many other European countries. Jonathan vividly remembers his parents, BMM missionaries Randy and Patricia Laase, helping a church that went without a pastor for three years because no other shepherds were available. The need for more workers was obvious, a fact that Jonathan couldn’t shake. In 2013 he had just graduated from high school in France and sensed an increasing pull toward missions. As he prayed, God impressed on him the reality of France’s spiritual needs, coupled with an aging missionary workforce—God wanted to use him to fill the void.

Jonathan moved to the US to attend seminary, where he met Priscilla Bishop, and they married in June 2019. From her childhood, Priscilla felt driven to make a difference in the world. Growing up as a pastor’s daughter, Priscilla was immersed in ministry projects. She heard countless ministry stories from missionaries her parents invited to their home. Greatly gifted in music, she longed as a teen to be a musician and travel the world. After Priscilla committed her life fully to the Lord, God gave a blossoming shape to her desire: the call to use her music skills in missions. A high school German class opened her eyes to Europe, and college chapel messages and her own devotions reinforced her urgency to go.

Jonathan is already experienced in French ministry. With his outgoing personality, he has loved youth ministry, especially camp. He also understands the slow-growing nature of French church planting. As a child and teen, Jonathan invited many friends to church. Some rejected the gospel, but a few received Christ. His witness continued into law school, where he invited an American professor struggling with marital issues to church, where Jonathan’s father led him to salvation.

As Jonathan and Priscilla return to France as a couple, they will join his parents to gain ministry experience and to help Priscilla learn the language and culture in a bilingual environment. Priscilla plans to use music lessons as a bridge to their community. Relationship building will be central to their church-planting efforts, and a crucial element will be the building of churches that duplicate themselves. Jonathan says, “Even if our lives are limited to planting just one church—but one that will plant other churches—then it will be worth it.”
By age six, Ryan had offered his life for God to use. Although by his teen years Ryan had memorized a great deal of Scripture, at age 16, intense spiritual doubts and struggles almost derailed him. For several months, his father, youth pastor, and others helped shepherd Ryan back to a trusting relationship with the Lord through a more complete understanding of Scripture. Victory over those struggles forged in Ryan a desire to deeply know the Scriptures. In college, he majored in Bible, getting a solid grasp of Greek and hermeneutics. This focus continued in seminary: he wanted to understand God’s words directly (adding Hebrew) for proper testing of theological teachings.

Across the country, God was forging Amparo at the same time. Born in Colombia, South America, Amparo’s family moved to Denver when she was nine. Her mother prayed many years for her children to be saved. Through the influence of high school friends, Amparo began attending church. There, she was saved and she surrendered her life for God’s use. She learned to love God’s Word, a love that grew even stronger in Bible college.

When financial difficulties forced her to quit college, Amparo faced her own struggle: What was God’s plan for her life? Little did she know, it was already in motion. God brought Ryan and Amparo together through a mutual friend, and they were married a year later.

Amparo has become Ryan’s strong, steady supporter as he pursues God’s plan for their family. That plan came into focus in seminary, when Ryan worked on his own New Testament translation for a class he taught. It was an excellent experience in how to make the clearest, most precise translation. As he learned more about Bibles International, BMM’s Bible translation and literacy ministry, he felt a growing affinity for its work. He jumped at the chance to attend BI’s consultant seminar in 2014, and God made it clear He had a place for Ryan in Bible translation.

Using her native Spanish, Amparo recently completed medical interpreter training, giving her greater understanding of linguistics and also increasing her ability to support Ryan’s work. The Penningtons await God’s specific venue, but they are considering a placement in southeast Asia, where they would not only work in Bible translation consultancy but also minister in a local mission church.

**Sending Church:** Agnew Road Baptist Church—Greenville, South Carolina

**Children:** Philip—10, Andrew—8, Matthew—6
It takes a special personality to enjoy parsing out the meaning of Bible verses in their original languages. Ron is just that personality. In fact, he loves studying biblical languages so much that it’s something he’d do in his free time. In college, he studied everything he could get his hands on up through the PhD level.

Twenty years ago, Ron and Terri were thrilled to join Tri-City Baptist Church, where Ron taught biblical languages at their seminary and Terri directed their preschool. Terri majored in missions in college, and the preschool became her mission field. When the preschoolers’ families faced crises, they turned to Terri for her loving, biblical counsel. A number of people were saved and joined the church through this ministry.

The church’s seminary is now closed, but in the 14 years Ron taught there, he not only educated students in biblical languages, but he also taught classes such as theology, hermeneutics, Old and New Testament theology, and more. This breadth of teaching reinforced his understanding of Hebrew and Greek texts. Six years ago, Ron became Tri-City’s associate pastor, a role he has carried until the present time. A few years ago, Terri stepped down as preschool director to care for Ron’s aging mother and handicapped brother, but she remains integrally involved at Tri-City.

On the opening night of Tri-City’s mission conference this year, Ron’s prayer impacted him more than he could have guessed: “Lord, please send someone from our church into missions.” Two of the missionary guests were Joe and Bonnie Valentin serving with Bibles International, BMM’s Bible translation and literacy ministry. As Joe and Ron talked at lunch one day, Joe asked Ron if he would consider working in Bible translation consultancy. As Bonnie described to Terri what a consultant does, Terri said, “Wow, that sounds like something Ron would do!”

The Webbers attended a BI translation workshop in June and saw how they could contribute to the ministry. Ron and Terri anticipate being based out of the BI office in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as Ron helps create clear and accurate translations of God’s Word and Terri helps in the BI office as she’s able. As the Webbers approach retirement age, retirement is the last thing on Ron’s mind as long as there’s something he can do for the Lord. He says to his generation: “You can do things like this, even if you’re ‘old.’”

Sending Church: Tri-City Baptist Church—Blue Springs, Missouri
Children: Four grown children and two grandchildren
To protect our 2019 missionaries headed to restricted nations, their photos and articles are not included. Instead, we share an article from their perspective on the unique challenges of their nations, including the need for special care in protecting their identities.

Working as a missionary in a Creative Access Nation (CAN) has its unique situations. Many ask me as an introductory question, “Is going there even safe?” The answer can be complex; it certainly isn’t always easy. Some governments don’t approve of missionaries coming. In some cases, they thwart them by not granting visas. In other cases, they actively look for missionaries serving in their countries and send them home. Because of this, we have to be careful. While most missionaries want to have a very visible presence, missionaries in CANs often need to be much less visible, even in American church communications.

More than half of the world lives in Creative Access Nations. If we are going to fulfill Christ’s command to go to all the world, we are going to have to follow Christ into lands with many challenges. The access to such nations is, well, Creative.

“Is going there even safe?” The danger is far greater to the souls of those who have never heard if we don’t go, namely, that they will spend eternity in hell. Christ told us that if we are to follow Him, it means following Him on the road to crucifixion. Following Christ includes danger. And bringing the gospel to those who have never heard includes danger.

And so, when people ask, “Is going there even safe?” I would like to change the question to, “Is going there even worthwhile?” The answer is absolutely yes. God opens doors in interesting ways, often in ways very different than we might have expected. And in spite of the opposition, God is doing a great work in many hearts. Often where, politically, the doors seem most closed, God is opening hearts in ways that we don’t usually see in fields seemingly more open.

With so many souls living in Creative Access Nations, and so many hearts becoming softened to hear God’s word, I believe we must face the challenges in prayer and in asking God to lead many to take the gospel into these lands. Because so many hearts are ready and the populations are so great, please ask that God would send out more laborers to accept the unique challenges and the unique opportunities these fields offer.

Every Creative Access Nation is different. Please carefully follow the guidelines your missionary has requested. Some missionaries must practice concern for the sake of their personal safety, others for their ongoing ministry. Some request that their pictures or anything that can identify them not be displayed in churches or on church websites/social media or be recorded during services.

Recent changes on some fields have increased the need for caution. While it would be best to not discuss your church’s CAN missionaries with visitors from those nations, we do hope that churches would offer a warm Christian welcome to people from these countries—in fact, doing so contributes to your CAN missionaries’ ministry!
Great is our GOD

The story of Baptist Mid-Missions

Photos, clockwise from left: Burning Wicks, BMM’s history, published in 1984; Macushi pastors with New Testaments; Alexander de Chalandeau; Dr. Raymond Buck and Dr. Gary Anderson; Project Catskills workers. Background: BMM headquarters dedication, July 13, 1987.
In the 1980s, BMM crafted new ways to stir younger generations for the high calling of missions. "Informissions" seminars introduced college and high school students to some of the finest missions speakers of their day. In New York State, BMM missionaries organized Project Catskills, which immersed students in ministries to Jewish people and other ethnicities. One of the most groundbreaking college programs was Arriba, an 11-month internship in Peru, combining academics with hands-on ministry, giving students an unforgettable, real-world missions experience. Today, the BMM missionary landscape is dotted with people who first tasted missions through these programs.

Media ministries became another way to keep missions before people’s eyes. The BMM Audio-Visual Department began traveling out-of-country to produce films for Arriba, along with dramatic films such as The Amazon Waits, Except a Seed Shall Die, and The Desert Shall Rejoice. Missionaries Fred and Rachel Whitman found that television and radio broadcasts opened doors for the gospel in Italy like nothing else. The growing contacts they made allowed their church plant to finally take off.

Other doors remained stubbornly closed, such as those in the Soviet Union, but that didn’t stop missionaries like Alexander de Chalandeau from searching out creative openings. Born to a Russian father, de Chalandeau took his French mother’s maiden name, making it easier to slip behind the Iron Curtain. Loading his van with Bibles, Christian literature, food, medicines, and other supplies, he regularly visited persecuted churches in Eastern Europe. On one occasion, while delivering a package to a friend of Georgi Vins’s, de Chalandeau was arrested and went through the Soviet Courts before being freed. By the end of the decade, de Chalandeau had made 34 journeys behind the Iron Curtain to strengthen believers.

De Chalandeau was not the only one getting Bibles into people’s hands. Since our founding, BMM missionaries had been laboring intensely to transmit God’s Word into the languages of the peoples with whom they worked. In 1981, Bibles International was formed to consolidate their efforts. Some of our earliest BI missionaries, Ross and Cathy Hodsdon, worked alongside Brazil’s Macushi Indians to gain their trust and their help in the Macushi Scripture project. When the Hodsdons prepared the Macushi New Testament for printing in 1981, it fueled a revival already starting among the Macushi people. The impact of bringing the Bible to new people groups was stunning. Allen Fisher, a translator working in Africa, wrote, “It is impossible to forget the thrill of watching the reactions of people who, for the first time, are able to hold in their hands a copy of the Word of God in their own language. Tears of joy flow freely as they thank God for this treasure.”

A changing of the guard took place within BMM in 1983: the retirement of President Allan Lewis and the installation of our second full-time president, Dr. Raymond Buck. Our new president oversaw “Operation Move Out,” in which BMM relocated from our cramped midtown offices into our current headquarters in suburban Cleveland. In 1989, at the age of 65, Dr. Buck passed the mantle of leadership to a 40-year-old pastor named Gary Anderson. An unwavering champion of missions, Dr. Anderson would become our longest-tenured president as he oversaw our operations for the next 26 years.
When I was young, my brother, who had worked summers hoeing beans, detasseling corn, and laboring on construction jobs, invested his savings in the stock of one local chemical company. Suddenly he was interested in the daily stock report in our local newspaper, concerned about a single company’s performance. This was long before the popular practice of investing in mutual funds had emerged as a means of spreading your investment over dozens of companies and maximizing investment returns.

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