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"Were it not for grace," A tribute to President Emeritus Gary Anderson » p. 8

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Called to Help Missionaries

Full-time missions isn’t God’s plan for everyone, but laypeople can still play a tremendous role in missions.
Dr. Gary Anderson has given us a wonderful, godly heritage, and I look forward to building on that heritage as I begin my presidency at Baptist Mid-Missions. I want to publicly say “Thank you” to Dr. Anderson for leaving Baptist Mid-Missions in excellent condition. As I come to the presidency, I will have to deal with neither theological controversy nor financial difficulties. I am fully aware that God is the author of BMM’s condition, but I also am fully aware that leadership is critical to stability in any ministry. Thank you, Dr. Anderson, for a stable ship.

In this *Advance* you will find some great tips on how you can find your way into service for the Lord in missions. Maybe you never thought of yourself as a missionary, but go ahead and read what God has done in others’ lives.

Amos 7:14-15—“Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: ‘I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.’ Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’ ”

Amos’ testimony was essentially, “I was working, God called, I obeyed, and I am here delivering God’s message to Israel.” This issue of *Advance* follows the stories of some modern day Amoses—people who were going about life following the normal everyday routine when God asked them to do the unusual or perhaps the unknown. Maybe you have never seen yourself serving with a missionary. All it takes to get started is a willing heart.

In November 2015 I was in Accra, Ghana, and I can attest to the help that Britt and Lee Bell had provided to the BMM guest house during their short-term service (see page 17). In the evening, public power went out, and within minutes the standby generator came on. We were all thankful for Britt and Lee’s help in raising the funds and getting the generator installed. Who can survive without internet connection in this day of digital communications? I was so grateful to be able to connect to Wi-Fi, which the Bells installed while serving in Ghana. Britt and Lee—what a blessing! Thank you to them and to all who make themselves available to serve missionaries.

Truly by grace alone,

"You can do this. Listen and search for opportunities, then step out in faith. It will change your life, and you will never regret helping to build the Kingdom."
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On January 1, 2016, Rev. Vernon Rosenau began his tenure as Baptist Mid-Missions’ fourth full-time president, succeeding Dr. Gary Anderson. The Lord has given us a new leader who can build upon our strengths and create a strong future.

Vernon’s roots run deep in Baptist Mid-Missions: His grandparents served on BMM’s first missionary team in what is today Central African Republic (CAR). Vernon was the third generation of his family to serve in CAR, where he and his wife, Jan, spent 24 years. In 1999, they were called to BMM’s Home Office, where Vernon served as field administrator for Africa and Europe until his call to the presidency. Vernon and Jan have three adult children: Julie, Sam, and Bill.

Get to know our new president as he shares his heart for Baptist Mid-Missions and his passion for the Great Commission.

To read further about Vernon Rosenau’s ministry, visit www.bmm.org and click Learn>Articles.
In your lifetime association with Baptist Mid-Missions, what have you most appreciated about this organization?

VR: At its core, Baptist Mid-Missions values the development of national leadership and the national church; it’s part of our DNA. In the 1920s, the first evangelist trained by my grandfather, Ferd Rosenau, could not read or write, so my grandfather orally taught him Bible verses and theology. Today, we have leaders like Dr. Rene Malipou, an African with undergraduate and graduate degrees in French and a doctorate in English from the US. He is the codirector of a graduate-level theological seminary in CAR, and I’ve invited him to be the speaker at my installation service. We have national leaders like Dr. Malipou all over the world.

I also appreciate that BMM works very hard in the arena of finances, both in managing ourselves corporately and in helping our missionaries meet legal requirements, stay transparent, and stay debt-free. I’m taking over the presidency with no fears of our fiscal behavior or of us going over the cliff financially. We’re working hard to do the right things.

What have you observed as Baptist Mid-Missions’ greatest strengths?

VR: We can look around the globe to any of our established fields and see that we’ve left behind a national church that’s functioning autonomously and yet still working in partnership with us. That’s good missiologically: you raise up Timothys and let them move ahead and take the lead, but you never divest yourself of the ministry relationship with them. We have the capacity to say to beginning missionary couples and singles, “You’ll work both with veteran missionaries and at the same time with veteran national ministry personnel who will teach you what you need to know as you start out in your first term.”

Another strength is that, with our experience and infrastructure as an agency, we could probably help anybody serve anywhere they feel God is calling them. Now, we won’t send anyone just anywhere—requests need to be carefully evaluated, and we have a screening process that helps place qualified people where they will be effective—but our strength is that we can figure out how to do it because of our experience. We have a solid understanding of how to deal with legal issues such as residency and taxation, how to handle emergencies and medical and political evacuations, and how to manage many other situations a missionary might face.

What has God taught you that will undergird your leadership?

VR: Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-40 that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This may seem terribly simplistic, but ministry should center on loving God and loving people. In the business of daily ministry, it is easy to lose sight of those two commands. We must keep the main thing the main thing: God and people. All other things

continued on page 6
that we spend so much time on are just tools to serve Him and others.

I’ve learned that leaders must be lifetime learners. They always ask the questions, “Why?” and “Why not?” If they do not, they will settle into a “same old, same old” routine. My missionary grandfather said, “Doctrine is never changing; methodology is ever changing.” He made this comment back in the 1930s or 1940s in a discussion as to whether a missionary should have an IcyBall [early form of a refrigerator] or whether that was an extravagance. He was of the opinion that if his wife, Ina, could better serve the ministry with a refrigerator, then she should have one.

Good leaders find people of character, equip them to do the ministry, and then release them to do the ministry for which God prepared them. God graciously allows us to partner with Him in their preparation.

They are His servants and He will be their sufficiency. Equip good people and get out of their way.

If you are in leadership, you need to stop every now and then, turn around, and make sure that people are following. If they are not, go to the Lord and seek His face as to the reason for the problem. Self could be in the way. As a leader, always be ready and able to say, “Thank you” or “I made a mistake” or “I am sorry” or “Please forgive me.”

**As you begin your presidency, what vision for BMM has God placed upon you?**

**VR:** I would like to see BMM utilize our experienced, educated, godly missionary force in a greater and greater manner within BMM. Dr. Anderson initiated strategic planning for us in 2003. It was stellar for him to pursue that process with a room full of field missionaries involved. I want to see more field missionaries offering their experience to help us craft what BMM does and who we are.

I also see the importance of an organization to be cognizant of changes in our world. It’s important to be a student of your world at large, as it was with “the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” I Chr. 12:32. As a leader, I ask the...
Lord to make me a son of Issachar and surround me with men and women who think like the sons of Issachar. It is possible to become so involved with daily ministry that we lose track of the times. Then, as has been so aptly said, “We are at risk of answering the questions that no one is asking.”

Building on that thought, how do you view the future of missions?

**VR:** The face of global missions is changing, without a doubt. We have gone from a climate in the post-WWII years where North America had great influence and strong funding of world missions to today’s landscape of fewer American missionaries and fewer American missions dollars. Many factors have contributed to the complexity of this issue. As I assess these changes, I love it that we have a French mission board started by missionaries but governed by trained French leaders.

I love it that pastors in Côte d’Ivoire are asking us how they can start a mission board to reach Muslims living north of them. I like that discussion because it’s part of the future of missions. With our expertise and knowledge, we can help the church launch global ministry efforts that continue as partnerships with them.

As a field administrator, you initiated enrichment conferences for our missionary family. Why has member care become so important to you?

**VR:** If you look at the numbers of missionaries who have failed in ministry due to emotional, physical, or family breakdowns, they vastly exceed the number of theological failures. Issues such as war, residency permits, or economies are not what are taking people out of missions. What’s taking them out is what I call “not tending the garden of their own heart.” Member care is very important because it provides tools for missionaries to care for themselves and their families.

I don’t know that I want a Member Care Czar in the BMM Home Office as much as I want multiple missionaries who are passionate about member care, and whom we can help gain training in this area so they can take that information to their coworkers on their own fields.

If you could look into the future, what would you most like to leave behind as your contribution to Baptist Mid-Missions?

**VR:** I want BMM to become an organization to which people are drawn, especially young people, and to have them say, “I want to be part of this.” I want to communicate with this generation, to challenge them that Baptist Mid-Missions is a great doorway to world missions.
On December 31, 2015, Dr. Gary Anderson left his office for the last time as Baptist Mid-Missions’ president. He finished his task well, faithfully wrapping up 30 years of leadership with BMM marked by integrity, a deep respect for God’s Word, and a shepherd’s heart. Many stories of God’s goodness can be recounted from Dr. Anderson’s life. These stories may never have unfolded, however, were it not for grace.

The Lord stepped into the life of Gary’s great-grandfather, a well-known West Virginia bootlegger. By God’s amazing grace, he was born again late in life. Gary’s grandfather struggled with alcohol dependency until he received Christ in his early 70s. Before moving to Dellroy, Ohio, Gary’s parents made professions of faith as young adults, but they weren’t established in a sound church until 1962. In that year, Gary’s mother saw a flier for evangelistic meetings being held at Carrollton Baptist Temple. Although 13-year-old Gary and his older brother felt they had better things to do on that Saturday night, they attended with their whole family. The Holy Spirit moved in each family member old enough to understand, and they surrendered to Christ. Within two years, many of Gary’s aunts, uncles, and cousins also received Christ.

Gary surrendered to God’s call to full-time ministry when he was 16. After high school graduation in 1967, he enrolled in Bob Jones University, where he heard BMM missionary Bill Grant appeal for workers in Australia. At the conclusion, Gary told the Lord he was willing to be a missionary, if God chose. Also at BJU, Gary met his future wife, a North Carolinian named Barbara White. They married in 1972, planning to serve together in missions. God fulfilled that plan in a way neither could have anticipated.

In 1975, the year he received an MDiv from Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, Gary went on a mission trip to India. During that trip, he received a telegram that changed his life’s direction. Springville Baptist Church in Springville, Pennsylvania, extended to him an invitation to become their senior pastor. Although
missions remained in his long-range plans, Gary sensed complete peace about accepting the church’s call. He desired to follow God’s will—unexpected or planned.

The Andersons grew to deeply love the people and ministry at Springville Baptist. With Gary’s passion for the Great Commission, the church forged a strong missions program. He also developed close relationships with several BMM missionary families. Although the Lord had redirected the Andersons from on-field missions, Gary was determined to uphold his church’s missionaries as fully as he could. During those years, the Lord blessed Gary and Barbara with three children: Tim, Stephen, and Joy.

At Springville, Gary’s leadership abilities grew, and his peers elected him to the Council of 10 for the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches. He also served as chairman of the board of trustees for Baptist Bible College & Seminary of Pennsylvania (BBC&S, now Summit University).

In the late 1980s, BMM’s governing board, the Elected Council, was searching for a successor to President Raymond Buck. Gary Anderson, who had joined BMM’s Advisory Council in 1985, received high recommendations from council members who served with him on the BBC&S board. As the search committee explored further, Gary rose to the top of the list. They valued his accomplishments and character, and they appreciated his love for BMM missionaries. In 1987, at age 38, Gary was selected as BMM’s executive vice president and served two years as chief operating officer under Dr. Buck before Gary’s installation as president on November 14, 1989.

In the year Gary assumed the presidency, BBC&S bestowed on him an honorary doctorate of divinity, giving him the title he was known by throughout his presidency: Dr. Anderson.

Dr. Anderson manifested servant leadership from the start of his tenure. Surrounded by administrative staff older than he, Dr. Anderson sat down with each of them, asking, “How can I help you do your job better?” Always willing to listen, he readily postponed what he was doing to meet others’ needs. He forged a sense of unity and trust that generated camaraderie in his staff. During his presidency, only twice did he fill administrative positions for reasons other than retirement. He also enjoyed great harmony with the BMM Elected Council, the Mission’s governors.

Dr. Anderson’s mindset throughout his tenure was to propel others forward and to keep himself out of the spotlight. When one of his field administrators, Dr. Gerald Webber, was called to the presidency of Continental Baptist Missions in 1991, he communicated to Dr. Anderson, “You showed me how to do this.” His model of leadership helped prepare Dr. Webber to accept the new position.

One of the challenges faced by any president of a nonprofit agency is fundraising. The global economy endured instability from wars, recessions, and job losses during Dr. Anderson’s tenure. God, in his grace, provided the resources needed to keep BMM stable, and Dr. Anderson worked diligently to keep us in the black throughout his 26 years as president.

Baptist Mid-Missions expanded its worldwide reach under his administration. Nearly 20 new fields on five continents were added. As the Iron Curtain was dropping country by country across Europe,
Dr. Anderson accompanied the late Dr. Alexander de Chalandeau on missionary expeditions to assist persecuted believers. Dr. Anderson’s vision to see us fill the spiritual vacuum in Eastern Europe became even more resolute. Today BMM missionaries continue to plant churches in former Communist countries such as Romania, Russia, and Slovakia. Europe has become BMM’s fastest growing region in numbers of new missionaries.

Dr. Anderson demonstrated trust in BMM personnel to venture into new countries, create new types of ministries, and use new technology. That trust was also shown in the appointment of missionaries as on-field coordinators for continent-wide missionary teams. These coordinators have enhanced overall ministry by mobilizing representatives who can quickly and easily travel to missionaries in need.

Even from his early years, Dr. Anderson helped BMM more sharply define who we are so we could operate with greater focus and efficiency. Fifteen years ago, a deeper question began to fill his thoughts. How much more could BMM accomplish if we did it through formal, proactive strategy? In late 2003, he launched our first strategic planning initiative, which defined our core values and vision and also yielded the mission statement by which we operate: “The Baptist Mid-Missions family exists to strategically advance the building of Christ’s church, with His passion and for His glory, in vital partnership with Baptist churches worldwide.” The plan has helped us strive with unity toward common goals, and it is being renewed periodically.

An offshoot of BMM’s strategic plan that incorporated our past was the annual William C. Haas Lifetime Service awards, which Dr. Anderson developed. He sought to give honor to whom honor is due by recognizing missionaries with the same pioneering spirit as BMM’s founder, William Haas. Since 2008, at each July Annual Conference we have recognized two missionary singles or couples. The awards encapsulate the respect Dr. Anderson has for the BMM Family as a whole. Having surrendered to missions himself and seeing firsthand the pressures and sacrifices missionaries willingly accept, Dr. Anderson considers them heroes worthy of esteem.

A student of God’s Word, Dr. Anderson recognized that to lead an undertaking the size of Baptist Mid-Missions he needed to abide in God’s wisdom. Through prayer and God’s Word, he guided BMM through seasons that were sometimes smooth and sometimes fiercely challenging. Through such times, he exercised wise leadership defined by patience, humility, and grace while taking a godly stand when necessary. Rev. Tom Townsend, president of BMM’s Elected Council during Dr. Anderson’s final year, said of his leadership, “He had the wonderful ability of making sure everyone felt like his or her opinion or position was important, yet he brought us to a consensus that recognized what was the best for the Mission.”

The position of a mission agency president naturally entails much travel. When people met Dr. Anderson and learned his title, they wanted to know all about his travels. However, travel was simply a means to an end for him; the
real thrill was interacting with the people of BMM. Dr. Anderson has been their biggest champions and has rejoiced and wept with them as if they were his own family.

In order to minister to the BMM Family, one of the sacrifices he accepted as president was travel that took him away from Barbara and their children. Today, a blessing of Dr. Anderson’s retirement is greater freedom for Barbara and him to visit their children (all serving in Colorado pastorates) and their seven grandchildren. Tim and his wife, Stacie, serve at First Baptist Church in Springfield; Stephen and his wife, Joy, serve at Faith Baptist Church in Fowler; and Joy and her husband, Ryan Lundquist, serve at Mountain Shadows Baptist Church in Pueblo West.

Retirement won’t mean a separation from the ministry Dr. Anderson has long enjoyed. As president emeritus, he now represents BMM through speaking engagements around the country, and he welcomes those invitations. For the past several years, Dr. Anderson has shared the gospel at sportsmen’s banquets, another ministry close to his heart. An avid hunter, Dr. Anderson took up turkey call making more than ten years ago. His callmaking skills earned him prestigious national awards from the National Wild Turkey Federation. The notoriety generated by those awards has opened new avenues for Dr. Anderson to give his testimony of the grace of God that changes lives through Jesus Christ. Sharing the life-changing story of His grace is something he never plans to retire from.

Grace has been intertwined not only with Dr. Anderson’s ministry but also with his entire life. In his November 2014 Family Letter newsletter to the BMM Family, Dr. Anderson wrote that he had become “determined to plumb the depths of grace.” Through Dr. Anderson’s studies in Romans, he discovered the treasure of a richer understanding of God’s unreimbursed, unrecompensed favor. In his last weeks as president, when asked about specific ways he has seen that grace in his ministry, Dr. Anderson responded with honesty and with a heart of gratitude to his Savior: “I can’t find a thing in my life or ministry that isn’t obviously attributed to God’s grace. Looking into my ancestry, humanly speaking the indicators predicting the direction my family would take two or three generations down the line—starting from a great-grandfather who was a notorious bootlegger—there’s nothing in any of that which would point to the experience of seeing my family and my extended family come to Christ, my brother and myself called to ministry, and now Barbara and I enjoying having all three children in ministry. I can’t look at any part of my life and ministry without thinking in terms of grace.”

**NEXT SECTION**

**CALLED TO HELP MISSIONARIES**

Some individuals don’t aspire to or feel qualified for full-time missionary service. However, they can still be tremendous assets to missionaries’ work.
The oil industry created a thriving economic climate for the northern Wyoming town of Buffalo. It meant steady work for Mike Prince’s handyman business, Home Sweet Home Repairs. With a reliable stream of income, Mike and his wife, Dora, were free to take a cruise to Juneau, Alaska, in 2007. They enjoyed it so much that they went a second time in 2010. Visiting Juneau was wonderful, but Mike thought the city’s rainy climate, would make it a bad place to live. He hated the rain.

It was later in 2010 that Mike’s steady income began to dry up as the oil industry took a downward turn. The Princes had been believers long enough to not panic but to look up to God. They knew He had allowed this change in their lives, but for what reason? They began to pray and wait on Him.

Soon afterward, a pastor friend in Durham, North Carolina, asked if they would help his church prepare their building for sale before moving to their new location. During the weeks that Mike worked there, he and Dora attended the church’s missions conference and met BMM Alaska missionary George Blood. Mike casually told George he might like to live in Alaska some day, but he never expected that day would come.

Back home in Wyoming, Mike and Dora continued to wrestle in prayer. God’s new location for them was still a mystery, but one thing Mike was realizing was that he needed to be completely surrendered. Wedged in the back of his heart was an idol: Mike’s love of guns and hunting. Mike came clean with God that he was refusing to go anywhere where he couldn’t use his firearms. Convicted, he saw that he was not in the position to tell God what he would or wouldn’t do. He laid his desires on the altar and surrendered to God’s will.

God’s mystery was then revealed. The more Mike and Dora prayed, the more Juneau came to mind. It became clear this was God’s leading, but when they investigated the cost of moving their belongings to Juneau (a city accessible only by ferry or airplane) the costs seemed too great: $5,000 for the ferry alone. With prayer, they lifted this need to God. Within weeks, Mike landed a repair job that would pay … $5,000.

One more obstacle remained—their tight-knit family. Every time Mike had broached the move with his mother, her reply was the same, “It’s so far away, like moving to another country!” Hesitantly, he again told his mother of God’s leading. This time, her response was completely different. She said, “You know what? I have a complete peace about that. I have no doubt the Lord wants you there.”

Mike and Dora decided to take only the essentials. It took six yard sales to cull their belongings down to what would fit into their truck and trailer. When they arrived in Juneau...
on July 25, 2011, they had only limited belongings, $800 in cash, their Great Dane—and no jobs. They would have to trust the Lord.

One of the assurances the Princes had about Juneau was that the city’s local papers showed no advertisements for handymen. It appeared that Mike would have a wide open door for his business. But once they got to Juneau, the city was full of handymen. Little did they know that the handymen always work by word of mouth. The Princes immediately saw God’s wisdom—He wanted them to walk by faith, not sight.

Hebrews 11:6 says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” The rewards didn’t come immediately, but God fulfilled His Word. Dora had previously worked as a county appraiser and found a similar job in Juneau. As Mike began spreading the word about his repair business, jobs started coming in.

They knew the overriding reason God had them in Juneau was so that they could serve Him. Prayers that began in Wyoming continued: “Lord, lead us where you want us.” The Princes heard about a mission church called Bethany Baptist Church, but because it was meeting in a home, they were leery of getting involved. Nonetheless, they decided to attend a Wednesday night Bible study. They fit like a hand and glove. And when they heard that the missionary pastor was Dean Blood, son of George Blood, they were amazed at God’s leading.

The church had just lost a key family, and Dean and his wife, Julie, were praying for a mature couple to step in and be an example to new believers in their congregation. Mike’s knowledge of contracting helped the church through a long building program (after which the church’s name changed to Riverside Baptist Church). As mature believers, the Princes fill many leadership roles. Mike is the Sunday School superintendent, adult Sunday School teacher, head trustee, and song leader. Dora is the treasurer and a children’s church teacher.

The Princes describe serving at Juneau as a spiritual fast track. They have learned more in the last five years than in all their previous years as believers. Walking by faith, they firmly know that God is in control of the Christian’s life. He will take care of their needs. Part of the faith reward has been deep peace in knowing they are exactly where God wants them to be.

They still live from paycheck to paycheck, but this means trusting God, just like a regular missionary. The Princes say, “It is an honor to be used by the Lord, allowing Him to move you. It’s all about souls, how many could be saved if you would yield and surrender and go.”

“...It’s opened my eyes to a whole new realm of how God can work in your life. I believe it’s the biggest fast track to spiritual maturity anybody can take. Put your seat belt on, because God has awesome things to teach you and to do in your life!”

—Mike Prince
Sitting in her junior high Sunday School class at Walnut Ridge Baptist Church in Waterloo, Iowa, Stephanie Swanson listened to missionaries Dean and Julie Blood talk about Alaska. At just 12 years old, she felt her heart beating for ministry. She could clearly see herself on the mission field.

All through high school, that picture never faded. At Dean and Julie’s invitation, Stephanie spent a summer in Alaska after high school. She instantly fell in love with the people and with the Bloods’ ministry at Peters Creek Baptist Church in Chugiak. Without a doubt, God wanted her there.

Nursing school had to come first, then a year of seminary at Faith Baptist Bible College. But for 13 years, she spent nearly every summer at Peters Creek. By 2007, she was ready to jump in with both feet. Landing a job as a nurse, she moved to Alaska full-time.

Stephanie’s enthusiasm and willingness to serve were a great boost to Peters Creek. She stayed with the church until its graduated from mission status in 2009. With a firm call to stay in Alaska, she investigated becoming a career missionary. But a pull on her heart told her she must go to Juneau next, and she must not wait. Following God’s will, she continued in a layperson capacity. By God’s master plan, the Bloods also felt led to Juneau for their next church plant: Bethany Baptist Church.

In 2011, Paul Sprenger was a Coast Guardsman stationed in Juneau. It had been a difficult year as he struggled through several challenging life circumstances. He sought help from the church most familiar to him, the Catholic Church. But confession and saying the prescribed Hail Marys weren’t giving him answers. His newly saved brother encouraged him to attend a Baptist church. Paul thought it was worth a try.

Finding Bethany Baptist Church, Paul felt welcomed by its friendly people. He kept coming, and one night he and Dean had an in-depth discussion on Catholicism. That talk ended in Paul’s receiving Christ as his Savior. He was baptized in January 2012. Paul drank in spiritual teaching and took online Bible courses to further quench his thirst. In time, Dean asked Paul to teach the youth group Sunday School. When Bethany Baptist Church started a building project (and became Riverside Baptist Church), Paul helped organize project assignments for over 150 people from the Lower 48. At times he preached when Dean was away. Everyone at church was excited to see this new member taking off in his walk with the Lord, including Stephanie. Their friendship grew and, united in heart to serve the Lord, they married in 2014.

Their plan was to stay in Juneau and help the Bloods, but in 2015 God instead led them full circle: back to Iowa for training at Faith Baptist Theological Seminary. The Lord’s plans are not yet clear for their future. Military chaplaincy is on Paul’s heart, but the Sprengers are open to whatever God wants.

God used a set of BMM Alaska missionaries to change Paul and Stephanie’s lives—and they weren’t the only ones. For many summers, the youth pastor from Stephanie’s church in Iowa, Brian Ralston, sent teams to Peters Creek Baptist to conduct VBSes and to help in construction projects. In 2009, when Peters Creek sought its first nonmissionary pastor, Brian applied—and got the job. You never know what God can do when you offer yourself to the Lord to help a missionary!
Today in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Brazilians are leading many missionary-founded congregations, and BMM missionaries are actively planting new churches. This may not have happened if Sally Rothwell hadn’t asked, “Are there any Baptist Mid-Missions works in Rio?”

In 1987, Jim and Sally Rothwell were embarking on a three-year assignment in Rio for Jim’s job with a mining company. Meeting veteran Brazil missionaries Neal and Alice Smith at the Rothwells’ church in California, Sally asked them her question. Neal regretfully said no. The question echoed in Neal’s mind until the Lord spoke to him that he must start a church in Rio.

In Neal’s boundless enthusiasm, he asked the Rothwells if they would share his and Alice’s vision to start a church there. Joining his excitement, Jim and Sally pledged whatever help they could offer.

It would have been easy for Jim, Sally, and their three daughters to blend into Brazil’s expatriate community, but assisting the Smiths helped the Rothwell family form relationships with Brazilians, learn the language more fully and, best of all, contribute to a work that reaped eternal fruit. By the time they left Brazil in 1989, they had participated in the start of three congregations in greater Rio, and they formed an expatriate English Bible study that continued after they left.

When Jim’s work took them to Australia in 1994, Neal Smith researched BMM ministries and connected the Rothwells with Meadowview Baptist Church in Melbourne, then pastored by BMM missionaries Steve and Ricka Butler. After the Butlers returned to the US (Steve is now BMM’s North America field administrator), the Rothwells helped Mark and Mary Snider.

This was the Rothwells’ second time in Australia. Back in 1982, during their assignment in Brisbane, Sally received Christ through a Christian friend. On Sundays, while the women were at church, Jim stayed home and read the gospels and was also saved. Now back in Australia as mature believers, the entire family pitched in at Meadowview. Sally played the piano, Jim was a deacon, and their daughters were involved in youth group. The experiences at church made the time in Australia much richer for their children also.

Today the Rothwells are retired and living in Washington State. Their can-do attitude toward ministry has them actively serving, especially in missions, in their local congregation, Grace Baptist Church in Bellingham. Sally also teaches Sunday School, and she plays piano, as she has done in every church they joined. Jim just finished a decade as church treasurer and is a small group leader. As they reflect on their nearly 10 years of coming alongside missionaries, one of the great blessings was offering encouragement to them. Ministry in an unfamiliar place, where missionaries may be the only Christians, is challenging. Having other Christians to come alongside them eases their load.

Jim and Sally also saw their faith built up; they saw that God could use them to build His church around the world. Sally says, “If anyone has the opportunity to have expatriate experience, contact a mission board to see if you can connect with missionaries to help.” Jim adds, “If you have the opportunity, go for it. You have no idea how God might use you.”
Helping a missionary is no doubt a two-way street: the missionary receives benefits and so do those who serve. Sandy and Sarah Shipley found this true when they stepped out to help Tim and Verna Friesen in a church rescue work in Regina, Saskatchewan.

A connection with the Friesens began during Sandy’s years at Emmanuel Baptist Bible Institute (EBBI) in Moncton, New Brunswick. Tim, then the president of EBBI, became Sandy’s mentor. Because of help offered by Tim and other EBBI staff, Sandy and Sarah grew greatly during Bible college.

During Sandy’s second year at EBBI, Steve Butler (BMM North America field administrator) presented ministry opportunities in North America. One strongly stood out: campus ministries. Sandy had grown up in a non-Christian home and followed his family’s pattern of alcoholism. Sarah was a backslidden Christian when they met. They had a daughter together before turning their lives over to the Lord and marrying. Campus ministries offered a venue for the Shipleys to help young people find the Lord and build their lives on a godly foundation. Through BMM’s FirstLook program, the Shipleys spent the summer of 2010 in Binghamton, New York, assisting Dave and Elizabeth Mayner’s campus ministry. The experience embedded into Sandy and Sarah a call to campus work.

In the months before his graduation, Sandy learned that Tim and Verna Friesen had accepted a missionary assignment to help Cornerstone Baptist Church, a struggling congregation in Regina. Knowing Regina has several universities, the Friesens invited the Shipleys to come with them to start a campus ministry. The Shipleys had considered becoming missionaries themselves, but the circumstances and timing were not working out. After a survey trip and plenty of prayer, the Shipleys loaded their belongings and moved to Regina with the Friesens in 2012.

Working as tentmakers, Sandy and Sarah jumped into Cornerstone’s ministry. The Friesens appreciated their enthusiasm in helping them start a nursing home ministry. When Sandy met a Chinese Christian student, the Shipleys began holding Bible studies at the University of Regina, calling their ministry Cross Campus Fellowship (CCF). Gradually, more students—all Chinese—began attending CCF’s Bible studies and events. Some North American students now attend, along with a Muslim student who loves the Shipleys’ children. She and several other CCF members have begun attending Cornerstone Baptist Church.

When the Friesens and Shipleys arrived at Cornerstone, only seven church members remained. Today the average Sunday attendance is 45-50. The church members’ passion for ministry has rekindled. They commonly help with CCF events and pick up students for church. The Shipleys’ help, not only in campus work but also in music, preaching, and other ministries, has fast-tracked Cornerstone’s growth beyond what the Friesens could do on their own. Two single missionaries, Carrie Thompson and Liana Wiebe, also assist the Friesens by reaching Canada’s First Nations People, and they help in CCF whenever they can. The Cornerstone team’s synergy has been a win-win for everyone.
Greg and Pam Kruger never expected that their 2003 retirement from teaching and nursing meant an end to serving the Lord. Praying together about their next ministry, the Krugers wondered if God wanted them to stay in their home church (Faith Baptist in Hibbing, Minnesota) or do something else. An opportunity opened to teach the children of Brazil missionaries Jim and Julie Leonard. After four months, though, this ministry ended when Greg and Pam couldn’t get a visa to return to Brazil. Then missionaries Richard and Sheila Meyer came to speak at the Krugers’ home church. The Meyers, who serve with BMM’s Spanish Publications ministry, Editorial Bautista Independiente (EBI), asked prayer for someone to help in the print shop during winters.

Greg and Pam each felt God’s tug on their hearts. So in January 2005, the Krugers spent their first winter in Sebring, Florida, helping at EBI’s home office. Three days a week, Greg assists EBI missionary Darrel Jingst in running the presses, cutting paper, and in other needs. Pam serves one or two days a week assembling printed materials. Two years ago, the Krugers sold their Minnesota home and now live full time in Florida—something they never expected to do. They regularly serve in their Florida church also.

Darrel says that the Krugers’ help is like having another staff person, even though they are volunteers. Greg’s help frees Darrel to work on additional projects, and Pam is a very efficient worker. They both step right in to get the job done. Retirees have great potential to help ministries like EBI. The Krugers consider their service at EBI a blessing. Greg commented, “If a person has any thought that God could use them in some place, we found out personally that He answers those prayer rather quickly!”

In 1999, a bright spot came to Britt and Lee Bell after Britt’s layoff from an aluminum manufacturer. Another job was available—in Ghana. Previously, the Bells never would have considered working overseas, but they thought, “Why not?” In January 2000, they started a two-year stint in Tema, near Ghana’s capital of Accra. Serving in a local Baptist church and meeting Ghana’s friendly population delighted them. They also became friends with missionaries Tim and Nancy Pierce, who ran the BMM missionary guest house, a much-needed oasis for traveling missionaries. In 2001 the Bells returned home. The experience they never thought they’d do turned out to be a tremendous joy.

Jumping ahead to 2009, Ghana missionaries Dan and Karis Mapes spoke in the Bells’ church, Bethel Baptist in Kalispell, Montana. The Mapes told them BMM needed short-termers to run the guest house. Would they consider it? Britt’s reply came in two seconds: “Yes!” Newly retired, the Bells rented their home and car to a Christian couple and returned to a land they’d come to love. Armed with engineering and business skills, the Bells spent hours painting, repairing, and upgrading the guest house. They installed its first internet service and computerized its bookkeeping system. They created a water gauge for the guest house’s water tank. The Bells served for 15 months in what they describe as the highlight of their married lives. “It’s good for everybody to work just for the joy of doing the work of the Lord without being paid for it,” says Lee. Rewards are not always monetary. The Bells still have the deep gratitude of the entire Ghana team who did not have the time or all the skills to do what Britt and Lee did. In a living environment as challenging as Africa’s, such help is invaluable.
How can I help?

If the Lord has spoken to you about serving missionaries, talk with your pastor for his counsel on whether or not this would be a good step for you. If God confirms your service, here are ways to find opportunities:

1 Begin with your local area.
Are there mission churches, campus works, inner-city ministries, or other ways to serve in your home town?

2 Contact your church’s missionaries.
Talk with missionaries your church already works with. See if you have gifts and experience that can benefit them.

3 Explore new locations.
If a job moves you to a new location or to another country, find out if there are missionaries you can help. Retirees have flexibility to move to new areas. Our missionaries reaching out to Mormons in Utah often work with laypeople and value their contributions.

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Through Baptist Mid-Missions’ Memorial Gift Program, you can provide a lasting legacy by donating in memory of a loved one or in honor of any occasion.

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**STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES IS EXPANDING**

We are pleased to announce that **Steve Brennecke** has joined Stewardship Ministries, where he will focus on donor services under the leadership of Rev. Glenn Rohrbach, Administrator of Stewardship Ministries. Steve and his wife, Kim, came to Baptist Mid-Missions in 2000, after practicing law in central Iowa for 14 years. As missionaries, the Brenneckes worked in Asia before accepting Dr. Anderson’s invitation in 2007 to serve as a field administrator. He is excited about his new assignment: “Donors encourage, fund, and pray for the forward progress of the gospel on every field. Behind the scenes, they are the heroes of the missionary endeavor.”

Steve and Kim are blessed with five children: Nicholas and his wife, Kristin; Brennan; Kaye; Natalie; and Gunnar.

**IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER**

The IRA charitable rollover is back and has been extended indefinitely. The law allows individuals 70½ and older, who are required to make annual distributions from their IRAs, to transfer up to $100,000 directly from their individual retirement accounts to Baptist Mid-Missions Foundation, a qualified charity, without being subject to income taxes on the distribution. Distributions must be made directly from the IRA trustee, payable to BMM Foundation. A receipt will be issued to substantiate the IRA rollover contribution. Gifts may be made at any time during the year. For further information, please contact Stewardship Ministries *(stewardship.ministries@bmm.org)*.

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