Missions starts at home

The powerful influence families and churches have in raising up missionaries
WHOSE ARE THEY?

There is no greater impact in the life of one called to missions than the home. I am a third-generation missionary, and throughout my life I have heard others say of me, “Well, what else would he do than be a missionary?” It is true that I am the recipient of a wonderful heritage of missionary grandparents and parents. However, growing up in a missionary home does not make one a missionary.

As I matured through my early teen years, I knew that God was calling me to ministry, and I began to train for that. Yet I refused to consider missions. I knew well the cost of missions, and I was not willing to make that sacrifice. I would serve God but not on the mission field, not in that capacity.

You might say, “Well, the Rosenau home did not have a very strong influence in your life for missions.” On the contrary, it was my parents’ and grandparents’ abandonment to God’s call that eventually broke my heart and allowed me to put my life on the altar for God to do as He pleased. My parents and our home did not stand in the way of God’s call in my life.

I fear that too many parents are petrified by the thought that God might call their children into missions and to a dangerous place and thereby take their grandkids to that unknown place. “Please God, not my children and not my grandkids!” We strive to make God the center of our homes and work so hard at being good servants, yet in that small, quiet place in our hearts, we cannot get our children and grandkids on the altar of Romans 12:1—“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

My dad often would ask this question of missionaries, “Whose is it?” Does your home reflect God’s ownership? If you have a doubt about ownership, your children will know. The home is where missionaries are grown. As this issue of Advance makes clear, the church also has a critical role in training missionaries for the battle. But Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa, make sure you have the ownership question settled in your hearts.

Truly by grace alone,

Vernon L. Rosenau
Features

MISSIONS STARTS AT HOME

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God uses churches and families perhaps more than any other influence.

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What generates a call toward missions? At its core, a call comes from the Holy Spirit’s working inside a person’s heart and life. But as with any spiritual workings, God often uses His own people to accomplish His purposes. It may be a word of encouragement, an interest or passion that becomes contagious, or a challenge given.

Over and over, we see God’s working especially through two institutions of His own design: the church and the family. Each carries a powerful influence to instill enthusiasm for His magnificent honor of taking the life-giving gospel to the world.
A MINDSET OF MISSIONS

Of the 60 missionaries supported by Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina, 38 are members or former members of the church. This large number of sent missionaries has been no accident. Faith Baptist purposefully cultivates an environment that promotes and champions missions.

Faith Baptist Church started as a missions outreach itself. In 1965, a youth pastor and small group of teens from Greenville, South Carolina’s east side became burdened to reach textile workers on the city’s west side. They led a little boy to Christ and started a children’s Bible club, Club 3:16, based on John 3:16. They added a teen ministry, and soon the group included parents and other adults. With a growing number of people coming to faith in Christ, Faith Baptist Church was born.

Jesus’ heart for the world, expressed in John 3:16, still motivates the church to reach their community, the US, and the world. At their yearly missions conference, senior pastor John Monroe challenges the people to think globally, particularly to reach the 10/40 Window, but also locally. A group meets monthly to share tracts in their community. Others are ministering at women’s shelters and in jails. In addition, the church’s ministry Freedom that Lasts has been a powerful platform to proclaim Christ as they help people find release from life-dominating sins.

Such an emphasis on local missions naturally inspires a global perspective. Sunday morning services include a PowerPoint prelude of missionaries featured that week. Administrative Pastor David Stockard explains that this missions emphasis enters the hands-on level in their Sunday School groups. Several groups have adopted missionaries. The groups share prayer updates and sometimes take offerings for them. During the past two missions conferences, contests were held to get church members thinking about missions. Last year it was the reading of missionary biographies, and this year they held a contest of writing e-mails to Faith Baptist’s missionaries.

It’s the big and little things that keep the people of Faith Baptist Church saturated in the Great Commission. One of the big things has been Wednesday night prayer meetings. Each prayer bulletin features a missionary update and prayer requests. Often, the updates are given in person, either through Skype or by missionaries on deputation or furlough. BMM missionaries David and Tiffany Deighton, Aaron and Emily Thompson, and David and Rei Karmokar are a few of the missionaries Faith Baptist has sent.

The church sends out short-term workers on a regular basis too. Their Ambassadors Ministry plans trips two to three times a year. The teams come alongside missionaries to help with VBS, construction, evangelism, medical ministry, and other needs. Church members support these teams with prayer and finances, which has enabled a large percentage of Faith Baptist’s members to go on mission trips, according to Pastor Stockard.

As Faith Baptist Church serves the
God who is not willing that any should perish, they are reflecting God’s missional heart for the world, and they are raising up missionaries ready to fulfill God’s call to reach people at home and around the world.

SMALL CHURCH, BIG IMPACT

On an average Sunday, Fosterburg Baptist Church in Bethalto, Illinois, averages 140–150 in Sunday morning attendance. Although smaller than Faith Baptist Church (up to 1,200 attendance), Fosterburg Baptist proves that churches making an impact on missions come in all sizes.

When Pastor Troy Crain arrived at Fosterburg, he found a church already focused on missions. His job was one of taking a good missions program and making it even stronger. “One of the reasons we are so missions minded is because missions is frequently talked about,” says Pastor Crain. “We understand that we have a responsibility to missions whether overseas or here at home.”

Pastor Crain and the church’s missions committee continually stir missions into the thought life and activities of Fosterburg Baptist. On the first Sunday of each month, a committee member presents a report on the missionary of the month and, whenever possible, shows a video update. If the missionaries are in town, they give an in-person report. Church members take home a bulletin insert to hang on their refrigerators as a prayer reminder.

Pastor Crain has helped sharpen the church’s missionary strategy: “I have always told the missions committee that the church is counting on them to do their job, so that when the missions committee recommends a missionary, the church can rest assured the committee did their job and is presenting a qualified candidate.” Pastor Crain, who is also a BMM Council member, appreciates Baptist Mid-Missions’ careful vetting of its missionaries so that he can be confident recommending our missionaries to the committee. From BMM, the church now supports Andrew and Janae Gonnerman, Heidi Robbins, Jacob and Jamie Sechrest, and Luke and Bethany Snell.

The missions committee has done an excellent job screening candidates, some of whom they invite to Fosterburg’s annual missions conference. During the Sunday–Wednesday conference, church members form deeper bonds with missionaries, resulting in a closer, ongoing connection and richer prayer and support. Because Baptist Mid-Missions’ retirement village, Missionary Acres, is only two hours from Bethalto, the church regularly invites its residents to the conference. The retired missionaries who attend are given the opportunity to share about their years of service, which has endeared them to the church family.

A missions-minded church is an intentional church, as Pastor Crain affirms: “Instead of just doing activities, we now ask ‘What’s the purpose for this?’ We try not to put superfluous activities on our calendar but instead plan activities that create an opportunity to reach people, or strengthen people, or encourage people. Each time I’m reminded of Alfred B. Smith’s song:

> With eternity’s values in view Lord,  
> With eternity’s values in view  
> May I do each day’s work for Jesus  
> With eternity’s values in view.”

Some of Fosterburg’s young people believe God is calling them into missions and into other types of ministry, and they are now pursuing their education. It is God who calls people into missions, but it is churches like Fosterburg and Faith Baptist that have the privilege of contributing to those calls—all because they keep eternity’s values in view.
As a child, Kim loved to sit on her father’s lap, absorbing missionary stories shared by guests in their home. Many of these missionary guests were Bible translators, and some of Kim’s favorite stories told how God’s Word could transform an entire society. Those comfortable gatherings quickly passed, but in Kim they planted seeds that sprang up into a love for missions. And one day, Kim would share missionary stories of her own.

When it came to missions, Kim’s parents, Ken and Anita, actively sowed seeds in their children’s lives, because seeds had been sown in their own lives. Ken grew up as a missionary kid in the jungles of Peru, and Anita was raised in a pastor’s home. Three of their siblings were foreign missionaries. As Ken and Anita raised their children (Kim and her sister, Melia), they cultivated an environment where the Lord was central. They were faithful in church and faithful in family devotions. From young ages, Kim and Melia were encouraged to read the Bible. Dinner discussions often revolved around God’s Word or the spiritual life.

Before they started their family, Ken and Anita served short-term in a supporting role with Wycliffe Bible translators in Peru. During Kim and Melia’s childhood, the family lived in Costa Rica for Ken’s job in agricultural development. There, they also were able to help two missionary families. Those experiences, and Ken and Anita’s continuing interest in international concerns, gave Kim and Melia a worldview focused on the Great Commission. During grad school, Kim wondered if Bible translation would be a good fit for her. She pursued this path and loved it. She was in the first graduating class of Bob Jones University’s master’s in Bible translation degree program. She also received an additional specialist in Bible translation degree.

Today, Kim serves as a Bibles International translation consultant in Asia. Kim’s parents, sister and brother-in-law, and extended family have been a source of spiritual and financial support from the time of Kim’s initial call to missions. Her family traveled to Asia to spend the first Christmas with Kim. They sent many care packages in those early years and encouraged Kim when things got frustrating.

Now retired, Ken and Anita are fulfilling their dream of offering hands-on support for missionaries. They traveled to Asia this January to spend three months with Kim and others. Anita is helping with BI linguistics and literacy projects,
and Ken is helping nationals develop their agricultural programs.

Kim is not sure she would have considered Bible translation were it not for the background her family gave her. Just as with the mustard plant in Mark, chapter 4, small seeds for missions, faithfully tended, truly have great potential to transform entire cultures for God’s glory.

**JOSH AND ERICA BURRILL—MALTA**

In the churches where he’s served, Josh has preached a message that touches his own life deeply. The text is Philippians 2:25-30, where Paul encourages the Philippian church to honor and imitate men like Epaphroditus, who sacrificed much to spread the gospel. Growing up in a pastor’s family, Josh learned to hold missionaries in high esteem. They were heroes such as Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, and William Haas, the Burrill children developed deep respect for the sacrifices these servants made. Josh admired missionaries of the past but also those of his time. The Burrill family frequently hosted missionaries in their home. In addition, Josh’s grandfather, Victor Burrill, was a pastor and a Baptist Mid-Missions Council member. Through his connections, Josh’s family came to know many missionaries from BMM.

Those connections had a profound impact on Josh as he grew older. Some of the missionaries that visited his church took a personal interest in the Burrill children, further stoking ministry interest in Josh. During evangelistic meetings when he was a teen, Josh sensed God was moving him into missions. Because his family held missions as a noble calling, everyone was excited for him and gave him their full backing.

Erica’s family likewise supported her call to missions. For four years, her family had lived in Romania for her father’s job. Although the job wasn’t missions-related, the overseas experience shaped Erica’s worldview, making her open to whatever God wanted, wherever He would lead her. In their city, there was no bibli-cal church available, so Erica’s father taught his children Sunday School in their home with materials sent from their home church. At the time, Romania was just coming out from under the Iron Curtain, and those four years prepared Erica for serving in the Creative Access Nation to which God first called her and Josh.

Josh and Erica now serve on the island of Malta. Their families continue to be their strongest champions. Both sets of parents and two sets of grandparents financially support them. Several siblings have provided support and furlough housing. Josh’s parents are currently spending an extended visit with them in Malta, and other family members have visited in the past.

Josh and Erica’s families miss them, but they are excited with what the Lord wants them to do. By keeping missionaries as role models before them, their families have helped make missions possible for Josh and Erica. That enables Josh and Erica to pass along their enthusiasm for missions and to be role models for missionaries of the future.
From where does a missions burden arise in the soul of a believer? Is it something placed on us from the outside by a convincing preacher, a stirring video, or a well-written missionary biography? Perhaps it is gained by a tightly packed and exhausting, yet wonderfully fulfilling mission trip? These all have their part in making us aware of needs and exposing us to gospel work worldwide. Yet a heart for missions resulting in an individual’s forsaking all to go for the sake of the Name comes from another source, a more powerful source. It starts with the love of Christ demonstrated through the gospel.

While defending his ministry and explaining his motivation to the Corinthian believers, Paul famously states, “The love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor. 5:14). The gospel changed Paul’s thoughts, words, and actions. Christ’s love welled up within him to the point of taking over his life. That is evident as he continues, “And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15).

Captivated and compelled
In other words, anyone who will be moved to join the ranks of God’s gospel workers must first be captivated and compelled by the love of Christ. A person who recognizes that all of life, energy, time, and talent find their source in the love of Christ demonstrated through His redemption work will not live for self but for Christ. The love of money, selfish ambitions, improper passions, earthly appetites, and wasting of time will be laid aside because they reflect a life lived for self.

Have you considered serving in some capacity in missions? Everyone should. Why? Because Christ loved us, and that love compels us to live out our lives for Him.

Short-term options
- Arriba – 11-month internship for college credit
- Serve 3-4 months with a church planter, or 4-6 weeks on a FirstLook trip for college students
- Help missionaries through repair or construction work
- Send your church team to help a missionary hold VBS

Career options
- Plant a church where there isn’t one, nationally or internationally
- Assist a church-planting missionary in a strategic location
- Work in youth ministry alongside a church-planting work
- Teach on the mission field
- Serve in a Creative Access ministry
- Reach the nations through campus ministry

Spiritual Eyes
Take a fresh look at the love of Christ! Our forgiveness and eternal life come from Christ, so it naturally follows that we should spend our days living for Him who loved us so amazingly.

Paul spells out what this life of service to Christ looks like. It means looking at people spiritually (5:16), not merely by what we can get out of them. It involves living as a new creation by the power of the Spirit, not walking in the ways of the old, sinful nature (5:17). It means using our time and energy to be a messenger of peace (5:18-21). Living for Christ means working together with God to plead with people to accept the grace of God before it’s too late (5:20, 6:1-2).
HOST MISSIONARIES IN YOUR HOME. THIS IS POWERFUL. MANY BMM MISSIONARIES AFFIRM THAT THE PERSONAL, INFORMAL INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM AND MISSIONARY GUESTS IN THEIR CHILDHOOD HOMES INFLUENCED THEM TOWARD MISSIONS.

“Make plenty of opportunities for missionaries to talk to young people and children from the time they’re very small. Make sure they know missions is something they can do too. It’s not just for people far, far away or for super Christians. Ordinary Christians can have this as a career choice. Continue this emphasis up through your church’s young adults age group.” —Kim H.

USE SUNDAY SCHOOL TO TEACH A TOPIC THAT WOULD PROMOTE MISSIONS AND EQUIP AND ENCOURAGE MORE TO BE INVOLVED. THEN PLAN A CLASS-WIDE PROJECT OR ACTIVITY TO REINFORCE THE LESSON.

Make your mission program relational. Sending cards is a great thing to do, but really get to know missionaries personally by corresponding with them, taking interest in them through their prayer letters and social media pages, and praying purposefully for them. Have missionaries in your church regularly.

“CHURCHES NEED TO TEACH THEIR MEMBERS THAT ALL OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE REVOLVES AROUND THE GREAT COMMISSION, WHETHER IT IS OVERSEAS OR HERE AT HOME. WE ALL NEED TO BE ABOUT THE GREAT COMMISSION.” —PASTOR TROY CRAIN, FOSTERBURG BAPTIST CHURCH, BETHALTO, ILLINOIS

“The Extraordinary Missionary institute at our church sends cards and letters to their missionary partners on a regular basis. It is a fantastic way to keep them in the forefront of our minds and prayer lives.” —Becky Amick

“Evangelism is woven into our church’s core values. As we emphasize responsibility for neighbors and our own community, people also become burdened for the global community.” —Pastor David Stockard, Faith Baptist Church, Taylors, South Carolina

“IT’S ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR SENDING CHURCHES TO KEEP THEIR MISSIONARIES IN FRONT OF THEIR PEOPLE. OUR HOME CHURCH PRINTS A LITTLE UPDATE ABOUT OUR MINISTRY EVERY WEEK. IT HELPS KEEPS PEOPLE UP-TO-DATE ON WHAT’S HAPPENING WITH US.” —JOSH BURRILL

Churches can include prayer letters, or key excerpts, in their weekly bulletins, and they can regularly pray for missionaries in Sunday School or during church services. Set aside a portion of family devotional times to pray for missionaries.

“MISSIONS EMPHASIS IS NOT PRIMARILY ABOUT CREATING PROGRAMS OR TRIPS BUT ABOUT FULLY GETTING BEHIND THE CONCEPT OF GOSPEL MINISTRY. DO THE LONG-TERM HARD WORK. BECOME CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP, NOT JUST QUICK RESULTS OR AN ADVENTURE. BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL AND ITS LONG-TERM EFFECT IN PEOPLE’S LIVES.” —TRAVIS GRAVLEY

“Churches need to teach their members that all of the Christian life revolves around the Great Commission, whether it is overseas or here at home. We all need to be about the Great Commission.” —Pastor Troy Crain, Fosterburg Baptist Church, Bethalto, Illinois

“Make plenty of opportunities for missionaries to talk to young people and children from the time they’re very small. Make sure they know missions is something they can do too. It’s not just for people far, far away or for super Christians. Ordinary Christians can have this as a career choice. Continue this emphasis up through your church’s young adults age group.” —Kim H.

“Evangelism is woven into our church’s core values. As we emphasize responsibility for neighbors and our own community, people also become burdened for the global community.” —Pastor David Stockard, Faith Baptist Church, Taylors, South Carolina
Great is our GOD
The story of Baptist Mid-Missions
Leaning against the railing of the steamship Aquitania, the six missionaries gazed into the November sky, with the New York harbor receding at their backs. Their thoughts took them far beyond the ocean waves in front of them. They were envisioning what God would do through them, and through their brand-new mission agency.

Less than six weeks earlier, on October 15, 1920, independent Africa missionary William C. Haas stood before a group of pastors and laymen at the First Baptist Church of Elyria, Ohio. These men shared Haas’s passion to reach souls still waiting for the Good News of salvation and to reawaken churches to their Great Commission opportunities. Together, they formed the General Council of Cooperating Baptist Missions of North America, Inc., today known as Baptist Mid-Missions. Under that banner, those six young missionaries—William Haas, Ferd and Ina Rosenau, Rowena Becker, and Arthur and Blanche Young—sank roots for the gospel in what is today Central African Republic.

God’s blessing on this new endeavor was evident from the beginning. As He had done in the Book of Acts, God powerfully established His message in this new territory with miraculous works. When the Rosenaus settled at Sibut, they unknowingly built their station on a hill once used by a powerful witchdoctor chief for cannibal feasts. The chief’s successor became very ill and told Haas that he would believe in this God if He could heal him. God answered the missionaries’ prayers by remarkably restoring the man’s health. The chief and many others from his village became Christians and began meeting daily to praise God and study the Bible.

Missionaries joined BMM throughout the 1920s, and God wrought further healings that opened hearts to the gospel, sometimes with people coming from villages miles away, their souls parched to hear of the Creator God who loved them and died for them. Once, when missionaries Leland and Margaret Camp were caught in a thunderstorm, they found refuge in a grass shelter. As their eyes adjusted to the dim light, they realized 15 to 20 people sat inside. Laying hold of the opportunity, they told them of God, Creation, sin, heaven, and God’s great love that sent His own Son to die for them.

Then, in great distress, a gray-haired woman began crying out and beating herself. She told Margaret, “All my life I’ve believed surely there must be a God who created the trees and grass and flowers. I’ve always cried out in my heart, asking Him to send someone to tell me about Him.” Clasping Margaret’s hand, she said, “Today you have come!”

The 1920s brought joys and hardships to the fledgling mission agency, including the death of William Haas in 1924. But what God had begun, He strengthened to continue on. His light was going into the world, and His life-saving, life-changing work through Baptist Mid-Missions was only just beginning.
FRIENDS WITH FORESIGHT

Baptist Mid-Missions deeply appreciates our friends who partner with us year after year with committed support and special gifts. This Great Commission ministry could not exist without you. We also honor those who look into the future and address potential ministry needs as the Lord directs. The Stewardship Ministries department at BMM Foundation would like to assist you with your planned giving preparations.

While some planned gifts are aimed at current needs, the majority of these gifts provide resources for tomorrow. For example, our enablement funds set in place an assortment of enduring funds that address the ongoing needs of BMM. Our gift annuity program provides resources to BMM when the annuity payments are completed. Another example is our emphasis on bequests, whereby donors make gifts from their estates.

All of these planned giving donors express foresight. These friends understand that the future may hold unusual challenges and opportunities for the gospel, and they want Baptist Mid-Missions to be able to meet these demands.

Steve Brennecke is available to assist you in designing and implementing a planned giving strategy that fits your needs. Please contact Steve through the Stewardship Ministries Department at (440) 826-3930 or stewardship.ministries@bmm.org.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

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. Gifts made to the Memorial Fund are invested and used to provide services to missionaries, churches, and ministry partners.

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Miss Katherine Kistner

Al Casto
Mrs. Sharon Casto

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Eckhart Baptist Church,
Frostburg, MD
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Swehla

Mary Webb Clark
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Young

Frank & Lillian Crumb
Kinsman Crumb Charitable Trust

Mona Dunckel
Dr. Karen Rowe

Alta Jacobson
Mr. Arthur Jacobson

Jake Jacobson
Sterling Baptist Church,
Sterling, AK

Lois Jackson
Grace Baptist Church, Lima, OH

John and Grace Kaminsky
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Leo Judson Sandgren
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Mr. and Mrs. Dave Geringer
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Mr. and Mrs. Robin Madren
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Richer
Mr. and Mrs. Tim Worosher
Just as “missions starts at home,” giving starts in the heart. What are the conditions of the heart that prepare us for the ministry of giving to the Great Commission? Here are a few:

- **OWNERSHIP.** A giving heart recognizes that God is the creator of all things, and that we are stewards of whatever He has put in our care (Psalm 100:3).

- **CONTENTMENT.** A giving heart knows that God will provide for every need, and is satisfied to rest in His provision (Hebrews 13:5).

- **PRIORITY.** A giving heart guards against greed, knowing “a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).

- **JOY.** A giving heart finds deep joy in the act of giving, which causes others to glorify God and thank God for His provision (2 Corinthians 9:10-14).

In short, a giving heart thrives because of a close relationship with God, who gave His only Son so that we might live. Yes, missions starts at home, and giving for missions starts in our hearts as we give to the eternal cause that is closest to God’s heart: the salvation of lost souls.

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