Have you ever wondered why our mission is called Baptist Mid-Missions? What is the meaning and significance of the “Mid”? 

Our original name was “The General Council of Cooperating Baptist Missions of North America, Inc.” Attached to that lengthy title was the subtitle, “Mid-Missions.” It is pretty easy to figure out which one stuck and probably why. Yet the significance of the subtitle “Mid-Missions” is not as well known as it ought to be. As the modern missions movement gained steam in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focus was placed on reaching people along the coasts of continents. Doing so was easier for numerous reasons. But taking the Gospel where it had already been preached was not the burden of our founder, William Haas. Instead, Haas and the pastors and laymen who launched BMM sensed the call of God to take the Gospel to the frontiers—the middle of continents—where the Gospel was not being preached. That is why we were known as “Mid-Missions,” which eventually became Baptist Mid-Missions.

As we embark on our second century as a mission, our frontiers are quite different than those our forefathers reached.

However, they are no less important. The cities of our planet are in desperate need of the Gospel. The average size of the world’s five largest metropolitan areas is 27 million people and growing daily. These cities need the Gospel like the middle of continents did a century ago. The other great frontiers of our second century are the Creative Access Nations of the world. These nations are not easy for missionaries to enter, let alone remain in, yet billions in these nations need Christ!

As you read Advance, I pray that God will burden your heart for these types of fields and those who serve there. Frankly, ministry in both of these contexts is very difficult. But that has always been the case. Whether it was the first century of the early church or the first century of BMM’s existence, places where ministry is very challenging are usually where the Gospel is needed the most. Join me as we pray for those whom God has called to go to such places, and pray for many more to join them.
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Advance is published quarterly, free of charge, to inform and equip those who support Baptist Mid-Missions’ worldwide ministries.

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Second-Century FRONTIE
Remember when you were a kid picturing what life would look like in the distant future? Baptist Mid-Missions’ founders may have done the same thing, wondering what life and ministry would look like 100 years from then. Today, we are living out that future.

One hundred years ago, the new missions frontiers were the middle of continents, where no missionaries had yet reached people with the Gospel—this is how Baptist Mid-Missions got its name. In our second century of ministry, we find missions frontiers shifting to new places.

Today, the majority of unreached people live in the world’s megacities and Creative Access Nations. And a growing trend in any ministry, even apart from the 10/40 Window, is creativity. We saw that last year when missionaries created new ways to minister amid quarantines, travel restrictions, and economic hardships. Even before 2020, our times have challenged missionaries to reach people behind the walls of spiritual indifference or fanaticism, materialism, and the distractions of a digital world.

Explore with us our second-century missions frontiers and read the stories of missionaries boldly stepping up to meet these modern challenges.
Tokyo

A hub for missions

After World War II, General Douglas MacArthur issued a call for America to send 10,000 missionaries to Japan. Seeing this new missions frontier, BMM missionaries began entering the country in 1949. By the 1980s, our Japan missionaries saw a new frontier: the growing city of Tokyo. Today, Tokyo is the world’s largest metropolitan community, with 38 million people living in the greater Tokyo area.

The BMM missionaries entering Tokyo (most of whom were Japanese nationals reaching their home country) recognized that Tokyo is Japan’s hub. Having the world’s largest economy, Tokyo attracts millions from within Japan and from other Asian nations. It holds potential to reach not only the residents themselves, but it also creates a Gospel connection to the residents’ hometowns. And many of those who have immigrated to Tokyo come from countries where missionaries are not permitted. Tokyo’s missions possibilities are limitless.

Our Japanese missionaries have found that the most successful churches are ones who are meeting needs and contributing to their communities. Such ministries provide an essential bridge to the Gospel for countries like Japan. Christianity is a relatively new and foreign ideology among the country’s longstanding traditional beliefs. One of the most effective ways our Tokyo missionaries have reached new, unconnected people is through English ministries. Nearly everyone in Tokyo wants to learn English, especially from fluent or native speakers. Our two newest missionary couples, both from the US, can help expand outreach in this way.

Another successful ministry has been among children. One church holds a weekly Bible club that has had mostly non-Christian neighborhood kids. A different ministry has offered an after school program to help kids with homework. In contrast to many in Tokyo who rely on public transportation, our missionaries own cars. They and the Japanese pastors of established churches use them to take people to doctor’s appointments or other activities. In the process, they build relationships and disciple people.

As Tokyo continues to grow in size, so do our opportunities. Areas for expansion include counseling and ministries to immigrants. With BMM’s long history in Japan, a network of churches exists in Tokyo and other parts of Japan. By equipping church members with greater knowledge and resources for sharing their faith and leading Bible studies, these believers can disseminate the Gospel further into greater Tokyo and create potential for future church-planting areas.
When our pioneering missionaries opened BMM’s Brazil field in 1935, they headed for undeveloped interior regions of the Amazon and Northeast Brazil. BMM’s church-planting efforts centered in these areas for years until a new pioneer effort came along. In 1951, after serving among Jewish people in the US, Manny and Reva Woods felt called to reach the Jewish population of São Paulo, Brazil. As they did, BMM church planters followed them, and today 12 couples serve with BMM in the greater São Paulo area.

In the 1990s a BMM missionary team had a vision to plant a church in the heart of São Paulo city. Concerned donors helped to fund this multimillion-dollar project which became Hope Baptist Church. Because of the high property costs, church planting in downtown São Paulo is difficult. But BMM missionaries have discovered additional frontiers at São Paulo’s city limits.

The western-most church is being planted by Graham and Rene Foran in the city of Cotia. Graham also serves as BMM’s Administrator for Brazil. He explained that areas along the edge of São Paulo attract new population growth because land is affordable. Many young families are flocking to Cotia as a bedroom community for work in downtown São Paulo. Businesses also are moving to these new-growth areas.

In traditionally Catholic Brazil, generations of families lived near each other. People were not always open to new spiritual ideas for fear of family reprisals. In new-growth areas, people are more disconnected from family ties and are willing to talk with born-again Christians or attend an evangelical meeting. The result has been a harvest. So many churches have been planted along the Rodovia Raposo Tavares that they have formed their own church network for fellowship and growth.

Church planting in large cities like São Paulo is not BMM’s only target in Brazil—churches are needed in every area of the country—but cities are a strategy for the future. To reach the most people, missionaries must go where the people are, and that’s a major advantage of greater São Paulo, where 20 million people live.
Bill and Deb Edmondson received the Lord through BMM campus ministries. This background taught them the importance of reaching people not only at critical junctures of life but also in critical locations. As BMM missionaries, they prayed for how to reach people most effectively. God brought Boston into their sights. They moved there in the 1990s to bring the Gospel to international students and scholars studying in this city.

During their years in Boston, God taught them that the academic community is only one part of what makes large cities important places to minister. Cities like Boston have immigrants, tourists, international businesses, and globally connected governments. The Edmondsons found that on any particular day in Boston, they can potentially touch any part of the world.

To leverage this potential, the Edmondsons developed Boston and Beyond, a globalized cities initiative. From the launching pad of International Baptist Church (planted by the Edmondsons and being developed by Toby and Susan Stephens), the Boston and Beyond team of missionaries, interns, and laypeople are initiating evangelistic relationships and Bible studies with people from all parts of the world, some of whom come from countries where missionaries cannot openly serve.

The Boston and Beyond team is challenging their discipled contacts and anyone with a heart for global ministry to offer their lives as living sacrifices by ministering to other globalized cities around the world. This can be done through periodic trips supplemented by online communication, or it can happen through teams relocating as missionaries to these cities.

Relationships built in Boston will continually generate new opportunities to launch additional teams. Boston and Beyond’s plan is to connect each of their discipled contacts with sound churches in their home countries or to start churches capable of ministering the Word of God to their surrounding areas.

Because of current travel restrictions, Boston and Beyond is focusing on existing and new relationships in Boston and on online discipleship with those who have returned to their countries. When restrictions lift, they are poised to accelerate the spread of the Gospel globally through this unique ministry.
We think a more accurate term is “Creative Access Nations.” Jesus’s command to go into all the world with the Gospel did not exclude these places. The heart of God longs for these nations to know His salvation.

From our earliest years, BMM missionaries have broken through man-made barriers to the Gospel. By the 1980s, Creative Access ministries became strategic targets. The late missionary Alexander de Chalandeau risked his life to take Bibles, literature, and humanitarian aid behind the Iron Curtain. This spirit continues in a growing force of missionaries serving in the world’s restricted areas. We cannot share their names or locations, but we can share their stories.

In Creative Access Nations, religious worker’s visas are impossible to obtain. Missionaries passionate to reach these people for Christ must create other means to live among them. That’s what a missionary couple is doing to reach a nation that is 99.9 percent Muslim. The business venture they developed provides a desired service for their city and gives open opportunities to develop relationships. Their business contacts and neighbors know they are Christians, and because the couple works hard at demonstrating love to those around them, people have welcomed them into their lives. Early on, the husband was invited to a funeral, a sign that he is trusted and accepted. After the imam of their local mosque became one of the missionary’s clients, the imam asked the husband for a Bible study together. The couples’ children also share about Jesus with classmates, and the whole family invites people to their home for holidays. One of their visitors comfortably said, “Oh, yes, you’re inviting us over to tell us about Jesus.” Through a home Bible study that has turned into a home church, this couple is sharing the Word of God and seeing people take hold of the hope found in Jesus the Redemptor.

In a country where local religions create hostile barriers, another missionary family conducts a church in their home. Because they cannot purchase property specifically for a church building, they are raising funds to develop a senior daycare facility, a service their community greatly needs. Elders are highly respected in this culture, and the senior center will create openings to reach elderly people with the Gospel, which will open doors to their families. Their facility will also have adequate space for a church to meet.
A hard-working missionary team has labored for years in a country whose populations is 99 percent Muslim and Hindu. Missionaries established a medical ministry that provides physical and spiritual hope among the needy in their community. Patients can browse a Christian bookstore near the hospital and ask questions of the staff. A Christian boarding school introduces children to the God who made them and died to give them new life. In past years, people swore that no church could ever be established in this area, but today a church planted by the missionaries sometimes holds more than 1,000 people eager to hear the messages. The church has planted 16 daughter churches through national missionaries trained by their Bible institute and sent out from the original church.

Ministry in Creative Access Nations requires discretion, wisdom, and discernment. Missionaries must be careful to not place themselves or those they minister to in jeopardy. They must also be patient and committed to the long haul. Missionaries may need to first gain specific business skills to enter some countries.

That was the case for a missionary couple who initiated ministry in the world’s most populous Muslim nation. The Lord burdened them for this country during a short-term visit several years ago. As they heard Muslim prayer calls five times a day, their hearts grieved that these worshipers had no assurance their deity would save them. But they thought, “Is it safe to take our family there?” After much prayer, they desired more and more to offer up the life God had given them. Even though they had no guarantees of safety and ease, they had God’s promises of grace and His gain on earth and in heaven.

These are the choices missionaries in Creative Access Nations sometimes make. Is it worth it? Considering the high price Christ paid for us and the realities of eternity, we have to admit that even the most difficult task is worth the sacrifice to see just one person saved. Think of Isaiah. When he saw who God really is (Is. 6:1-8), it caused him to look inward and then to look outward at the world; it made him want to be sent.

The Bible tells us that in heaven, every tribe, tongue, people, and nation will be represented. How else will that glorious outcome happen other than through missionaries willing to reach into the hard places? Will you pray God sends workers into these fields? And who will knit their hearts with the heart of God, who longs for these nations to know His salvation?

Our second-century frontiers await a new generation of bold ambassadors for Christ!
Consider this example. In 1727, a German nobleman named Nikolaus von Zinzendorf set in motion what became known as the 100-Year Prayer Meeting. Zinzendorf challenged the community of Protestant refugees living on his estate to form bands for Scripture reading, discipleship, and prayer. This effort healed the community’s former spirit of dissension. With renewed passion for the Lord, 48 men and women pledged to pray daily. A 24-hour-a-day prayer chain ensued, and others continually joined them.

It continued around the world for more than 100 years.

Truly, the impact of those prayers have shaped Christianity to this day. One of the most profound transformations was on missions. In 1732, two of Zinzendorf’s community members surrendered to take the Gospel to the West Indies’ slave population—with a willingness to become slaves themselves to reach them. In a flood of surrender, more community members answered the call to worldwide missions, sparking the world’s first major Protestant missionary movement.

Sixty years later, William Carey left for India, citing inspiration from these missionaries. The 100-Year Prayer Meeting also played a key role in the salvation of John Wesley. And it is likely that these centuries-long prayers laid the groundwork for the Great Awakenings of England and America in which hundreds of thousands of people were saved and Christianity was reinvigorated in these lands.

If we could see the invisible, supernatural power unleashed by persevering prayer, we would be astounded at our intercession’s impact.
During Baptist Mid-Missions’ 100th anniversary celebration in 2020, BMM President Patrick Odle issued a missions challenge for our own time:

“What part does God want you to play in taking the Gospel to the world? BMM would not be what BMM is today without partners, people who believed in the things I have spoken of—for 100 years.”

He laid out Advance the Vision—a 20-year goal offering five ways churches and individuals can partner with Baptist Mid-Missions to advance the Gospel worldwide. We are asking God to provide:

- **20,200 Prayer Partners.**
  Pray daily for the Lord to send missionaries from our churches through Baptist Mid-Missions into His harvest.

- **2,020 Donors Giving $20/Month.**
  Become a corps of new donors giving to the Global Impact Fund to support the cause of Christ around the globe.

- **202 Donors Giving $200/Month.**
  Store up treasure in the best investment of all—one that shapes lives for eternity.

- **20 New Missionaries/Year.**
  Join the ranks of a mission agency founded on unchanging biblical principles and take the Good News to the billions of souls for whom Christ died.

- **20 New Fields and Ministries.**
  Expand with us in the next century by bringing your passion and creativity to reach new places with the Gospel.

**Catch the vision!**

We can make a difference in our own time just as the people of the 100-Year Prayer Meeting did! Become part of God’s work through Baptist Mid-Missions.

- Sign up to be a daily prayer partner at info@bmm.org or call 440-826-3930.
- To set up monthly giving online, visit www.bmm.org/Give.
- We’d be glad to speak with you about missionary service. Contact us today!
No one could have anticipated that the child born to missionaries Eugene and Ernestine Rosenau on August 5, 1949, would not only follow in their footsteps as a missionary to the Central African Republic, but he would also lead BMM at its highest level. His missionary grandparents, Ferd and Ina Rosenau, as well as his parents surely would have been proud of him. Yet Dr. Rosenau attributed everything in his life to God’s grace, shown in the closing remark of all his letters: “Truly by grace alone.”

As high school ended for Vernon (as he preferred to be called), he chose a career in accounting, reasoning that his contribution to missions would be financial support. But God wanted him to pour out grace in a different way. Vernon surrendered to God’s leading and began studying for youth ministry at Bob Jones University. There he met and fell in love with Janet Shutt. In 1970, Vernon was drafted into the Army, and he and Jan married on February 12, 1971. Together, they spent what Jan called an “extended honeymoon” in Germany, where he was stationed. Throughout his life, Vernon often said of his accomplishments that “none of it would have been possible without Jan.”

After an extended battle with cancer, President Emeritus Vernon Rosenau completed his life’s journey on December 25, 2020, beginning a new life in heaven. Dr. Rosenau served as Baptist Mid-Missions’ eighth president from 2016 to 2020.
It was in Germany that the Lord worked further in Vernon's heart, whispering “Africa” deeper into his soul. After his tour of duty, Vernon graduated from LeTourneau College, and he and Jan joined BMM in 1975 to serve as the third generation of Rosenaus in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Vernon always thought his role in the CAR would be one of helping with physical needs. But his father challenged him to teach at the Sibut Bible Institute founded by Vernon’s grandfather, Ferd. It did not come easily to Vernon, but he drew upon God’s grace. From that experience, Vernon developed a lifelong burden for training nationals. He saw the need to develop his own Timothy who would take over the work after him. God sent him René Malipou, who became the first African in BMM history to earn a doctorate and who later co-founded the first graduate-level seminary among BMM-affiliated churches in Africa. Vernon learned an important missions lesson: Find a Timothy, pour yourself into him, and let him climb up on your shoulders and reach higher than you ever could in ministry.

Vernon carried this lesson to the US when he was chosen as BMM’s Field Administrator for Africa and Europe in 1999. He was passionate about challenging missionaries to train their own Timothys so that the work of missions would continue in national hands. And he endlessly reminded missionaries to take care of themselves to avoid burnout and attrition. Dr. Gary Anderson, then BMM’s president, saw Vernon’s big-picture perspective and invited him to coordinate BMM’s Strategic Planning Initiative in 2004. Vernon passed along his lifetime of practical missions experience as he shaped BMM’s future.

In 2015, when BMM’s Elected Council sought a new president to replace retiring President Anderson, Vernon’s qualifications were just what they sought in this transitional time. Vernon was already 66 years old and had dealt with recurring cancer for the previous 13 years. The lure of resting from a lifetime of work was strong, but his life’s pattern was one of selfless service. The Lord had poured grace into him all his life, enabling him to do what he never thought possible. Vernon answered the call and brought new strength to BMM until his retirement on June 30, 2020.

We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Dr. Vernon Rosenau. With the wisdom of a seasoned leader, he strengthened the church not only in the CAR but also around the world. He demonstrated that sacrificial service is worth the cost and leaves behind “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

His life lived by grace alone was a life that honored Jesus Christ, and it will remain as a model for generations to come.

Vernon is survived by his family, who were the most precious thing in his life: his wife, Jan; their children Julie, Sam (Landi), and Bill (Erica Kuczma); and eight grandchildren.
How Can I Impact Eternity?

Henry and Marilyn Littleton* came to know the Lord early in life.

*not their real names

They were married in the 1950s. Henry worked as a fabricator in the automotive industry. He’s the kind of guy who can fix or build about anything they might need. Years ago, when they wanted a wood-burning furnace to supplement their home’s radiator system, Henry simply installed one himself. They are heating their home with it again this winter. In the spring and summer, you will find them enjoying the day in their large garden or splitting wood for next winter.

If you pull up a chair and sit in the shade to chat, the conversation will soon turn to the Lord, to His goodness, and to the precious assurances of Scripture. In autumn they harvest and preserve their garden produce, setting aside food for the future. Their joyful lives reflect deliberate choices to live in a simple, God-pleasing way.

Henry and Marilyn first encountered Baptist Mid-Missions through the ministry of their church, which partnered with several missionaries. Over the years they grew closer to Baptist Mid-Missions and became significant contributors to BMM’s Global Impact Fund, knowing

Truly, they are as consumed for the cause of Christ as our missionaries are.

Please contact Stewardship Ministries at BMM for ways to make an impact for Christ.
(stewardship.ministries@bmm.org or 440-826-3930).
How Can I Impact Eternity, cont.

that each gift would help “lift the hands” of every BMM missionary. They also have given via charitable gift annuities, which provide lifetime income for them and a gift to the ministry beyond their lifetimes. Yet they routinely send their gift annuity checks back to Baptist Mid-Missions as new gifts for the ongoing work of the Great Commission.

With the help of people like Henry and Marilyn, Baptist Mid-Missions’ Global Ministry Center continues to provide vital services and encouragement to the entire missionary family. Whether large or small, gifts like theirs make an impact for eternity.

Will you join our team and impact eternity for the cause of Christ?

More ways to give!

Discover a variety of tax-advantaged ways to support Baptist Mid-Missions’ ministries at https://giftplanning.bmm.org.

Memorial Gifts

Through BMM Foundation’s Memorial Fund, you can give a lasting legacy by donating in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion. Memorial Fund gifts are invested and used to provide services to missionaries, churches, and ministry partners.

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Lynne Funtik
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