Missionary/national teams are creating effective training and discipleship methods that fit their cultural contexts and resources.
President’s View

DR. VERNON L. ROSENKAU

A DREAM FULFILLED

“Missionary/national teams are creating effective training and discipleship methods that fit their cultural contexts and resources.”

As I read the initial draft copy of this Advance, several ideas jumped off the page at me, those of “missionary/national teams,” “discipleship methods,” and “cultural contexts and resources.” For Baptist Mid-Missions, these elements are and have been our method of fulfilling the Great Commission as given by Christ to His disciples and to us today.

I thought back to the vision of my grandfather, which he wrote down almost as a prayer as he was sailing from America to Africa with the first group of BMM missionaries in 1920. His desire was that God might use him in very specific ways to reach the heart of what is today Central African Republic with the gospel. First, he desired to learn and articulate the gospel in the vernacular language so as to win some to a saving knowledge of the Savior. Secondly, he dreamed of forming a training center where Africans could be trained to lead the church into the coming years. Thirdly, he dreamed of having the Bible in the Africans’ language. He realized this would be necessary for the advancement of the church and the training of leaders. That was his vision in 1920.

Ninety-seven years later, in 2017, I was privileged to stand in the Central African Republic and participate in the cornerstone-laying ceremony for a graduate school of theology (see photo on p. 5). After being invited to pray, I prayed and thanked the Lord for the vision of those, like Grandpa, who went before. And I thanked God for the fulfillment of that vision in a ceremony that was celebrating the founding of a seminary campus that was led and driven by the spiritual descendants of those for whom Grandpa prayed almost 100 years earlier: Africans training and discipling Africans to lead the church—and to lead the church into the next 100 years by God’s grace.

This is what BMM is about: Missionary/national teams creating effective training and discipleship methods that fit their cultural contexts and resources.

Truly by grace alone,

Vernon

“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).
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Imparting the Word

It started with humble beginnings. Our earliest missionaries in Africa gathered their students under shade trees and imparted theology to these future leaders. Because the students couldn’t yet read, classes were taught orally.

We’ve come a long way! While the message has never changed, Baptist Mid-Missions missionaries and those they discipled have adapted its transmission in myriad ways to fit changing cultures and resources. This issue highlights ministries ranging from formal theological education to one-on-one discipleship during everyday life. Through big and small ways, BMM missionary/national teams are imparting God’s Word to build and strengthen His Church.
On April 22, 2017, Central African Republic (CAR) president Faustin-Archange Touadéra laid the cornerstone for the new campus of FIBAT—Faculté Internationale Baptiste de Théologie (International Baptist Seminary). Missionaries John and Paula Dannenberg reflected deeply at this poignant moment. Theological education within BMM began in this very country with the arrival of our original six missionaries in 1920. Our first orally taught classes in CAR contrasted profoundly with FIBAT, a school offering graduate-level degrees.

FIBAT developed through BMM strategic planning with CAR churches in 2008. National church leaders desired an advanced-level institution to prepare people to teach and to lead ministries in francophone Africa. Dr. John Dannenberg and a CAR pastor, Dr. René Malipou, helped organize the school, which began classes in 2011 on BMM’s property in the capital of Bangui. Apart from John’s role, FIBAT is African led. An exceptional feature is the school’s resilience. Although FIBAT purchased land for its new campus in 2012, military conflict put development plans on hold until 2017. Thankfully, the political situation in Bangui has remained stable, but instructors monitor students’ safety. A 2016 graduate, Olfete, planned to teach at the Bria Bible institute, which was looted and burned shortly after he became its director. Today he continues to pastor and teach despite opposition. Other grads serve as pastors, church planters, teachers, and Bible institute directors.

Operating an institution like FIBAT is no small task in CAR, considered to be the world’s poorest country.¹ New campus construction remains at a standstill until the seminary can raise funds for additional buildings and for the campus’s water and electricity provision.

In the meantime, FIBAT holds classes on BMM’s Bangui property and has graduated nearly 20 students since 2016. FIBAT leaders pray and work toward a special goal: to move onto their new campus by late 2020, exactly 100 years after BMM’s first missionaries entered Central African Republic.

Most missions efforts in India happen in the southern part of the country, where Christianity finds greater acceptance. In northern India, Hinduism is more concentrated and fervent, making this region a challenging mission field. And that’s the very reason missionaries Henry and Molly John believe it’s important to reach this region.

Born in north India, Henry and Molly work tirelessly to spread the gospel among this area’s 550 million people. In fact, their vision is to plant 300 churches by 2030.

Henry determined that to multiply impact, he needed to train church planters. In 2012, he founded North India Baptist Seminary (NIBS), the only Baptist seminary in this half of India. It is also the country’s first bilingual seminary, with classes taught in English and Hindi.

NIBS has always been a team effort. Henry and the NIBS board oversee its operations. Because students come from throughout India, classes are taught in three modules per year to make the most of students’ travel time. The module format also enables visiting professors and pastors to provide faculty for the school. Many visiting professors teach the same classes at their US Bible colleges, so NIBS offers studies similar to any US seminary. Classes range from systematic theology and exegesis to books of the Bible, pastoral ministry, Baptist history, and missions. NIBS offers bachelor of theology, master of arts, and master of divinity degrees.

With graduates armed with such a comprehensive education, NIBS fulfills its motto of “Sharpening Skills and Shaping Servants.” Across north India, NIBS graduates are planting eight churches, and these missionary pastors enjoy good interaction with their communities. The NIBS name and reputation are starting to spread, and the Johns continue to seek God’s hand in multiplying His message throughout north India.

Learn more about NIBS at www.nibsindia.com
Sending qualified workers in Peru

In 1972, after 35 years of BMM work in Peru, churches had multiplied, and God was calling many Peruvians to work His vineyard. Peruvian pastors and BMM’s Lima missionaries joined forces to create the Seminario Bautista del Perú (SBP—Baptist Seminary of Peru), now located in Trujillo. Since the school’s founding, 552 graduates have fanned out across Peru and into at least five other countries to serve as pastors, missionaries, Bible college personnel, church musicians, deacons, radio ministry workers, and faithful church members. In 2019, 55 students are taking classes to earn one-year certificates or bachelor’s degrees in theology.

To make training accessible, day and evening classes are held on SBP’s campus. Evening classes allow students to earn a certificate, whereas day classes teach students who are pursuing degrees. Faculty are a mix of missionary church planters and Peruvian nationals.

Professors also take to the road to offer modules in other cities and in the jungle. Dozens of workers have been trained this way.

In southern Peru’s mountains, the Seminario Evangélico Bautista Independiente de Cusco (SEBIC—Independent Baptist Evangelical Bible College of Cuzco) has been training Christian workers since 1994. Twenty-five students are currently working toward BA degrees in biblical or pastoral theology or in Christian education. The 2019 school year saw SEBIC experiment with moving from the module to semester format. Most SEBIC professors are either BMM missionaries or SEBIC grads. Visiting US Bible college professors round out the faculty. The seminary trains workers to reach Peru’s diverse ethnicities, and many students’ native language is not Spanish but Quechua, Aymará, or Yine. God is using graduates extensively. BMM missionaries Aaron and Stephanie Cochrell and Bob and Becky Bass are team church planting with three SEBIC grads. Most of Bibles International’s Quechua Bible translation team are also grads.

One of the seminary’s biggest impacts has been in the Huilca-Quispe family. Roberto, the father, was the first to be trained. He later taught at SEBIC and left a powerful ministry legacy. All seven of his children are active in ministry, and six have studied at SEBIC. Today they are using their education as church planters and in their local churches.

Learn more at seminariobautistadelperu.com sebic.blogspot.com
Adaptive Education

While formal theological education lays the bedrock for strong, healthy church leadership, church members themselves grow in health when they access deeper Christian training. On fields throughout the BMM world, missionaries use ingenuity to surmount obstacles of time, resources, and accessibility to offer in-depth discipleship that shapes and polishes every life it touches.

TAIWAN—USING AVAILABLE RESOURCES
In urban, developed nations like Taiwan, Matt and Marla Hanna found a creative solution to meet needs of busy students who find it hard to take Bible courses in traditional classroom settings: social media. Matt, in partnership with missionaries from sister agencies, leads the Chinese Baptist Bible College in Kaohsiung, a church-based institution with in-class and home extension students. Rather than using complicated, time-consuming software to manage online education, Matt created a chat group within a social media app popular in Taiwan, enabling students and teachers to communicate in real-time. Using this highly informal organizational structure makes the education easily adaptable and scalable to the students’ and school’s changing needs.
Most of the Hannas’ church members are first-generation Christians with Chinese pagan-religion backgrounds. Because these Christians have little to no Bible background, the college quenches their desire for increased Bible knowledge. Students are using their training for personal and family growth, church ministries, and better equipping for evangelism.

GERMANY—GOING WHERE THE STUDENTS ARE
In southern Germany, BMM missionaries began offering practical theology and doctrine classes in the 1990s. The training filled a need for education grounded on the fundamentals of the faith, and it trained some of the current German pastors of BMM church plants. In 2010, this training was organized into the Theologisches Training Zentrum (TTZ—Theological Training Center) by missionaries Dr. Burdette Bergen and Dr. Jeff Brown in partnership with German pastor Oliver Meyer. These men, along with missionary Mark Boyd and a partnering missionary, take TTZ’s evening classes to four locations, making the training accessible to where church members live and work.

In the spring semester, class participation grew to 24 students. Nearly 150 people have taken at least one TTZ course. Many are serving in their local churches as youth workers or are leading the worship service or preaching. Two students have moved to Nuremberg specifically to prepare for ministry through TTZ—a first for the school. Although TTZ leaders desire to see more pastoral students, they value TTZ’s proven contribution in not only teaching church members the basics of the Bible and doctrine but also in bolstering their spiritual growth.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC—ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH SATELLITE LOCATIONS
With 50 students, classroom space maxed out this year at Seminario Bautista Internacional (SBI—International Baptist Seminary). The growth has been satisfying to Dominican leaders who pastor churches that trace their origins to BMM missionaries of the past. In 2006, to strengthen their congregations against unbiblical doctrine spreading across Latin America, these national leaders launched SBI at a church in La Romana. Right away, they saw potential for growth.

Church leaders invited BMM missionaries to partner with them in a new venture of school expansion. In 2016, Jérémie and Amy Roy arrived, followed by James and Lauren Peavy the next year. The Peavys and Roys began live streaming classes to five satellite locations in 2017. Classes can now be taught at any of the host churches, which triples SBI’s faculty. The school offers undergraduate degrees in pastoral theology and Christian ministries plus a Bible certificate. Because of the growth, SBI is seeking new teachers and is researching further expansion through adding new satellite locations, offering fully online classes, or developing a residential SBI campus—with any of the options growing toward the granting of master’s degrees.
We see teens more active in searching Scriptures as they progress. Many have gone from not owning any Bibles to having their own Bibles to looking up passages for themselves. That’s progress.” —Luke Warner

Molded by the Potter

The early years of working among Romania’s Roma (Gypsy) population were enough to make Luke and Kim Warner question whether or not God wanted them to stay. Church members routinely gave way to common cultural sins and expected regular financial help. In 2015, God planted peace in the Warners’ hearts and pointed them in a new direction: raise up a younger generation of Christians not yet caught up in sin and dependency.

The Warners, working alongside BMM team members Dave and Ruth Kimmel and Nikki Carr, have built a solid youth group of 25 teens. Scripture learning and memorization lie at the core of their strategy. For half of the youth, this meant teaching them to read. Bible-based literacy ministry has proven to be a strong discipleship method. Last year, the group studied a catechism to ground them in doctrine.

The Romania team look for culturally applicable methods to build discipling relationships. One successful project is Potter’s Club, based on the premise that God wants to mold our abilities to honor and glorify Him. Each Tuesday, small groups learn everything from art and baking to woodworking and archery. Because music is integral to Roma culture, the team formed a choir that holds concerts in their own church and in neighboring churches so the teens can interact with mature Christians. The concerts also create a forum to invite parents, most of whom are highly supportive of these efforts.

Many one-on-one conversations have woven the gospel into teens’ lives, and three teens have accepted Christ as Savior. Others now understand the Bible is truth they need to receive, but they hold off making a decision for Christ, feeling they would be rejecting their community’s traditional religion. So the team presses on to let God’s Spirit work among hearts. By emphasizing His Word, the team is laying groundwork for a successful future church taught to follow God’s Word.
A central pursuit

Discipleship has always been a central pursuit for Campus Bible Fellowship International (CBFI), BMM’s secular campus ministry. In addition to their discipleship staples of hospitality and one-on-one Bible studies, CBFI missionaries tailor methods to their giftedness and campus culture. In Syracuse, New York, Paul Jewell asks athletes to run with him—a fitting venue for encouraging students in their Christian races. Dave and Elizabeth Mayner invite wrestlers and baseball players from Binghamton University and SUNY–Broome to their events. At the University of Colorado, Tom and Nancy Miller attend concerts, play basketball in the rec center, and eat with students to rub shoulders with them.

A concert pianist, Indiana CBFI missionary Steve Giegerich teaches piano to build rapport with Chinese students that he and his wife, Charlene, meet during their fall furniture giveaways. Mary Amesbury at Cleveland State and Jeff and Kim Abernethy at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte use meals to build discipleship moments. At Utah Valley University, Mike and Sharon Keller engage in a conversational English club and offer LDS students lessons on how to study the Bible. At Florida International University, Ken and Marty Taylor host an information table, a staple of CBFI ministry. Many more, including Gary and Betty Holtz in the Dayton, Ohio, area, use conversational English classes to build relationships.

One tool in everyone’s arsenal is Disciples in Deed, a manual created by the late CBFI missionary Carl Abbott. This discipleship course has been a proven discipleship tool, effectively building a strong foundation for Christian living in the multitudes of students who have completed the series.

Our campus ministry has a surprising discipleship twist. Because CBFI missionaries work in tandem with local churches, church members receive unique opportunities to grow in Christ as they help with flier distribution, meal preparation, event hosting, and more. CBFI’s discipleship focus strengthens local churches and produces spiritually grounded students who, after graduation, benefit their new home churches around the world.
Great is our GOD

The story of Baptist Mid-Missions

Photos, clockwise from left: World Relief was founded in 1971 to help missionaries address crises like that in Chad • Australia missionaries Evan Gough, Roland Smith, Doug Couch, and Carl Barton with national pastors • Jean Warring • three of the martyred Chadian pastors (on left) • Martha Jongewaard with Dr. C. Raymond Buck • Harold Dungy (third from left) with men from his Bible studies.
By 1970, Baptist Mid-Missions was a seasoned agency celebrating a joyful milestone: our 50th anniversary. At the celebration, our last surviving original missionary, Ina Rosenau (grandmother of Dr. Vernon Rosenau), became first to be honored with a 50-year service pin. By that year, Mrs. Rosenau had two sons and a granddaughter serving with BMM—the first of many multigenerational families within BMM.

Ina and her contemporaries earned us the nickname “Mid-Missions” by reaching the interior of nations where people had never before heard the gospel. As BMM began its second half century, new missionaries pressed forward with the same pioneering spirit—reaching frontiers of an entirely new kind.

One territory was specialized people groups. Don and Maribeth Peterson found a mission field among military personnel in Tacoma, Washington. In Jackson, Michigan, Harold and Arletha Dungy (uncle and aunt of football coach Tony Dungy) united their existing prison ministry with BMM. By reaching people at critical junctures in life, these ministries saw much fruit. After meeting several deaf people at a bus stop in 1972, Austria missionary Martha Jongewaard began a Bible study that led to 20 contacts, with 10 finding Christ. A legally blind woman, Jean Warring, joined BMM in 1975 to reach other visually impaired people.

In the late 1960s, Baptist Mid-Missions noted trends in Australia: many people were emigrating to this nation, but most churches had slipped into liberal theology or dead orthodoxy. Many missionaries began work in Australia in the early 70s: Carl and Selma Barton, Doug and Sally Couch, Evan and Wanda Gough, and Roland and Luella Smith. One evening, Carl Barton became so burdened for a man named Carl James that he spent all night praying for him. Two weeks later, Carl and Mary James were saved and almost immediately began witnessing to their family. Eventually, 111 relatives received Christ! Carl James later pastored the Bartons’ church plant.

The missionaries worked together to create Victoria Baptist Bible College, which continues to train Australian Christian leaders. In 1973, our first Australia missionaries, Bill and Glenna Grant, began church planting in New Zealand, further expanding ministry in the region.

Turmoil that marked the 1960s bled into the 1970s in equally tragic ways. The president of Chad, Africa, N’garta Tombalbaye, had been taught as a young schoolboy by BMM missionaries Paul and Etienne Metzler in Sahr, Chad. Tombalbaye claimed to be a Christian, but his actions spoke otherwise. In 1973 he instituted a so-called Cultural Revolution that viciously targeted genuine Christians. Tombalbaye demanded churches be united under his government’s authority and that Chadians undergo idolatrous tribal initiation rites.

The government expelled all missionaries. Chadian churches refusing to comply with Tombalbaye’s demands were closed. Many faithful Chadian Christians were subjected to humiliation, loss of possessions, and severe tortures; some were buried alive with only their heads above the ground. Thirteen Chadian pastors, many of whom were trained by BMM missionaries, took a brave stand opposing the edicts—and were martyred for their faith in Christ. The Word planted in these believers’ hearts had so taken root that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ as those did in the Hebrews 11 Hall of Faith.
REFLECTING JOY

Wills and estate plans have fallen out of favor. Procrastination and a general distaste for pondering the end of life result in a majority of US adults with no plan in place for their passing. When asked in a recent survey why they had no estate documents, 47 percent responded, “I just haven’t gotten around to it.”* But the opportunity to draft a will that expresses the joy of your life in Christ and makes provisions for gospel ministry is inviting, and approaching the task as an act of ministry can be invigorating.

First, do you have a will, and is it current? By drafting your will, you will “finish well” as His steward. Seize the opportunity to set down your personal, lasting testimony of God’s work in your life. Then, with thoughtfully designed provisions, distribute those things the Lord has placed in your care for His glory.

Second, to what degree does your will reflect biblical values? A balanced will can be structured to address real needs, such as paying any debts that are due, and then make provisions for both ministry and family. In striking the right balance, it is good to recall:

• **Jehovah Jireh**: The Lord is our provider, and He is also the provider for our children, a liberating truth. “You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” Ps. 145:16. “And my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” Phil. 4:19.

• **The Church Age and the Great Commission**: The local church and Great Commission ministries remain in the heart of God’s plan for this age. Directing resources to known biblical priorities brings the inner peace of a job well done.

Did you know? Only 4 in 10 American adults have prepared a will.”

**Drudgery or Opportunity?**

*Our outlook matters! Drafting your will can be a celebration of God’s work in your life!

- **CARING FOR OUR OWN**: Gifts to family are affirmed in Scripture: “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children” Prov. 13:22. Properly balanced provisions for family can be a true blessing.

Our last will and testament should reflect the joy of our life in Jesus Christ; it should declare both a testimony of our spiritual life in Him and our will for those things the Lord has placed in our care. If we believe that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, then we will be in His presence in heaven when our last will and testament is being read on earth. In that moment, we will want our will to express our Savior’s priorities.


For more information, call Stewardship Ministries at 440-826-3930.
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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. Gifts made to the Memorial Fund are invested and are used to provide services to missionaries, churches, and ministry partners.

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