Images of 2020
God's redemptive power in a year of challenge
The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly changed our lives and ministries, but it has not forced us to stop fulfilling the Great Commission. God’s plan to make disciples of all nations was not put on pause, even though many of our plans and ways of doing ministry might have changed.

Continuing to fulfill the Great Commission during a global pandemic is due in large part to the creativity of our missionaries. Members of the BMM Family have found ways to make disciples, spread the Gospel, and teach the Word of God, despite obstacles and challenges.

Francis Schaeffer once wrote, “Creativity has value because God is the Creator.” Creativity is a reflection of the image of God in mankind.

In the case of COVID-19 creativity, it is also a reflection of our commitment to carrying out God’s call in our lives. This issue of Advance highlights the variety of ways BMM missionaries have continued to fulfill their calling creatively. It thrills my heart to see God’s servants creatively reaching souls despite the pandemic. I trust that your heart will be just as excited as you enjoy seeing what the Lord is doing around the world.

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Cover: A student from BMM’s seminary in Urubamba, Peru, delivers “Blessing Packs” to people affected by Peru’s long-standing quarantines. See page 14.
Images of 202
God’s redemptive power in a year of challenge
No doubt about it:

2020 was one of the most challenging ministry years on record.

But they still served.

When faced with lockdowns, fear, and economic distress, our missionaries and their national coworkers stepped up to the task. They met people where they were at. They tailored their ministries to address people’s needs. And they saw those people’s hearts grow open to spiritual truths.

And it made a difference.

It’s profound that in our 100th year, we saw our missionaries reach deep for greater creativity and stronger efforts. Nothing would stop them from doing their job. In this year of darkness, they caused Christ’s light to shine.

See for yourself.

As we close out our 100th anniversary, we think it fitting to show that the missionaries of 2020 still have the same passion and forward-thinking drive as those who launched BMM in 1920. We filled this issue of Advance magazine with photos that will bring a smile and a sense of gratitude. Your support has always made a difference—and especially so this year.

Take a look and see God’s work.
(1) It was a busy year for Stephen and Edna Muindi as they made progress on Eldoret Baptist Church’s new building and started a new church plant, Northview Baptist Church (5,6).

(4) As with most BMM missionaries, they distributed relief aid this year. But they also continued their focus on evangelizing, edifying, establishing, and educating believers through leadership mentoring, marriage counseling (3), youth activities, and men’s and women’s fellowships.

(2) In January, the Muindis enjoyed an encouraging visit from their BMM field administrator, Steve Gault.
When their local high school contacted Herb and Janet Hunter about providing food for 12th-grade students (some of whose parents had lost their jobs because of shutdowns), the Hunters and their ministry teammates met spiritual needs at the same time. They printed Gospel cards and cooked and boxed 85 meals in three weeks. One of Herb’s teammates set up an online chat so students could reach out to Herb for help dealing with depression and stress due to the lockdowns. Partnering with the local Rotary Club, the Hunters also delivered a large number of meals to others in their community. This ministry led to many conversations about Christ.
In a Creative Access Nation where it was once said a church would never be established, 922 people attended a 2019 Christmas service. In February 2020, our missionaries dedicated a church building addition enabling them to seat 1,000 people. They also celebrated their 1,099th baptism. The missionaries dedicated the 15th daughter church started by the church’s own missionaries, and started constructing the 16th daughter church on a property donated by a family that is poor but loves the Lord with all their heart. The Bible school graduated its 12th student, and it currently has 12 more students studying to help further ministry expansion.
Cambodia

(1) Michael and Julie Carlyle gathered at the river in Pursat for the baptism of Chrup (center front) after an 8-week Creation to Christ evangelistic series. Chrup is illiterate but listens to hymns and sermons on her battery-powered speaker.

(2) In place of Buddhist holidays, the church holds annual Bible Conferences. This gives people an alternative obligation to not be pressured by family to participate in the worship of dead ancestors. Instead, they study the Living Word and praise the Living Creator together. Such times include a fellowship feast.

Japan

(4) Joyce Oshiro played the piano while Pastor Nishino (saved as a teenager through his Okinawa church’s ministry) preached to a congregation that worshiped online, starting on Easter Sunday. (3) Two visitors came during an online service! The pastor quickly called a church member who knew them, and she rushed over to welcome them.
(1) In February, Daniel and Heather Boyd’s church family in Bergen op Zoom repaired the home of a widow in their church. (2) In April, after lockdowns, the Boyds delivered flowers to every church family. After each online church service, people clamored for fellowship with one another: “It was loud and sometimes chaotic, but it was so nice to see everyone’s face.”

(3) In June and July, the church rescheduled their April baptism, splitting it into two events to comply with mandated group sizes.

(4) By August, restrictions had eased, and they held their City Kids Program. Many attendees came from Muslim families and were very attentive. For the Boyds, it was a special blessing to watch their son Cole teach the memory verse and clearly communicate the Gospel.
(1) In Neumarkt, Mark and Leslie Boyd used billboards addressing virus fears as a way to direct people to their church and the hope offered by the Gospel. The billboards read, “Do not fear, God desires to be with you. But how?” and included the church website. (2) They also delivered masks and tracts to neighbors, which has resulted in greater ongoing contact with them.

(3) Luke Snell’s midweek Bible studies in Oberpfraundorf saw three times the attendance as their in-person studies. (4) Bethany Snell held socially distanced ladies’ studies when they were able to meet again.
After much prayer and struggle, Tim and Barb Whatley, Joy Akkermann, and Peruvian coworkers Rolando and Gladis finally purchased property for their church in the jungle town of Kiteni.

Then quarantines hit, but along with them came new ministry opportunities. From his rooftop each night, Tim led neighbors in singing Peru’s national anthem and saluting the police and military. On Sundays, Tim and Rolando preached from the rooftop through a loudspeaker. Their nearest neighbors, Ander and Betsabé, listened through a crack in the wall. Each decided to follow Christ. Other listeners received the Lord also.

The Lord provided the Whatleys with a mini recorder so they could broadcast Gospel programs on the local radio station, even after rising COVID-19 cases prevented their access to the radio studio. With help from US donors, the Kiteni team distributed food to 16 Peruvian churches and works, with more planned. The Whatleys wrote, “Neither the gates of hell nor the restrictions of COVID-19 can stand against the power of God’s Word! Onward and upward!”
(5) In February, Stan Templeton spoke at a pastors’ family retreat packed wall to wall with 200 people. After quarantines, Stan shifted his teaching ministry online, teaching youth, seminary students, and church association members. (6) Stan and his wife, Ruth, along with their Peruvian teammates, continued expanding their radio network, Red Radio Integridad. The team opened a new station in Chachapoyas. Throughout quarantines, Red Radio Integridad stations have reached thousands of housebound people who might never otherwise have heard the Good News.

The school year was just as improvised in Peru as in the US. (7) Fetzer Academy MK school in Lima shifted to online classes, but Academy administrator Allan Frey made sure this year’s graduate was honored with a ceremony at her home (live-streamed for other Fetzer families).

(8) Heidi Robbins and Diane Frey held Fetzer Academy’s AWANA chapel and game time online. Diane wrote, “I didn’t know games could be so much fun on Zoom!”
Peru

Peru has felt enormous economic struggles from their long-lasting quarantines. (1) Using over $16,000 in special offerings, Rachel Tarvin worked alongside students, staff, and their families at the Urubamba seminary to package up food (2), tracts, and Scripture portions. (3) They canvassed their town and passed out over 26,000 “blessing packs” on 17 occasions (see also magazine cover). (4) They also distributed 1,400 Quechua New Testaments. Many read the Scriptures for the first time in their heart language.

(8) Isaiah and Rosanna Peterson continued working with Bible translation projects, and Isaiah taught an online Greek course for the Urubamba seminary students. (6) Their daughter, Tirzah, received the Lord this year and shared her birthday cake with neighbors so her family could develop relationships to bring Christ to them.

(5) In February in Alto Qosco, Aaron and Stephenie Cochrell and the Petersons handed out refreshments and Gospel tracts to hundreds gathered for their community’s anniversary celebration. (7, 9) As their community felt quarantine pressures, the Cochrells and Petersons distributed food and basic supplies. Over 100 people have since made salvation decisions, and more than 30 continue in Bible studies.
Honduras

(1) Ruth Coleman’s Sunday School children help care for the littlest in the church. A week and a half after the photo was taken, life changed in Honduras. (2-3) On the days that Ruth was allowed outside her home, she took food, supplies, and Gospel literature to the kids reached through the church. One child called out, “Hey, there’s real toilet paper! We are rich!!” Such an item is a luxury for most in Ruth’s poor neighborhood.

(4) In October, Ruth’s church resumed full services. During quarantines, a woman found the church’s services online and called out during a prayer meeting that she wanted to be saved. The pastor joyfully led her to Christ.

St. Vincent

Last fall, John Wilburn (center) began teaching at the Baptist Bible College of the Caribbean. He has been so proud of his students, who have a clear passion for the Lord and for starting new churches. One student, Grafton Jack (second from left), wants to help John in his ministry in Barrouallie.
As new appointees with *Editorial Bautista Independiente* (Spanish publications), Marco and Lydia Garibaldi visited EBI Director Bruce Burkholder at EBI’s headquarters in Sebring, Florida. The visit had the added bonus of photo opportunities for the Garibaldis’ deputation presentation.

Since 2010, Janet Stinedurf has been retired from the ministry she and her late husband, Jim, had in Puerto Rico. But Janet continues to minister to Hispanic people near her home in Michigan. Twice after visiting nursing home residents, Janet sensed she should knock on just one more door. On those occasions, she led both ladies to Christ.*

When she shops, Janet gives out gospel booklets. Once, a young woman said she was an atheist or agnostic but confessed that she hadn’t been taught. She said, “I need to start reading the Bible.”

* Janet’s photos are reenacted
Brazil

(1) In Tatuí, Mike and Dawn Jewell had the joy of seeing a new believer, Dona Elzira (center) grow in faith. Divorced and newly retired, she slipped into depression. But she found Christ after she was invited to church by neighbors. (2) The Jewells took their church’s teens to visit a Guarani Indian tribe, where they shared Bible stories with the children.

(3) In Quatro Bocas, Luciene accepted Christ on her deathbed. She told her family that her new pastor, missionary Evandro da Silva, was to conduct the funeral instead of the priest. (4) Erica da Silva checked on church members during the pandemic. Church people provided food baskets for unsaved families. (5) The da Silvas hosted a couples’ dinner, a significant breakthrough. Few couples were married when the da Silvas started their church. (6) Erica’s mother, retired missionary Gayle McLain, taught a women’s class at the local seminary.

(7) Before transitioning to ministry in Canada this year, (see p. 24), Terry and Jane Carruthers served many years in Brazil. The church they started in Milho in 1988 continued strong in 2020.

(8) Like most missionaries this year, Jim Leonard in Crato, northeast Brazil, preached online for his church family.

Dominican Republic

Heidi Van Dyke and her church in Hato Mayor began planning their video VBS in early June. Church members volunteered to teach and demonstrate crafts. Despite technical problems and interruptions from Tropical Storm Isaías, the group met their filming deadlines for the YouTube video series. The first session broadcast in mid-August had upwards of 800 views, but most sessions averaged 150. A local TV station also aired the videos. Heidi said she hadn’t done that many all-nighters even in college, but it was worth it for all the positive feedback received.
Our Bibles International missionaries not only work with translation and literature, but they also serve in local churches where they minister to the very people who benefit from their work. (1) Our team in Asia planned a relaxing game night for Sunday School student teachers. (2) Our national missionary/pastor encouraged his people to memorize Scripture during the lockdowns. This young girl memorized Romans 6 in one week! (3) Before borders slammed closed due to the pandemic, our consultant-in-training was able to complete the Zotung translation workshop, checking a significant portion of Genesis that nationals had translated. (4) The presence of multiple languages represented at a midweek home prayer meeting didn’t hinder the encouragement that God’s Word has for his people. Seeing God’s Word used in such practical ways is a joy and satisfaction for our Bibles International missionaries.
In the 1930s, the Mnema became the second Bible translation initiated by BMM missionaries. This current project is an update for that original text.

(5) The children in Asia love “Oreo,” the cat puppet that was this missionary’s toy as a child.

(6) In February, the Matu translation team celebrated the final workshop for the Matu New Testament. The final text read-through has been delayed by the pandemic, but after completion it will be sent for formatting and printing. (7) Our missionary worked with a national scholar on the Mnema* Bible translation.

* A pseudonym for this project.

(8) At BI’s office in Grand Rapids, Michigan, translation consultants met online with a Haitian pastor to check his work on Isaiah for the Haitian Creole Bible. Joining them was an intern gaining valuable experience in translation.
The beginning of Bibles International’s year looked like any other. (1) BI missionaries met with the Akha people in Asia to refine their translation process. (3) Several BI team members had the joy of participating in the 100th anniversary celebration of the Gospel coming to the Diangello* people (*A pseudonym). At least 2,500 filled the tent, with many more outside. (2) Earlier, a BI missionary observed the Dendi translation team record the Scriptures for oral learners in Benin, West Africa, (4) and translators checked the Day translation before the airport closed because of COVID-19. (6) The Bibles International office closed for several months, but through modern software and the internet, translation consultants continued working with their national teams worldwide, including those in Africa. (5) Thanks to eased restrictions, Bibles International’s annual Consultants’ Seminar was held in August. Because the BI office was not large enough for social distancing, a church offered their building for the week. It was a wonderful reunion for the BI staff and consultants, some of whom live overseas.
Alaska

After years of serving in Brazil, Terry and Jane Carruthers moved back to their home country of Canada for a church revitalization project. They were installed at Ambassador Baptist Church in Morden, Manitoba, in July. They’re shown here (center) with founding pastor and wife, Lyle and Helen Neufeld (left), and BMM representatives Tim and Verna Friesen.

Canada

Mike and Jeanette Clark in Iliamna had to get creative to provide VBS with local COVID-19 restrictions. Their theme was “Time Lab: Discovering Jesus from Eternity Past to Eternity Future.” For three weeks they and their church recorded Bible lessons, puppet skits, and songs. After that, they spent four days of packing “time capsules” with a DVD, activities, snack, and a surprise each day. They delivered the boxes to 27 kids in Iliamna/Newhalen (the largest number of participants ever) and through their aviation ministry flew boxes to 17 kids in the bush villages of Levelock and Kokhanok. Several parents watched the videos with their kids. One parent enjoyed the lessons herself, and the Clarks are now having a weekly discipleship Bible study with her.
Ohio

(1) As an outreach of her children’s ministry at Faith Baptist Church & Community Center in inner-city Cleveland, Jackie Hopkins continued her popular “Faith Building” event in June. Jackie and her team sorted hundreds of plastic building blocks. (3) The teens from First Baptist Church of Elyria, Ohio, led the kids in song time and games. Jackie taught the children how to build their lives on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. (4) Parents were invited to see what their children built and to hear the Gospel.

Because of a rise in COVID-19 cases and because the church’s air conditioning wasn’t working, the church staff canceled Jackie’s August VBS. (2) In its place, Jackie took to the road with a VBS on God’s Creation. Bringing a decorated wagon, crafts, snacks, and mats for the kids, Jackie taught two groups of kids in front of their homes. A total of 40 kids attended and learned about the power of God and the magnificence of His Creation.
The spring semester forced CBFI Bible studies and meetings to go online. But at the beginning of the 2019–2020 school year, John and Rebecca Park at the University of Iowa cultivated relationships with American and international students through their (1) annual Thanksgiving dinner and (2) Christmas cookie outreach. (3) Their children enjoyed a game of Twister with these Venezuelan students.

(4,5) Cleveland State University restrictions prevented groups from meeting on-campus, but the Lord opened an opportunity for Mary Amesbury to create The Lighthouse—a rented storefront across the street from CSU—a place for students to study, relax, and engage in spiritual conversations.
Like everyone else, our Boston and Beyond Team met online. The meetings built unity as team members and prospective interns in Boston and elsewhere shared updates, requests, and answers to prayer during quarantines. Boston and Beyond leaders Bill and Deb Edmondson wrote, “We all have been encouraged each time we were joined by others who were willing to obey God in bringing the Gospel to the city, knowing that we are sharing similar challenges.”
Guam

Stateside college students could not come to Guam to work in camp ministries this summer. Instead, Rhonda Green (top, fourth from right) worked with five Micronesian Bible college students. They went to the neighborhoods where their church’s bus kids live and shared the Gospel by holding hiking trips and three Bible clubs.
(1-2) In April, Jody and Terry Colson taught their church kids how to make masks from bandanas and elastic hair bands, (3) and they decorated their church for Easter Micronesian-style. (4) The Colsons’ Christian radio station, which broadcasts 24 hours a day, became vital after the state-run station shut down and couldn’t be repaired due to current travel restrictions.

Rob and Jackie Ernst have been unable to hold in-person services since mid-March. Rob has conducted Sunday church services online and found his audience increase and include people from around the world. Jackie has done the same for Children’s Church with help from their daughter Stefanie manning the dog puppet, Sprocket. The kids love this addition and look forward to seeing Sprocket each week.
Stewardship
Impact

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel!

In this 100th year of Baptist Mid-Missions’ ministry, may we live deliberately for the glory of God and give willingly to His work!

Today for Eternity

Jesus often spoke of eternity and lifted our focus from our present day to future scenes in heaven. There, eternity will unfold before us in the presence of our Father, of angels, and of the multitude of the redeemed who will praise and worship the Worthy One. That reality should impact how deliberately we live, and how willingly we give.

GIVING TOOLS
for an unusual year: 2020

No Cap
Usually deductions of qualified contributions have a cap. For 2020, the cap has been removed! Individuals may deduct qualified contributions of up to 100% of their adjusted gross income. In fact, contributions over that amount can be carried over to the next tax year. To qualify, the contribution must be a cash contribution made to a qualifying organization during the calendar year 2020. (Non-cash contributions are subject to normal limits). This tax benefit is available only to IRS Form 1040 filers who itemize on Schedule A.

New Deduction
For those not itemizing, the CARES Act provides a new deduction for up to $300 per taxpayer ($600 for married couples) in annual charitable contributions. This is beneficial for most taxpayers, who will take the standard deduction when filing. The new deduction will reduce taxable income.

QCDs
In addition, donors age 70-1/2 and older can still make a qualified charitable distributions from their IRA, even though the Required Minimum Distribution is suspended for 2020. Donors who do so will reduce their taxable IRA balance.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel!

In this 100th year of Baptist Mid-Missions’ ministry, may we live deliberately for the glory of God and give willingly to His work!
Check Out Our Gift Planning Website

Many ways are available to make a gift of cash. Discover a variety of tax-advantaged ways to support Baptist Mid-Missions’ ministries at https://giftplanning.bmm.org.

Enduring Grace Society membership is extended to those who have included BMM Foundation in their estate or gift plan, who give even as they step into eternity.

Join the many who are leaving a lasting legacy through Enduring Grace Society:
E-mail stewardship.ministries@bmm.org or call 440-826-3930.

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.

In Memory Of

Charles & Mary Burks
Mrs. Marilyn Merrill

Carol Corbett
Ms. Geraldine Covell
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Faber
Goodview Baptist Church,
Goodview, VA
Ms. Sunnie Griswold
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Hughes
Miss Gerri Moose
Mr. and Mrs. John Prince
Mrs. Vera Pursel
The Ryan Agencies

Richard Merrill
Mrs. Marilyn Merrill

Martha Dunn Russell
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Brand

Valerie Grace Shepherd
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Ellen Wickes
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John and Gloria Whitelaw
Eugene Williams
Edward G. Zindle and Barbara Zindle
Celebrating 100 years of ministry in 2020!