A look back at God’s work around the world in 2019 and the start of our 100th anniversary celebration!
In this copy of Advance you will see what we refer to as “the year in review.” What has God done through the ministries of Baptist Mid-Missions around the globe in 2019? What a wonderful opportunity to review His goodness and His watchcare over our Mission Family this year. And 2019 has been a wonderful year!

As I rejoice in the victories when I read of the advance of the gospel, I often find myself praying that the Lord would protect the Mission Family. You see, it is my experience that when the gospel advances, the devil does not remain silent. My missionary father often reminded me when I was a young missionary that the devil never sleeps. So I pray for the Family at these times of advancement. I pray that God would protect them physically and spiritually in the battle in which He has chosen for us to contend.

I often pray for their children, some even individually. I remember as a child in Africa that when missionaries would start speaking rather vociferously about other missionaries, my missionary grandfather, Ferd Rosenau, would speak up in a very commanding voice and say, “The children are in the room!” and everyone would go silent. He always thought of the welfare of the children, and perhaps that is what reminds me to pray for the children. You see, they are not exempt in this battle. It is the whole Family that is under attack. I trust that as you read of these wonderful victories in the ministries of BMM around the globe that you will pray for our Mission Family. Pray that God will protect us from “all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

You will notice on the last page of this Advance a section entitled “Missionary Milestones.” This is a list of those whom we honored at our 2019 Family Conference for their years of service. Those represented stand for 1755 total years of missionary service. God’s protection is very real. He has given our coworkers 1755 years of protection, for which we are so very grateful. We are ever so honored to serve with these our coworkers for the gospel.

Thank you for your prayers on behalf of our Family.

Truly by grace alone,

Vernon
Features 2019 IN REVIEW

4 > Our 100th Anniversary
Celebration kickoff

6 > Africa
CAR, Ghana, Chad

7 > Asia & the Pacific
Bangladesh, Japan

8 > Europe
Italy, Germany

9 > Latin America
Brazil, Honduras

10 > North America
Alaska, Boston, Cleveland

11 > Launching Out
Celebrating missionaries starting their first terms, new church plants, and church graduations

12 > Great Is Our God
God’s work through BMM in the 1990s

Columns

2 > President’s View

14 > Stewardship Impact
Celebrating 100 years of ministry in 2020!

One Gospel
One Goal
One God
We’re looking ahead to the most momentous time in the history of Baptist Mid-Missions: Our 100th anniversary.

The images roll through our minds: generations of workers who went before us, building upon the Great Commission vision of our founder. They blazed paths for the gospel, taking it first to the heart of Africa and then fanning it into Asia, South America, and eventually the whole world.

On October 15, 2019, we kicked off our yearlong anniversary celebration—giving praise for an entire century’s worth of gospel advances. We’ve chosen Psalm 96: 2-4 as the verses backing our theme: One Gospel. One Goal. One God.

In this issue of Advance, we highlight the first of these concepts: We’re committed to the spread of the gospel. As this issue shows, our missionaries are building upon a long history of reaching into unreached territory, developing relevant ideas, expanding ministries, engaging in synergetic partnerships, and seeing the results of consistent faithfulness.

As the coming year unfolds, watch our website and future issues of Advance as we illuminate our theme and provide more 100th anniversary coverage.
Pastor’s Conference

The suffering endured by the people of Central African Republic (CAR) during years of civil unrest has been unimaginable. Pastors in the CEBÍ church association (BMM-affiliated churches) have been emotionally and spiritually drained through personal loss and through ministering to hurting people. When CEBÍ held a pastor’s conference April 22–26, the pastors were so hungry for this refreshment that 233 attended, some of whom spent five days in treacherous travel to get there.

One of the speakers, Steve Gault (BMM Field Administrator for Africa and Europe), spoke on soul care. He used an example from his MK years in CAR, when someone would shout, “Así Asá!” to indicate his family’s water tank was full and overflowing. He led the pastors in this chant to remind them that they must fill their own spiritual tanks so they could serve out of the overflow.

Late into every night, Steve heard pastors laughing, talking, and sharing stories. The conference was rare, exquisite joy for these pastors who have suffered so greatly for Christ.

Play with Purpose

When Ryan and Joy Owen added a coaches’ clinic to their Play with Purpose evangelistic basketball camp, held August 26–30 in Ghana, they expected 10-15 local school coaches. Instead, 37 came from across Ghana. Bob Jones University coaches Mike LeViere and Burton Uwarow taught classroom skills and practical techniques while weaving in the gospel. At the Ghanaian coaches’ request, Ryan has distributed hundreds of Bibles for their teams.

After the morning coaches’ sessions, Coaches LeViere and Uwarow, along with several BJU players, led University of Ghana students in afternoon sessions. Students were eager to learn and were very attentive to the gospel given by the BJU students and by the Owens’ coworker Rob Whitty.

More students have begun attending the Owens’ Wednesday night meetings, and Ryan has had multiple opportunities to counsel students around campus.

Refugee Ministry

When Les and Carol Carew moved to Chad, Africa, to help war refugees from Central African Republic, they had no idea of the amazing things God would do. For the last two summers, they have held two-day children’s outreaches in refugee camps. To their shock, over 700 children came to the first outreach! Many made decisions to follow Jesus or to recommit their lives.

Several women and children from a Muslim Fulani tribe attended. They had gone many days without food, and most of their men had been killed. The Carews’ meals fed them the only meat some would eat for months. One of the few Fulani men told Les and Carol, “Never have any of my children been shown so much love by anyone, let alone strangers!”
Church planting in Bangladesh

Despite being one of BMM’s most difficult ministry fields, Bangladesh is one of our most fruitful. After reaching its long-time goal of having a Bangladeshi pastor, Natore Baptist Church has been exceeding its 300-person capacity. The church is adding a second floor to increase total seating to 1,000. Natore Baptist has planted more than 20 daughter churches since it was founded in 1993. Two of these were started in 2019, and two Bible school students are investigating church planting in their hometowns.

The Bangladeshi pastor became principal of the Bible school, which is now offering four years of MDiv coursework. Pastors and missionaries from the US and Japan continue to teach block classes.

The hospital ministry, now in its 34th year, added a missionary nurse. After retiring from nursing in Japan, she dedicated her life to missions and received Bible training. She will provide much-needed assistance for the hospital’s enormous patient load. The hospital’s sole missionary doctor sees 400 patients per day and performs 70+ surgeries per week. Our Bangladesh team continues to seek the Lord for additional missionary doctors, nurses, and teachers.

Inroads into Japanese lives

Thirty years ago, David and Melody Yoshida faced a dilemma: how to make contacts in Chiba New Town, Japan, a new Tokyo bedroom community. Then a local elementary school PTA leader invited the Yoshidas to teach English to her children. The classes took off and have continued to this day.

Melody has contacts in all of their city’s elementary schools and teaches in one of them using Bible stories and books like The Chronicles of Narnia to teach biblical concepts. The classes have built trust between the Yoshidas and their community. People stop to say hello, saying, “You’re the ones who teach the English classes!” David and Melody began English classes for the children’s parents, but once they understood how the Bible is helpful to their daily life, many adults have asked that they teach just the Bible.

The classes allowed the Yoshidas to invite students to church, and children and adults alike have become Christ-followers. This year, the Yoshidas put up a larger church sign with gifts from their supporting churches. The sign has drawn attention, and some people come to church because of it or drive into their parking lot out of curiosity. The Yoshidas are thankful for the many inroads God has given into the hearts of the Japanese people.
ITALY BROADCASTING CHANGES

On July 1, our BMM Italy team ended Radio Luce, the FM station that team leader Fred Whitman started in 1980. The station, along with Fred’s weekly TV broadcast, had been critical to the growth of Centro Evangelico Battista, the church that he and his wife, Rachel, started in Perugia in the mid-1970s. The team made the difficult decision to close the station due to loss of support, overextension of their missionary team (which now includes the Whitmans’ son and daughter and their families) and the lessening effectiveness of FM radio in Italy.

However, the silver lining has been the funds that are now freed to pour into future church planting and into Fred’s TV broadcast, La Bibbia Oggi (The Bible Today). This year, the broadcast marked its 40th anniversary, and Fred estimates that the twice-daily program has been shown 30,000 times. At the invitation of a local TV station, Fred produced a series on the Ten Commandments, which broadcast in February.

About half of the Whitmans’ congregation was first contacted through these ministries. Between Radio Luce and La Bibbia Oggi, tens of thousands of people in central Italy have heard the gospel for the first time. The Whitmans wrote, “Only eternity will reveal how many people in these years have been saved in those remote hill villages where there will never be a gospel testimony. Pray with us for the many unbelievers who faithfully listened for years in the secrecy of their homes, that the Holy Spirit will now push them to get in contact with us.”

TRUTH-BUILDING IN GERMANY

When one of Crystal Buegel’s supporting churches asked for a VBS project, Crystal hopped on an idea she’d seen in another church: children’s events using plastic toy bricks. With the $500 the church raised, Crystal loaded up on bricks wherever she could find them. As the idea took root, others began sending her money or blocks every month and pledging to pray for her events.

Crystal held her first three-day brick-building event in March in Wiesbaden, Germany, at an English-speaking church for American service members. Since then, she’s held four other events at sister churches in Germany and in the Ingelheim church plant where she serves with team members Ted and Becky Fletchall.

Crystal developed two programs in which children learn about Nehemiah or the Wordless Book. She’s seen sharp attentiveness in the children during the programs. They sing, hear Bible stories and engage in games or crafts between construction times. On the final day, the children name their brick cities and elect a mayor who cuts the ribbon on the city, revealing their creations to their families.

Word about the clubs is still spreading, and Crystal has received more than a dozen invitations from churches in Germany and in other countries.
REACHING “THE LEAST OF THESE”

“Trusting in Jesus’s promise of protection and power, we have been going into ‘hot zones’ near notorious gang neighborhoods,” wrote Honduras missionaries Sam and Maria Conover. Earlier this year, the Conovers and their coworker, Ruth Coleman, delivered hundreds of gospel CDs, literature, and bilingual New Testaments in public schools.

After receiving the literature, at least one teacher began reading the New Testament to her class and praying each morning. The school principal gave the Conovers and Ruth permission for weekly readings and New Testament discussion. Multiple principals have invited Sam to speak to the teachers and parents on how to work with children. In each meeting, Sam has shared the gospel and given a biblical philosophy of childrearing.

In the neighborhood around one of the schools, the team distributed invitations to Sunday evening Bible studies that began in November. The school principal

offered to promote it with a written notice at the entrance to the property. The team is praying God will bless this initiative and that a church will be established.

ENGLISH OUTREACH

The university setting is perhaps the most challenging place for the gospel in Brazil. When Jim and Julie Leonard searched for a significant ministry for a mission team coming from Hagerman Baptist Church in Waterloo, Iowa, they developed English Encounter. The project was a partnership with the Federal University in Cajazeiras and the Leonards’ coworkers Daniel and Sarah Ruley, who are starting a church in Cajazeiras.

In July, the Hagerman team put on a two-day English program for 124 university students, professors, and former students. The university granted a certificate for those attending. The Hagerman team sang, taught lessons, told stories, and served American snacks. All team members told about “My Life in America,” and clearly shared their faith in Jesus Christ and its impact on their lives. Students were very receptive, and Daniel is following up with the university’s language director and students. The contacts have given the Ruleys new opportunities to reach a difficult-to-reach segment of their city.
**HANGAR PROJECT UNDERWAY**

“It sure would be nice to have a hangar right now.” It’s a thought that crossed Mike Clark’s mind many times in his 13 years as an Alaska missionary aviator. In 2015, he and his wife, Jeannette, stepped out by faith to build an airplane hangar enabling them to consistently reach southwest Alaska’s villages that have no other gospel witness. This summer, their faith became sight. After raising most of the needed $240,000, the Clarks oversaw the hangar’s construction on a lot leased from the Iliamna state airport. The Clarks wrote, “Whenever we hit roadblocks, we remind ourselves that God is the project superintendent and He will accomplish His will.” The Lord surmounted enormous hurdles with building permits and equipment/supply logistics to erect the hangar just under the wire of their lease contract deadlines. God also sent countless prayer partners, donors, and work teams to make the hangar a reality. The Clarks are praying for the final $60,000 to complete the hangar’s electric, heating, and septic system.

**BOSTON AND BEYOND**

Baptist Mid-Missions’ newest ministry encompasses the world. From the global hub of Boston, Bill and Deb Edmondson are seeing internationals saved, discipled, and returning to their home countries to raise up more disciples. Boston and Beyond was approved as a new ministry model this year as the Edmondsons seek to build a team to increase outreach both in Boston and in their disciples’ homelands. Learn more at www.bmm.org/ministries/boston-and-beyond.

**BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE**

The Baptist Mid-Missions Family shares a wonderful interconnectedness that not only generates encouraging fellowship but also helpful ministry ideas. When Jackie Hopkins learned about Crystal Buegel’s use of plastic toy bricks for children’s events in Germany (see p. 8), she knew it would be a good fit for her ministry at Faith Baptist Community Church and Center in inner-city Cleveland.

The project became a team effort: Crystal provided hours of practical advice through online messaging, many people donated their brick sets, and several friends spent months helping Jackie sort thousands of bricks. In June, Jackie used the bricks for FBCC&C’s VBS with the theme Building for the Future, using the Wordless Book.

The event was a great success, with excellent one-on-one time with the kids, who asked many thoughtful questions. On the final day, their families came to see their creations, and they heard the gospel themselves. Jackie plans to repeat this outreach next summer.
Launching Out

MISSIONARIES LAUNCHED

Missionaries who raised their full support and departed for their first term of service in the last 12 months:

November 2018 — Joe and Bonnie Valentin (Bibles International)
January — Creative Access Nations missionaries
June — Ron and Joy Hemsworth (Missionary Acres)
July — Aaron and Emily Thompson (Japan)

CHURCHES LAUNCHED

PRESIDENTE PRUDENTE, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL
Igreja Batista Calvário (Calvary Baptist Church)
Missionaries: Chris and Darcy Vergiels, Warren and Lara Vergiels

CHURCHES GRADUATED

BIG LAKE, ALASKA
Independent Baptist Church
Missionaries: Doug and Linda Ferrett
Pastor and wife: The Ferretts will continue in the pastorate, no longer in missionary status.

BLEDSOE, KENTUCKY
Bledsoe Baptist Church (merged with Grace Baptist Church)
Missionaries: Barry and Judy Byrne, Susie Kallal
Pastor and wife: Larry and Cindy Toner

BRONX, NEW YORK
Commonwealth Community Baptist Church
Missionaries: Joel and Brooke Grassi
Pastor and wife: The Grassis had served short-term with BMM and will continue in this pastorate.
Great is our GOD

The story of Baptist Mid-Missions

Photos, from top left: James and Joyce Garlow; Project Utah door-to-door witnessing; Hong Kong pastor Luke Cheng; Destroyed BMM Bangui property; John Gouge preaches with a translator in Slovakia on Easter Sunday 1995; Background: Medals for Glory volunteers
“For He has broken the gates of bronze, and cut the bars of iron in two” (Ps. 107:16). In the 1990s, the formidable Iron Curtain was split in two, leaving an opening for God’s truth to again flow into former Soviet nations. Cold-War-era operations to bring Bibles and material aid rapidly moved from covert to public.

The drought of God’s Word left people thirsty. In August 1990, Germany missionary Ruth Buerer taught an English camp in Hungary, where Bible studies started at nine p.m. and often went until midnight. Almost nightly, someone accepted Christ. Europe missionaries such as Rich Visser, John Haskell, and Tom Ruhkala made periodic trips into Eastern Europe to strengthen believers. Others served full-time, taking up new opportunities in Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Poland. As far away as Newfoundland, Canada, church planter Edgar Mitchell had a thriving ministry among Russian fishing crews docked in his city. On two occasions, Mitchell led more than 20 to Christ.

James and Joyce Garlow set their sights farther east in another kind of pioneering work. After having to leave a 45-year ministry in India due to governmental restrictions, the Garlows coordinated Asian National Ministries to strengthen national believers with Christian literature and training. The Garlows also founded GLEAM, a ministry that has shipped tons of literature into Asia.

It was a decade where new ground was being broken, and opportunities came from all corners. Seeing Utah’s booming population growth, our Mormon Focus Ministry Team (MFMT) seized the opportunity with Project Utah outreach. Gathering volunteers of all ages, the MFMT canvassed thousands of Utah neighborhoods. The evangelistic literature they introduced to LDS homes brought many salvation decisions and extensive contacts.

When the Summer Olympics came to Atlanta in 1996, BMM’s North America missionary team jumped into action through the Medals for Glory outreach. Evangelistic booklets were printed in 12 languages, and volunteer teams were trained to share Christ among the Games’ two million spectators. Volunteers witnessed to people from 165 nations at Olympic venues and visitor attractions and on public transportation. Organizers recorded 597 decisions to receive Christ, and follow-up was carried out through our international contacts. Salvation decisions were not the only fruit. Volunteers grew bolder to share their faith and returned home with a re-energized missionary mindset.

As a decade of global changes, the 1990s brought new missions challenges. In 1997, Great Britain restored Hong Kong’s sovereignty to China. To prepare, our missionaries fully nationalized all church plants. Although the future of religious freedom was uncertain, the national pastors went into the transition determined to do all they could to continue spreading the gospel.

In 1990, BMM’s mission property in Bangui, the capital of Central African Republic, was looted and destroyed during political unrest. Several missionaries were assaulted. The Bangui missionaries relocated to other stations while they waited for stability to return. In Liberia, a civil war that began in 1989 continued for seven brutal years. All missionaries had to leave the country. Many moved across the border into Côte d’Ivoire to minister to Liberian refugees taking shelter there. Others moved to Staten Island, New York, where they continue ministering to displaced Liberians.

Next issue: 2000s
Terrorism’s impact, missionary/national partnerships, and strategic missions initiatives
Missionary service is not a solo enterprise. Instead, many churches and individuals play important roles on a missionary’s team. Those roles are varied and range from performing practical support tasks to sharing in financial needs as the work progresses.

Roy and Dorothy Kishpaugh were married near the end of World War II. As a P-51 pilot and Distinguished Flying Cross recipient, Roy completed 74 missions over Germany. When he returned from the war, they made their home near Weston, Michigan, and engaged in the ministries of their local church. Roy’s joy was teaching the Word in Sunday school. They soon became acquainted with BMM, and that relationship has continued for over 70 years.

Around 1950, BMM Missionaries Bill and Glenna Grant were preparing for their work in St. Lucia, and they needed help managing their prayer letters. Roy and Dorothy volunteered, and their work placed them in a vital role of receiving, printing and transmitting the missionaries’ communication to their churches and friends.

The Kishpaughs considered it a wonderful privilege to serve in this way, but it was just the beginning. In the years that followed, they took responsibility for the distribution of prayer letters for other missionaries: Albert and Naomi Spieth, Bob and Aloha Vance, and Don and Pat Block.

With the advent of e-mail and electronic media, the days of mailing prayer letters have faded. Although Roy has stepped into heaven, Dorothy continues to support Baptist Mid-Missions’ Global Impact Fund. “What I do for Baptist Mid-Missions is little, but I rejoice that I can still help the gospel to be heard around the world.”

Like the Kishpaughs, many people play a vital but behind-the-scenes role in missions. Some make their greatest contribution to the Great Commission through financial support.

Please join our team and help the gospel to be heard around the world by giving to BMM’s Global Impact Fund!

“I still thank the Lord for the many years and ways to serve Him.”

—Dorothy Kishpaugh

Find out more about the Global Impact Fund at www.bmm.org or call 440-826-3930.

Background photo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Approaching_Omaha.jpg, public domain
MEMORIAL GIFTS

Through BMM Foundation’s Memorial Gift Program, you can provide a lasting legacy by making a donation in memory of a loved one who has gone Home to the Lord or in honor of a birthday, retirement, graduation, wedding, anniversary, new baby, or any other occasion. These special events are ideal opportunities for you to give a gift that will keep on giving for years to come.

Gifts made to the Memorial Fund are invested and are used to make an impact for the gospel around the world.

In Memory Of

Jane Acker
Rev. and Mrs. Wilbur Parrish

George Blood
Mr. and Mrs. Robin Madren

Gene Bryant
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Goodpaster

Al Casto
Mrs. Sharon Casto

Lucille Calhoun
Mr. Ernest Calhoun

Frank and Lillian Crumb
Kinsman Crumb
Charitable Trust

Charles and Joan Nichols
Mr. and Mrs. Keith Barrett

Mr. and Mrs. J. Winston Boyes, Sr.
Mrs. Elaine Boyes

Rachel Schildroth
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Brooks

Doris Smallman
Rev. and Mrs. Wilbur Parrish

Gloria Whitelaw
Anonymous

Nancy Yeigh
Dalad Construction Co., Independence, OH

Check Out Our Gift Planning Website

In the past, most gifts were made by mailing in a check. Although many ways are available to make a gift of cash, consider other tax-advantaged ways to support Baptist Mid-Missions’s ministries. To discover how and what you can give, visit our planned giving website at giftplanning.bmm.org.

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For a brochure or a specific illustration, call, write, or complete the Gift Annuity Coupon.

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Date of birth ________ male/female _____
Amount to be illustrated $ ____________

Name of second annuitant

Date of birth ________ male/female _____
Amount to be illustrated $ ____________

Baptist Mid-Missions Stewardship Ministries
PO Box 308011 • Cleveland, OH 44130-8011
MISSIONARY MILESTONES
At the 2019 Family Conference, the following missionaries and staff members received awards marking years of service:

**20 YEARS**
- Kathy Armstrong—Home Office
- Creative Access Nation missionaries
- Tim and Sandy Fink—Bibles International
- Dan and Laura Gillette—India
- Mike and Sharon Keller—Campus Bible Fellowship International
- Creative Access Nation missionary

**25 YEARS**
- Tim Fry—Home Office
- Susie Kallal—North America
- Jeff and Judy Traver—Brazil
- Stewart and Deborah Cottle—Bibles International
- Ken and Sharon Loveall—Peru
- Patricia Laase—France

**30 YEARS**
- Randy Laase—France
- Barry and Judy Byrne—North America
- Jackie Hopkins—North America
- Steve and Gayle King—Ivory Coast
- Renate Reiner—Brazil
- Tim and Barb Whatley—Peru
- Jeff and Linda Brown—Germany
- Charles and Gai Jewell—Central African Republic
- Ed and Sylvia Christy—France

**35 YEARS**
- Terry and Jane Carruthers—Brazil
- Charles and Nancy Ellis—Home Office

**35 YEARS**
- Creative Access Nation missionaries
- Joyce Oshiro—Japan
- Mark and Linda Willson—Brazil
- Allan and Diane Frey—Peru

**40 YEARS**
- Ken and Dawn Houghten—United Kingdom
- Mark and Debbie Seymour—Home Office
- Jon and Isobel Dygert—United Kingdom

**50 YEARS**
- Bonnie Bixby—France
- Lloyd and Marty Larkin—Mormon Focus Ministry Team
- Joy Spieth—Brazil

**55 YEARS**
- Jackie Eaton—Bibles International

* Gayle King’s award was given posthumously