

A photograph of a city street at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong orange glow and lens flare. On the left, there are parked cars and a person walking away. On the right, there are tall buildings, some with scaffolding. A black rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Send



**[ON MISSION]**



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# [ON MISSION]

On Mission highlights missionaries, chaplains and churches working to reach North America and the world for Christ. On Mission is a publication of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), SBC. The magazine is also privileged to tell the stories of missionaries serving with the International Mission Board.

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# The sacrifice of send

By Kevin Ezell, NAMB president (@kevezell)

Last fall when my daughter and her husband responded to God’s call to serve as missionaries in Asia, I experienced the “send” call for the first time as a parent. Yes, our children have taken part in short-term mission projects over the years, but this was the first time one had set out to live her life in a different place, with different people, far away from family, friends and the support network she had known all her life.

This was new for me, and it was not easy. It’s one thing to trust God with your own calling and life, but quite another to do the same with your daughter. Then I realized that for years as a pastor I had asked parents to do the very same thing. To send their daughters and sons. To make them available to God. To allow them to live their lives in service to Him no matter what He calls them to do or where He calls them to go.

In a completely new way, I have learned the sacrifice of sending, and I have a deeper appreciation for all of those parents who trust God with the unknowns that come with seeing your child go off to the mission field.

But the sending sacrifice also has great rewards. In our own lives, it’s the reward of knowing we are obediently following where God leads. It’s the reward of joining Him as He works in people’s lives. And as we watch our children go, it’s the blessing of seeing them embrace their faith in new and daring ways as they set out on their journey with Him.

Are you living the sacrifice of send? If not, I challenge you to set aside whatever is holding you back, and experience everything God has waiting for you once you say “yes.” **[OM]**



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## Heard

**“Unless our people are applying the message of Jesus to their lives in an ongoing way, it’s unlikely that the gospel will be the first thing out of their mouths when they speak to others.”**

Pastor and church planter Kent Bateman on the importance of teaching congregations to live out and share the gospel

Source: Send Network, May 2016

**“Chief Brown told the victims’ families [and police officers] last night that he was a man of faith. And I am a man of faith, too. And that we need prayers. Prayer is good ... join us in that spirit of prayer to bring our city together and our country together to heal wounds and not create them.”**

Mayor Mike Rawlings of Dallas, Texas, press conference July 8, 2016

Source: CBSNews.com, July 8, 2016

**“America needs a fourth great awakening. Let that revival start with us, not because it is what we do as a job, but because it is a passion.”**

California pastor Greg Laurie urging Southern Baptists to work together toward spiritual revival at the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention

Source: Baptist Press, June 15, 2016

## A growing convention

According to data collected for the 2015 Annual Church Profile, Southern Baptists added more churches to their denomination in 2015 than 2014. Primarily due to church planting efforts, the number of churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention grew by 294, a .63% increase from the previous year. This marks the 17th consecutive year that the number of SBC churches has grown.

Source: Baptist Press, June 7, 2016

## Online introduction

Does your church broadcast a live-stream online? Research shows the growing number of churches live streaming services is an effective tool to attract potential new members. Young married couples, ages 24 to 34, will watch a live-streamed service an average of six times before deciding to step foot into the church building.

Source: Outreach, May/June 2016

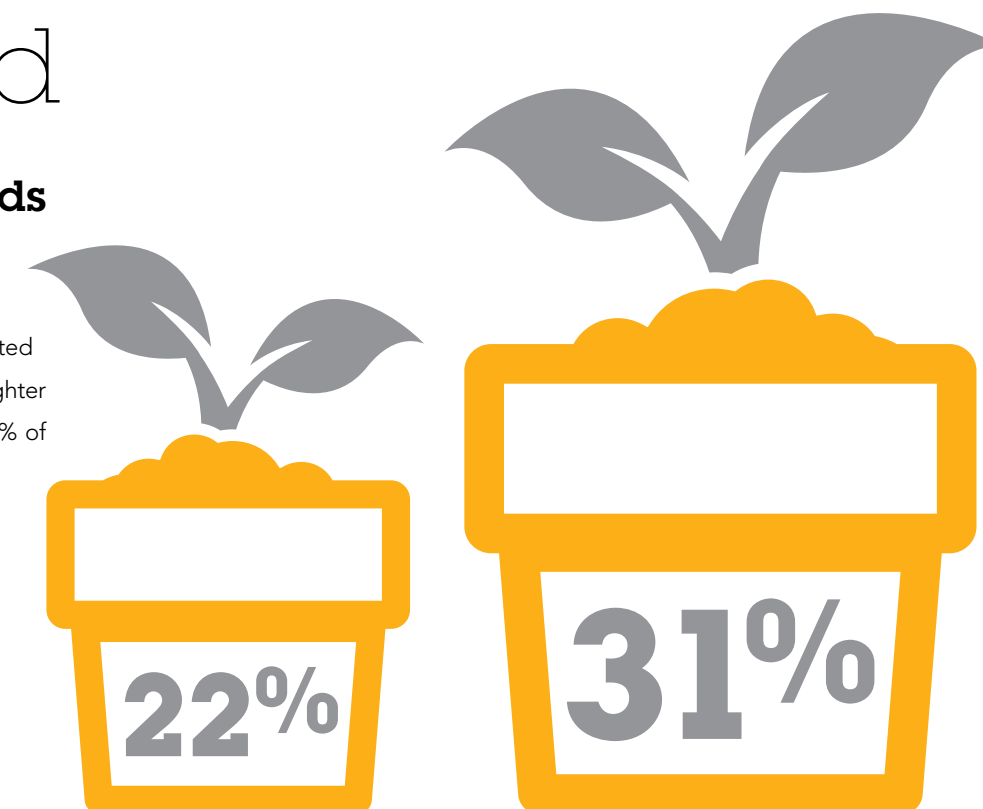


## Measured

### Church planting trends

Only 3% of established churches in the nation are currently involved in helping start another church. Among churches started prior to 2012, 22% started at least one daughter church within their first five years. Nearly 31% of churches receiving funding from a sponsor or sending church supported the launch of a daughter church of their own within their first five years as a congregation.

Source: Outreach, July/August 2016



### Halloween spending

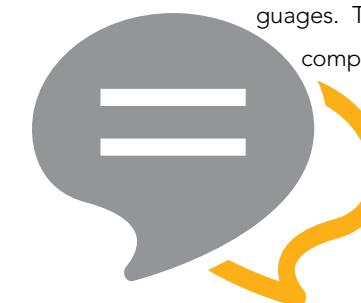
Until recently, Americans gave less money to reach the unreached than they spent buying Halloween costumes for their pets. But in 2015, giving to missions groups reaching the unreached topped \$450 million.

Source: The Traveling Team, 2015

### Global communication

Facebook can now translate posts into 44 languages. The social media giant’s “multilingual composer” is designed to break language barriers and reach a global audience.

Source: Wired, July, 2016



### Worldwide reach

U.S. campuses now host almost 1 million international students, up nearly 40% from five years ago. Almost a third are from China, which is home to 456 unreached people groups.

Sources: Wall Street Journal, Joshua Project, 2016



Prayers for our leaders

The majority of Americans believe the nation is currently facing a crisis in leadership. An overwhelming 90% of Americans believe the nation is lacking in quality leaders.

Source: Barna Research, June 22, 2016



Moving in

Cohabitation before marriage is steadily becoming the norm for couples in the United States. Some two-thirds of adults say they are okay with the thought of living together outside of marriage. While only 44% of practicing Christians agree that this is a good practice for couples, a staggering 88% of people who practice no faith support the idea of cohabitation outside of marriage.

Source: RelevantMagazine.com, June 24, 2016.

Religion in America

The practice of religion is common amongst Americans—though not necessarily a relationship with Christ. A recent study conducted by Pew Research Center revealed that 1 in 3 Americans identify as “highly religious,” meaning they pray daily and worship weekly. Of that number, only half are considered to be evangelical Christians.

Source: Christianity Today, June 2016

The power of a small church

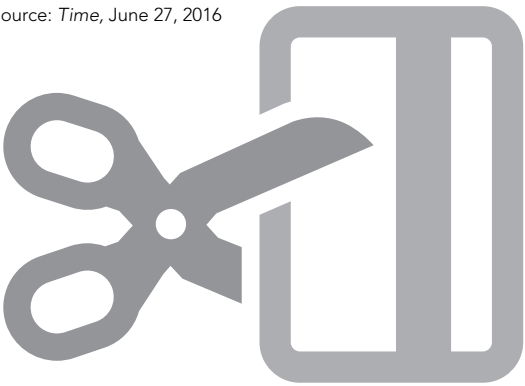
While mega churches are still a popular trend, churches with smaller congregations hold appeal for a majority of U.S. citizens. Currently, 1 in 5 church plants say they are sponsored by a church with an average attendance of less than 100 people. Giving per member is higher on average among small congregations, with \$1,750 per regular attendee given annually in a church of less than 100 attendees compared to \$1,140 given per regular attendee in congregations of more than 1,000 adults. Trends also show that some 88% of Americans would consider attending a church with under 100 people, with 85% saying they would be open to a church of less than 200.

Source: Facts & Trends, Spring 2016

Financial struggle

More than two-thirds of the country’s Millenials have found themselves in debt from student loans, credit cards or both. Additionally, their participation in savings programs or accounts has dropped.

Source: Time, June 27, 2016



Take a break

In 2015, more than half of full-time workers in the United States used only a portion of their allotted vacation time. On average, workers took 16.2 vacation days last year, down from the previously polled average of 20.3 days in 2000.

Source: The Week, June 24, 2016

Noted

Prison ministry

Some 83% of pastors say they have personally visited a prison or correctional facility as part of their ministry. With more than 2.2 million Americans held in prisons or jails, the need for this kind of ministry is great in the U.S. See related story, page 24.

Source: LifeWay Research, May 24, 2016

Anxious hearts

Anxiety disorders are twice as likely to occur among women than men. How can your church support those struggling through this and other mental illnesses in your community?

Source: Motto.Time.com, June 8, 2016

Internet growth

Approximately 3 billion people are using the internet across the globe. This number has grown by 9% in the last year.

Source: Time, June 20, 2016

Bible believers

The number of people who believe the Bible contains all a person needs to live a meaningful life is slowly declining. While 53% held this belief in 2011, that number dropped to 45% by the start of 2016.

Source: Barna Research, June 22, 2016

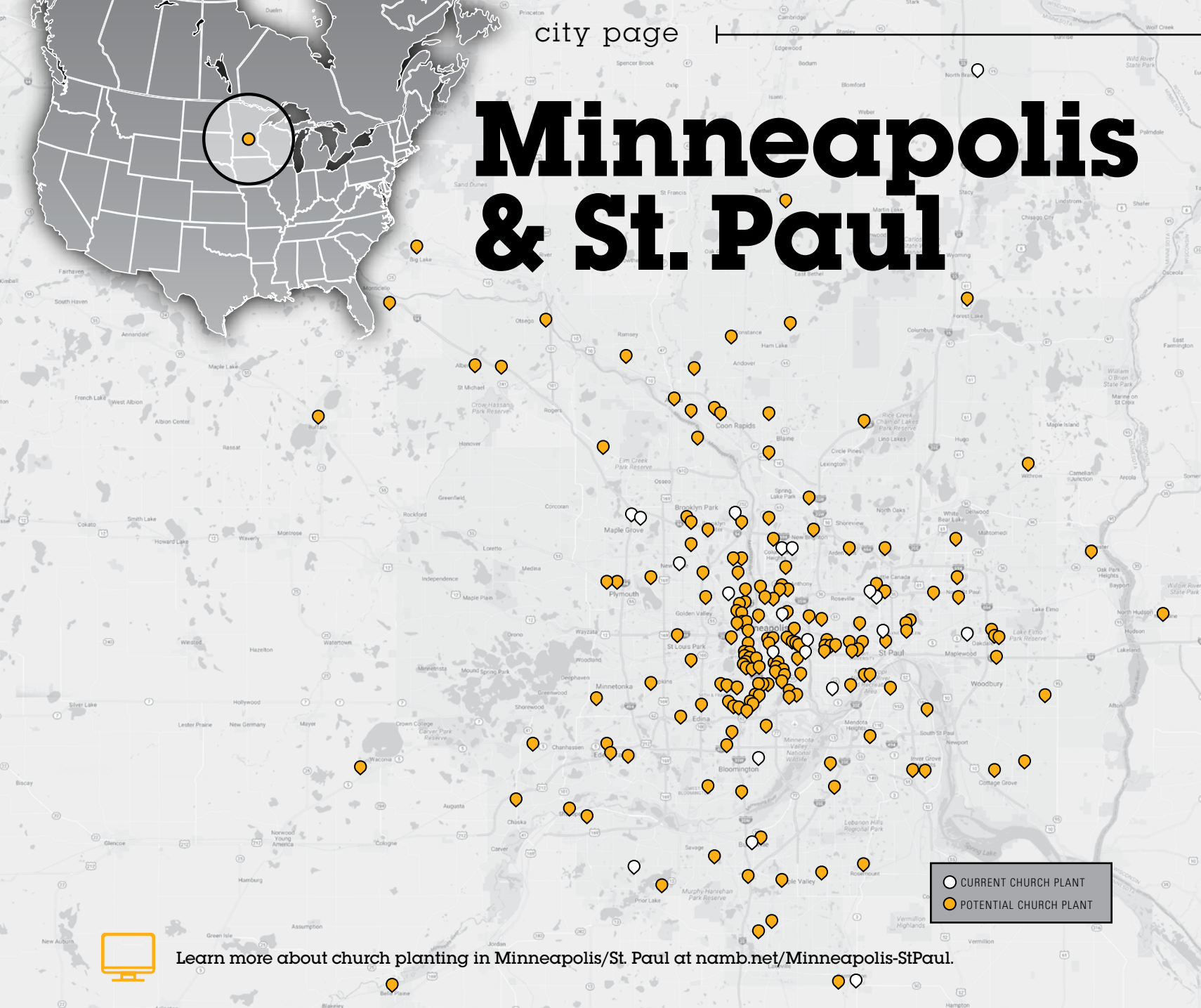
Economic expansion

India now has the fastest growing economy. It also has the highest number of unreached people groups at 2,013.

Sources: Business Standard, Joshua Project, 2016

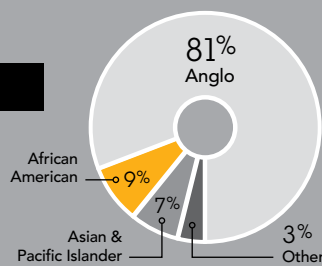


# Minneapolis & St. Paul

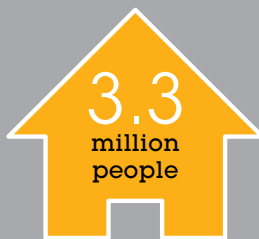


Learn more about church planting in Minneapolis/St. Paul at [namb.net/Minneapolis-StPaul](http://namb.net/Minneapolis-StPaul).

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The ethnic breakdown of Minneapolis is primarily Anglo (81.1%). 8.5% are African American, followed by 6.9% Asian & Pacific Islander, 2.7% two or more races and less than 1% Native American.



**3.3 million people** live in the metro area, with only one Southern Baptist church for every **70,189 residents**.

Known as the Twin Cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul are large cities with a cultural influence that affects the entire Midwestern United States. They are a diverse collection of social classes, customs, languages, religions and more. Sadly, the varied population of Minneapolis/St. Paul is almost completely untouched by Southern Baptist efforts.

“The church is designed to run into the flames of culture,” says Joshua Whetstine, the Send City Missionary for Minneapolis/St. Paul. “There’s a very rich indigenous pride that exists here.” People in the region are in desperate need of the gospel, and local church plants can make a difference in spreading the gospel throughout the Twin Cities and the entire Midwest.

Sources: NAMB Research, CityVisionTC.org and StarTribune.com

# Kuala Lumpur



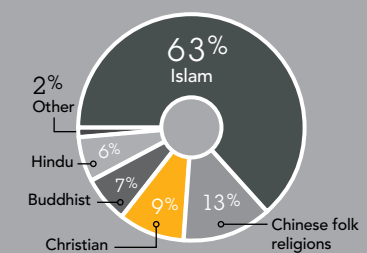
You can download IMB's Kuala Lumpur City Guide at [imb.org/Cities](http://imb.org/Cities).

Malaysia is made of two partial islands between Thailand and Australia. The capital city, Kuala Lumpur, is home to about 8 million people. The city's skyscrapers light up the sky—a stark contrast to the lush rainforests, tree-covered mountains and tropical beaches in the rest of the country.

Half of the world's population lives within a five-hour flight of Kuala Lumpur, making the city a prime location for international trade, vacation and study. Pete Lawson,\* a small business owner says, “We love living in Kuala Lumpur because it’s a vibrant city of opportunity that is full of religious diversity, including many who have never had a chance to hear the gospel.”

Sources: IMB Global Research, CIA-The World Factbook, Joshua Project [JoshuaProject.net/](http://JoshuaProject.net/) Countries/MY, IMB Global City Profile-Kuala Lumpur

\*Name changed



The Malay people are one of the largest unreached Muslim people groups in the world. Kuala Lumpur has a **63% Muslim population**.



**Eighty-four unreached people groups** live in Malaysia; that's 45% of the population.

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# Coaching

Send Network multiplies communities of healthy church planters

By Meredith Yackel

**T**hree years ago, church planter Jamie Limato was close to quitting ministry altogether.

"Honestly, I was a broken church planter and had just gotten beaten up by ministry," says Limato, pastor of Aletheia Church in Norfolk, Virginia. "As church planters, I think we are often pathologically disappointed. We have an event, and even though our volunteers see all of these people coming to serve, as church planters we see the one person who isn't there. We have the list of people who didn't show up. Because of that, we forget all of the

good things God has done, so we become discouraged and disappointed."

It became clear to Limato that he desperately needed a coach while at a coaching retreat with Dino Senesi, the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send Network director of coaching. Senesi had chosen Limato for what was supposed to be a 20-minute coaching demonstration during one of



the sessions, but he quickly discovered they would need much more time together.

The gift of coaching relayed

Shortly after the coaching retreat, Limato and Senesi began a two-year coaching relationship, which ultimately laid the foundation for the coaching network Limato would start in the Washington, D.C., area.

“Church planters experience some of the highest of highs, but what people don’t always see is that we also have the lowest of lows,” says Limato. “Dino showed me he cared in that he didn’t have an agenda for our time, because he knew there was an agenda inside of me for our conversations.

“We met every other week over a video call since

we didn’t live in the same place, and he would check in with me, encourage me and talk about what my greatest challenges were. At the end of every conversation, I would create an action item, or two, that I could work toward before the next call.”

As Limato continued to be coached, he began taking on other church planters to coach as well.

“A lot of times in ministry we tend to focus on the things that are yet to be done instead of focusing on where God is at work,” says David Ferraro, pastor of discipleship at Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City, Michigan, about his experience being coached by Limato. “Coaching brings focus to where God is leading you and clarifies everything going on in your head. So having a coach is really just helping you listen well to what God is saying.”

Four ways a coach helps

| Function   | Benefit        | Question                                |
|------------|----------------|---|
| Processing | Clarity        | “Where do you need to go next?”         |
| Planning   | Action         | “How do you need to get there?”         |
| Assessing  | Discovery      | “What do you need?” “Who can help you?” |
| Debriefing | Accountability | “How is your plan working?”             |

“I have so many different voices speaking to me as a church planter. It’s refreshing to be able to stand back and evaluate what they are saying and what direction I need to take to honor the Lord and what He is saying to me through all of this!”

— Terry Branscombe, pastor of The Refuge in Riverview, New Brunswick, Canada

Like Limato, Ferraro has started a coaching network in the Detroit area for local church planters. Ferraro feels this is the “missing piece of leadership development.

“There are always training opportunities,” says Ferraro, “but rarely do we have a system to actually implement the things you have learned. Having a coach to walk alongside you does just that.”

Individual goals; a unified vision

In addition to coaching church planters, Limato has taken the initiative to coach ministry leaders in his own church as well. Every leader at Aletheia Norfolk has a peer coach, which Limato believes has created a culture where the leaders “aren’t always praying for others and never being prayed for themselves.

“Probably the biggest effect culturally is that we have been able to recreate that coaching culture inside our church,” says Limato. “What I realize is that I am not the only person who feels lonely. If the leader feels lonely, all the people around him are probably feeling lonely too.”

For this reason, every leader at Aletheia has a coach. The music ministry is led by husband and wife team, Jack and Amy Harris, who meet with Limato once a month.

“You go into the session sometimes feeling discouraged or exhausted from the millions of things you are doing in life,” says Amy, who is also a full-time teacher and co-leads the women’s ministry. “But you come out of it feeling lighter. You come out better understanding what God is teaching you currently.”



“Coaching has been a great reminder that my wife is my first ministry and my kids are my second ministry. If on the surface level you build a successful church, but lose your family along the way, you really haven’t accomplished anything for the kingdom. If anything, it is a disservice to it.”

— Jason Lamb, pastor of Rising Church in Leesburg, Virginia

Although the sessions often cover matters of the heart, they are intentional to identify goals with practical checkpoints to accomplish before their next meeting.

“It isn’t a therapy session as much as it is a problem-solving session,” says Jack. “Every goal is put into the calendar, so we are held accountable—whether long term or short term. Reaching your goals is the expectation.”

“Since the coaching element has been a part of the leadership, I think we understand each other better, and also understand the vision of who we are as a church and where we are going.”

### Good for you and good for the people

“Think of all the things that Moses had been through up to Exodus 18,” says Limato. “He had been rescued [from the Nile], lived in the palace with the king, gone out to the wilderness and had the audible voice of God talk to him through a bush. He had seen God exodus a whole people group out of bondage and slavery and miraculous things like the parting of the sea and food fall from heaven. Yet, in Exodus 18, we see he is disappointed.”

“I am sure a lot of leaders are just like that, but Jethro shows up in Exodus 18 and celebrates all that God has done with Moses. He inquires how he has been, he sees his discouragement and he draws out from Moses how standing and listening

# 9 tips for effective coaching

By Dino Senesi

**1 Have clear expectations, and review them at the beginning.** Many of the details will need to be reviewed at the beginning of the coaching relationship—things like preparation, keeping appointments and taking notes.

**2 Know family details.** Learn the names and interests of his spouse, children and other significant relationships. By listening, you are showing that you care for his success not only professionally but also personally. You will also need this as you pray for them.

**3 Expect planter preparation.** Mutual thought, prayer and prep increase the value of your time together. Email session questions 48 hours in advance, and expect answers 24 hours in advance. Be persistent if he does not respond.

**4 Create goals with clear checkpoints, and send follow-up emails.** Follow up immediately after every checkpoint. Encourage, and include next steps he has agreed to take. This should guide what you review in preparation for the next conversation and remind him of his commitments.

**5 Encourage note taking.** The coaching environment needs to be a working environment. Choosing a conducive, non-distracting

environment is key, and taking notes will help you stay focused and allow you to reflect on the conversation afterward.

**6 Coach for action.** If there are no agreed-upon actions, coaching isn’t happening. Press into specifics when asking questions on his next steps to reaching a goal.

**7 Linger on family and character questions.** That is your gift to the planter. A passionate, task-driven planter and his coach will gravitate toward the most urgent things on the planting timeline. The long-term health of the church plant, however, is greatly dependent on the health of his family and character development.

**8 Encourage.** Not every coach is gifted to be a “Barnabas,” yet every church planter needs a fan. Help him see what God is doing, and make a big deal about it.

**9 Be consistent.** The goal is to have two hour-long conversations per month over a four-month span, twice a year. The next coaching conversation you have makes the previous conversation have greater value. Your kingdom investment for the year will be 16 conversations that equal 18 to 20 hours total. Try and schedule six conversations at once. When cancelation is necessary, reschedule immediately.

*Dino Senesi is the NAMB coaching director for Send Network.*

to everyone's problems aren't helpful. Together they come up with an action item, and that is to set people in charge of different people groups. In verse 23 he says, 'This will be good for you, and it will be good for the people.'"

Just as Jethro acts as a drawing voice for Moses, Limato asks questions to help draw out the next steps God wants them to take.

"Unlike a mentor who pours into you, coaches ask questions to draw out," says Limato. "You talk about your family, ministry, problems, heart-hungers and things that God is talking to you about."

### More than a coach

Limato is now eight years into the Aletheia Norfolk church plant. What started in his living room has now grown to a network of Aletheia churches found in Maryland, Florida and Virginia. For Limato, coaching has been an invaluable gift—a gift that begs to be shared.

"Everyone needs a coach," says Limato. "If you get a good coach, you get a friend. Dino is a friend to me; I don't see him as just a coach." **[OM]**

*Meredith Yackel is the associate editor of On Mission.*



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Download Dino Senesi's free e-book, *Sending Well: Principles & Practices of Church Planter Coaching*, at [namb.net/SendingWell](https://namb.net/SendingWell).



Give to support the Send Network coaching initiative at [namb.net/Donations](https://namb.net/Donations). It is critical to the success of church planters and the churches they launch.





# Shoes at the door

By Caroline Anderson

**B**oots, loafers and sandals collect outside the apartment door. Each pair of shoes represents an East Asian believer inside who is passionate about growing deep in faith and helping others do the same. In apartments across the city, men and women gather to soak up biblical doctrine from the volunteers who traveled from the southern U.S. to teach and invest in local believers and aid International Mission Board (IMB) workers in equipping East Asian disciples.

It's a God-ordained portrait of how missions should look—IMB workers, U.S. churches and local believers leaning on, and learning from, one another. East Asian believers receive theological training and strategy training from IMB workers and Southern Baptist leaders.

Local believers are now sharing the gospel message at an unmatched pace.

## Audience participation

One spring afternoon, local believers break into small groups to practice delivering sermons and discuss the difference between the expository and topical preaching they just learned from members of Church at the Cross in Orlando, Florida.

A middle-aged "auntie" with a sequined cross on her shirt gives feedback on the sermon of a young



“Our church planting is limited by the number of healthy, multiplying leaders we have. If we don’t grow more leaders, we won’t have more healthy, multiplying churches.”

pastor with swooping bangs. He’s leading a new church plant in a neighboring city. The auntie is a fixture in the growing church network.

Over lunch, IMB worker Jeremiah Farmer\* sits down with leaders and asks about their victories and struggles. He suggests training material he’s developed to encourage church growth.

## The greatest need

Jeremiah and his wife, Joy,\* serve East Asian and U.S. churches, equipping them to make disciples.

By asking good questions, the Farmers have identified needs and formed strategies to meet them. When they asked East Asian leaders how they could help, they learned the greatest necessity was in systematic theological development.

“Our church planting is limited by the number of healthy, multiplying leaders we have,” Farmer says. “If we don’t grow more leaders, we won’t have more healthy, multiplying churches.”

U.S. churches are helping meet this need. Every month, the Farmers host teams from U.S. churches who come to teach a variety of subjects, including the doctrine of salvation, Bible interpretation and the doctrine of the Church.

“How can we leverage the strengths of the church in the States to help?” Jeremiah asks. “In reverse, how do we leverage what we learned here and translate it back to the States? It’s a mutual building of one another.”

## Cross-cultural partnerships

During their first four years, the Farmers worked on their own, training and vision-casting. “At that rate, it [would] take a millennium,” Farmer says.

Over a meal between trainings, Jeremiah meets with pastors from South Carolina who also came to teach church leaders.

“Your coming here frees us up to do strategy,” Jeremiah says. “We’ve effectively grown our team by having teachers come in and do what y’all are doing.

“For us, having church leaders from America come

PHOTO BY LUKE IN



IMB worker Jeremiah Farmer\* trains hundreds of East Asian church leaders with the Healthy Disciple curriculum. The leaders gather from near and far to partake in intensive training that is not available otherwise.

to Asia and help us do theological development with our [local] believers has not only helped us do what we do better, [but] we do see this partnership as a true partnership, a two-way street,” Jeremiah says.

## The end goal

Noah Graham,\* a church leader at Big Stephens Creek Baptist Church in North Augusta, South Carolina, says they wanted to significantly contribute to the ministry and not just come “to pat ourselves on the back and feel good about ourselves.”

East Asian church leaders are grateful for the chance to receive theological education from the U.S. train-

ers. Zhu Fa\* says the session on the doctrine of salvation gives him a firm foundation in the subject and how to teach this to his congregants.

Cults threaten the health of many churches. Cults cause believers to question their salvation. Participants say this session is critical.

The session on giving and tithes also strikes a chord with other believers, many of whom are convicted and brought to tears.

These two subjects often come into play on a broader scale, as many of these church networks send cross-cultural workers, both domestically and internation-



Delicious food is prepared by local volunteers, so others can fully participate in the all-day Healthy Disciple training.



PHOTO BY LUKE IN

ally, to start churches. Shao Man Te’s\* network sent believers to serve cross-culturally. He says the training equipped believers to minister more effectively.

### Churches sending churches

Shao says East Asian believers are taking the gospel to new realms. He says his vision is for his churches to become sending churches. He says many Western workers have visited East Asia through the years. It’s time for East Asians to send out their own.

Li Wan\* says the Farmers’ investment in her church enables them to move beyond their borders and inspires her to devote her life to Christ.

“I’m also moved by the teaching of Jeremiah,” Li says. “He is a foreigner, but we can see he has a burden for East Asian people, and it encourages me to want to go outside, go beyond my country, to send the gospel to other countries.”

East Asia is now sending out cross-cultural workers at an unparalleled rate. Guo Fan Hai,\* who oversees 30 churches, says they wouldn’t be at this stage if it weren’t for the Farmers and the American trainers who have come to their country.

### Giving back

East Asia is now sending out cross-cultural workers at an unparalleled rate. Guo Fan Hai,\* who oversees 30 churches, says they wouldn’t be at this stage if it weren’t for the Farmers and the American trainers who have come to their country.

“I want to visit the church behind the [trainer],” Guo says. “I want to be a testimony to U.S. churches as to how you’ve helped us.”

He says he wants to one day visit the churches of the volunteers who have equipped his networks.

“I hope I have the chance to go to the U.S. to bless your American churches,” Guo says. “I’m going to make a report on how in this year the American church helped us and how we responded.” **[OM]**

Caroline Anderson writes for IMB.

\*Names changed

## Make healthy disciples in East Asia

### Pray

An increasing number of the Farmers’ national partners want to go out as cross-cultural workers. Pray for the East Asian believers and the Farmers as they work to train, equip and partner.

As the Farmers’ children grow, their education needs become more complicated. Juggling national school with homeschool is becoming difficult. Pray for wisdom to daily depend on God to do and be all that He has called them to do and be in this endeavor.

### Prepare

Download the Farmers’ training resources at [TheHealthyDisciple.com](http://TheHealthyDisciple.com).





The Graham Chapel at Louisiana State Penitentiary is one of several chapel buildings that host almost 30 inmate-led congregations for worship.

# Life on the farm

By K. Faith Morgan

**F**ields of soy, sorghum, squash and more stretch for 18,000 acres before meeting the tree-lined levy that separates Louisiana State Penitentiary from the Mississippi River on three sides. “Angola,” the prison is more commonly called, or even just “the farm.” Across the prison grounds, steeples rise above the barracks and rows of crops—the rows of pews inside each chapel representing a more significant harvest than the one growing outside. It’s a harvest of redeemed souls. A harvest of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. And against these things, there is no law.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN WHITLEY



# A servant leader

With his gentle demeanor and easy smile, chaplain Rick Sharkey is hardly someone you would expect to meet working in a prison. He didn't expect to either. His first time inside a maximum-security men's prison was his first day on the job two years ago. But among both inmates and prison staff, he quietly commands immense respect.

“We believe the next great revival in America is going to come from the prison.”

— Rick Sharkey

Capped in his signature khaki Boonie hat—a modest barrier against the blazing Louisiana sun—he walks the grounds sharing the particulars of his ministry as supervising chaplain and head of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's (NOBTS) Joan Horner Extension Center of Leavell College inside the prison.

Angola has seen 274 of its inmates graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Christian Ministry since the program's inception over two decades ago. Those

graduates have gone on to become pastors, tutors, vocational instructors, mentors and more within the prison. Others are sent out as missionaries, transferred to other correctional facilities in Louisiana. Some have continued their ministry after being released.

Instinctively side stepping the spotlight in favor of highlighting others, Sharkey often interrupts descriptions of his own ministry to point out inmates in the halls and walkways of the prison compound. This inmate pastor is an especially gifted preacher. Another is capable of doctoral-level work now. Here's a file folder with newspaper clippings, reports and accolades for still another Bible college graduate—Sharkey never misses an opportunity to highlight another's strengths while downplaying his own hard-won accomplishments. (In addition to more than three decades of ministry experience, he holds one doctorate outright and simply lacks a dissertation on a second.)

But it's his unobtrusive strength that makes Sharkey uniquely qualified for the position. He prefers to minister in the background. He does regularly teach classes for the Bible college, but “chaplains don't preach here,” he says. “I don't preach. We want the inmate pastors to preach. We want the inmate pastors to gain momentum. They have the pulpit.

“The Bible college equipped the church here with qualified and capable men, and the church grew



Chaplain Sharkey speaks with a Bible college graduate who is about to transferr to another Louisiana prison as a missionary.

strong,” he adds. “We have 28 inmate-pastored churches here. We don't have enough room for them all to meet on Sunday, so we do church every day here.

“You'll notice there are no corrections officers in the church services,” says Sharkey with a smile, thinking back on Angola's former infamy as America's bloodiest prison. “They keep order themselves.”

# Bringing life to death

It was the heat. The oppressive, unrelenting heat. “God, it would be better if I died.” So said Jonah

in the scorching east wind as the sun beat down on his head outside Nineveh. And so said Jerome Dericks from his sweltering Louisiana cell.

“One day I was in the cell, and it was hot. I was thinking death would have been good; that's how hot it was in this cell,” remembers Dericks. “I said, ‘Lord, I'm not going to make it.’

“I was a Christian before I came to prison. I heard the call of God when I was 13,” says Dericks. But like Jonah, he ran. Like Jonah, he was caught. But while the record of Jonah's story ends unresolved, Dericks' continues.





One of the first Bible college graduates, pastor Jerome Derrick, has established a high level of trust among the inmates during his long tenure in ministry at Angola.

“In that hot prison cell, I heard God telling me, ‘If you don’t want your life, give it to Me.’”

### Give it to Me

Those four words have defined Derrick’s ministry—almost two and a half decades long—inside the confines of Angola. Sitting in the Graham Chapel in Camp F, he looks back on his early years of service at the prison starting as a tutor and then a librarian. “That’s when I first got introduced to death row,” he says. “I was their librarian.”

Derrick was one of 30 inmates selected to participate in the pilot program of NOBTS at Angola.

“There’s a quote in *Experiencing God* that says, ‘Find where God is working, and join Him.’ I thought that was awesome. I just needed to find out exactly where God was working in my life and then join Him and let Him take care of the rest.

“I was in the first graduating class of the Bible college. When we graduated, they asked us where we wanted to go. I volunteered to go to death row. That’s when I started being their pastor, which would’ve been in about 2000. I’ve been with them ever since.”

### Life of purpose

Engaging and charismatic, you would expect

“It’s rewarding to give back, because I know where I come from, and I see the need around me.”

— Jerome Derrick

Derrick to regularly speak to large crowds, but one of his most faithful audiences is a group of about 10. Instead of sitting in pews, his congregation is contained in individual cells inside the prison yard while Derrick leads singing and preaches the Word. Only 10 are allowed to participate at a time, and they all attend by choice—each one moved to and from the service in shackles.

“At first it was challenging because even though they already knew me and my walk, I knew that there were a lot of guys on death row that did not love the Lord and didn’t want to hear anything about the Lord,” says Derrick of his ministry to the 82 men living on death row. “But now I can testify that some of those same guys who had a frown on their face have a smile on their face, and they have a heart of flesh now that’s receptive to God’s Word. So when you see those fruits from your labor, you know that your labor is not in vain.

“Before I leave this life, I want to know that I have impacted at least one person for the better. There are so many people who have lost hope, and it’s a saddening thing when you see a man walking around with no hope. That’s why I strive to do all I can each day to just give that hope to the men around me,” says Derrick. “It’s a hard place. It’s just a hard place, but you can show love to people and let them know that your life still goes on.”

### Freedom inside

Inmates at Angola can be divided into two groups—those who have “numbers” and those who have “letters.” Numbered inmates have a defined sentence length. Ten years, 50 years, 75 years; it’s a prescribed term. It’s finite. The rest have letters, and those four letters are all the same. L-I-F-E. In Louisiana, life means life. No parole. No time off for good behavior. Life. The majority of inmates at Angola have letters.

Pastor Paul Will has letters, but he could also be described, somewhat archaically, as a man of letters.

A graduate of the NOBTS extension program, Will is the senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church—where the pastors and the congregation are prisoners. It’s the first fully incorporated Southern Baptist church on record inside a correctional facility.

Will speaks with the seasoned grace of a minister and the measured thoughtfulness of a professor, sometimes pausing for 10 or 15 seconds at a time to consider before answering a question. When speaking to him, it’s easy to forget the setting—that is, until Will casually glances up to the clock and notes, “You’re going to have to put me on count, Dr. Sharkey,” as the interview runs through the Angola reality of “the count” of prisoners. “We like to count things around here,” adds Sharkey.



# Every church on mission

**E**ighty miles away, just south of Baton Rouge in the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women, NOBTS has just graduated its first class of female inmates. Led by chaplain Rick Sharkey's wife, chaplain Debi Sharkey, the program is still in its infancy, but it has already established a strong reputation within the facility. Two of the graduates, known as peer ministers, lent an expert voice to what it looks like for the Church to do ministry within the prison—or anywhere.

## Helen Wright Burns

You have to have unity and humility. You have to be a servant and be willing to serve regardless of who it is. You need to have that basic foundation. What are we working for? What is our purpose? What is the goal? Our goal is to reach people with the gospel—which is Jesus Christ crucified, risen and seated on the throne now.

We're not here to get any glory. To God be the glory. And in order to do that, we have to come together in our differences to agree to disagree, to stay on focus. This is our vision. People perish because of a lack of this vision. Even on this compound as peer ministers, we don't always agree. But our sound foundation, our purpose, is Jesus, and we're working for Him.

## Sabrina Monaco

That's what it looks like in here. If I want to win souls to the Lord, I'll do whatever I have to do. If it takes me bearing 120 degree heat and a strip search to be able to go minister to ladies in another area of the compound, I'll do it. And, you know, they see that, and they know that. They tell us, "Y'all really must love us to come back here and do this." Yeah, we



Bible college graduates and peer ministers Helen Wright Burns (left) and Sabrina Monaco.

do love them. And only love can draw them. Only love can comfort them.

Unity, love and being willing to serve other people. No matter who they are. Whether you like them or not, serve them. That's what it's all about.

*To read more about chaplain Debi Sharkey's ministry alongside peer ministers Helen Wright Burns and Sabrina Monaco, visit [namb.net/LCIW](http://namb.net/LCIW).*



Inmate pastor Paul Will corresponds with other pastors in the local Washington Baptist Association. Will is the head pastor of Grace Baptist Church, the only fully recognized Southern Baptist church on a prison campus.

## Captive of grace

"At 14 years of age, I started experimenting with drug use," says Will. "From 14 to my point of incarceration at 27, there was highly progressive drug use—marijuana to LSD and beyond. By the time I was 21, I had a \$1,000-a-week heroin habit." It was a habit he says he used to "anesthetize" his disappointment with the world he inhabited.

"All of my life, I clearly wanted to be loved, and I wanted to love, but, with no identity in Christ, I was governed by underdeveloped emotions," says Will. "I couldn't do it because there was no government

of love in me. I wasn't whole yet." Sitting in his cell at the Philadelphia County Jail, Will heard the gospel.

"I ran into Jesus," says Will. "I realized that the very thing I've been looking for my entire life—that thing that I had been rejecting—was the actual love that God was pursuing me with. I didn't run into a conversion of ideals; I was consumed by a moment of experiential love in Christ."

## Set free

"If I were to define freedom in the way that I once believed, it would have to be anarchy, quite frankly," says Will contemplatively. "If I follow my behaviors





and thought patterns from before to a logical conclusion, the end product would be anarchy—not freedom. Freedom is the power to be exactly who God has known both you and me to be before the foundations of the world and live that out by faith. That’s freedom.”

Ironically, Will’s entire experience with freedom has taken place in confinement. His life outside—the one many others still pursue—could hardly have been described as free.

“You know, prison is a very interesting thing in a physiological sense. I’ve come to realize that in the justice system is something most people feel divorced from, but prison should be seen as a parable for the endemic imprisonment of all of humanity,” says Will as he gazes out the window. “I’m looking at this razor wire and these fences that seem to be protecting something from something else—something other than what humanity really is. I hope that when people come to this place that it’s like running into a flower in this really dark place; there’s some sort of beauty that you’ve been impacted by in a place that shouldn’t necessarily house beauty.

“You come in here, and maybe you experience in

“I believe prisons are the last measurable frontier for missions in America. If God is moving in a place that’s dark, what better place for the light to shine?”

— Paul Will

me, or in some of the other men, high levels of freedom. What I would like people to understand about this parable of prison is that the juxtaposition of freedom inside of here should let people know that we are all inside a larger prison, and there is only one avenue to true freedom, and that’s the atonement of Jesus Christ.

“So it’s kind of a wonderful setting when you really do understand that.” **[OM]**

*K. Faith Morgan is managing editor of On Mission.*



**NAMB endorses 422 prison chaplains across North America.** In 2015, those chaplains reported 22,763 gospel presentations, 6,664 professions of faith and 1,348 baptisms. Learn more about NAMB-endorsed chaplaincy at [namb.net/Chaplaincy](http://namb.net/Chaplaincy).



# Pounding the ground

By Rachel Cohen

**W**ith a medical degree, a camera and their 8-year-old son Trey in tow, Heidi and William Haun packed up their house in Georgia and moved to Nalerigu, Ghana, in October 2014.

In many ways, the Hauns hit the ground running, using their professional skills to bring the news of Jesus to people who have yet to hear the gospel. Heidi is a surgeon at Nalerigu's Baptist Medical Centre, and William works as a media specialist for the International Mission Board (IMB). But one of their first tasks was slow. Learning Mampruli, the language of the Mamprusi people, takes effort, diligence and a lot of time. However, the Hauns see its importance.

"As a long-term missionary, it helps to live here, to be learning the culture, to be learning the stories, [to know] what's in the news locally," says William.

"It allows me to take Scripture and apply it to their

lives in a way that I wouldn't be able to if I hadn't made the effort to learn the language and the culture."

## Getting creative

The Hauns combined their language learning with a video project called "The Courtyard Pounding." The documentary showcases the tradition of women's courtyard poundings, a process by which they cement the area in front of their houses with water, sand and a day's worth of pounding with a mallet, or sampanni.

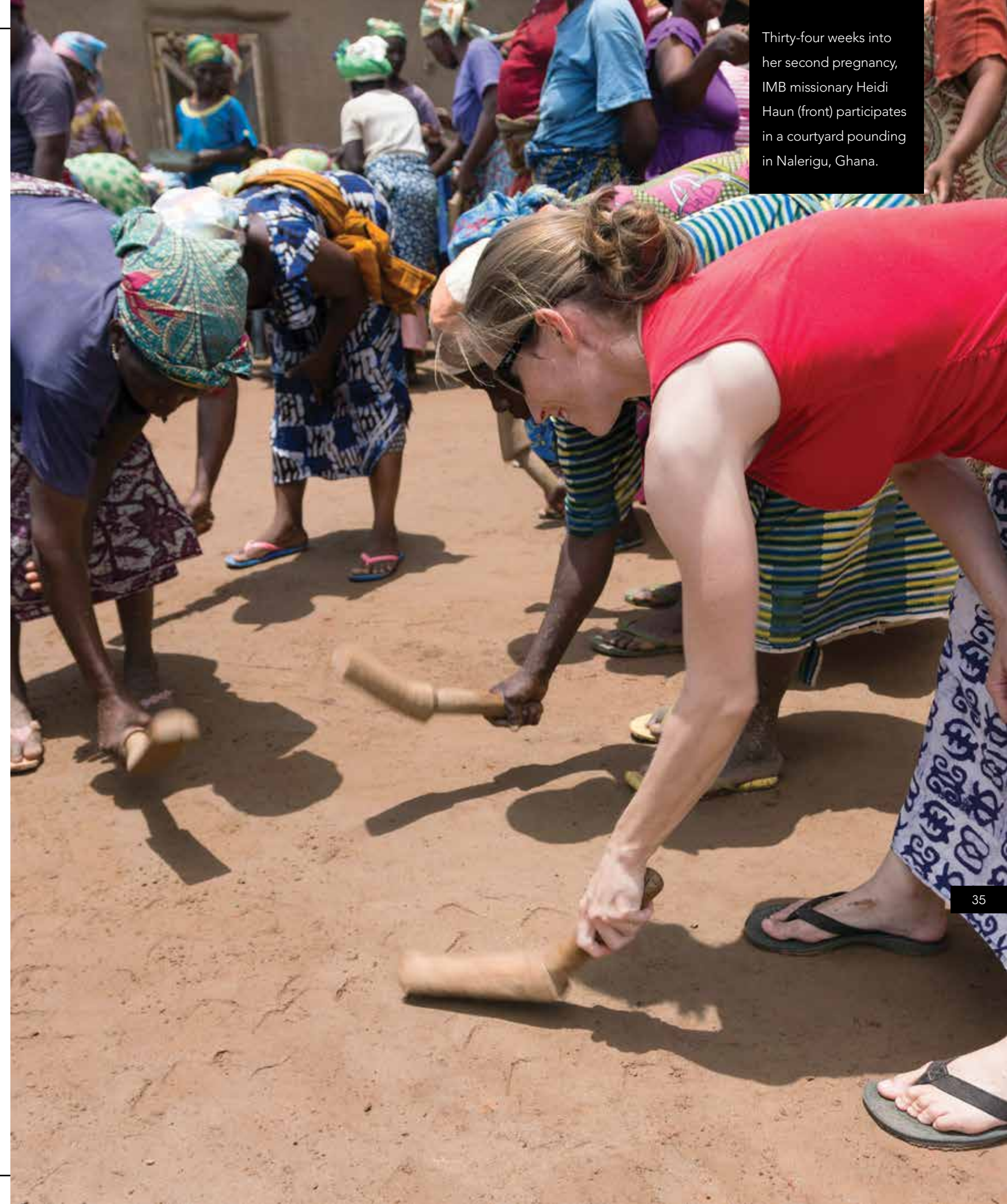
William filmed while Heidi, 34 weeks pregnant, joined the women to beat the ground to smooth perfection.

"It's been a fantastic way for Heidi to be accepted into the community. They are all blown away that she participates and doesn't just spectate," says William.

At a local screening of "The Courtyard Pounding," William noted that people in Nalerigu weren't used to seeing themselves on film, let alone in a positive light that honors their heritage.

(Continued on page 43)

Thirty-four weeks into her second pregnancy, IMB missionary Heidi Haun (front) participates in a courtyard pounding in Nalerigu, Ghana.



PHOTOS BY WILLIAM HAUN



The White Volta River runs south from Burkina Faso until it meets a 40-kilometer escarpment in northern Ghana, the Hauns' new home, and turns west.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Mamprusi chief Naa Bohagu blesses the young IMB missionary K.J. Haun with her traditional name, Wumpiinkasi, or "God's Holy Gift."

IMB missionary Heidi Haun (second from left) gets her hair cut at a local salon.

Nine-year-old Trey Haun (center) dances in front of the king's palace during Damba, the Mamprusi people's largest annual festival.





IMB missionary Dr. Heidi Haun (left) performs surgery at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, Ghana.





A senior Mamprusi woman leads songs at a courtyard pounding in Nalerigu, Ghana.



(Continued from page 34)

## The naming ceremony

The Hauns welcomed daughter Karen Jane, or K.J., June 2015. The Mamprusi people traditionally have a naming ceremony for their children, and it is a high honor to have the paramount chief name the baby.

The Hauns had already given K.J. the name Wumpi-inikasi, or “God’s Holy Gift,” before they presented her to Naa Bohagu Mahami Abdulai Sheriga, overlord of Mamprugu. But he blessed her name, and the Hauns held a traditional baby-naming ceremony with enough food to feed 200 people. They completed this Mamprugu tradition by personally visiting and thanking their guests the next day, strengthening their relationships within the community.

## A doctor’s call

Dr. Haun spends long hours seeing patients and performing surgeries at Nalerigu’s Baptist Medical Centre. While out in the community, Heidi also recommends swift medical treatment to friends and church members who might not otherwise seek care for their ailments. But because they trust her, they go.

“I think that’s the neatest thing about having patients that live here in town,” says Heidi. “I can build a friendship and share the reason why I’m here.”

## A place for conversation

The venue for chit-chat is the local hair salon. Heidi recognized early on that meeting women in their homes and places of business gives her an opportunity to build relationships and practice the language. She visits a friend who runs a local salon, and though her haircut lasts only three minutes, she still uses the opportunity to share stories of Jesus in Mampruli.

Although the Hauns have made progress, they often feel disheartened by the same language limitations that most learners experience.

“[It’s hard] not being to a point with language where we can have deep, meaningful conversations,” says William. “It’s frustrating to share a rehearsed gospel presentation in Mampruli but not be able to discuss it in-depth with the person and understand their response. We’ll get there though. It just takes time.

“[Living here] has been tough, very tough, but it’s satisfying to see relationships grow and our communication skills improve, both in language and worldview. As we dig deeper into the rich Mamprusi culture, we fall more in love with it.” **[OM]**

*Rachel Cohen writes for the IMB.*



Watch “The Courtyard Pounding” to see how God is working through the Haun family in Ghana at [HaunsInAfrica.com](https://HaunsInAfrica.com). The Hauns are one of eight IMB families you can specifically pray for during this year’s Week of Prayer for International Missions, December 4–11. During that week, at [imb.org/LMCO](https://imb.org/LMCO), you will be able to view video prayer journals from the Hauns and seven other families around the globe.

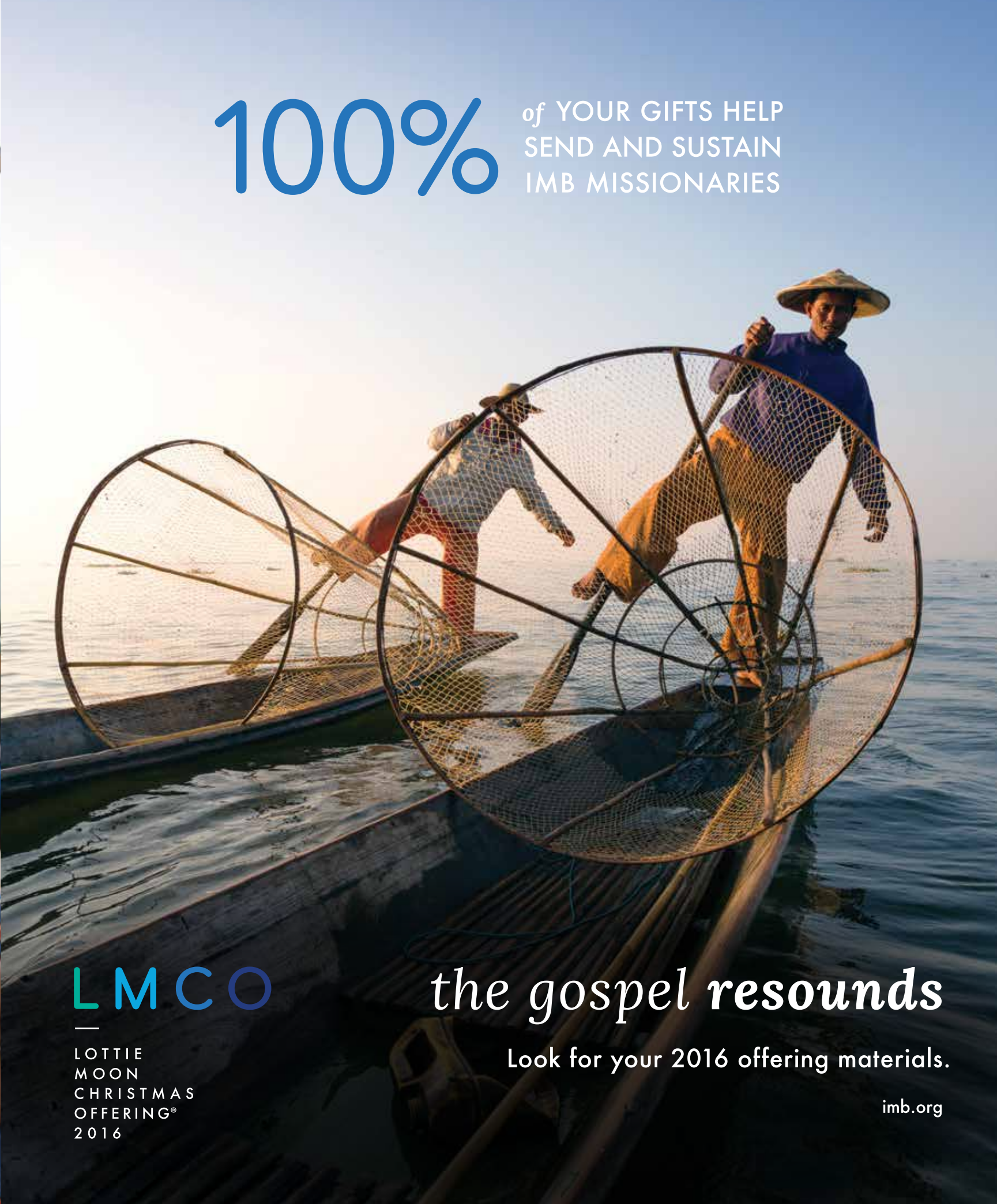


In November, Southern Baptist churches will receive the Week of Prayer brochure along with Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® (LMCO) posters and envelopes. Please contact your state Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) office for additional resources. LMCO is a registered trademark of WMU®.





IMB missionary Dr. Heidi Haun writes orders for nurses as she checks her post-operative patients at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, Ghana.



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# The universal language of hospitality

By Josie Rabbitt

**K**im Carr ate her lunch in silence, listening to languages she didn't understand.

"I found myself asking all these questions," says Carr. "Where are they from? And when did they get here? But most importantly, I wondered, who is reaching them with the gospel?"

That was the last meal Carr had alone; her lunch and dinner hours suddenly became consumed with developing a tactic where internationals could defeat language barriers and develop authentic relationships. Her hope is always that those relationships lead to faith in Jesus Christ.

Two years later, the International Learning Center (ILC) in Jacksonville, Florida, was born, offering English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, as well as citizenship classes and opportunities to develop job skills. Carr also developed classes where the Bible is used to teach reading.

"The core of this program is English as a Second Language," said Carr. "But the heart—my heart—is

reaching the people for Christ. Developing relationships with them gives you full access to the families where you can lead generations to faith in Christ."

Carr's vision was to teach people how much God loves them before they learn anything else in English. That is why John 3:16 is one of the first sentences non-native speakers encounter in the ILC reading course. With that approach, more than 1,300 people have come to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

"Many of the people who come into our program are families," says Carr. "So we're able to share the gospel with more than one life or generation."

PHOTOS BY JOHN SWAIN



International learning centers foster community for refugees





Carr listens as one of the ILC students chats about her former life, before knowing Jesus. Carr says the people that come to, and graduate from, the center are like family.

### Discovering the ILC

The sizable Halaby\* family of 13 spent three years living only a mile from the main headquarters of the prominent terrorist group, ISIS. Every night, the Halabys gathered together, crouching below their windows for safety, to listen to street fights or car bombs detonating outside their door.

The family was in danger every second of every day. One afternoon, Rahel Halaby,\* niece of Mariam\* and Yakob Halaby,\* had just stepped off her school bus outside her home when the bus exploded. She

ran inside as her friends and classmates perished in the bomb’s inferno.

Fear was palpable and often left people petrified to leave their homes. But the Halabys felt there was nowhere to hide, nowhere to come home to and be safe. So, they left. But when the Halaby family sought refuge in America, no one seemed able to help them integrate into American culture—a society completely foreign to them.

They spent many days worrying about how to survive in America, too, until they stumbled upon the ILC.

“My first day of school was terrifying,” said Rahal. “My brother and I needed help. We couldn’t speak any English. We didn’t know what anyone was saying. But we found the ILC, and they instantly made us feel loved. They started us at the beginning of our learning. They liked us, and we liked them. They were our second family.”

### Faith as a family

Within two weeks of walking through the front doors of the ILC, all 13 of the Halabys were rapidly moving through their English classes and had accepted Christ.

“The first day of school can be really scary for someone who doesn’t speak the language or know the routines of American life,” Carr said. “But that’s where we come in. We enrolled them in English classes with each other, so that they could help one another learn. The children were able to help the adults, and, through using the Bible as an English reading tool, the Halabys learned about God and prayer.”

Rahel now prays with her family every day, in which-ever language she chooses.

“It was really great coming to the ILC,” said Rahel. “We now go to church and understand more each time about what we read in the Bible. We are so grateful for this.”

“Many of the people who come into our program are families, so we’re able to share the gospel with more than one life or generation.”

### A lasting impact

Because of their newfound education and knowledge of the English language, the Halabys are thriving in their schools and jobs, and they finally have a safe place to call home.

They are no longer worried about survival.

“I never would have imagined a meal in a restaurant challenging me to change my course in life,” said Carr. “But that’s how God works. He’s mysterious and powerful. He makes all the decisions—as nuts as it may seem. I’ve learned to simply sit before the Lord and wait for Him to tell me what to do and when to do it.”

Over the past 16 years, the ILC has grown to support more than 6,000 internationals. Today, the ILC continues to be a spiritual oasis for refugees and inter-



## The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is partnering with the ILC to expand the ministry to NAMB's 32 Send Cities in North America as a part of NAMB's Send Relief initiative.

nationals, caring for and coming alongside people from 108 countries who speak over 50 languages.

Carr attributes the ILC's success in cultivating new disciples to international church planters.

"People come to faith in Jesus Christ through this program, but then they're supposed to go out and be disciples," says Carr. "We're not here to just make converts. We're also here to make disciples."

### Caring about cultures

In 2008, international church planting couple, Jon\* and his wife, Sara,\* came to the ILC from Baghdad, Iraq. Carr and the ILC staff had been "storming Heaven for an Arab pastor to come and be a part of the program.

"God sent the very best," says Carr.

Jon and Sara knew that internationals often struggle to find a place to worship in culturally relevant ways, and that often made discipleship more difficult. The couple heard about the Arab refugees the ILC helped and had a long conversation. Jon told Sara they needed to help their people at the ILC feel "at home" with their new faith in Jesus.

"Now, we bring them worship," Jon said. "And we worship our way—the way my people respond best to the Lord."

Every culture is different, and Carr recognized that special attention to the detail and unique understanding of an Arab pastor and his wife would help foster stronger relationships among the refugees with the new faith they'd just learned about.

"Their authenticity and love have helped plant 82 churches," says Carr, a member of Jacksonville's Mandrin Baptist Church. "These two, and many others just like them, are partnering with us to plant churches all over the nation. It is a critical part as we move forward to expand."

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is partnering with the ILC to expand the ministry to NAMB's 32 Send Cities in North America as a part of NAMB's Send Relief initiative.

NAMB and Send Relief hope to see churches and missionaries influence their communities with the gospel through ILCs.

It is Carr's hope that Millennials and Gen Xers blend with second-generation internationals to help guide them into a walk with Christ in America, too.

"Those generations are perfect for this job," Carr says. "We're looking for people who can build relationships out of the box, people who are not afraid to do something in a new way. Through those gifts and talents, they can be effective in reaching all nations for Christ while in this nation."



### Expanding reach

NAMB's 32 Send Cities focus special attention on urban areas where most North Americans live but are largely unreached by the gospel. About one in five people living in these cities speak a language other than English in their homes, which means 20 percent of these 32 Send City's populations practice another culture, language or belief.

"This is a great opportunity for my generation,"

says ILC staff member, Lindsey Brigham. "Authentic community and globalization are buzz words for us, but because our lives are often so fast paced, we don't get the opportunity to experience them. You walk into an ILC, and you walk into a place of learning and life together. It's a beautiful opportunity. I want to be a part of it to change the world." [OM]

*Josie Rabbitt serves as assistant editor for On Mission.*

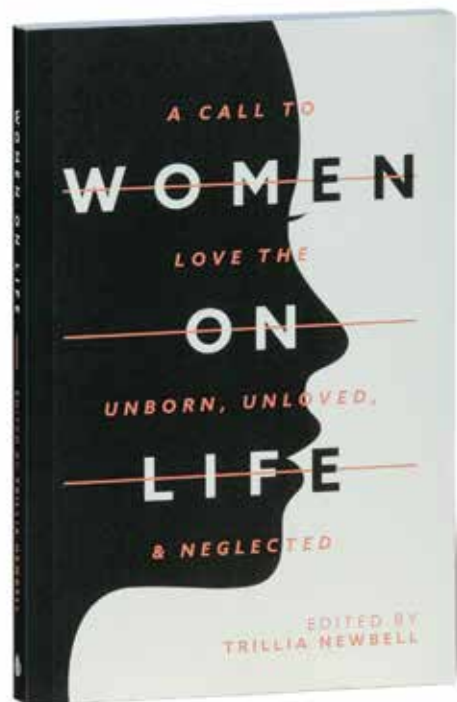
\*Names changed



Learn more about the International Learning Center and how you can help families like the Halabys succeed in North America by becoming part of NAMB's Send Relief efforts at [namb.net/SendRelief](https://namb.net/SendRelief).



# Ministry Gospel



## Women on Life: A Call to Love the Unborn, Unloved, & Neglected

Edited by: Trillia Newbell  
(Leland House Press, 2016)

*Women On Life* is a compilation of articles written by women for women—though men could certainly benefit from its contents as well. The book is deisgned to equip and encourage readers in caring for the lives of the women seen and unseen, loved and unloved, in their communities. The introduction states simply, “This book is a collection of essays to help us think about life—*all* of life. We want to be women who love life, and that means caring for the unborn and the born.” Topics range from teenage pregnancy and sexual purity to adoption and pro-life ministries.

Especially powerful is an essay by Courtney Reissig detailing her own experience with a high-risk pregnancy and advising women on how to care for and love others in a similar position. She encourages women to point one another “to the Savior who knows what it means to suffer a seemingly senseless death, who understands loss and pain personally, and can sympathize with us in our weakness.”

Other poignant pieces in the book include an interview with writer and artist, Jackie Hill Perry, on her struggle through homosexuality, a personal look at loving single mothers by Shannon Kotynski and a realistic picture of what it means to parent children with special needs by Jennifer Case Cortez.

Each essay provides a Scripture-based viewpoint on how to see, love and encourage the unloved and neglected toward life in Christ. The work is a quick but compelling read that ultimately challenges the reader to find and practice tangible ways to love their neighbors with the pure, unbiased and real love of Christ.

*Sara Shelton is a freelance writer living in Alpharetta, Georgia.*

## The Gospel at Work

Sebastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert  
(Zondervan, 2013)

Work consumes so much of the Christian life—over 80,000 hours of our adult life on average. So, it’s no surprise how often pastors encounter believers wrestling with how their work should fit with, or relate to, their walk with Christ.

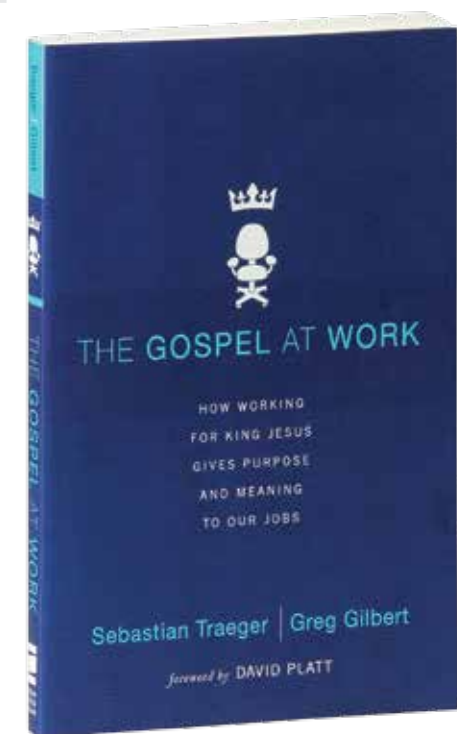
We often hear, “Your work is supposed to be worship.” And there is Paul’s exhortation concerning work, “Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men” (Colossians 3:23, HCSB).

But what does that look like? Sebastian Traeger and Greg Gilbert’s book, *The Gospel at Work*, effectively addresses that question.

*The Gospel at Work* provides a biblical prospective, as well as practical ways, to apply God’s Word through work. This book craftily attacks our idolization of work and unashamedly challenges the heart’s tendency toward idleness—placing the gospel front and center as the only power to finding real meaning in our jobs.

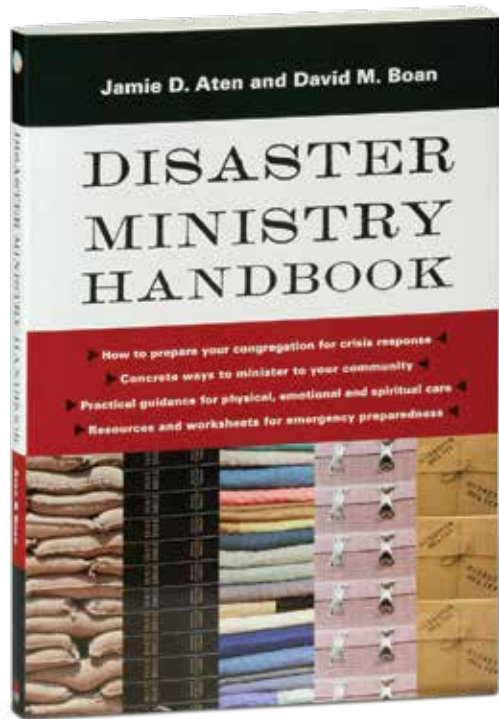
This book reminds us over and over again, “You *work* for the King!” It carries some of the best wisdom and biblical advice I have ever received and could ever give. But it doesn’t stop there. Traeger and Gilbert provide principles and perspectives that help apply this glorious truth in every believer’s life.

*James Paquette is the executive pastor of central ministries at The Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas.*





# Mission Leading



## Disaster Ministry Handbook

Jamie D. Aten and David M. Boan  
(IVP, 2016)

When disaster strikes your community, how will your church respond? James Aten and David Boan have put together a great handbook to prepare your church as an effective ministry partner in response to a disaster.

The authors stress the importance of a church-wide ministry based on your congregation's unique talents, calling and gifting—not the calling and energy of one person. Starting small and gradually building a plan in place uses the church's strengths and will produce a sustainable ministry for local and global disasters.

The handbook includes worksheets with step-by-step directions, resources and exercises that will assist in your church setting up its own disaster-response ministry plan. Also included are common disaster survivor stress reactions to prepare your congregation to respond spiritually and emotionally to those in need.

The authors summarize the book by stating, "Disasters represent an opportunity for the church to, in a very real and tangible way, serve as the hands and feet of Christ. Though disasters reveal injustices, disaster ministries reveal God's love, mercies and grace." This handbook is a great workbook that can assist a congregation in adding disaster ministry to its community outreach.

*Beth Bootz is the communications coordinator for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief at the North American Mission Board.*

## United: Captured by God's Vision for Diversity

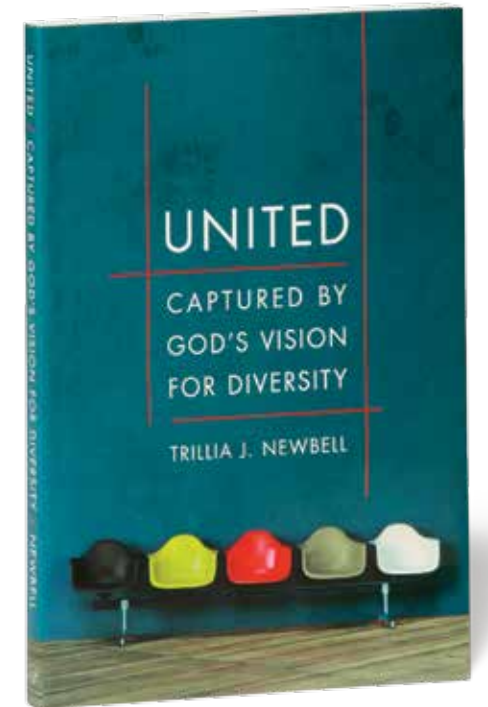
Trillia Newbell  
(Moody Publishers, 2014)

With a refreshing transparency and clear Christology, author Trillia Newbell takes us on a personal journey—sharing her fears, experiences and growth in Christ in her new book, *United: Captured by God's Vision for Diversity*. Her journey proves to be an essential one that reveals a latent human need for authentic conversations about identity, and a deeper reflection on what it means to embody the image of God and live in one's own skin.

Newbell chronicles her pain in a way that opens us up to our own painful experiences and offers the only lasting cure—Christ. She further exposes our hearts to an insightful revelation, "that our pursuit of diversity isn't really about diversity ... It's about love." She calls this "a radical, whole-hearted, grace-motivated love for others." Newbell is among a handful of evangelical voices addressing the need for the Church to be intentional about diversity as a catalyst to elevate racial understanding, eliminate the sin of partiality and embrace the reality of God's multi-ethnic design.

*United* is compelling and drives readers to consider doctrine over comfort and God's purpose over preference. The personal subject matter and theological framework of this book are also perfect for small group discussions, a book club or as a model for a teaching series on diversity. It is urgent that the body of Christ takes seriously what Newbell elegantly presents in *United*. Our churches, communities and, possibly, the nation would be far better for it.

*Frank Williams is lead pastor of Bronx Baptist Church and senior pastor of Wake-Eden Community Baptist Church in New York City.*





# Why we continue to support the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®

By Montia Setzler

**D**uring our 61 years, Magnolia Church in Riverside, California, has given faithfully to missions. In fact, the California Mission Offering was,



at one time, named after a member of our church. Recently, we built our missions program around the Acts 1:8 strategy. We view this biblical call to missions as an *and* strategy, not a *then* strategy. The biblical mandate is to go to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth; not to go to Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, then the ends of the earth. The whole church is challenged

to take the whole gospel to the whole world simultaneously. The question is not whether we should focus on reaching our city or world. The question is, how can we effectively reach our city and our world?

In 2012, Magnolia Church embraced an unengaged, unreached people group (UUPG) in South Asia. Some assumed we might fund that by reducing our giving to the Cooperative Program or to the missions offerings we take each year. We did neither of those things. Some feared the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) would suffer, but the opposite has happened. Our people joyfully support our efforts to reach the South Asian UUPG, and our giving to LMCO has increased.

Our work in South Asia heightened our congregation's global awareness and caused many to recognize that supporting overseas field-workers through LMCO directly benefits the work our church is doing to fulfill our commitment to our UUPG. We have developed a beautiful, symbiotic partnership with the field-workers. We send short-term teams and support them through LMCO. They disciple and maintain relationships with our UUPG in our absence. All glory to God. **[OM]**

*Montia Setzler is the lead pastor at Magnolia Church in Riverside, California.*



## The gospel resounds

By David Platt, IMB president (@plattdavid)

**W**ell over 100 years ago, a single missionary named Lottie Moon, serving in China, wrote letters challenging the church back *here* to send and support more workers to go *there*. After her death on the field, her challenge was heeded in the formalization of an offering in her name—the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®. Her life is a reminder of why we must give in order to send and support missionaries serving among unreached peoples in unreached places.

In Colossians 1:6, we read how “the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.” This verse depicts our vision together as a coalition of churches: We want to see the gospel bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world!

We each have a part to play in seeing that vision become a reality. Consequently, in our lives and in our churches, we *must* do everything we can to get the gospel to people who’ve never heard it. We must realize that our *ownership* of the gospel creates an obligation with the gospel. We must realize that saved people on this side of heaven owe the gospel to lost people (and peoples) on this side of hell.

Indeed, we cannot keep this gospel to ourselves. It is the greatest news in all the world: People can be made right with God, forever, through faith in Jesus Christ. Everybody needs an opportunity to hear this. They *must* hear this! Therefore, we must not stop in our efforts to proclaim the gospel until it resounds among every nation and from all tribes and peoples and languages. **[OM]**



Every dollar of your generous gift to the LMCO goes directly to support missionaries on the field. Give online at [imb.org/LottieMoon](http://imb.org/LottieMoon).



Your gifts make sending possible. You can give at [imb.org/LottieMoon](http://imb.org/LottieMoon). The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is a registered trademark of Woman's Missionary Union.





# EVERY CHURCH ON MISSION



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