

An aerial photograph of a city street scene. A tall, modern building with a dark, textured facade is the central focus. The word "CONTROL" is written vertically in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on its side. The building has several rooftop terraces with outdoor furniture and plants. To the left of the building is a lower building with a flat roof and a large, dark, rectangular feature. To the right is a multi-story brick building. The street below is filled with cars, including several yellow taxis, and a white bus. The overall scene is a dense urban environment.

CONTROL

[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), Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The magazine is also privileged to tell the stories of missionaries serving with the International Mission Board.

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Making a connection

By Kevin Ezell, NAMB president (@kevezell)

Jesus was the master at communicating truths in a context people could understand. This is why we love His parables. He considered His audience and took the time to adapt His words so listeners would not only know the meaning, they would also understand the application for their lives.



He also did this with His actions. While many religious leaders of the day stayed walled-off in their institutions, Jesus conducted His ministry among the people. He showed up in their homes, at their workplaces and in the streets of the villages where they lived. He practiced compassion. He met physical needs. He spoke words of encouragement to those enduring hardship.

This helped build bridges into people's lives and allowed Him to share spiritual truths about sin, separation from God and the way to salvation through acceptance of Him.

If Jesus made such an effort to help people understand their need for a Savior, what does that say to us about the importance of context while sharing the gospel? I believe God places us in people's lives, so we can share the gospel in those unique contexts. Of course, God can use anyone, anywhere, at any time to lead a person to Christ, but so often He works through friends, neighbors, coworkers and family members living on mission—a way that allows them to create opportunities to share Jesus.

When we plant churches, we are bringing the gospel into the context of the community surrounding that church. When we send Disaster Relief volunteers to cities and homes devastated by storms, we bring the gospel into the pain and loss brought by disaster. And when we serve children in foster care, the hungry or those needing rescue from sex trafficking, we instill the hope of Jesus into those situations as well.

It is not enough to build relationships and only focus on physical needs. Our efforts must include delivering spiritual hope, too. In doing so, we will be less like New Testament religious leaders and more like Jesus when He walked and lived among us. **[OM]**

Because you gave...

\$20 A church planter was able to buy lunch and build a relationship with a Muslim neighbor.

\$50 A Send City Missionary had a bus fare for a month to travel in an unreached area of his city.

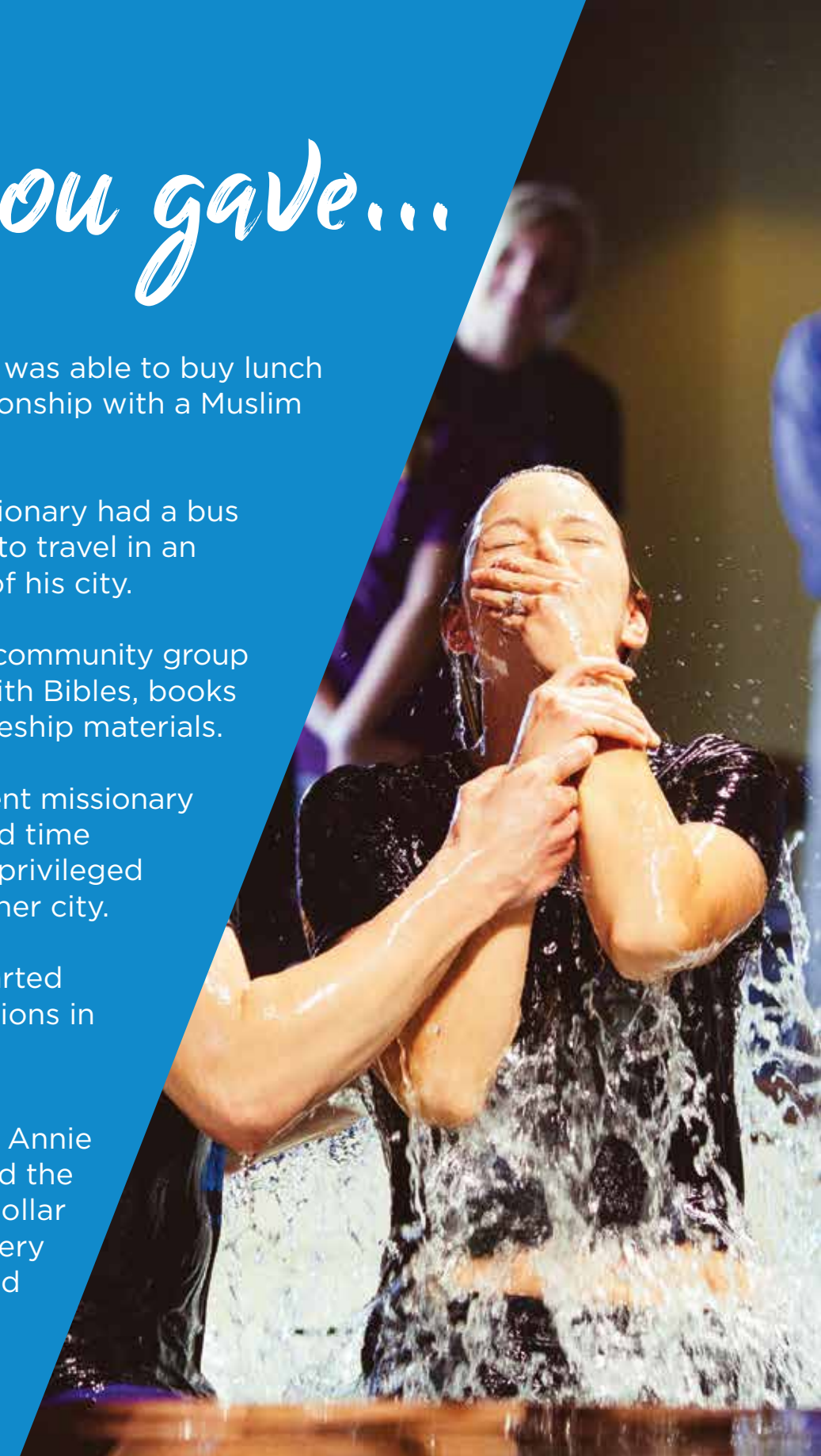
\$150 A church plant's community group was resourced with Bibles, books and other discipleship materials.

\$400 A GenSend student missionary was able to spend time mentoring underprivileged children in the inner city.

\$500 A block party started gospel conversations in a community.

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Heard

“I believe prayer is one of the most powerful tools we have, especially as a person who's moving their family into a community that is not only against the gospel but is a dangerous community. And whether you're in New Orleans or any other city or any other part of the world, He's in control.”

Justin Haynes, church planter at Refuge Church in New Orleans, on the importance of prayer in church planting. See Justin's testimony at namb.net/JustinHaynes.

“There's no loss in this life that can take away my victory in the next.”

Trip Lee, rapper, author and pastor at Cornerstone Church in Atlanta, at the Harvest America 2017 event in Phoenix, Arizona.

“Sin promises freedom and brings slavery. Sin promises success but it brings failure; it promises life but it brings death.”

Greg Laurie, author and pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, quoting Warren Wiersbe at the Harvest America 2017 event in Phoenix, Arizona.

“Churches plant churches, and churches send missionaries—churches of every size. Every church—all 47,000—Southern Baptist churches can be involved in missions. And that starts with prayer.”

Kevin Ezell, president of NAMB, on Pray for Planters during the NAMB presentation at the Southern Baptist Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. Sign up at PrayForPlanters.com.

Source: NAMB



The “unchurched” believer

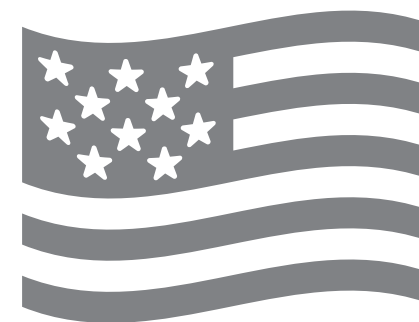
After surveying a group of Americans who have not attended church in the past six months but still self-identify as Christians, Barna Group discovered they rival regular church attenders on orthodox beliefs. Ninety-three percent of believers who do not attend church agreed that there is only one God, while 90% of church attenders agreed with the same statement. However, only 28% of the unchurched believers agreed they had a personal responsibility to tell others about their faith, while 56% of church goers felt responsibility for sharing their faith.

Source: *Christianity Today*, June 2017

Evangelicals in America

Evangelical Christians say it is becoming harder to live in America. In June 2016, 41% of Evangelicals say it is becoming harder; only 34% said so in 2014.

Source: *PewResearch.org*, July 14, 2016



“Adulting” defined

A recent poll asked Americans what it takes to be considered an adult today. Answers ranged from flossing daily (18%) to doing your own taxes (38%). The number one response? Paying your own bills (81%).

The U.S. Census Bureau compared answers to the same question from people ages 18-34 from 1975 and 2016: What does “adulthood” mean? The most common response from the 1975 group was “having a family,” whereas 60% of the 2016 group of millennials answered “finishing school.”

Source: *BuzzFeed News*, April 30, 2017, and *RelevantMagazine.com*, April 20, 2017

Are millennial workers more educated?



Source: *PewResearch.org*, May 16, 2017

In 2016, 40% of millennial workers ages 25-29 held a bachelor's degree which is substantially higher than the 32% of Gen Xers in 2000, 26% of Baby Boomers in 1985 and 16% of Silents in 1964. This increase can be attributed to the economic payoff of a bachelor's degree—greater today than ever before.

Most dangerous countries for Christians

The World Watch List 2017 was recently compiled by Open Doors, revealing the top 50 countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith. North Korea topped the list as the most dangerous country for Christians.

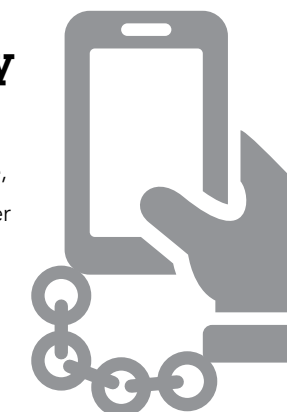
1. North Korea
2. Somalia
3. Afghanistan
4. Pakistan
5. Sudan
6. Syria
7. Iraq
8. Iran
9. Yemen
10. Eritrea

Source: Open Doors, World Watch List, 2017

Technology addiction

Millennials, on average, check their phones over 75 times a day.

Source: *The Week*, February 10, 2017



Christian growth in Sub-Saharan Africa

In 2015, 26% of the world's Christian population lived in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pew Research Center predicts it will continue to grow. In fact, they foresee that 42% of Christians in the world will call Sub-Saharan Africa home by 2060.

Source: PewResearch.org, April 19, 2017

Taking debt to the grave

Three-quarters of Americans die in debt. An average outstanding debt balance is \$61,554, which includes mortgage debt, and the average credit card debt is \$4,531.

Source: *The Week*, April 7, 2017



The tech boom continues

There are currently over 500,000 computing jobs open in the U.S., but only 60,000 students graduated with a computer science degree in 2015. It is predicted that by 2020, there will be 1.4 million computer science-related jobs.

Source: *The Week*, March 31, 2017



How “churched” is America?

According to the Barna Group’s most recent study, 38% of Americans are active church members, meaning they have attended church in the past seven days. Throughout America, the top “churched” cities—or the cities with the highest percentages of active church members—are Chattanooga, Tennessee; Salt Lake City, Utah; Augusta and Aiken, Georgia; Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Birmingham, Anniston and Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Source: Barna Research, May 26, 2017

Noted

Mixed marriages

Seventeen percent of marriages in the U.S. in 2015 were of different races or ethnicities. Over the past 50 years, the U.S. has seen a fivefold increase in interracial marriages. According to Pew Research, White Americans are the least likely to enter a mixed marriage while Asian and Hispanic people are the most likely.

Source: *The Week*, June 2, 2017

World’s best countries

In a survey conducted by *U.S. News & World Report*, the U.S. fell three places the past year on the list of best countries. Switzerland made the number one spot with Canada following as number two. The survey, which based its scores according to metrics like citizenship, cultural influence and quality of life, also included the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Sweden, France, Australia and Norway in the top 10.

Source: USNews.com, 2016

Millennials view on sex

Match.com’s annual survey, *Singles in America*, found millennials to have a casual approach to sex. Forty-eight percent agreed that they would likely have sex on a first date. Nearly 30% view sex as a way to decide if they really love someone or not.

Source: *Relevant*, May/June 2017

India workforce

About 40% of the world’s freelance jobs are filled by independent workers in India where 95% of the population is unreachable.

Source: Spera Report and Joshua Project

The longest commute

Los Angeles was named the most congested city in the world last year with residents sitting an average of 104 hours in traffic in 2016. Moscow and New York City came in at second and third.

Source: *The Week*, March 3, 2017



Underage drinking

Data from the CDC indicates that underage drinking is on the decline. In 1991, underage drinking hit a high of 50.8%. 2015 data shows a decrease to 32.8%.

Source: *TIME*, May 29, 2017



Istanbul

Istanbul is the only city in the world connecting two continents—Europe and Asia. Divided by the Bosphorus Strait, this bustling metropolis carries the distinction of “the place where East meets West,” and that striking blend of cultures creates a unique mission field with great gospel need and enormous potential in God’s redemption story.

It is said that Istanbul is like a person grasping in alternate directions. One hand reaches toward modernity, money and progress. The other hand strains to hold on to ancient traditions and Islamic faith.

Many from the Muslim world come to Istanbul for work or tourism. Additionally, 2.7 million Syrian refugees have fled to Turkey the past couple years and must pass through Istanbul. Because of that, Istanbul offers an extraordinary opportunity for Christians to reach the Muslim world with news of Jesus.

Sources: imb.org

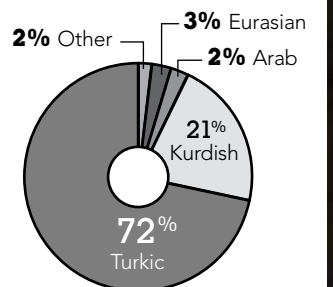


Learn more about IMB’s work in Central Asia at imb.org/Central-Asia.



Population

Istanbul’s population of **14.8 million** makes it the largest province of Turkey with **18.5 percent** of the country’s population.



Population

72% Turkic
21% Kurdish
2% Arab
3% Eurasian
2% Other



Religion

With an overwhelming **Islamic population of 96.5%**, Turkey is divided between Muslims and those who practice a more devout Islam. Small Orthodox, Catholic and Jewish communities still exist in Turkey. Evangelical Protestant Christianity is slowly growing as Muslims turn to faith in Christ. Estimates of **evangelical Christians** in Turkey **range from 5,000 to 6,000** people.

Ahuntsic



Chad Vandiver grew up as a missionary kid in Europe and Africa. He and his wife, Shelly, now serve with the North American Mission Board in Montreal. Learn more about the ministry climate in Monteval at namb.net/Ahuntsic.



Jackson Ntumba and Lizanne Loder are using their lives to serve people from all kinds of backgrounds in Ahuntsic. Learn more about their journey to church planting at namb.net/Ahuntsic.



Aaron and Elizabeth Hitchcock traveled with a short-term mission team from Troy, Alabama, to support church planting efforts in Ahuntsic. Learn more about the family's experience at namb.net/Ahuntsic.



New believer Emilie Carle-Tetrault (right) is helping plant a church in the neighborhood where she grew up. Hear her testimony at namb.net/Ahuntsic.

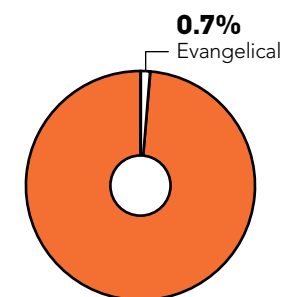
The streets are named after saints, and churches sit on almost every corner, but for this Canadian city, things are not what they seem. Montreal and its surrounding province, Quebec, are filled with empty churches that either remain vacant or are on the cusp of closing.

Until a few decades ago, the Catholic church was in charge of Quebec's education and government. When that dissipated, the majority of Montreal residents viewed Catholicism as part of their cultural heritage and nothing more.

But Canadian National Baptists are beginning to see breakthroughs thanks to the work of Baptist church planters and supportive church planting networks.

First-time church planter of La Chapelle (Ahuntsic campus), Jackson Ntumba, was born in the Congo and then grew up in Paris, France. He had no idea until he met his wife, Lizanne, who was from Quebec, that they'd one day plant a church in her home province.

"It's so important for us not to just plant a church," Jackson said. "Church is good, but God is better. Together my wife and I prayed, fasted and God revealed His plan—that is, exactly what He wanted to do with us."



Religion
Quebec is only **0.5 percent evangelical**, and Montreal is only **0.7 percent**. Miraculously, there are pockets of openness like Ahuntsic—population of 130,000—to church planting efforts. Montreal may appear religiously empty, but church planters like Jackson see vast potential among the spiritual wilderness.

Sources: NAMB Research



Go to namb.net/Ahuntsic and follow NAMB on social media to learn more about the church being planted there.

Bivocational to covocational church planting

A conversation between Jeff Christopherson, vice president of Send Network for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), and Brad Brisco, covocational church planting catalyst

JEFF CHRISTOPHERSON: Tell me about your journey into bivocational church planting.

BRAD BRISCO: I became a Christian in my late 20s. My brother and I were in the restaurant business. We owned several frozen yogurt shops and a bakery and deli, too. When I became a Christian, I thought I had to give that up and go to seminary.

If I knew then what I know now, I wouldn't have given up the business. When my brother and I would go into town, we were instantly recognized. I think about how wonderful it would have been to plant a church because we had so many relational connections.

That's part of how we can change the conversation—by shifting the paradigm and training

planters to rethink how they plant. We want to help people realize they can potentially stay where they are and plant a church at the same time.

JC: If we're going to reach all of North America, it's not only going to be through the traditional means of church planting. How do you establish churches when congregations can't afford a full-time pastor or do things people think churches should do?

BB: It starts by changing the conversation. Bivocational church planting is not just the future of church planting; it's the present. There are so many benefits to planting a church bivocationally. One is missional engagement. Having another vocation outside of church planting gives the planter more opportunities than a full-time pastor. It also gives them street cred.

Inside the church, people see that he works a full-time job while planting a church and ask themselves, "Why can't I?"

PHOTOS BY NICK DRAKE



Brad Brisco knows firsthand what a difference having a secular career during your church planting journey can make.

Jeff Christopherson and Brad Brisco are champions of the covocational church planting model, insisting it's one of the best tools to reach all of North America with the gospel.



Outside the church, being a pastor doesn't always carry a lot of weight. Planting bivocationally establishes credibility that you're in the community for the long haul—you're putting down roots to help the community outside a church's walls.

JC: Is that the image people have when they hear the expression “planting bivocationally”?

BB: No, and I think that's why we must change the language. By default, we compartmentalize our vocations into two separate things. Covocational makes more sense. It's derived from a Latin word which means “together” or “in common.” Words like coauthor, copilot, commission or companion speak to how two things are brought together.

JC: Often, the image we associate with bivocational or covocational planting is of a church planter who isn't financially making it. They have two jobs for the finances because the thing they really want to do is be a pastor. That is a reality for some, but if we're ever going to see movement in church planting, it's not going to be dependent on that model. Church and work should be complementary—where a leader can see his job and his community as a covocation.

BB: We're blowing up the sacred versus secular ideas we have in regards to vocation. If God reigns over all things—and He does—then all things are sacred. We need to help people see that regardless

of the calling God has placed on them to be a doctor, a teacher or a school bus driver, it is a legitimate calling of God, and so is church planting if they are called to plant.

JC: When Jesus walked on earth, He walked in secular and sacred space. The Pharisees knew everything from paces they had to take to certain washings and ceremonies they had to do. If Jesus had thought that was important, He might have spoken of it. But He didn't. Instead, He spoke of the kingdom of God and bringing light to darkness.

BB: Ultimately, that is what church planters do, whether in their congregations or in their communities. With covocational church planting, their congregations can be their communities and vice versa. Plus, if a church planter has a calling in the marketplace, it provides salary, stability and benefits. It gives them more room to breathe. When less is needed to financially support the planter, more is available to support mission and ministry.

At NAMB, we have developed training geared specifically toward covocational church planters. The training is very accessible; they can engage at their own pace, organized around the concepts of Christology, missiology, ecclesiology and, ultimately, disciple-making.

It's a 40-lesson series that begins with a rethinking of some basic issues and ends with lessons on very

specific covocational issues like self management, family management, soul care and creating margin.

JC: How does this training help?

BB: It helps give church planters a new image for what it looks like to plant a church. The training focuses on a “What would Jesus do?” model to help them unlearn and relearn some things about missiology based off what Christ did first.

JC: If planters simply approached a city saying, “How would Jesus enter into this city? What would He do first?” it may not be a Sunday service. This gives church planters the freedom to establish more biblical expressions of what church could and should be.

BB: If a church is driven by God's mission, then there ought to be lots of wild and wonderful expressions of church!

I think the ideal way to plant in the future will be teams of covocational church planters that work together and can each give eight, 10 or 12 hours a week to church planting, but they also have other gigs going on. How awesome would that be?

JC: I would want to be part of that church.

BB: Right! But the way that has to start is by NAMB helping people rethink vocation. **[OM]**

 Interested in becoming a covocational church planter? Go to namb.net/SendMe.

 See Dr. Marino Martinez-Vargas' testimony of covocational church planting at namb.net/DrMartinezVargas.

Mexico City is a hub of economic and social activity in Central America. The metropolis is responsible for more than 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The challenge for mañana: Mobilizing the megacity

By Emelee Austen and Charles Braddix

Mexico City is a global city. IMB missionary Rick Martinez says people travel there from places such as Germany, the Middle East, Africa and China.

"One of the things that we're praying about is how can we leverage this movement that's happening from Mexico City to other parts of the world," he says. "Imagine reaching a successful businessman for Christ, who already has connections to the Middle East or Asia. Just imagine that flow of the gospel, leading from Mexico City to those places."

Many of the 13 IMB team members in Mexico City are adjusting to their role as mobilizers, spreading the gospel from Mexico City worldwide. They also struggle with the megacity lifestyle that challenges their ability to build relationships, but God is working and teaching them how to work within this new culture.

Working through the busyness

"How do you break down the walls of everyone being so busy to get to know people?" team member Debbie Hurst asks. "People are driven, very focused on their careers and very, very busy."

The team is praying for people who can help them make disciples in the work world.

Rick says the challenge is teaching people how to share the gospel in their natural work patterns. The team hopes to connect with people experienced in this type of ministry, learn from them and try to discover ways to partner with them.

Rick and fellow church planter Carlos Llambes hope more Christian professionals join them in Mexico City.

"We need people to come to the mission field via new pathways, whether they be a professional, a tradesman, a businessman, a doctor, a lawyer or an architect, working together to reach the nations," Carlos says.

Discipling students

Anne Beel, who leads the team with her husband Todd, knows people from Mexico have gospel opportunities that Americans don't.

"Their passports can get them into certain countries where I can't go," she says. "Because of this, we pray more Mexican students in the universities who are believers will be disciplined to go into those countries. We pray they recognize God's call on their lives to go and to have greater, more wide-spread impact."

“We need people to come to the mission field via new pathways, whether they be a professional, a tradesman, a businessman, a doctor, a lawyer or an architect, working together to reach the nations.” — Carlos Llambes, church planter

Will Wright, a journeyman who spends his time with college students in Mexico City, has been asking God to put faithful young men in his path who are willing to initiate work in groups the IMB team has found lack a gospel witness.

“I’d love to see the Lord send people I can work with to engage these lost areas and groups in the city,” he says. “I know it depends completely on the Lord bringing them to me.”

Commissioning women

Rick’s wife, Kelly Martinez, has optimized her time watching her daughters practice gymnastics to befriend other moms waiting at the gym for hours after long work days. Kelly and her daughters consistently pray for the coach and welcome her and a family from the team into their home where they’re able to talk about the gospel.

“You have to try to minister to people where they are,” Kelly says. “They are so very busy. Because of traffic, getting anywhere takes forever. Wherever you’ve gone, look for opportunities there because that’s where you’re living life anyway, right?”

Anne said the women in her small group have seen opportunities to be part of God’s plan for the nations through daily interactions, whether it’s at

work or through their husbands’ job or with their kids. She says the women are aware of people around them from cultures that have less access to the gospel, and they want to be “salt and light” in those relationships.

Mobilizing the evangelical church

Team leader Todd Beel says five to seven percent of Mexico City’s population is evangelical Christian. “That may not sound like much, but multiply it against 20-plus million people—that’s a lot of people,” he says.

“How can they make a difference in the world?” Todd asks. “That’s one of the big questions we have. How can they be mobilized to go to all of the world for the gospel?”

Considering the harvest in Mexico City, Anne says, “We need to pray God calls out His people here in Mexico, those He would like to go into the most unreached pockets of the city, the country and then out into the nations.”

“Thankfully, a lot of the Mexican people are responding,” Todd adds.



Mexico city is filled with people rushing from one place to the next. The challenge for missionaries is to build relationships in these daily rhythms.

Training the next generation of leaders

Billy Hurst works with Baptist seminaries and the Baptist convention in Mexico City to prepare church leaders to take the gospel across cultural boundaries.

“We’re training our students to learn how to make better adjustments in language, in culture, in teaching and postmodernism,” he says.

They’re equipping students to work both at the local churches and overseas, “so they’ll be more prepared to handle the challenges they’re going to face, so that the people have a chance to hear the gospel.” [OM]

Emelee Austen and Charles Braddix write for IMB.



Your gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® send and support IMB missionaries like the Mexico City team. For more stories of how your giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering makes an eternal impact, go to imb.org/LMCO.

Reaching the next generation

By Meredith Yackel

Throughout history, college campuses have been a central location for evangelical revival. Many of the greatest revivals in North America have swept through the university context.

Contrary to the spiritual principals most of North America's earliest universities were founded on, today's university context is overwhelmingly secular. Barna Research has found that 64 percent of Christians in North America accept Christ before the age of 18, and only one in four born-again Christians embrace Christ after their 21st birthday, meaning college is one of the last times people are open to receiving the gospel.

"There are only a couple of windows after high school when people are open to learning," says

Paul Sabino, pastor of Candeo Church on the campus of Northern Iowa State. "One of those is college. After that, there is the first year of marriage and the birth of a first child. There aren't many windows in people's lives where they are truly open."

A collegiate network

The Salt Company campus ministry was founded in 1986 by Troy Nesbitt, a man determined to reach students on Iowa State's campus.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SALT COMPANY

College students in the Midwest are engaged in worship, discipleship and evangelism through the Salt Company.



Large crowds of students gather on Lawther Field on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa for a Salt Company event.

“There are only a couple of windows after high school when people are open to learning. One of those is college.”



After a few years as a collegiate outreach, the Salt Company campus ministry decided to establish their own brick and mortar on campus called Cornerstone Church.

As a freshman at Iowa State in 1992, Paul found himself at a Salt Company event during his first week of college. Paul remained active in the church throughout his college career. Upon graduating, he joined the staff at Cornerstone as director of Salt Company and then as family pastor. After a decade, Paul felt God calling him in a new direction.

"I began to have a growing desire to emerge as a teaching pastor," says Paul. "I didn't initially think that would be through church planting, but when Troy asked me if I would be interested in planting a

church at Northern Iowa, I felt it was time for me to move forward in faith."

Candeo Church launched in 2013 when five families from Cornerstone moved to plant a church at Northern Iowa State—the last university campus in Iowa where Salt Company was not represented.

Candeo is one of eight church plants Cornerstone has sent to reach university students. Their goal is to plant at least 20 churches in the next five years with an ultimate aspiration of planting at all 81 major campuses in the Midwest in the next 12 years.

"If we accomplish this, it would be a miracle and a pretty cool thing," says Troy. "I recently transitioned from being the lead pastor at Cornerstone



The Salt Company celebrates the baptism of one of their collegiate members.

5 Misconceptions about collegiate church plants

By Brian N. Frye

1. Collegiate churches are just for college students. In reality, most of the collegiate churches we work with in North America are around 30 to 90 percent college students. Rarely will a church start 100 percent collegian. As the founding group ages, so does the church. While collegiate churches start with a lot of collegians, most become community-focused churches within a decade. What sets collegiate churches apart is their commitment to remain focused on reaching lost collegians.

2. Collegiate churches are not financially sustainable. This critique would be accurate if planting a successful church required buying a worship building, employing one or more full-time pastors and funding a full buffet of ministry programs. Fortunately, collegiate churches often start with pastors who are young, raise their own support and work hard to optimize savings. Meeting in homes and coffee shops cuts expenses, as does meeting on campus or in a nearby church. Time after time we've watched collegiate churches launch cheap but grow into sustainable, reproducing churches.

3. College students aren't old enough to start a church. From the 12 disciples to key players in the Great Awakening to mission leaders like Lottie Moon, God has consistently used college-aged people to build churches and launch movements. This trend continues today. Leaders like Rick Warren, John Mark Clifton, Jeff Christopherson, Clint Clifton, Dhati Lewis and others planted churches in their twenties. Undoubtedly, younger planters will face challenges, create messes and make mistakes, but they will also learn earlier on and have time to plant more churches. We should not encourage them to delay but to start now. The call to make disciples doesn't begin after college.

4. Universities won't allow churches to meet on campus. If a church asks a university for permission to launch there, the answer will likely be "no." If a group of students, however, organizes itself to start a church on campus, the prospects are different. Universities are almost always interested in student organizations that engage in healthy, life-giving relationships within the university community. Universities do best when student life is thriving and retention rates are high. By living out the gospel, churches in university contexts provide many benefits that contribute to the university's bottom line.

5. College is where people lose faith. Fortunately, collegiate churches focus the majority of their energy on making disciples and planting churches to bring lost students to Christ. Their goal is to make disciples and then launch them out into the harvest. Because collegiate churches maintain a high focus on reaching the lost and prepare students to start, lead or serve through church plants, they provide some of the highest yield in mission's investment in the church today.

Brian N. Frye serves as National Collegiate Strategist for the North American Mission Board.

“If you want to continue to reach the next generation, you have to allow them to have vested leadership within your church.”

to direct the Salt Network, through the North American Mission Board (NAMB), to focus more on expanding our network to reach more college students. Kevin Ezell (the president of NAMB) has really motivated us to look beyond Iowa and be more strategic about planting in areas that reach the city and the campus.”

Raising up leaders

“The vision that drives our church is reaching the next generation,” says Troy. “If you want to continue to reach the next generation, you have to allow them to have vested leadership within your church.

“We have partnered with Midwestern Theological Seminary and started Cornerstone School of Theology, where you can get a Master of Arts degree

in theological studies. The interns in our residency program are getting their theological education while doing ministry at the same time. The purpose is to raise up new leaders to go and plant in different places.”

One of those leaders is Stephen Jones. Stephen attended Iowa State and was introduced to Salt Company his first semester of college, too.

“College was a turning point,” says Stephen. “I was thankful for my Christian upbringing, but I wasn’t sure if it was for me. God providentially put guys into my life who pointed me toward Christ my first year in college. Being around a community of believers who were my age, learning to live on mission in a secular context and learning to share my faith with students far from Christ was very transformational for me.”

Although Stephen spent his college career pursuing a pre-dental degree, he admits his plans were “flipped upside down” when he started to feel called into full-time ministry during his senior year. His calling was confirmed by leaders at Cornerstone, and he is now in their residency program through the school of theology.

A modern revival

“Our goal has always been to be a multigenerational church that aggressively pursues the next



Discipleship and leadership are pillars of the Salt Company’s model for reaching the university context.

generation,” says Troy. “We have all the ministries you would want in a church, but college ministry is our primary ministry since that is our context.”

Troy has been amazed at how God continues to bless and grow all the churches in the Salt Network. Across all of their campuses, they see a weekly average of 2,242 college students, and in the past year they have baptized 465 in their congregations.

“In my opinion, every church should do everything it can to invest in university students. People get away from college ministry because students don’t pay the bills, but when you have 20-year-olds fully engaged in worship, it does amazing things for your church.” **[OM]**

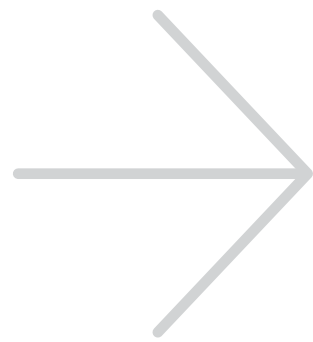
Meredith Yackel writes for the North American Mission Board.



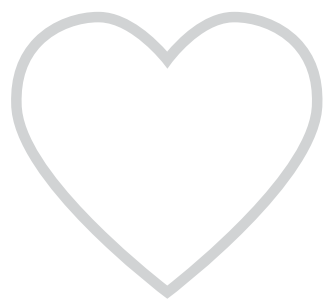
Learn more about collegiate church planting at namb.net/Collegiate-Church-Planting.



Commit to praying for a university church plant through Pray for Planters. Visit PrayForPlanters.com to sign up and connect with church planters in a university context for whom you can pray.



Finding family



By Josie Bingham

“*W*hen we arrived at the orphanage, we saw what the real China was like—the culture, the poverty and the absence of Western anything. We were in the slums of the city at a run-down building that seemed to be past its prime. But we were greeted by the orphanage directors and welcomed into their office where they served us tea in plastic cups.”

Over a decade before and thousands of miles away in Athens, Georgia, Lindsay met Slate Fluker at a college party where they drank sweet tea from plastic cups and bonded over heady discussions like God’s sovereignty and how to be a light in a dark world.

After college, the couple married and became a rowdy tribe of five with three sons, but their family wasn’t complete yet.

Called to adopt

In January 2012, Lindsay saw *Bloodlines*, a documentary about John Piper’s decision to adopt transracially.

“Something about Piper’s story moved me,” says Lindsay. “Maybe it was his determination to step outside the racial boundaries as a man living in the deep South. Maybe it



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CINDY STANSBERRY AND FAMILY

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Today, most of the abandoned babies in China have medical needs. Physical defects such as cleft lips or missing limbs are considered “unlucky.” Many parents are told by doctors that their children’s illnesses will cost the families more money than they have, so the parents often feel they have no choice but to leave their children, hoping the orphanages will arrange life-saving surgeries.

Because of strict population control policies, some parents may also be fined up to three times their annual income if they are found to have more than one child.

“Adoption is God’s very heart,” Lindsay says. “The gospel says we were all once spiritual orphans, alone and without hope. But, God adopted us into His family and has given us all the rights and privileges of His very own! This news is even better than having our sins cancelled because it gives us status and meaning and a new family!”

“They asked us to promise we would never abandon or abuse her. That brought tears to my eyes. Camille’s past was hard and sad. Slate and I have both promised her over and over, since those first 24 hours, that she would always be ours and that she would always be safe.”

Family support from the church family

Many adoptions can cost more than \$30,000. That’s why the North American Mission Board’s Adoption Fund for Ministers exists. The fund gives grants to Southern Baptist pastors and denominational workers to help with costs as they seek to raise support for adoptions.

“There are a number of men and women within the Southern Baptist Convention’s vocational ministry who are taking in orphans and the needy,” says Lynette Ezell, an adoptive mom and champion of the Adoption Fund for Ministers. “God has called some to adopt children and give them a permanent family. He has called some to help others adopt by supplying the necessities, support system or finances.”

“When God calls a family to bring an orphan into their home through adoption, there are a multitude of barriers to overcome,” says Tera Melber, another adoptive mom who helps with the administration of the fund. “But there is so much power in love. It’s amazing how Jesus works through adoption and the adoption process. He brings life to the whole thing.”

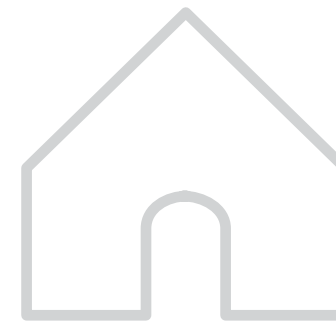
The Flukers brought their daughter, Camille, home three years ago.

“We have been asking for Jesus to pour out His love for Camille through us,” Lindsay says. “And we sincerely feel that He is! This adoption has given us a deeper understanding of how the Lord has brought us into His family and how He chose to lavish us with love through Christ! As we always tell our boys, and now Camille, God’s love is a never-changing, never-giving-up, unbreaking, always and forever love.

“We are so humbled and grateful for the many people who have asked how they can help us in the process,” says Lindsay. “It truly takes a village to adopt a child, and we learned the humbling lesson that we could not do it alone!”



“We are so thrilled and grateful for the generous grant from the Adoption Fund for Ministers in helping us adopt our daughter from China. We’re celebrating the years ahead and are excited to be part of James 1:27.”



Home forever

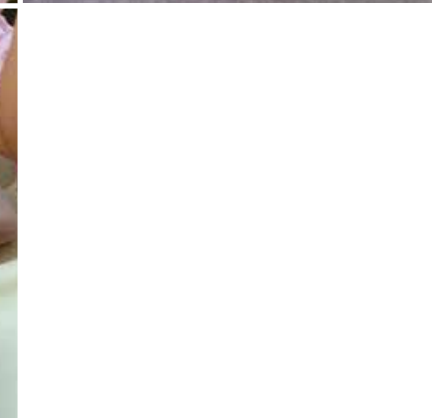
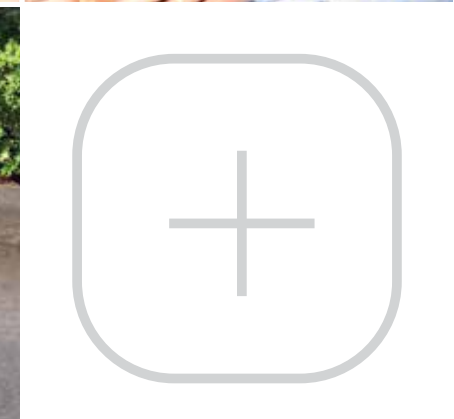
On Tuesday, August 19, 2014, the Flukers’ adoption was finalized. Camille Fluker was officially their own daughter.

“They asked us to promise we would never abandon or abuse her,” Lindsay says. “That brought tears to my eyes. Camille’s past was hard and sad. Slate and I have both promised her over and over, since those first 24 hours, that she would always be ours and that she would always be safe.”

Today, Camille’s preschool artwork hangs on the fridge while her 16-year-old brother, Slate Jr., finishes sophomore year of high school with a driver’s license, her brother, Mat, has completed middle school and her third brother, Jim, is filling his late-elementary-school years with a heavy sports schedule.

“We are so thrilled and grateful for the generous grant from the Adoption Fund for Ministers in helping us adopt our daughter from China,” Lindsay says. “We’re celebrating the years ahead and are excited to be part of James 1:27. This verse says, ‘Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress ...’ and is truly the heart-song of our family. It’s a joy to watch His hand continue to work in our lives. Camille will forever be a Fluker and will grow up in a home where the name of Jesus is praised!” **[OM]**

Josie Bingham is a writer for the North American Mission Board.



To learn more or give to the Adoption Fund for Ministers, visit namb.net/MinistersAdoptionFund.



Get equipped as a foster or adoptive family with the Adopting and Fostering Home podcast at namb.net/Podcast.

IMB short-term workers hike across
bridges built to avoid landslides
and rugged terrain in Nepal.

Missional mountain eering

Taking the gospel to the tops of the earth



A Tibetan guesthouse owner stands in his doorway while trekkers pass by.

IMB PHOTOS

Getting to gospel conversations requires years of building deep and meaningful friendships—a crucial foundation needed to earn the right to speak into the life of a Tibetan.

hours the Bagbys and their neighbors watched their homes shift in a constant string of aftershocks. Story after story of devastation and death followed.

The next morning, the Bagbys learned that one village they had planned to visit in the coming months was buried under rubble when a glacier broke off the mountain causing a landslide. The village was home to Tibetans the Bagbys were working to reach.

Everyone in the village died.

“Now, it’s just gravel,” Radford says. “There’s still some glacier and some snow, but no people.”

Radford was overwhelmed by the loss of life, and he questioned why the earthquake happened before his trip where he was planning on sharing how the villagers could have assurance of salvation through Christ’s life, death and resurrection.

To the tops of the earth

More than 20 groups of ethnic Tibetans are dispersed among the Himalayan mountains and valleys of northern Nepal. Reaching the most isolated groups can take an entire month of travel—most on foot, climbing thousands of feet each day.

“I look at all these different Tibetan groups pock-eted in all these Himalayas that are so difficult to

reach,” Sarah says. “And in my mind, I’m like, ‘Ugh, it might be that the tops of the earth are those last few places where someone will believe because of the difficulty to get to them.’ ... And so, my prayer is that we can finish the task in these places.”

Each ethnic group maintains its own distinct culture and language giving rise to considerable challenges for clear and heartfelt communication. Getting to gospel conversations requires years of building deep and meaningful friendships—a crucial foundation needed to earn the right to speak into the life of a Tibetan.

“You can just sense that there is some level of tension involved with the direction the conversation is going, especially in the area of spiritual things,” Radford says. “You can’t start at having a deep conversation. You have to have that relationship.”

Tibetan Buddhism

The one commonality among the groups—their religion—is perhaps the greatest stronghold.

“To be Tibetan is to be Tibetan Buddhist,” Sarah says. “They do not believe they could be any other religion and be Tibetan.”

Radford and Sarah estimate that Tibetans need around eight years of exposure to the gospel before they decide to follow Christ. Most Tibetans

By Polly Maclean

n a Saturday late in April 2015, the earthquake alarm in Radford and Sarah Bagby’s* home in Nepal rang loudly.

Beeeeee, ding, ding, ding, ding!

Sarah grabbed their daughter and took cover under the dining room table. Radford ran to the room where their son slept, snatched him from the bed to the floor and reflexively pulled the mattress over their bodies.

In a matter of seconds, their house started shaking up and down. When Sarah peeked through the

window, she saw buildings moving.

“I just thought, ‘God, why?’” Sarah says. “You called us to Nepal, and here we are. We obeyed. And now we’re all going to die. What is your plan?”

After two minutes, the earthquake stopped.

Radford and Sarah took their children outside. Everything seemed fine, but over the next few

When teams leave Kathmandu to reach the villages in Nepal's mountains, their first day involves a 10-hour jeep ride across landslide-ridden terrain and steep cliffs exceeding 1,000-foot drops.



“There are so many things that are in their way—so much persecution, so many family issues. There are a lot of barriers to the gospel.”

who have heard of Jesus believe Christianity is a foreign religion good for other people but not for themselves. Their own communities are centered around the practices of Tibetan Buddhism from the way they dress each morning to walking the *kora* around sacred sites to spinning prayer wheels and using prayer beads in the recitation of mantras.

“They’re trying to gain enough merit so that when this life is over, they don’t have to come back anymore,” Radford says. “Tibetan Buddhism looks very peaceful and very kind and generous, but in reality, a lot of the people who are in Tibetan Buddhism are very afraid. There’s no assurance in this religion, in this faith.”

Those who become Christian will face severe opposition within their close-knit communities. They will be disowned by family, threatened physically and lose important relationships for trading and farming.

“There are so many things that are in their way—so much persecution, so many family issues,” Radford says. “There are a lot of barriers to the gospel.”

A strong foundation

In the aftermath of the earthquake, Nepal worked to heal from the loss of more than 8,000 lives rebuilding homes, infrastructure and historical sites that were damaged and destroyed. Radford, Sarah and their children also spent the next few months laying down their fears.

“The earthquake taught me that I have to trust in God and I have to depend on Him in everything,” Sarah says. “And I had to trust in Him even when the ground, which I have always trusted, was shaking underneath me.”

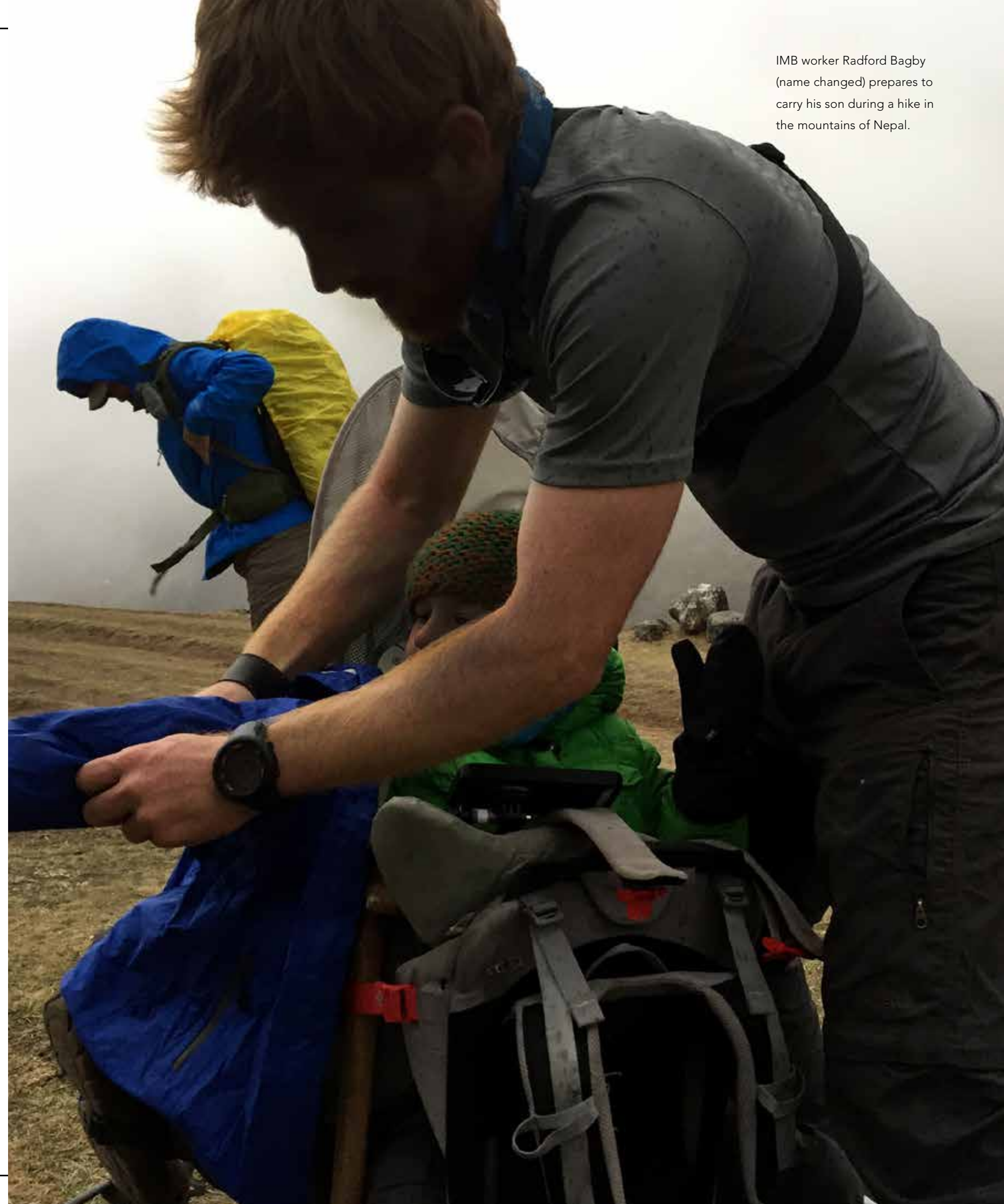
Their family took comfort in God’s sovereign plan and His promise that one day, someone from every nation, tribe, people and language will stand before the throne of Jesus.

“We’re starting to see now how His plan is working in the lives of the Tibetans,” Radford says.

Trekking with children

The Bagbys traveled several days with their two toddlers to visit an area near the village that had been destroyed. They found people living under

IMB worker Radford Bagby (name changed) prepares to carry his son during a hike in the mountains of Nepal.



Together, with their Tibetan Christian friends, Radford and Sarah helped the people of the valley uncover foundations for new houses. In the process, they built deeper relationships with them that normally take seven or eight years of persistence.

tarps. When the survivors saw Radford and Sarah's children, many of them cried. The Bagbys learned the Tibetans had lost nieces, nephews and their own children under the rocks.

"These were the first children they had seen in over 14 months," Radford says. "The Tibetans thanked us for bringing our children and told us, 'It's brought joy.'"

Sarah says she sees their work as a family vocation.

"I didn't feel like God wanted it just to be my husband's job," she says. "We've been able to go on two different trekking trips with our whole family. It is more difficult. Crying does happen. Kids are dirty. But they've been so beneficial. When we walk into a village, in my experience, deeper conversations happen faster [with] kids."

Moving mountains

Together, with their Tibetan Christian friends, Radford and Sarah helped the people of the valley uncover foundations for new houses. In the process, they built deeper relationships with them that normally take seven or eight years of persistence.

They had real conversations with Tibetans who questioned their Buddhist upbringings after the earthquake. They wanted to hear about Jesus.

"Because of that earthquake, Tibetans are now hearing the gospel for the first time," Radford says.

If you visit the valley today, you'll see new homes and meet Tibetans who are more open to learning about Christ than they have ever been. Radford and Sarah believe the earthquake has changed Nepal. They have seen God at work through terrible loss and tragedy and doors open for the gospel to be proclaimed in places it has never been.

The Bagbys' prayer is that one day "Tibetan" will no longer be synonymous with "Buddhist" but with "Christian." They pray the shrines in Nepal will become tourist attractions of an old religion, that Tibetan folk songs will become songs about God, that monasteries will become schools where people learn about Jesus and that the chants of the monks will become prayers to God. **[OM]**

Polly Maclean is a writer for the IMB.

*Name changed

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Your gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® send and support IMB missionaries like the Bagbys. For more stories of how your giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering transforms lives, go to imb.org/LMCO.



PrayForPlanters.com

Frontline faith

By Andrea Fanning

A 20-year-old sailor walks out onto the fantail, an open-air deck at the rear of the ship. He has just completed an intense morning of emergency drills. Four months at sea, two more until this deployment ends. The next port is Dubai, a place he's never been. He likes the adventure but misses home. He wants to be strong for his family but doesn't want them to know he is struggling at sea. If only he had someone to talk to about all of this. This is the mission field of an on-board chaplain.



“I want to produce the very best, most professional naval chaplains to be excellent in character and competence. I want them to strive for that same passion in professional development.”

“We provide care exactly where people are,” says Captain Steve Moses, Chaplain Corps, U.S. Navy, the commanding officer of the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center (NCSC) at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. “Wherever our troops go, we go with them. We wear the same uniforms and go to sea or into war zones.”

Called and qualified

Chaplain Moses understands the demands of military life. The son of a serviceman, he was born in Germany and lived in Arizona, Florida, Texas and the Netherlands, among other places around the world. He enlisted in the Air Force and was active from 1979 to 1988, serving primarily as an avionics technician and technical instructor. After leaving the Air Force and becoming a pastor for a time, his call took a turn, drawing him back into military life. He was commissioned as a U.S. Navy chaplain in 1994.

Between operational tours and shore assignments, Chaplain Moses has served alongside troops in ports and forts from Japan to Illinois. Earlier this year, he became NCSC’s commanding officer.

“This is the place where all chaplains who are going to serve in the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines come for their basic leadership course on professional naval chaplaincy,” he says. “This is where they

learn how to translate what they already know and have experienced as pastors while they are on active duty or in reserves for the military.”

In his new role as commander, Chaplain Moses is doing his part to equip, train, motivate and inspire. He can often be found teaching classes or in the gym challenging the leaders and instructors.

“I have a passion for excellence, and I’ve made that as a philosophy for this institution,” he says.

“I want to produce the very best, most professional naval chaplains to be excellent in character and competence. I want them to strive for that same passion in professional development. I also have a passion for excellence in professional satisfaction. I want them to enjoy their jobs.”

Unique mission field

“It is an honor to be here to train these leaders,” says Captain Moses. “Chaplains have the unique opportunity to minister to people in places that local pastors cannot go, and we want to make sure every person who comes through the school is equipped for that responsibility. We get to talk with atheists and agnostics, people who have different beliefs. Because we provide care and support, doors are open for evangelism and sharing the love of Christ. It really is an amazing job.”



The Naval Chaplaincy School trains chaplains for the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and Merchant Marines.

Though many chaplains are Christians, Chaplain Moses explains that there are 225 faith groups represented in chaplaincy.

“We are very careful to provide support across religious boundaries,” he says. “We try to treat faith groups as equally as possible. We are the champion of the commander’s requirement. We

have a golden opportunity to care for people where they are, to pray for an atheist or an agnostic and to provide training and support to those in command. It’s not that we’re excluded from doing ministry; we’re learning to provide a broader ministry so we can reach more people.

“A chaplain is the only person in the military who

“ Chaplains have the unique opportunity to minister to people in places that local pastors cannot go, and we want to make sure every person who comes through the school is equipped for that responsibility.”

is fully a non-combatant. Doctors and nurses can carry a sidearm for the protection of their patients, but we don’t employ a weapon. We bring our Bibles, our relationship with God and our faith into combat.”

Approximately 840 chaplains are currently on active duty and around 400 are in the reserves, but more are needed.

“When I was in seminary, a chaplain came to my class; he was in his summer whites, and he talked to our class about military chaplaincy. It opened my mind to how I could provide ministry to military folks. We want people to know that this is an option for those interested in ministry and an incredible opportunity to share the gospel.” [OM]

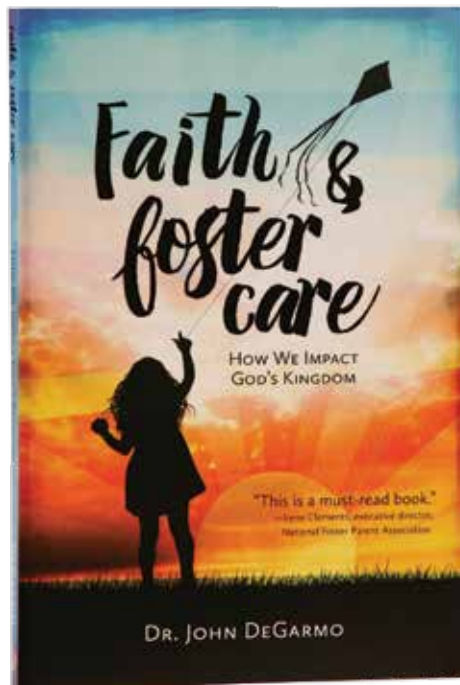
Andrea Fanning is a freelance writer living in Birmingham, Alabama.

Learn more about the thousands of Southern Baptist chaplains serving in military, hospital, corporate, Disaster Relief and public safety settings at namb.net/Chaplaincy.



Chaplain Moses is entrusted with the leadership development of young military chaplains.

Ministry Gospel



Faith & Foster Care

John DeGarmo

(New Hope Publishers, 2016)

In *Faith & Foster Care: How We Impact God's Kingdom*, Dr. John DeGarmo challenges his readers to see life through the eyes of a child in foster care. Try to imagine suddenly being removed from familiar surroundings, forced to leave with nothing. Although your mind and body are tired of the fear, abuse and lack of care, this is the only home you've ever known. Your mind screams "take me back" as you stand before a family you've never met. More than anything, you need to know someone loves you. The thought of another stranger entering your life is almost more than you can bear.

Unfortunately, this is the harsh reality of America's children growing up in the foster system. But, as John's book points out, it can change. What if children were placed in homes where the love of family helped them absorb their pain? What if the families surrounded them with the acceptance and hope of Jesus? Writing from years of experience as a foster and adoptive parent, John encourages believers to take care of wounded little ones. John emphasizes the power of prayer and lays the biblical foundation to care for children in need. This book is a sharp tool for those considering foster care and invaluable encouragement for the courageous families already serving children in their homes.

There are approximately 500,000 children in foster care on any given day. John shares what it looks like to live in foster care. Foster children are starving for a place to call home—a place where they can feel safe and loved. Like all other kids, they desire the security of knowing they will be protected. The personal stories from foster families and children in foster care truly give a face to the overwhelming need for the family of God to take care of His children.

Lynette Ezell is an adoptive parent and host of The Adopting and Fostering Home podcast.

Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out

Alvin Reid

(B&H, 2017)

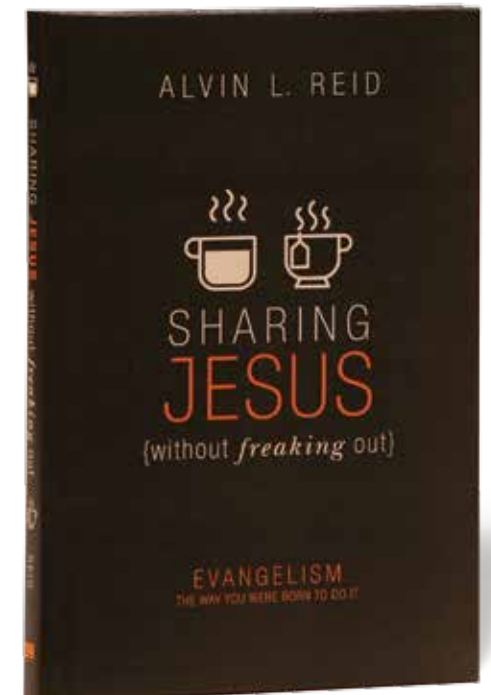
Imagine walking up to a non-believer and boldly telling him about the good news of Jesus. Did your heart flutter? Did your stomach flip? Did your palms begin to sweat? It's no secret: evangelism freaks Christians out.

In Alvin Reid's *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out*, he analyzes the decline in evangelism among Christians today and seeks to remove the intimidating veneer that cloaks the act of spreading the gospel. He redefines evangelism at its very core, insisting that there is no reason to fear. It is what God created us to do. In his own words, "It's in our everyday conversations that we can help people see that their life matters, that their passion to live comes from God and that the good news of Jesus can rescue them from pain." You don't need an elaborate gospel presentation to witness; you just need to start a simple conversation fueled with your love for God and your love for the other person.

By using personal stories, theoretical scenarios and biblical references, Reid creates a strategic guide to evangelism for both experienced and inexperienced witnesses. He effectively summarizes the art of sharing Jesus and declaring the good news through eight succinct principles in order to cultivate a successful lifestyle of evangelism. At the end of the book, he includes an eight-week challenge as a personal and engaging guide to aid readers in their pursuit of the evangelistic mission.

Through his encouraging and lighthearted take on evangelism, Reid passionately leads his readers on a quest to fill our ultimate purpose: to fearlessly share our love of Christ with the world.

Daryn Sinclair writes for the North American Mission Board.



Leading Mission



New to Five

Ralph Moore and Jeff Christopherson
(Exponential, 2017)

New to Five provides a compelling vision for the future of God's Church. In our day, it is common for words like "multiplication" or "missional" to find their way into every book or blog post. You get the sense that these words convey an abstract notion to which pastors aspire while lacking any clear idea of the changes which need to take place for a church to truly embrace these concepts. Ralph Moore and Jeff Christopherson are not interested in theory, rather they point readers to concrete practices that shape the culture of churches actually multiplying. They argue that a new operating system, one defined by multiplication, is necessary if the Church is ever going to effectively reduce lostness in our day.

As a pastor of a local church, the practical nature of the exhortations and encouragement found throughout this book caused me to read with pen in hand, jotting down concrete steps our church could take to move multiplication from a theoretical dream to a lived practice. I was personally convicted and challenged to learn from two leaders who have given their lives to embody the practices they discuss. Pastors, and particularly church planters, will find *New to Five* to be a catalyst that reshapes their thinking of multiplication and gives clear guidance for moving multiplication from a buzzword to the defining operating system for the churches they lead.

Matt Rogers is the pastor of the Church at Cherrydale in Greenville, South Carolina.

Gaining by Losing

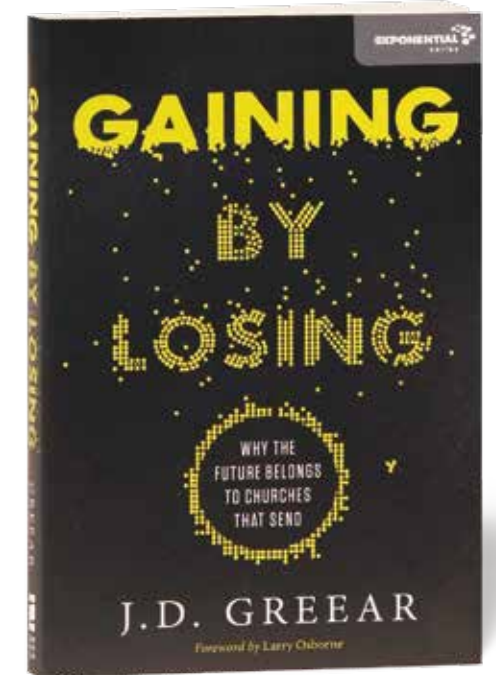
J.D. Greear
(Zondervan, 2015)

As pastors and church leaders think through what makes a healthy church, many do not consider sending out their best and brightest to start new works. The paradoxical idea that the future of a healthy church is rooted in sending members out on mission is the thrust of J.D. Greear's book, *Gaining by Losing*.

J.D. is the lead pastor of Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina—a church known for sending members on mission. The bulk of the book focuses on the ten plumb lines that act as directional markers to help Summit Church shape their ministries around the Great Commission. The plumb lines help other church leaders brainstorm and develop mission markers for their own congregations. In addition to these ten plumb lines, J.D. provides an appendix looking to establish an international missions strategy as well as a second appendix on establishing a domestic church planting strategy. Those resources alone are worth the price of the book.

Gaining by Losing is written to awaken pastors and church leaders to the reality that the future of healthy churches and greater kingdom impact belongs to those who continually send people out on mission both across the street and across the globe. The future belongs to Sending Churches.

Nathan Garth is the lead international missions pastor for Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and is a consultant to mission leaders through the Upstream Collective.



In-home outreach

By Hillary Cintron

This past April, my church participated in our first Send Relief Home Fire Campaign (HFC) in partnership with our local fire department and the American Red Cross. What started as a one-day event aimed at helping our neighbors by offering to change their smoke detectors and educating our community on fire prevention has grown into an ongoing ministry.

My church is not large, but we are blessed with a wonderful congregation that is always seeking ways to serve and be the hands and feet of Christ. When I first began reading about the HFC, I felt an immediate sense of excitement. I knew it would provide my church with an exciting opportunity to reach our community and show Christ's love in a tangible way.

On the day of the event, I heard story after story from church members of divine encounters as they changed smoke detectors and prayed with homeowners. God paved the way, and He kept those doors open for our church members to minister as they served obediently.



God used this initiative to allow us to serve alongside of and minister to our local fire department and the American Red Cross. There was so much joy in partnering with people who are constantly serving our communities. Because of the HFC,

our church has forged a friendship with our local firefighters, and we are now able to serve them in small ways.

Whether we bring pies, send thank-you cards or make monthly visits to the firehouse, our church remains in constant contact with our fire department. God is continuing to reveal small ways to further support them as they risk their lives every day in their line of work. What a mighty blessing it is to minister to

and support heroes in our communities!

To any church considering a Home Fire Campaign, I say don't wait any longer—go for it! The Lord will bless your efforts as you step out in obedience to His call as His hands and feet in your community. **[OM]**

Hillary Cintron serves as the preschool and outreach director for Lakota Hills Baptist Church, West Chester, Ohio.

A message with eternal impact—Are you in?

By David Platt, IMB president (@plattdavid)

You may have heard of Madeline Ray, a young woman from Zebulon, North Carolina, whose heart was set on taking the gospel to billions of people who have yet to hear the name Jesus. Madeline said that she still desires to engage firsthand with unreached people groups around the world. However, as she wrote last December, "It must not have been God's will for me to do so before the expiration of my wish on my 21st birthday."

You see, Madeline was given a Make-A-Wish® Foundation "wish" as a teenager; she suffered from a medical condition related to hemorrhagic strokes. Her heart's desire was to use her wish to make an eternal impact—to take the gospel to an unreached people group.

So, Madeline donated the funds for her wish to the International Mission Board.



What Madeline understands is we all have a part to play in taking the gospel to the nations. Can you imagine the limitless possibilities that exist if we take seriously the sending of missionaries? It's part of the reason, if not the primary reason, we exist as a coalition of churches. And the more Southern Baptists give, the more missionaries we can send.

When your church gives to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®, you invest in eternal impact. And you can be sure that 100 percent of your gifts go to the mission field to support the missionaries from your churches—a reality that has been true since the Lottie Moon Offering started in 1888. Lives around the world are transformed because of the work God does through IMB missionaries. Giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is a vital part of this.

Are you in? **[OM]**



Learn how your church can serve your community by organizing a Home Fire Campaign at namb.net/HomeFire.



Support missions efforts around the world through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering at imb.org/Give.



EVERY CHURCH ON MISSION



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