

MESSAGE

Vol 66 | Issue3 | 2018

abwe[®]
INTERNATIONAL

THIS IS WHAT MISSIONS LOOKS LIKE
WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT

2018 Candidate Issue

Letter from the
PRESIDENT



Where Would We Be?

Where would you be if no one had told you about Jesus?

Where would your church be without outreach to children and those living in your communities?

Where would international missions be without faithful supporters who are willing to give sacrificially so that those who don't know the name of Jesus may hear?

Where would the global church be without people who willingly leave home, family and friends to take that gospel to those far corners of the world?

Today, I am humbled to think of the 35 new missionaries who have joined ABWE for long-term service this year and the nearly 20,000 individuals and churches who partner with us and these missionaries. This issue of *Message* is dedicated to you.

Whether you are a giver, a goer, or a prayer warrior, thank you for being an integral part of missions today.

I hope you are encouraged as you read the testimonies of those who have answered the call to go. May the stories in this issue help you as you consider how God is calling you to grow your role in His Great Commission work.

 | ABWE President



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WHO IS THE ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM (ABWE)?

ABWE was founded in 1927 as an independent Baptist mission. We are dedicated to fulfilling the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people. Currently, more than 1,000 ABWE missionaries are working to advance God's work in more than 70 countries by sharing the story of hope, building communities of faith, and serving the world with love.

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FEATURES



God's Tapestry

Meet our newest missionaries in 2018

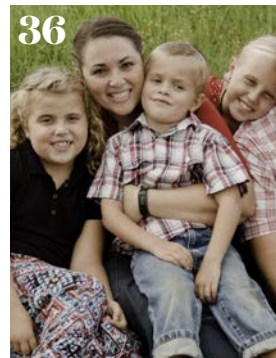
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All the Things

The International Headquarters exists for our missionaries. Learn about some of the specific ways we work to support and care for the mission family through the Global Gospel Fund







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SHARON PAYNE

CANDIDATE CLASS: 1982

COUNTRY SERVED IN: Brazil



© Jolkesky



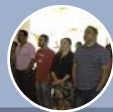
1961

Born to missionary parents in Florida



1976

Helps plant a church with her parents in Rio Bonito



1987

Organizes and trains Christian Ed. Dept at Reimburg Church—started in 1955 by her parents



Moved from Upper Amazon to São Paulo with her parents

1970



Arrives on the field after raising support. Begins teacher training in Rio Bonito

1985

AN INTERVIEW WITH SHARON PAYNE



Q: How did God first call you to missions?

A: I was 12. I had just heard a missionary speaker—coincidentally, my father, David Payne (a now retired ABWE missionary)—in chapel at the Pan American Christian Academy, and I became convinced as he spoke that God was calling me into missions. Observing my parents and being able to help them in missionary ministry was also a key factor. I began to work toward the goal of being a missionary just to see how far I would get, trusting God to close the door if He wanted me to do something else.

Q: What is your favorite memory from your time as a missionary?

A: Too many. I grew up on the Amazon. I remember the fun, the exotic pets.

The furlough presentations with a six-foot long dried snake skin, getting some unsuspecting kid to hold one end, unrolling it then “accidentally” letting my end go. (Inevitably, after getting over the scare, the kid would want to try the same trick on a friend who hadn’t witnessed it yet.)

But I would have to say one of my favorite memories is actually from the present: writing the

Sunday School curriculum for the publishing house (EBR), and seeing my work in print.

Q: What moment had the biggest impact on your ministry?

A: My dad’s bout with typhoid fever when I was 10, or 11. He nearly died from it. And it made me consider what I might do with my life for God. Or what would I leave behind?

Q: What is the best part of being a missionary?

A: There’s only one answer to that question: seeing people saved and discipled! Knowing I had some small part in the process. Hearing them acknowledge specifically some small contribution I made to the spiritual development. Seeing them serving the Lord today.

Q: What advice would you give to those considering missions?

A: If you make it through your first term, [it all gets easier] from there. So just hang on! To someone considering missions: Congratulations! There is no more rewarding field of service to consider. Just say “Yes”! ■

LEARNHOW you can start building your own legacy of faithfulness
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1991

Begins teaching Christian Education courses at seminary



2006

New Song church in São Paulo is planted



Begins writing lessons for publishing house Junior Sunday School curriculum.

1989



AWANA Brazil becomes a national, self-supporting ministry; she trained the first leaders

1992



all the
THINGS

HELPING MISSIONARIES SURVIVE
& THRIVE IN LIFE & MINISTRY

When missionaries suffer or struggle, it is often behind the scenes. Living abroad, raising kids, staying healthy, doing ministry; they all can be challenging under normal circumstances. Now add in stress, crisis, and isolation. It's no wonder missionaries need special care.

Through ABWE's Global Gospel Fund, we are working to create and grow the "member care" ministries that serve missionaries in times of crisis, and also work to prevent it.

Our goal is to help more people go, and stay, by supporting families and individuals—spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. This section of *Message* is dedicated to just a few of those ministries.



Every journey begins with a first step.

Having already decided to pursue full-time missions overseas, Gavin* and Brooke* were looking for the right agency to partner with when they discovered ABWE's "24-Hour DEMO" event.

This event was created to give those who are seriously interested in missions the chance to discover a missions agency, engage with others in their shoes, meet veteran missionaries and global leaders, and open up to new possibilities for how they can serve.

Over the course of two days, DEMO attendees get to know the people, passions, and ministries of ABWE.

To date it is one of our most successful mobilization initiatives with more than 30 percent of DEMO attendees going on to serve as missionaries long-term or short-term with ABWE. Countless more carry what they've learned to their churches to help mobilize others toward God's missions.

"Even though there was no commitment or obligation to the organization after attending the DEMO, I chose to apply for long-term ministry with ABWE because of the staff's hospitality and infectious desire to share Christ's love with all people,"

said DEMO attendee, and current missionary Raise Clark.

"One of the biggest values of attending 24-Hour DEMO was the opportunity to meet and build relationships with the office staff and see their heart for missions," Gavin echoed. "We heard their love of seeing churches planted, and the gospel being preached at every level—from the president, all the way down to the general office staff."

Their preaching pastor, who attended 24-Hour DEMO with them, was also encouraged by the additional opportunities and resources ABWE made available for their church.

"God used 24-Hour DEMO to solidify in our hearts and minds that [this] was the organization we and our church should partner with," Gavin and Brooke said. "Beginning ministry in a foreign country with an unknown language can be a daunting task. [And] the support that comes through joining a missions board has been extremely helpful for us to see that this task as more achievable.

Often, it can be intimidating not knowing what you don't know. ABWE's knowledge and experience has provided us with wisdom and assistance—beginning at our pre-field ministry, and continuing in the network of families who will become our partners and teammates when we get to our country of service."

ABWE helps mobilize as many as 500 people to missions in a single year.

In the last year, we have helped recruit and appoint:

- 79 student interns
- 376 people to short-term trips
- 52 adult short-term missionaries
- 35 career missionaries
- 82 DEMO attendees

Mobilizing a new missionary can be a time-consuming, expensive process involving building deeper relationships, prayer, networking, and training.

Once our candidates are through the door, there is a team of mobilizers serving with them and guiding them along the journey. Will you consider helping us mobilize a new missionary?

- \$2,500 can recruit one new long-term missionary
- \$230 sponsors a couple to attend the 24-Hour DEMO
- \$99 mobilizes a college student intern for 1 month

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*names changed for security



The burn was painful and the missionary was nervous.

The blistering scorch-mark stretched nearly the length of her forearm and she was living in Africa, almost five hours away from reliable medical care.

Instead of attempting an exhausting trip over incredibly rough terrain, she emailed ABWE's International Healthcare Ministries (IHM).

"I told her to send me pictures of the burn," said IHM missionary, Dr. Tim Hepworth. From his office at the ABWE Headquarters in Pennsylvania, he was able to send back a list of treatment suggestions based on what she might have on hand. Over the next week he monitored her progress, and in time, her second-degree burn healed.

It is one of Dr. Hepworth's favorite success stories, and it encapsulates much of how technology, a good team, and a strategy, has changed the way that missionaries can be cared for from the far-corners of the globe.

"She never had to leave her village," Dr. Hepworth said, "and she was able to continue her ministries in the meantime."

INTERNATIONAL HEALTHCARE MINISTRIES

Launched in the early 2000s, ABWE's International Healthcare Ministries (IHM) operates as a lifeline to missionaries serving around the world, administering medical care to those who can't access it, or who live in places where you wouldn't want to, even if you could.

Additionally, IHM recruits staff for ABWE's hospitals, helping medical professionals to consider using their skills to heal people physically and grow them spiritually.

Each year, these hospitals treat tens-of-thousands of patients and see thousands of professions of faith. These patients are then connected to nearby church-plants, dozens of which have been established as a direct result of medical ministry.

MORE WORKERS

It's no surprise that many medical missionaries face unique circumstances in their ministry as a result of constantly facing death and suffering, and working long hours. While one patient may walk out the door healed, four more could be waiting at the hospital gate.

In the case of an outbreak, war or natural disaster, the team may be on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for weeks on end.

Nancy Berends, Director of IHM, has worked extensively with her team to create partnerships with churches, other Christian organizations—like



Samaritan’s Purse—and medical schools around the U.S. to mobilize people from all over the world to serve as medical missionaries and grow our teams.

Because of IHM recruitment efforts, ABWE has more than a dozen career missionary doctors, nurses, and PA’s serving on our teams that engage in healthcare. Dr. Bob Cropsey has worked to develop a list of 20-some short-term medical staff who can be called on to fill gaps in coverage when missionaries go home on furlough, or an emergency occurs.

NEVER-ENDING NEED FOR SUPPLIES

When IHM team member, Jodi Boyd, joined ABWE as a missionary nurse in 2011, she saw the difficulty of communicating with people in the U.S. what supplies the hospitals needed, as well as the problem of what to do with supplies that arrived in Africa that were unusable or downright junk.

As a result, Jodi turned her attention to obtaining and managing medical supplies for ABWE’s hospitals—working with companies and donors to procure high-quality, low-priced items—IV tubing, syringes, dressings, specialized items, and various sizes of equipment “to fit every size of person.” She and a group of volunteers work to inventory, pack, and ship the supplies, saving over-taxed hospital staff on the other side of the world valuable time.

BATTLING AN OUTBREAK

When a meningitis outbreak in Togo threatened ABWE personnel serving there, missionaries with IHM quickly worked to get them vaccines.

This was no small or inexpensive feat. Not only did the team have to get approval from the CDC to give an “under-55” vaccination to those older than 55 years after learning that the “over-55 vaccine” was out of production, but they also had to find someone to hand-carry the vaccines to Africa and get them through customs.

Despite these obstacles, Dr. Hepworth managed to get the vaccines to Togo in a matter of days.

As you can imagine, this type of access brings peace of mind to many who are considering serving abroad. From helping to orchestrate medical evacuations in times of life and death, to keeping up with U.S. and international medical and privacy laws, to screening new missionaries and providing basic health services—IHM exists to serve our missionaries, and plays an integral part in the ABWE’s global church-planting efforts.

But many of these services are currently funded by the IHM missionaries themselves. Our goal is to be able to provide more resources to this invaluable ministry, so these missionaries can work on medicine and ministry.

Will you help us?

IHM keeps our missionaries healthy, recruits staff, supplies our hospitals, and shares the gospel through short-term trips and clinics.

In the last year:

- 1,897 email, telephone and face-to-face medical diagnoses were processed at the International Headquarters
- 8 short-term medical trips
- 2,500 people received care and heard the gospel on those trips
- 2 containers brought needed supplies to our hospitals

In our nearly 90 years of ministry, we have seen compassionate medical care soften hearts to hear the important message of the gospel, changing lives for today and eternity. But we can’t do any of this without you. Will you help us support the ministries of IHM?

- \$150 supports a health-care clinic for one day
- \$500 can help recruit a doctor or nurse

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He could see the signs of burnout all over their faces.

They were desperate and their marriage was hurting. On top of it all, medical issues had gone untreated, leaving them physically and emotionally distraught. After all the work they'd put toward becoming missionaries to bring hope to the world, they were the ones left feeling hopeless.

CARING FOR MISSIONARIES

One of the greatest things missionaries need but often lack is a “safe space” to be vulnerable about the things they are facing behind the scenes, says Brad

Winkler, Director of ABWE's Member Care Department. “They need someone who will ask them the deep, probing questions, and care about how they're really doing.

But there can be a fear that if you admit your struggles, someone might think you aren't spiritual enough, or even pull their support.”

With hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars invested in getting a missionary through prefield training, language school, and then onto the field, Brad sees a huge need to proactively “protect that investment...by helping missionaries thrive in the work God has called them to do.”

The remedy to burnout and attrition?

“We need to keep investing in them, consistently.”

That's why ABWE's Member Care department—a team of 13 staff and missionaries—is developing a strategy

that not only cares for our missionaries in times of crisis, but also works proactively to prevent it.

RE-ENERGIZED & RE-ENGAGED

After the Member Care team members had visited the missionary couple during a field “wellness visit”, they recognized the couple's need for support. Initially, there was progress, but when things started to deteriorate again, the couple was brought back to the U.S. and sent to a Christian counseling center that works specifically with pastors and missionaries facing the unique difficulties of a life of ministry.

Attending the three-week retreat would be costly, and the missionaries had no money to cover the expense; but ABWE believed the value of their marriage, health, and ministry were worth more, and raised the funds to foot the bill.

By the third week at the center, the husband called his Member Care mentor



to say with emotion in his voice, “This is a game-changer.”

Seeing how well the couple had responded to the first three weeks, the center offered them a scholarship so they could stay an additional week and focus on their marriage.

Recently, they were able to return to the mission field, feeling well-equipped with the tools they would need to thrive.

“If we had not provided the help they so desperately needed, we might have lost [these] amazing missionaries forever.”

- Brad Winkler, Director of Member Care

“Now they’re going back into ministry with spiritually healthy souls and the tools they need to succeed.”

WHAT IS MEMBER CARE?

This scenario isn’t uncommon. Time and again, Brad and his team have been met with tears of joy from missionaries and missionary families that they took the time and effort to visit and show genuine care for their spiritual and mental well-being.

“It means so much [to have an agency that] cares enough to send you guys here. I feel so loved,” one missionary told them.

When crisis occurs on the field, like the sudden death of a teammate, Member

Care sends a pastoral couple to minister to the team and help them process the loss. The team also performs “wellness visits” to help missionaries assess the more subtle, day-to-day stress of cross-cultural living.

As a result, they are developing trainings and tools for churches on how to consistently and effectively support their missionaries, and establishing networks that connect with, and care for missionary kids when they return to the U.S.

The goal, Brad says, “is to have member care happening consistently. Not just during furlough or field visits.”

The demand for this kind of personal care is great, but the resources are few. Right now, Member Care staff raise their own funds to cover the cost of this ministry. But missionaries and those who support them are pleading for this kind of care more than ever.

In the next year, Member Care plans to continue to grow the ministry to meet the needs. Their dream is to build a functioning team of “Member Care missionaries” who could serve across all 90 fields of service.

But to better support the physical, spiritual and emotional health of missionaries and their families—moving them from surviving to thriving—the team needs support.

Will you help?

Member Care exists to serve our missionaries, by supporting their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.

In the last year, we have had:

- 7 visits to missionary field teams
- 87 missionary kids who benefitted from pastoral care
- 136 missionaries who benefitted from pastoral care

When missionaries suffer or struggle, it is often behind the scenes. Living abroad, raising kids, staying healthy, doing ministry; they all can be challenging under normal circumstances. Now add in stress, crisis, and isolation and it’s no wonder missionaries need special care.

Would you help care for missionaries in crisis with a gift to Member Care?

- \$4,000 can provide a critical care visit to the field
- \$285 can provide one day of onsite counseling after a traumatic event

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WHEN HOME ISN'T

It was the last night of the conference, when Jim Cook noticed a young boy in tears.

“He was banging his hand down on the pavement,” the ABWE missionary described.

“He told us, ‘I don’t want to learn a new language. I don’t want to make new friends. I don’t want to go to a new school. I don’t want to leave my home...’”

This fear of the unknown, found in many children headed to the mission field with their parents, is why ABWE makes supporting missionaries a family affair.

“These kids are leaving everything they’ve known. They don’t know what this new life will look like,” Jim said. “That adjustment phase is hard for both the parent and the child.”

ABWE’s MK Ministries was created to support families through their journey to missions, offering educational and parenting resources, and training and services for missionary kids.

Through a specialized training program created by the Cooks, ABWE teaches missionary children (MKs) how to live cross-culturally. An MK education consultant helps families serving abroad with their children’s educational needs—from homeschooling curricula, to resources for kids with learning challenges. Ron and Zina Allen serve older MKs returning to a “home” that could seem foreign to them, and whose parents might be half a world away.

CAUGHT IN THE IN-BETWEEN

I wrote a poem as a bitter 14-year-old missionary kid. It was about a flower that never got solid roots, because it kept getting ripped out and re-planted in new places. Since then, I’ve often struggled to feel like I have a home or a certain place I belong.

But being in [New York] this summer has made me realize something: God has blessed me so much... I get to have four homes, not just one.

I get to meet so many amazing people in every place that I go. I get to have three different church families, and a family bond among the missionaries that will never be broken.

[It hurts] to have the “roots ripped out” when I leave each place, but I am so blessed to have people that I will/do miss this much.

I absolutely can’t wait for the day when there will be no more goodbyes.

- Annoymous MK



For parents, knowing that there is someone there who understands their child, who is watching out for them, gives them the peace of mind. It also gives the MK a “safe person” they can go to when they’re homesick, need encouragement and prayer, or even just a hug.

These simple things have opened the door to many discipleship relationships and ministry opportunities.

Ron and Zina are located near Liberty University, which is home to many ABWE MKs. After serving for 11 years in Mexico, the Allens returned to the U.S. and found themselves missing the food and culture they had grown to love. They realized this loss was something shared by many who left their own mission fields—and an outreach was born—as the Allen’s host MKs for homecooked meals to create a sense of community and connection.

“We feel privileged to share life and minister to these amazing kids,” the Allens said.

When an MK who has spent most of his or her life overseas comes back to the U.S. for college, they often struggle to find a sense of belonging. Although many of them “look American and speak English,” Ron said, “they don’t speak ‘American’ and really don’t know the U.S.”

As one MK said, “I am American in my skin, but Brazilian in my heart.”

The transition from home to school can also bring different challenges as MKs try to juggle the stress of college and being away from home, with the stress of trying to learn a new culture and feeling like they “belong”. Learning to navigate things like driving, not being overwhelmed by all the choices in the cereal aisle, or answering the difficult question, “Where are you from?” can range from humorous to frustrating.

Experience living on the field has given Ron and Zina some insight into the MK world that encourages MKs to open up more to them.

“We have met many adult MKs who are excited and thankful for our mentoring and discipleship ministry to their MK peers who are [moving] to the U.S. for college.” Ron said. “Most all have said they wished someone had been there for them.”

MK Ministries works to help MKs understand that it’s totally normal to feel the way they do, but to also take advantage of where they’re at—whether they are a kid leaving home to move to a strange new country, or an MK venturing back to a strange new “home.”

Will you help support our MK Care team as they minister to MKs?

MK Care serves kids and adult MKs through community, discipling opportunities, and specialized trainings that help them on and off the field.

In the last year, we had:

- 650 MKs
- Nearly every missionary family was given educational resources for their children
- Countless college-age MKs were hosted for dinners and events

We know that the success of a missionary’s ministry is not just dependent on their skill and preparation. When the entire family is supported, it means everyone has more time to focus on external ministry. Will you help us care for our missionary kids?

- \$4,000 can send support staff to a global regional conference
- \$2,000 can send support staff on a college tour

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GOD'S TAPESTRY

NEW MISSIONARIES 2018

PHOTOS BY HARTMAN BENZON MEDIA



David & Rachel Bell | *United Kingdom*

HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH, SHELBY, NC



www.bellstobritain.com

“I didn’t need to be on Facebook,” Rachel said. “But I was.”

That March day, her second-cousin had posted a status: Some people give up things for Lent. I’m giving up on life.

Rachel Bell and her husband, David, reached out to her, inviting this near stranger living in the U.K. to visit them in the U.S. She arrived two weeks later.

During her visit, she requested three American delicacies: corn dogs, a root beer float, and Nerds candy.

As they drove home after securing said root beer float, she made another startling statement.

“It’s interesting that you guys, like, do Christianity,” she said. “I don’t have a Bible. None of my friends have Bibles. Actually, I don’t know what a Bible is.”

As Rachel shared an overview of the Scriptures, her cousin seemed startled. “Wait. Are you saying Jesus was a real person? I thought He was like Santa or the Easter Bunny.”

It was then that the reality struck David and Rachel, and they knew they had to go. It wasn’t just this one cousin who hadn’t heard of Christ. There was an entire generation who didn’t know Jesus as a real person.

They knew they were being called, but as they pursued relocating to England, door after door slammed shut. Yet still the urgency grew. Finally, David decided to have a day of fasting, asking the Lord for a sign “completely out-of-the-blue.”

At 2 p.m., David received a “random” phone call from ABWE, followed by a two-hour long conversation about going. The Bells haven’t looked back since. “I knew God was telling me this was it,” David said. “He wanted us to be missionaries.”

“The people of the U.K. don’t need religion,” Rachel added. “They need relationship.”

David and Rachel were both saved as preteens. David is from Florida and Rachel is from Indiana. They now reside in Shelby, North Carolina. “We just met in the middle,” they joke.

David has spent 10 years in youth ministry, and also teaches at Gardner Webb University. Rachel teaches career and employment development part-time to adults with disabilities. They enjoy spending time with their two small children and feel strongly that they are their children’s first exposure to the gospel.

Jerald & Katie Touchstone | *Togo*

MERIDIAN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN, ID



www.touchstonestotogo.com

MINISTRY FOCUS:
Aquaponics

Jerald and Katie have had a desire for missions for most of their life together—it just took a while for the opportunity to serve overseas to come along.

In the meantime, God has been using them as missionaries where they're at. Jerald has been teaching at a Christian high school for 13 years, ministering to the many seeking students who he interacts with on a daily basis. Katie has been serving in AWANA at their church for just as long.

As a couple, they have also had opportunities to lead high school missions trips, and witness the fruits of them. Some of their youth have gone on to full-time missions, and even Jerald and Katie's own kids have developed a heart for missions.

Katie grew up in a Baptist missionary family serving in southern India. Jerald also came from a strong Christian family, though he said he lived a "mediocre Christian" life until his college years.

His first go at college only lasted three semesters before he dropped out and pursued auto mechanics. During his time as a mechanic, he went on his first missions trip—to Mexico—and

had the experience of "helping someone who had really no chance of paying me back."

Jerald decided to try college again after coming back from the trip, majoring in aquaculture with a minor in business. He had no idea what he was going to do with a degree in raising fish, though, and for several years after graduating he tried unsuccessfully to land a relevant job.

It was a lesson in patience, he said. Because at the same time, God was growing him as a church leader, and preparing him for his next mission field in the high school science classroom. When their oldest went off to college, Jerald and Katie began exploring foreign missions again.

Last November, their pastor returned from Togo and told them about the open position with the aquaponics ministry—a position that Jerald was uniquely-qualified to fill with his degree and skills. After visiting the ministry last March, Jerald and Katie are eager to take on the task, and see where God is leading them next.

Megan Kinne | Brazil

GOSPEL COMMUNITY CHURCH, LYNCHBURG, VA

The Easter Sunday after she turned 5, Megan sat with her grandmother at their kitchen table after church, asking about Christ's death for her sins. Because of the brokenness of her own family at the time, she was intrigued by Jesus' love for mankind, and wanted to know more. Her grandmother helped her understand God is a loving father, but sin had broken that relationship between him and his children. God had sent his Son to restore that relationship. Megan accepted Christ there at the table when she understood the forgiveness and reconciliation that Jesus offered.

Her desire for missions began at age seven, and her college years at Liberty confirmed that call. In fact, her first mission field was ministering to her peers at Liberty University and her community in Virginia.

"[Missions] is not a location," she said. "It's a state of your heart."

At Liberty's Global Focus Week in 2015, Megan struck up a conversation with an ABWE missionary couple about their ministry in Brazil. A year and a half later, she was on a plane headed to South Brazil to serve with them for a few weeks.

"God used that trip to wreck me in a lot of ways," she said. "The plane ride broke me of my self-sufficiency and my desire for control."

The arrival in South Brazil also brought on some hard lessons that helped develop in Megan a love and compassion for the people she met there.

Halfway through the trip, God challenged Megan: "He said, 'Maybe I didn't send you here to support them from the states. Maybe this is where I want you to go.'" It was a terrifying thought—but she knew this was where God was leading, so she started the application process.

On her second trip to Brazil, last summer, she said God continued to grow that passion in her to go. "So, here I am."



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Drew & Melinda Wright | *United Kingdom*

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Drew came from a Christian home. Like everyone he knew, his family went to church every Sunday morning.

But around 5 or 6 years old, Drew started to realize something was different about his family—there wasn't a dad.

"I knew that he was in the army," he said, "so I assumed he was off on a mission." But when he asked his mom very simply, "Where's my dad?", he was crushed to learn that his dad had died when he was an infant. Surely they could visit him in this place called "heaven", where Drew's mom said he was now?

His mother took the opportunity to explain the full gospel to him from the Bible. And even though he was 6, Drew understood he had sin in his heart, and chose to accept Christ as his Savior there.

He first felt the call to ministry at 16, but he didn't know where exactly God was leading. Missionary, pastor, evangelist—they all sounded good to him. Eventually he settled on pastoral studies while attending Crown College in Knoxville, TN, where he was also involved in deaf ministry.

"I had learned some ASL from a deaf man at the church I grew up attending," he said.

It was through this ministry he learned that there are over 70,000 deaf in the U.K., yet there are few people trying to reach them with the gospel. Despite his protesting, Drew could feel God working in his heart, and he finally surrendered to the call during his senior year of college.

The deaf ministry was also how Drew met his wife.

Melinda accepted Christ at a young age as well, through AWANA. After multiple closed doors as a young teen, she realized that God was leading her to deaf ministry. She graduated from Crown with a bachelors in missions with a deaf ministry emphasis.

Her freshman year, she attended a "Fantastic Saturday", where she heard Mickey Scrimshire's testimony, and his broken heart for the deaf of the U.K. burdened her heart as well.

"So when Drew told me that God had prodded him to reach the deaf in the [U.K.], I could not have been more thrilled!"

"The burning question in our hearts and minds is the same question Paul asked in Romans 10:9: '...How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard?'" Drew said.

Drew and Melinda both look forward to seeing what God is doing next in their lives.



Jonathan & Claire Jones | *East Africa*

CENTER POINT CHURCH, LEXINGTON, KY

Claire grew up in a Catholic family of 11 children. Before her father died, her parents were a major financial support for their church. Claire's mother also had a special passion for orphans and the poor—a passion she passed on to her daughter.

But while Claire deeply desired to minister to children, her first marriage prevented her from doing so. Eight months into their marriage, her husband who had claimed to be a believer stopped going to church. Five years in, he claimed he was an atheist, and also barred Claire almost completely from being involved in the church.

“I was given one hour, one day a week to go to church on Sunday.”

She was not allowed to take part in any ministries or outreach, or openly practice her faith at home. Knowing she needed to grow, but not knowing what to do, she earnestly prayed and sought God's direction.

Then one day her neighbor stopped her and began asking her about her faith. He asked her if she knew God, and if she believed she would go to heaven. Then he asked, “Are you saved?”

“I told him I did know what that meant. That if he explained it to me more, I would know how to answer.”

He pulled out his Bible and began teaching her. Claire accepted Christ right there, and began going to church with the neighbor.

She was introduced to ABWE through her second husband, Jonathan. This is his fourth missionary journey—he spent many years in ministry as a pastor and as a church planter, and now feels called to return to East Africa.

They are looking forward to returning to East Africa, and Claire especially looks forward to being able to serve children and widows through the church.



Joey & Esther Faulkner | Ecuador

TROY CHURCH, TROY, AL



JOHN 1:16-17:

Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Church felt superficial to Joey growing up. He had been raised in a Christian home, but after his father died when he was eight, his home shifted from being a “Christian” home to a “moral” home. His family remained active in the local church, and Joey knew all the right things to say, but it meant nothing to him, and he lived life through a very angry, distorted lens.

Two years after graduating high school, Joey reconnected with an old acquaintance, Esther, who had been known as the “good girl” in school. But when she invited him to her baptism, Joey lied about why he didn’t go, feeling no remorse. His actions caused the two to part ways once more.

A month later, however, Esther reached out to him again, and Joey felt a strange tug to ask if he could go with her to church. As he listened to the pastor’s sermon on Ephesians 4, on putting off the old and putting on the new, he began to understand the gospel for the first time.

“It [actually] made sense.”

Esther had spent much of her childhood doing the “church hop”, never planting deep roots or getting disciplined.

“It was ‘easy’ to be a Christian,” she said. “Until it wasn’t.”

When her parents started experiencing marital issues, Esther began to question this God she said she believed in. She had thought it was a give-and-take relationship: that if she did all the right things, God would bless her.

But one night as she wrestled with why God wasn’t fixing her family, she came across 1 John, and she realized that Christianity wasn’t just following a list of do’s and don’ts.

“It was the most freeing feeling.”

Why missions? “I don’t want anybody to [go through what I did], to think that they have to keep this list of good things... It’s all Christ,” she said.

For Joey: “If I have a God who’s willing to pay that kind of a debt for me, then I should be willing to spend the rest of my life proclaiming that to the nations and glorifying his name with my entire life.”

Jessica Mulder | *Nicaragua*

FARMINGTON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, WEST HARTFORD, CT



mulderoverseas.weebly.com

Jessica grew up in a gospel-centered home, surrounded by missions. She reveled in the stories she heard from the missionaries her family often hosted—stories of far-off countries and cultures. As she listened, and poured over the biographies of past missionaries like Amy Carmichael, she could feel her own heart for travel and missions growing.

“I was always curious about other countries, and other people, and hearing their stories,” she said. She dreamed of being “that classic missionary woman”, teaching children overseas. Her home church’s strong emphasis on missions fanned that flame.

But God still had many life lessons for Jessica to learn before she was ready to serve overseas.

During her early teen years, Jessica began to struggle with doubt of the assurance of her salvation, leading to a deep place of depression. Afraid to confide in anyone, the pressure of keeping these feelings suppressed eventually pushed her to a breaking point.

“But God met me in that darkest moment and brought that assurance, that He is the one who saves—that it is not about me at all.”

He began to grow Jessica as a missionary within her own community, first through serving in youth and children’s ministry, and then in a new career field very different from the totally Christian environment she had spent much of her life in.

After returning to law school for her paralegal certification, Jessica’s work in this new very secular environment showed her much about the deep lostness of people around her. God taught her about being a light in the darkness to reach those with whom she came in contact.

But just as Jessica was settling into this ministry, thinking maybe stateside missions was where God had led her to serve, God began hinting toward “something next”. And in 2014, God began opening doors for Jessica to serve in Nicaragua, where she served short-term three times, and now feels that God is calling her to serve long-term.



Tyler & Kat Betz | *France*

SAYLORVILLE CHURCH, DES MOINES, IA



“
**I just *knew* that
God would *never*
call me to missions.**
”

Tyler and Kat had only been dating two weeks when Tyler announced he was moving to France to serve as a short-term missionary for a year, with the intention of eventually serving long-term.

He hadn't always been open to the idea. Though he had always felt called to ministry, "I just knew that God would never call me to missions." And he actively disregarded any idea of serving overseas, until a letter from his father's missionary friend changed his mind.

This friend had tried to recruit Tyler to ministry in France when Tyler was still in high school, but Tyler turned the offer down. Then he wrote to Tyler again his freshman year of college, this time with a check attached to the letter inviting Tyler to visit their field. Seeing the check prompted Tyler to think, and eventually he agreed to go.

It started with six weeks. But during those six weeks, Tyler felt a deep, rapidly growing desire to return. By the end of his visit, as he stood in the airport preparing to fly home, Tyler knew he would be back.

"And if you wouldn't consider being a missionary to France for the rest of your life, we might as well not even date," he told Kat the night he announced his plan to go back.

The prospect of serving full-time overseas didn't scare Kat off as Tyler feared it might, and God used their time apart to grow and mature Kat as a believer. Saved when she was seven, she completely surrendered her life to God while working at a Christian summer camp during her freshman and sophomore years of college.

While Tyler was away in France, she got more involved in her church, and found an older woman to disciple her. Together, they studied David Platt's "Follow Me". Kat said the book opened her eyes to the importance of global missions.

Kat and Tyler were engaged by the end of his short-term tour, and married soon after. Every time they have been back since being married, their desire to minister in France has only deepened.

Daniel Winemiller | Romania

TRIAD BAPTIST CHURCH, KERNERSVILLE, NC

Daniel grew up in Romania in the late 1980s, during the overthrow of Communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu. His family went from being well-off to having nothing. And because his parents could not feed them, Daniel and his brothers were pulled from the home by state social services and placed in an orphanage.

At the age of 5, he was adopted by a missionary couple who were unable to have children on their own. His future father met Daniel while out evangelizing, learned his story, and one situation after another led to the missionary adopting him.

Daniel has been back to Romania several times, some of those times with his adoptive parents.

“One nice thing [is] that my parents never held [my] background from me—they actually expounded on it.”

As he returns to serve full-time on the field, his heart is for street orphans—and orphans in general—and encouraging local churches in ministering to them.



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Allen & Melissa Batts | *Togo*

FAIRVIEW LOOP BAPTIST CHURCH, WASILLA, AK



Melissa knew God was calling her to Africa as soon as she felt the wheels of the plane touch down, signifying the beginning of a missions trip to a South African orphanage during her sophomore year of college. “It felt like I was at home,” she said. “Like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders and I could breathe again.”

Allen and Melissa met in Alaska in 2012 through a blind date set up by Allen’s pastor and the wife of Melissa’s pastor—both good friends. While dating, the couple led several missions trips and served as leaders in their church’s college and career ministry. They married in 2014 and continued to pursue their shared calling to long-term missions as a married couple.

Last year, God challenged them to be willing to give up anything and everything to follow Him. Life was going well for them. They were living what Allen called the “Christian American dream”. But the desire for that life diminished as they felt God pulling them toward a new phase of life.

What began as a church missions trip to Ghana to visit and encourage a group of missionaries suddenly became contacting ABWE about administrative needs at an orphanage in North Togo. During Melissa’s second pregnancy, God had placed adoption on their hearts. Now, they could feel God moving them beyond simply adopting.

“He challenged us: ‘You want to pursue international adoption for one baby. What about providing care for countless babies?’”

Their answer was yes. Yes they would give up anything, their jobs, their lives, their thriving ministry in Alaska, to serve at the orphanage in Togo.

“Our heart’s desire...is to share with those orphans the truth about their heavenly Father, and to mirror the gospel to them.

“To show them that they are wanted.”



www.facebook.com/battsabroad

battsabroad.com

www.instagram.com/battsabroad

“
**We have been surrounded
 by fellow believers.
 The people of Southeast
 Asia are without that hope.**
 ”



www.fostersonamission.com

David & Andrea Foster | Thailand

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF RICHLAND, WA

At just six years old, David and Andrea's daughter, Karen, started expressing her desire to be a missionary. That interest led their entire family—of three at the time—to take part in short-term ministry in Thailand/Cambodia.

Already heavily involved with children's ministry stateside, they felt God pulling them through that trip to pursue children's ministry overseas. And they could feel their hearts being led specifically to the great spiritual need they experienced in Southeast Asia.

David and Andrea grew up in very different situations. David was saved at a young age through puppet ministry. His early salvation, he said, spared him from a lot of difficulties in situations he would face later in high school and in college.

Andrea was saved at a Good News club when she was eight, but she didn't grow up with the same strong spiritual upbringing David had. Although she did not see much growth, she still felt the hope and assurance of her salvation. And it was this that literally saved her life when the situations she faced as a teen

became too much for her to bear on her own. After she and David married, she recommitted her life to Christ, which is when she says that she began to grow spiritually.

They served as AWANA leaders at their home church in Irvine, California and as members of the AWANA missionary's advisory board for a time before relocating to David's hometown in Richland, Washington. There they continued their work in children's ministry.

Their call to ministry to Southeast Asia was confirmed in 2016, when they returned as a family to Thailand/Cambodia for a second trip, focusing on child and family prison ministry.

“We've realized that we have always been sheltered by the eternal security we have in Christ, and we've been surrounded by fellow believers,” David said. “The people of Southeast Asia, however, are largely without that hope.”

“We have been called to reach out to these people with the gospel, and to encourage and support the ministries and local Christians there.”

Patrick Tayne | *Germany*

CHRISTWAY BAPTIST CHURCH, DALLAS, TX

Growing up in a gospel-centered home is what laid the foundation for the work that God would carry out later in Patrick's life.

It wasn't until high school that he said he began to truly understand what it meant to find his identity in Christ. "[And] I didn't do too well at that off the start," he said. But God provided a mentor to disciple Patrick through all four years of high school, which helped him get his life "back on track" and see what it looked like to live a life fully surrendered.

In 2011, Patrick headed to the University of North Texas to pursue his high school dream of music education. But during the summer between his freshman and sophomore years, God graciously revealed a different plan for his life through a missions trip to Alaska.

"From the moment I hit the ground [in Alaska], I knew that God was up to something beyond my imagination," he said.

By the time he returned to Texas, Patrick knew God was calling him into full-time ministry. That calling only grew over the next three years as he sought God's direction in how exactly that would play out in his life.

He completed his undergraduate studies and began seminary the following year, where he continues to work towards his Masters in Divinity. In this same season, God also led Patrick to a small, country church just outside of Dallas-Fort Worth to serve as a worship and youth pastor.

"God blessed me beyond measure [through that small church]," he said.

Late last year, God began hinting that He had a different assignment waiting for Patrick in the future. Patrick once again began seeking where God was leading him. Then, last December, Patrick discovered ABWE and began a conversation.

"One step after another, God confirmed that this was the right path to come down, and [He has been] directing me every step of the way."



www.patricktayne.com



Russel & Tori Minnick | Ireland

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHAWNEE, SHAWNEE, KS



“
**I feel
God stretching
me beyond my
comfort zone.**
”

The Lord used many people to convince Russell that his calling and passion was not in church music, but rather biblical studies. So he changed his major, and suffered through a 26-hour senior semester to catch up on the year he had missed.

Saved at a young age, Russell felt the call to ministry as a senior in high school. He struggled through finding out that the man he thought was his dad was not his biological father, and found encouragement and his calling to a life of ministry through a study of Jeremiah:

“To those on Earth, I was a mistake. [But] God wanted me here, He had a plan for me, and He knew me before he formed me in the womb.”

A spring break trip to Panama City Beach during her freshman year of college spurred serious spiritual growth in Tori’s heart. After confronting anger and bitterness she had been harboring toward her absent father, the Lord led her to write a letter, telling her him exactly how she felt.

“I never sent it, but God used what I wrote to [help me forgive him],” she said.

Then, several years later, at a Christmas gathering, Tori was able to present the gospel to him. And after a long heartfelt conversation, Tori’s father apologized to Tori for not being there.

Tori’s famous last words: “I’m never going to marry a pastor” obviously betrayed her, she said, but she has since embraced her role as a pastor’s wife and a strong spiritual leader, in her own right.

Until recently, the Lord has used the Minnick family in pastoral ministry. That call has since transitioned to missions—or perhaps, ‘pastoral missions’—in Ireland.

“God gave me a passion for the people of Ireland and a passion for seeing the gospel shared, embraced, and grown,” Russell said.

As the couple prepares to head to Ireland, Tori says she can feel God once again stretching her beyond her comfort zone.

“But that’s the amazing thing about marriage,” she said. “God brings two people together, and uses their strengths and weaknesses to stretch and grow them, for His glory.”



MATTHEW 10:8:
**Freely you have received,
freely give.**

Josh & Jodie Greve | *Brazil*

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH,
LITTLE EGG HARBOR TWP, NJ

Jodie knew she was being called to missions when she was nine years old, while watching a missions trip recap presentation by her church's youth group. She continued to pursue that call in college, making a trip to Brazil between her junior and senior years at Cedarville University, and completing her student teaching in Papua New Guinea.

But when she was offered the opportunity to continue serving as a teacher through ABWE in Bangladesh, she felt God telling her no. She thought she was ready to go, but no matter how much she prayed, she could not feel at peace about it.

After graduating, Jodie moved back home and taught at a local middle school. This was not how Jodie had planned her life to play out. But God was using that time to prepare her heart, teaching her many lessons through her time as a middle school teacher living at home.

Before dating Jodie, Josh said he had only two loves: "Basketball, and being right." But through his time on the Cedarville men's basketball team, and through his pursuit of a biblical studies degree, God taught him valuable lessons

about teamwork, friendship, and that "I was wrong, and He was right."

Josh began to consider missions on a trip during his sophomore year of college to Bulgaria with Athletes in Action, where the American missionary family who hosted Josh's team shared with him about their ministry in theological education. Josh immediately felt pulled towards pursuing the same kind of ministry.

Though they had known each other in college, Josh and Jodie's relationship did not begin to grow until after graduation. After they were married, they moved to Dallas so Josh could attend seminary. The time they spent serving in India at a Bible college for his internship opened their eyes to the great need and desire for theological education overseas.

"Matthew 10:8 says 'Freely you have received, freely give.,'" Josh said. "In His grace, [God] taught me His Word that I did not deserve to learn. And now He is asking me [to go] teach this Word to others."



“
It is our hope and eager expectation that we will be able to share the gospel of Christ with the unreached in South Togo.
 ”

Jack & Taylor Kehl | *Togo*

ALPINE BAPTIST CHURCH, SUGARCREEK, OH

Both Jack and Taylor had the privilege of growing up in a gospel-centered home, and both were saved at a young age.

A missionary’s sermon on Matthew 9:37-38 deeply impacted Jack when he was 16, compelling him to completely surrender his life to missionary service. In college, at Cedarville University, God continued to affirm Jack’s calling to missions by leading him to a professor who was a retired missionary surgeon.

During his junior year, Jack went on his first medical missions trip, to Peru. It was his first time witnessing the “remarkable effectiveness of compassionate healthcare as a tool for evangelism”, as modeled by Christ in the New Testament.

Taylor also attended Cedarville. There was no “key moment” of being called to missions for her, but she says God had been working throughout her life through missions experiences, tuning her heart towards complete submission and obedience to Him.

Jack and Taylor went on their first medical missions trip as a married couple to Ecuador in 2008. The trip was instrumental in opening Taylor’s eyes to the joy of serving Christ alongside her husband, and led her to surrender herself completely to God’s will, whatever that might be.

After nine years of medical training, they traveled to Togo in 2017 with their three young children to work at Hôpital Baptiste Biblique. During their time in Togo, they were burdened for the Muslim tribes near the hospital that did not have any gospel light.

“It is our hope and eager expectation that we will be able to share the gospel of Christ with the unreached in South Togo, [as well as] training and discipling Christian African physicians to become surgeons [and] leaders.”



MINISTRY FOCUS:
*Equipping Pastors
Orphan Outreach*

Craig & Rene Brannan | *South Africa*

 FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ONTARIO

At 16 years old, having gone through some challenging times in his family, Craig was far from God. Then God sovereignly intervened through a BMW missionary presenting the gospel. Craig accepted Christ as his Savior on March 4, 1982 and committed to serving God with his whole life. When he was 18, Craig met and started living with a ABWE missionary couple in Durban North, KwaZulu Natal, where he helped plant churches and also worked full time for a retail company.

Although Rene did not grow up in a Christian home, God orchestrated a number of events throughout Rene’s childhood that would lead her to the gospel, and she accepted Christ when she was 14. Shortly after giving her life to Christ, Rene also committed to going anywhere to serve Him.

The two met at the ABWE church plant in Durban. Rene needed a ride to Bible college, and Craig wanted to be “obedient” to God and ensure she got their safe (“Thank you Jesus!”). Two years later, they were engaged.

But they both still had some maturing to do.

When Rene courageously broke off their engagement and the relationship, God used it as a catalyst event for Craig to

pursue greater discipline in his life, digging deeper and more earnestly into the word. Nine months later, God put it on Rene’s heart to pursue Craig again. Together they vowed to serve God as disciple-makers anywhere He led them, and they were married.

They served with ABWE missionaries in South Africa for 15 years before God called them in 2000 to serve in Canada for a time. Mid-2012, Craig and Rene began to feel God calling them back to South Africa. Through multiple visits over the next four years, God used them to equip African pastors in rural KwaZulu Natal with biblical and practical resources in education, with the counseling tools needed to model the gospel; and by teaching orphans and vulnerable children up to 25 years old to become disciplined, discerning self-sustaining stewards, training them to use their hands so that they will serve the next generation to do the same.

Craig and Rene are in the process of adopting a Canadian baby and hope to return to South Africa by January 2019.

We can't name them all—there's far too many. So meet just a few of the more than 120 missionaries currently committed to serving with us short-term, from two months to three years.

—
**SHORT-TERM
SPOTLIGHT**
1 Year-Term

Melanie McGibbon | *Chile*

Melanie maps her journey to missions through three friends: Jessica, Julie, and Angela.

Melanie was raised in a very legalistic church, and when her pastor announced he was divorcing his wife (when she was 10 years old), she was left with a lot of questions. Also following the shocking announcement, her parents pulled her out of her church's private school and put her in public school—and stopped going to church as often.

Then they moved to New York, where Melanie would meet Jessica, whose entire family had recently accepted Christ as their Savior. Jessica strongly encouraged Melanie to go with her to the Southern Baptist State Youth Convention.

"There, I heard the gospel again—this time, without all the baggage and legalism of my upbringing." She accepted Christ that weekend. A few years later youth leaders encouraged her to attend Word of Life Bible Institute.

That's where she met Julie. The daughter of missionaries to Argentina, Julie was born with a hole in her heart, leading her family to return to the States for the needed surgery.

"She was very encouraging as far as missions," Melanie said. It was during a visit to the Christian missionary school where Julie worked in Argentina that confirmed the call to missions for Melanie.

After spending two years as an ESL and math teacher at the school, Melanie returned home and applied to be a full-time missionary in Argentina.

Recently, however, things changed, and God suddenly closed the door on going back. Confused, Melanie confided in her roommate, Angela (who currently serves with ABWE at the Santiago Christian Academy). "I'm done," she said. "I'm not going to be a missionary [anymore]."

Through the encouragement of a good friend of Angela's, however, and the wise counsel of Melanie's pastor and missions committee, Melanie decided instead to seek where God may be leading her to next. It was then that he led her to ABWE, and then the Santiago Christian Academy.





“
**I read the needs
and said,
‘That’s me!’**
”

Evan & Rachel Bachtold | Ireland

SHORT-TERM SPOTLIGHT : 3 YEAR -TERM

Evan initially didn't know what exactly it was going to look like, but he knew God was calling him to ministry. Now looking back, they can see how God has used the past five years to prepare them for their upcoming journey.

Three years after they got married, Evan and Rachel followed God's call to move from their home in Illinois to Harrison, Tennessee. While there, Evan pursued a master's in biblical studies, and they both got involved in several studies through their small group at the church they attended.

After the birth of their first child, Evan and Rachel decided to move back to Illinois to be closer to family as also, ironically, Evan was offered a job at the same time from a company just south of Chattanooga that was looking to fill a sales position in Illinois.

In 2016, they were thankful for good insurance from Evan's new job as it covered much-needed procedures/surgeries to put an end to Evan's seizures.

In 2017, an associate pastor position opened at their church. Although Evan had reservations, he applied for the position.

But after much prayer and counsel, he realized God was not opening that door for him.

The search for where God was leading them in ministry carried over into this year, when a Google search unearthed an opportunity to serve in Ireland where his training and education would be put to good use. "I read the description of the needs and said, 'That's me!'"

"Evan came to me and asked, 'What do you think about being missionaries in Ireland? And by the way, I already applied.'" Rachel laughed.

Rachel grew up in a very legalistic church, which she left after discovering "a different side of Christianity" at a Christian summer camp in her late teens. Shortly afterwards, she began dating Evan, and was re-baptized at their church in Tennessee, which had become a second family to her.

Being one who would be content to live a normal, routine life, she said she can feel God "stretching" her through this new journey, softening her heart towards missions and continuing to confirm in both of them that this is His will for their lives.



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TIME to REST

By Faith Drake | Missionary in Togo

“In Togo, we live with a lot of worries that aren’t always in the forefront of our minds but weigh us down none the less...”

“It’s funny,” Faith wrote later, “we got a lot of response about [this], mostly from missionaries who were glad someone else felt the same way.

I’m happy that what we wrote can be an encouragement to others, even if it’s just knowing that someone else is down in the trenches with you and what you feel is normal.”

Right after school finished, our family was able to take a little vacation and visit some supporters in France. We had not traveled outside of the country in three years, and we didn’t realize how much we needed it until we actually got away. I couldn’t figure out why I was so teary eyed after a friend picked us up at the airport and we were driving along the highway. The kids’ reactions to everything from a garbage truck, to an off-ramp were hilarious; but there was a strange feeling that I couldn’t identify till later that night.

It was a feeling of “safety”. In Togo, we live with a lot of worries that aren’t always in the forefront of our minds but weigh us down none the less. Will that give me an amoeba? Did that mosquito carry malaria? Did I bleach that lettuce properly or will I get typhoid from it? Do I have enough meat to last me till the next trip to the capital? Does this skirt show too much ankle? Did I just hand someone something with my left hand?! Will I be able to find a bathroom? (Follow up question: Will it have a toilet seat? Or toilet paper?) Will the power stay on tonight? Do we have enough water in the tank to last us

several days when the water in town is off? Is there enough anti-venom at the hospital, since my boys are playing where deadly snakes abound? When will my girls begin to be affected by the inappropriate comments constantly directed towards them? Am I being culturally sensitive enough? The list can literally go on and on.

We aren’t telling you this to make you feel sorry for us, or put ourselves on a pedestal. We’re just trying to be transparent.

All the sudden all those things weighing us down were lifted for almost two weeks. Adam wasn’t constantly answering phone calls. We didn’t have a stream of visitors to greet every day. We went out in public, and no one cared! We walked down the street, and we weren’t chanted at! We were invisible, and it was a wonderful feeling. We went to a store, a real store, with fixed prices and new clothes. And the restaurants...well, don’t even get me started. Every pound we gained was totally worth it.

It was so wonderful visiting our supporting church there as well and reconnecting with people that Adam grew up with. It was a time of refreshment and renewal, and now we feel ready to tackle this next year head on. ■

Adam and Faith Drake arrived in Mango, Togo in 2011 as church planters and as the developers of Hope Radio. The radio station operates alongside the Hospital of Hope, reaching into four countries and peoples’ homes and lives in a way that few mediums can.



Top 3 Reasons WHY MISSION AGENCIES ARE BIBLICAL

*According to
Alex Kocman, Director of Long-Term Mobilization*

“I love Jesus, but not organized religion.”

Phrases like this show just how small the average person’s view of the church is. But Jesus had a far greater vision: “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18b).

The church is at the center of Christ’s kingdom. So what, then, do we do with non-church organizations like missions agencies? Should they exist? Although missions agencies aren’t in the Bible, here are three reasons the concept is perfectly biblical.

1. The Apostles Formed Teams

Only the church is God-ordained, but the nature of missions over land and sea made teamwork essential—even for Paul. Paul built a team from people outside his church, including Timothy (Acts 16:1-5). His missionary team was sent from the church at Antioch and reported back (Acts 13:1-3, 14:26-28), but he also accepted support from other churches (Phil. 4:15-16) and his employment (2 Thess. 3:8).

No missionary should be a lone gunslinger for God. In the New Testament, missionary teammates come from multiple church families—forming a new “organization” that exists outside the local church yet under its authority.

2. Biblical Churches Cooperate

Church cooperation is all over the New Testament. In Acts,

the church in Antioch sends relief to Jerusalem during famine (Acts 11:27-30), and Paul often urges generosity between the churches (Rom. 15:25-29, 2 Cor. 8-10).

The Great Commission is too big for one church to tackle alone. No church can help missionaries learn languages, navigate culture shock, or gain access to closed countries alone. If churches can partner together to send relief or form denominations, why not cooperate in missions too?

3. Missions Agencies Serve the Church

Missions is the job of the church, so a biblical missions agency must exist for the church. An agency is only legitimate as it supports the church in its call.

Paul’s ministry wasn’t just random evangelism—he stayed long enough to plant churches (Acts 14:21-23). Even without the ability to email or call the sending pastors in Antioch, he stayed laser-focused on local churches.

We must do whatever it takes to “support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth” (3 John 8). Let’s support missions agencies that prioritize the bride of Christ and help our churches recognize the blessings of a healthy, church-centered missions agency. ■



For more: Listen to The Missions Podcast Episode #1, “What’s Wrong With Missions Agencies?” missionspodcast.com



For the rest of Nyakpo's story:
vimeo.com/storytellersabroad



this is the **STORY OF A PRINCE**

Nyakpo Kossigan Dzidzinyo was born into a royal African family and raised by his grandmother. After her passing, and a series of difficult trials, Nyakpo came to know the Lord. He is now a teacher for the Bible Baptist Schools of Togo, and highly involved in youth ministry. Stacey Sue had the privilege of telling his story when she took part in Storytellers Abroad—a multimedia missions workshop uniquely designed for those with hands gifted in media and a heart geared toward missions. Stacey went on the July 2016 Storytellers trip to Togo as a young communications major, seeking to learn how to combine her media skills with her heart for missions. Her introduction to Nyakpo opened that door.

“I knew going into this workshop that I would learn more during my time [there] than I will have in my three years at school. And that is exactly what happened,” Stacey said.

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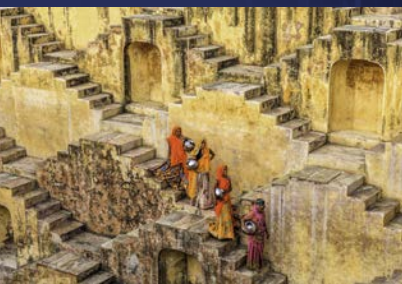
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