

2017 MISSIONS CONFERENCE



# HOME

Helping Our Missionaries Excel

“...seek that ye may **Excel** to the edifying of the church.”

1 CORINTHIANS 14:12

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# 2017 HOME

## MISSIONS EDITORIAL DR. BILL DUTTRY

Our theme for the year has been to Help Our Ministries, Members, and Missionaries to Excel (H.O.M.E.). This special H.O.M.E. Missions Conference is designed to be a blessing to our missionaries and our membership. Our desire is to see that each of us “seek that ye may *excel* to the edifying of the church.” First Baptist Church has been blessed by the presence and power of our God. We worship Him and all honor and glory is His!

As you look through the pages of this year’s magazine, please stop often and thank God for all He is and has done in and through His church—His people. One of the highlights for this special week of September 17-21 is having Dr. Keen as our keynote speaker. This is our third H.O.M.E. Conference, with the first being held in 2003, the second in 2010, and now this year 2017! We look forward to having all of our member missionaries with us for this special time. I would ask each of us to pray about

being a blessing to our missionaries financially while they are home and by praying for our Faith Promise missions commitment for the new year. We will once again be over \$400,000 in our missions giving!

Enjoy the articles and this special time. We will schedule our next H.O.M.E. missions conference for 2024. May the Lord continue to bless His church—His people—at First Baptist Church of Milford.



In His Work Together,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Bill Duttry". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a dark background.

Pastor Duttry  
Senior Pastor  
First Baptist Church  
Milford, OH

For where your  
treasure is,  
there will your  
heart be also.

MATTHEW 6:21



 **2017 MISSIONS CONFERENCE**  
*Helping Our Missionaries Excel*

My commitment for the year 2017 – 2018 is to give

<input type="checkbox"/> \$1.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> \$2.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> \$5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____

on a \_\_\_\_\_ basis.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (optional)

**Ministry Commitment**

My commitment for the year 2017 – 2018 is to pray for

- Bearing Precious Seed
- Milford Christian Academy
- Master Ministries
- Biblical School of World Evangelism

**Faith Promise**

My commitment for the year 2017 – 2018 is to give \_\_\_\_\_

Each year, our Pastor challenges us to increase our faith in the area of Faith Promise Missions giving. Would you begin praying now about what the Lord would have you to give this year towards missions?

# THE FIRST TO GO

by *Sandra  
Christensen*



Colin Christensen was the youngest of three sons growing up in a small farming community of Walnut Grove, Minnesota. After graduating from Walnut Grove High School in 1964, and in response to a challenge by his pastor Rodney Benson, he attended Pillsbury Baptist College in Owatonna, Minnesota. Colin sensed something was wrong after his first year of college. Colin talked with his pastor that summer and realized he was not truly saved. He accepted Christ the same day he spoke with Pastor Benson and returned to Bible college a changed man. During his second year at Pillsbury Baptist College, Colin felt the call to preach. Colin had heard that Midwestern Baptist College in Pontiac, Michigan was a great school for preachers and transferred to Midwestern. Upon graduating in 1968 Charles Keen, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Milford, Ohio (FBCM) asked him to join the ministry as an assistant pastor and song leader. Colin was thankful for the opportunity and later said that of all the training he received, the training from

Pastor Keen had the greatest impact on his life's ministry.

In 1969, just one year after Colin arrived in Milford, Pastor Keen announced that the church would have its first missions conference in 1970. When time for the conference finally arrived, Pastor Keen had secured three speakers that would forever influence Colin's life. The conference speakers were Don Frazier, founder of Bearing Precious Seed; Bob Lemmon, a pastor from the state of Texas; and Bob Hayes, a veteran missionary to Ghana, West Africa. Colin was able to spend time with each of the conference preachers and sought God's will throughout the week. Colin was not really an emotional man but shed tears as God broke his heart for the lost. By the end of the conference Colin realized God not only wanted him to have a burden, but to go! The closing night of the conference Bob Hayes preached as Colin silently wept. As the sermon ended, Colin went to

the platform to lead the invitation. Shaking with sobs, he left the pulpit and went to the altar where Pastor Keen prayed with him. Pastor Keen and Colin returned to the platform where Pastor Keen asked Colin to explain why he had gone to the altar. You could hear a pin drop. Colin blew his nose, and while fighting off the tears told the congregation that God had called him to the mission field of Mexico. The congregation wept as they came forward to hug and rejoice with Colin. The church promised prayers and well wishes.

Folks did not understand the preparation associated with being the first missionary to be sent out of FBCM. Colin first took a survey trip to Mexico with Don Frazier and immediately began deputation upon returning in late March of the same year. After two months of deputation (April and May), Colin left for Mexico in June, 1970. Colin went to Cuernavaca (about an hour south of Mexico City) where he began language school and was preaching within six months. He worked with Dr. Ralph McCoy in the city and in the mountains of Guerrero until 1974 when he enrolled in missions training at Baptist Bible Translators Institute (BBTI). Colin finished his training and taught at BBTI until 1978 when he went to the Philippines where he served until 1988. Colin then returned to Milford to work with Bearing Precious Seed until 1993 when he moved his evangelistic ministry to the country of Hungary. Colin faithfully served in Hungary until 2007. He came home thereafter and went home to be with our Lord in 2011. Colin Christensen's love for lost souls and service to the Lord as the first missionary sent out from FBCM causes him to remain alive in the hearts and minds of many today.



*Pastor Charles Keen  
and  
Colin Christensen*



**DON FRAZIER &  
COLIN CHRISTENSEN**

*By the end of the  
conference Colin realized  
God not only wanted him  
to have a burden, but to go!*

The Lord is surely coming back in my life-time! I just turned sixty and realize that if I should die or the Lord would come for all of us, whatever I will do for Christ I had better do now! I do not have time to feel sorry for myself, or to lose a single day mired in self-pity over missing Connie, though I do miss her so much!

All who are close to the ministry of First Baptist Church of Milford Ohio (FBCM) likely know that my life's partner Connie went home to be with the Lord on September 6th of last year. I was asked to write a testimonial article about continuing the mission work after losing my mate. I am so blessed that I have not lost my mate; I know exactly where she is! The knowledge and hope (expectation) that she is with our Lord brings me such comfort and peace, and a sense of anxious anticipation. You see, in a little while I too can put off this house of clay and look full in His wonderful face! Having this peace helps keep me determined and motivated while I am still able. Letting up or doing less is just not an option.

I remember vividly the early morning hours of the day Connie passed away. The Lord woke me at 3:30 a.m. and as I went to her bed, the Lord woke her as well. Connie asked me if she was "going to die." I said, "Yes honey, you are." She looked up and joyfully said, "I'm going to see my Jesus!" Teasing her I asked, "Are you sure you're saved?" She said, "Oooh yes!" and after a brief pause, said "I love you so much." I told Connie that I loved her too and she said, "God is sooo good! Oh dear Jesus, I love you so much!" The whole time she was conscious she continually said, "God is so good!"

Connie's last hours were spent rejoicing in the Lord. All four of our children were there that day as was Connie's long-time friend, Glenda. Connie's sister and her family, her mom, dad and brother all came on that day too. We sang, prayed, read Scripture throughout the entire day until God called her home at 8:13 p.m. What a blessed day! I was so happy for Connie! I am so happy for Connie!!

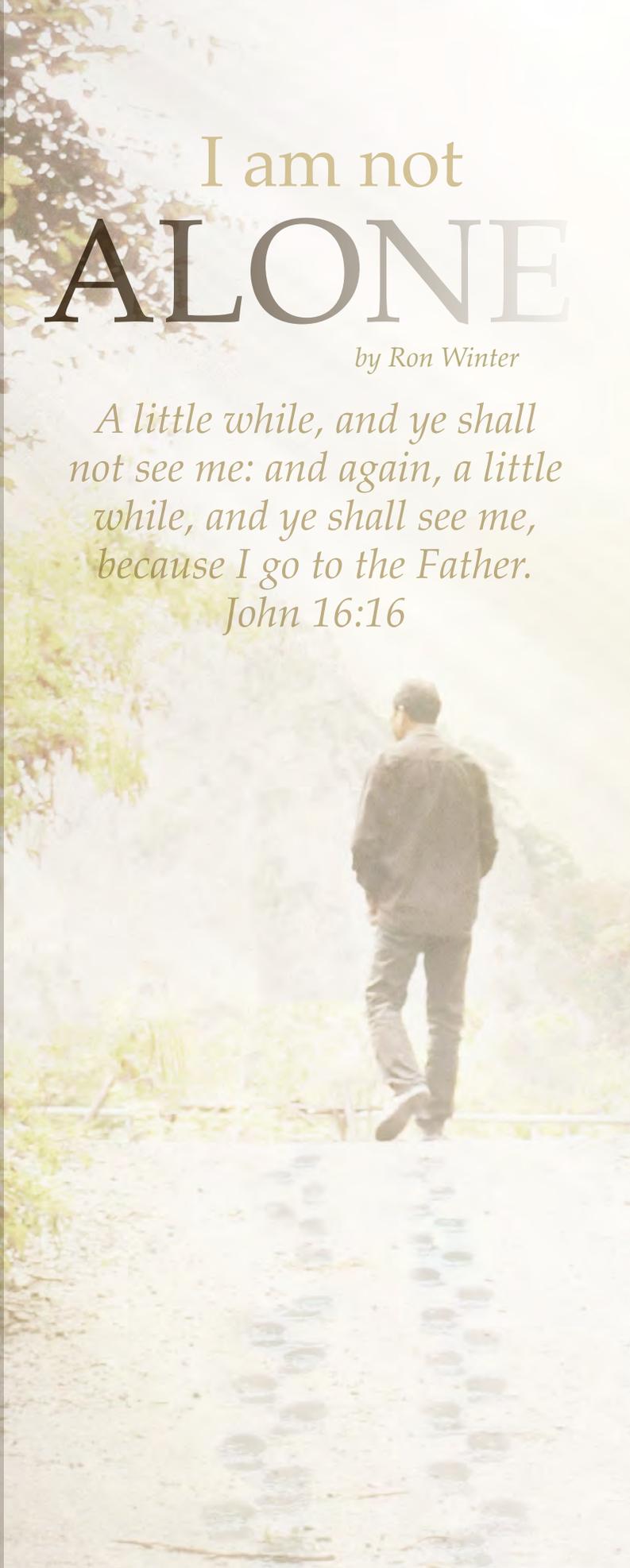
The morning after Connie went home to be with the Lord, I awoke very early and started praying, discussing and rehearsing with God events of the past days, months, and years. I began to weep and cried out to God "I miss Connie." It was at this moment that the Lord told me not to be selfish; He told me that it is not about me. God reminded me that Connie had cancer for eight years and He had taken her home. I was so overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude that I thanked God for taking her and asked Him to forgive me for being so self-centered. I asked God to help me carry on, to be a better dad and grandfather; to be a better brother and brother-in-law; to be a better missionary and pastor, and

# I am not ALONE

by Ron Winter

*A little while, and ye shall  
not see me: and again, a little  
while, and ye shall see me,  
because I go to the Father.*

*John 16:16*



more than anything, to be a better Christian. I miss being a good husband. I miss buying Connie flowers. I miss telling her that I love her, but I thank God every day for the thirty-six years He allowed me to have with her. She was here to raise our 4 kids. She was here to see all of her children saved. She was even here to see her ten grandchildren. Connie witnessed all of these children and families live their lives in gospel preaching churches. I thank God for His grace and the time Connie and I did have together.

When Connie was first diagnosed with "Prolymphocytic T-cell leukemia", I could hardly sleep. We did not know how we would ever pay for treatments. I begged God to heal Connie. While God chose to allow the cancer to remain, He gave us insurance even though Connie had already been diagnosed with the disease. The insurance paid bills amounting to \$240,000 dollars. God was showing Himself mighty through what we perceived as impossible. God showed me that Connie was His and that He would take care of everything. We learned to thank God for the illness, and for the opportunity to serve Him through it. Just the other day a woman who used to attend our church said she had prayed fervently that God would heal Connie. I thanked her and told her that Connie has no ailments now! Praise the Lord, He answered our prayers and showed His love for all of us, and especially for Connie!

Upon returning to the States for Connie's chemo treatments in 2010, a bone marrow biopsy revealed the cancer was still present. We were just waiting for Connie to become more ill with the expectation of additional chemo treatments. I did not want to be the one to ask her to leave the United States where her kids and grandbabies were, but I longed to return to Mexico. Connie longed to get back to the field too as one day she asked the doctor why we could not just return to Mexico. We had turned our previous work over to a Mexican pastor and needed to go to a new place. After much prayer, I felt the Lord would have us go to Camargo, Chihuahua, a city of 55,000, with no independent Baptist church. We soon planted the Bible Baptist Church in Camargo and God allowed me to have 4 years with Connie continuing in His work. The people there never knew Connie when she was well. She was known by the camp stool she took with her when knocking on doors. She sat on the stool when she became tired and unable to go to every door (Connie's partner would go while she rested on her stool). I finally had to tell her not to go door knocking. Connie was upset with me because she so very much desired to be an encouragement to the ladies.

While God is my guide, I must assert that any good Christian character, convictions, etc. that I ever possessed were greatly a result of Connie's influence in my life. I cannot imagine where I would have been without her. Now that she is in Heaven,

I see that I was relying on her too much and not being as responsible as I should have been.

Through Connie's illness and death, I believe I have a better focus on eternity. I believe I understand a little better what it is to be eternity minded. I tend to be somewhat fearful and apprehensive, worrying about things. I am coming to realize that as Jesus said to Pilate in John 19:11, "...Thou couldst have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above:..." I need to embrace my fears, "problems," and difficulties as opportunities that God has placed in my life to lift Him up and show His working power in my life. I better realize now that God is looking at the "big, eternal picture" and that He has chosen to use me and my situation to serve some purpose for the good of those He would have me minister to and for His glory.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

I am trying to teach our church in Mexico that God ALWAYS wants what is best for us, saved or lost, and that it is up to everyone to trust Him, because; "To every *thing* there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:..." Ecclesiastes 3:1-10

I sometimes think that God took Connie and left behind the person who was not producing fruit to full capacity. Perhaps He took away the weary (Connie) that has run her race and in doing so, cleanses, sanctifies, and equips those of us that are left to bear more fruit and to be better disciples (John 15:2,8). Connie sacrificed her family and a much deserved rest "back home" in the last 5 years of her earthly life as she faithfully served the Lord. Failing in God's work without my help meet is not an option no matter how difficult. Letting up or continuing with less urgency would be a black eye to Connie's legacy.

**CONNIE WINTER**

**October 24, 1958 –  
September 6, 2016**



# Mission Field FACTORS

by Charles Sickett

Missionary strategies differ but missionaries always face a conditioning process that includes a variety of factors. The goal of this article is to share a few factors that God used to improve and influence our ministry in Uganda.

## *The Envy Factor & The Prosperous Slave!*



When my wife Madelon and I arrived on the mission field of Uganda in 2003, we knew Africans would want a Bible Saviour who could deliver them from sin. Early on, we dealt with emotional struggles that began to reveal important realities behind missionary ministry. After nine months of learning, we started our first Bible study in a ten feet by ten feet shop on the back of a hillside. Our first Sunday brought rumors from our African prospects. I knew we were in trouble upon fielding

their first two questions. First, we were asked where the Coca-Cola was that they had been promised. Next, they wanted to know where the flushing toilet would be placed.

Envy examines the place you come from rather than the person you have become. It often considers project funding over practical faith in God that makes it possible to perform His will. I recall a woman called Mama Jessica who attended our services. She stirred bad feelings among the others coming to hear the Word. Months of agony passed before an opportunity came to change the circumstances. A girl in her family fell sick. I had a man take some church funds and provide help.

Mama Jessica became a loyalist. The envy in her heart left and so did the antagonistic spirit. We led many to Christ though few would follow in genuine consistency.

After six months we divided the group into three locations where the best prospects for viable church planting could be examined. Our home in Mutungo Hill became the location God would use and we became First Baptist Church. We moved to a second house where the home church cell continued. In 2009, our men advised that we find a public facility and so we rented a small building. In 2013, we purchased the building and are now praying for an opportunity to purchase a neighboring plot.

Envy can grow almost anywhere. Most Ugandans are religious and identify with Bible beliefs. However, they are consumed with prosperity preaching and shortcut business ventures. There are wealthy Ugandans, but all too often the fear of poverty exceeds the fear of God. Their fear is driven by envy. The terms “first world” or “third world” are not statements of finance, but statements of faith. Most people are third world in their mind, not because of the material things they possess.

Have you ever heard about a “prosperous slave?” Well, the Bible tells us about one! Joseph was so envied by his brethren, but they did not want the true prosperity that came from their father’s love. Joseph wanted a relationship and they wanted a shortcut. When they finally sold him out of envy they learned the true meaning of poverty. It is not long until the Bible tells us that Joseph was prosperous (Gen. 39:2-3). His prosperity was found in the context of what he could do in Potiphar’s home. Many do not understand that joy comes through the cost of filling the lives of others. This is where faith overcomes finance and envy loses its logic. I wish you could have seen the looks on the faces of our people when I asked them, “Can a slave be prosperous?” Many Ugandans think riches bring Americans happiness. Most people do not want to know the difference between Biblical prosperity and financial achievements.

## *The Empty Factor & The Lending Parent(s)*

If you are a good parent you probably know what it is to be lonely. You make decisions and your children do not always understand the wisdom of your direction. Jesus experienced this with His disciples. The missionary’s biggest enemy may be an emptiness that comes when flying from a homeland of camaraderie and support to a world that will not understand his agenda. Missionary church planting is a slow process because it must help first generation Christians overcome bad parenting. Pastors who think that a missionary should be able to produce a church plant every few years need to

ask themselves how many years it took them to parent their own children. Often the missionary becomes a godly parent to his converts.

This is true of pastors also. Some of our early converts were just kids when they came to us. Milton and Jackson were boys living across the street from our first house church. They

would come to our house from school, learn the Bible with us, and eat at our home. Jackson spent so much time with us that he began to pick up American humor. The key to their attentiveness

came from parents who allowed them to spend endless hours with us. Both Milton and Jackson had unsaved fathers running homes without their wives. Milton's mother died when he was young and Jackson's mother lived elsewhere. There are other examples like Mark and his brothers who spent much time with us, most of them from single parent homes.

Have you ever heard of the Jewish priest who did not parent well? The Bible tells us how Eli did not restrain his sons. But it also tells us of a woman called Hannah, (1 Sam. 1:11, 28) a very good parent. Empty, she willingly offered her son to God before he was born. Give your kids to God even before they are born. It does not mean they will live for Him, but it may allow you as a praying parent to lend them to those with right influences.

There are risks a parent must take in trusting others with their children, but these risks are reduced when God's house and His men are factored in the equation. Ron Todd was a missionary my parents trusted. Brother Todd took me to his meetings as he reported back to his supporters. I might not have become a missionary had my family not seen a need to place me under the influence of such godly people.

### *The Encouraging Factor & The Psalmists' Love*

Our first church plant in Kampala, the Capital of Uganda, is called First Baptist Church of Mutungo. We have prayed and sought other areas to plant churches, but God has yet to open the doors to let us completely leave this first work. Part of the missionary conditioning is just sticking it out where you are until something grows. It can take a take long time in a third world culture to establish a consistent and worthy reputation that gains people's trust. Much of the progress comes from

the pace of spiritual growth in the men God is calling out of the missionary local church planting efforts (nationals). The encouraging news is that two of our very own men have surrendered to preach and have finished Bible school. We also have intermittently been planting Biblical seeds in a village town called Mbulamuti since 2008. We have purchased property there and would like to start another church plant. Additionally, one of our men has spent time in western Uganda on a missionary internship and is contemplating possible church plant locations. He is returning to Kampala to raise funds and is praying that God may give him a wife to unite with him in his ministry goals. Others are becoming faithful as well. The Mutungo building has been renovated and we are raising funds to purchase a second building to expand. More visitors have come in the last few years than ever. The offerings are growing as people tithe and do the right thing. We need prayer for spiritual and numerical growth to propagate this work and the other potential ministries we want to see come from our men.

In Psalm 119, the psalmist affirms one basic fact—his love for the Word of God (119:47-48). Full-time servants of the Lord must value this quality beyond all others. We must train our mission field converts to love God's Word. There will come a point in time when our ministry finishes in East Africa. What must stand firm from our ministry are people who have a great love for God's Word. The difference between a single generation work and a multiple generation work comes from people who love the Word. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." That kind of love is what keeps His servants serving long after all the missionaries are gone. The missionary must be conditioned to endure and strive for ministry longevity. Persons who love God's Word can stay anywhere and even sustain love for the unlovely.

*"The missionary must be conditioned to endure and strive for ministry longevity. Persons who love God's Word can stay anywhere and even sustain love for the unlovely."*





# Finding God's Will on the Mission Field

by Adam Jarvis

**M**oving to the mission field was one of the most exhilarating, exciting, and terrifying things I have ever done. In October of 2015, my family and I packed up several storage tubs and carry-on suitcases and arrived at the airport with our one-way tickets to Honduras. After two years of praying and planning, including 18 months on the road visiting churches and sharing our vision, we were finally ready. "This is it," I thought. "I am ready. We are moving to Honduras and soon we will be settled in for the long haul. I am 100% certain that this is God's will for my life." Many times while we were preparing to move to Honduras, and even after moving, I encountered people who asked this question: "How long are you planning to stay?" I would give them a quizzical look and say: "I'm moving there. I have no plans to do anything else. This is it. Forever!" And then one Wednesday afternoon, sixteen months after leaving home and planting my wife and children in a foreign country, we found that we had to move our work. I was suddenly faced with a question I had thought was already answered: "Where do you want me to go, Lord?" The setting, the scene, the backdrop that I pictured playing out in real life was seemingly all gone. I had to ask myself if the vision God gave me

was gone too. Even more difficult questions had to be answered. “What am I doing here? Is this my work, or is this God’s work? Can this vision be transplanted, or was this a one-time shot? Where did this vision come from? If I truly believe it came from God—and I do—what is the purpose? If I knew then what I know now, would I still have come to Honduras in the first place?”

Someone asked me, “If you could go back to the beginning, what would you change?” Both my wife and I agreed: “Nothing.” So where do we go from here? A family of six, 4700 kilometers from home, and wondering “What to do? Where to go? What is God’s will for my life now? How do we find it?” The answer to these questions was not a great revelation; I learned it as a child in Sunday School. Read your Bible, pray every day... walk faithfully with God and He will lead the way. One thing that I believe is very important in finding God’s will on the mission field is to not try to force anything. I simply ask God to open the doors He wants me to go through, and close the doors He doesn’t want me to walk through. That’s what we did.

Sure enough, God began to open new doors. I received an email from someone I had never met, who told me I had been recommended to him by another man I had only met once. I was begging God for direction and He led a man I had only briefly met once, to contact a man I had never met, to call me. The man suggested we meet and discuss the possibility of working together. This is not the only way God works. He works differently with different people. I cannot tell you how He will work for you. I can only tell you what He did for me. It was not only an answer to prayer, it was a miracle!

Another thing I believe to be important in finding God’s will on the mission field is to never make hasty decisions out of fear or impatience. Seek Godly counsel, discuss everything with your pastor, be willing to listen and accept the counsel, and pray earnestly with all of your might. After two survey trips to meet and get to know this missionary and his family (someone whom I had never previously met but was still located in Honduras) I knew that God had led me through this door. God gave me peace that this was where He would continue His plan for our family. We would remain in Honduras.

I am sure that this new road will not be easy and that trials await in the new direction in which God is leading. But when we trust God to lead, He gives us the peace in knowing that He will guide us through every obstacle, every roadblock, and every challenge. He will do so with His power and His grace.

Most of our future plans are mapped out in a setting we fabricate in our minds. “This is what the vision will look like. This is the setting. This is how I see it playing out.” But when the time comes that this setting is stripped away, and we are left alone with just the bare-bones of the vision and nothing more, we need to be willing to give it all to the Lord and trust Him to direct our steps. Follow what we know is right. Follow God in all the “everyday” areas of life. Be obedient. Be faithful. Allow Him to be our guide. We need to be willing to take all of the goals, plans and dreams we have—and hand them over to God. Let God do what God wants to do with the vision. After all, it’s His vision to begin with.

“One thing that I believe is very important in finding God’s will on the mission field is to not try to force anything. I simply ask God to open the doors He wants me to go through, and close the doors He doesn’t want me to walk through. That’s what we did.”

# THE EVER-REACHING MESS

*a panoramic view of the effectual reach of the gospel*



# MESSAGE AND MESSENGERS

*Results of Bearing Precious Seed*

**SINCE 1973, BEARING PRECIOUS SEED HAS HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SENDING OUT MISSIONARIES AND/OR PRINTED SCRIPTURES TO OVER 120 COUNTRIES.**



*"He that goeth forth and weepeth,  
bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
bringing his sheaves with him." ~ Psalm 126:6*



# THE ROLE OF THE *Missionary Wife*

by Madelon Siekbert

When my husband Charles and I were dating, Pastor Duttry was preaching through the book of Ruth. It was a terrific series and we listened with great excitement. God was preparing us for our journey together. As a missionary wife, it is my role to love and support my husband so he can have confidence that I will follow him wherever God leads him.

*"...Intreat me not to leave thee, [or] to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge:" RUTH 1:16*

This verse is so applicable to the missionary wife. Still, while Charles is the head of our home and leader of our ministry, there is more to the role of the missionary wife than just following my husband. Here are three ways in which God allows me to help in His work.

## *Being An Example*

It is my pleasure as a missionary wife to aid my husband in exemplifying love to our people. There is no Biblical foundation in Uganda therefore they have little concept of love. The Luganda word "jagaIa" means to want, to like, to love. Their language does have a separate verb for love. Can you imagine love being synonymous with want? As love is associated with giving (John 3:16), I often prepare something for a church member that I know they will like. For instance, Carol enjoys caramel corn and Mark enjoys cornbread. You know the old saying, "Nothing says lovin' like something from the

oven." As a missionary wife I need to be an example in exemplifying love. This can be accomplished through acts of "giving."

Seeing love displayed is so uplifting. In June of 2013, my son Charles Jr. was hospitalized overnight. My husband spent the night at the hospital with Charles Jr. Mark Nagaba (a faithful man in our church) spent the entire night at the hospital as well even though he had to go to work the next day. What an example! Nothing illustrates love better than the giving of your time.

As a missionary wife I find it critical to build relationships with people. My home is always open for fellowship. Recently, Charles has been dealing with a medical situation. When we were unsure of Charles' prognosis, we had a prayer meeting at our home. I served popcorn and juice. The kids played outside while the adults prayed. It brought great joy to hear our wonderful, faithful men pray for Charles, their preacher. It was dark outside by the time we finished. None of our guests would accept the transport money Charles offered them to get home. This was extraordinary in a culture that does not often express love! Building relationships can be an expression of love.

## *Being An Educator*

Our home is our first ministry, so the children's education consumes a lot of my time. Our children are homeschooled using the Abeka Book® curriculum. We use this curriculum because it is very thorough. When we are on furlough, we place our children in Milford

Christian Academy (MCA) at First Baptist Church of Milford, Ohio. This allows us to check their progress and also helps our children develop socially. We feel it is important that our family stay connected with our home church and its Christian school.

In 2015, MCA changed their uniforms to a new style. We happily accepted some of the old style uniforms that would fit our children for the next few years. We even have a separate room in our house for homeschool. We believe the school uniforms and a specific room for teaching helps build a more formal learning atmosphere. We begin school on August 1st and end in April. Holidays are celebrated and I bake something extra special for each occasion. I have picked up many festive tablecloths (on sale) to help us keep track of the seasons in America. Valentine's Day of 2016 was especially memorable. A sweet lady from our home church in Milford sent a box of Valentine treats. Her thoughtfulness meant a lot and reminded me of my favorite verse, Matthew 6:26. God cares about every aspect in our lives, even the little things. The day before the treats arrived, I had told the Lord that I wished the children could have a nice class party like they had in America. God had answered my prayer before I had even prayed! It takes a minimum of three weeks for a package to arrive but God had everything worked out.

Teaching Sunday school is another opportunity to be an educator. I have a very special student in my class named Isaiah. Isaiah is interested in every word that I say and never loses eye contact. Isaiah then goes home and teaches the Sunday school lesson to his mother. Many times parents will hear their own children more than they will hear another adult.

### Being An Encouragement

Correspondence is a vital part of the life of a missionary wife. I make an effort to respond to anyone who writes. We certainly need the prayer support! There are precious Christian ladies from supporting churches that send me email messages. These ladies have become dear to my heart. It is good to communicate with other missionary wives. Jeannette Joyner calls me almost every Tuesday, even on furloughs. She bakes wonderful cakes for our birthdays. We can relate to each other and share our concerns. She has been a missionary wife for over thirty

years and her key advice to others is to have a Plan B. A magnet on her refrigerator reads, "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break." It is my goal to emulate her and reach out to new missionary wives.

I also try to stay in touch with grandparents. We keep them up to date with plenty of photos. I love taking pictures of my children (they grow so quickly).



One of the greatest lessons I have learned as a missionary wife is that your location does not determine your spiritual condition. I heard this while listening to a sermon by Pastor Barry Rackley. At the time, I had two children under the age of fourteen months, so I could not sit through an entire church service. I was thinking, "If I just had the convenience of a nursery (like in the States) or if grandparents were nearby, I could grow more as a Christian." Brother Rackley's statement gripped my heart. Spiritual struggles are faced everywhere and growth is a choice.

Remember Moses in the wilderness? He was there by God's design (for training). "And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him... And he said, Here *am* I." Exodus 3:4. Moses was prepared for the next step of obedience. Perhaps God is calling you to the mission field. He will take you there, one step at a time. Dr. Charles Keen once said, "Missions is the highest form of our gratitude."



Seeking the  
*Shadow*  
of the **National**  
{by Jim Roe}

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." // Timothy 2:2

After resigning as a teacher from the public school system, I surrendered to preach and enrolled in the School of the Scriptures at First Baptist Church in Milford. In 1989, Melissa and I began our missionary journey in Alberta, Canada where we established the Vision Baptist Church in Leduc. Following the installment of a Canadian pastor and becoming Canadians ourselves, we answered the Lord's call to go to the unlikely island nation of Communist Cuba.

Since then, we have made the focus of our ministry to quietly and deliberately train Cuban nationals to do the Great Commission. In 1999, I began training two faithful men in the dining room of our home in Havana. This would be the humble beginning of Berean Bible Institute, a means by which Cuban men and women could be equipped for ministry. Since that time, Berean has grown into several provinces producing scores of graduates. As a result, 34 churches have been started and countless missions in Cuban cities as well as in rural locations.

II Timothy 2:2 is our founding verse for ministry in Cuba: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The end goal has been the training of faithful men which will ensure the continuation of ministry in a repressed and restricted nation.

I wish I could tell you that II Timothy 2:2 had always been my ministry mantra, but it had not. When we first arrived in Havana and unpacked our bags on a sweltering July afternoon, we began to contemplate the limitations of ministry and the reality of our situation. Though only 90 miles from the United States, we were in an altered world: anti-American propaganda greeted us on billboards and blasted from the television and radio; suffering and hardship were on every corner; there was a scarcity of basic necessities (such as toilet paper); adjusting to the rapid-fire Cuban Spanish was exhausting; but worst of all, no one wanted us there.

A particular event framed our introduction into that repressed place that seemed to further exasperate our circumstances. Word had reached us of the tragic accident in Africa that claimed the lives of Bob, John, and Sarah Hayes. I sat stunned at the news. I remembered Bro. Bob Hayes preaching with such passion and conviction during that missions conference in February 1986 when I had surrendered to the call of foreign missions. I recalled how we had accomplished ministry during the ensuing years in Canada. Now this.

*"Since then, we have made the focus of our ministry to quietly and deliberately train Cuban nationals to do the Great Commission."*

Our heroes had been taken home and we pondered the actuality of starting a church in a place where we did not know how to minister. What had been successful in Canada would not work here. No public speaking; no door-to-door soul-winning; no renting a building where people could congregate; no evangelistic or church planting campaigns were permitted. Religious work of any kind was prohibited without a religious visa. We were not even candidates for a visa. We had come to that desert place in our lives: sad, frustrated, and we questioned, "Why would God have brought us here?" Memories of crisp Alberta winters and a welcoming congregation of faithful Canadians haunted me.

In Leduc, Alberta, we started the Vision Baptist Church and spent five and one-half wonderful years there building the work. We worked hard during that time and had tangible results. We were accepted and felt as though we had found the place God would have us for many more years to come. From the very beginning of our ministry, I would have told you that II Timothy 2:2 was an important verse in our philosophy of ministry. However, it was not until that Fall of 1998 in Havana, Cuba that I realized that the training of a few faithful men would be the only thing we could do on the island. We ourselves would not plant churches; we would not start a Christian school, build bus routes, pastor a church, etc. as we had in Canada.

Every country in the world is unique. Even countries that are in the same geographic region and speak the same language have varying histories, cultures, attitudes towards foreigners, levels of education and literacy, and forms of government. A methodology (not a biblical principle) may work well in one country and not at all in another. We have lived in four vastly different countries over a ministry of 30 years; the political systems include a representative democracy, a constitutional monarchy (parliamentary system), and for the past 19 years a communist dictatorship. We refer to the latter as a Restricted Access Country (RAC). What had been successful in Canada would not work in Cuba. We adjusted our methodology, re-worked our goals, and discovered that God's purpose was for us to seek and remain in the shadow of the national.

The idea of Berean Bible Institute was birthed in May 1999 in Havana, Cuba. There were two young men who came to us asking to be trained for ministry. By November of 2001, the group had grown to four. In the beginning, progress was

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# EVANGELIZING IN THE DARK

by Michael C.

“Perhaps my sun shines not as yours,” wrote Helen Keller. “The colours that glorify my world, the blue of the sky, the green of the fields, may not correspond exactly with those you delight in; but they are none the less colour to me.”<sup>1</sup> Helen Keller was blind. Her heightened sensory perception caused her to *see* the world differently than most others. In a similar manner Christians would do well to allow their heightened spiritual perception to cause them to *see* the world differently than most others.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration *sees* the world differently than most others. They *see* the world scientifically through charts and graphs and studies. NASA data on Global Horizontal Irradiance, for instance, helps determine how much shortwave radiation infiltrates different parts of the globe.<sup>2</sup> This data reveals that the Arab world (North Africa and the Middle East) is a particularly sunny region. In fact, this region is above average in its potential to produce solar energy.

Appearances, however, can be misleading. While it is true that the Arab world shines brightly from the light of the sun, it is simultaneously true that a deep darkness covers the region—not a darkness to be seen *physically*, but one to be perceived *spiritually*. Do not always trust your eyes; always trust the Word of God.

The Apostle John wrote much about the contrast between light and dark, as in John 8:12, “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the

light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Jesus makes it clear that people live in spiritual darkness when they do not follow Him. But Jesus does not want people to live in that oppressive darkness! He said in John 12:46, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." What will it take to get the light of Jesus Christ to the spiritually dark places in this world so that people might have the opportunity to believe on Him?

Samuel Marinus Zwemer perceived such a spiritual darkness while preparing to minister in the Arab world in the 19th and 20th centuries. Later dubbed *The Apostle to Islam*, Zwemer turned his attention to Arabia while in his first year of seminary. He and his friend, James Cantine, had already pledged to go overseas as missionaries when they began praying for direction. "As their plans took shape, Zwemer and Cantine envisaged the possible opening of a new mission, and they selected Arabia, the homeland of Islam, as the most difficult field they could find. The Muslim religion was the only one that had met and conquered Christianity on a large scale and thus was the great rival of the Christian faith."<sup>3</sup>

What will it take to *evangelize in the dark*? Samuel Zwemer and James Cantine formed the Arabian Mission, and **prayer** was fundamental, as evidenced by their adoption of Abraham's prayer in Genesis 17:18b, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Later in his life, Zwemer spoke on Luke 5:5 and "...related this to work in Muslim lands. Yet, he said by faith, as we obey our Lord's commission, the time will come when Muslims will be brought to Christ in such numbers that the boats (or churches) will not be able to hold them. The audience was so affected by the message that they asked

what they could do. Dr. Zwemer said, 'Pray.'<sup>4</sup> It will take **perseverance** to *evangelize in the dark*. Zwemer and Cantine had trouble rousing support for their mission. Even back in the 19th century it seems the idea of missionary work in Muslim lands was widely regarded as radical and unwise. Zwemer's attitude was, "If God calls you and no board will send you, bore a hole through the board and go anyway."<sup>5</sup> Zwemer persevered through countless obstacles and hardships during his life, and notably while ministering among Muslims. One must also consider **physicality** in order to *evangelize in the dark*. Even with the modern advancements in technology, physical presence—warm bodies on the field—are still vital to the work of evangelization. Technology helps but it is not enough. There is no replacement for the classic face-to-face Gospel presentation.

My family and I have served in North Africa for more than five years. We know what it is like to get sun burnt in a dark place. We know the loneliness that comes from being surrounded by unbelievers. But we also know the joy that comes from seeing the transformation of a single individual coming out of darkness and into the light. So we labor and we press on...handing out Arabic New Testaments; painfully listening to friends' stories of persecution; and studying the Word of God together.

"The sun does not shine for my physical eyes, nor does the lightning flash, nor do the trees turn green in the spring; but they have not therefore ceased to exist, any more than the landscape is annihilated when you turn your back on it."<sup>6</sup> Spiritual darkness exists whether we *see* it or not. We can turn our backs on it; we can try to ignore it, but the darkness remains. Only the light of Christ can illuminate a place shrouded in darkness, no matter how radiant the place is physically.

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### Endnotes

1. Helen Keller, *The World I Live In* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, E.C., 1908), [http://www.drugfreereading.com/interest\\_novels/Helen%20Keller%20Autobiography.pdf](http://www.drugfreereading.com/interest_novels/Helen%20Keller%20Autobiography.pdf), chap. X [130].
2. "SWERA (beta release) GHI NASA Low Resolution," National Renewable Energy Laboratory, accessed July 7, 2017, <https://maps.nrel.gov/swera/#/?aL=we1q1F%255Bv%255D%3Dt&bL=groad&cE=0&lR=0&mC=-4.390228926463384%2C21.4453125&zL=3>.
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4. Wilson, Jr., "The Apostle to Islam," 166.
5. Wilson, Jr., "The Apostle to Islam," 164.
6. Keller, *The World I Live In*, chap. X [130].



# THE CHURCH

DAVID WILLIAMSON

**FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS** God used the nation of Israel to effect His will for mankind. Through a covenant made with man and later through His dealings with this man's ancestors, God reveals Himself to all who will attend. God paints a picture as He deals with the people of Israel. This painting reveals that man has a problem that only God can remedy. The problem is sin and God's remedy is Jesus. Jesus came, lived, died, and overcame the grave. Jesus ascended and is coming again. The command of Jesus until His return is to be used of Him to bring others into the fold. The vehicle God uses to accomplish this command; to complete His will now for all mankind is the New Testament Church. Born again, regenerated believers are positioned in Christ and have a new identity. This identity is corporately referred to as the Church. The objectives of the lives of every Christian must not contradict this new identity as we are used of God to fulfill His will.

The theme for First Baptist Church of Milford this year has been to "excel to the edifying of the church." The literal translation of this term "edifying" is the act of promoting the growth of wisdom, holiness, and happiness of fellow believers. If we are to "edify" one another we must promote these attributes or characteristics in our brothers and sisters in Christ. Why? So that God can fulfill His will for us which is to be used of Him to expand His kingdom; to help others come to know Jesus as Savior. How does one "excel" at edifying? How does one excel at growing wisdom and holiness and happiness in the brethren? Does it not first start within the heart of each believer? Must we not first examine our wisdom; our holiness; our happiness, before endeavoring to "edify" or grow these traits in others? How is this accomplished?

## BE WILLING TO CHANGE

In Galatians 6:15 we read "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

The thought here is not only that we are new creatures in Christ, but that our change is the only thing that "availeth." The Greek term *availeth* refers to having force. Paul is explaining to the believers in Galatia that any power of value, any influence of worth is in Christ Jesus; in our newly regenerated position in Him. We find a parallel verse as Paul writes to the church of Corinth:

*"Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Here we again find that the "new creature" is in Christ and that the ability to influence (all things) is associated with our existence in Him. These verses contextually agree and confirm that upon accepting Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and being placed in Christ, we have the means to change; we literally are new creatures. Our power and influence; our behavior in all things should never be separate from our new identity in the Lord.

Still, there remains a free will in this new creature which must submit to the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Believers must be willing to accept this change so that they are able to use this power and influence for God's glory. The question is, am I willing to change; am I willing to submit all things to Christ so that my behavior completely reflects Him? Only then can we be assured that our investment, our edification of others replicates Jesus.

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slow, but deliberate as men were sought who were teachable, not driven by economic motives and would be governed by principles and not by circumstances. In February of 2004, the goal of establishing training stations in various Cuban provinces was realized with these "faithful" men now training others.

To summarize, due to the limitations on foreigners doing religious work in Cuba, we were providentially led, actually forced to adapt our ministry to II Timothy 2:2 and the training of "faithful men." The result has been several church-planting projects across the island, initiated, established, and pastored by graduates of Berean Bible Institute, all Cuban nationals.

In July 2005, Berean Bible Institute placed itself under the umbrella of the only legally recognized independent Baptist church on the island. This was a huge advancement towards the goal of establishing non-affiliated Baptist churches throughout the entire island through Cuban nationals.

Our goals are simply to prepare Cubans for ministry who are not bound by the same limitations as foreigners. We desire to facilitate and equip the nationals to plant and pastor churches and to do the Great Commission. In reference to our own involvement, discretion is key and although we have always sought to "fly below the radar," I am keenly aware that any trip could be my last. Our goal is for the national team and their endeavors to flourish, regardless of my presence.

### *Lessons learned:*

- The training for adequate leadership takes years. The primary work of the missionary should be in training leadership and to be a facilitator of church-plants, each with its own national pastor. The Apostle Paul did not spend time recounting all the churches he planted. Luke reported where they traveled and that they "ordained elders in every city."

*"The ultimate goal is to produce World Christians, taking steps to look beyond their island to reach all nations and kindreds and people and tongues."*

- Putting together a team from the beginning has proven to be indispensable. The Apostle Paul listed at least 74 people who co-labored with him. Planting multiple churches in a few years to impact entire regions rather than just one church should be our church-planting model.
- Building the national leader and trusting him will allow him to own his passion, rather than duplicate mine. Maintaining a learner's attitude with the national has educated me in the culture, language, and nuances of everyday life, in addition to forming an interdependence among those with whom I labor.
- An imported Western church will soon be associated with the Western "man" who initiated it. If Christianity is a message for all peoples, then the church must be capable of taking root in foreign soil. A local native church should be "foreign" only to the extent of its heavenly character, not because of any human trademark.

During our time laboring in Cuba, we have had a strong sense of relaying to Cubans their role in the Great Commission and to introduce an "all peoples" philosophy of ministry. Due to restrictions on every side and the limited view of our Cuban brothers, it seemed a distant goal in the early years. However, we now see this desire coming to fruition as Berean Bible Institute has increased their vision and the byproduct of Christian maturity has produced a desire to make God known in all the earth. The Lord has led us to the next phase of our ministry in the introduction of TAINO Ministries. This pioneer expansion is to assist Cubans to enter ministry as missionaries among the peoples of Central and South America in countries with similar political leanings. The ultimate goal is to produce World Christians, taking steps to look beyond their island to reach all nations and kindreds and people and tongues.

# WE ENLIST THE MOMENT WE ACCEPT CHRIST AS OUR SAVIOR, WE ENLIST IN THE BATTLE. IN THE BATTLE

## BE WILLING TO BE CHALLENGED

In 1 Thessalonians 3:3 we read: *“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.”*

Paul, speaks of the “afflictions” that the new believers in Thessalonica must go through and further speaks of the fact that we (the church) are “appointed thereunto.” The Greek term *appointed thereunto* (keimai) means destined; inevitable. Paul, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is asserting that there is absolutely no escape from having to navigate these afflictions. Now let’s look at the term “affliction.” While there are several Greek definitions for this term, this particular translation is metaphoric for the travail a mother goes through when giving birth to a child. What Paul relates in this passage is quite clear. All new believers; all new church plants must corporately go through afflictions as a new church; as a new local body of believers. Just as all mothers must go through the pain and labor associated with giving birth, so must each believer be challenged upon becoming a new creature in Christ. Am I willing to accept this challenge? Am I willing to go through the labor of living a life set apart for His glory? The Bible clearly shows us that our transformation brings afflictions. Am I ready for this challenge?

## BE WILLING TO CHAMPION

Noah Webster defines “champion” (verb usage) as one who is bold in contest; a “champion” of the truth. Churches today need members who will champion the cause of edifying fellow believers. Churches today need Christians who are bold in their efforts to invest in their brothers and sisters in Christ. We

need to be bold in contest. There is no doubt that the newly generated, born again believer is immediately entered in a contest. The moment we accept Christ as our Savior we enlist in the battle. The battle is won corporately through believers who are willing to champion the cause. Paul reflects upon the cause in 1 Corinthians 9:23 – 27:

*“And this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I might be partaker thereof with [you]. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring [it] into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”*

Paul establishes several significant truths in these five verses. First, the rewards the believer obtains upon being victorious are for our Savior. Second, the cause is worth great sacrifice. And finally, any other objective in life is selfish and vain.

What happens after Missions Conference? What happens after 2017? Will the theme for our church change next year? Will our focus change from “excel to the edifying of the church” as we again begin to direct our attention to people groups of a particular continent looking toward Missions Conference 2018? I pray that our priority continues to be one of constantly changing to become more like Jesus. I pray we continually challenge one another to grow in Christ so that we may be better equipped to do more for Him. I pray that First Baptist Church champions the cause to reach more people than we have ever reached before. The only way this will come to pass is if we are a unified body of believers that “excel to the edifying of the church.”



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