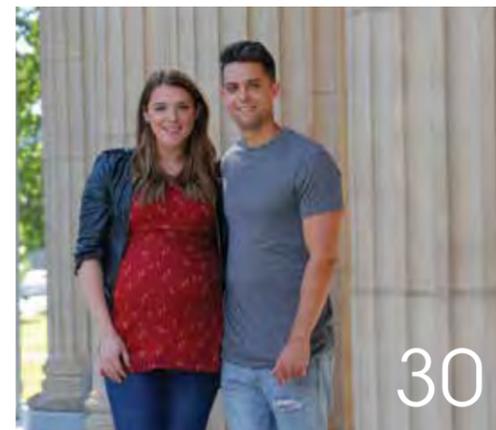




REDEFINE

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[ON MISSION]

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

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Redefine your perspective

By Kevin Ezell, NAMB president (@kevezell)

Jesus always calls us to something larger than ourselves. He uses the unique way He has created us to reach others and fulfill His mission.

I love the story in Matthew 9:9–10 where Jesus called Matthew to become His disciple. Matthew immediately followed, and in the very next scene, he invited Jesus to a dinner with his tax collector friends—in addition to many others with bad reputations in the community. What a great picture!

As a tax collector, Matthew's top goal in life was making as much money as he could, and he didn't mind cheating people in the process. But then Jesus called him to something much larger. Matthew instantly wanted his friends to know about it.

We all have important priorities—jobs, family, friends, school—but those things, no matter how good,

should not be our focal point. Our focus is Jesus and the mission to which He has called us. If we get too focused on other things, we could easily miss out on the greater mission to which we are called.

As Christians, our calling is to follow Christ and make Him known. It's the lens through which we should discern everything in life. How does your calling redefine how you interact with others at work? What about your relationship with family? How about your friends?

Matthew gave up some things when he decided to follow Jesus, but he stepped into a larger story and a greater adventure than collecting taxes or making money ever would have given. Jesus didn't call us to a business-as-usual life. He wants our calling to transform—to redefine—everything we do. That's a perspective shift you will never regret making. **[OM]**



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Measured



3 million

adolescents in the U.S. ages 12 to 17 are reported to have had a major depressive episode in the past year.

19.5% females

experience depression, compared to 5.8% of males.

6.3 million

youth ages 13 to 18 have an anxiety disorder, representing 25% of the adolescent population in 2015.

30.1% females

have an anxiety disorder, while at 20.3%, males are more likely to deal with anxiety over depression.

Source: TIME, November 7, 2016

Heard

“I am so thankful for the Disaster Relief network, and in particular the leadership in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. This crisis is a great opportunity to see churches empowered to serve and minister to the thousands in need. We are grateful for the support in resources, both volunteer and financial.”

David Melber, vice president of Send Relief at the North American Mission Board, on the continued effort of Southern Baptists in response to Hurricane Matthew survivors.

Source: Baptist Press, October 10, 2016

“You are able to sit here in church and worship because men and women are over there getting scars and wounds. We need to provide a safe place where the love of God is shared with those who are wounded.”

Kathy Langston, co-author with husband, Navy Chaplain Mike Langston, of *A Journey to Hope: Healing the Traumatized Spirit*, on ministering to those with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Source: NAMB, November 10, 2016

“Many of our conversations about multiethnic issues are not multi-ethnic themselves because we lack multiethnic leadership ... It’s one thing to have a multiethnic church, it’s another thing to have multi-ethnic leadership.”

D.A. Horton, pastor of Reach Fellowship in Los Angeles County, at The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission’s 2016 national conference on cultural engagement.

Source: Baptist Press, August 26, 2016

After-school Satan club

A school district in Portland, Oregon, approved an after-school “Satan Club” at a local elementary school this past September. The Satanic Temple advocated for this club in response to a 2001 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that Child Evangelism Fellowship could have access to school facilities to host their “Good News Club.”

Source: *The Washington Post*, An open letter from The Satanic Temple Los Angeles, August 1, 2016



Evangelicals and their beliefs

The State of Theology, released in 2016 by LifeWay Research and Ligonier Ministries, found that many self-professing evangelicals reject foundational evangelical beliefs. When shown the statement, “God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam,” 46% agreed or somewhat agreed. A recorded 36% agreed with the statement, “By the good deeds that I do, I partly contribute to earning my place in heaven.”

Source: TheStateofTheology.com, 2016



Living in the city

The Center for Global Christianity says 134,000 non-Christians become urban-dwellers every day. Many are moving to one of the 291 megacities worldwide that are less than 50% Christian.

Source: The Center for Global Christianity, 2016

From global to local

In 2015, the United States was home to 46.6 million people who were born in other countries. More than 2 million of those immigrants were from China, and almost another 2 million from India—the two countries with the most unreached people groups.

Source: Pew Research Center, May 2016

Noted

Baptist students provide aid

About 450 students from collegiate ministries spent their 2016 Labor Day weekend serving those affected by the Louisiana flooding. Students pried up waterlogged wood flooring, tore out drywall and helped salvage homeowners’ precious mementos from the mold.

Source: Baptist Press, September 6, 2016

Children's ministries matter

When looking for a new congregation, 56% of adults say the quality of educational programs available for children was an important factor. Of adults who are currently parents to minors, nearly two-thirds (65%) agreed.

Source: Pew Research Center, August 23, 2016

Refugee crisis on the rise

In 2016, with nearly one in 100 people worldwide currently displaced from their homes, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recorded the highest numbers of refugees since they began collecting data in 1951.

Source: Pew Research Center, October 5, 2016

Supernatural healing

A recent Barna poll showed that the majority of American adults (66%) believe people can be physically healed by God, supernaturally. The study also showed millennials are the more skeptical of this belief than elders, and evangelicals are the most likely to believe in supernatural healing.

Source: Barna, September 29, 2016



Content consumption

Audiobooks are currently the fastest-growing format in the book business. Sales in the U.S. and Canada jumped 21% in 2015 from the previous year. While the e-book declined 11% last year, revenue for audiobooks rose 38%.

Source: *The Week*, August 5, 2016

Where the tourists go

Countries around the world hosted nearly 1.2 billion international travelers in 2015. Over half of these travelers (53%) were leisure tourists. The World Tourism Organization predicts 1.4 billion travelers will cross international borders in 2020.



Source: World Tourism Organization, 2016

Reasons they will come

In a survey by LifeWay Research of 2,000 Americans who do not attend church, several events were identified that may draw non-church attendees to participate in church-sponsored activities.

- 62% Meeting about neighborhood safety
- 51% Community service event
- 46% Sports or exercise program
- 45% Neighborhood get-together
- 35% Worship service
- 25% Recovery group
- 24% Seminar on a spiritual topic

Source: *Christianity Today*, September 2016

Dirty mouths

Work place etiquette has undeniably taken an informal turn since millennials have entered the workforce. A new survey reported that two-thirds of millennials swear at work and 40% even prefer working in an environment where there is cussing. Furthermore, a third of those surveyed said the use of profanity strengthens the team.

Source: *The Week*, October 21, 2016



Women and social media

In partnership with Proverbs 31 Ministries, Barna conducted a study about the impact of social media on women. Almost half of women surveyed (49%) say they feel bored after using social media. Thirty-five percent reported they feel they should change something about their lives. Twenty-four percent feel they are missing out on something. However, 81% say social media has a positive impact by connecting them with friends. Facebook was also noted as the most popular social media outlet among the group.

Source: Barna, August 17, 2016

Moving home

According to the Census Bureau, Americans are on the move. About one in eight Americans move each year, and many end up living close to mom. *The New York Times* reported that 50% live within 18 miles of their mom. Only 5% live over 1,400 miles away.

Source: *Facts & Trends*, Summer 2016



Uprooted

A new report from UNICEF, called *Uprooted*, shows that there are nearly 50 million displaced children worldwide. About 20 million are international child migrants who have left their homes because of extreme poverty, gang violence and other related reasons. In 2015 alone, over 100,000 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in 78 nations.

Source: UNICEF.org, September 7, 2016

The Latino impact

The United States is now home to 55 million Hispanics—17% of the nation's population. Hispanics are projected to account for 52% of new homeowners by 2030. They have also contributed to 47% growth in small businesses between 2007 to 2012—a rate 60 times higher than that of non-Latinos.

Source: *TIME*, September 26, 2016

Mexico City



On a clear day, an IMB worker ascends the 44-story Latin American Tower in Mexico City's central district to view the expanse of the city.

"I find myself thinking about the spiritual needs below, and I am reminded to keep praying for the city," he says.

Mexico City's metropolitan area, one of the most populous in the world, is home to almost 21 million people, roughly equivalent to the population of Australia. Teeming with life, the capital hosts the largest Spanish-speaking population in the world.

Within Mexico, freedom to share openly about the Lord abounds, yet millions of Mexican citizens do not yet know the good news that Jesus has come to save them and give them life more abundantly.

 Learn more about people groups in Central and South America at imb.org/Americas.



21 million people live in the metro area, which is over **17%** of the entire population of Mexico. The national language is Spanish.



The ethnic makeup of Mexico City is primarily Mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish) 62%, followed by 21% predominantly Amerindian, 7% Amerindian, and 10% other (mostly European).

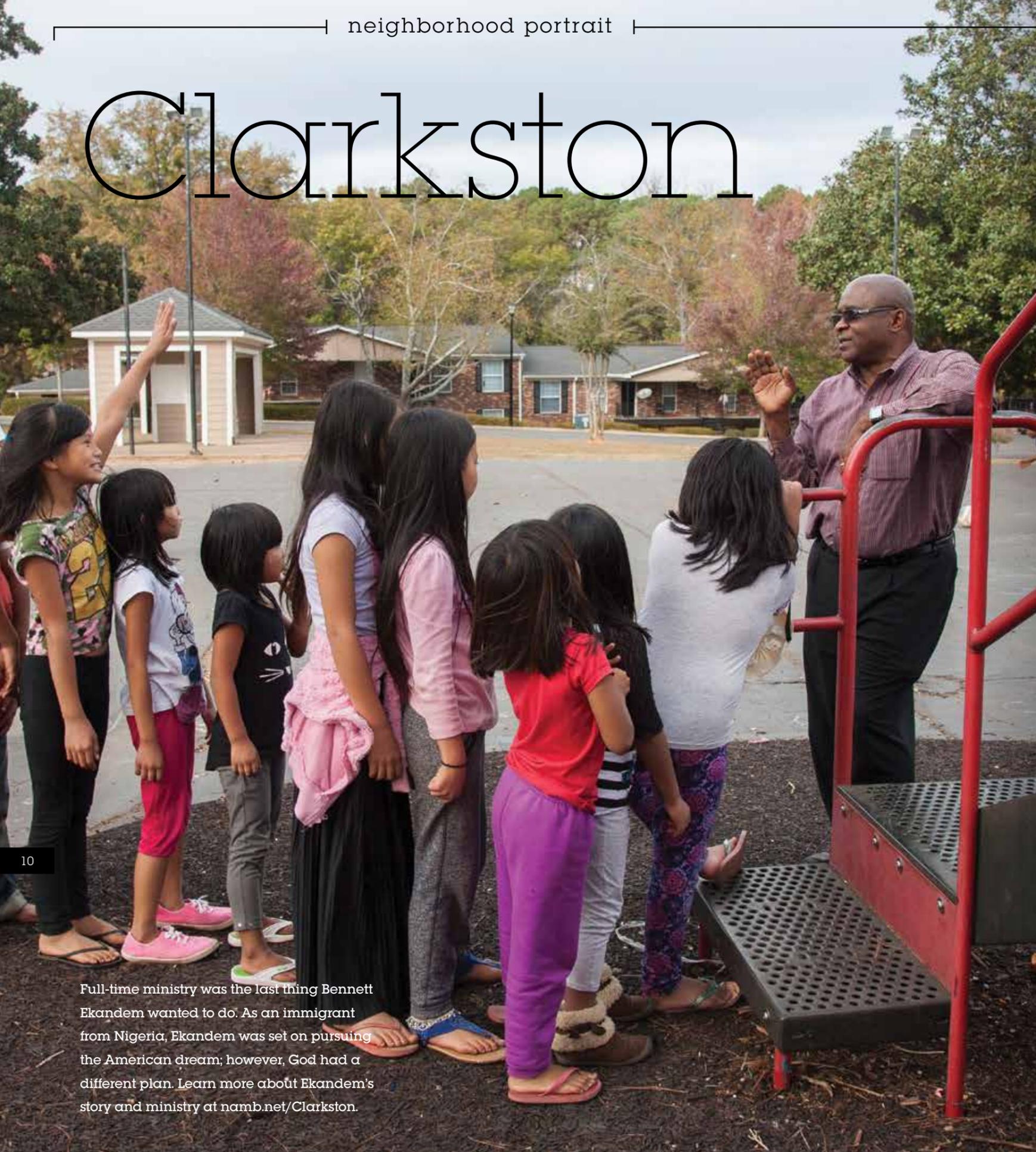


82.7% are Roman Catholic, the dominant religion of Mexico City. Of the remaining, 5% are Evangelical, 1.6% Pentecostal, 1.4% Jehovah's Witnesses, 1.9% Other, and 4.7% are not affiliated with any religion.

Sources: IMB, World Atlas, CIA World Factbook

PHOTO COURTESY OF RICK KIBRAI

Clarkston



Fatmata Bayoh

After escaping from the tyranny that followed Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war, 8-year-old Fatmata Bayoh began a new life in the United States. Learn how a local ministry assisted her at namb.net/Clarkston.



James Amar

James Amar had planted 360 secret churches in Burma before the police started looking for him. Amar's efforts now continue in the U.S. Learn more about his story and struggles at namb.net/Clarkston.



Kitti Murray

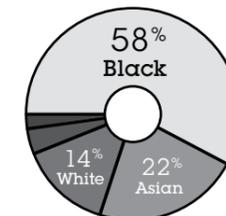
Kitti Murray believes coffee shops are an extension of the American living room. She started Refuge Coffee to employ and train refugees and to encourage community. Learn more at namb.net/Clarkston.

Full-time ministry was the last thing Bennett Ekandem wanted to do. As an immigrant from Nigeria, Ekandem was set on pursuing the American dream; however, God had a different plan. Learn more about Ekandem's story and ministry at namb.net/Clarkston.

Everyone—your neighbor, a stranger on the street, a colleague—has a story as vivid and complex as your own. These stories are flooded with brokenness and big dreams, innate craziness and steady routine, deep worries and tremendous joys. These stories are what connect us to the grander narrative God is orchestrating so all would know His glory. As you step into the neighborhood of Clarkston, Georgia, just outside the Atlanta perimeter, you are overwhelmed with stories.

Once referred to as "the most diverse square mile in the country" by *TIME* magazine, every face carries a new story. As a designated refugee resettlement area assigned by the United Nations, Clarkston has become a haven for those driven out of their homelands.

"I see the same hope in refugees as I do in us," says Missionary Service Corps missionary, Ashley Kendall. "They hope for a better life, to take care of their children, make sure their children succeed and make a living for themselves. In these times of racial discrimination and fear of other people, we have to remember they are just like us."



Ethnic diversity

- 58% Black or African American
- 22% Asian
- 14% White
- 4% Hispanic
- 2% Two or more races

Sources: ClarkstonGa.gov; US Census Bureau; IMB Research



Go to namb.net/Clarkston to hear the stories of refugees in Clarkston and how God is using them in their community to share the love of Christ.



Follow NAMB on social media to learn more about Clarkston.



Never the same

Produced by Tobin Perry

The Bible tells us the gospel never leaves anything it touches the same. It makes everything new (Revelation 21:5). When we submit our lives to the gospel, it redefines our priorities, our dreams, our hopes, our expectations—everything. The four people whose lives are shared here exemplify that truth. Their stories display the transformative power of the good news of Jesus.

[God] *really* did love me. That realization changed my life. I committed my life to following Jesus. I now feel like I can make a difference in the lives of other people — starting with my kids. With Jesus' help, they'll have a different life than I did.

Yes, He loves me

By Fanny Pena

I used to think of myself as a stereotype. I was a Mexican, poverty-level single mom. For years, I was what society said I'd become.

But that's not my identity anymore.

My mom—a single mom herself—brought me to the United States illegally when I was just 4 years old. Life was hard. She was a migrant worker. We had little money. A few years after we arrived, my brother came to live with us. He started physically, emotionally and sexually abusing me. When I was 12 years old, I finally stood up to him and told others about my abuse. He was sentenced to prison. I was sentenced to a lifetime of remembering what he did to me.

When I was 16 years old, I got pregnant. I wanted my beautiful baby girl to have a different life than I had. My mom always had to work two or three jobs to support us. That meant I was alone quite a bit, even on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I didn't want my daughter's story to repeat mine.

But I built walls. I never shared my story. I didn't let

anyone in. I had a wall around my heart. I was broken, and that was just the way it was.

One day at school, a girl named Lori invited me to a Christian youth event. When I got there, I looked around and realized no one looked like me. It was a bunch of middle-class white girls. I thought I was their charity case.

Lori told me that night, for the first time, about the love of Jesus. But I didn't buy it. No one loves you that much. I was sure of that. And certainly no one would love me that much.

At age 19, I got pregnant again. People told me I'd never graduate high school, but I did. My kids walked with me to get my diploma!

Not long after that, I heard about Jonathan Housing, a ministry to single moms, youth aging out from the foster-care system and adults graduating from a nearby recovery program and shelter, started by Bill and Penny Roullier.

I also started attending Denslowe Community Church, which Bill pastors. I learned a lot about God. I began to see that what Lori had told me about God years earlier was true.



He really did love me.

That realization changed my life. I committed my life to following Jesus. I now feel like I can make a difference in the lives of other people—starting with my kids. With Jesus' help, they'll have a different life than I did.

I'm also opening my home to another young lady who was walking down the same path I walked. I'm looking forward to helping her see what Jesus can do in her life.

I'm still a single mom who works full-time. Following Jesus didn't make life easy, but it guaranteed that I can face every struggle with Him by my side.



From prison to the mission field

By Brandy Rounsaville

I grew up attending a small town church in rural Mississippi. I was in the building every time the doors were open. Raised by my grandmother, I remember deacons and pastors were regular fixtures around our dinner table.

I accepted Jesus as my Savior at the age of 8. I knew without a doubt that if I died I'd go to heaven. But that's all I knew. I didn't know how to worship Jesus in spirit and truth. I wasn't discipled.

When I was 12 years old, my spiritual life became really derailed. My mother fought my grandmother in court to get custody of me. My mom had remarried a man with two sons. They needed someone to raise the two sons, so they tried to get custody of me.

I didn't want to go, but that didn't matter. A judge forced me to move back in with my mom. I started to rebel—smoking, drinking and through relationships with boys—almost immediately.

I'm learning to trust God's Word and His Word alone. Jesus is remaking me — taking off my old nature and giving me a new one. I never want to forget that because of what Jesus has done on the cross I am new — brand new.

At the age of 15, I got pregnant and then married an abusive man. We were together for the next eight years. The abuse was so bad that I had a miscarriage because of it. After our divorce, I began to spiral further downhill. I was introduced to marijuana.

I clearly remember God gently whispering to me that I needed to leave the area. I needed a fresh start. But I didn't listen. It was a horrible mistake.

Soon, I descended even further—into cocaine. I couldn't get enough of it. In a four-year span, I lost everything I cared about. I experienced such a deep level of spiritual attack that I lost connection with reality. I ended up hurting someone I loved badly because my mind was so messed up. I was given a 25-year sentence as a result.

I only spent four years in prison, but they were four really important years. I studied God's Word while I was there. The Lord put me in an incubator and protected me spiritually while I was in prison.

When I got out of jail, I figured I'd be fine. I thought the spiritual warfare was behind me. It wasn't. I started to sense I was struggling again. A friend told me about Buried Treasure, a Christ-centered ministry that helps women transitioning from prison and addictions.

Under their guidance, I began to read God's Word like never before. Jesus started slowly changing

me from the inside out. I won't lie; it was extremely hard. I started to realize that the Lord had a call on my life. I didn't know what that was at the time, but I began to see how He wanted to use all the pain from my past to do something new.

I'm learning to trust God's Word and His Word alone. Jesus is remaking me—taking off my old nature and giving me a new one. I stand in front of the mirror every day and tell myself, "Brandy, you are dead. You no longer live." I never want to forget that because of what Jesus has done on the cross I am new—brand new.

Now, God is using me to help others. Clark and Valerie Rumpfelt, who are North American Mission Board missionaries and the executive directors of Buried Treasures, asked me to stay at the home to help other women in transition. I recently finished an associate's degree. I plan to head to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to prepare for what God has next for me. I believe God is leading me to join Him on the mission field in North America. I'd like to help disciple women in a church plant setting or on a Native America reservation.

My favorite Bible verse, Matthew 6:33, says, "But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you." I'm so grateful God has proven that verse to me over and over again in my life.

I had always dreamed of a life defined by success, where hard work would lead to a comfortable suburban life. But the more I've understood and applied the gospel to my life, the more it has redefined my life — separating the trivial from the important.

Finding out who I really am

By Sean Cook

Sports meant just about everything to me growing up. I played basketball and baseball in high school and received a scholarship to play baseball at a small Mennonite school in Northern Indiana. Throughout high school, my identity was entirely wrapped up in being an athlete.

I had grown up attending church with my family, but I never had a relationship with God. In fact, I rarely thought about spiritual matters. That began to change when my freshman year of baseball didn't turn out like I had wanted. I was miserable at school and transferred to another university. I gave up sports completely.

For the first time in my life, I could no longer identify myself as a baseball player. I had never known that kind of brokenness, so I reached out for God. I began to read my Bible and understand it. Jesus came alive to me. I asked Him to forgive me and take control of my life. I started attending a men's Bible study and got involved at my college's Campus Crusade for Christ chapter and at a local church.

I met Brandon and Emily Shields a few years ago. They were starting a new church in Indianapolis. They only had a handful of people in the congregation, but their vision for Soma Indy resonated with me. Eventually, I started attending Soma and was baptized in March of 2016.

One of the things I appreciated about Soma is that they have a very missional approach. They are always encouraging me to look at the world around me as a missionary might.

I had always dreamed of a life defined by success, where hard work would lead to a comfortable suburban life. But the more I've understood and applied the gospel to my life, the more it has redefined my life—separating the trivial from the important. Recently, I left my suburban community and moved into a diverse downtown Indianapolis neighborhood. Making the move allowed me to invest more of myself into my neighborhood and my church. I saw it as an opportunity to open up my home to my neighbors and let them see what Jesus could do in them as they submitted to the gospel.



It has been happening, too. I'm learning to be more intentional with my neighbors and others I interact with. Recently, I had to have some work done in my yard. I took the opportunity to get to know the guys who were doing it. I brought meals to them. I engaged them in conversation. I told them it was

no accident that they were cutting down trees in my yard. I told them about Jesus.

My main goal is no longer to chase the American dream. Instead I want to chase God's dream for my life.



My God is forever faithful

By Louisa Coutzee

I can't say I didn't grow up with an opportunity to know about Jesus. We went to church every Sunday. We'd also pray together on a regular basis. I even remember being 17 years old when I repeated the "sinner's prayer."

I figured I'd settled it at that point, but I never had a relationship—a real, growing, thriving relationship with God. I met my husband when I was 18. He grew up in a religious family, too, but neither of us really knew God. We only knew how to play the part. We went to church regularly, but on the weekends, we'd drink and party just like everyone else. If everyone else was doing it, how wrong could it really be?

I started reading my Bible regularly. God's Word broke into my heart like never before. Eventually, our entire family surrendered our lives to Jesus. We were baptized together in June of 2015. Our lives had changed forever.

I thought we were saved, but I know now we weren't.

We emigrated from South Africa to Canada four years ago. For two years, everything went well. Then, my husband lost his job. We had to move from British Columbia to Edmonton to get work.

That's how we met Stan and Karen Felder. We saw a poster advertising an Easter event they were hosting at our Edmonton apartment complex. We figured it was something to do—a way to get out of the apartment. Our girls were excited. I thought it would just be about the Easter Bunny. I was less than enthused.

I was wrong though. We had a great time. The Felders invited us to have lunch with them, and they immediately felt like family. They cared for us. We started attending the small church they led in the apartment complex.

We needed those relationships. We were also going through our own struggles at that time. My husband had gotten a job when we moved to Edmonton, but the salary wasn't enough to cover our expenses. I got a job, but it still wasn't enough. I became depressed.

We continued to go to the church, but we also started praying together as a family and spending time with Stan and Karen. I started reading my Bible regularly. God's Word broke into my heart like never before. Eventually, our entire family surrendered our lives to Jesus. We were baptized together in June of 2015. Our lives had changed forever. We stopped drinking altogether and have been sober for over a year. God has given us a sense of peace that I can't really describe.

It hasn't always been easy, but now, when struggles come our way, God gives us strength to go through them. My husband was without work for two months, but there was always food in the house. Because God has been so good to us, we want to help others find out about Jesus. We have started a Bible study in our home. It's small, but we're praying more people will join us.

I know there are other people who think they're saved, but they've never given their lives to Jesus. They're living in their own strength. I want people to know God will never give up on them. He will be forever faithful. And He loves you!



Are you ready to take your next missional step toward making real gospel impact in your community? Visit namb.net/SendMe to learn more.

A South Asian village woman stands outside her home.



Empty nesters SOAR

By Caroline Anderson

In their late 40s, Frank and Claire Mullins* left their grown children and steady jobs in the U.S. and moved to South Asia where Frank trains believers and pastors in a region where most people have never heard the gospel. Claire organizes and empowers fellow Christian workers.

Both Frank and Claire grew up in church and had an interest in missions since their youth. But life happened. They married young, at age 21.

"We weren't walking with the Lord—weren't necessarily running from Him, but we got busy as

we started our family just trying to keep our heads above water," Frank says. "We came to a point where God captured our hearts totally, and that came with a realization of His heart for the nations."

They asked themselves, "How can our lives be

PHOTOS BY LEAH ZAMORA



A South Asian family out for a walk



A South Asian village woman gives her child a drink.

leveraged for God's greatest kingdom good and for His glory?"

This part of the map

The couple started a missions mobilization ministry and partnered with local churches to customize mission trips, primarily for students. Much of their work centered in Panama and East Africa.

They led approximately 70 mission trips over the next 10 years while Claire worked as a project manager at a financial institution, and Frank was a high school youth pastor. Their church adopted a people group in South Asia. Frank visited them on a vision trip,

and God captured the couple's hearts for the South-Asian nation.

"As we considered the reality of unreached peoples, we just couldn't get away from this part of the map," Frank says. "We've always said, 'God, use us where others can't or won't go.'"

As the great need for the gospel in South Asia gripped their hearts, the Mullinses considered either asking their church to support them overseas or raising funds and going with another organization. But after discussions with the International Mission Board (IMB) personnel in the region, they applied to go with IMB.

"I think the reason we chose this route over a number of others is because we totally bought into the vision," Frank says.

Soaring into ministry

Frank and Claire partnered with IMB as their daughter was starting college and their son was beginning his career.

"There were certainly challenges of leaving our young-adult children behind," Claire says, "but we felt like the best thing we could do was model for them obedience to the Lord's leading."

Going overseas as empty nesters has freed Frank and Claire to soar into ministry in South Asia.

Claire provides operational support and coordinates meetings, trainings and various events for their leadership team.

"I think the beauty of it is to take that skill set and bandwidth that she developed in corporate America and use it to impact eternity," Frank says. "It's the best project management job in the world."

"[We need to be] telling people in corporate America that they don't have to abandon their skills—they can be used for God's work too. God can use your

Claire Mullins walks alongside young village girls in South Asia.





A South Asian man walks through the city.

“There were certainly challenges of leaving our young-adult children behind,” Claire says, “but we felt like the best thing we could do was model for them obedience to the Lord’s leading.”

gifts for His glory,” Frank says.

Frank says he and Claire “came as a package of complementary skill sets.”

“The body is put together as He sees fit, and we need each other. There are endless skill sets that can be leveraged for kingdom advance,” he continues.

Deep and wide

Frank trains believers and pastors, coaching them on how to articulate and defend their doctrinal beliefs. His passion is seeing churches grow in the faith.

“We want to see rapid movement and reproduction tempered with health—reproducing healthy churches that plant churches,” Frank says.

Frank heard stories of massive church growth in South Asia—7,000 churches planted in six years. It caused him to wonder, “Is this just a mile wide and an inch deep?”

“But, almost audibly, as I was wrestling through that, and studying back through Acts and Paul’s journeys,” Frank remembers, “The Lord spoke to me and said, ‘Do you think I want my church a mile deep and an inch wide?’ And I just repented and said, ‘No, Lord, obviously not.’”

The Mullinses say they’re humbled to work alongside their national partners as the power of the gospel reaches both deep and wide throughout their region.

That deep and wide faith shows up in Frank and Claire’s lives, too. “We’ve never been less certain about where we’ll be and what we’ll be doing a few years from now—and we’ve never been more content with that,” says Frank. “I think it is just the grace of the Lord.” **[OM]**

Caroline Anderson writes for IMB.

*Names changed



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Resonate over riches

The past seems almost foreign to church planter Jacob Dahl. Like many college students, Dahl went to school anticipating four years of fun and freedom. He dreamed of the secure financial future his engineering degree had practically guaranteed him. But during Dahl's senior year at Washington State University (WSU), everything changed.

By Josie Bingham

Dahl had just spent the past three years investing his identity in his major, potential job offers and the money he anticipated earning. But it was 2009, and the economy was crashing.

"I remember going to an engineering job fair in 2007," Dahl says. "There were so many businesses

and firms offering opportunities with high starting salaries, I just couldn't believe it. I thought, 'I have nothing to worry about. I'll graduate and be a success; I will have this lifestyle forever.' And then I went to get a job at the career fair right before graduating in 2009. There were only two companies there—alone in an empty auditorium. I became depressed."

Mad at God, and at the world, Dahl began to backslide.

“Without His Word and a solid community of believers, kids can get lost and easily distracted in the world. I did.”

“I grew up in church and knew who God was,” says Dahl. “But after I accepted Him into my heart, I neglected the relationship part. It wasn’t what I had wanted to invest in. After realizing I’d spent all my life chasing things that weren’t going to happen, I lost it.”

He was caught cheating in his final semester of school.

“I had stopped caring about rules and right versus wrong,” Dahl says. “I was drinking heavily and figured nothing mattered anymore. So, I cheated. I should have gotten kicked out, but instead, my professor gave me another chance. It was one of many turning points the last few months of my senior year.”

Resonate Church, a North American Mission Board church plant in Pullman, Washington, located near the WSU campus, was hosting a mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico. Dahl had visited Resonate before with a friend. When the pastor mentioned the trip to the congregation, Dahl felt a spark of curiosity—an unexplainable desire to go.

“I wrestled with myself and with God that night around midnight,” says Dahl. “I asked, ‘Have I done too much bad stuff to go on this trip?’ But I started to pray. It had been years since I’d prayed, so my prayer was along the lines of ‘God, take it or leave it. I’m not sure if I’m even allowed to go, but if I am, that’s cool.’ And that was it—my first prayer in years.”

Dahl didn’t tell a soul about his time with God or his interest in going to Tijuana. A few days later, he received a letter from his grandmother with a check for the exact cost of the trip. Dahl called her, curious to know what had prompted her gift.

“She told me God had woken her up at midnight, telling her the exact amount of money she needed to send me,” Dahl says. “Then, she asked me if I needed it. I told her I did. She never asked me why.”

His grandmother’s faith moved him. Dahl went to Mexico for a week, serving strangers with other strangers. There, he met his best friend and future wife, Jessica.



Jacob and Jessica Dahl sit on the steps of a building on WSU’s campus.

“In Mexico, everything began to really shift,” said Dahl. “I had realized, before, that my worldly life was falling apart, but the Tijuana mission trip was what sealed the deal. I had just walked a week through slums handing out rice and water, painting houses of people I didn’t know and felt more joy than I had when I was doing what I wanted. After that trip, everything was stripped away. I became a new creation, and I got to know Jesus personally.”

After his return from Mexico, Dahl was baptized.

“It was the first thing I wanted to do as a believer walking with Christ,” Dahl says. “I wanted to show others that I was now going to follow Him first. After all, 21 years of my life were just stripped away. I found who I wanted to live for, and it wasn’t me.”

Within six weeks, Dahl had gone on a life-changing



College students gather at the Dahls for dinner and community.

mission trip, been baptized and had graduated college. Yet, he felt immeasurable peace with the future. While searching for a full-time job, Dahl interned at Resonate Church, where he ran into Jessica again.

“She was on staff at Resonate, and she was just as beautiful as I remembered her being on the trip,” said Dahl. “She was super legit, too. She was walking with Jesus all the way.”

But Dahl, a new Christian at the time, worried

about how to date her well.

“Jess had captivated me from the moment I saw her serving in Tijuana,” Dahl says. “She is fluent in Spanish, and that made her very popular on our trip. She was someone I instantly liked. I watched her serving from a distance that whole trip and knew I had to get to know her one day. I still felt the same way for her as I had before, but I was worried I would screw it up.”

Dahl left the church internship to work for WSU at

the campus lab.

“I was an engineer there for about two years,” says Dahl. “It was a fun job, and I made great money but, eventually, I was restless in the soul. I felt like I was not put on Earth to sit behind a computer and crunch numbers. So, I did what I had done before the Tijuana trip. I prayed.”

In fact, prayer became part of Dahl’s morning routine. Before work, he would purposely park his car over a mile from the WSU lab and spend that time walking and praying about his future.

“I was no longer trying to do it all myself,” Dahl says. “That’s how you lose. Instead, I was giving it to God and asking Him what He had for my life.”

One Saturday, Dahl was reading Isaiah when he had a remarkable experience.

“It was like God was in the room,” says Dahl. “And He told me, clearly, that He was calling me to lead ‘My people.’ He wasn’t specific about who His people were. It was generic, but I didn’t need to know who He wanted me to lead. All I had been asking for was what He wanted me to do next with my life. And He answered. Isn’t God amazing?”

In fall 2013, Dahl joined the pastoral staff at Resonate Church, and in May 2014, Dahl left Resonate at WSU to plant Resonate in Ellensburg, a city

Resonate multiplies

There are currently two Resonate Church plants at WSU in Pullman, Washington, as well as one off-campus site. There’s a Resonate Church at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, Dahl’s Resonate Church plant at CWU in Ellensburg, Washington, a Resonate Church plant at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Washington, and a Resonate Church plant at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.

that is home to 11,000 college students at Central Washington University (CWU). During that time, he also married Jessica.

“Shepherding was the last thing I saw myself doing,” Dahl says. “I’m a strategic thinker and an introvert. Yet, God has shown me through this ministry that I can reach college kids who were like me and say, ‘Hey, I was Exhibit A, but here’s how God has changed my life.’ And I get to lead this church plant with my wife by my side. She ministers to missionaries on college campuses and helps

Dahl and other pastoral staff at Resonate Church plants have planned and planted six sites around college campuses that connect the gospel to people, people to community and community to the mission of Jesus.

everyone, especially the women's ministry and young girls."

At Resonate Church, Dahl is currently the lead pastor. His responsibilities include meeting with students and allowing them to explore their faith. But to Dahl, getting out on college campuses "cold turkey" and asking "Who is Jesus to you?" is most important. Approximately 1,000 out of 11,000 college kids are attending church every week. That's less than 10 percent of students who are engaged in the gospel weekly.

"It rocks me that about 10,000 kids are not in church or even a Bible study," says Dahl. "Without His Word and a solid community of believers, kids can get lost and easily distracted in the world. I did."

Dahl and other pastoral staff at Resonate Church plants have planned and planted six sites around college campuses that connect the gospel to people, people to community and community to the mission of Jesus. The Resonate Church staff, including all plants, are currently praying and preparing to plant 21 churches in the next five years.

"In 2021, we hope to have 21 campus church plants that grow our message to more and more colleges

across America," Dahl says. "We're calling it the 21 to 21 campaign because in the year 2021, we're hoping to plant 21 churches."

And the 21 to 21 plan is already in action. In 2017, Resonate Church planter Colin Luoma is taking a team of 15 people from the Resonate Church plant in Ellensburg to develop one in Monmouth, Oregon.

"We're looking to go deeper and reach more people with the gospel," says Dahl. "Our whole network is praying over this goal. But anything is possible with the Lord. I've witnessed it and been a part of His limitless plans. I am where I am today because of Him. So, yes, we can do all things through Christ, and it's exciting to think where Resonate Church and Resonate church plants are headed in the next five years." **[OM]**

Josie Bingham serves as assistant editor for On Mission.



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Next steps, new paths

By Caroline Anderson

Pushing to the cusp—that’s Liberty Baptist Church’s vision for missions—to go to places Christians aren’t already serving and to advocate for unreached people groups (UPGs).

When Ken McLemore became the missions pastor at Liberty, his desire was “to move Liberty from a missions-giving church to a missions-doing, going and sending church.” Missions is now the heartbeat of Liberty, which has three campuses in Virginia.

In McLemore’s role at Liberty, he’s become well acquainted with the International Mission Board (IMB) and its strategy.

“Through my work with the IMB, I began to see that God’s plan was for us to take the gospel to places

where it did not exist—UPGs.”

Partners and advocates

McLemore said he looked to partner Liberty with missionaries who saw them as an equal part of ministry—not only as a source of funds.

“This was key. As a missions pastor, I was not simply looking to give money away and not have any role beyond writing a check or a few trips a year,” McLemore says. “I wanted a missionary partner

PHOTO BY LUKE IN





Susan Wilken (left) helps African women with a sewing project.

who would allow the church to be a part of what was happening to reach the UPG.”

In the 1990s, a family from Liberty committed to serve with IMB in an African nation. In August 1999, the church voted to adopt the Arab people group the family worked among, “until a viable church movement began.”

Personnel at IMB helped Liberty move toward this goal through developing their church mission’s strategy. Just as one would prepare for an adoption of a child, Liberty Baptist prepared their spiritual

family for adoption. The family overseas shared specific ways Liberty could work alongside them. Stateside mobilization was a key way Liberty became involved.

McLemore organized and initiated an advocacy group within the church focused on the Arab people group. Steve and Candace Wilken* were the group’s first leaders.

“The first thing we asked was, ‘Where’s the manual? What are you supposed to do?’” Steve says. “There wasn’t any.”

“The commitment was do to whatever it took, as long as it took, until there was a church planting movement,” Candace says. “That commitment really changed our lives because we were committed to the families there and to the people group.”

In addition to mobilization, prayer and meeting ministry needs of the IMB families, the Wilkens’ advocacy group made many short-term trips to Africa with the goal of opening doors for long-term workers to share the gospel.

“We learned short-term mission trips are very important,” Steve says. “Whatever we were doing—redoing a concrete floor in a classroom, teaching English as a second language, leading business classes—whatever we did, we did with excellence, and we made sure we were loving on the people.

“What we were doing was coming alongside the missionary and building a bridge for them. So when we left, they had the relationships to go in and share the gospel and continue to share the gospel until a door of opportunity was there,” Steve says.

In a Muslim country like this one, sharing the gospel is difficult. However, Liberty’s service has provided countless opportunities for IMB workers to share the gospel among the people group. There are now 200 Muslim-background believers in this country where Liberty serves.

“I wanted a missionary partner who would allow the church to be a part of what was happening to reach the unreached people groups.”

The next step

At the beginning of 2017, the Wilkens moved overseas to a similar nation.

Steve, a third-generation joint owner in a heating and air conditioning company, sold his share of the business to his brother. The Wilkens also sold the dream home they built and lived in for only six years. They are using the funds from these sales to support themselves overseas. Through the IMB’s SBC Direct program—which allows people to serve overseas on a self-funded or fund-raising model—they serve other IMB workers by providing pastoral care.

Steve said they heard a sermon many years ago about putting your “yes” on the table.

“The idea meant, whatever God asked you to do,

COURTESY OF LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH

Liberty's service has provided countless opportunities for IMB workers to share the gospel among the people group. There are now 200 Muslim-background believers in this country where Liberty serves.

you already said yes to it. Before He even asked, the yes is on the table, so that's been our mentality through the years," Steve says.

Their missions journey started back in 1999 when they started the advocacy group.

"That yes has been on the table through all these events, and today our yes is taking us overseas," Steve says. "What is God going to do next? Our pastor preached on this—what's the next step? Everything we have done has been a 'next step' that God wants us to do."

"I couldn't have imagined us doing what we are doing now without all of this other stuff we did first," Candace says. "We did all of it because that was the next step leading us on this path to follow Him."

More pathways, more partnerships

IMB's nontraditional pathways like SBC Direct allow Liberty to send more missionaries than they did in the past.

"The new pathways have opened the door

for us to send people in conjunction with the IMB who may be able to pay their own way or raise support," McLemore says. "We feel the door is wide open to explore new ways and ideas to send our people and still connect and work with the IMB."

Liberty's partnerships now span the globe. They partner with IMB missionaries in multiple regions of Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Central America and South America. Advocacy groups support each of these partnerships.

Liberty is still looking to extend its reach. The church developed a missions-training program for high school juniors and seniors that teaches the students best practices for reaching UPGs. The students then travel to visit a UPG.

"This is not a trip where we do all the work and witnessing for them. They do everything, so they can learn what it is like among a UPG and what real missions is like," McLemore says. "This is crucial in Liberty's future of raising people to go to the UPGs." [OM]

Caroline Anderson writes for IMB.

*Names changed



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A day in Baltimore

“When I was 21, I moved to Baltimore with one suitcase and a journal. I didn’t know who Christ was, and I never thought I would stay. I was going to come here, work out a one-year contract, fix everything that was wrong with me and then go back to Kansas. But I met Christ here. Then I found the hood, and I never went home.”

By K. Faith Morgan

That was 16 years ago. Now full-time missionary and church plant team member Colleen Smith makes her home in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the nation just one door down from Captivate Church’s East Baltimore campus.

“You know, my house has been broken into, my car has been broken into, my tires have been slashed, people have been murdered outside my house, but I stay,” she says. “I earned my street cred the day the police broke into my house during a raid. It’s like you see on TV. The police came in; they destroyed my house; they were

standing over my bed at 4:30 in the morning because they had a warrant for someone who was using my address. Some of the boys told me, ‘Ms. Colleen, that’s the day we knew you were real because a normal person would have moved.’ But I don’t leave because I want to be here.”

Splitting her time between a robust program for kids and youth, outreach to prostitutes and homeless and building relationships with the people in her community, Smith never knows what a day will bring.

PHOTOS BY HAYLEY CATT



Colleen Smith, missionary and church plant team member, outside her inner-city home in Baltimore.

[7:33 a.m.]

Her ministry starts on the doorstep. As Smith steps out of her door, she's immediately greeted by a chorus of "Hi, Miss Colleen" from everyone who passes by. As she locks her door, she asks about siblings and homework and compliments new hairstyles.

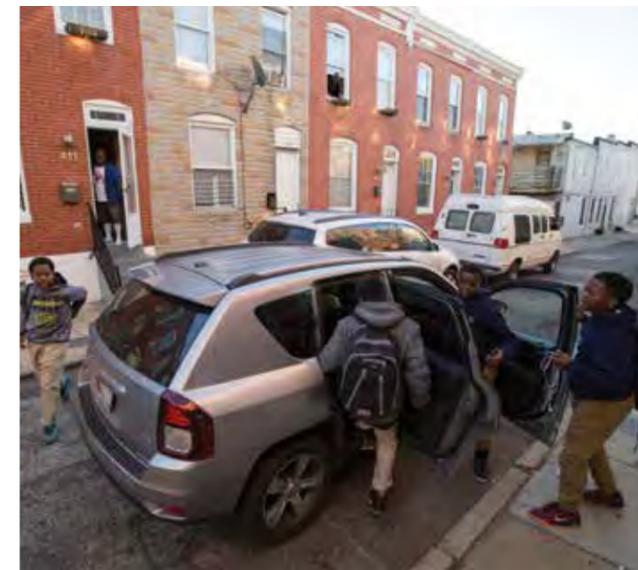
Many of these children are members of the G.E.M. (gospel, education, mentoring) program she coordinates at the church.

"I grew up in a very similar environment to these kids' homes," she remarks. "An abusive dad, a mom who was absent, grandparents who raised me, three siblings who I had to take care of—and that's how a lot of my kids are living."

[7:40 a.m.]

Four middle-school-age boys dart out of a rowhome and into Smith's Jeep with so much happy cacophony that neighbors peer out of doors and windows to watch. They insist on a stop at 7-11 on the way to school for snacks. For Smith, this school carpool is a simple task with big implications. It's time she can use to speak truth and hope into their lives. It's a time they can feel safe.

"I've always said that it's best if we capture them before 13," notes Smith. "It's not hopeless after that, but it becomes harder. The boys will tell you if you make it to 18, you celebrate. If you make it to 21, it's a milestone. If you make it to 25, you're old. That's just how it is here. The dealers try to catch them between 7 and 10 to become drug runners. If you're a minor, the police can't really do anything to you. By 13, the pressure is on to choose a drug gang to join. One day, I asked one of the boys, 'What are you thinking about today?' He said, 'I'm thinking about whether I'm going to make it home without dying.' And that wasn't a joke—he really was."



[8:47 a.m.]

Smith makes her daily stop to hang out with an unlikely group of friends affectionately dubbed The Dunkin Gang—an assembly of men ranging from their 60s to 80s who have met every morning for the past five years to talk about politics and grandchildren, ballroom dancing and military service, dating and aging parents.

Smith became an honorary member of the gang in early 2016 when she sat in the last chair left in the store—at their table. Sometimes, they buy Smith's coffee and a bagel. "We're teaching her how to be retired. It's a five-year program," they joke. Smith takes some of her G.E.M. boys with her from time to time.

"It's fun to watch them interact," Smith notes. "They love my boys and tell them, 'You know what? You can do this.' They tell them stories of their experiences and mistakes they've made. They've been very good about just loving them."

"She has a passion for this," the Dunkin Gang says of Smith. "When she talks, you can feel it. She's sincere."



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[9:27 a.m.]

Smith drives down a street notorious for prostitution. She's looking for "my girls." It's all part of a ministry she calls Pretty in Pink. She initiates interactions by passing out pink bags filled with toiletries, a journal, candy and a pink Bible.

"I meet them where they are. I build a relationship and walk through life with them until they're ready to get some help. It's a long process," she says.

She not only works with the women themselves, she comes alongside their families—especially the mothers—offering support and help as they work to repair broken relationships.

"One of my first girls asked me to call her mom to see if she could come home. I didn't know what to expect, but we pulled up to this mini mansion, and my heart broke. I thought, 'You left this?' It's not

what you think. A lot of these girls come from wealthy families."

In six years, Smith has successfully moved 12 girls off the streets permanently. But she has also held girls' hands while they died of an overdose.

"I had to call the mom of one after she died, and I spoke at her funeral. Between all my ministries, I've lost 12, and that's the hardest thing," she says as she passes a stoop littered with half-inflated balloons and empty liquor bottles—the remains of mourning for a fallen community member. "I was turning the corner right when he got shot, and I saw it happen. He died here. That's the night it became real that I could die in my neighborhood, in my city. It's never easy, and it never will be. The day it becomes easy and my heart doesn't break is the day that I probably need to find a new job."



[9:52 a.m.]

After stopping by an elementary school to check in on some of her kids, Smith settles into her office to tackle the logistical gymnastics associated with all her ministries and the regular short-term mission teams coming from all over the nation to help.

"I look at my life sometimes, and I think, 'This is not the life I would have planned for myself,'" she says. "I mean, who is this white girl from Kansas in the hood in the middle of Baltimore? I learned very quickly that you don't make plans; God changes them."

Soon, she'll relaunch a successful ministry to the homeless.

"In the summer, we do bingo in the park. We bring food and gift cards for prizes, and we just play bingo for hours," Smith explains. "It's not even about the gift cards anymore—it's about the community. One of the guys said to me, 'You know what I like about you, Miss Colleen? You don't just come to the park and drop something off. You get to know us.' And that's what you have to do. You have to build relationships."

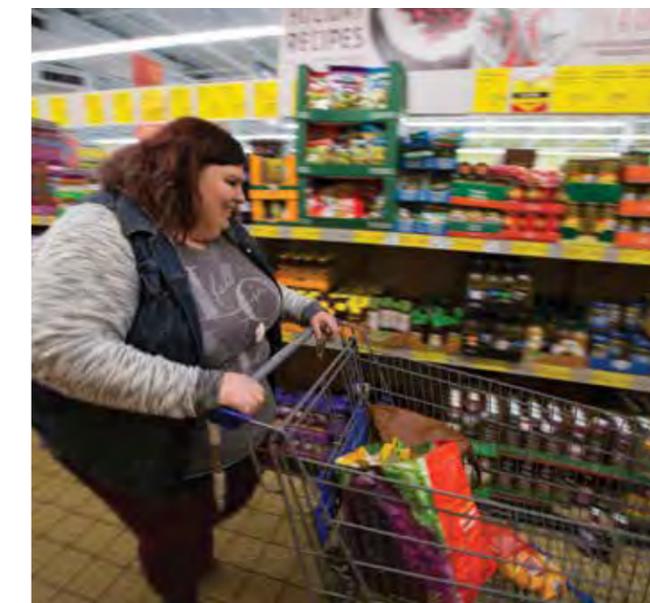
[1:43 p.m.]

At last night's G.E.M. meeting, Smith invited a few of the kids over for a "family meal," so she makes a grocery store run and starts to prepare dinner.

These dinners are a time when the kids get to experience what many would consider a normal family environment—sitting down together at the end of the day with people you love. It's also a guaranteed meal—something many of her kids don't always have.

The kids who sell drugs on the streets of this neighborhood usually aren't looking for extra money to buy designer shoes or electronics; it's to provide for their families Smith explains.

"When you walk into our neighborhood, that is the only obvious option. They'll tell you, 'I'm selling drugs because my family hasn't eaten today,' or 'I started selling drugs because I needed to feed my siblings because my mom wasn't there.'"





[3:45 p.m.]

At a corner by the playground, Smith picks up Peter from the bus stop to go shoe shopping—a constant necessity for a growing boy. Smith used to be a foster parent, but that was before Peter. Peter's mother started bringing him to the G.E.M. program where he flourished. Not long after, his mother died. Then his father called Smith and told her that he is very ill. He asked Smith if she would adopt Peter if something happened to him. Peter has been splitting his time between his dad's house and Smith's while the two learn how to live as a family.

"He has a room at my house, and one of our mission teams helped decorate it the way he wants it. He is the child that God chose for me to love and care for in that role," says Smith. "It's hard, and we're learning how to live together and how I fit into his life and how he fits into mine. He's 11, and he's already lost his mom. His dad is going to die—it's just a matter of when at this point, but he has a safe place in my life."

[6:17 p.m.]

A few G.E.M. kids arrive at the house with the promise of a hot meal and fellowship. They play basketball, do homework or play card games while Smith cooks.

The buzz barely quiets as they sit down for dinner. Between bites of chili dog, the conversation drifts from silly nicknames to deep moral discussions. Every topic is allowed at Smith's kitchen table—a table the kids helped another church member build for her.

"I think for a long time, my kids had this perception of me because I'm white; I must come from a perfect family and be rich, but they've reached a point where they trust me," says Smith. "They'll tell me things like, 'I'm mad that my dad won't come see me,' or 'I'm really upset that my mom sells her body.' I don't think even a year ago I would have been at that place with some of these kids. It's hard to hear those kinds of things, but I have to remind myself that I'm not the savior. I'm just a tool God is using to help redeem their stories."



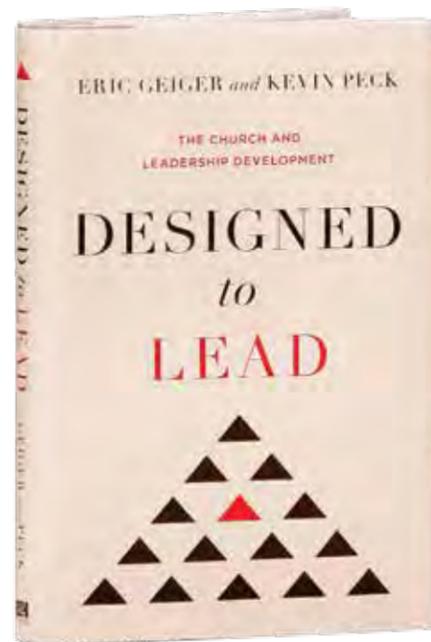
[9:01 p.m.]

Smith loads kids into her car to drive them home. In the morning, the unpredictable chaos will begin again, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I feel God has given me His eyes to see my community, and if you look at things that way, you see beauty and you see hope. I want to love people who other people find hard to love. The homeless person who's living in a park and the prostitute who's selling her body and the inner-city kid who doesn't think there's hope—all the people others are running from are the people I want to run toward," she says. "I want to love them the way Jesus loves me. I don't think they understand how to be loved like that. I want them to see that they can be loved constantly. God loves me without boundaries, and people deserve that kind of love." **[OM]**

K. Faith Morgan serves as managing editor for On Mission.

Leading Gospel



Designed to Lead

Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck
(B&H Publishing Group, 2016)

Most leadership development models stem from sources far removed from the church. For decades, those of us leading in local churches have turned to books and conferences outside the Church to strengthen our leadership skills. Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck reverse that mindset with this premise, “The Church is uniquely set apart to develop and deploy leaders for the glory of God and the advancement of the gospel.” *Designed to Lead* brings the church into the forefront of leadership development and connects that development to God’s command to “make disciples.”

With “send” being the core of the North American Mission Board, leadership development in the local church is a critical practice to advance the gospel in North America. Believers have the greatest mission statement of all time—to advance the good news of Jesus Christ. This makes leadership development imperative.

“Our hearts grieve when ministry leaders fail to see the kingdom-potential in their midst, the ‘ordinary people’ waiting to be developed and deployed.” Geiger and Peck suggest we have developed an unhealthy dependence on pastors as primary leaders to the demise of the leadership of “ordinary people.” Kingdom-potential is in our midst in the men and women in our churches, and it has been underdeveloped far too long.

Designed to Lead makes this bold declaration, “No organization should outpace the Church in developing leaders.” Let it be so.

Kathy Ferguson Litton serves as the executive editor of Flourish, an online community for ministry wives. Visit Flourish.me to learn more.

A Journey to Hope

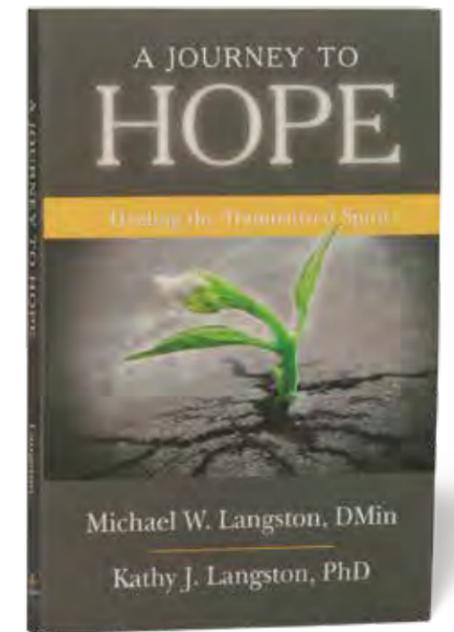
Michael and Kathy Langston
(Lampion Press, 2016)

A Journey to Hope was written to capture the life-changing impact of combat on the lives of veterans and their families. In particular, this book records the personal experiences of a Southern Baptist Navy Chaplain who, after having spent many months in a combat zone, struggles to find normalcy. The book addresses the physical, emotional, relational and spiritual effects of post-traumatic stress on those who have experienced—or continue to recover from—any kind of traumatic event. Told from the perspective of a war-weary military chaplain and his supportive wife, the authors guide the reader on a painful, yet redemptive, journey from brokenness to healing and hope.

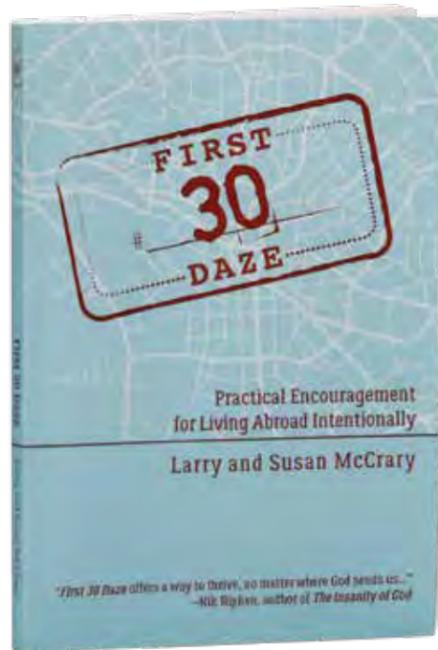
The book opens with the chaplain looking back over his successful ministry career. He describes his ministry experiences as an agent of encouragement and hope to service members struggling with military life. At some point, the author realizes he himself had become a psychological casualty of war. Pastors and chaplains reading this book will quickly be convicted that ministry takes its toll on our lives, regardless of one’s spiritual maturity. Ministers are susceptible to burnout, compassion fatigue, “soul injury” and post-traumatic stress, too. This book is unique in its brutally honest detail of what ministers’ wives go through to stand with their husbands. In this particular case, the chaplain’s wife was his lifeline.

This book does a tremendous job in painting a picture of a military chaplain’s ministry experiences. The authors’ engaging description of post-traumatic stress is worthy of a classroom textbook. *A Journey to Hope* is an invaluable contribution to understanding the heart of our military veterans and their families.

Chaplain (Major General) Doug Carver serves as the executive director of chaplaincy for the North American Mission Board.



Mission Leading



First 30 Daze

Larry and Susan McCrary
(The Upstream Collective, 2016)

Anyone who has ever moved to a new country knows what it means to be overwhelmed. Imagine working through the experience by having coffee each morning with an understanding and wise couple who has already pushed through this extreme transition. That's what it's like to read *First 30 Daze*.

In this practical guide, Larry and Susan McCrary, who have moved to—and thrived in—several countries, share from the wisdom of their experience by providing believers with advice, devotional thoughts and practical activities that help expatriates adjust to life in a new place.

Each day's reading consists of Scripture, some brief insight and activities designed to help you apply what you've read. Topics range from the practical (shop like a local, join a new group) to the personal (dealing with emotions, asking for help, finding motivation). Writing prompts help you measure your progress in acclimating to the new culture.

First 30 Daze should be in the backpack of every missionary, professional, student and retiree spending time abroad. From the first daily reading (a lesson in humility) to the last (don't take yourself too seriously), this guide points readers to the gospel while helping them fight culture shock, develop good habits and make connections in a new setting.

Caleb Crider leads instructional design for the International Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia.

Reclaiming Glory

Mark Clifton
(B&H Publishing Group, 2016)

God has led me to church replanting since 2013, and I've been involved in the local church since 1990. I love the local church. Perhaps more importantly, I get excited about what the local church can do for its people and the work of the kingdom. That said, I can't deny the emotions I've felt with the current state of the local church. Many churches seem to be dried up, and some, if not most, seem to be declining—even dying.

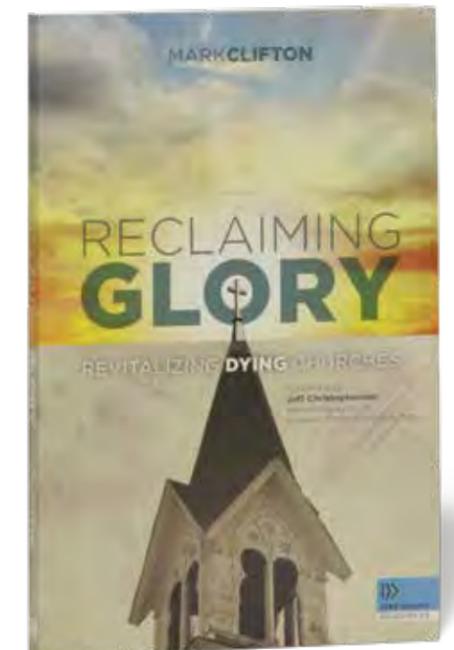
Reclaiming Glory is a perfect guide and timely resource for church leaders who are embarking on replanting. Mark Clifton has a keen sense of the main issues involved in declining or dying churches in North America.

Clifton states our main dilemma has to do with the lack of proper discipleship. Through his diagnostics, he introduces eight characteristics of declining or dying churches. He then offers practical and replicable pathways for churches facing these difficulties. He lays out six replanting imperatives a pastor or planter must embrace to ensure development and fruition.

His case studies of the churches that have been transformed through replanting provide contextual, congruent references that instruct and inspire. Clifton concludes the book with discussion on eight vital characteristics of a replanter, which would be beneficial for anyone whom God may be calling to replant.

When 70 to 80 percent of local churches in North America are either plateaued or declining, perhaps there's no higher glory we can bring to God than when we serve to renew, revitalize and redeem these churches.

Joon Choi is lead pastor of San Francisco Bay Christian Fellowship and the English pastor for Chinese Grace Baptist Church.



Trusting without answers

By Patty Leno

Thirty years ago, my daughter, Jamie, was born. She spent her first year doing normal baby things. However, around her first birthday, everything changed. Jamie's muscle tone began to decrease, and by 2, she stopped crawling, talking,



socializing and lost use of her hands. Jamie eventually withdrew into a world of her own. She was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome—a neurological disorder with severe mental and physical impairments.

At home we cried and fought off dark thoughts, but at church we had to be Mr. and Mrs. Pastor. Garth would preach about God's love, faithfulness

and power to heal. I listened, expecting God to do something for my daughter, my pain, my suffering.

As we waited, we became completely drained. But that's when God worked overtime to heal, restore and rebuild. Not in Jamie's life—in ours.

We believe God has a purpose behind every broken dream. Jamie is now 30, and only some of the "whys" are evident to us, but God has taught us to rely on Him.

How can we cope with broken dreams? We learn not to be surprised by trials and suffering. We learn to revisit the cross. The cross is where selfishness dies, and we realize life is more than my comfort, my security and my well-being.

As parents of a child with disabilities, we searched and demanded answers. But what do you do when there are no answers? You learn to live with mystery, or go crazy.

By the grace of God, we learned to rely on Him. And now we are learning to lean into the future because God's people have so much to look forward to. **[OM]**

Patty Leno is a pastor's wife and lives in Windsor, Ontario, where she and her husband, Garth, lead at The Gathering Church.



The goal: God's glory

By David Platt, IMB president (@plattdavid)

In recent weeks, thousands upon thousands of Southern Baptists paused during the Week of Prayer for International Missions to pray for Southern Baptists taking the gospel to the unreached. You prayed for people like the Hauns, who bring physical healing to rural Ghana while testifying of Jesus Christ's love and salvation. You prayed for the Creggs, who share the hope of life in Christ with individuals in a South Asian city of 22 million. You prayed for the Doves, who rely on prayer to open the door for church plants in Norway.

And you have partnered together—40,000 churches strong—with your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® to send and support missionaries around the world. Thanks to your sacrificial giving, IMB projects will be sending more than 450 new international missionaries in 2017.

In all of this, we are exploring new ways we can mobilize the entire Southern Baptist ecosystem for the spread of the gospel to billions of people who've never heard it. The IMB will continue to send full-time, fully funded, career missionaries. They are the priceless, precious, critical core of our missions force. Those career missionaries will be surrounded with professionals, students, retirees and others who collectively show that global mission is not just for a select few people in the Church but for multitudes of Spirit-filled men and women across the Church.

But let's always remember that the goal is not merely more missionaries. The goal is not even a multitude of new missionaries. We're not mobilizing for the sake of numbers; we're mobilizing for the sake of our God's glory among the nations. His glory in the world is the bottom line of what we do and why we do it—and it's worth giving our lives for it. **[OM]**



Discover how you can serve those with special needs in your church at namb.net/SpecialNeedsMinistry.



Give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to Support international missions efforts at imb.org/Give.



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