



Focusing on the Landscape... Across Utah and Idaho

New Years, bowl games, and the Super Bowl are behind us. So, what is on our horizon? It's hard to believe it is 2020. It seems just a few days ago I moved to Utah and that JeQuita and I were married. We will celebrate our 30th anniversary next month. Time flies by causing me to reflect on the past and attempt to be more strategic towards the future.

Just think, the last week of June 2025 we will be welcoming our Southern Baptist Convention family to Salt Lake City for the annual meeting. This will be the second time we have hosted our extended Baptist family to our state convention. Time has a way of dulling our memories. I remember two years of meetings preparing for CrossOver, enlistment of many volunteers and their training, and preparing our churches for opportunities to welcome guests and reach out to their communities. I remember after the last session of the annual meeting sitting in a silent Salt Palace reflecting and praying for God to continue to move.

I've heard many thoughts on how it impacted our churches and question if it impacted the kingdom. As we followed up CrossOver, many of the cards listed people that we couldn't locate. Many church members had used their vacation to serve during annual meeting, so some of our churches weren't able to hold Vacation Bible School. But as I reflect and begin to think about the possibilities in five years, I remember that the next year, 1999, we saw one of our largest numbers of baptisms, 1,045. The third highest ever for our State Convention; the two higher were in 1982 we had 1,186 and in 1991 we had 1,058 baptized. I can't tell you if the baptisms were a result of hosting the Southern Baptist Convention and CrossOver. I do know it reminded our neighbors there are Southern Baptist churches in Utah and showed them where our churches met in their communities.

So, what do we want the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention to look like when we welcome our family back to northern Utah in five years? Will you join me in praying that God will prepare us to be the churches and believers He wants us to be. We have had 60 new churches started in the last six years and I hope we see that

UISBC Cooperative Program Giving Report

November/December 2019

Cooperative Program giving	
November	\$68,844.17
December	\$62,863.17
Cooperative Program budget	
	\$59,326.67
Over/Under CP budget	
November	+\$9,342.50
December	+\$3,360.54
State Missions Offering given	
November	\$13,528.69
December	\$6,911.23

January-December 2019

Cooperative Program giving	
	\$775,187.53
Cooperative Program budget	
	\$714,032.00
Over/Under CP budget	
	+\$61,155.53 (+8.6%)
State Missions Offering given	
	\$71,327.09
State Missions Offering 2019 Goal	
	\$95,000
Under State Missions Offering Goal	
	-\$23,672.91

trend continue so we see 50 more churches by 2025. Plus, that they see healthy existing churches that are reflecting the light of Christ resulting in the multiplication of disciples who love Jesus and are telling His redemptive story.

Rob Lee

GIVING NOTE: We have forwarded \$214,209.60 (30% of our gifts) to the Cooperative Program. Plus, half of our above-budget gifts, an additional \$30,577.77, for a **2019 total of \$244,787.37!** This means we will have forwarded nationally through the Cooperative Program... 31.6%. This is a record for our two-state convention! PTL!

Humanitarian group celebrates impact made in theaters and jungles

By Aaron Earls

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — From the bright lights of a New York City film festival to a river running through the jungles of Burma in Southeast Asia, Kevin Eubank and the Free Burma Rangers continue to change lives.

The documentary named after the group, made in association with LifeWay Films and Deidox Films, won Best Feature Film at The Justice Film Festival in New York City in November 2019.

“Free Burma Rangers,” which will show in select theaters across the U.S. as a Fathom Event on Feb. 24 and 25, 2020, follows the Eubank family, their work with the Free Burma Rangers, and the more than 1.5 million displaced individuals they have assisted around the world.

“We are equal parts thrilled and humbled to have ‘Free Burma Rangers’ recognized in this way,” said director Chris Sinclair. “It was a personal privilege to help capture the compelling story of the Eubank family and their bravery in going on rescue missions throughout the Middle East.”

Sinclair said he was “glad those in attendance at the festival were just as moved by the raw compassion and lived-out love that is displayed in the movie.”

LifeWay Film’s Trent Myers said winning Best Feature Film at The Justice Film Festival “is an honor for our team and LifeWay as a whole. We believe it is a great indicator of the film’s potential Kingdom impact.”

Brent Gudgel, the director and producer of “Free Burma Rangers” said it was a timely recognition for the film. “In these dark times in the Middle East, the Eubanks model real compassion, which knows no limits or bounds, by helping whoever is hurting, no matter their culture, color or creed.”

In 1993, after 10 years in the U.S. Special Forces, David Eubank answered a call from his father, serving on the mission field in Thailand, to help the people caught in the middle of a civil war.

After Eubank married, instead of a traditional honeymoon, he and his wife Karen went to Burma to help free the oppressed

U & I Praying Together

Pastorless Churches

- Sevier Valley Baptist Church, Richfield, David Payne, Interim
- First Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant, interims Don Carter and Perry Causey
- Salt Lake Chinese Baptist Church
- Stites Baptist Church
- First Baptist Church, Roy, interim Dr John Thomas
- First Baptist Church, Moab
- Central Valley Baptist Church, Cascade, Rod Moerer filling pulpit
- First Baptist Church, Orofino
- *Crossroads Church, Rose Lake

New Pastors

- First Baptist Church, Centerfield, Emery Polelonema
- First Baptist Church, Grantsville, Ken Hawker
- First Southern Baptist Church, St George, Associate Pastor John Shirey

Prayer & Praises

- Pray for our pastorless churches and their interim pastors.
- Prayers for the Jan Harding family as they grieve her home-going in late October. Pray for Jim as his cancer has returned.
- Prayers for the Marshall family as Teaching Pastor Robert Marshall of Risen Life Church grieves the home-going of his mom, Evelyn.
- Pray for Debbie Chidester, her mom Donna (former administrative assistant at the state convention) and family as they grieve the home-going of her dad, Dennis, over Thanksgiving weekend.
- Praise for the fourth year in a row Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention ended the year above Cooperative Program budget giving and will pass on a record amount to the Cooperative Program nationally! Thank you, churches and members, for your faithfulness in giving to advance His kingdom locally, nationally, and worldwide.
- Upcoming VBS trainings across our two state area during March, April, and May
- Ski and Share in Burley, Idaho, March 6-8
- Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, June 9-10, Orlando, Florida; registration is now open



David Eubank, founder of the Free Burma Rangers, along with ethnic Kachin FBR leaders, document Burma Army activity across the valley floor to compile reports for human rights organizations and journalists. Photo by Chris Sinclair

and rescue victims there.

As they went on relief missions into the height of conflict, more locals joined in. Eventually, indigenous leaders asked Eubank to train teams. In 1997, the Eubanks founded the Free Burma Rangers.

Today, David, Karen and their three children continue to provide humanitarian aid to some of the most difficult areas in the world. They've trained more than 4,500 members of the Free Burma Rangers.

In April, the group will receive the 2020 Foley Humanitarian Award at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. from the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation.

This past December, the group graduated 141 new rangers at their training camp in the Karen State of Burma.

U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, a member of Alto Baptist Church in Rayville, La., attended the graduation.

The congressman, who served as a First Lieutenant in the Army National Guard, encouraged the graduates with stories from U.S. history of individuals displaying bravery and standing for freedom.

After the graduation, four rangers—one staff member and three new students—were also baptized after professing faith in Christ.

One of those baptized, Ray Khin, came from an animist family, but said he knew in his heart he wanted to follow Jesus.

“To follow Jesus is free for everyone. You only have to believe,” he said. “With animist beliefs, every time I have to go back to my home village and do something. I feel like when you believe in Jesus you are free. You can pray and worship Him anytime, anywhere.”

In addition to baptizing the new Christians, the Free Burma Rangers held a memorial ceremony at the river for Zau Seng, a videographer of the group who was killed in November on a mission in Syria.

Seng, who also served as an assistant medic, was killed when the team's position was hit by a Turkish munition.

Missions inspiration underscores WMU board meeting

by Julie Walters

From Alaska and Hawaii to Maine and Florida, WMU board members and state leaders from across the U.S. gathered at national WMU in Birmingham for their biannual board meeting, Jan. 11–13. More than 200 were in attendance, including representatives from the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board, to share inspiring stories and hear updates of God at work around the world.

Gordon Fort, senior ambassador for the International Mission Board president, thanked WMU for their support and partnership for the cause of missions before introducing his daughter, Lizzy, who served as a journeyman in Central Asia.

While there, Lizzy shared about meeting Mary who told her she had dreamed about Jesus. The two became friends and began studying the book of Luke in Kurdish. However, Lizzy said Mary began to worry she would be persecuted if she accepted Christ and decided it was too risky, so she quit coming.

“I prayed for her,” Lizzy said, “and Mary came back one day and said she felt so lost. We began studying the Bible again. When we read Romans 10:9 about confessing with your mouth that you believe in Jesus, she prayed to receive Christ . . . the lost need to be found.”

Andrew Kelley*, who serves with his family through IMB, shared about their missions efforts among Rohingya refugees in South Asia; and JD and Andreina Fasolino who serve as church planters with NAMB shared about their Hispanic church plant in Toronto.

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, thanked WMU for their partnership in helping to raise a record \$61.4 million in 2019 through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions and shared updates related to Send Relief ministry centers and outreach efforts.

Ministry Highlights in 2019

WMU President Linda Cooper said 2019 was a banner year for international missions efforts in WMU.

“We are a national company with a global reach,” Cooper stated. “Through Pure Water, Pure Love, we provide all IMB missionaries with water filters and funded water projects in 12 different countries including Cuba, India and Liberia—providing clean drinking water for people in need and the opportunity to experience the Living Water.

“More than 1,800 impoverished artisans in 22 countries earned a sustainable wage and find real hope through WorldCrafts,” Cooper continued. “In addition to nearly 200 Christian Women’s and Men’s Job Corps sites in the United States, there are Christian Women’s Job Corps sites in Mexico, West Africa, South Africa, and soon to be Thailand

“We still mourn his loss but know he is in a better place with Jesus,” David Eubank said.

In addition to their relief work, the Eubanks say their mission is to share the love of Jesus Christ and help free people from oppression.

“Everywhere, every person in the world has something good and wonderful we can love, learn from and build up,” said Eubank.

“When we stand together in Christ and love others, we form the antidote to evil. That is the story I want to be told.”

It’s because of that story that LifeWay Films wanted to get involved, said Myers.

“When we began the work of producing and distributing faith-inspired documentaries in 2016, it started with a mission to deliver stories with a real and raw message that ultimately would have an eternal impact. As we came across the Eubank family’s story and began to understand the depth of their journey, we knew this was a film that could have a massive impact on the Kingdom,” he said.

“The things they walked through as a family were unlike anything we had seen before. Dave and Karen Eubank are



Ethnic Kachin children bow their heads in a closing prayer after a Good Life Club program, part of the Eubank family's work. The children are IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) who fled their homes due to Burma Army attacks in their villages. Photo by Chris Sinclair

living testimonies of how Christ calls us to live in Matthew 16:24-26; to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him with complete faith and trust. We truly feel the message of this family’s journey will influence the Christian walk of all those who experience the film.”

“Free Burma Rangers” will release in theaters across the nation for a two-day Fathom Event on Feb. 24 and 25, 2020. To learn more about the film and view the official trailer, visit <https://fbmovie.com>.

Aaron Earls is a writer for LifeWay Christian Resources.

About LifeWay Films

LifeWay Christian Resources is one of the world’s largest providers of Christian resources. LifeWay Films exists to empower churches and Christians to engage faith-based films as a tool for discipleship and growing their faith.

About Deidox Films

Deidox Films is a non-profit documentary production company creating content from a Christian perspective. Their documentaries serve churches and organizations around the globe.

WMU cont...

with IMB personnel.”

Shifting to WMU’s online leadership development opportunities, Cooper shared, “Women from around the world – including Afghanistan, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Ukraine – take WMU’s Christian Women’s Leadership Center classes, and a second international student just finished all nine courses representing 150 hours of coursework.”

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of national WMU, said, “In 2019, WMU’s ministries touched countries from A-Z – from Afghanistan to Zambia – 39 different countries! When you include ministry partners here at 100 Missionary Ridge [location of WMU building], the number of countries touched moves from 39 to 65. And then factor in what each of you are doing in your states – it’s

astounding. The breadth and scope of global kingdom impact is stunning and beautiful and humbling.”

Cooper and Wisdom-Martin continued to recap some the year’s highlights, including:

Milestones marking decades of changed lives: Mexico WMU and Nigeria WMU both celebrated 100 years. Taiwan WMU celebrated 60 years, and Brazil celebrated 70 years of Royal Ambassadors.

Following an 18-month collaborative process that included three national WMU staff members traveling to South Korea, WMU signed an historic agreement with Korean nationals on the campus of IMB’s International Learning

Center. Koreans will have the rights to WMU’s chronological Bible storying resource, *Tell the Story: Bible Storying for Kids*, to sell in Korea. In exchange, Korea Baptists will translate *Tell the Story* into Korean and gift the translation to WMU.

After leading Korean WMU for 30 years, Angela Kim passed the mantle of leadership to Joy Lee. WorldCrafts welcomed four new U.S.-based artisan groups: Refugee Sewing Society in Clarkston, Georgia; Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans, Louisiana; Christian Women’s Job Corps of Monroe, Louisiana; and Christian Women’s Job Corps of Madison County, Alabama. National WMU staff members

Highlights cont...

participated in numerous podcasts, panel discussions and task force meetings with various Southern Baptist agencies and entities to discuss strategies to address the needs of refugees and displaced people.

In addition to encouraging ongoing support of Southern Baptist missionaries through prayer and giving to the missions offerings, WMU maintains a database of approximately 650 available housing options for international missions personnel while on stateside assignment, partners with IMB to host an annual MK Re-Entry retreat, and awards a host of scholarships. WMU also partners each year with NAMB to promote Christmas in August in which WMU missions groups gather, pack and send needed supplies to North American missionaries.

Wisdom-Martin recognized that while ministry is not always easy, it is evident God is at work.

“We need to all commit daily to serve humbly and lead courageously,” she encouraged. “As long as we surrender wholeheartedly to the cause of Christ, we will have a future in kingdom work. It’s not about me or you. It’s not about WMU. It is about taking the gospel to those who have never heard. I just happen to believe engaging Christ followers in missions discipleship is critical to the Great Commission. And we are Great Commission people.”

Making Disciples

“It can get complicated when you try to explain all that WMU does,” Cooper acknowledged, “but when you think about it, we only do three things: compassion ministries, leadership development, and missions discipleship. Everything we do fits under one of those three areas . . . all with the purpose of making disciples of Jesus who live on mission.”

Cooper shared an example of missions discipleship from a Girls in Action (GA) leader in California who told about an outreach event that draws thousands to their church each October. The leader said a small group of girls from her previous GA class approached her and asked if they could practice sharing the story of salvation with her.

Cooper said, “This leader goes on to write, ‘This was simply a few girls who chose to approach the evening with a desire to share the gospel with anyone who would listen. They did just that. Because of the size of our event, we are required to have several paramedics on stand-by. My favorite image of that night was definitely the sight of those GA girls sharing the gospel with the paramedics assigned to our church event. Those things happen through ministries like GA and RA. They happen when we share with our children the importance of the gospel and then model a lifestyle of faith . . . living it and sharing it.’”

Cooper said one of her dreams is for every church to offer missions discipleship through WMU.

“I believe with everything in me that it is life-changing,” said stated emphatically. “It sure has changed mine!”

“My biggest dream,” she continued, “is for everyone on the planet to have a chance to hear and respond to the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, and I believe WMU can play a big role in seeing that come to fruition. We must raise up a



generation that will continue to tell the wonderful story of Jesus so they can tell others, who tell others, and on and on until His return . . . making disciples of Jesus who live on mission. To God be the glory and honor for the things He has done and will continue to do through WMU.”

Executive Session and Bonus Opportunities

Meeting in executive session on Saturday evening, the executive board heard reports from standing committees and an assessment from a consulting company that outlined a plan and expenses for replacing the 36-year-old heating, ventilation and air conditioning system with original controls in the WMU building.

In other business, the executive board approved the 2020 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal be set at \$175,000,000 and the 2021 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal be set at \$70,000,000.

On Saturday, 26 different conferences covered a variety of topics such as developing leaders, missions discipleship by age-level, Hispanic and Korean WMU, WorldCrafts, Christian Women’s and Men’s Job Corps, and a panel discussion with church planters and pastors.

On Saturday and Sunday evenings, participants had an opportunity to go through a U.S.-based refugee simulation and provide feedback on this new resource that will be available for online purchase at wmustore.com this spring. *Displaced: Seeking Home* is a one-hour simulation designed for students and adults that provides a glimpse into some of the difficult decisions and struggles refugees and displaced people in the United States experience as they go through the resettlement process. Participants live out real-life scenarios such as school registration, finding a job and working with a resettlement agency.

Other optional activities over the weekend included audio tours of the WMU building and historical artifacts, an interactive prayer experience, and screen printing bags or T-shirts in honor of the 50th birthday of Acteens and to promote Blume. Blume is a missional event for girls sponsored by WMU that will take place this summer at Germantown Baptist Church near Memphis, Tennessee, July 8–11.

WMU’s next board meeting will be June 6–7 in Orlando, Florida.

Chitwood announces five-year plan, IMB trustees elect new vice presidents, appoint 21 new missionaries

By Ann Lovell

IMB President Paul Chitwood announced IMB's five-year plan during meetings with trustees Jan. 29-30 in Riverside, California. IMB trustees also elected Charles Clark as vice president of mobilization and Price Jett as vice president of finance, logistics and technology; appointed 21 new missionaries for service around the globe; and recognized 78 former IMB personnel in memoriam.

Seth Polk, who serves as IMB trustee chairman, presided over the meeting. Polk is lead pastor of Cross Lanes Baptist Church in Cross Lanes, West Virginia.

"It is an honor to serve on a spiritually unified and focused board," Polk said. "The Holy Spirit is working among us. ... We are grateful for the leadership of Dr. Paul Chitwood and the staff and missionaries who make up the IMB family."

To "press toward the fulfillment of the Revelation 7:9 vision," Chitwood announced five targets built around IMB's vision and mission to engage unreached people and places over the next five years. The targets are based on the organization's core convictions, which includes proclaiming the gospel to those who have yet to hear it.

Mobilize 75% of Southern Baptist churches prayerfully and financially supporting the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® by 2025. "With less than half of Southern Baptist churches reporting on the Annual Church Profile that they gave to the Lottie offering last year, we have lots of opportunity to grow the support needed by our missionaries," Chitwood said.

Send an additional 500 fully funded missionaries by 2025. This number came to IMB leadership directly as a request from the field, Chitwood said.

Mobilize 500 global partner missionaries on IMB teams. While IMB will not fund these missionaries, they will be embedded on IMB teams and an essential part of IMB strategy, Chitwood said.

Engage 75 global cities in comprehensive strategies. Demographers project that 80 percent of the world's population will be in the urban centers by the end of this century, Chitwood said.

Increase LMCO receipts 6% annually to sustain the 500 additional missionaries, or \$10 million per year for the next five years. "While that seems like a lot of money, it will only require that every one of the 16 million Southern Baptists increase their Lottie Offering by \$0.63 per year," Chitwood said. "Dividing by the number of Southern Baptist churches, every church needs to give an additional \$200 per year. No matter how you do that math, the point is, it can be done."

New vice presidents elected

International Mission Board trustees also elected Charles Clark as vice president of mobilization and Price Jett as vice president of finance, logistics and technology. Clark most recently served with the IMB as affinity group leader for the

New VP cont. on page 7

Seven Trends in Churches in 2020

By Thom S. Rainer

Offering trends are a worthless exercise if they have no connection to reality.

For over 15 years, I have suggested trends in churches that may become movements of reality. On an occasional basis, I review all of my prognostications to see if they came close to reality in just a few years forward. So far, my prediction accuracy rate has been almost 90 percent, depending on how long you allow the trend to become a reality. For me, three years is the timeframe by which I usually judge my accuracy.

To be clear, I am not the brightest bulb in the chandelier. Not close. But because we receive voluminous amounts of information from churches at Church Answers, I am able to see thousands of "dots." I am then able to connect those dots and often see a trend in the making.

My list is not exhaustive but, as we head into 2020, I see seven major trends developing. They are likely to change the landscape of churches in the next few years.

1. **Worship sizes will grow significantly smaller.** Please don't mistake this trend to be synonymous with attendance decline. Even in growing churches, we are likely to see smaller worship gatherings. The growing churches will obviously have more services, venues, and sites. This trend is congruent with the next trend.
2. **There will be a significant increase in the number of worship services offered at times other than Sunday morning.** In most communities, one-third of the workforce has to work on Sunday morning. That number includes some of your most active church members who have to work one or two Sunday mornings a month. We accommodated the farmers well with 11:00 am worship on Sunday morning in the 1800s. We are due for some major changes 150 years later.
3. **Church facilities will undergo a dramatic transformation.** The two preceding trends lead to this third trend. With both smaller worship gathering and more service options, the need for large worship centers or sanctuaries will diminish greatly. The "big box" worship center is a Baby Boomer phenomenon that is disappearing. Another major change in church facilities will be the sharing of those buildings and rooms with other organizations, even secular organizations.
4. **Attendance will become a greater emphasis.** For years, we have seen an aversion toward church leaders stressing attendance. Some critics say church leaders focus on numbers too much. Others say the church is wherever the people

Trends cont. on page 7

New VP cont...

Americas. Clark has more than 15 years' experience with IMB. Growing up as a missionary kid in the Americas, Clark began his career with IMB as a church planter in 2004 after working more than 30 years in the corporate industry in progressive leadership roles. Clark completed his corporate career as vice president of e-Business with Occidental Chemical Corporation and vice president of global solutions with HAHT Commerce. He and his wife, Karen, have three grown children and nine grandchildren.

Jett has served as chief information officer of IMB since July 2019. In this role, Jett has managed all aspects of IMB's technology portfolio and established a global governance process for technology initiatives, as well as restructured financial arrangements with vendors to eliminate waste. Prior to work at IMB, Jett founded The Care Group, using technology to help families navigate the complex world of elder care. Jett also previously served as the chief information officer and executive director of The Corporate Executive Board (now Gartner) from 2002 to 2016. As executive director and chief information officer, Jett led a technology team of 300 and a publishing team of 200 across five continents. He and his wife, Diedre, have three children, Peter (13), Price (18) and Rachel (20).

"I am personally excited at the prospect of Charles Clark and Price Jett joining our Core Leadership Team," Chitwood said. "Both men have proven their worth at IMB and have tremendous leadership capacity."

New missionaries and celebration of service



Nate Bishop, IMB trustee from Kentucky, receives thanks from other IMB trustees after he addressed the plenary session on racial reconciliation.

Trustees approved the appointment of 21 new full-time, fully funded missionaries, who were honored during a Sending Celebration on Wednesday, Jan. 29, at Magnolia Church in Riverside, California.

Todd Lafferty, IMB's executive vice president, recognized the lives of 78 former colleagues — including 10 retired staff members, three current missionaries and 65 emeritus missionaries — who died in the past year. The field personnel's lives totaled 1,780 years of service through the IMB, with an average age of 85 and an average of 26 years of service.

Former staff who were recognized in memoriam included Don Kammerdiener, who served 39 years as a missionary to Colombia, Argentina and Paraguay, area director for Middle America and Caribbean, and executive vice president and interim president of the IMB.

Lafferty also recognized three missionaries who died in active service. Gena Wilson, 51, served 22 years in Europe. She died of cancer May 13, 2019. LaVerne Brown, 48, served 15 years with Sub-Saharan African Peoples. She died of cancer Aug. 25, 2019. Andy Leininger, 56, served 22 years in Europe. He died of cancer Oct. 13, 2019.

Emeritus missionaries included, among many others who served around the globe: Martha Brady, 86, who served 43 years in the Bahamas, Guyana, Belize, and the Caribbean Regional Office; Emanetta Qualls, 101, who served 20 years in Brazil; and Thurman Braughton, 87, who served 28 years in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Pakistan.

IMB cont. on page 8

Trends cont...

are. The result has been a diminished commitment to attend regularly. Why should someone attend if attendance is really not that important? We are now seeing a reversal of that attitude. More church leaders realize that the gathered church was a vitally important part of church life in the New Testament. It should not be less so today.

5. **Evangelism will return to its rightful place of importance and priority.** Too many churches have been doing good things while they are neglecting the priority of evangelism. Good becomes the enemy of great. In fact, many church leaders and members think they are evangelistic simply because

they have community-invited events. Evangelism is the explicit sharing of the gospel message in the power of the Holy Spirit. Evangelism will return to its place of prominence in many churches.

6. **Fewer pastors and church staff members will be compensated full-time wages.** There are many factors contributing to this reality. Only one of them is related to declining church budgets. Indeed, a number of pastors and church staff will choose the bi-vocational or co-vocational option.
7. **Fewer churches will align exclusively with denominations.** Some of the

churches will leave their denominational alignment altogether. But more of these churches will see their respective denomination as but one of many ministry partnerships. They will align with and fund multiple organizations and networks.

As we move into a new year, let me again thank you for being on the front lines of ministry. We at Church Answers are grateful to God to serve you and work alongside you. May you see the abundance of God's blessings in 2020.

175 years of work

In response to a motion made during the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention in Birmingham, Ala., IMB trustees also voted to recommend to the SBC “that the IMB sponsor the addition to the SBC calendar of an annual George Liele Missions and Evangelism Day, to be held on the first Sunday of February of each year,” beginning in 2021. George Liele was a Georgia slave who came to faith in 1773 at age 23, was given his freedom to pursue God’s call on his life, became the first ordained African American Baptist preacher in America and planted the gospel in Jamaica as the first missionary from America.

“As we seek to educate Southern Baptists on our own history, we are grateful for the prospect of being able to promote an annual George Liele Missions and Evangelism Day,” Chitwood said.

Chitwood also announced the celebration of 175 years of Southern Baptist work among the nations. Acknowledging that Baptist churches in the South separated from northern churches over the issue of slavery, Chitwood acknowledged that the SBC and the IMB began in sin. Chitwood invited Nate Bishop, an African American trustee from Kentucky, to share his perspective on the issue.

Bishop encouraged trustees when addressing the beginnings of the Southern Baptist Convention and the IMB “to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

“Our convention was birthed in sin,” Bishop said. “There is no way to get around it. You can’t put lipstick on a pig. You have to call it what it is. But here is the beauty of being a Southern Baptist: When we repent and confess our sin, we don’t have to be defensive. ... We celebrate this 175th anniversary because Christ has freed us (from that sin).

There is a new ethnicity birthed by the blood of Jesus, and that (ethnicity) is the Church,” Bishop continued. “We will tell the truth (about our history), not because we are ashamed, but because we want to glory in Christ. What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

Other business



IMB President Paul Chitwood addresses IMB trustees during the plenary session Jan. 30.

Bill Agee, executive director of California Southern Baptist Convention, participated in the missionary Sending Celebration and brought partnership greetings during trustees’ plenary session.

“We see God doing great things, and He continues to do great things,” Agee said, noting that California led the SBC in baptisms last year. He also reported that California Baptists started 70 churches last year, but “it will take 70,000 churches to reach unchurched Californians,” he said. “We are encouraging all of our churches to step up” to fulfill their missional responsibility.

Chitwood also announced the selection of several new staff members, including a renewed emphasis on mobilization, a new general counsel and a newly created prevention and response administrator.

“In an effort to better serve and more effectively mobilize the diverse family of Southern Baptists here at home, we have diversified IMB’s mobilization team with team members representing and assigned to African American Southern Baptist churches, Hispanic Southern Baptist churches, and Asian American Southern Baptist churches,” Chitwood said. “We have also added mobilization personnel specifically assigned to engage more students and local Baptist associations. We have a long way to go, but the early returns on this extra investment in mobilization are encouraging.”

The goal of these positions is to continue to grow the number of candidates for missionary service, Chitwood said.

“Our missionary pipeline is growing again,” Chitwood said. “In just over a year, we’ve been able to increase the number of candidates in the career pipeline by more than 400% and the

number of combined long-term, mid-term, and team associate candidates by nearly 300%. We’ve also been blessed to receive this year the largest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering from a church in IMB history.”

Chitwood also announced that Richard Salamy has been named as IMB’s General Counsel and Somer Nowak will serve in the newly created role of prevention and response administrator.

“The prevention and response administrator position is evidence that IMB absolutely remains committed to

making changes necessary to better prevent instances of child abuse and sexual harassment (including sexual assault) and to better care for victims while holding perpetrators accountable,” Chitwood said. “IMB leadership is implementing *every* recommendation presented by Gray Plant Mooty, diligently moving toward the highest standards in abuse prevention and response, including providing compassionate care. The prevention and response administrator position is another vital step of implementation.”

Chitwood also shared the results of the annual financial audit. IMB again received an “unmodified opinion,” the highest level of assurance available. Chitwood reported that no property sales were used for operations, reserves were funded at the appropriate levels, and 100% of receipts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering were spent on the field.

“We are thankful for the generosity of Southern Baptists in their faithful giving to the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions. The IMB would not exist without them,” Chitwood said. “We are also thankful for the IMB finance team, both abroad and in Richmond. We have men and women with high integrity, love for our Lord and a desire to see the gospel proclaimed to the ends of the earth.”

The next IMB board of trustees meeting is scheduled for May 13-14 in Richmond. The next missionary Sending Celebration is scheduled during the June 9-10, 2020, annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando.

Ann Lovell is editorial design manager for IMB. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® is a registered trademark of Woman’s Missionary Union.

Two ultrasound machines, hundreds of lives saved

By Tess Schoonhoven

NASHVILLE (BP) -- Amory's life changed forever when she saw those two blue lines on the pregnancy test. Thinking it was a false positive, she took it again, and again, three more times.

Amory had just finished graduate school, accepted her first job as a speech-language pathologist, moved into her own apartment and finally found a guy who she believed liked her back. However, their relationship was rocky, and Amory had no idea how he would react to the idea of being a father. Although in that moment, Amory's life as she knew it seemed to crash down, her story did not end there.

Terrified of potential judgement and ridicule and almost too afraid to even seek help, she scheduled an appointment with Liberty Women's Clinic in Kansas City.

Amory's clinic nurse was Missy. Missy treated her with kindness, respect and grace, providing not only information, but hope.

Thanks to the ultrasound machine at Liberty Women's Clinic, Amory saw her baby's heartbeat for the first time. The emotions that flooded her heart were surreal, overwhelming. She knew she was going to be a mother. There was no doubt she was keeping her baby.

Ryder entered the world, and Amory says he brings her incomparable joy. When he says "I love you" she cannot imagine her life any other way.

Amory's story is not uncommon for recipients of the ministry of pregnancy care clinics.

Ultrasound technology is often referred to as a window into the womb, for it gives mothers a vivid picture of the life they carry inside them.

'TEETERING ON THE EDGE'

For the past 16 years the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention has donated ultrasound units to clinics like the Liberty Women's Clinic across the country through the Psalm 139 Project. So far, the project has funded and placed 20 machines.

The machines are fully funded through direct monetary gifts and through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving plan to support national and international ministry causes. The machines' impact is powerful.

Bobby Reed, chief financial officer of the ERLC, said the project is a very practical way for those passionate about the sanctity of human life to get involved and make a real difference.

"A lot of times people who become passionate about it, their follow-up question is 'Well, what can I do?'" Reed said. "One way to be involved in valuing human life is to be involved in the Psalm 139 Project."

Individuals can invest personally in saving lives, in ministering to mothers just like Amory. The money donated

Sanctity of human life cont. on page 10

Olympic ministry plans underway in Tokyo - Missionaries sense an era of opportunity in Japan

By Caroline Anderson, IMB writer

If you share the gospel with a Japanese person, there is a 99% chance this would be the first time they've ever heard the message. With that statistic, Japanese people can be classified as an unreached people group.

This might come as a surprise for those who think of "unreached people groups" with images of men and women living in jungles or remote desert dwellings. Instead, Japan's unreached are often businessmen working in skyscrapers and young adults with unparalleled digital connectedness.

IMB missionaries say in this era of Japan's history, they see an unprecedented opportunity to reach the Japanese with the gospel. Japanese people are increasingly open to hearing about hope and eternal life.

Japanese Christians and missionaries are excited to potentially be on the cusp of change in the tides of Christian history on the island nation. Daniel and Tara Rice, IMB missionaries in Tokyo, say they believe the 2020 Summer Olympics could be a game-changer, and they are hopeful that in 2020, the percentages of those who haven't heard the gospel will continue to decrease.

Era of restoration

As in most societies, zeal and fervor can be easily found at festivals and sporting events in Japan. The Rices say the atmosphere allows freedom of expression and gives unspoken permission to be silly or carefree. On these occasions, missionaries say Japanese people are more likely to listen to presentations of the gospel.

The 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo will provide missionaries, Japanese believers and Southern Baptist volunteers inroads to talk about Jesus in Japan.

Over the past six months, and in the months leading up to the 2020 Summer Olympics, the Rices and Japanese churches are hosting community festivals. The festivals will feature family-friendly games, activities, food and gospel presentations. Volunteers from Southern Baptist churches in the U.S. are key partners in the festivals.

"The festivals are seen as a first step in discipleship," Daniel said. "They are always connected to a local church, and we strongly encourage the local church to have something planned next."

During the Olympics, mission teams will focus on evangelism through things like a pop-up coffee shop and Olympic pin trading. The goal of each effort will be to share the gospel with Japanese and visitors who might be more receptive to the message.

After the Olympics, Japanese churches will follow up with people interested in hearing more about Christianity. Involving Japanese Christians ensures that the gospel doesn't leave with the short-term volunteers or IMB missionaries when their terms of service end.

The Olympics have the potential to usher in a Christ-centered era in Japan. Join IMB missionaries and Japanese Christians in praying this will be a reality.

To learn more about outreach efforts in Tokyo and how you can be involved, please visit the IMB's [Olympic ministry website](#).

Sanctity of human life cont...

to the project goes directly to funding a machine placement and therefore, to saving lives.

But the lives that are to be valued also reach beyond the womb, Reed said. "It also goes to the orphan or the foster child who needs a home. There's a dual messaging there. Not only does that center help babies who are in their mother and need life, but they're also helping moms who are scared for their very lives."

Carol Graham, founder and CEO of Liberty Women's Clinic, said that in the twelve months since receiving the ultrasound machine they have provided nearly 4,000 services to more than 650 women.

285 of those women had a positive test result, 231 were eligible for an ultrasound and 209, to their knowledge, chose life for their child. That is a 90 percent rate of choosing life for those who saw their unborn child on an ultrasound.

"Ultrasound is truly what makes a difference for young women who are teetering on the edge of a decision between life and death of their child -- the quality of that image is vital," Graham said. "The truth presented in the ultrasound image and the compassion of His people poured out on the broken, provides an avenue to set captives free from their current anguish and the future despair of a decision to end their pregnancy."

LWC has more than 100 volunteers

prayer asking God to work in the hearts of the two women, to change them and convince them to choose life for the child. When the time came for the ultrasound, both grandmother and granddaughter were moved to change their minds about the abortion.

Lopez recounts what the grandmother told her after the appointment -- "I cannot deny, I saw it in the ultrasound. That's my great-grandbaby."

Lopez said 97 percent of the women who come into the clinic and receive an ultrasound choose life for their baby.

Even through this small center, Lopez said 50 lives of unborn children are saved in a year, averaging out to one child -- one life -- a week.

Lopez said their goal in the coming year is to hire another

helping with events and projects as well as serving in the clinic. Additionally, more than 1,200 individuals, churches and businesses financially support the clinic on a regular basis.

"Together, we are encouraging hearts and saving lives, one client at a time," Graham said. "We have the amazing opportunity to have a mission field that literally walks through our doors."

'THAT'S MY GREAT-GRANDBABY'

Not all clinics that receive the machines are as large as LWC. Greenspoint Pregnancy Assistance Center in Houston is staffed by just eight volunteers and one ultrasound technician.

But even with the small staff, Flora Lopez, director of the Greenspoint center, said that 102 women gave their lives to Jesus in the past year through the ministry of the center.

Lopez said that her personal journey to the position of director has been filled with faithful reliance on God to utilize her desire to serve and share the Gospel. Previously working as a banker with no experience in the pregnancy assistance field, Lopez had doubts about whether she was fit for the role.

"I didn't feel that I had the skills or that I was prepared and that I wouldn't be able to do it because I was never involved with pregnancy centers before," Lopez said. "But when you put your yes on the altar and you trust the Lord and when you ask Him 'what is your plan for my life and

whatever it is I'll be there, I'll say yes and I'll go because I know you'll equip me. You equip the called, you're going to be with me all along and you are going to help to go through this path."

Lopez said the key to being utilized in ministry is just to be available. She encourages anyone who is wondering what they can do to champion the value of human life to simply put their life in the Lord's hands and see what He will do with their desire to be used.

Lopez recounted the story of a new mother she recently served. The mother was 14 and came into the clinic with her grandmother. They were already planning on getting an abortion.

The grandmother was encouraging her granddaughter to have an abortion because she also had one when she was younger. Both individuals were confused and hurting.

Lopez said that the grandmother told her granddaughter that she could get an abortion but it would all be OK in the end because God would forgive her. "That statement broke my heart," Lopez said.

But the pair agreed to an ultrasound appointment for the very next day. Lopez said the grandmother told her if, in the ultrasound image, the baby appeared developed, then her granddaughter would not have an abortion.

The rest of the day, that night and the morning, the staff of the center spent time in

Cont. in blue box below...



technician in order to have more ultrasound appointments and in the end, save more lives.

"When we encounter a woman that does not know the Lord, and we're able to share the Gospel, not only the person is being saved, but also their souls are being saved," Lopez said. "That's the main focus -- sharing the Gospel and the good news of Jesus Christ."

"God is doing great things through the ultrasound machine at different pregnancy assistance centers," Lopez said. "Thank you [donors] for making my dream a reality and God's dream

too."

For more information on the Psalm 139 project, visit <https://psalm139project.org/>.

Tess Schoonhoven is a staff writer for Baptist Press. Photo by Sandy Ward.