

# GLOBAL PARTNERS

January 2013

By James G. Smith

## MISSION DIRECTORS

JON KONNERUP

PAUL HYLTON

STEVE BENDER

JIM SMITH

Administration

Missionary training

Financial services

▶ **Travel**

Missionary care

**O**ne area of ministry performed by the BBFI Mission Office that may or may not be understood is the area of travel.

Our Mission Director, Jon Konnerup, and the associate directors, Paul Hylton, Steve Bender, and myself, spend a lot of time getting from one place to another. Let's explore the many reasons and the benefits of all this travel.

While each director has considerable responsibilities and specific administrative duties, we also enjoy serving the pastors, churches, and missionaries of the BBFI in a more personal way. We pretty much go anywhere we are invited and serve however we can. The foreign trips always have specific causes. The domestic travel is usually to serve a state fellowship or a local church.

We hope you enjoy the colorful and detailed accounts of some recent travels.



## WHY WE TRAVEL – Jon Konnerup

Although I enjoy eating exotic foods around the world, I must say that this is not the reason I travel. I have seen some unbelievable sights — both beautiful and heartbreaking. Yet again, this is not why I travel internationally four to five times a year. There are basically three reasons for my travels abroad that I believe not only fulfill my responsibilities as the mission director, but enhance BBFI mission efforts.

The first reason I travel, and the one I enjoy the most, is to encourage our missionaries who have committed their lives to serve the Lord in a foreign country. Having been a missionary kid and later a missionary for 11 years, I have an appreciation and understanding of what our missionaries go through. I know what it is like to live without the common amenities we enjoy, the constant battles with government red tape, and hostile religions. Many of our missionaries live in completely different cultures that speak “strange” languages while dealing with ongoing safety issues. The children’s education, language learning, dealing with traffic, and so many other things on a day-to-day basis that we don’t know about can cause discouragement. Satan attacks these choice servants of God because they are invading his longtime strongholds on people’s lives. So, I visit the missionaries to encourage them, to listen, and to try to be a friend while reminding them they have a host of prayer warriors in their supporting churches, the backing of the Mission Office, and most importantly the power of God behind them. This threefold cord is strong and can help sustain them.

During these trips I get to see and participate in our missionaries’ ministries. It is always a blessing to see them interacting with their people, communicating in their language, and watching God use them as they share the love of Christ. It is a huge blessing to see people repent of their sins and ask Jesus to save them in a different language with the missionary by their side. I think of the hours they have spent witnessing and finally seeing one, or many, turn to Christ and then see them get baptized. What a joy it is for me to experience these life-changing moments and to cheer on our missionaries, encouraging them to keep going no matter the hardships because it is worth it to see these people come to the truth.



The second reason I travel to distant countries is because of invitations extended by both missionaries and national leaders to participate in their ministries. I have preached to pastors in many countries about missions and how to begin the process of fellowshipping together for the cause of world missions. It is so exciting to see this happening in many places today. They no longer want to be on the receiving end — they now want to be on the giving and sending end of world evangelism. I have preached to pastors and Bible school students in different countries on various subjects such as enduring hardships in the ministry, overcoming the adversary, and enduring persecution. I am also invited to preach for anniversary Sundays like the ones in Korea, the Philippines, and recently in Tanzania. What a joy to see churches committed to reaching their communities, their country, and their world.

The third reason for my international travels is to visit places where we have little or no representation of the gospel as a Fellowship. It is said there are still 402 unengaged, unreached people groups. That means there is no one witnessing among them. My desire is to see our Fellowship rise to the task of reaching as many of these as possible. My travels take me to places that often are in complete spiritual darkness. Maybe there is a little candle lit, but the darkness is heavy. So, I visit these likely unheard of places in order to promote their needs and the available opportunity to our churches, youth groups, and colleges. In October 2012, I visited two such places — Namibia and Madagascar. I hope you will read about them in this issue and pray with me that someone would answer God's call to send the light to a people searching in darkness.

I would like to thank the churches who support the Mission Office financially. Your support does so much more than pay salaries for the 18 people on staff. It also enables me and the associate mission directors to make these international trips to be a blessing to our missionaries on the front lines, to challenge and encourage the national leaders, and to promote new frontiers for our Fellowship. Thank you for making all this possible. We greatly appreciate your support — it goes a long way in making an eternal difference in the lives of people around the world.



Athens, Greece (left) and various ministries (below) led by BBFI missionaries



## VISITING GREECE — Jon Konnerup

In October 2012, I visited with our missionaries in Greece. The Dimakos and Sinda families, along with Laura Nell Ferrell, have an unbelievable opportunity of reaching both the Greeks and the immigrants moving from all over the Middle East and Africa into Europe through Greece. It is said that 80 percent of all immigrants entering the European Union go through Athens, Greece, making it a very strategic portal with global reach.

I watched our missionaries as they ministered in a variety of activities ranging from evangelism efforts downtown to personal discipleship, from teaching Bible to Arabic-speaking people to teaching Bible to Farsi-speaking Iranians, from training leaders to leading a vibrant multi-cultural church. They have the opportunity to reach out to 17 different nationalities without leaving Athens. I personally witnessed three baptisms — one Greek and two Iranians.

Since my visit, more Iranians have been baptized — some are eager to return to their countries to share the good news of Jesus Christ with their families and friends. Our missionaries in Greece have a wonderful opportunity. Their greatest need is more laborers to enable them to do even more.

**“It was such a blessing to us to have our Mission Director, Jon Konnerup, come and visit us in Greece. We were privileged to hear him preach and we were refreshed. Our people enjoyed meeting him and were encouraged by his preaching. They were also encouraged by Chris Beeson’s testimony, who was such a blessing to have around as he also shared his tech skills. We also had the opportunity to go to Patra where we had two pastors and their staff meet up with us. Dr. Konnerup exhorted them to remain faithful in such a difficult field. We truly appreciate the mission director taking the time to come and visit Greece to refresh and recharge us and our people.”**

**George & Louisa Dimakos**



## TANZANIA – Jon Konnerup

I was invited to participate in two events in November 2012 with the missionaries of Tanzania. The first one was their national pastors' meeting where they wanted me to inspire the pastors regarding world missions. Pastor Mike Frazier attended the meeting as well and spoke to the Tanzanian pastors and churches about their responsibilities of fulfilling the Great Commission. It was a blessing to see their excitement and energy grow as they considered how they would lead their churches and Fellowship in reaching the world.

In the second event, I taught four sessions on world missions to Bible school students from churches all across Tanzania. I saw their interest as I explained how many people on our globe have still not even heard the name of Jesus. I challenged them to be leaders in their churches for world missions and to even consider going to places that have yet to hear a clear presentation of the gospel. I was then privileged to preach at the annual graduation for their Bible school. I look forward to seeing the fruit of these two meetings in the near future. Because of the short amount of time in the country, I was not able to visit all the missionaries and their ministries. However, the ministries I saw blessed my heart. I met believers in Christ who now have a hope of heaven because of the grace of God and the hard work and faithful dedication of our missionaries.



**“He gets off the plane at 3:30 in the morning and stands in darkness waiting for a ride. No welcome signs, flowers, or refreshments. No bands playing or crowds cheering. Only a warm embrace and simple hospitality preclude a whirlwind tour of the country, numerous preaching and teaching assignments, lots of beans and rice, and moving from guest house to hotel. The mission director’s visit to Tanzania was no holiday tour or sightseeing excursion. We put him to work. We picked his brain, and we made him sit through hours of meetings and services in a language not his own.**

**We are proud of Dr. Konnerup and appreciate his concern, his counsel, and his interest in the ministry and our lives. As mission director he blessed us, encouraged us, and made each missionary feel appreciated. He contributed to our pastors’ meeting, our Bible school seminar, and several church services in between. His greatest contribution, however, was not as mission director, but as a friend. We are grateful for a director who loves, respects, and treats with camaraderie each missionary family on the field. So while we are proud of Dr. Konnerup as our mission director, we are equally glad to have Jon as our colleague and friend. “Karibu tena!” we say in Swahili, “Come again!” You are welcome any time. Next time we promise not to leave you standing at the curb.”**

*Dave Jones*



## NAMIBIA – Jon Konnerup

Wedged between the Kalahari Desert and the South Atlantic Ocean, Namibia has great potential as one of Africa’s youngest countries. Global powers ignored Namibia until the end of the 19th century when it was colonized by Germany. Namibia became an independent country in March 1990.

The name of the country is derived from the Namib Desert, considered by many to be the oldest desert in the world. To date, Namibia boasts a proud record of peace and stability for its eleven ethnic groups.

Namibia, about half the size of Alaska, has a population of 2.1 million people. It is governed by a stable, multi-party parliamentary democracy. Namibia has the second-lowest population density following Mongolia. It has a high unemployment rate with half of the population living below the international poverty level. At the same time, this nation has suffered heavily from the effects of HIV/AIDS.

Windhoek, the country’s capital city and commercial nerve center, has an ethnic mix of people making up its population of 350,000. It is a fairly modern city surrounded by several other smaller towns in the northern region and along the coast like the town of Swakopmund. One can see

the years of German influence throughout the architecture and culture.

While the official language is English, most of the Caucasian population speaks either German or Afrikaans. The tribes also have their own respective languages.

The constitution of Namibia allows





## BOTSWANA – Jon Konnerup

One country in Africa I had never been to but always wanted to visit was Botswana. Currently, we have two missionary families serving there. Carl and Bonnie Clark are soulwinners and are doing a wonderful job of church planting in Botswana. Their people were so friendly and certainly love to sing unto the Lord. Carl and Bonnie tirelessly serve in the work with complete devotion to their calling. I was personally blessed to spend time with them and to encourage them in the Lord.

It was also a blessing to preach to the Botswanan people in Steve and Pam Workman's ministry. Not only do they have a vibrant, growing church, but the Workmans have a unique ministry with one of the best Christian schools in the nation. The graduates of this school are nationally recognized because of the tremendous education they receive. Steve and Pam devote much time and effort into this ministry that is resulting in young people being saved and living for God. The Workmans also hold camps at this facility. The Rawlings Foundation purchased the school in hopes of establishing camps and a training institution that would enhance the efforts of reaching all the two million people of Botswana. The Workmans' greatest need is having more help to lead the camp ministry and to teach in the school. Anybody interested?

**"Botswana is not on the way to anywhere. You don't drop in for a couple of days on the way to someplace else to see an old friend, then move on to your real destination. You have to want to come to Botswana, and it is a trek to get here. Add in hot dusty summers and freezing cold winters, and you can understand why we get very few visitors our way. That is why it was such a special blessing to have Jon Konnerup with us recently. He was able to see firsthand the beauty of Botswana — it truly is an amazing place. Plus he saw all that is involved in our ministry, with our church, our youth camps, and our school. Our church people were blessed by his message that encouraged them to reach out to bring more to Christ. And his explanation of the worldwide work of BBFI Missions made them feel like they were part of something significant and far-reaching.**

**We were also able to fulfill a dream I have had for several years — to survey a new country that has yet to be opened to BBFI missionaries. Together we visited the beautiful country of Namibia, next door to Botswana, and heard firsthand about the incredible opportunities and challenges of sending missionaries to reach the lost there. Only a personal visit such as this can open someone's eyes to all that is being done in a missionary's life and work, and all that can be done in a country that desperately needs missionaries. I wish to thank Dr. Konnerup for making the trek to Botswana, and to thank the pastors of the BBFI for making this a part of his ministry to our missionaries. We need the encouragement we receive from these visits. They are worth far more to us than you know!"**

*Steve Workman*



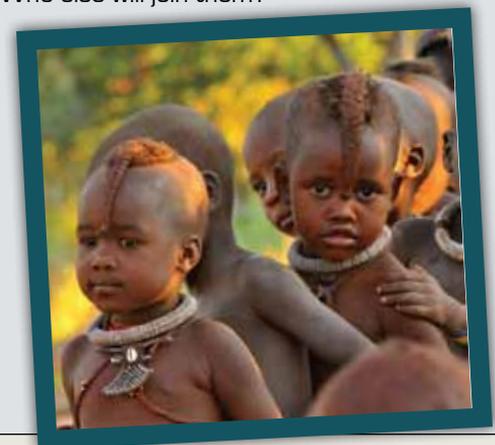
for freedom of religion and the country is a secular state. The largest religious group is the Lutheran Church followed by Roman Catholics. Missionary work during the 1800s drew many Namibians to Christianity. However, for many years now, very few churches continue to preach the

true gospel of Jesus Christ. Many cults have infiltrated the religious culture preaching a prosperity gospel. There is much confusion when it comes to the truth of the gospel.

Namibia would be considered a "Creative Access Nation" due to the governmental restrictions of entering missionaries in recent years. They want to know what you will do to help the people. Ministry is very possible if someone has a creative way to enhance and build up the skills of the people. In fact, there are many opportunities to reach out to the people while evangelizing and starting churches both in the cities and rural countryside.

The BBFI has never had missionaries in Namibia. These people need to hear a clear presentation of what Jesus did for

them on the cross. Perhaps you will be the one to enter the country and pave the way for others to follow. Praise the Lord, one family recently answered the call of God to Namibia during the October 2012 Global Awareness Week at Baptist Bible College. Who else will join them?



Have you heard of Madagascar? The extent of knowledge most people have of this country is from recent animated movies. Madagascar, the fourth-largest island in the world, is situated off the southeastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean.

In 1897, the island was colonized by France, from whom they regained their independence in 1960. Since 1992 the nation has officially been governed as a constitutional democracy.

Located near the geographical center of the island is the capital and largest city of Madagascar, Antananarivo, with a population of over four million. The buildings and houses of the city are spread across many hills with fingers of valleys nestled between rice fields.

In 2012, the estimated population of Madagascar was just over 22 million, 90 percent of which live on less than two dollars per day. Approximately 43 percent of the population is under the age of 15. The majority of the people form the Malagasy ethnic group which is a mix from Southeast Asia and East Africa. Malagasy and French are both official languages of the country.

The majority of the population adheres to Christianity or traditional beliefs. In 1818, missionaries from the London Missionary Society began to arrive establishing schools and transcribing the Malagasy language using the Roman alphabet. They translated and printed the first book on the island — the Bible.

Today, many who consider themselves Christians have syncretized their religious beliefs with traditional ones, especially those related to honoring ancestors. They practice the ritual whereby a deceased ancestor's remains may be periodically exhumed and rewrapped in fresh silk shrouds before being replaced in the tomb. The Famadihana is an occasion to celebrate the beloved ancestor's memory, reunite with family and community, and enjoy a festive atmosphere. It is widely believed that by showing respect for one's ancestors in these ways, they may intervene on behalf of the living. Conversely, misfortunes are often attributed to ancestors whose memory or wishes have been neglected. A growing percentage of the people practice Islam and Hinduism.

While many in the U.S.A. only know Madagascar through the animated animals on the screen, God loves and knows them the Malagasy people for whom He sent His Son to die. They aimlessly try to reach Him through animism and ancestral worship. They are enshrouded in darkness and live in fear of the next life, counting on their ancestors to pave the way for them. They need to know that their hope for an eternity with God is only through Jesus who will forgive them of their sins and give their lives true meaning.

The BBFI has never had a missionary in Madagascar. While there are a few Baptist missionaries in the capital city and scattered around the island, in order to reach these millions of people, more missionaries are needed and the opportunities for ministry are endless. Can you imagine making a difference in the lives of these people by sharing the love of God with them? Let's do all we can to lead them in finding the only way to God, reaching them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



## MISSIONARY FINANCES — Paul Hylton

Recently I attended a two-day seminar and round-table for mission organizations, sponsored by Mercer, concerning missionary finances and international taxes. This annual meeting allows mission organizations to stay informed of current issues going on in the world that would impact their organization and their missionaries.

During this meeting there were lectures and discussions on four topics — Challenges in Managing Health Care Costs in Today's World, Missionary COLA Review, Tax Equalization 101, and Social Security Totalization Agreements. Health care for missionaries was a large concern for those



## BULGARIA & HUNGARY — Steve Bender

At the invitation of missionaries Steve and Janelle Swann, Jenell and I traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria, where we ministered in Mladost Baptist Church.

Jenell spoke to a group of missionary ladies that gathered on Thursday night for a time of spiritual challenge and encouragement. Then on Saturday morning the ladies gathered for a craft time and then to be challenged as Jenell encouraged them from God's Word.

On Sunday, October 21, we celebrated two events with the church family — the 13th anniversary of the church founded by missionary/pastor Steve Swann and the ordination of Zachary Tsvetkov. Jenell sang and I preached the ordination charge to Zachary and the church body. Zachary will soon be assuming the office of pastor. It was a blessing to be a part of the Swanns' ministry as we witnessed the Great Commission being fulfilled. The Swann family has been ministering in Bulgaria for 17 years and is the only BBFI family in the country. Please join them in prayer that God would burden the hearts of someone to help them.

From Bulgaria we flew to Budapest, Hungary, where missionary Patty Peters greeted us. We then traveled to the city of Szolnok and spent time in the Peters' home. We had a great time of reminiscing with Patty as we toured the city of Szolnok and listened as Patty shared her heart for the people of Hungary. On Wednesday I spent time with Dan and encouraged him as he is going through an intense personal attack and some serious legal battles. That

of us attending the seminar. Also, important up-to-date information was provided on situations affecting cost of living in many countries of the world. Some clarity was given on Cost of Living Adjustment tables (used by the BBFI Mission Office) to provide needed adjustments to missionaries' personal compensation. Tax issues are always a hot topic. One thing that has become a major concern for mission organizations and missionaries relates to agreements signed between the United States and 24 other countries that have a potential of affecting missionaries' Social Security benefits. Missionaries who live and serve in the "agreement" countries

must be mindful of certain requirements of paperwork and certificates to stay on the "right side" of the agreement regulation otherwise they could lose a large portion of their U.S. Social Security benefits.

The two sessions of round-table discussions were very beneficial. It enabled everyone to glean information and how-to tips from the experiences of other mission organizations. We discussed things about new and ongoing tax regulation changes in some countries that could drastically affect missionaries, IRS reporting requirements, and issues concerning taxable benefits. We also discussed some important issues such as retired missionaries and retirement

funding, violence/dangers in many countries and crisis action training, missionary volunteers, visa changes in some countries, and training procedures for missionary candidates.

During the Thursday evening meal each table was alive with conversation as we shared with each other our testimonies in different areas of ministry and shared the joys, burdens, and blessings of working with and serving missionaries. Arriving home Friday night I was a little weary but very thankful for the opportunity to be a part of a meeting that enables me to know more and be able to do more for God's very special servants, our own BBFI missionaries.

evening we met with Bible Baptist Church for their midweek service where Jenell sang and I preached. Dan and Patty have served in Hungary for 18 years and are going through a difficult crisis right now. Please remember them in prayer as they weather this storm.



"There are no words to express my thankfulness for having the Benders visit during the most difficult circumstances in our ministry. Being able to visit around Budapest as well as our time here in Szolnok was such a blessing and took my mind off of the circumstances at the time. I appreciate the fellowship and encouragement that I so needed at the time."

*Patty Peters*

Bethel Baptist, Warrensburg, MO

Bethel's Global Impact Celebration is the most important scheduled event of the year for our church. Steve Bender's indelible impact on the church was seen through his servanthood and humility in and out of the pulpit. His messages were biblical and Christ-centered, precisely blended with personal illustrations. Steve was truly a blessing to the church! I consider it a blessing to have men like him ministering at the Mission Office."

*Richard Ricard*



HEATHERRIDGE BAPTIST, TULSA, OK – Steve Bender

Jenell and I were the final guests for the missions month at Heatherridge Baptist Church in Tulsa, OK, on Sunday, November 8. Pastor and Mrs. Carter and the members of Heatherridge were welcoming hosts that not only put great effort into the physical preparation for this conference but also into the spiritual preparation. I spoke to a combined Sunday school and presented faith promise giving — challenging both those already involved and those praying about beginning to get involved at some level.

In the morning worship hour, Jenell sang a mini concert after which I was able to preach the Word of God. At the close of the service, faith promise mission commitment cards were received. It was a privilege to see that God is still working in the hearts of men and women and they are still responding to His call.

## EAST TEXAS BBF, WRIGHT CITY, TX – Steve Bender

I was recently invited by Pastor Rohn Boone to speak at the East Texas BBF meeting hosted by First Baptist Church of Wright City, TX.

Having grown up in this area of Texas and knowing most of these men and women, I could speak personally to the theme of “Why I Fellowship” — because of their direct involvement in my life from childhood days at Texoma Baptist Youth Camp, their support to my family as a missionary in Korea, and their encouragement as I now serve in the BBFI Mission Office. I thank God for the men and women of the BBFI for how they helped me personally and for their support of each other as pastors and missionaries in fulfilling the Great Commission.

**First Baptist Church of Wright City hosted the East Texas Baptist Bible Fellowship meeting in October 2012, with the goal of entertaining, encouraging, and motivating pastors, missionaries, and those involved in ministry. Steve Bender and Mark Milioni preached, and the spiritual impact was immediate and obvious. Steve’s personal testimony was inspiring and reminded us why we must continue to join together to reach the world for Christ. Several of the missionaries in attendance told me that pastors they had never met before came to them during the meeting and pledged monthly support. We forgot our preferences, hurts, and burdens, and for two days we laughed, cried, sang, shared, praised, preached, and fellowshiped! Our church will reap the benefits of this meeting for many years to come, as will missions, missionaries, and ministries around the world.**

**Rohn Boone**

## MISSIONARY COMMUNICATION

Nothing really prepares missionaries for the intensity of the week as their planes land in Southern California where they expect to be surrounded by beautiful beaches, blowing palm trees, and the world-renowned L.A. However, those visions quickly fade as they are picked up and whisked away to the serene setting high above the Southern California valley to Ponderosa Pines Christian Camp, affectionately known as PONDO.

On November 4, 2012, Jenell and I joined Pastor Lewis and Karen McClendon and other workshop coaches, Brian and Rachael Weed, to begin the fourth annual Missionary Communication Workshop. Six couples and three single BBFI missionaries attended MCW for the sole purpose of improving their communication skills in three areas: verbal, non-verbal, and written. They embarked upon a very intense week of



## CENTRAL BAPTIST, SUNBURY, OH – Steve Bender

One of my favorite aspects of ministry is being invited to preach on missions in a local church. In October I preached in the missions month at Central Baptist Church where it was evident Pastor Herb

Koonce and his people had been preparing for this month.

The newly remodeled building and missions decorations were beautiful. On Saturday morning the men met to focus on leading their families in global missions. I was encouraged by their heart for souls.

Sunday I challenged Central Baptist to commit to praying consistently for missionaries, to support missionaries financially, and to pray about giving their lives to serve the Lord in foreign missions. Pastor Koonce and the people of Central Baptist Church are definitely making an impact worldwide as they send out missionaries.

Jenell and I will never take for granted the invitations to travel and present God’s Word in mission conferences, mission weekends, and ladies retreats.

**What a joy it was to have Steve Bender begin our mission conference at Central Baptist. Being a younger church in a new location, Steve not only preached for us, but he also helped set up our mission displays, met with our men for a men’s mission breakfast, and helped us do anything else we needed done!**

**This was the first time I have had Steve with us and our congregation was truly blessed by his heart for God and for missions. ... I know our missions giving has been affected in an excellent way by his ministry and we definitely want to have Bro. Bender minister at Central in the future.**

**Herb Koonce**

**WORKSHOP, VENTURA, CA** – Steve Bender

instruction, preparation, and delivery of their “speeches” to be critiqued and coached to become better communicators of the gospel of Christ. It is a joy to see them make great strides in becoming better speakers, resulting in them being sought by pastors

to visit their churches and present their ministries in a challenging yet encouraging way.

Ventura Baptist Church and several other donors give to make this a free workshop for our missionaries. I would

encourage all BBFI missionaries — veterans, deputation missionaries, and those currently involved in an internship — to make every effort to attend the workshop in 2013. Jenell and I are privileged to be involved in such an endeavor.



Steve and Jenell Bender have helped many missionaries at our Missionary Communication Workshop. As part of the coaching team, Steve teaches one of the classes, and both he and Jenell lead a small group. Missionaries benefit from the Benders’ experience as missionaries, their knowledge of worldwide missions from their work in the Mission Office, and from their heart for missionaries. By the end of the week missionaries have learned how to give powerful presentations because of the personal time Steve and Jenell have spent with each one of the missionaries in their small group.

Lewis McClendon

 **JIM & SHARON SMITH IN SPAIN** – By Jack & Joy Loveday

Jim and Sharon Smith landed in Madrid, Spain, on August 18. Missionaries Lavon and Carolyn Waters picked them up at the airport and brought them to Mount Calvary Baptist Youth Camp where we were finishing off our fourth week of camp.

We had invited the Smiths to speak for our fifth week of camp, which was going to be four days of practical teaching for those who were actively ministering in the Baptist churches around Spain. On Sunday, Jim spoke at Iglesia Bautista La Cruz in Guadalajara (near the camp), where the Waters serve. In the evening he preached at Iglesia Bautista Bíblica in Móstoles with Marvin and Becky Robertson.

The plan was for the Smiths to arrive on Monday to help us get things going for the last camp. Little did any of us know that the Smiths would be awakened in the wee hours of the morning by a very excited missionary wife, Carolyn Waters, letting them know she had been called to go to the hospital for a possible kidney transplant.

We know God works all things for

good, for He put Jim and Sharon in the Waters’ home to be an encouragement to Lavon during that first week following the transplant. And in the midst of all the excitement, we began our workers camp with an attendance of 79. Our theme was “Meet for the master’s use.” Jim preached each night and also taught one of the men’s practical courses in the mornings. Sharon spoke to the ladies in two sessions. What a blessing to have these dear servants speak, sharing their lives and their years of experience.

On Sunday morning, Bro. Smith spoke at Iglesia Bautista Bíblica of Leganés. Missionaries Bill and Therese Williams started his church, and it is now pastored by Harry Garris. Sunday night Jim was with us, preaching at Iglesia Bautista Bíblica in Madrid.

Although their time in Madrid was short, the Smiths were also

able to touch base with missionary Steve Mowery (Murcia) and missionaries Scott and Norma Edwards (Portugal) during the week of camp, as well as minister in four churches in Madrid. God blessed the workers camp, and we are so thankful to have had Jim and Sharon with us, as they shared from their many years of ministry in Ecuador. Our hearts were encouraged by their visit and we are making plans to do it again soon!



The Great Commission is not just a mandate for the North American church. It is a global command to all those chosen to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ. It is a command that crosses all borders, penetrates all cultures, and calls all of Christ's followers, no matter from where they come, to leave their comfort zones, to run the risk, leave their homelands, and go and preach in the darkest corners of the world. The Latin American church is waking up to this challenge.

Two years ago at the first BBFI Latin American Fellowship meeting, held at The Highlands camp of Mexico, international cooperation in accomplishing the Great Commission began. Inspired by the Mexican Fellowship's example, participants from various Latin American countries realized their personal and ecclesiastical responsibility in the Great Commission. Our Mexican brothers have been involved in global missions for many years, sending missionaries to many different Spanish-speaking countries — Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala, Panama, and Spain, to name a few.

However, through the work of the Holy Spirit, two years ago Juan Rodriguez\* and his family surrendered to go to a place that many have forsaken. Last year they arrived in the Middle East\* eager to serve their newly adopted people. God has used this family greatly to inspire other Latin Americans to take missions to the extreme. God saw fit to bring Juan to this year's international Latin American meeting. His presence and teaching were a testimony and challenge that Latin Americans can and must do their part in accomplishing the Great Commission. If he and his family were able to obey the call and go to the uttermost, and if the Mexican fellowship was able to take the commission seriously enough to send them, then all the churches of Latin America can and should follow suit!

In 2012, Bible Baptist Congregation of Bogotá, Colombia, pastored by BBFI Missionary Craig Lingo, hosted the second BBFI Latin American Fellowship Meeting. Over 350 arrived at The Highlands Camp (funded in part by the Rawlings Foundation)

in Chinauta, Colombia. Nearly, 100 pastors, missionaries, and laymen came from all around Central and South America. The attendance of the event demonstrates that the Latin American Fellowship is rising up to the global missions challenge.

Jim Smith, former missionary in Ecuador and now serving at the BBFI Mission Office, was the keynote speaker every night. He challenged our Latin American brothers and sisters to take missions to the extreme — to do whatever it takes to take the gospel to those who still have not heard it. His 30 years of successful experience as a missionary church planter and his command of the Spanish language

were essential in making an impact.

An emphasis was placed on working together as a team and crossing borders to unite in the mission of sending missionaries to the uttermost. Paul Byars, BBFI missionary in the Philippines, preached and led a workshop on what God has been doing through the Filipino churches. His testimony greatly impacted attendees because through the Asian Baptist Clearinghouse that was started several years ago, 120 Filipino families have been sent to many different countries of the world.

Many people left the conference with a renewed vision to reach their cities for Christ and to reproduce their efforts all over the world. Many decided to begin giving to faith promise missions. Others stated they believe God has called them to be missionaries. In the follow-up meeting a month after the event, over 30 people attended to find out what their next step should be, half of which were young people under the age of 18.

We are grateful to several others who helped develop the overall theme of the conference, Extreme Missions: Sharon Smith, Fernando Paez (Ecuador), Edwin Hoagland (Mexico), David Martinez (director of The Highlands Camp, Mexico), Alejandro Velazquez (Mexican BBFI Mission Director), David Liles (Peru), and the team from Colombia.



*\*Names and exact locations have been changed for protection*



**ECUADOR: GREAT TO GO HOME!** – Jim Smith

What a blessing to be able to go home from time to time. It had been two years since Sharon and I had been in Ecuador, so we were very happy to be able to spend a few days in the country and city that was our home for 30 years!

The main events in Quito were the 29th anniversary of the church we started and a graduation ceremony at the Bible institute. Both events were emotionally thrilling and spiritually edifying. With an attendance of 450, the church rejoiced in the blessings of the past and we sensed excitement about the prospects of the future. The Bible institute has continued and improved in our absence. Plans are being made to greatly improve the technology and to become more effective in training those whom the Lord is leading into ministry.

## TEMPLE BAPTIST, MARSHFIELD, MO – By Josh Keeny

Continuing a long history of mission emphasis, Temple Baptist Church of Marshfield, MO, concluded their 2012 mission conference on December 2. The theme was “Consumed with Compassion.” Jim Smith, Associate Mission Director at the Mission Office, brought a series of messages that stirred hearts and renewed a passion to reach people around the world.

The church was blessed and challenged by the TJ Gritts family and the Kevin Pine family as they communicated their passion and desire. Pastor Tim Auten and the church look forward to prayerfully supporting these new missionaries as they labor for Christ in Spain and England.

Veteran missionaries of 30 years to England, Tom and Gail Gritts, also took part in the conference, reporting back to their sending church and communicating the need for laborers in England. Seeing the great need and the fields white unto harvest, the Temple Baptist Church family worshiped, singing the words, “Take this heart, set it on fire, shining in the dark. I want to tell the world of who You are, all I am is Yours!”

## FIRST BAPTIST, MILFORD, DE – By David Perdue

It was our privilege to have James and Sharon Smith minister to us recently. Bro. Smith preached in all of our services on Sunday and was a tremendous blessing to our people. In fact, even though our faith promise mission conference had ended over a month earlier, several more thousand dollars were promised as a result of their visit!

Mrs. Smith taught our Ladies’ Bible Class during the Sunday school hour and was also a blessing. Bro. Smith also encouraged our workers at our annual Workers’ Appreciation Dinner the following evening.

On Tuesday, First Baptist hosted the local pastors’ fellowship, the Delmar Baptist Bible Fellowship. Bro. Smith preached and presented BBFI missions very well. Sharon ministered to the pastors’ wives.

Over the years, we have had three of the associate mission directors preach in our church and each one was a blessing and helpful to our church. I highly recommend this exposure to other churches and local BBFI fellowships.



## HOW DOES IT WORK? – Jon Konnerup

The churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International have always been a blessing to the Mission Office. We are the World Mission Service Center for the churches and missionaries — basically the bridge between those who send/give and those who go. A unique aspect of the Mission Office is that we do not charge for our services, but rely on monthly support from our churches. Much is accomplished to efficiently and effectively serve over 3,000 U.S. churches and 840 missionaries in 100 countries. Your faithful support not only assists with paying 18 salaries, processing support funds, complying with government regulations, and a host of other day-to-day services, it also enables us to set a foreign travel budget for myself and the associate mission directors.

Because unexpected situations arise on the field that may require the attention of one of the directors, it is difficult to plan and budget for every trip. Several of the directors may be in different countries

at any given time as they deal with these circumstances. Because of the added expenses related to these travel costs, the Mission Office requires the associate directors to turn in any love offerings (honoraria) they receive for speaking in mission conferences or other Fellowship events. These funds are then used to help subsidize their individual foreign travel expenses.

Each director truly appreciates these offerings and understands that by turning them in to the Mission Office, we receive a personal benefit from them as we are enabled to travel internationally to assist our missionaries. We all say, “Thank you for the part you have in caring for our missionaries.” Countless times our missionaries have been encouraged and blessed by a personal visit from one of the directors. Thank you for your monthly support that enables us to budget for trips and for the honoraria that also makes it possible for us to be a blessing to our missionaries.

