



# GLOBAL PARTNERS

Sept. 2011 **PREACHING!**



**In two of the five times the Lord gave us the Great Commission, He used the word *preach*.**

Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:47

**The first preachers were very effective in their ministry in Jerusalem. When the persecution came upon the church they became effective in other places as well.**

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.

Acts 8:4

**Looking at the history of the church over the ages, we see seasons of great effectiveness in preaching. Within the BBFI there have been specific people and places and circumstances when the preaching was highly effective.**

**We believe God has a perfect plan for our individual lives. His perfect will for preachers is to preach. As proclaimers of the everlasting truth, we are entrusted with a treasure in an earthen vessel.**

**In *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson states “Preaching is a living process involving God, the preacher and the congregation, and no definition can pretend to capture that dynamic.” There are always three basic elements in the activity of preaching. We have the Word of God. We have the listeners. In between these two elements is the preacher. It is his duty to understand the Word and understand the listeners. If he has not conquered those two assignments, he will likely not be very effective in communicating the Word to the people.**

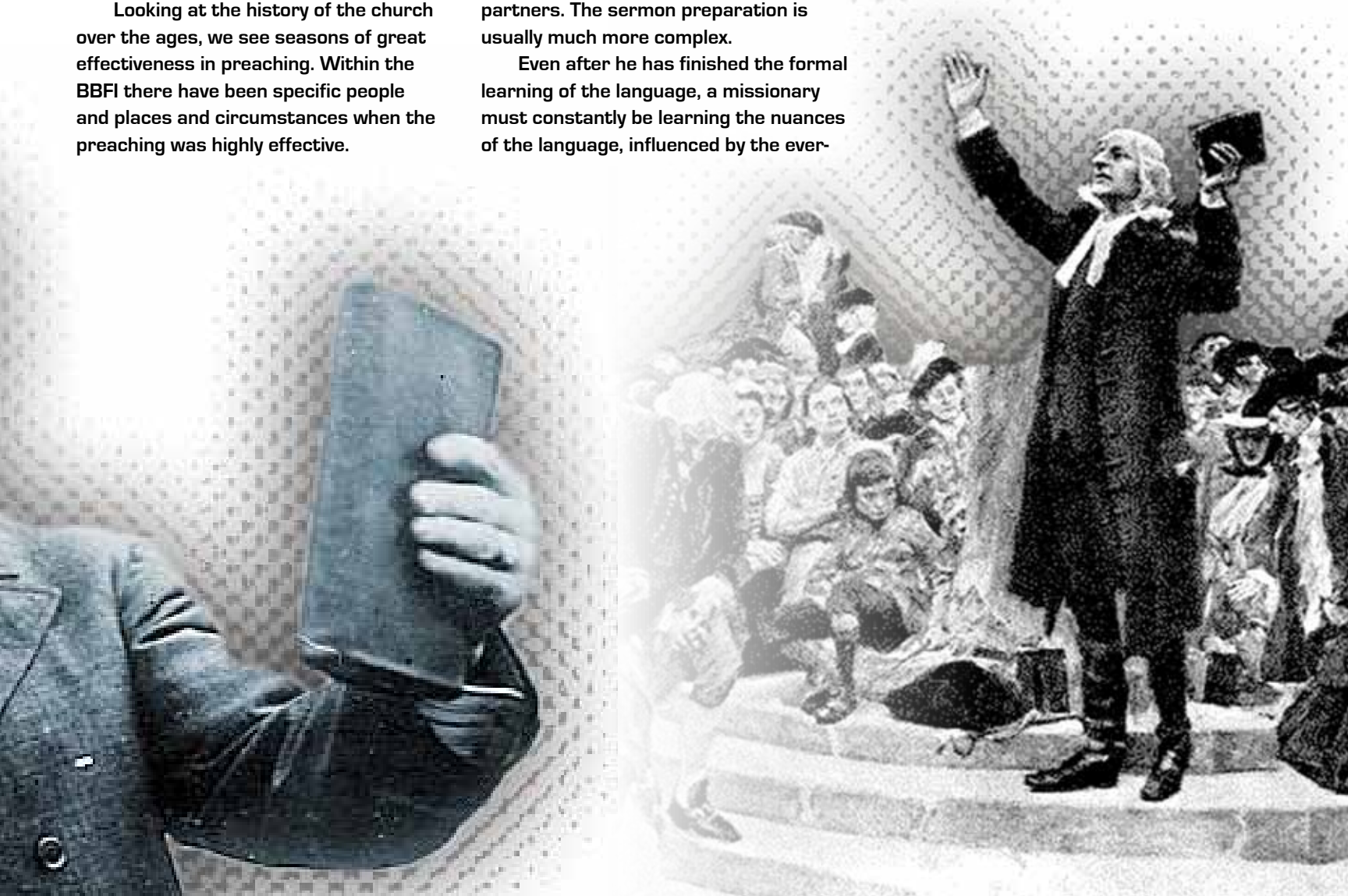
**While this seems rather straightforward within our own culture and language, the job becomes far more complicated and difficult for our global partners. The sermon preparation is usually much more complex.**

**Even after he has finished the formal learning of the language, a missionary must constantly be learning the nuances of the language, influenced by the ever-**

**changing culture and the religious background of his listeners. It is the responsibility of the preacher to know if the listener is actually hearing and understanding exactly what he is saying.**

**The essence of most BBFI missionary work is communicating the gospel across cultural and linguistic barriers. Church planting comes as a result of evangelism and discipleship. Neither evangelism nor discipleship is possible without effective communication.**

**How important is this specific activity in the lives and ministries of the global partners of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International? What are the similarities and differences in the development and delivery of Bible sermons in the various cultures and languages where our missionaries serve? These questions and others like them motivated us to do a quick study of the importance of homiletics within our group.**



## MISSIONARIES PREACHING

# Q&A

We sat down at our keyboards with many of our missionaries all around the world to ask them some questions regarding cross-cultural preaching. Those who participated in our discussion were from various cultures, age groups, and geographic areas: Josh Allred, Mexico; James Bradley, Mexico; Fred Davis, Canada; Jim Eberhard, Kenya; Joe Flippin, Brazil; David Liles, Peru; Ron Minton, Ukraine; Brent Moeller, South Africa; Rick Moeller, Scotland; Lance Patterson, Kenya; Kevin Pine, England; Leonard Smith, Mexico; Phil Stephens, Zambia.

### **GP: How is preaching in your new culture, language, and country *the same* as it was in your original culture, language, and country?**

**Kevin Pine:** Preaching in England, in many ways, is identical to preaching in the U.S.A. Most of the words even have the same meaning and cultural understanding.

**Rick Moeller:** Preaching is the same in all three cultures in which we have served (U.S.A., South Africa, and Scotland) because it is the same life-changing gospel in all three cultures. We preachers are still the ambassadors of our Lord in every culture in which we serve, and in every culture it is the foolishness of preaching that the Lord uses to save souls and change lives.

**Ron Minton:** The messages are almost the same because the truth never changes.

**Jim Eberhard:** A good illustration is great in any culture.

**Josh Allred:** The message that is preached transcends any culture or language. The truth of the gospel does not change even though it may be presented differently in different cultures.

**David Liles:** Preaching in Peru is similar to that of the United States in that it requires holy living on the part of the preacher, accurate understanding of the text, and artful presentation of the message.

### **GP: How is preaching in your new culture, language, and country *different* than it was in your original culture, language, and country?**

**James Bradley:** There are some obvious differences between preaching in the U.S. and preaching in Mexico. The most obvious is the duration of the sermon. In the States, 30 minutes is a normal length in many churches. What we have seen here in Mexico is that an hour is the minimum.

Another big difference comes from being a new church with many baby Christians as opposed to an established church with many mature believers. I find that my messages are more teaching them what the Bible says rather than reemphasizing what they've heard before. We still apply what the Bible says to their lives, but for many it is the first time they are hearing what the Bible says.

**Kevin Pine:** Preaching in England is definitely different than preaching in the U.S.A. Just enough of the words have different understandings that one must be careful, especially with slang terms. Also, the response of the people can often be different. In the States people will sometimes say "Amen" while you are preaching if there is a particular point or something that they agree with, or that spoke to them. While here in the U.K. they tend to make more of a grunt like "Hmm."

**Rick Moeller:** In the American culture and the Scottish culture, I would say that my preaching is basically pretty balanced, say 40 percent content and 60 percent application. Whereas in a developing-world culture like among the Zulus in South Africa where we served for 25 years, preaching was more like 20 percent content and 80 percent application. The Zulu people are concrete in their thinking and are avid storytellers. They learn best through stories so my preaching reflected their culture and I used many illustrations and stories to make the truths of Scripture real to them.

**Phil Stephens:** The main thing I find here in Zambia is the preachers prefer to just go verse by verse. And they seem to respond to that better. Often, our preaching in the States is topical. Much of the time when I preach I spend a lot of time defining terms. The ones that understand my English still do not know the definitions of many words in the Bible.

**Ron Minton:** My Russian is not good enough to preach quality messages so I preach through a translator. They call them interpreters, but I call them interrupters. My main translator is Tanya and it took me a few times to get used to that. (The mark of a good preacher is one who preaches God's words after Him.) Also, in the smaller towns and villages, they want one- or two-hour-long messages.

**Brent Moeller:** I tend to do a lot more expository preaching than what I grew up hearing in the U.S.A. There is generally little exposition of Scripture in many African churches. Many African preachers read a text, close their Bibles, and never return to it. Then they pontificate about anything that seems to strike their fancy. African people love stories. I would say that there is a considerable amount more of this in sermons here than in the U.S.

**David Liles:** Preaching is different in Peru in that it must appeal to collectivists, is not bound by the 35 to 40-minute ceiling, truths are best presented indirectly, and language can be simpler.

Collectivists view themselves as a part of a group rather than as separate individuals. Appealing to them to do something on the basis that it will make their individual life better is not as effective as appealing to them to do the same thing for the group. Additionally, they view themselves as very similar to one another with common problems.

## **GP: Do you have a humorous incident involving preaching cross-culturally?**

**James Bradley:** For example, we often say, "I changed my mind." They think this means you removed your brain and replaced it with a new one. They say that they changed their idea. They understand what I am trying to say, but often laugh a little bit at the manner in which I say it. Our people love to laugh with us when we make mistakes with our Spanish. Lori mistakenly said in a class she was teaching that she was going to eat the dog instead of feed the dog.

**Rick Moeller:** Once when I was preaching to the Zulu, I used the Zulu word for frog instead of the Zulu word for thief when I was preaching about the crucifixion of Christ. There was a collective gasp when I enthusiastically preached that Jesus was crucified between two frogs instead of between two thieves — especially since frogs are unclean animals and often associated with evil spirits and actually quite feared. Soon, my Zulu friends understood what I had meant to say and they laughed and laughed with me and at me.

**Lance Patterson:** I've been on two mission fields and learned the languages, and the languages sometimes conflict in my mind. For example, in the Filipino language Tagalog, the word *ako* means I, or me, or my. In the Kenyan language Swahili *ako* means you. Once, my mother visited us in Kenya and as I introduced my mother I kept saying *ako* instead of the Swahili word *angu*. I was actually saying, "This is your mother." I didn't figure out why everybody was laughing until after the service.

**Fred Davis:** A missionary friend of mine preached a sermon on being a living sacrifice from Romans 12:1. By changing one tone, he actually said, "I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a turkey..."

**Joe Flippin:** I broke my leg a few years ago and was trying to explain it and I used the word *mulatas* instead of *muletas*. Muletas are crutches. Mulatas are those mixed-race girls who dance almost naked at Carnival time. Everybody just laughed out loud. All I could do was laugh with them.

**Brent Moeller:** I learned the hard way how Africans respond when they either don't like your subject or if you have in their opinion spoken long enough! I once was preaching a revival meeting and I spoke on the tribulation. I guess the subject matter was a little to their disliking and I am sure I had spoken too long, so they just started singing over me. No matter how loud I got, they just sang that much louder. Needless to say, I have never preached that message again!

**David Liles:** In Peru, any interruption by an animal is barely noticed by anyone except the missionary.



NADA  
NADA

GREENLAND  
GREENLAND

ICELAND

SWEDEN  
NORWAY

**GP: Do you see the actual art and science of homiletics as important in your new culture as you did before you went there?**

**Kevin Pine:** Homiletics has always been the art and craft of taking the good news and the life-transforming teaching of Scripture and applying it simply and clearly to meet the listeners where they are; and to get us to interact with God and watch as He changes and transforms lives. Now it's just a matter of looking at Scripture, in light of British culture, and making application and drawing illustrations that help them connect to, and better understand, God's Word. It's a bit more time-consuming to look for illustrations and applications that are more relevant to what is going on in British culture.

**Rick Moeller:** Yes, perhaps in some ways it is even more important because to make yourself properly understood you need to know the nuances of their culture and the language barriers. Crossing not only from American English to South African English but from South African English to Zulu. Among the Zulus I had to be very careful that my illustrations not only fit their culture, but also that they were true to the Scripture. Clarity and simplicity are the watchwords.

**Phil Stephens:** In training Zambian preachers/teachers, I spend much time explaining basic concepts. It is a slow process. I have met many here with 12th grade Zambian English and who can quote scripture in English. They take Bible college curriculum tests and score 100 percent, yet they have no earthly idea what they have learned by rote means.

**Jim Eberhard:** It is very important that we teach with logic and purpose and order as we arrange our sermons. I think it is much more palatable for them to understand.

**Fred Davis:** Being able to present the gospel clearly and interestingly is very important.

**Brent Moeller:** I would say it is critically important because of the lack of solid Bible preaching in the culture. In South Africa the louder you are and the more flamboyant the better. While there is no doubt a place for that, it unfortunately is a replacement for sound Bible preaching.

**David Liles:** Peruvian ministers need good homiletics modeled before them, members need good feeding as there are so few channels of Word spoken to their lives, and doctrinal error abounds where people are less informed and don't emphasize faithful interpretation.

GLOBAL

**GP: Explain the process of communicating cross-culturally in your context.**

**James Bradley:** The best way to prepare to communicate Christ cross-culturally is to learn to view the Scriptures from a culturally neutral position like God does.

**Kevin Pine:** Communicating cross-culturally in my context is a constant learning experience. I am still picking up figures of speech. Although we share a common language, oftentimes we are not speaking the same language at all. It's almost like I have to relearn my own language, because in this culture what I'm saying may have an entirely different meaning and get an entirely different response than the meaning it would have back in the States.

**Rick Moeller:** I have always felt that preaching is the basis of my ministry, whether it is to one individual or to a congregation. The clear presentation of a gospel message and the instruction in Biblical doctrine is still the basis of what we do as missionaries. Without that we are not really obeying our Lord's commission.

Right now I am attempting to replant a church that has fallen on hard times here in Scotland. I am finding that the people that are coming are from such a wide variety of backgrounds that it is essential I give a clear message each service and that I back up everything that I say with clear scriptural evidence. The Word of God is still "quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword," no matter the culture. We have had good results. Not as fast as I would like, but still very encouraging results.

**Lance Patterson:** You have to learn what is pertinent to the people you are talking to. An illustration about John Elway means nothing to people who don't know what American football is. Neither is an illustration about fighter jets and how radar works useful with people who have never flown in an airplane or seen a movie on T.V. It helps to learn the history of the culture, who the icons of the civilization are, what type of government they have, and out in the bush what kind of local government they have and how it operates. When you understand those things you will be better equipped to relate to the people and their needs.

**Fred Davis:** In Taiwan I had to start by showing that Jesus Christ was the Son of the God, not Son of a God. In Canada I start by showing that there is a God and work up from there.

**David Liles:** First we try to understand our audience by listening and identifying common problems. This happens in personal conversations, counseling sessions, and mentoring. Next we contemplate the central issues involved and God's answers for the spiritual aspect of them, and we prepare ourselves spiritually. Third, we craft the lesson for the particular audience. Finally, we present the lesson with the idea of provoking interaction and response.

**Leonard Smith:** Problem with me is Spanish is so second nature that half the time I don't know which language I am preaching in ... and judging by the typical response, my listeners don't either.

**GP: What have you learned that might be helpful to your supporters to understand regarding preaching and your overall ministry?**

**James Bradley :** Preaching and teaching God's word is the foundational and most important part of our ministry. Because of the influence of many other religions, the people with whom we work don't know God's Word. They say they believe it, but they have never studied it. Offering to teach them what the Bible says, with a Bible in their hands to verify what we are saying is correct, has opened many doors for us and has caused the people to have a deep respect for us. Sharing Christ cross-culturally is only a problem when a person can't separate their cultural thinking from the teachings of God's Word.

**Fred Davis:** Though I have a myriad of other responsibilities, preaching and teaching others to preach is a major part of being a missionary.

**Brent Moeller:** One of the great frustrations is that the lack of education of many of our members can sometimes make learning much slower in our culture. One needs to repeat subject matter again and again. At the same time the lack of sound doctrine makes Biblical preaching indispensable.

**David Liles:** Tonya and I speak publicly 12-15 times a week. That's a lot of preparation and output that has to be balanced with a healthy home life.

**GP: How could you have been better prepared to preach cross-culturally?**

**Kevin Pine:** The mission courses in the undergraduate program at Baptist Bible College really helped me think through and prepare for this experience. I was also blessed to have homiletics classes with Bro. Bassham and Dr. Sewell in undergrad and with Bro. Kolb in grad school. The constant emphasis of what you are saying has to make sense to “Oscar Pewsitter” and to preach the Word have been impressed upon me. In graduate school I went through the Biblical Counseling program under Dr. Carson and this has been huge in helping me be prepared to help people apply God’s word to their everyday situations — making sure that what is being preached is relevant and applicable to what the listeners are going through. No matter what culture it’s in, God’s Word changes the lives of people.

For me, it’s just a matter of applying this in a culture that is ultra-humanistic with little or no desire to hear from God. This is the task and goal of preaching cross-culturally in the U.K.

**Rick Moeller:** I believe it is very important in the developing world to make the message as simple as possible and to learn to think like your new culture thinks and then apply the message to their everyday world. In some ways this is not emphasized in hermeneutic classes in Bible colleges and seminaries. It might be better to have unique classes for missions majors that will teach them the special skills that are needed to make the message plain to the people who they are trying to reach. I had to learn to spend less time in alliteration and “sermon-craft” and more in thinking carefully though how each point would be received and understood by my audience.

**Lance Patterson:** If I had known more about the culture when I started, it would have been a big help in learning how to communicate.

**Jim Eberhard:** Learning the language before I got to the field!

**Brent Moeller:** I think by learning the art of storytelling.





## 2011 Missionary Retreat

August 1-5, 2011

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# BBFI Missionary Candidate School 2011

By James G. Smith



**W**hat a great week of training and learning! In July every year, the BBFI World Mission Service Center hosts a Candidate School for missionaries approved by the BBFI. As part of the approval process, each missionary must attend this event.

We meet at our office in Springfield with an intensive training program that goes from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. This year we had 47 missionaries in attendance. We had four simultaneous tracks with 22 different speakers. Along with the Mission Office staff, we had visiting pastors and outside professionals teach 45 different subject matters. Noon meals were provided by generous churches.

As you can see from the comments from the attendees, it is a valuable part of the preparation of Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionaries.

"Candidate School deepened our understanding of policies and procedures, provided a forum for developing relationships with other missionaries, and encouraged us as we embark on the next chapter in our journey to serve Him. Thank you to the Mission Office for all you do for BBFI Missionaries!" **Sean Willeford**

"The Mission Office staff did a great job organizing, connecting, and making it fun while the sessions were filled with much-needed information, encouragement, and fellowship. It kind of reminded us of camp, great time in the Word each morning, practical sessions, and beneficial for life and ministry." **Dwayne & Tammy Wright**

"We thoroughly enjoyed our week at Candidate School! We gained a lot of valuable insight and information that will help us immensely in our ministry, and we also developed a close bond with many of our fellow missionaries that we will carry with us as we settle our families in across the world." **Joshua Allred**

"Every session was very impactful to me. I enjoyed the practical sessions the most. The personal experiences are vital to our success on the field." **Stan Sherwood**

"My favorite classes were the classes done by all of the wives. It was great to spend time with them knowing that they know what we are going through. I also really enjoyed the devotions and info from what the pastors expect and deputation info." **Janelle Willeford**



“Seeing behind the scenes of the Mission Office, we have been greatly humbled by the servant attitude they demonstrate on a daily basis.” **Ben & Raelene Walker**

“Candidate School had many purposes and it fulfilled them all, but we appreciate the time we got to spend with the missionaries and we look forward to any opportunity to spend with them on the journey we call deputation!” **Brian & Rebekah Wright**

“I really enjoyed the women’s sessions! To get information from a missionary wife perspective was very helpful and encouraging!” **Amanda Allred**

“Candidate School was like eating a piece of toast upside down; when your tongue tastes the goodness of the jam first it is always so good! The fellowship with the missionaries, mission office staff, and others was very encouraging to us and we couldn’t be more honored to serve alongside such wonderful people in the Lord” **Nathan and Tiffany Foltz**

“It was a fantastic time of learning very important aspects of ministry that apply to missionaries, and a great time building relationships with other couples that will last a lifetime.” **Jackie Sherwood**

## IN CLOSING

# Preach the Word!

A beautiful example of Old Testament preaching is that of Ezra, the priest and scribe, found in Nehemiah 8. He opened up the book, the people stood. He blessed the Lord. The people responded by saying “Amen,” by lifting up their hands, by bowing their heads, and by worshipping the Lord with their faces to the ground!

A key element in preaching is found in verse eight, “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” It is of utmost importance that the preaching of the Book be understood!

The details are variable. The pulpit can be made of wood and in the shape of a cross. Or it can be acrylic with the church logo on it. Or it can be a music stand. Or it can be a big, sacred desk. Homiletical preferences will change. The use of visual aids and media may vary from one culture to another. The sermon manuscript can be several pages long or scribbled on a scrap of paper. The notes could be on a laptop computer screen or an iPad or on a smartphone. In our experience, the notes can be in a totally different language than what is being spoken.

The one thing on which we must all agree is that the listener must first understand, then believe! Paul in his great treatise on salvation, his letter to the Romans, gives us a clear connection between preaching and salvation:

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:13-15*

The glad tidings must be understood in order to be believed. That is the work of the preacher. We have preaching missionaries all around our world who are vitally interested in sharing the good news and making disciples. Our missionaries are working continually to make sure the truth of the message of God is heard, understood, and believed. Let us encourage those with beautiful feet in their task!