

HIGHLIGHTS

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Jimmy Martin

Gospel Partnership & Progress

ACM 2019

Two New Full Member Churches

Spring 2020

Conferences for Men, Women, & Leaders



Partnership and Progress in the Gospel

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:3-6)



by Jimmy Martin
General Secretary

Someone has described the bond of churches in relationship with each other as a “rope of sand with the strength of steel.” The IBC is not a single church but a part of God’s global church and, more precisely, a family of churches. Our mission statement says that we “exist to mobilize and multiply disciple-making churches.” We see it to be the local church’s calling to make disciples, but as a family, we come alongside every member of the IBC family to encourage and enable and support. Our vision statement expresses a hope: “We envision a movement of global-minded churches that are reproducing healthy disciples, leaders, and congregations.”

We want to make progress so that every IBC church is moving ahead in effectiveness. I often hear it said that we are “independent” churches but I believe the more biblically correct term would be “autonomous” – self-governing churches. We are not independent but completely dependent on God and, by choice, we are interdependent on one another. We are mutually dependent. As Denton Lotz, long-time General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, Christian spokesman, and father to IBC pastor Carsten Lotz, never tired of saying, “We belong to one another because we belong to Christ.”

We are in gospel partnership. Every IBC church, when it chooses to join our family of churches, enters into covenant with God and with the other churches of the IBC, committing to work together in a spirit of unity and partnership for the greater good of God’s global glory. I believe it is this bond, sealed in covenant with each other, which expresses our desire and intent to pursue our core values, which define us as an international family of churches and

drive all our decisions and ministries. These values enable us to live and serve together in the most effective, God-honoring way. We value fellowship and partnership, unity and diversity, church planting and healthy churches.

Because of that we seek to make progress in our common work together and in our commitment to each other. And that is a challenge. We are widely scattered. Our churches are different sizes. Some of our strongest churches are mostly U.S.-military-related churches, but they are less than 20% of the total. The other 80% are international, multicultural, and multilingual, but even those churches are very different from one another. I meet ambassadors and refugees, teachers and students, business people and the unemployed and stay-at-home dads and moms from more than 130 countries around the world in our churches. Often, many of these diverse people worship and serve together in the same church. And it is a beautiful thing, a “taste of heaven on earth.”

But it also requires acceptance of each other, patience with one another, humility that enables us to learn from one another, and a desire to grow together. This is true in our churches, and it is true among IBC leadership. Even our pastors represent 11 different nationalities and come from different denominational unions and conventions. Although we are united in commitment to basic Christian beliefs found in our *Summary of Basic Beliefs*, we are diverse in our leadership styles and structures and our preferences in worship and ministry.

How do we progress and build partnership in the gospel in the future, and particularly in this coming year, which will be a year of transition? I have rec-

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Am Dachsberg 98, 60435 Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 69 9540 8505
Email: admin@ibc-churches.org
www.ibc-churches.org
Jimmy Martin, General Secretary
Judith Lynn Maxwell, Editor
Cover photo: Naples is the site of the ACM 2019 by Judith Lynn Maxwell

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commended to our Executive Leadership Team some objectives and goals and categories built around the theme of “Partnership and Progress in the Gospel.” The theme is inspired by Paul’s opening words to the Philippian church, where he greets the church, gives thanks to God, and prays for the believers. His desire was to see them make progress and continue in gospel partnership.

PARTNERSHIP

Paul’s ministry was a partnership with God, fellow workers, and the church. We see it in his opening greeting: “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.” This attitude of “together with” continues throughout his letter.

He gives thanks to God: “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians about 10 years after he started the church. The partnership (*koinonia*) began when a successful businesswoman, a demon-possessed slave girl, a jailer and his family and others came to faith to form a small church that grew.

As a family of churches, the IBC began as a vision of two churches and two pastors, twins Herbert and Herman Stout who started churches in Wiesbaden and Frankfurt in 1957 and 1958. Together these two churches envisioned a movement of churches. In six years, they worked to begin 32 churches and missions: 23 in Germany, seven in France, one in Spain, and one in Luxembourg. From our “first day until now,” some 61 years have passed. Given the turnover in almost all of our churches, that is about 20 generations of believers who have passed through our churches. Churches have come and gone. We have expanded from the one country to 24 countries. And today we are praying that the initial church-planting vision will continue and progress both through collaborative partnerships as we see opportunities in strategic locations and as we support our churches who are planting daughter churches.

The international church movement is not a new phenomenon, but it has grown exponentially in the last 20 years or so as travel and communication and technology have brought globalization to unparalleled levels. This past spring, we met with other international church networks and learned from each other at the Global Church Global World conference in Dubai. We are part of a global international



church movement that is reaching the world at our doorsteps. And to think, in many ways, it all started with the Philippian church as the gospel moved from Asia to what today is Europe.

Paul continues: “It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus” (1:7-8). For Paul, partnership was personal. His heart and soul were in it. These were his brothers and sisters. He cared about them. His victories were theirs, and his struggles as well. As I speak to pastors and leaders, there is often pain and hurt in their lives and the lives of their families. We need each other, but we don’t always risk sharing our pains. Isolation in ministry is crippling; it is not good for you or your family, nor is it healthy for your church. Pastors and leaders and churches should not be islands. We are making a real effort to encourage more involvement in each other’s lives. That is partnership.

I am thankful for the foresight of past IBC leaders who, out of the tragedy of the loss of life, began a fund that we now call the IBC Endowment Fund to help churches to build. We expanded that fund at our last ACM to include churches making needed repairs and renovations. This past year Jurbise in Belgium, Stavanger in Norway, and Little Stukeley in England have been helped. We have just approved a \$50,000 grant to help another church, Bratislava Faith Community in Slovakia, to purchase an apartment for their pastor. Along with these building projects, we were able to start the IBC Residency Program that is helping to raise a new generation of



Bratislava receives IBC Endowment Fund grant.

IBC church planters and leaders by giving potential leaders experience in an IBC church. So far, two of our churches – Wiesbaden and Paris – have started this in their churches. We are also talking with several other churches about bringing the residency program to their churches.

Speaking of partnership, the concept of financial support for one another in the IBC is built upon the biblical principle of “not equal gifts but equal sacrifice.” The Philippian church was Paul’s example to other churches that any church can give to help support other churches. Paul commends the church in this letter for their support of him but also in the Corinthian letter for their generosity in supporting the Jerusalem church as it was suffering. And he gives them the promise that, because of their generosity, God would meet all their “needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (4:19). Working with all IBC churches I see the blessing that our giving is to churches in need as we share our resources with one another. In the first nine months of 2019, 47 of 62 churches have given to support the IBC and its churches. I am thankful for their generosity. I pray that the 15 churches that have not given this year will fulfill the commitments they have made as members of the IBC. Together, we are making a difference

Paul continues with a prayer: *“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God”* (1:9-11). The need for love in our churches and among our churches is at the heart of the gospel partnership we have. Love enables us to make wise decisions, to discern what is best. We come to know God in a deeper way when our love for each other increases. Praying with one another for direction and spiritual power will only come about when we give each other time and space to share with each other.

PROGRESS

Along with Paul’s desire for partnership, this text is filled with Paul’s hopes for progress. He was confident that God, who began a good work, would continue it until the day of Christ Jesus. And he prays their love would progress – “abound more and more... until the day of Christ.”

Three years ago we began a renewed journey with a fresh vision and strategy. We are seeing progress. In the area of church planting, God is stirring our churches. EIC Paris, not one of our largest or wealthiest churches, has a vision of planting churches in

different parts of that great city with millions of English-speakers. They have planted one and several others are in their prayers. IBC Cologne in Germany has recently spawned a new work in nearby Bonn, and they are hoping to start new churches in the next few years. MultiNation Church in Frankfurt, after doing a feasibility study and receiving coaching, decided to change locations. With a fresh vision, they are moving from survival to outreach and multiplication. ICF Oberursel is working to plant a new church in the Frankfurt area. And other churches are doing the same. Statistically, new churches reach more unbelievers with the gospel.

I appreciate the work of the EBF’s Mission Partnerships program that Daniel Trusiewicz is leading. Just this year, we are supporting seven churches in seven different countries – Moldova, Latvia, Israel, Georgia, Ukraine, Iraq, and Croatia. Most of these are being supported by individual IBC churches, who see this as a beautiful way to expand the church-planting vision beyond their Jerusalem and Judea. I urge you to see if this might be a great way for you to stretch the borders of your church mission.

And as the vision for planting progresses, so does health in churches. We don’t want to plant unhealthy churches, but the result of a healthy church with a fresh vision can result in starting healthy new



Jimmy Martin prays for the two new churches.

churches, which will continue to increase health in a church. Recently we have focused on trying to define what a healthy IBC church looks like so we can help churches self-assess and take steps toward health and growth.

This next year we want to see more leaders developed with greater effectiveness. I have mentioned our residency program. One of our residents is Philip Vandergrift. He is a product of God’s transforming power. He is also seeking to grow as a Christian disciple and a leader through the residency program of his church.

We desire to see more disciples made with greater commitment to multiply. A number of our churches have made a commitment to raising up leaders in their churches rather than only harvesting leaders who come into the church. A few months ago I was in Jurbise to take part in the ordination of one of their men who had been trained in the church to serve as a leader. Now he is leaving the church to serve as a minister of the gospel with military members and their families.

Reaching people with the gospel is every church's and every Christian's calling. Some have the gift, but all of us should be ready to share with compassion and effectiveness. I hope this next year we can offer some additional resources and training to help us to grow in effectiveness as we seek to reach people in our new day of postmodernism where objective truth is made subjective, moral values are relative, relationships are transactional and provisional, authority is suspect, and social institutions are undermined. The message remains the same, but a changing audience needs to hear the gospel in a fresh way.

One of the ways we can encourage one another toward progress is the sharing of stories for greater encouragement and prayer. Luke tells us three stories in Acts 16 of people's lives transformed by the gospel in Philippi. What an encouragement. But every life transformed is an encouragement to us to not grow weary in doing good. At our men's conference this year, one soldier told his story of how God changed his life. At his lowest point, in a military jail in Vicenza, Italy, a military policeman took a chance to encourage this man. Hope, dim as it was, began to awaken his conscience. Eventually he moved to Ramstein, Germany, and was embraced by people at Frontline Community Church. Frontline disciplined him and brought him to the men's conference where he shared his story of transformation. A few weeks later I was in Jurbise, Belgium, where one of the men in the church who had also attended the men's conference told about hearing this soldier's story and realizing that he was that military policeman. God is so good to let us hear and be a part of each other's lives as we share our stories.

TRANSITION

In October 2020 we hope to celebrate a year of progress and participation. We also hope to celebrate a smooth, effective transition of a new General Secretary who will begin a new day in the leadership of the IBC. I, along with the IBC staff, our Core Strategy Directors, our Presidential Leadership Team, and the General Secretary Search Team will all be working toward what I pray will bring God's good work toward greater partnership and progress.

It has been said, "The church is never more than one generation from extinction." But it is also true that we are people of hope in a resurrected Christ. God is our Partner. We believe the world can be turned upside down in a generation, but we must do our part if our churches are to make progress.

As we face the challenges and opportunities before us this next year, let's follow the example of Paul to pursue partnership and progress together. Let's make our attitude and prayer for one another be that of Paul's: *"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* 

Theme for 2019/2020

Partnership and Progress in the Gospel Phil. 1:1-11

OBJECTIVES

- Gospel Partnership.** We will encourage and enable leaders and churches to find meaningful connections points for greater fellowship and partnership.
 - Pastors and leaders committed to church planting together
 - Teams mobilized for mission ventures with partners
 - Churches giving and receiving financial support for gospel projects
 - Pastors and leaders encouraging others and being encouraged by others
 - Pastors and leaders joining others to grow in strategic leadership skills
 - IBC church members invited into convention involvement
 - Pastors and churches sharing resources with one another
 - Churches and pastors praying with one another for direction and spiritual power
- Gospel Progress.** We will challenge and support churches to become more effective in accomplishing God's mission of making disciples of all nations.
 - More churches planted with greater support
 - More health in churches for greater impact (including an agreed-upon definition of "healthy church" that helps to assess church health)
 - More leaders developed with greater effectiveness
 - More disciples made with greater commitment to multiply
 - More people reached for greater church growth
 - More believers living and sharing the gospel with greater compassion and effectiveness
 - More sharing of stories with one another for greater encouragement and prayer
 - More love for greater insight and holiness
- Transition.** We will enable a smooth, effective transition that brings us forward to a future of effective ministry together.

Two Churches Become Full Members

The International Baptist Convention at its 56th Annual Convention Meeting, held 21-23 October in Naples, Italy, welcomed two churches as full members, heard reports from the General Secretary and Core Strategy Directors, and approved a €406,285 budget for next year.

Koinonia International Baptist Church, Aalborg, Denmark, and LifeBridge International Baptist Church, Panama City, Panama, have been associate members of the convention since their days as church plants. They have both been active in the life of the convention and were joyfully welcomed as full members.

The €406,285 approved budget for 2020 was a slight decrease from the current year. Finance Team Leader Erik Nielsen reported that giving for 2019 is running at approximately 90% of budget.

The convention also approved the awarding of the IBC Endowment Fund grant to Bratislava Faith Community for the purchase of an apartment for their pastor. At the 2018 ACM, the convention expanded the scope of the endowment fund to include major repairs to existing church buildings, matching grants for smaller repair projects, and strategic initiatives of the convention. During the course of the year, the convention has awarded grants to North Sea Baptist Church, Stavanger, Norway, and International Bible Church, Jurbise, Belgium for repairs to their existing buildings; to Grace Fellowship, Stukeley, England for a matching grant for repairs to their building; and to the IBC Residency Program to help train and develop new pastors and church planters.

The convention also heard presentations from General Secretary Jimmy Martin (see article on page 2) and each of the strategy directors concerning their strategy and plans for the coming year. Darryl Evetts (multiplying churches), Barry Cole (strengthening churches), David Fresch (empowering leaders), Scott Corwin (building connections), and Ju-

dith Lynn Maxwell (developing resources) shared their goals for 2020.

During the final business session, Tim Faulkner, Il Faro International Baptist Church, was re-elected president. Nick Howard, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Wiesbaden, Germany, was re-elected 1st vice-president. Nathanael Fawcett, pastor of Calvary International Church, Sao Paulo, Brazil, was re-elected 2nd vice-president. Each will serve a one-year term.

The evening sessions focused on the theme “All to Maturity, Many to Leadership.” On Monday evening, Tim Faulkner spoke on the succession strategy they had used at Il Faro International Baptist Church, Naples, over the past few years. In January 2019, Faulkner successfully handed over the pastorate to Danilo Bozza. On Tuesday evening, a panel of pastors and leaders discussed their own experiences in “passing the baton of leadership” to others in their churches. Gerhard Venter, Bratislava Faith Community, Slovakia; Gilbert van Bueren, International Baptist Church, Eindhoven, Netherlands; and Rebecca van den Brink, North Sea Baptist Church, Stavanger, Norway; served on the panel.

Bob Marsh shared Bible studies at the beginning of the sessions from Luke 15, 2 Timothy 1, and the book of Hebrews.

Fifty-nine messengers representing 29 churches plus 18 guests were part of the business sessions. 



Bob Marsh



IBC Conducts Successful CPAC in Naples

The International Baptist Convention conducted a successful church planter assessment center on 24-25 October at Il Faro International Baptist Church, Naples, Italy.

Twenty people gathered to provide assessment on three church planter candidate couples. IBC churches planning to plant new churches sponsored each candidate couple. The candidates spent two intense days making presentations, examining personality types and communication dynamics, preaching, working on church planting projects, and participating in numerous interviews.

Church planter assessment is an essential element of the IBC's core strategy to multiply churches. The purpose of assessment is to reduce risk and increase the church planting success of our churches. The assessment center provides an opportunity for a formal assessment of potential church planters to help discern if they possess the skills, competencies, and aptitudes best suited for successful church planting in an international context.

The assessors evaluated for 12 specific character and competency building blocks. These building blocks were identified specifically for the English-language international church planter.

At the end of the assessment center, candidates were given a specific recommendation as to their aptitude and readiness to serve as a church planter, a list of identified strengths, and suggested areas for growth.

Leaders from 10 IBC churches came together to make this assessment center possible. Conducting church planter assessment centers is one of the many ways IBC church leaders rally in partnership to support the church planting efforts of our churches.

And finally, the assessment center could not have happened were it not for the tremendous support and wonderful hospitality of the Il Faro church family.

Darryl Evetts
Multiplying Churches Strategy
Director



Sam Dyer works on part of the participants' church planting project.

Women's Conference

Tuning In to Discern God's Will

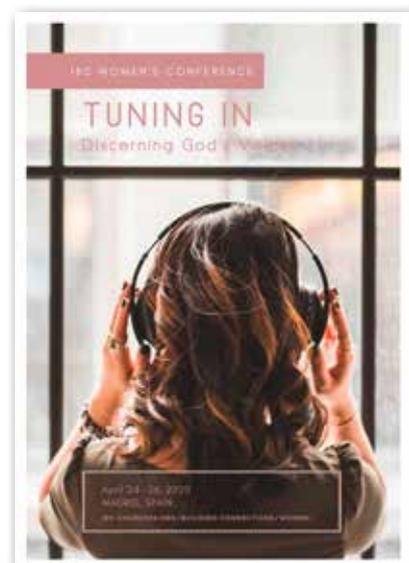
The IBC Women's Conference will be held 24-26 April at the Madrid Nuevo Boston Hotel in Madrid, Spain. The weekend conference provides an opportunity for women to fellowship and grow with other women from IBC churches. It includes conference sessions, seminars, testimonies, fellowship, and times of worshipping the Lord through prayer and music.

Tianne Moon will be the conference speaker. Tianne is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary with a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies. She has served for 20 years as the director of spiritual development and assimilation at Fel-

lowship Church in Grapevine, Texas (USA). Though her first career was in helping people rebuild their lives through physical therapy, she considers herself privileged to now be a part of seeing God rebuild people's lives through Christ.

The cost of the conference is €215 per person in a double room or €270 per person in a single room. The early bird deadline is 1 February.

To register for the conference, visit: www.ibc-churches.org/building-connections/women



Partnering Together with Turkish Baptists

The circumstances that led me to attending and assisting at a Christian conference in Izmir, Turkey, with a church group from Paris seem so far-fetched I would have trouble believing it if I didn't experience it. Flying halfway across the world from New Zealand to Paris in order to attend a design course, I naturally wanted to find a suitable English-speaking church when I arrived. My first Sunday morning I was on the train, planning to go into central Paris and find a church there. My mother messaged me from New Zealand while I was on the train and sent me a link to a church she had found online called Emmanuel International Church. I got off the train at the next station and caught a bus to EIC. Little did I know that I would so quickly find a support group of close friends and brothers and sisters in Christ, who I would go to Turkey with three months later to encourage Christians and be encouraged.

Still, when I was first informed of the conference and offered the opportunity to go, I wanted to spend a week to think about it. I felt unprepared, ill-suited, and unknowledgeable concerning sharing Christ

with the Turkish, many of whom came from a Muslim background. I knew very little about Turkey – the people, the country, or the language. We were informed that we should prepare a testimony to share at the conference; I felt my testimony was not interesting or powerful enough to be worth sharing. In the end, I considered all of the people that God used in the Bible who felt they were “not suitable” and looked at this conference as an opportunity not only to share my unique story and encourage Christians from another culture, but to also have my faith strengthened and be encouraged myself.

This specific conference in Izmir, I found out, doesn't follow a set structure. We were told to have a testimony, a devotional, and perhaps some activities ready, but not when and where and how we might share them. We weren't given an agenda of any sort. We were told to make an appearance and be ready for anything. And from the moment our Paris group arrived at the airport, flying in from five different cities, it was very much a “go-with-the-flow” environment. We were dropped off at the campground and settled in. The girls made ourselves at home upstairs



in a low-ceilinged roof space with 10 beds and a single fan plugged in the corner. It was 39 degrees almost every day.

I found when I arrived that there were two other non-Turkish groups who had flown in, like us. One came from Texas (USA) and one came from the Czech Republic. It made complete sense, but I still hadn't expected it.

I also wasn't sure what level of English to expect from the Turkish groups. I started spamming Duolingo the week before the trip in order to get some basics, but I didn't know if every person I communicated with would require an interpreter or if there were a significant number of people who could speak English with me. And the last thing I wanted, and that we were specifically discouraged against, was to stay only in our English-speaking groups. Our goal was to interact, to encourage, regardless of language barriers.

Fortunately, what I would estimate as 50% of the Turkish people there spoke some level of English, and many spoke very fluently. Those that didn't were friendly and open and happy to communicate through someone interpreting or using the few words we knew of each others' languages.

The songs and sermons were nearly completely in Turkish. Sermons were difficult to follow along because the English-speaking groups sat in a separate part of the room with an interpreter speaking to us. She did her best to follow along and interpret to us as quickly as possible, but the preacher spoke faster, and we missed out on a lot of details and structure. We were, however, able to have devotions and share testimonies within our church group, and in our free time share some encouraging words with the Turkish.

Something that stood out to me about the people was how eager and passionate they were to discuss and debate anything about God and Jesus at any hour. I recall one young woman who came from a Muslim family and had yet to tell them that she was a Christian. We were asked not to share any photos or posts of her on social media in case her parents discovered it. She spoke English remarkably well, constantly had a smile on her face, and loved talking to anyone and everyone. She was sitting outside one evening around 23:00, along with a friend from our Paris group, and I came out and joined them. Immediately, she thrust her Bible into my hands and said "Show me your favourite Bible verse."



I met a teenage boy from Syria. His whole family, including his parents and his younger brother, became Christians while in Syria and came to Turkey as refugees. They had been going to the church pastored by Andrew Brunson, the American man who had been unlawfully arrested in 2016 and held in prison for two years. The young man told me that the entire church had to scatter, find new churches and other places to worship discreetly.

We also had the absolute pleasure to witness a Turkish baptism on our final morning at the camp. A young woman who had become a Christian that year wanted to be baptized in the baptism pool outside. Despite again being limited by the language barrier, the heart and enthusiasm of everyone present was contagious. Apparently, a Turkish baptism includes a lot of music, followed by ecstatic cheering, then throwing bystanders into the baptism pool fully clothed for the rest of the morning until lunchtime.

On top of being passionate about their faith, the Turkish people love a good time. The bus rides were always filled with singing and clapping. The Texas group taught everyone a handful of different line dances, and once the Turkish people knew all the steps, they got extremely into it and made it their own. There was a spice-eating contest and other crazy games and activities every night.

And we all shared a universal love of food. We had a traditional Turkish breakfast every morning and various different Turkish dishes throughout the week. There was one man who wanted to make

Turkish coffee for whoever wanted to enjoy it one evening. He told me he made 35 cups that night.

The Izmir locals were also happy to take us to beautiful Ladies' Beach, Sirince, and Ephesus. As followers of Christ, Ephesus was particularly special to all of us. Being in the same place where Paul walked and taught was a surreal moment. Seeing relics of an ancient history and knowing that these ruins were once a thriving city was sobering to consider. One of the Izmir locals who came with us was very knowledgeable about the history and shared lots of information with us. Stepping foot into the remains of the Grand Theatre of Ephesus, he began to sing a Christian song in Turkish, and all other tourists who were present took a seat and listened. These are precious moments that fill my memories, that I never thought I would have the joy to witness.

I heard many stories from many different people concerning how they came to Christ. Some were filled with joy from the moment of first believing

to today; others had moments of sadness or fear for safety. But they were evidently all completely, passionately in love with Jesus. And it was inspiring to me to witness such faith, despite the possible risks they faced, especially considering I came from a country where I could freely worship without fear of safety or disownment by my family. Suddenly the moments before the conference when I felt ill-suited to the task were clear in my mind as a lack of faith in what God could do if I just obeyed.

I went to Izmir to minister to the Turkish people, but they also ministered to me. And the crazy set of circumstances which led me there were all part of God's plan. Pray for the Turkish who attended the conference, many of whom hope to come next year; pray for their continued faith, for their safety and protection, for support and community, and that God's work will continue being done in Turkey. 🇹🇷

Gretchen Young



Two Conferences, One Goal: Leadership Development

Plan now to attend one of two ministry leadership development conferences being offered by the International Baptist Convention. The conferences are designed for IBC church leaders desiring biblical teaching on leadership.

The Ministry Leadership Conference – Europe will be 13-17 March at the Importanne Resort in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Conference speaker will be Jim Putnam on his model of relational discipleship. Putnam's passion is discipleship through small groups. With his background in sports and coaching, Putnam believes in the value of strong coaching as a means to disciple others.

In addition, there will be a wide variety of seminars that will appeal to both staff and volunteer leaders alike.

The Ministry Leadership Conference – Latin America will be 23-26 March in Brasilia, Brazil. Conference speakers will be Chuck and Ingrid Davis. While Chuck was serving as senior pastor of Stanwich Church, Ingrid served as a life coach and spoke at conferences internationally. Chuck just recently resigned as pastor so that they could partner together in an itinerant ministry focused on the development and care of church and mission leaders.

Both conferences will provide a chance to recharge, spend time with other IBC leaders, and be sharpened, encouraged, and prayed for and will give you an opportunity to learn some great skills to empower you as a leader.

For more information on both conferences, visit the IBC website: www.ibc-churches.org/empowering-leaders/mlcs.



In Memoriam

Sympathy is extended to the families of:

BETTY MCILVEENE

Pastor's wife, Kitzigen Baptist Church, 1991-1994, interim Bethel International Baptist Church
Born: January 17, 1926 – Died: December 5, 2018

WILMA HEFLIN

Wife of IBC General Secretary James Heflin, 1996-2001
Born: November 10, 1942 – Died: April 6, 2019

DENTON LOTZ

Interim Pastor, Converge International Fellowship, 2017;
General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, 1988-2007
Born: January 18, 1939 – Died: April 23, 2019

ERNEST WALKER

Founding Pastor, International Baptist Church, Bremen, Germany, 1992-1994
Born: January 6, 1926 – Died: May 31, 2019

JIM NORTON

Pastor, Hope International Baptist Church, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 1993-2000
Died: August 2019

LAURA SUE HAYS

Interim Pastor's Wife, Wiesbaden, Germany, 2004; Denmark and Spain
Born: October 9, 1935 – Died: August 29, 2019

GLOBAL MISSIONS OFFERING

Sunday | December 1, 2019

*Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
Psalm 96:3*

30
percent

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Global Missions Offering

Declaring God's Glory among the Nations

The International Baptist Convention's Global Missions Offering goes to help convention partners further their work and mission. This year's recipients are the European Baptist Mission International's Baptist Alliance of Turkey project, the refugee ministry of Adana Baptist Church, and Kainos, a foundation founded by David and Lana Packer, International Baptist Church, Stuttgart, Germany. 1 December is GMO Sunday.

EBMI PARTNERSHIP

Thirty percent (30%) of the GMO will support our partnership with European Baptist Mission International (EBMI) and the Baptist Alliance of Turkey. Ertan and Marlene Cevik pastor the church in Izmir (biblical Smyrna).

Like some of our IBC churches, Izmir is a city with lots of students. Many of these students are coming to the church with questions about faith. Some of these students become believers.

The church in Izmir is also trying to reach the business community. One way they do that is to hold business breakfast meetings for Muslim businessmen. In addition to a traditional breakfast, they share a message of hope.

The church also sponsors a young adult camp each summer (see related article on page 8).



Ceviks



Onbasilar

MINISTRY OF ADANA BAPTIST CHURCH, TURKEY

Thirty percent (30%) will go to support IBC Aid and the refugee ministry of the Adana Baptist Church, Turkey. They share the following prayer points:

- Pray for Sükür and Petirina Onbasilar, pastor couple of the church.
- Pray for the Alliance of Baptists in Turkey and their 7 churches – Samsun, Ordu, Sinop, Istanbul, Izmir-Buca, Izmir-Menemen, Adana.
- Pray for church leaders to live faith-based lives as an example to their families and communities.
- Pray for the young leaders in the churches.
- Pray for unity and for the Lord to help the churches spread the good news in Turkey's different areas.
- Pray for the newly baptized persons – for their security from persecution and from the enemy's attacks.

IBC MISSIONS PROJECT KAINOS

Forty percent (40%) of the offering will go to help an IBC missions project. This year the money will support Kainos, a ministry started by David and Lana Packer of the International Baptist Church, Stuttgart, Germany.

Kainos was founded with the mission to end human trafficking and restore victims of sexual exploitation right in the heart of the sex tourism hotspot of Europe. They exist to love the broken and to journey with them to a new life.

The aim of Kainos is to help girls reach this new life emotionally through counseling, professionally through job training, intellectually through specially designed classes, and socially through healthy relationship models. It is their greatest hope to see each woman turn from their past of guilt and shame and to walk confidently with Christ as a new creation. Their driving passion is to see them become "free to be new."



Prague, Czech Republic

In May, Pastor Gareth Morris of the International Baptist Church, Prague, Czech Republic, baptized Rebecca Mabin, a ballerina from the U.K., dancing with the Prague National Theater company. This is her testimony:

AFTER HAVING some seriously awesome conversations with lots of people coming up to this day, I feel like it would be cool to explain what baptism is. Pastor Gareth will also explain a bit more later on too, and if you have any questions afterwards, I would love to talk to you about it too! Later on after the service, I will be in a tank of water in the church next door and I will answer some questions basically professing my faith out-



wardly. I will be fully submerged under the water, can't wait, and this is a representation of how I am 'made new into the life that Jesus has bought for me on the cross as He died.' Obviously this is all symbolic, I am still going to be me, just slightly wetter, but I believe that this is a declaration of my faith thus far and is a symbol of my promise to God that I want to love and have Him in my life always.

I actually just this past week turned 21 and for someone who has been brought up in a Christian home attending church services regularly, you may wonder why I am only now getting baptized. In fact, in sharing the news of my baptism to a lot

of my friends, about 70% were shocked I hadn't previously been baptized already. Well, fitting my natural stubborn nature, as I was growing up I decided that I would only get baptized once I had fully decided and weighed the cost of following Jesus for myself.

Since being in Prague, lured away from London and my home culture, living alone in a flat for the first time in my life in a whole new country and culture, my relationship with God grew deeper and deeper. Thanks to this church family I have been able to continue growing into the person God always intended for me to be, not to say I'm anywhere near that just yet. I decided over New Year that this year would be the year I gave my life to Jesus on a public scale and I felt I wanted to best honor him by getting baptized into this church family which I now get to call home. I think for a while I kept telling myself "No no, I'll wait. I am not sure this commitment is something I can take on or I'm not where I should be or I will be closer to God and then do it," when in all reality, isn't this what grace is all about? No matter where we are in our walk of faith, we will never reach perfection because we will never be Jesus. So today I guess I'm here saying, "I know I'll never be perfect; I know I won't always make the right decisions or be in the perfect place within myself, but I also know that God knows that about me – all of my failings, all of my deep secrets and pains, and He still chooses to love me through it all." All I will ever have is this promise to love God forever, through trials and temptations, through joys and blessings, and the rest I know that God will be at work in, ... so what was I waiting for?

Although I was raised knowing about Christianity, I would say that only in the past four years or so have I really started to know God personally for myself and to call Him my Father, Friend, Love, Teacher, and Savior. It's crazy looking back at myself growing up, professing to love a God I had barely known and whose voice I couldn't recognize and all the while feeling so trapped within my own doubts and hypocrisy. My whole being longed to know who I truly was and whose I truly was too.

For me, it was definitely a slow fall, as God gracefully and mercifully lured me away from my sin and from things which were made to kill, destroy, or distract me from Himself. Don't get me wrong here, I am not saying that I am without sin. There is so much work to do in me, I know, but thanks to the complete grace of God, I am forgiven. I mean, isn't that what this all boils down to? Knowing that we are human, imperfect, sometimes feeling so lost or broken, and holding ourselves together to face the world. We can inflict pain on others and ourselves without a second thought. And yet, God, who has been constantly redeeming us, pursuing us as His beautiful creation and His children, since the very beginning of time, would literally be betrayed by us daily in our sin and yet continually choose to love us and forgive us. To send Jesus, His son and a part of Himself, to die the death that we deserve and to reconcile us to Him. And on top of all of this, would continue to win us over, fight for us, love us in our doubts and heart breaks. This is the God I have come to know, and this is the God that I am getting baptized for today.

I also believe that God has demonstrated his actual presence in my life on many occasions. At times I have looked back in retrospect at my disappointments and life struggles thus far, and I can truly see God's plan, like His mighty hand lifting me away from things meant to destroy me and my faith. If you don't know much about me, my name is Beccy, and I am working here as a ballet dancer. This identity, all be it true, however is not who I am; yet there was a long time where I would have easily hidden behind and relinquished this identity to the point of imprisonment.

Whilst I was growing up, I decided to take ballet seriously and pursue a career in it. During this process I would say I successfully pushed people I loved away, only aware of myself and what I needed. I had an unhealthy relationship with my self-image and food and was determined to succeed all by myself. And I did pretty well at trying to do it all by myself until I couldn't. I ran out of myself. Even now I see how God used each of my struggles to bring me here today, and I couldn't

be more grateful. I have seen God take me away from ballet through injuries at different times, which in the moment seemed like a dead end for me. But with new eyes and a fresh perspective of God's Word, I learnt how crucial each of these hard times were – beautiful in their own way in order to give me true perspective on the world and God's will for me in it.

But you see while I was in it, feeling stuck and confused about why God would be wanting me to suffer and not do the thing my heart had yearned for since I was young, I truly learnt how to look after my body and myself in the right, healthy way. He redeemed me from years of self-loathing and freed me from the chains I had been wearing for years that I hadn't been able to see. Not only do I stand here knowing I am free from these pains, but I also found my relationships with my family were reconciled in new ways and God successfully softened my heart.

Our God is good. His plans are always good, for those who profess their love for



Him. He is worth the hardships and persecutions; He is worth the early Sunday mornings; He is worth the tears and questions. He is worth the sacrifices we make daily just as He sees how much worth each and every one of us is. And He paid

it all; He redeemed us with extra expenses covered because we are His prized pearl and special possession.

I know where I'm putting my hope. What about you? 

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Jurbise, Belgium

ON 24 AUGUST, the International Bible Church of Jurbise, Belgium, held an ordination council for Chris Stephenson. Pictured here are the men who served on the council, examining Chris' personal character, doctrinal understanding, and ministry praxis, and deemed him eligible to be set apart for gospel ministry. Chris and his wife Melissa will be serving with an international organization reaching military personnel. 



Aalborg, Denmark

ON 3 NOVEMBER at Koininia International Baptist Church, Aalborg, Denmark, Pastor Lee Hanson passed the baton of leadership on to new Pastor Kristian Bak. Lee is retiring after many years of ministry at the church. Kristian has been serving for several years as the associate pastor. 

Sao Paulo, Brazil

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF MINISTRY IN BRAZIL

On 9 November, Pastor Bill and Mary Fawcett celebrated 50 years of ministry in Brazil and 38 years serving at Calvary International Church, Sao Paulo, Brazil. It was a night filled with joy, praise, worship, and testimonies of God's goodness expressed through the faithful service of Pastor Bill and Mary. This celebration comes as Pastor Bill is resigning his position as associate pastor at Calvary but, in his own words, reminding us that "This does not mean I am retiring from serving the Lord!" We praise the Lord for their lives and their impact on so many others during these 50 years! 

