

FBC Missions – A Long and Far Reach to the Ends of the Earth

The congregation of First Baptist Church, Norman today is separated by 134 years and several generations from its first congregation; three families, the Banks, the Hatfields, the Plemens, and the new pastor, Z.M. Wells. They met for the first time one Sunday morning in November of 1889 and announced to Norman that they were the new First Baptist Church. Their offering that day came to \$5.60, (today about \$182). They had established a church and hoped it would grow. They probably had little idea of how far in the future the church would continue on, and certainly didn't contemplate the century-long, far reach of the future missionaries who would come out of it.

Since then, thousands of members have contributed millions of dollars, and thousands of hours to the activities and ministries of FBC. Much of that money has gone to missions, particularly international missions. Just as significant as our donations and work is the fact that we have also contributed and supported 82 international career missionaries, as well as hundreds of others to help fulfill the Great Commission in America and across the world.¹ We have always been a mission-minded church and still are today.²

While all missionaries see themselves as fellow workers in preaching and teaching the Christian message, international missionaries are more often in the spotlight, perhaps because they are seen, as someone has put it, as “the gold-plated version of the ideal Christian.” In reality, they, like home missionaries, are simply people who have responded to God's call to serve in places where the Kingdom has not yet arrived or still needs the support of long-term workers to evangelize, develop churches, and educate leaders and leaders. Sometimes their work is in difficult or

¹ From 1953 to 1989 (the period for which we have records) 98 members served in both short-term and career mission service overseas and in the United States. Since then, we have exceeded that number over and over.

² It might also be noted that 11 other Norman Baptist churches began out of Norman First.

dangerous situations, and often in another language. Most of the time it is just, as Eugene Peterson has said, “a long obedience in the same direction” to making disciples. International missionaries will be the first to tell you that they do not see themselves as special, just servants who have been willing to take on the task they were called to do. Eighty-two of them have been associated with FBC, many as members who grew up here.

This booklet presents the stories of 19 of them. They represent every decade of the last century (except for the 1930’s), and a wide range of missionary careers and experiences. Among those experiences you will find ocean liner romances, a school enrollment at gunpoint, seminary founders and presidents, grandchildren of one of our pastors, missionaries teaching the Bible and music, missionary children playing next to pigs, and a man who lost a leg to a land mine while rescuing a runaway orphan. Most importantly, however, you will find people who are willing to say, “Wherever he leads, I’ll go.”

Bettie Stephens-Lide – China and The Philippines

1920 - 1966



While we are often aware of how far our church's missions reach into the world today, most of us don't realize that it goes back in time equally far. To see the early reach of these Gospel carriers, we have to look across a hundred years of our past to a 19-year-old OU freshman who began attending First Baptist Church of Norman about 1910. One source tells us that she was the daughter of "Oklahoma pioneers", perhaps arriving before statehood. By the time she left, this young woman mathematics major had decided to make a huge career change that would take her some 7000 miles away. She was the first of 82 FBC members who in the following years became long-term international missionaries, including many for whom it was a career calling.

Bettie Stephens was born in Greenwood, Missouri in 1891, daughter of Charles, an itinerant preacher, and Molly. They later moved to Chandler, Oklahoma, and then to Norman in 1910. As a child, Bette didn't like school and wasn't interested in college.³ Nevertheless, she enrolled at

³ Bette eventually earned two master's degrees. An article from the Fearless Women's Summit relates: "*When it came time for her oldest daughter to attend, however, Bette was told that girls were not admitted to Wake Forest. Putting on her Sunday best, Betty marched into the president's office and refused to leave until her daughter was admitted.*" Each of Betty's children went on to earn PhDs or MDs.

the University of Oklahoma where she was both a student and a mathematics teacher. She graduated in 1914 with a B.A. in mathematics, then moved to Muskogee where she taught math at the local high school. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the university found itself needing another math instructor and asked her to come back and she gladly returned. While teaching, she also began work on a master's degree in math, and rejoined the fellowship of First Baptist.

Bettie continued teaching until 1920 but somewhere during that time her growing desire to serve in overseas missions led her to seek appointment by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention⁴, a desire that was fulfilled in June of that year. Bettie was assigned to work in China, and along with a number of others, sailed from Vancouver, Canada in August.

On the long voyage, Bettie encountered Francis (Frank) Lide, a recent graduate of Clemson University.⁵ While Bettie had graduated and been teaching for six years, and was seven years his senior, young Frank had only finished his B.S. a year a half year earlier, then followed up with a year in the U.S. Marine Corps. But romance didn't care about age, and despite the age difference, the couple fell in love and were married in China on December 23, 1920.

Like most international missionaries, Bettie went to language school, then began working in evangelism. She continued in this role but also worked as a teacher until 1940. In 1923 Frank became a professor of New Testament and Greek at the newly formed North China Baptist Theological Seminary in Hwangsin, Northern China.

In a letter to the Women's Missionary Union group at FBC, Bette wrote, describing testimonies of some of the first people to accept Jesus, given during a church service.

⁴ For those not familiar with Southern Baptist missions, the agency to send missionaries to other countries was formed in 1845 as the Foreign Mission Board. The name was changed to International Mission Board in 1997.

⁵ Interestingly, Jane, Francis' older sister, was already serving in China at the time of Francis' appointment.

“The first one to be examined, was an old, a beggar woman with one leg, and a board tied on for the other. She says that she was first interested in the Christian faith one day when Ruby Newton, the little daughter of Reverend Newton, a missionary, came out of the Newton yard, and found her outside the gate, begging with her sick baby. Ruby saw that the woman was sick so she gave the old woman some money and told her to take the child to the hospital and they would make it well there. The old woman was greatly impressed by the kindness (probably the first that she had received in her life), and took the baby to our hospital, where it was cured, and ever since she has been trying to learn more about Christians and their faith. The old beggar’s face fairly shown with happiness as she answered the questions. Another woman at the church stood up in the church, and said she would vouch for the old beggar’s conversion.”

The Japanese invaded China in 1931 but the war only simmered for the next six years until more fighting broke out and the situation became a full-fledged conflict. Bettie, along with most other missionaries, was evacuated in 1940. Frank, one of 90 others, remained but was interned by the Japanese in 1942. He was exchanged for Japanese prisoners of war in 1943.

Frank and Bettie returned to Shanghai, China in 1946 where he became professor of church history until 1951 when the Lides moved to the Philippine Baptist Seminary. In 1952 Frank was named president of the seminary and remained in that role until 1963 when the couple retired, moving to Wake Forest, North Carolina. Frank died in early February, 1970, and Bettie followed quickly on February 15, 1970. Through Bettie Stephens Lide, FBC Norman had reached people thousands of miles away for 43 years.

Edgar and Zelma Hallock - Brazil

1941 - 1986



Hallock Hall at First Baptist Church is named for E.F. “Preacher” Hallock who served as pastor of the church from 1923 to 1969 – some 46 years. Though best known for his tremendous Bible-based preaching, he also had a deep love for missions. Each Sunday, the names of missionaries having birthdays that day were read from the pulpit and prayed for. His missionary love was not lost on his children and his son, Edgar became an honored pioneer of Baptist missions in Brazil. ⁶

Appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Edgar with a doctorate in Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Seminary and wife Zelma, who had earned a Master of Social Work at the

⁶ Two of the Preacher Hallocks' grandchildren Eddy Hallock and Charlotte Greenhaw, also served as missionaries to Brazil. Another grandson, Ben, was a Southern Baptist missionary assigned to the Caribbean.

University Oklahoma, became a formidable team who taught, ministered, and led Brazilian Baptists by the thousands for over 45 years.

Edgar was born July 26, 1916, in Pennfield, NY but grew up in Norman, and became a member of FBC in the early 1920's. Zelma, his wife, was born July 17, 1916, and was raised in the small town of Gould, Oklahoma. The two were appointed missionaries to Brazil in 1941 by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. They spent the next 45 years working to spread the message of Christ nationwide -- and worldwide -- from their base in Rio de Janeiro.

Hallock possessed extraordinary energy and led Brazilian Baptists' Sunday School program for three decades. For nearly 20 years he was executive secretary of their Sunday School Board, which promoted religious education and printed Christian books, tracts, music and other materials for Brazil and the Portuguese-speaking world.

Edgar also taught thousands of Baptist students as a seminary professor, spearheaded theological education by extension to train pastors and leaders throughout the country, directed the Brazilian Bible Press, preached, served as pastor in multiple churches and held many other leadership posts during his missionary career.

One of his proudest moments:

"He was there when the first page of [the first entire] Bible was printed in Portuguese in 1944; he saw it come off the press," recalled his son, Eddy, also a Southern Baptist missionary in Brazil. "His dream was for there to be a million Bibles a year printed in Brazil, and they came very close to that."

Former BWA [the Baptist World Alliance] President Nilson Fanini, a Brazilian Baptist pastor and evangelist often called "the Billy Graham of Brazil," paid tribute to Hallock in a message to his national radio audience:

"In this land, Edgar ... developed a great and eternal work, which lives on after him. His heart was filled with love and a passion for lost souls. He gave his best always.... We praise God for Edgar's life."

We thank [God] because this missionary's story started in God's heart.

As a missionary, Zelma Hallock worked as a social worker and religious educator and was administrator of the Casa da Amizade (Good Will Center) in Rio de Janeiro. In 1963, she was featured in a Newsweek magazine article regarding her work in Brazil. As a college professor, Hallock established the Department of Social Work at the College of Rio de Janeiro and in 1997, Zelma Hallock was inducted into the School of Social Work's Hall of Fame at Oklahoma University.

Beloved by the people of his adopted city, Edgar Hallock was named an honorary citizen of Rio de Janeiro. The Hallocks retired as missionaries in 1986, but remained active in many pursuits.

The masses of people without Christ in the world preoccupied Hallock. Even as Southern Baptists made major advances in missions in the 1950s and '60s, he was concerned that so many church members seemed to know so little about world needs.

"Ignorance breeds indifference, and indifference selfishness," he wrote. His solution: intensive mission education in every church."

Robert and Margaret Lindsey - Israel

1944-1987



Each day many of us drive down Lindsey Street in Norman, named for Bob Lindsey's parents, J.L. Lindsey and his wife, Elsie. In 1912, J.L. was hired as a clerk at OU where he eventually became the Financial Controller, then later the University Bursar. Bob was born to them in Norman in 1917 and graduated from OU in 1939. Upon his graduation, he traveled to Palestine where his love for Israel was born. Returning the following year to the U.S. via Japan by ship, he met Margaret Lutz who was returning from her home in Korea. Margaret was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1919, the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries, but spent much of her life in Korea. The two were married in 1941.

The couple were appointed to serve in Israel by the Foreign Mission Board in 1945. Bob pastored the Narkis Street Baptist Church during several periods of their career where he was known for his pastoral skills and deep caring love of all Israeli people, Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The church still thrives today,



Margaret's role in the couple's ministry (besides raising six children), involved writing articles and giving talks about the Baptists in Israel, and work at Baptist Village, an orphanage that she and Bob founded for children victims of the 1948 Israeli War of Independence. She also led Bible studies, taught children at the orphanage, and kept their home open to a variety of visitors. Like Bob, she held a deep, deep love of Israel and its people.

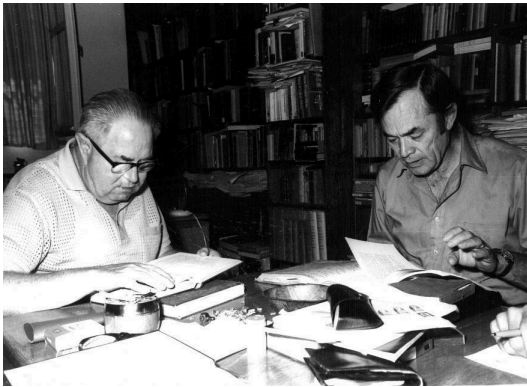
Baptist Village thrived and later added a school for the children. There also followed a new Baptist church. Baptist Village's role changed over the years and it is now a camp and conference center, known throughout Israel.

Bob suffered a major injury in 1961 that labeled him "a hero of Israel". The event was related in *The Jerusalem Post*, a major Israeli newspaper:

*"In 1961 Lindsey had crossed into Jordanian-controlled east Jerusalem to retrieve one of the residents of the Truett home whose relatives were preventing his return to Israel. Sneaking across the Mandelbaum Gate at night, Lindsey stepped on a landmine, causing the loss of a leg. His biography, co-written by his son-in-law, is titled *One Foot in Heaven*."*

Bob had the presence of mind to use his belt as a tourniquet, which kept him alive for several hours until he was taken into custody by Jordanian officers. Through the efforts of the Foreign Mission board and the United States State Department he was released a few days later.

After his injury, Bob returned to his home in Tiberias in Galilee where he focused his attention on the Gospels as a New Testament scholar and he quickly became known internationally as a major scholar. Over several years Bob developed a case for his idea that the Gospels were first written down in Hebrew, not Greek, a major change in thinking about the early forms of Mathew, Mark, and Luke. Many of his ideas appear in his book, *A Hebrew Translation of The Gospel of Mark*. His entire library now resides in The Lanier Theological Library, a major resource of Biblical scholarship center, located near Houston.



Bob and Margaret retired from their mission work in 1957. Bob died May 31, 1995 and Margaret in 2020 at the age of 100. Their missionary ministry had made a huge impact on Baptist churches in Israel as well as the scholarly world of New Testament studies.

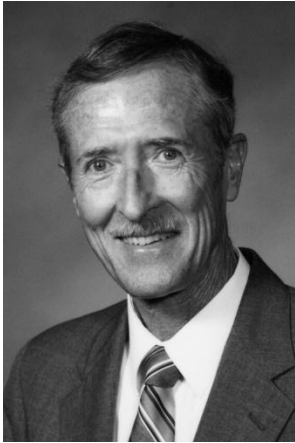
Elia Qubti, a Teacher at the Baptist School in Nazareth, and Chairman of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel, spoke at Bob

Lindsey's memorial service in Jerusalem and eloquently expressed what was felt by many of those present:

Jesus tells in John 15:13, "There is no greater love than this—that a man should lay down his life for his friends." Dr. Robert Lindsey was willing to do this because of the love of God that directed the course of his life. He loved our land and its people and gave us the best of his days. He came to this country an energetic man and left old and sick. He gave us the vitality of his youth and the wisdom of his age. To many he was a graceful father, a caring brother, but a friend most of all. He was a friend to the Arab and the Jew, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the educated and the unschooled, those in key positions and the common, the afflicted and the whole. His name is precious to us, and his memory shall always be in our hearts."

James and Leola Ragland – Lebanon

1953 -1991



The majority of missionaries spend their careers in relatively peaceful countries where many people are receptive to the Gospel, and where they are able both to start and support local churches, as well as establish long-term training for local leaders. Others, however, spend decades in places where their message is resisted and their lives are sometimes filled with perilous experiences. Such was the case of Jim and Leola Ragland.

Jim was born in Ada, Oklahoma where his parents were school teachers. After high school he graduated from Oklahoma State University. His work in education eventually led him to finish a PhD from OU where they were faithful members of FBC Norman.

Leola Lee Ragland was born near Gatlin, Oklahoma, not far from Duncan. After marrying Jim, the two attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, then moved to a small Texas town where he became pastor. In 1952 they were appointed as missionaries to Beirut, Lebanon. In 1955, they opened the Beirut Baptist School, a preschool through high school institution. Jim was the first principal, staying for

over 30 years. The school is still in operation today with a large campus and almost 1500 students.



About 1975 the school came under fire - literally. A civil war broke out involving the whole country and continued for 15 years. While most missionaries elected to withdraw from Lebanon, the Raglands chose to stay. That meant being exposed constantly to raging battles, stray gunfire, and armed groups in the streets. These quotes from the Raglands in an article from the Daily Oklahoman tells much of the story:

"Beirut is a supermarket of gangs," says Ragland. Beirut Baptist School has bus drivers from four different groups to ensure the children's safety. Four pupils have been killed in incidents away from the school.

"Being out on the road and not knowing if you're going to get home ties me in knots," Mrs. Ragland explained."

Ragland, 60, carries the extra burden of safety for the children while they're in class. When shelling starts near the school, it's Ragland who has to decide if they would be safer at home. At times, he calmly asks the pupils to move away from classroom windows because of the danger of flying glass and other debris.

In at least one instance, Ragland faced armed men who tried to force him to enroll students without proper credentials. [He refused.]

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board does not decide for its missionaries when they should leave a crisis situation. The

missionaries have to decide for themselves. Under such conditions, why do the Raglands stay?

"And leave 800 kids?" asks Mrs. Ragland. "I can't."

This level of devotion to missionaries' countries and peoples is not unusual. They are possessed of a deep sense that God has called them and they don't leave until they feel it is no longer possible to stay.



Travis and La Moyne Wiginton - Korea

1960 - 1964

Travis and La Moyne Wiginton became members of FBC in 1964, attending across several years while Travis served as the director of the Baptist Student Union (today known as Baptist Collegiate Ministries.) Like other missionaries he was highly influenced by Preacher Hallock. He later became pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Norman, where he served for several years while he also took responsibilities as Chairman of the SBC North American Mission Board in the 1980's.

The Wigintons came to us after serving with the Foreign Mission Board in South Korea. A Korean proverb says, "He who learns another language gains a second soul." This was deeply true for La Moyne and Travis. Their love for the Korean people, as well as the Korean language permeated their minds and hearts, and they returned to Oklahoma for medical reasons, still longing to be in Korea where they had worked in 25 churches.

They soon channeled that love into a strong ministry at the BSU. Travis and La Moyne cared for students and ministered to them through Travis's excellent preaching and La Moyne's beautiful singing. Her musical talents had earned her a scholarship to Wayland Baptist College, helping her develop her rich singing ability and she put it to praiseful use. The two deeply influenced students and out of those they ministered to, at least eight FBC members followed them into international missionary careers.

La Moyne met Travis in First Baptist Church of Colorado Springs where Travis was stationed during his time in the U.S. Army. Although she focused her energy on taking care of their children, she was also active in mission work in Korean churches.

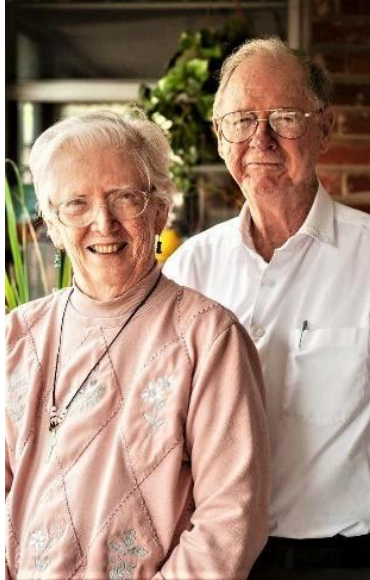
In addition to Bethel Baptist Church, Travis also served as pastor of Foothill Baptist in Mountain View, CA, First Baptist Church in Nicoma

Park, OK, First Baptist Church in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, and First Baptist Church in Quanah, Texas.

La Moyne and Travis retired to Norman where she died in 2015. Travis followed her in 2019. Across their 80 some years they had contributed enormously to God's Kingdom in Korea, in Hawaii, and here in Oklahoma.

Russell and May Morris - Singapore

1966 – 1999



As a mission field, Singapore is unique because it is both a modern, densely populated city, and a sovereign nation, all wrapped into one. The entire country is only about a mile wider than Norman. The Morris' career there is likewise unique among others. It has a thriving Baptist population found in the 9200 members of its 37 churches but when Russell (Buddy) and May Morris arrived in 1968 however, there were only 11 congregations, all more or less independent of each other.

The Morris's have long ties with FBC because they grew up here and knew each other early on. Like other missionaries, they were strongly influenced by the church, and especially by Preacher Hallock as he encouraged regular Bible study and prayer, and trusting in God's promises for guidance. May's life was influenced not only by FBC's strong support of international missions but also by her family which had a long tradition of missionaries, over 10 of them. They went back as far as the nineteenth century with her grandfather who was assigned to Mexico in 1872 by the

Presbyterian Mission Board. May's sister, Beth served in Togo, West Africa for 20 years. Other family members served in various other international mission organizations.

Both May and Buddy graduated from OU, May with an Ed.M. in Special Education, and Buddy with a B.A. degree in Philosophy. They both moved to the west coast, May to teach in Oregon, and Buddy to study at Golden Gate Baptist Seminary. After their marriage they moved to southern California where Buddy led the student ministry at California Baptist College. (While in California he completed his Master of Divinity degree at Golden Gate Baptist Seminary.)

In 1966 they were appointed by the Baptist Foreign Mission Board to Singapore. In Singapore, English was widely spoken so it was difficult to focus on learning a local language there, thus they were first assigned to a Chinese language school in Taiwan to help facilitate their language learning. This was because of the FMB's increased emphasis on missionaries working in a country's local languages. (In other countries missionaries had tended to work in English, as was the case in Singapore.) After two years of language learning they were approved to move on to Singapore.

Arriving there, they quickly realized that the need for church leadership and development was much greater than student ministry. In fact, while there were eleven churches in Singapore, most of which had no ordained pastor. Buddy quickly found himself in the role of pastor-advisor to four of them, preaching regularly in all of them during that time, while later also directing their weekday ministry programs. May moved into teaching women in the Sunday Schools. She was also invited to join the committee that organized women's programs in the churches. She said that it was only after joining that she realized it was an "obligatory lifetime membership".

They proved successful in their ministries and churches began to grow. In Singapore and in other Chinese-speaking areas, the governments began to call for the Mandarin dialect to become the standard one used across the country which gave the Morris's an advantage. After May and

Buddy established a Mandarin speaking congregation in an English language church, other pastors decided they also could do so. This is the way many of the early churches had begun, with people worshiping in their heart language. May and Buddy worked along with Singaporean Baptists to build the Kingdom in their country, and by the time they left in 1999, there were 30 churches.

Missionaries are given Chinese names that sound something like their English names. Buddy's last name, "Morris," became "Mao" in Chinese, just like the former Chinese communist leader (of the period), Chairman Mao Zedong. When Buddy became chairman of the Singapore Mission, the pastors that worked with him sometimes jokingly referred to him as "Chairman Mao", and May by the name of Mao's wife, Jiang Qing. Since Jiang was the notorious leader of a radical political group, May said smilingly that they didn't call her Jiang very often.

Teaching and ministering to Singaporeans brought a great sense of purpose and satisfaction to the Morris's and they continued it for 33 years. May explained the power of that satisfaction when she related a very painful experience. In 1982 their youngest daughter, Marilyn died in an accident at home. May said she was totally devastated by the death and didn't know how to deal with the emptiness and grief. She simply didn't know what to do. When requested by a group of Chinese women, she began teaching a women's Bible study in Chinese, which gave her a focus and she found that, as she said, "It became a great joy" that helped fill the void. Today, they live in Norman and are members and leaders of the Chinese Baptist Church of Norman, where they still serve, continuing their lifetime call of ministry to Chinese people.

Jerry and Darlene Hobbs – Thailand

1957-1991



Jerry Hobbs, a long-time member of FBC, was born in 1929, in Rocky, Oklahoma, and graduated from high school in Cordell. While in high school, he met Jimmie Darline Anderson; they were 16 and 14 years old. The two became friends, then sweethearts, and one of Darline's immediate effects on Jerry was to encourage him to go into pastoral ministry. Jerry began college at Panhandle A&M but then decided to attend Oklahoma Baptist University, where he pastored churches as a student. In 1950 he was ordained to the ministry, and in August, Jerry's senior year at OBU, he and Darline were married.

Darline was born in 1930, in Weatherford, Oklahoma, to Dr. R.W. and Margaret Anderson. She also graduated from high school in Cordell, then attended the University of Tulsa, the Oklahoma College for Women,

and Oklahoma Baptist University. She later attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with Jerry.

Jerry received a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1957, and the Hobbs were almost immediately appointed as field evangelists by the Foreign Mission Board. They sailed for Thailand in August of that year and arrived on September 20.

Like many international missionaries to Asia, Jerry and Darline attended language school on their arrival. In 1959, Jerry became an evangelistic pastor in Nakhon Nayok, while Darline took care of their home and ministered through it. Darline wrote about it: “When we first came, we had many people come to visit us.” “They were very curious and wanted to see how we foreigners live. One group who came asked me if they could see our worship room and our idol of Jesus.” Darline explained that in Thai culture, there is often a room in each house in which several Buddhist idols and pictures of ancestors are displayed. The Hobbs told the visitors that they worship Jesus “in spirit and in truth, needing no idol to remind us of Jesus, for Jesus yet lives.” They worked there until 1963.

Darline and Jerry then began working in Bangkok, Prachinburi, and Bangkla, where Jerry served as mission chairman, and the couple served as hostel parents as well as general evangelical work. Darline also taught a children’s class with an enrollment of 37. She wrote about her hope that as the children learned the Bible stories, the message of Christ would “penetrate, then will come to have meaning.” She wrote that “we can’t build a church on children (alone) but we may be able to help build up a love of Christ in children.”

During their time in Thailand, the Hobbs had six children including Patsy “Pat” Eileen. Pat and her husband, George Wilson are active members of FBC.

When the Hobbs first arrived in Thailand, they noted in a letter dated December 2, 1958, that many nations in southeast Asia were very young, and had only established their governments in the previous 15 years.

“During a little more than a year since we have been in Thailand, there have been two coups that have changed the government from a representative type to a strong-man government,” they wrote. “This is not altogether bad, but it does indicate the inner struggle for power that is constantly going on. ... Pray for a true meaningful ‘freedom of religion.’ This does not exist in Thailand today for one is considered unpatriotic who is not Buddhist.”

In 1960, the Hobbs also reported that work on a new chapel site in Nakhon Nayok was begun in an old house on the edge of the market, and that they had obtained a new piece of property in the same village, thanks to Lottie Moon offerings. “Now we can build a missionary residence that will be a symbol of the permanent status of Christian missions in this area,” they wrote. “Present plans call for a Thai-type house on posts that will leave a place under the house for the pigs and [one for] the children to play. Really, we try to plan for modest residences that will fit the area in which we live. That style house is well-adapted to our needs.”

The early days of the Hobbs’ ministry in Thailand were the building years. As Darline wrote in 1965, “... we see God’s blessings on every hand, but we truly cannot report that people are stumbling over each other to come to our chapel or to us to learn about Christianity. It is the old story of not being able to help those who don’t realize they need help or ... who don’t want what we have to offer them.”

“We realize more and more each day how difficult it is for us to make Christianity understandable here to these people, first because our ability to speak Thai leaves much to be desired and then because the good news of Christ is so far removed from anything any of them have ever heard before,” she wrote.

Darline also wrote about a small worship group “in which we receive much pleasure.” “It is not made up of the wealthy or the learned of this world,” she wrote. “In fact, about half of the group are lepers. They are poor people, many of them are in debt, but their faith and their witness might make the ones who are more fortunate feel very much ashamed. They sing (off tune), they sit on the floor, they have no musical

instruments, they have no regular preacher, but they love the Lord. “This, to us, is the beauty of Christianity. Christ came into this world to give hope to the hopeless and to help the helpless.”

Though the work of Jerry and Darline, and other missionaries in Thailand, was hard and developed very slowly, today there are almost 200 Baptist churches. The word they preached and taught until their retirement in 1991 has not returned void. Jerry died in June, 2020, but Darline has remained a faithful member of FBC.

Ed and Jan Spann – Brazil

1971-75



Numerous missionaries have come from the ranks of First Baptist Church, Norman. They have worked in scores of countries on just about every continent and in a variety of roles. One of them is a current member of our church, Ed Spann, the father of Beverly Thiege. Here is their story.

Ed is from Arkansas where he graduated from North Little Rock High School in 1951. He attended Hardin-Simmons University, Ouachita Baptist University, and Southwestern Seminary earning a bachelor's and two master's degrees. Later he went on to gain a PhD in Music Education from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida.

Ed served in the U.S. Army from 1958 to 1960 as a bandmaster and chaplain's assistant, and afterwards, returned to Southwestern Seminary to finish his studies. While at Southwestern, Ed met Jan Tillinghast, a native of Odessa, Texas. Jan had moved to Fort Worth with her family because of a job promotion which her father had received. They were married in June of 1961. Ed continued to serve as Minister of Music in a number of Baptist churches in Texas, Arkansas, and Florida from 1960 to 1975 while Jan taught elementary school.

In 1971 Ed and Jan were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board to work in Sao Paulo, Brazil where he created and then directed the Department of Sacred Music at the Faculdade Teologica Batista, (the Baptist seminary) there. Together, he and Jan worked to train music leaders for Baptist churches in Brazil. Ed also worked to create similar programs in other seminaries as well. The Spanns continued there until 1975, then returned to the U.S. to serve once again in churches in Texas where he continued as minister of music until 1989.

In 1989, the Spanns moved to Dallas and Ed began teaching at Dallas Baptist University as an Associate of Professor of Music. In 1991, he was named Dean of the DBU College of Fine Arts and held the position until his retirement in 2004. During his time as a teacher there, one of his students was Chad Smith, our Minister of Worship Arts.

While the Spanns were at the university, Jan was presented with the annual Ruth Award by the DBU Women's Auxiliary Board for her service to the university. Each year the Award Luncheon honors three women in the Dallas community who exemplify the character traits of Ruth from the Bible. Jan died in 2016.

Ed has been a prolific writer, producing both academic articles and books for general audiences. In April of 2011 he was invited to speak on his book, *Presidential Praise: Our Presidents and Their Hymns*, at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.

Andy & Kaye Martin - England and other countries

2007 – 2022



Kaye and Andy grew up in First Baptist Norman and like so many others were influenced by its missionary heritage. They were equally influenced by Preacher Hallock as their pastor. In addition, Kaye's mission influence came from her parents, Don and Helene Stanton who served as long-term service volunteers in the early 2000's, working in Zimbabwe, Korea, and Thailand.

I asked them to tell us their story in an interview:

1. Andy and Kaye, when did you serve with the IMB, and how long have you served with Samaritan's Purse?

Kaye and I were appointed with the International Mission Board in November, 2007. We attended Field Personnel Orientation (FPO) in

Richmond, VA in February and March, 2008. We arrived on the field the first week of April, 2008, and served through December, 2015.

We joined Samaritan's Purse as full-time staff in May, 2016. Andy officially retired in March, 2020, and Kaye retired in April, 2022. Both of us continue to work with Samaritan's Purse part-time on a contract basis.

2. Where did you work and what kind of work have you done?

Prior to our missionary experience Kaye and I served on staff in several churches. Our church ministry journey began in 1979 when Andy served as Youth Pastor at First Baptist, Norman for two years. In 1986 we moved to Vancouver, British Columbia to serve as Associate Pastor of Village Hills Baptist Church and Youth Pastor for Capilano Baptist Association. From Vancouver we moved to Ft. Worth, Texas, where Andy earned his Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. After graduating from seminary, we applied to the Foreign Mission Board, but were turned down due to our oldest daughter being a teenager before we would reach the field. As a result, the Lord led us to Eugene, Oregon to plant a new church. Kaye and I served as Pastor of Harvest Community Church in Eugene from 1992 -2007.

For the IMB, Kaye and I lived in London while we served as Member Care to over 200 missionary families who lived in around 15 countries in Western Europe and a little bit of Central Asia. Our role as Member Care was to encourage, support, and equip our missionaries to be able to live and serve well on the field. Our work included personal, family, and team counseling; team trainings; traveling to visit our missionaries in their homes and fields of service; providing resources for personal and spiritual growth; responding to traumatic events in our missionaries' lives; encouraging and supporting our missionaries to stay the course and fight the good fight.

Samaritan's Purse hired us to begin a member care program to support their international staff. As we started our work with Samaritan's Purse, Kaye and I lived in Boone, NC, where Samaritan's Purse is headquartered. After 2 years we moved to Oregon to work remotely, basing our work from home. In our work as Member Care Chaplains, we

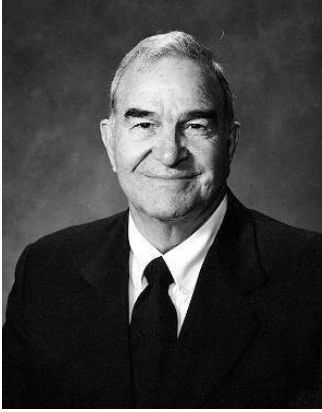
primarily support our disaster relief workers who live and serve internationally. We were responsible for supporting approximately 150 ex-patriot staff and 1000 National staff in nine different countries, mostly in Africa and Southeast Asia. We also supported 30+ medical missionary families who serve in mission hospitals in 10 different countries. Our goal as Member Care Chaplains for Samaritan's Purse has been to encourage, support, and equip our staff to thrive spiritually, emotionally, and relationally as we serve together in Jesus' name.

3. Why did you like doing it? What are some of the challenges you've had?

Kaye and I have long believed the Lord has given us "missionary hearts". As we looked into the possibility of serving overseas, we would regularly tell people, "We are willing and wanting to go and do what others either can't or won't go do." We love "other culture people". Both of us are highly relational, and the opportunity to serve the Lord in other cultures where we were building relationships with both the nationals and the missionaries serving in those cultures was truly exciting and a great blessing. Our roles in Member Care have given us opportunities to personally support people in their work to be successful missionaries. We have loved building relationships with missionaries that gives us freedom to help them be able to thrive in their work.

One of the biggest challenges we have faced with both IMB and Samaritan's Purse is having to step in and be involved with missionaries and teams dealing with interpersonal conflict. Sometimes the Lord brings healing, but too often the result is deep hurt that leads to people leaving the field. We were also challenged with some of the locations we have served. Especially with Samaritan's Purse. Visiting and working in the middle of the pain and suffering in places like South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Togo, Iraq, Nepal, Cambodia, and others, often leaves us frustrated and broken hearted. We do what we can to help and support, but so much more is needed. The Lord knows!

**Von and Marge Worton - Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma,
Thailand,
Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal
1965 – 1999**



Like some other missionaries we've seen, the Wortons' experience varied from the rather standard evangelism, church planting, and teaching to constantly working in unexpected or unknown situations.

Von was born in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, and grew up there, becoming a Christian in high school. In 1950 he moved to Norman as a freshman at the University of Oklahoma on a full-time football scholarship where he played for four years coached by the legendary Bud Wilkinson.

As it turned out, Von's roommate was also an athlete, Ramond Mason, a wrestler. On the first Sunday after arriving, Von and Raymond decided to attend church and wanted to go together. A problem arose because they couldn't agree on which church to go to. Raymond proposed a wrestling contest with the winner choosing the church. Von lost and thus became a member of First Baptist Norman. He graduated from OU four years later having been highly influenced by Preacher Hallock's strong Biblical preaching and emphasis on missions.

Marge was a Texas girl from Lubbock who moved to Phoenix with her family at an early age, transferred there by Santa Fe Railway where her father worked. She became a Christian in high school while attending a conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in North Carolina and it was there that she felt God was calling her to serve as a missionary. After graduation, she attended the newly opened Grand Canyon Baptist College in Prescott, Arizona, then moved back to Texas to attend Hardin Simmons University in Abilene where she graduated.

During one summer at Glorieta Conference Center she realized that her mission call was to Indonesia so after graduation from Hardin Simmons she enrolled at Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth. Von had spent the next two years in the U.S. Army before he also enrolled at Southwestern. Like Marge but at a different time he felt a call to work in Indonesia. While participating in a mission trip during one summer in the Bahamas, the two met. They hit it off, sharing their mutual interest in missions with each other, including the same yearning for Indonesia. They also fell in love.

Marge and Vonn were appointed to Indonesia in 1965, but spent some time in the Philippines while they waited for the long process of being approved for Indonesian visas. The wait proved to be one of many in the future years.

They were positioned in a city of about 100,00 which was centered in a large rural area, populated by small villages. There, Von was a Church planter, and Marge took the traditional role of homemaker, mother and/Bible teacher. She also taught classes at the Indonesian seminary.

A very large percentage of the Indonesian population lived in villages and it was in some of these that Von started churches. Village work involved a different strategy than the kind many church planters did in other countries, especially in large cities. Whereas cities and areas of larger communities might involve public evangelism rallies or working through existing churches, Von's role required establishing communication with local authorities, often a traditional village chief, then proceeding to one-on-one or small group evangelism, followed by organizing a local

church. Von worked with a contact in a village, perhaps a resident, to contact village leaders and explain who he was and what he wanted to do. Having the leader's approval gave freedom to work with local people and offered a kind of unofficial endorsement by the chief or group of village elders. Von was effective at it and able to begin a number of new churches.

The Worton's ministry was successful and they continued for almost 20 years in this role. Their commitment to stay in Indonesia until they retired was being realized. Then, in 1988, they received upsetting news: the Indonesian government was refusing to renew their year-long resident visas and the International Mission Board found itself with the Wortons and 47 other missionaries, over half the mission's members, with no country to serve in.

The Southeast Area Director, Jerry Rankin, quickly developed a solution. Some of the missionaries, such as theological teachers, moved to friendlier countries like the Philippines to work in seminaries or other pastoral education. Others were organized into teams that could go into countries where short-term visas could be obtained, staying a few months at a time. Von and Marge eventually worked in eight such places, preaching, teaching, and helping develop local groups of Christians. Occasionally they were able to get into countries hostile to Christianity and where they couldn't actively teach or preach but could search out possibilities that would let IMB missionaries work, perhaps using a platform like business or guest teachers. Some of these countries still cannot be named for security reasons.

The Wortons were led to work in India through a Bible passage in Revelation 3:7: *“The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens says: 8 I know your works. Because you have limited strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name, look, I have placed before you an open door that no one is able to close.”* The new assignment involved going to India for four months, then to another country for shorter periods. The door was never closed and they continued the pattern across the next ten years.

The short-term visits were organized around conferences to train pastors in local churches. The missionaries had developed a book, *“What Any Pastor Should Know”* which they took regularly into every country they entered. In India the Wortons found fruitful ministry, working with Baptist groups. Von was able to lead the conferences and assist churches while Marge, an effective teacher, helped educate members and other Christians.

Marge found herself constantly teaching classes to Christian believers in a variety of settings. In some countries Christianity was accepted but in some there was active persecution, and in certain of her classes she became aware of government undercover agents among the students seeking to identify objectionable ideas or behavior. Once she taught a group with a member who had been arrested and jailed, accused of reading a Bible passage and charged with blasphemy. In reality, the man was illiterate and falsely accused. Students told her that later he went with his lawyer, also a Christian, to the court. Arriving, they were quite surprised when they found no police or other officers present. Turning around to leave they were gunned down by the occupants of a passing car. Both were killed

Another time, Marge found herself teaching the book of Acts to a group. As she got to know the group, she discovered that about half of them had spent time in jail for preaching or teaching the Gospel. Marge was stunned. They had experienced the situations of Peter, Paul, and Silas in real life. She had only known it through reading Acts. She asked herself, “What can I say to these people”? It was quite humbling for her.

Across ten years Von and Marge continued preaching and teaching across eight countries in Southeast Asia and their fruits continued to prosper. Much of it still goes on today in the churches and lives they affected.

They retired to Norman and First Baptist Church where they had furloughed. There they continued to teach and preach, forever the faithful servants. Von died in 2021. Marge is still an active member.

In the New Testament Gospels we see Jesus preaching and teaching then appointing 12 apostles to take his teachings, his love, and his power to Israel. They were the first missionaries. The concept is magnified in his final instructions – believers were to go out to carry Good News to Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth. Across a hundred years the people of FBC have responded to Jesus’ command and gone both literally to Judea and Samaria, and far beyond. They have been faithful servants helping to carry Good News and establish the kingdom. They have been faithful to Jesus’ command, and faithful to the missionary heritage of those who came before them. May we continue that heritage.

“... We're pilgrims on the journey
Of the narrow road,
And those who've gone before us
Line the way.
Cheering on the faithful,
Encouraging the weary,
Their lives a stirring testament
To God's sustaining grace.
O may all who come behind us
Find us faithful,
May the fire of our devotion
Light their way.
May the footprints that we leave,
Lead them to believe,
And the lives we live
Inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us
Find us faithful.”

- Jon Mohr

First Baptist Norman Long Term International Missionaries

Here is a list of all missionaries who have been members or have been associated with our church. As you can see there have been many of them and it is possible that we have missed some.

Names	DATES	COUNTRIES OF SERVICE
Bettie Stephens	1920-1966	China, Philippines, Hong Kong
Edgar Jr. and Zelma Hallock	1941-1986	Brazil
Dorine Hawkins	1943-1976	Brazil
Robert and Margaret Lindsay	1944-1987	Israel, Switzerland
Hazel Smith	1945-1954	Argentina
Marion and Thelma Moorhead	1946-1982	Japan
Oren and Martha Robison	1952-1988	Liberia, Nigeria
James Sr. and Andrea Bartley	1952-1993	Uruguay
Robert and Jo Ann Parham	1953-1974	Nigeria
Rodney and Sue Wolfard	1953-1989	Brazil
James and Leola Ragland	1953-1991	Lebanon
Ancil and Ruby Scull	1955-1967	Indonesia
George and Beth Wilson	1956-1998	Hong Kong
Jerry and Darline Hobbs*	1957-1991	Thailand
Loren and Cherry Turnage	1959-1995	Costa Rica, Iran, Colombia
Travis and LaMoyne Wiginton	1960-1964	Korea
Frank and Betty Coy	1960-1995	Chile
Jack and Velma Smith	1962-1968	Japan
Von and Marge Worton*	1964-2001	Indonesia, Malaysia, 8 others
Russell and May Morris	1965-2000	Singapore
Sally Kirk	1969-1974	Yemen
Ed and Jan Spann*	1971-1975	Brazil
Donald and Wanda Reed	1971-1976	Peru
Jim and Barbara Lassiter	1973-1981	Vietnam, Ivory Coast
Tollie and Linda Bibb	1974-1987	Ghana

Donald and Margaret Janice Brake	1974-2002	Paraguay
Gerald and Jean Milligan	1976-2008	Jordan, Gaza
Mike and Beth Wilson*	1977-2001	Togo
Larry and Linda Rhodes	1983-1987	Malawi, Ethiopia
Brad and Susie Price	1984-1993	Colombia
Karl and Kathryn Malthaner	1985-1994	Ghana
Wade Smith*	1986-1988	Panama
Harvey, and Lonella Albright	1987- 1989	Israel
Eddie and Brenda Hallock	1987-2003	Brazil
Tony and Maria Rengifo	1987-2003	Costa Rica
Don and Helene Staton*	2000-2003	Zimbabwe, Korea, Thailand
Debra Simonini*	2002-2004	Argentina
Andy and Kaye Martin*	2007-2016	England, Ukraine
Chris and Christina Elledge	2008-2013	Austria
Alex and Diane Montgomery	2012 - present	Colombia
Undisclosed	Present	Undisclosed
Undisclosed	Present	Undisclosed
Undisclosed	Present	Undisclosed
Undisclosed	Present	Undisclosed

* Denotes current FBC members

I've benefited from many sources to compile this list and to write the stories of the missionaries featured in this booklet. Kim Marks, a fellow FBC member provided much of the original list while Jim Berwick of the International Mission Board provided many histories and photographs. Numerous online articles allowed me to fill in other information. More importantly however, was the honor of having known and talked with about 30 of the missionaries as acquaintances or friends. They have inspired me tremendously.

Mike Wilson, September, 2023