

HIGHLIGHTS

Volume 47, Issue 2

Published by the International Baptist Convention

August 2009



Interlaken 2009

**A Foretaste of
Glory Divine**

Sister Centuries

**Every Nation
under Heaven**

IBC Singles' Ministry

**Unhindered
Devotion**

Living in the Shadow of “A Foretaste of Glory Divine”

CONTENTS

Highlights
Volume 47, Issue 2

Exalting His Name Together at Interlaken 2009	4
Finding the Quiet Places in the Maze of Life	6
A Tribute to Fred Wallstead, IBC Bookkeeper	6
IBC and Virginia Baptists Seek Volunteers	7
From the Former Editor’s Pen	7
“From Every Nation Under Heaven ...”	8
Ministry to Singles: Unhindered Devotion	9
IBC Women Get “Extreme Makeover” at Retreat in Germany	10
Singles’ Conference Focuses on God’s Ways	10
Speaker Helps Women Discover God’s Treasures	11
On Mission With European Baptists	12
New Terms of Office for President and Vice President	12
Children’s Ministry Training held in Bremen	13
News from the Churches	14



After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell face-down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. (Matt. 17:1-8)

■ **As I write this article**, I am still reveling in the “taste of heaven” that was ours in Switzerland in July. Six hundred or so children, youth, and adults met in Interlaken and Grindelwald – both groups gathered at the feet of the Swiss Alps – a tradition going back to 1961 – to worship, learn, listen, and fellowship.

The Interlaken Summer Experience is always a highlight of the IBC year. It is probably the busiest week of the year for the IBC staff, but who can complain about working in full view of the mighty triple crests of the snow-capped Eiger, Moench, and Jungfrau peaks as they rise 4,000 meters (over 13,000 feet) in the distance? The view – probably the most dramatic, and certainly the most memorable mountain scenery in all of Switzerland – inspires even the most unemotional of us to “lift up ... eyes to the hills” in worship and reflection of our Great Creator.

Our theme at Interlaken centered on the well-known verse from Psalms 34:3: *“Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.”* The capable and inspiring messages of UK Insight for Living host Terry Boyle and Pastor/Bible teacher Stuart Briscoe helped us to consider such unfathomable mysteries as the sovereignty, righteousness, judgment, love, redemption, grace, and wisdom of God from the mountain-peak Bible books of Romans and Isaiah. As Terry Boyles said the opening night of our conference, “We are like snails setting out from Interlaken to map the Jungfrau as we try to fathom the majesty of God.” At the end of the week, God was no more majestic than when we began, but in our eyes He was magnified in a remarkable way as we came to understand better His greatness. Stuart Briscoe challenged us to be “tremblers at His Word.” I think we were all trembling in view of God’s greatness as we left.

Thanks to Erik Nielsen (Copenhagen) and the entire Interlaken Team for a job well done. The Interlaken Ministry Team, IBC staff, homegrown IBC worship team, 35+ child-care workers from Virginia, seminar leaders, and other volunteers who helped in many different ways, made the week memorable, possibly even life-changing. Special thanks to Lorraine Stringer, IBC administrative assistant, who put in countless extra hours

of planning and preparation before and during the conference.

Matthew 17 reminds us that mountaintop experiences can prepare us for the rest of life and ministry, which is often characterized by sickness, distress, hostility, danger, lack of resources, and frustration. Jesus spent time with three of His disciples on a high mountain, where He was transfigured (transformed) before them. His appearance changes – skin and clothes shining with dazzling brilliance. Two of the best-known Jewish prophets, Moses and Elijah, appear with Christ. It was an unforgettable experience, one that left the privileged disciples dazed with the wonder of the moment. BUT ... “the rest of the story” tells of their return to the foot of the mountain where they are immediately confronted with a challenge that was beyond them. Jesus is disappointed with their response to the challenge. They were probably disappointed with themselves as they were reminded by the Lord that they still did not “get it.”

I know many who left the Swiss Alps to return to difficult circumstances: Some churches in financial distress. Others in challenging leadership transition as pastor or other key leaders have left. Some with internal dissension or other spiritual battles. Persons with family or health challenges. Some with big questions about the future. Some overwhelmed by the unknown, or the known. All these, and many more challenges, await God’s people in the valleys of everyday life.

The IBC itself is facing challenges of ministry and mission that are greater than our own resources. We are praying that God will lead and empower us to become an international church-planting force that impacts the world with Kingdom force. We want to see our churches now and in the future call and develop leaders who are fully equipped for God’s work. We want to help struggling churches with badly needed assistance. We desire that God will lead us to be a family of cooperative churches that give evidence of the power of the Gospel to unite us rather than the power of the enemy to divide us. We want to see not only individuals but people groups around the world impacted by the Gospel message. We want to maintain and develop strate-

HIGHLIGHTS

Published by the International Baptist Convention
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 by Judith Lynn
Maxwell



gic partnerships that help us move from strength to strength in the battle. In all these challenges, the resources of finances, personnel, expertise, and experience are needed. Will we disappoint the Lord or ourselves by our response? I hope not.

I suggest that we listen, perhaps better than the disciples did on the Mount of Transfiguration, to advice from heaven.

“This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased.”

We are often poor stewards of God’s glory. We can worship an experience or the gifts of God rather than God Himself. Peter rightly recognized, “It is good for us to be here” (17:4). He wrongly desired to build monuments to God’s presence so as to prolong the experience longer than God intended. He seems to have equated the importance of Moses and Elijah with that of Jesus. It is no wonder that the Lord overshadows the three disciples with a cloud, and then removes from the sight of the disciples these two Old Testament saints so that “they saw no one except Jesus” (17:8). Our love of great Bible teaching and preaching or of worship in music or even of fellowship with like-minded believers must always be a means to an end that brings us to love the One whom the Father loves and who desires the worship of praise and obedience. We can and should thank people, but we should worship only God. I hope we leave such mountaintop experiences reflecting and talking more about the Lord than about our experiences. He is central because the Son, whom the Father loves, is Lord and Savior. When Christ is central in our lives and in our churches and in our family of churches, it is the Son that shines for all to see.

“Listen to him!”

We often, like Peter, speak when we ought to be silent (see v. 4), and fail to listen because of our “need” to tell God and others what we can do. Our insistence that God hear our plans can cause us to miss His. God does give us from time to time foretastes of His glory. Any “experience” God chooses to give should be received with a quiet, thankful, and humble spirit on our part and with a response of “Here am I, send me” rather than “Here am I, let me lead.” The deeper our experience and worship of God, the less we will desire to push our own agenda. I think it was my mom who used to tell me that I had two ears and one mouth “for a reason.” “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” is the proper prayer for every day and especially for times of spiritual highs. As a family of churches, we should plan with an ear

for hearing God’s voice and then continue to listen as we implement the plans we have made.

“Get up’, he said. ‘Don’t be afraid.’”

Jesus calls us to follow Him – to do it together and to do it without fear. Touched by our experience of worship, we are called to follow Him wherever He leads. It may or may not be down to where a demon-possessed boy is writhing in pain next to his desperate father. As followers of the Servant, it will probably always be to serve someone somewhere. I hope we will “keep in step with the Spirit,” as He leads us into the valleys of need and hurt. As we go, we can have confidence that the One who calls us also equips us to meet life’s challenges. We will not follow perfectly, but we can follow completely and with confidence.

I am happy to be part of a family of churches who, in our international, multicultural, multiracial church experiences, get a taste of heaven each time we worship. I am grateful for the times when God chooses to break into our lives with an unusual manifestation of His presence. Lord, haste the day when our hopes will be realized and our faith shall be sight. Let’s serve Him until then. Let’s face the challenges that come our way in following Him, with confidence and commitment.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

Till He returns or call us home, ■

Jimmy Martin
General Secretary



Exalting His Name Together at Interlaken 2009



The children share what they learned during the week.



Parents visit Euroventure on Wednesday afternoon.



A youth leader takes a well-deserved break.

LEAD Teams is one of 22 seminars offered during the week.





Virginia volunteer Bob Slavin prepares dinner for the youth.



Children enjoy crafts during Monday's picnic.



Terry Boyle



Stuart Briscoe

photos by Stewart and Judith Lynn Maxwell



Swiss musicians provide entertainment during the picnic.

The praise team leads the musical worship times.



Jill Briscoe:

Finding the Quiet Places in the Maze of Life

■ **We love fairy tales!** We like the idea of the knight in shining armor rescuing us and riding off in the horizon where we will live happily ever after. If that has failed, we look for some other magic wand, the tooth fairy, the check in the mail, or most especially, we dream and wait for Santa Claus!!

If only one of these would work as quickly in our spiritual lives so that we would become content, peaceful, and joyful in all circumstances. We want it to come together; we want to be Christ-like; we desire to be committed in our Bible study and prayer life. Wow – it would be nice if it happened at the wave of a wand.

The women who attended Jill Briscoe's morning sessions this year in Interlaken heard the words again and again: "It takes work!" She gently and delicately led us through the maze of life as we tip-toed into the corners of quiet places with the Father.

We were challenged with the principle of discipline for Biblical studies that would change our lives. Briscoe affirmed

over and over that "God's Word must penetrate the deepest parts of our lives ... or what is the point?"

There is no magic wand for this change, Briscoe said. "It takes work to rest; it is work to trust; it is work to stop worrying." And this will only come as we give our minds to God in study. With this, she said, "He will mind my heart."

Briscoe shared from her life those stories, conversations, and events where the Lord led her and continues to teach her now, as He has these past 50 years of ministry. She learned these lessons on her face alone with God, and she strongly encouraged those attending the sessions that this is the only way to know that God is enough. "He will not kiss away every hurt", she said, but He leads us to share those hurts and to hear and listen to Him in those times.

We were urged to find that place of quiet – that place where "we center down in the middle of the muddle," that solitary place where He wants us still before Him – to know that "He is enough." David is

an example who became a "giant killer" because he had learned of God in solitude.

Briscoe also shared ideas of various ways for Bible study. Each one was encouraged to find the way she learns best, such as to use a different translation for a year or to study Jesus' words in a red-letter edition.

"Out of our worship, comes our best work," Briscoe said. There is no wand for this type of ministry. We were reminded that we are all Martha's by nature, but we must also discover the Mary side of us. This is only found as we seek the quiet places, as we diligently search the tiny crevices of His Word, as we listen and obey.

We came away with the desire to know the heart of God more fully, more intimately. Jill Briscoe's very life and energy spoke into the lives of those who listened to her heart. She has truly learned "the art of leaving things undone" (those Martha things) in order to focus on the "one thing."

Barb Suiter
IBC Copenhagen



A Tribute to Fred Wallstead, IBC Bookkeeper

Fred Wallstead died at his home in Frankfurt, Germany, on the morning of 26 July 2009. Although his death came as

a shock to most of us in the IBC, Fred had experienced significant pain for the last several months, stemming from the spread of a cancer that had been diagnosed three years earlier. Inke, Fred's faithful wife, had tended to Fred day and night for the last several months of his life.

Fred was 66 years old at the time of his death. He had lived in Germany since 1971 and in Frankfurt since 1994. In addition to Inke, Fred leaves behind a son Frederick who lives in Thailand. He is also survived by a daughter Verena who lives in Berlin, and two grandchildren.

Fred was well-known in the IBC, having talked with most of the current pastors and financial leaders in IBC churches either in person or by email or phone for the last eight years. Fred began as a self-employed consultant for the old EBC while its offices were still in Wiesbaden to help set up a new accounting

system. He became the EBC/IBC Bookkeeper in 2002. He also served for several years as the IBC Treasurer. Fred was a regular participant at all IBC events, including Interlaken, where he served on the Interlaken Ministry Team as its treasurer. Fred was loved by the IBC. This was obvious by the numerous calls and notes of condolence we received immediately after the news of his death went out.

Fred also served as the Chairman of Deacons at Bethel International Baptist Church in Frankfurt. Not much happened in the church without Fred's knowledge and involvement. In addition to numerous other duties, he and Inke kept the church's grounds. The IBC offices and home of the General Secretary are located next door to Bethel church. I always marveled at the beautiful roses that Inke tended to at Bethel and often asked how she was able to keep them that way. She just smiled and refused to take too much credit. Of course, she never told me her secret either, so I was left to wonder and struggle to "keep up."

Fred was a man full of life. He loved

gadgets, especially the electrical kind, and was always eager to show off his latest computer toy or time-saving device. He was a loyal employee and helped with much more than just the bookkeeping when time allowed. Fred loved the Lord and strived to be a good witness at every opportunity.

Fred was also an avid jogger. He loved to run in the forest near his home.

Fred's body was cremated in Frankfurt shortly after his death. The family held a memorial service on 15 August at Bethel church and another service is planned in September in Berlin.

Inke plans to move from Frankfurt to Berlin to be with her daughter and family. If you would like to send a note or call Inke, please call or write the IBC office for details.

Fred was certain that God had healed him of his cancer. Today, that faith has become reality even though it was not in the way Fred had hoped. We will all miss him as a brother in Christ, friend, and servant of the Lord. We at the IBC Office will also miss him as a co-worker.

Jimmy Martin

IBC and Virginia Baptists Seek Volunteers

■ **As part of** the partnership between the International Baptist Convention and the Baptist General Association of Virginia, volunteers from the IBC have the opportunity to participate in several mission opportunities in July and August 2010.

Virginia Baptists, as part of their partnership with Baptists in South Africa, are participating in outreach events during the World Cup 2010 in South Africa. They need soccer/football players, coaches, and enthusiasts for soccer clinics, pick-up games, and informed conversations. They also need creative worship teams for outreach, performance, and interaction with the public. And maybe most importantly, they need helpful hearts and hands to provide service and interaction with those visiting the World Cup and the South Africans working at the venues. Volunteers



are needed for two-week segments from 2 June through 13 July 2010.

During this same time, Virginia Baptists have committed to having 150 volunteers ready to greet visitors and provide assistance at the Baptist World Alliance Congress, 28 July-3 August, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Virginia Baptists are asking IBCers to join them in this endeavor. What a surprise it would be for a visitor to the Congress to be greeted in his or her own language.

A third opportunity for next summer is available through Impact Virginia. This program teams up middle- and high-schoolers with trained adults to build and/

or renovate homes for needy families in Virginia. Adults and teenagers are both needed – especially if they have building experience.

Costs and lodging options are still be worked out for all three opportunities. For more information on participating in any of these events, please contact IBC Partnership Coordinator Pamela Culbertson at youth@icf-frankfurt.com. ■



From the Former Editor's Pen



■ **Someone once said,** "The more things change, the more they stay the same." In some ways, I think that may be a description of the International Baptist Convention. Thirty years ago this year, I was called as pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church in Wiesbaden, Germany. This year, God gave my wife Lynne and I the opportunity to serve Immanuel again for six months as interim pastor. Obviously, there have been many changes over the years from what was the European Baptist Convention. However, the primary goal of providing a ministry for English-speaking people is just as meaningful as it has ever been.

Thirty years ago there were many missionaries serving with the Foreign Mission Board (now IMB) who provided leadership in many of the churches and through the EBC Office. Lynne and I were the first non-missionaries to serve and be fully supported by Immanuel, which we served 1979-1984. With the IMB's present approach to English-language work, the ministry of the IBC has even become more strategic and its borders extended to other parts of the world. What a challenge and what a tremendous opportunity!

The make-up of many of the churches is quite different from 30 years ago. Most of the congregations of the EBC churches

consisted of young military families seeking a "church like home" in which to be involved. In God's plan, the churches are now realizing the opportunities of international outreach. Then, as well as now, the opportunity to reach people from all over the world with the message of Christ is exciting and challenging. The realization that most of the people in the IBC churches are not permanent and will be going throughout the world still makes the ministry an awesome responsibility. It is clear that we will never know on this side of heaven, what influence and how many lives have been affected by the ministry of an IBC church!

What a joy it was for Lynne and I to attend Interlaken this year! Evidently, Interlaken proves that when you've got a good thing, why change it or if it's not broken, why try to fix it. It was just as spiritually uplifting as ever. Also, it is so gratifying to see that partnership ministries which basically got underway 25-30 years ago are still providing leadership and support for and with the IBC.

Things have changed. Thirty years ago, there was no European Union. There were border crossings at every country's border. There was a wall which stood in Berlin. Every country had its own currency. And, today, it is much more expensive! Now the American military presence

in Europe has been significantly reduced.

Yet, one thing definitely has not changed. Christians still need a family of believers for encouragement, support, and discipleship wherever they are. And, those who do not know Christ as a personal Savior still need salvation provided only through Jesus Christ. With the tremendous responsibility the IBC churches have, also comes an awesome opportunity.

We thank God for allowing us this opportunity again. Our former experience in Europe became a focal point of the rest of our ministry. There is no doubt that Lynne and I will be talking EBC/IBC many more times as we return to the U.S. in October. We pray for God's abundant blessings for the IBC staff, churches, and pastors knowing that God's resources will enable an ongoing earthly ministry and an eternal harvest. ■

Richard Walker

Richard Walker is now serving as interim pastor at Immanuel Baptist Church, Wiesbaden, Germany. He pastored Immanuel for five years, 1979-1984. During that time, he served as Editor of the Highlights and two years as president of the European Baptist Convention.

“From Every Nation Under Heaven ...”

By PAUL DRESSEN AND BOB MARCH

■ **It's a familiar scene** in any major city. Busy streets packed with people rushing to their destinations. The color of their skin, hair, and eyes provide a wide, vivid spectrum. Some dress in garb that is not familiar to you, and it intrigues you. As people brush by you (and sometimes bump into you), you hear them talking to one another in languages you do not understand, in elevated levels to overcome the “white noise” of urban living. Street-side vendors call out for your business; the aroma of ethnic foods and smoke fill the air, along with the dust and litter of thousands of busy citizens who have seemingly come from every corner of the globe to this thriving metropolitan area.

several crucial elements came together in the first century that provided the perfect atmosphere for growth. In these early days of the 21st century, an amazing parallel has developed that provides optimal conditions for Great Commission accomplishment in our day. There are three commonalities between the 21st century and the first century.

Urbanization: People in the first century primarily lived in urban areas even though they were agrarian. Though they worked on their farms, they lived in cities, which provided protection, convenience, and community. Today, we live in an urban world, and more than half of the world's population resides in the city.

lowed people “from every nation under heaven” to gather in Jerusalem. Today, the ease of travel and the ability to communicate is astounding. One can hop on a plane and be halfway around the world in less than 24 hours. With the emergence of the internet, communication is cheap, fast, and accessible to people all over the world. As a result, more and more people are living in more places besides their native countries. In virtually every city today, you can find people gathered “from every nation under heaven.”

Common language: In the first century the common language was koine Greek. This, of course, was the original language of the New Testament. Though people often had a native language like Hebrew, Aramaic, or Latin, the shared language of commerce and education throughout the Roman Empire was Greek. Today, the common language is English. You can go almost anywhere in the world, especially in urban areas and hear English spoken. Up to 80% of the internet is in English. If you speak English in most countries your marketability improves significantly. International communities of business, education, science, or industry communicate strictly in English on every continent. In fact, the largest English-speaking nation on the globe in 2019 will be China!

Amazing Opportunity for the Church

Secular anthropologists and historians may see the convergence of these elements in the first century as “a random confluence of events that allowed the fledgling Christian faith to gain a footing,” but we see it as Divine sovereignty. God had promised a deliverer from the days of Adam and Eve through Abraham, Moses, David, and the Prophets, but He waited until the first century to fulfill it – because it was then that He had all the pieces in place. Today, God has orchestrated world events to produce an opportunity unequalled since the days of Paul and Barnabas – an opportunity to reach the world that no one would have dreamed of 30 years ago, and it may be a distant memory 20 years from now.

Converge Worldwide (CWW) is partnering with the International Baptist Convention (IBC) to capitalize on this opportunity. The IBC has more than 50 years experience planting English-speaking international churches around the world. In IBC congregations from Dubai to Berlin to Costa Rica, people from “every nation under heaven” gather to worship. In



photo by Reiner Sternitzke

Whether we have experienced the above personally or seen it depicted in film or on television, most all of us can imagine such a panorama in the 21st Century. But the description above is not of a 21st century scene...it is the image presented in first century Jerusalem, found in Acts 2:5.

It was the day of Pentecost. The followers of Christ were “all together in one place” in the city of Jerusalem. Also gathered in that same city were “God fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.”

Sister Centuries

Like a greenhouse provides the perfect conditions for the growth of vegetation,

The reasons for living in cities today have changed from the first century. But the reality is that for the first time since Christ, the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas. The United Nations reported in 2007 that we build a city the size of Vancouver, British Columbia, every week.

Travel and Communication: By our standards, travel and communication was slow and arduous in the first century. However, the infrastructure in the Roman Empire made roads much more accessible and travel safer and far easier than what had been previously known. This allowed not only for greater ease of travel but also a better system of communication. It al-

2007, IBC General Secretary Jimmy Martin contacted Tom Nebel, CWW's Director of Church Multiplication, to inquire about the systems and tools that have made the church planting efforts of Converge Worldwide so effective. Their discussions and subsequent visits by Converge personnel has led to a new joint church-planting effort known as A2:5 (from Acts 2:5).

In February, two current IBC pastors and their wives attended a CWW Missionary Assessment Center and were approved as Converge missionaries. At their April meeting, the Board of Overseers of

Converge Worldwide appointed the first missionaries to work with the IBC in Germany. Future sites include cities in Central and South America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

The first century proved to be a time of unprecedented growth for the early church. This century has the same possibilities, especially for the international church. The question is, will we, through obedience and faith, be as effective as those early Christ followers and reach the people "gathered from every nation under heaven" in cities around the globe? ■

Paul Dressen is pastor of International Baptist Church in San Jose, Costa Rica. He and his wife Dina have served there since 2002 and were welcomed as Converge Missionaries in February.

Bob Marsh has been the church-planting pastor of Gateway Community Church in Mayville, Wisconsin, since 1995. He and his wife Carol were confirmed as Converge Worldwide Missionary Appointees to Darmstadt, Germany, in April.

Ministry to Singles: Unhindered Devotion

■ **She's new in town...** and single. Family, half a world away. Friends, none. The city, millions. The language, foreign. The emotions, overwhelming. The job description sounded great, but they didn't say anything about culture shock and the loneliness. So she sits down at her computer, in her little apartment, to search for something that can provide support in her time of need. Something ... anything. ... And so she types. English – speaking – church – and the name of her city. Enter. And she waits. ... And then she finds us. A church that speaks her language and cares for her needs. She sends them an email, and they respond. She attends a service, and they welcome her. She's invited to lunch by strangers, and by the end of the meal she counts them as friends. She joins a small group and becomes a part of a family that she never knew she had.

These needs can be seen by the hundreds or even the thousands in the large cities of our world. The details may be different, but the core issues are the same: unmarried, away from family and friends, in need of a community that will embrace them for who they are and what they can become. They may be students, immigrants, business people, teachers, embassy employees, or countless others. Whether Christian or non-Christian they have a need that we can meet. At the same time they bring abilities, experiences, passions, and, at times, flexibility that many church members may not have. So what do we do?

That's a question that the IBC Singles' Ministry Team has been wrestling with. We had a great singles' conference in Berlin, 29-31 May. It was a blessing for those who were able to attend, but singles' conferences alone will not meet the needs of the thousands of singles in our cities. We believe that the answer is not only found

in the individuals but also in the churches.

If one person can make a difference, how much more so can a congregation or a convention.

But what pastor has time for this new ministry? We don't have enough workers as it is? Our church can't afford to hire a singles' minister? What if we don't have anyone who knows anything about leading a ministry to singles? We know there are singles in our community, but how can we reach them? God has given us a heart for singles, but where do we start?

With these questions in mind the IBC singles' ministry team is planning a strategy that would help IBC churches better understand and minister to the needs of the many singles in their cities. This plan would include training weekends that would bring together individuals from our different churches. During these weekends individuals would be trained to form ministry strategies whose goal would be to begin with the needs of singles and end with singles who are using their lives to serve God. Whether your church has five singles or 50 singles, we would work together to help formulate ministry plans that would fit our unique situations of ministry. It would create a network of singles ministries that could share ideas, strategies, and resourc-

es. It would equip the local church to minister to singles in ways that would not just meet their needs, but also involve them in the ministry of the church.

This new focus is continuing to take shape. Please contact us if you would like more information, or if you have ideas, resources, or experiences that could benefit the singles' ministries of the IBC. E-mail: singles.ministry@ibc-churches.org



Conferences offers singles an opportunity for fellowship.

We live in a world where the singles' population is growing rapidly. On one extreme this is a segment of our society that often turns away from the teachings of God. On the other extreme these are people who can serve God with unhindered devotion like few others in the church. Which direction will the singles of our age turn? It is yet to be seen. May our churches impact the lives of singles in such a way that eternity would testify to the fact that many of them chose *unhindered devotion*. ■

IBC Women Get “Extreme Makeover” at Retreat in Germany

■ **Many women** have days, months, even years when they feel like they’ve hit bottom with nothing left to give. Busy lives, demands, crises can leave them searching for help which the world’s quick-fix methods never give. At Extreme Makeover God

Edition, 24-25 April, at the International Christian Fellowship in Oberursel, Germany, women were reminded that the only lasting answers come from God.

This “weekend getaway,” organized by Roberta McCallum, Laurie Martin, and their team, provided many elements to help women get back on track. The retreat centered on sessions by speaker Lana Packer, who has written a book on marriage and has ministered to women around the world. She recently moved to Stuttgart, Germany, to serve with her husband David, who is pastor at the IBC church there.

Pianist Alyssa Kogler led praise and worship times. The music performed by Alyssa and Caroline Martin helped reinforce ideas shared by Parker and added to the atmo-

sphere of renewal, relaxation, and rejuvenation at the retreat.

Break times gave women a chance to meet people from different churches and even shop. A bookstore offered a variety of items of interest to Christian women. There were also tables with pashminas from Nepal and items from Thailand, with sale proceeds going to support missions and a children’s home. On Saturday, skincare, jewelry-making, and massage workshops were offered, as well as seminar-discussion sessions.

The decorations, food, and overall atmosphere made the retreat team’s hard work and planning evident. But even they got a helping hand as ICF Pastor Paul Grinyer and other men of the church provided cleanup and other kitchen duties during the weekend. ■

Nancy Blancato
IBC Women’s Team



Women enjoy crafts during “Extreme Makeover” retreat.

Singles’ Conference Focuses on God’s Ways

■ **The International** Baptist Church, Berlin was the host of this year’s International Baptist Convention Singles’ Conference, and more than 50 people from around Europe gathered together for a wonderful weekend of fellowship, worship, fun, and great teaching from the Word. The theme for this year was “I will never leave you or forsake you,” with the key Scripture passage coming from Isaiah 55:8: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.”

Our teacher was Brad Ellgen, an American living in Baumholder and serving as the director of the Hospitality House that ministers to the military servicemen and their families living in that area. Ellgen chose to spend the 5 sessions teaching us from the life of Jonah. We looked to Jonah as one who first ran from God’s will for his life and then learned through a painful process that God’s will is always best. We discussed the fact that if we can learn to trust Him, we will not continue wasting time in the belly of the world, but thriving as we live for Him. We also learned about trusting God, even when we do not understand or see the whole picture. It was a timely message for many and a good reminder that His ways are indeed higher than our own.

Each session was followed-up by small group times, giving everyone the opportunity to discuss what we had just heard, to be vulnerable and open with each oth-

er, and to spend time praying for one another. It was a blessing to be able to hear where people are in their walk with the Lord and to be able to pray together for specific things.

Another aspect of the conference that was a huge blessing was the worship. Adam and Heather Davies joined us from IBC Milan, and they and their band led us each session in worshipping the Lord. They did such a great job, and hopefully everyone was able to really connect to Christ through the singing.

In addition to all the learning, discussing, and worshipping, a lot of fun was had by the conference attendees. Hang-

ing out late at night, going out on the town, and exploring the historical and influential city of Berlin are only some of the things people found to do during their free time. Saturday afternoon found most of the group enjoying one of three different tours around significant parts of the city, led by members of IBC Berlin.

These weekends are an excellent time to getaway from the busyness of life and to reflect on Christ. To be refreshed, re-filled, and re-focused. To be challenged in our faith and to be reminded of our chief end: to glorify God with our lives and enjoy Him in all that we do! ■

Emily Franklin



Speaker Helps Women Discover God's Treasures

■ **Women seeking** a bit of renewal got just that from speaker Lana Packer at Extreme Makeover *God Edition*, 24-25 April, at the International Christian Fellowship in Oberursel, Germany. In her first session *Riches Stored in Secret Places*, Packer used the story of the widow in 2 Kings 4:1-7 to show how God provides riches when we're running on empty.

Like the widow, when we've lost hope and don't know how we'll survive, the first thing to do is to cry out to God, Packer said. "Cry out. God can handle it." The widow told Elisha she didn't have anything but "a little pot of oil." We, too, may think we don't have much, Packer said, "but God can do great things with that little bit."

We may run out of things, but "God promised to be with us and fill us up, no matter what," Packer said. "He gives us the Holy Spirit and whatever situation we're going through, He's there. He empowers us to keep going. He gives us strength to live well beyond what we can imagine doing."

We also need to remember what we've forgotten, Packer said. When we get frustrated and are losing hope, we need to remember all God has done for us. Packer shared that she uses a "gratitude journal" to help her remember. At night, thinking back over her day, she writes down things God has done.

Another lesson from the widow is the pouring out principle, Packer said. Sometimes we have to empty ourselves to be filled. The excellence of His treasure will be fully displayed when we're broken and say: "God, I can't do it anymore." When we pour out ourselves, spending time with the Lord, doing things for others, "God fills us up," Packer said.

It may take a crisis to show us we can't do it all alone, Packer said. The widow and her sons benefited when she poured out the oil. She may not have had great faith, but she obeyed, Packer said. We may feel we've done all we can do, but "God can bring something extraordinary that we can't even imagine," Packer said. "That's the treasure. When He fills us, we can live extraordinary lives."

In her second session, *Living Life to the Fullest, A Woman Who Sparkles* (Colossians 1:3-6, 9-12), Packer talked about what it means to sparkle.

A woman who sparkles, Packer said, knows that she has all she needs; she is complete. In Colossians, Paul wrote to Christians in danger of losing their first love, their sparkle, Packer said. They had Jesus, but they were falling into a trap thinking there were still things they had to do. Jesus says, "I am enough," Packer reminded the group. "We forget He's right here with us. When you have all of Jesus in you, you have all His power."

A woman who sparkles also has a life that's a living prayer. Paul wrote Colossians while chained between prison guards, remarked Packer. In the midst of all he was going through he prayed constantly. "Prayer makes a difference," Packer said. "Pray continually: during interruptions, when you're hurt.

Use what you read in newspapers or hear on TV to remind you of what to pray. If a driver cuts you off, use that! Ask God, how He's going to use that." When we pray our life changes, we sparkle.

A woman who sparkles also knows her purpose. God wants us to know Him, His will. "When we know His will, everything else will follow," Packer said. Paul prayed for the Colossians to understand God's will. "We focus on itinerary – what we are to do," Packer said. We think, "If I do this differently," things will change. God wants us to focus on the "who" not the "what," Packer said. When we know who we are in Him, when we're filled with the knowledge of His will, we sparkle.

With the final session, *Diamonds are Forever* (Colossians 1:9-12), Packer encouraged women to make a difference with their lives by leaving a positive legacy.

We can start by living in God's will, Packer said, doing what He wants. In Colossians 1:9-10, Paul wrote of the importance of living in God's will: "We have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."

Surrendering your will and your agenda takes courage, Packer said, and she suggests starting each day by asking God: "What do you want me to do today?" But don't wait until you have all the answers to step out, Packer said. Time matters. If we say, "When everything is perfect, I'll do it" or "When the house is quiet, I'll have quiet time," we may never get going. "Five minutes with God is better than no time with God," Packer said. God is extraordinary. Even with a few minutes, expect Him to do and say extraordinary things, she said.

There are times when we all need rejuvenation. Expectations, circumstances even our routine can get the better of us and make us feel we've lost our purpose, our sparkle, Packer said. But we don't need to wait for a retreat to get it back. "God's spa is always available to you," she said. What we find there is a treasure – Him. No matter where we are in life, we can cry out to Him. When we remember all He's done for us, we're filled with hope, which helps us step out and do what He says. When we do that, not only are we experiencing the treasure, others see it in us. "When we sparkle, people start to see, not religion, but Him," Packer said. They say: "There's something in her that I want."

At the end of the retreat, Packer encouraged women to make a realistic goal. "Don't leave here saying I'm going to do this, this, this. You can't do everything." Pray and ask God what He wants, but "don't leave here without finding the 'diamond' God has for you." ■

Nancy Blancato
IBC Women's Team



On Mission With European Baptists

■ **For the past** four years I have had the privilege of representing the International Baptist Convention (IBC) at the annual Mission Council meeting of the European Baptist Mission (EBM).

The EBM is the missionary sending body of European Baptist unions as they work together to do their part to spread the gospel to the rest of the world.

EBM has missionaries in several countries in Africa and Latin America, and it has recently commenced work in India. Each year as I attend the annual meetings, I am the only American there, and I fellowship with mission-minded Christian people from approximately 15 European nations, five African and five South American nations and from India. Usually there are leaders of several international Baptist organizations in attendance.

The four meetings I have attended so far have been in Budapest, Rome, Bonn and, this year, Bülach, Switzerland. The 2010 meeting will be held in Croatia. I truly enjoy representing the IBC at these meetings, but I am also prepared to share the blessings with anyone else who would like to go on our behalf.

The primary language during the annual meetings is English, but there are always speakers who do not speak English well. At such times, I get to put on the headphones and listen to the simultaneous transla-

tion done by very capable linguists. They provide translation into German, French, and Spanish for the non-English speakers as well.

EBM has one emphasis that I have not seen in our mission organizations back in the U.S. They expect that countries to whom they are sending mission workers will also send out workers. Those who receive mission help are encouraged to give mission help. I see each year people from either the African or the South American continent who are now working here in Europe.

It is a blessing to hear reports from some of the unions that make up the EBM, to listen as Baptist leaders in those different countries speak of the great things God is doing among their people. I always listen with the knowledge that many of them come from countries where it is not nearly as easy to practice one's faith as it is here in Europe or in the U.S.

It is a great joy to sing hymns and praise choruses with this group of international believers, to know that the same sacred songs that bless our English-speaking hearts are also blessing them, regardless of their native language. Each year I get the pleasure of hearing some really good preaching by men from various countries. It is always an encouragement to know that there are preachers being developed in those areas who can stand and de-

liver the Word of God with conviction and passion.

The greatest joy each year is to witness the commissioning of young Europeans to go as missionaries to some nation in Africa or Latin America. I have had the privilege of seeing several young families from places such as Germany and Austria launched out either as career or long-term volunteer mission workers.

I believe my greatest thrill to date as I have attended these meetings was to hear a young man from Cuba tell at the council in Budapest how he was able to plant Baptist churches in many places on that Communist island.

Last year IBC contributed \$7,505 to support the work of EBM, and their budget for the current year asks us to give \$8,000. Our support of the exciting work of European Baptists is made possible only through the support of IBC churches.

It has been a welcome revelation to me to spend time with delegates from countries that I always thought of as receiving missionaries and to realize that they are now sending their own missionaries. It is our privilege and, I think, responsibility, to continue to participate in the mission activity of our Baptist brothers and sisters from the European Baptist Mission. ■

Sam Owens, Aviano Baptist Church

Plan Now to Attend!

IBC ANNUAL MEETING

International Baptist Church
Jurbise, Belgium
26-29 October 2009

Nearest airports are Brussels International and Charleroi.
There is a train station in Jurbise.

New Terms of Office for President and Vice President

■ **At the** International Baptist Convention Annual Meeting last year, the convention voted to change the terms of office for the president and vice president. These changes will take effect at the annual meeting in October this year.

The president will be elected to serve a one-year term. He or she will then become the Past President for the following year. The Vice President will be elected to serve a one-year term. The Vice President will then become the IBC President for

the following year (and then Past President the year after).

IBC General Secretary Jimmy Martin is encouraging convention members to consider possible candidates for these two offices as well as for the positions of clerk and treasurer. Nominations, including a brief description of the person, should be sent to the IBC Office before 26 September. These nominations will be distributed to the churches before the ACM, 26-29 October in Jurbise, Belgium. ■

Children's Ministry Training held in Bremen

■ **On Saturday 25 April** we were privileged to have Sheri Babb and Diane Smith conduct a Sunday School teacher training session in Bremen, Germany. Significantly, not only the trainers, hailing from Virginia (USA), but also many of the trainees had travelled a long way to be there. Although organised by IBC Bremen, we were pleasantly surprised by the number of people who travelled from other IBC churches in northern Germany – in particular Hannover and Celle – to take advantage of this great opportunity.

First, a little background. Sheri Babb and Diane Smith serve as children's ministry trainers in the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV). Utilising the current partnership between IBC and the BGAV, we were able to request assistance in the area of Children's Ministry – a request fulfilled in the form of Babb and Smith volunteering to travel to Bremen and conduct a day-long training session. Having conducted a similar training session at IBC Bremen last year, this was Smith's second visit to Bremen, while Babb was joining us for the first time.

The day began with a look at Acts 2, where we were reminded of the functions of a church – teaching, fellowship, worship, evangelism, and welfare. We then realised that in many ways, the Sunday School, having the same functions, is a microcosm of the wider church. In the process, the trainees were learning various techniques for interacting with children. This would set the pattern for the rest of the day. Sunday School workers, in a reversal of roles, put themselves in the children's shoes for a day, learning by doing, and experiencing for themselves the impact and consequences of what is said and done in the classroom.

To tailor the training to age group of the children taught, Smith and Babb each led separate sessions running in parallel, and the Sunday School workers were split accordingly into older and younger children groups. The two leaders were in their element as they shared their invaluable knowledge with us in creative and interesting ways, which the trainees could in turn apply in their classes. It was clear from their passion for children's ministry that theirs was a labour of love.

A hearty soup lunch provided an opportunity for fellowship between the various churches represented. This was followed in the older children's group by a study of the three primary modes of learning – audio, visual, and tactile. The trainees were each assigned to one of three groups, and each group tasked to retell a Bible story using each of the three learning modes. A seemingly futile assignment at first given the brief preparation time allowed, the results of 15 minutes of furious sketching, singing and dramatising by the respective groups were impressive. They demonstrated to us the need to provide opportunities for children to express themselves and respond to lessons in

their own way.

This author would like to acknowledge the hard work put in and initiative taken by IBC Bremen's Children's Ministry coordinators which made this training possible, and thank Diane and Sheri for coming all the way over here to share their experience with us. ■

Boonseng Soh, IBC Bremen



Sheri Babb demonstrates teaching techniques.



Diane Smith shares her passion for children's ministry.

Sofia, Bulgaria

A Church without a Building

■ **Perhaps the biggest need** we have at the International Baptist Church Sofia, Bulgaria, is a church building. Although expensive, we are blessed with a great auditorium. Each Sunday morning we meet in the World Trade Center (called INTERPRED by the Bulgarians).

Since we minister to the English-speaking people who pass through Sofia, our lo-

cation is ideal. Our building is known by every taxi driver and is situated on or near major tram, subway, and bus lines. Early Sunday morning we carry our keyboard, sound equipment, and other necessities and set up the auditorium for worship. After the worship service, we dismantle everything and store it in our seventh-floor apartment.

The worship service is wonderful. The

problem: we need a place where we can conduct prayer meetings, Bible studies, choir practice, socials, and other activities. We also need a place where we can store dry goods to assist those who are struggling to survive.

Several years ago, we rented an apartment for these purposes. Our church ministered to people in many different ways, including a "Teaching English" class that used the Bible as a text. However, when the war in Iraq began, the police came in and setup very tight security. Our people were no longer allowed to enter the building. A local expert told us that to legally operate such a facility in an apartment building, the church would need written permission from everyone who owns an apartment in the building. Consequently, we were forced to leave our apartment.

One of the ways we cope with our situation is by having special dinner meetings in restaurants and in homes. Recently, we honored a couple who is transferring to the U.K. The Ambassador from Indonesia invited us to his residence for a time of food, fellowship, and praising the Lord in song. Truly, God inhabits the praises of His people. Some said this meeting was the best night they had enjoyed since arriving in Bulgaria.

Please pray with us that the Lord will provide in His time. ■

Ray Smith



IBC Sofia enjoys a time of fellowship at a member's home.

Bremen, Germany

■ **The day dawned** with the sun shining and people feeling a real sense of God's blessing on this special Sunday even before they left home. Prayers had been answered, and the whole church gathered with happy hearts on the edge of the Werdesee for our first open air service of 2009.

It was an awesome sight as friends and family of IBC Bremen joined together to worship in song with live music. Children ran about, and people clapped and waved in worship attracting the interest of others visiting the area on this sunny day. The message preached by our own pastor Neville Johannie explained simply the steps that lead to a personal relationship with Jesus and were made explicit on six posters held up by willing volunteers so that anyone passing could see as well as hear the Good News. The posters read: GOD, SIN, JESUS, NEW BIRTH, BELIEVER'S BAPTISM, and RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS!

The message was followed by two per-

sonal testimonies given by Abena and Melanie before they joined Eva and entered the water to be baptised. As each person spoke in English, the words were translated into German to make the message available to all. This was a great witness for those who gathered to watch, whether they were there as part of our church family or just there to enjoy Sunday. No one could have gone home without feeling something of God's presence. It was a beautiful setting and as each woman walked into the water, with music playing and people softly singing, you could sense the peace as God's living water flowed over their soul and they came out reborn and whole. What a privilege it was to be there.

The service ended with prayer and praise as everyone made their way from the water and prepared to share fellowship with each other with a BBQ. The Grillmeisters got going and everyone enjoyed the wonderful food that was brought to share. Food reflecting the wide variety of

different nationalities that makes up our international church family was delicious!

Fun and games followed with the boys – young and young at heart – playing football, others playing Frisbee, some swimming, and many enjoying the time to chat and catch up with news. The sun continued to shine, and the distant clouds only threatened now and again.

All nations joined in making a colorful handprint collage to capture the diversity of our church in Bremen. It was an inspirational representation of our family from the youngest to the oldest, from the farthest shores to the nearest lands.

The whole day was a wonderful opportunity to share our love for Jesus Christ, to be a living witness for Him. Everyone left feeling blessed and uplifted, wanting to know when we could have our service outside again. Even the heavy downpour as the last people left did not deter anyone's enthusiasm for doing it again as soon as possible. ■

Susan Turner

Wiesbaden, Germany

■ **On Saturday**, 27 June, 25 women spent a delightful day together at Immanuel Baptist Church, Wiesbaden, Germany. It was a day of refreshing renewal with the theme of "For Such a Time as This" (Esther 4:14). The women enjoyed a delicious Middle Eastern meal, provided by volunteers and served by three of our own men: Buddy Bagwell, Tommy Davenport, and Interim Pastor Richard Walker. What a special blessing for us! We had time for prayer and relationship building. We enjoyed pampering treatments of lips, hands, and faces, but discovered the Scriptural value of inner beauty reflected in these. Music, games, testimony and lots of Scripture tied the day together to help us realize that God has a specific destiny for each of us (Jeremiah 29:11), when we wait on His timing (Acts 1:7) for "such a time as this!" It was a day of joyful celebrating like the Purim, established after God's victory through Esther.

In an authentic "Persian" costume, Lynne Walker, interim pastor's wife, impersonated Esther. As Esther, she told her story of how God unexpectedly chose her as the Persian Queen for Xerxes. She explained how Esther was equipped through personal preparations and prayer and was directed to be His instrument at the right time to rescue the Jews – God's chosen people living in captivity, but destined for annihilation due to a subversive plan by Haman, the Agagite.

In 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Paul reminds us that "... God has chosen the weak things of the world ... that no flesh should glory in His presence." Esther's "rags to riches" life was all in God's plan, but she had to willingly cooperate with Him and be spiritually prepared to be His instru-

ment to save an entire nation. She had to put her fear aside, ask for prayer support, and trust God for the right time and words to speak. She accomplished so much because of God's timing, her preparations (inside and out), and her willingness to listen and obey (Mordecai, Hegai, and God). For her to wait until after her second banquet and the king's third offer to make her request was not logical, but it was in God's perfect timing.

When faced with challenges in our walk of faith, we need to see these as "God's opportunities" to work in and through us. James 1:2-3 tells us to "... count it all joy when we fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of our faith produces patience." In our human understanding, it may seem impossible, "but with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). Our natural reaction may be fear and "I can't," but "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 2:7). We need to realize that if we refuse or cower, God will accomplish His plan another way, but we will miss the opportunity to be blessed. Mordecai reminded Esther of this (Esther 4:14). As Esther prayed and asked for a three-day commitment of serious prayer from others, she was able to face the challenge of approaching the king, sending the message to Mordecai, "If I perish, I perish." Jesus calls on us the die to ourselves daily as we take up our cross and follow Him (Matt. 16:24, 1 Cor. 15:31); then He'll give us the courage and the right time to complete His plan for us, saying "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). We also need to ask friends and family for specific prayer support as we face challenges.



Photo by Richard Walker

Immanuel women enjoy a day of pampering.

God puts people in our lives to communicate His plan and His wisdom to us, just as Esther had Mordecai and Hegai. Our church family can be this kind of support for our growth. We also have God's Spirit in us and God's Word, the Bible. We need to establish a priority of a daily "Quiet Time" with the Lord as we pray and study the Bible, saying "Teach me Your ways so that I may know You" (Ex. 33:13) Then our lives can be a blessing to others.

"When God's timing intersects with our personal preparation and obedience, remarkable opportunities emerge. Most of life is a steady preparation for those circumstances when our life intersects with God's sovereign opportunities. Are you preparing yourself to be used by God 'for such a time as this'?" (Anne Alexander, October 2005, Journey) ■

Lynne Walker

Madrid, Spain



Children from VBS sing during the Sunday morning service.

■ **"We never did it this way before!"** That's what we said about this year's Vacation Bible School at Immanuel Baptist Church, Madrid, Spain, 25-30 June, because our dates ran from a Thursday through a Tuesday (including Saturday and Sunday)! That seemed, though, to be the best way to accommodate the public and private school schedules (which don't end until late June) and avoid the 1 July vacation rush. We had 111 children enrolled for "Power Lab" (this year's theme) with more than 60 helpers. These helpers were mostly from our own church but also included 10 students from Baylor University's study abroad program. ■

Susi Dixon

Franconia, Germany

A Lesson in Patience

■ **Franconian Baptist Church** has been learning a lesson in patience. The church meets in two locations. The afternoon service takes place in Bergtheim (ministering to the Würzburg and Schweinfurt areas). It is a continuation of the original "Kitzingen Baptist Church." The morning service is held in Lehrberg (ministering to the Ansbach and Illesheim area). The morn-



Children enjoy crafts during children's church at Franconian Baptist.

ing service was started in the early fall of 2006. Since its inception, the services held there have struggled with attendance. At the very first, there were several families with children. However, for one reason or another each of them stopped coming and soon the church had only adults in attendance. Each new visiting family would come for a Sunday or two and then leave because there were no children with whom their children could fellowship. In spite of a children's service being provided, the situation did not improve.

It finally got to the point that at the MLC meeting in 2008, the pastor and deacon families met to discuss whether or not to continue this morning service. By this time, attendance had dwindled to one grandmother and her two grandchildren (finally two children attending regularly!). Pastor and deacon families were each travelling approximately 180 kilometers round trip each Sunday in order to provide this ministry. Should we continue? Should we dissolve? These questions were raised again and again by the leadership. There seemed to be no definite answer to the prayers.

During one of the free afternoons at the

MLC meeting, the leadership families of Franconian Baptist Church met to discuss this difficult situation. But God had already been at work in the hearts of all involved in the decision. The morning sermon had touched and convicted each one. And so, the decision was unanimous – we will continue to minister to this one woman and her two grandchildren for as long as she wishes to attend.

Four and a half months later, God finally answered the prayers that had been raised (in His time!). On 10 August, three families with children attended. And suddenly we had 8 children in Children's Church and 2 in the nursery. And the really exciting thing about God's answer is that all three of those families have stayed! And because God answers our prayers over and above that which we can imagine, He has sent even more families to become a part of our fellowship.

The number of children in attendance since then fluctuates as new families come and go. But hopefully FBC has learned well the lesson in patience that God has taught it. "You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." (Matt. 25:23) ■

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

■ **When interim pastor** and wife Hilton and Alice Jo Olive arrived in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, the International Baptist Church of Tanzania did something special to introduce them to the church members and the city. For their first 10 days, a different family in the church took them out to lunch or dinner at a local restaurant. For the Olives it was a great way to meet the families and learn a little bit about their new city.

A few weeks later, the Olives traveled several hours outside the city to the site of a new quarry owned by a church member. The owner, at the time in India, asked Hilton Olive to dedicate the quarry before digging began. Pictured is Olive offering a prayer of dedication while the owner listened in on a mobile telephone. ■



photo by Alice Jo Olive

Düsseldorf, Germany

■ **The International Baptist Church**, Düsseldorf, Germany, was blessed to have a weekend worship seminar in May. We had Karen Cruise and Johnny Parks, two well-trained and highly experienced worship leaders from Ireland, come and share their wisdom with us. We had a great response in the number of people who attended from not only our church but others in the area as well.

Many of our worship band members have been challenged and inspired by the things that we learned from Cruise and Parks. This weekend made us take a realistic look at what we are doing during our worship services and why we are doing it. The elements of team building was also constructive in not only forming solid worship teams but also in maintaining the type of relationship that team members need to have in order to flow with

the Holy Spirit during services and our everyday lives.

We have seen an immediate response in our congregation as they have embraced some of the practical changes we have made in our worship service. We will continue to seek the Lord and follow His guidance as He continues to change us and move us into becoming a church that represents the heart of the God we worship. ■

Katrina Hebron