

HIGHLIGHTS

Volume 47, Issue 1

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Ministry Leadership
**Conference Offers
Encouragement**

Interlaken 2009
**O Magnify
the Lord with Me**

MOPS
**IBC Churches
Help Moms**

Worshipping in a foreign land:

International, English-language

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International Baptist Convention churches are part of a worldwide movement of English-speaking people around the world. For this edition of Highlights, I have used an article by journalist Kenneth D. MacHarg, who speaks about international churches around the world. I think members of IBC churches will resonate with the experiences of other expats. I appreciate our unique sense of connection and partnership as a fellowship of churches.

Blessings along the Way,

They're called expatriates – expats for short

■ **An unusual breed** of people, they live outside of their home country for a variety of reasons – including professional, business, diplomatic, educational, and religious. With these are an increasing number of retirees who seek a less-expensive way of life in a tropical climate.

Several million U.S. citizens call Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, France, and a host of other foreign locations home. Some estimate that more than 10 million Americans will take up residence in Central or South America or the Caribbean in the next decade.

While abroad, many seek institutions and activities as well as spiritual comfort that were familiar back home.

Enter the nearly 1,000 international, English-language churches that have sprung up around the world in countries where English is not the primary language.

Situated in capital cities, business centers, oil fields, retirement communities, and anywhere that expats live, the international churches offer a much-needed outreach to Christians and non-Christians alike who find themselves living in a foreign land.

"International churches have given me the opportunity to worship in my first language and to meet other believers," said Michelle Reibling of St. Louis, Missouri, who attends the multi-denominational Compass International Fellowship in Krakow, Poland, where she works for the U.S. State Department. "These types of churches provide a wonderful community."

Many expats say that they feel more at home in international churches than in local congregations of the host country. "I tried attending national churches here," said retiree Ron Tucker, a native of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, who now attends International Baptist Church in San José, Costa Rica. "But, I could not be comfortable with the worship style." Today, Tucker leads committees for the several-hundred member congregation and teaches two Bible studies each week.

About one-half of these churches are de-

nominationally related, many of them Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Assemblies of God, or Anglican. The others are intentionally multi-denominational representing a broad diversity of worship style and programmatic approach.

"Our church provides a place for spiritual growth as well as social and emotional support," said L'Anni Hill who just completed a several-year term as pastor of the American Protestant Church of the Hague in the Netherlands. "Expats bring a broad perspective of the world which is stimulating," she said. "They bond more closely and quickly because friends and family aren't around. Because spiritual needs may be greater, they invest more [in the church] here than at home."

Hill, who comes from a Reformed Church in America and Presbyterian background and grew up in the Philippines, said that her congregation is made of people from a variety of church traditions including Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and some who have no previous church experience.

Diversity is seen as the unique strength of international congregations, whether they represent one denominational tradition or are multi-denominational. "We celebrate diversity much better than typical national churches," said Jimmy Martin, the general secretary of the International Baptist Convention whose headquarters are located in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. "That is a positive witness to the Gospel which is for every race and culture."

"International congregations are able to impact the world in a very significant way because people from around the world are coming to them," he said. "Many people who come from countries that suppress or oppress the Christian Gospel are more open outside their own country."

Most of these English-speaking churches, even those with denominational ties in the U.S. or Great Britain, tend to be very international. Some churches report up to 40 different nationalities among their membership.

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Churches Serve Expats around the World

While that diversity is celebrated, it can also bring stresses. "Many of these churches tend to be more 'American' than international," Reibling said. In fact, some of the churches, such as the American Church in Paris, were founded as a bastion of the American religious experience abroad.

Tucker agreed. "We attract a lot of students from the United World College and the (United Nations sponsored) University for Peace, many of whom are Africans. They are the most welcome guests in our family but they are guests and not directors. Too often we cater to them to the discomfort and displacement of our solid permanent membership."

The international churches range from several dozen members to more than 1,000. Many meet in their own building; others rent space from local churches, hotels, or international schools; or meet in member's homes.

Some of them hire pastors, bringing them from the U.S. or other countries. Others, such as the 100-member International Christian Fellowship that meets in a hotel ballroom in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, call on a local missionary to provide pastoral services on a part-time basis.

"We are involved in other ministries in Honduras," said Pastor Bill Hoff, a native of Las Vegas, Nevada, who also operates a Bible institute to train local pastors. "I was asked to start this group 10 years ago and have been the pastor ever since."

And, they vary in their ministries and theology. Most of them are evangelical while others represent a more liberal denominational style. Most offer worship and study opportunities as well as fellowship programs, counseling services, youth ministries, and mission service.

Judith Hamje, who has attended international churches while living in Peru and Egypt and now is a member of Escazú Christian Fellowship in San José, Costa Rica, said that in addition to providing traditional services, her church serves as a way to reach out and meet needs. "We say our mission is to be the heart, hands and voice of Jesus Christ in the English-speaking community," she said.

While many of these congregations began or continue to serve as a chaplaincy for expats, some have become more what Len Kinzel, pastor of the 400-member English Fellowship Church in Quito, Ecuador, calls "missional." "We have transitioned from being a church where we provided triage services for missionaries

to a broadly based congregation where today, easily 60% of those who attend are Ecuadorians."

Kinzel, who is from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, said that the focus is less on the two hours spent in church each Sunday morning as "what people do with their lives the other 166 hours a week."



IBC, San Jose is an example of an expat congregation.

Several umbrella organizations help to facilitate publicity about these churches for people and also provide a major role in matching interested pastors with churches abroad seeking pastoral leadership.

The Network of International Congregations, funded by Protestant denominations in the U.S., Canada, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand, maintains an extensive list of international churches at its web site: (www.internationalcongregations.net/nic_directory.html).

The International Baptist Convention provides a similar listing of churches (www.ibt-churches.org/church_locator/churchlocator.htm), facilitates the matching of churches and pastors, and works to establish new congregations in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and South and Central America.

"My role is to give vision and direction to our family of churches, provide pastoral care to the pastors and leaders, help with staffing, and give overall oversight to the work," explained the convention's General Secretary Jimmy Martin.

Martin, who served for 10 years as the pastor of one such church in Germany says that his convention, which is related to the U.S.-based Southern Baptist Convention, is committed to planting English-language international churches and to strengthening existing churches.

Those who work with the overseas international churches see them as models for congregations back home. "They show how to serve a denominationally and ethnically diverse population," said Karl Reko, Director of the Chicago-based Network of International Congregations. "They can also teach sensitivity to global issues and develop a concern for the global church."

Operating an expat church involves some challenges not common to U.S. congregations.

According to David Pederson, who turned his Ph.D. thesis on these congregations into a book while pastoring churches in Athens, Greece; Seoul, South Korea; and Manila, Philippines; these include: a tension between whether such churches are an oasis in the midst of a foreign culture or a bridge to cooperation and understanding the culture; a general distrust among many expatriates of the local people and local churches; and the need to provide connections abroad, especially for expat wives who are often more isolated.

"Transience is a given in the international congregations," said Martin. "Along with mobility comes a constant change which means that the most effective and experienced leaders are constantly leaving the church as they are reassigned."

Regular attendance is often difficult even for those who are faithful members. "Many of our members are regional representatives for their businesses," said Stewart Perry, a native of Greenville, South Carolina, who served a church in Washington D.C. before assuming the pastorate of the International Church of Bangkok in Thailand. "That means a huge amount of travel, up to two to three weeks a month. It's hard to build a community or ministry in that context."

Even with their struggles these churches are warmly received and appreciated by members and pastors alike.

"I love the expat community so much that while my contract as pastor here has ended, I have used my counseling degree to establish an independent counseling ministry for English-speaking expats here," Hill said. ■

Kenneth D. MacHarg

Interlaken Summer Experience 2009

O Magnify the Lord with Me



Briscoe



Boyle

■ **“O Magnify the Lord with Me, and Let Us Exalt His Name Together (Psalm 34:3)”** is the theme for the International Baptist Convention’s annual Interlaken Summer Experience in Switzerland, 4-9 July. The Interlaken Summer Experience is a popular event offering daily Bible studies, worship times, seminars, and activities for all age groups in one of the most beautiful areas in Switzerland.

“Our platform speakers will be speaking to our theme,” said Eric Nielsen, coordinator for this year’s event, “of magnifying and exalting the Lord by explaining His character, His purposes, His will and His ways as He has revealed Himself in the Bible. Both of our speakers are skilled Bible expositors with international experience and ministries that reach a worldwide audience.

“While the adults are in worship times and seminars, the children will be taught and loved by a team from Virginia. The youth will have a packed week of fun and learning ‘up the hill’ in Grindelwald.”

Stuart Briscoe will be the morning speaker. Briscoe served as senior pastor of Elmsbrook Church in Brookfield, Wisconsin, for 30 years. During this time the weekly attendance grew from 300 to 7,000 and numerous sister churches were planted. Since 2000, he and his wife Jill have served as Elmsbrook’s ministers-at-large, going where they are most needed to support under-resourced churches and missionaries.

While at Elmsbrook, they also began “Telling the Truth” ministry. It has grown into an international broadcast and Internet ministry that is heard around the world. The continue to add new Bible teaching resources to the ministry.

Terry Boyle will be the evening speaker. Originally from Windsor, England, Boyle spent 20 years in the U.S. studying and serving as senior pas-

tor at Skillman Bible Church in Dallas, Texas. In 2001, Boyle and his wife Rose Ann were asked by “Insight for Living” to move back to the U.K. to serve as the field pastor for the ministry. “Insight for Living” is the Bible-teaching ministry of Chuck Swindoll and is committed to communicating the truths of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ in a clear and practical way.

The worship leaders will be some of the IBC’s own pastors and worship leaders. They will lead the group in a worshipful response to God’s revelation of His character, His purposes, His will, and His ways.

The conference offers three separate tracks for adults, youth, and children. The conference begins with registration on Saturday afternoon with the opening session beginning at 7 p.m. The conference concludes on Thursday at noon.

Each morning at 9 a.m., adults will begin with a seminar period. This is followed by worship and Bible study. Participants may choose two seminars, led by committed Christians from around the world.

Planned seminars include “Marriage Enrichment,” “Discipleship,” “Women’s Ministry,” “Reaching Muslims,” “Hebrew Poetry,” “Church Planting,” and “Encouragement.”

Singles attending the conference will find a number of special activities planned during the afternoon and evening times. A block of rooms has been reserved for singles at a hotel near downtown Interlaken, a short walk from the conference center. This option also includes a daily breakfast along with four hot meals (Sunday through Wednesday). Singles who wish to stay with this group must register early to ensure their accommodations are confirmed. The deadline for registration with accommodations is June 1.

Euroventure attracts a large number of youth each year and provides the youth with a time packed with Bible study, worship, small group sharing, recreation, and much more. Conference fee, lodging, and meals are included in the registration fee. Space is limited so please sign up early.

Euroventure is for youth ages 12-19 and is a great place for students to grow in their relationship with Christ. This year’s speakers will be Matt Kearns and Tom Hufty.

Kearns has served in local church youth ministry for 14 years and worked with the student evangelism team of the North American Mission Board. Currently, he serves as the Student Ministry Director for the Missouri Baptist Convention. In addition to his passion to see students come Christ, he is an avid sports enthusiast.

Hufty returns with a group of students from Hannabel LaGrange College. He has been speaking to students and families for more than 30 years. The biblical truths he shares, balanced with



Worship Team



humor, effectively communicates his passion to see students become all God wants them to be. He challenges his audiences to live their lives with purpose, making Jesus look good everyday.

There is something for the children as well. During all the scheduled meetings, children of all ages will enjoy a biblically based program designed just for Interlaken. Led by a team of trained volunteers, the children's program provides Bible learning, music, recreation, and activities for all ages.

Registration fees for the week are

- €195 Family 'Early Bird' / €215 Family
- €100 Individual 'Early Bird' / €120 Individual
- €175 Single 'Early Bird' with meals (4 evening meals) / €195 Single with meals
- €300 Single 'Early Bird' meals & accommodation / €320 Single meals & accommodation
- €240 Euroventure 'Early Bird' / €260 Euroventure (Two or more family members attending will save €20 each)

Early Bird rates are available before June 1.

For more information or to register for these events, log onto www.abc-churches.org or see information packets mailed to IBC churches.

For more information on the accommodations available in Interlaken, please refer to the brochures mailed to the churches from the local tourist bureaus or contact the Tourist Office Interlaken at Hoehenweg 37, CH-3800 Interlaken.

Telephone: +41.33.826.5300

Email: mail@InterlakenTourism.ch

Website: www.interlaketourism.ch ■

Praise With a Purpose: Interlaken 2009

■ **These four beautiful verses** of Scripture from the psalmist fill our hearts with joy, gratitude, and a nice, warm feeling of comfort: *"The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power"* (Psalm 145:8-11). Verses eight and nine tell us in as lovely a manner as we can imagine about the attributes of Almighty God that we seem to appreciate most, and rightly so. Where would any of us be if those verses were not true? We would have no reason to go to the IBC Summer Conference in Interlaken if we did not know that those words describe both the attitude and the action of God in our lives since the day we were saved.

Then when we come to verses 10 and 11, we find the reason for which we do come to Interlaken – to praise Him and bless Him and to talk of His glory and power. Those four verses taken together define a comfort zone for believers where no one would decline to go. But, alas, along comes verse 12, and it tells us that our praising, blessing, and discuss-

ing our Wonderful Lord must have a definite purpose: "to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom" (145:12). Does that make the comfort zone cease to be so cozy? The Bible is telling us that our acts of praise and worship are supposed to serve the purpose of informing "the sons of men" about the greatness of our God.

"The sons of men" surround us at Interlaken each year as we go to celebrate the relationship that we enjoy with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. As a major Swiss tourist attraction, that beautiful little town attracts people from all over the globe. In the past IBC believers have met in the Aula and praised and worshipped the God who created and saved us, largely ignoring the many unsaved people with whom we share the splendor of Interlaken. This year at Interlaken 2009 you have the opportunity to become part of this generation of IBC members who will change all that.

We are planning to dedicate at least one afternoon this year to the distribution of Gospel tracts and other literature to tourists on the streets of Interlaken. We will procure these items in many of the languages that

we hear being spoken all over that area. It is our hope and prayer that you will become a part of "Team Interlaken Evangelism" (TIE) as we attempt to make known to the sons of men the greatness, the compassion, the goodness, and the mercy of our Lord and Savior.

If you speak an Asian or European language and would like to either witness to people in their native tongue or to interpret for others who are witnessing to them, please e-mail your name, language, and contact information to Sam Owens, pastor of Aviano Baptist Church, Aviano, Italy. Sam's e-mail address is samnade2@yahoo.com.

As Christians, most of us often say that we want to be in the center of God's perfect will. One way to ensure that we will be right where we say we want to be is to get involved in personal evangelism. As we take to the streets of Interlaken and the areas surrounding it with our Gospel literature in our hands we will be in the center of God's will. Join us this year as we TIE our praise and worship to the divine purpose of making "known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom." ■

Sam Owens

Ministry Leadership Conference En

■ **The International** Baptist Convention's Ministry Leadership Conference was held 13-17 March, in Carvoeiro, Algarve, Portugal. The weekend conference provided pastors and leaders in the IBC church's to enjoy fellowship, relaxation, encouragement, teaching, and the beautiful weather and scenery of southern Portugal. Sunday night included a joint worship service with all the churches in the area.

Keynote speaker for the weekend was David Walker, pastor of the Alamo City Christian Fellowship in San Antonio, Texas. Musical worship times were led by Sean and Shelly Blacksten and their children Shalyn and Shaphan. The Blackstens serve as missionaries with the International Mission Board in Seville, Spain. Their missionary service in Europe began at IBC Stuttgart.

Other speakers and seminar leaders for the weekend included Shirley Walker, Aaron Johnson, Matt Burns, Eddie Fernandes, and IBC General Secretary Jimmy Martin.

David Walker, in his three evening messages, gave the group a catch phrase for each of his messages. Friday's night theme was "You aren't crazy and it ain't over yet." The Enemy, Walker said, wants you to believe otherwise. "We are in a fight, and you are on the front line," he said. The Kingdom of God will only truly advance at the expense of the Kingdom of Darkness. If that happens, the Enemy will not be happy, and he will try to whittle away at our hearts. Discouragement is one of the ways the Enemy works. In 2 Cor 1:8, Paul says that all hope is gone. This is the same Paul who wrote "I can do all things in Christ" and in me is Christ, my hope and glory. But at this point in his writing to Corinthians, he is low. But, by the grace of God, Walker said, he continued and finished strong.

Walker's theme for Sunday evening was "There's somebody else in the room." This reminder, Walker said, is an essential for walking in victory and recovering from a bruised heart. Jesus, in his model prayer, teaches us to pray "Come, thy kingdom." The essence of a kingdom is the presence of the king. When the king is not in the house, nothing is going to happen. For us, the presence of the king is the Holy Spirit. Paul, in Phil 3:10, Walker said, was "hooked on" knowing the manifestation of Jesus – "to know the power of the risen Lord and the fellowship of His sufferings."

"Come in Low" was Walker's theme for Monday evening, based on Rom 4:4. When a man works for what he receives, Walker said, then it is what is his due; it is not a gift. Somehow we think, Walker said, that based on what we have been through, we deserve what God gives us. When the Lord does not "pay" us what we believe we deserve, then we are disappointed. When we "come in high" we back God into a corner, Walker said, but when we "come in low" we approach Him with humility and receive the blessings of God's inheritance to a son or daughter. Faith does not rest on the wisdom of man but on the power of God.

Fernandes spoke on the need for more Christ-like leaders in the world today. He outlined seven steps to being a transformed and transformational leader. These steps form a metaphor for the river of life, Fernandes said.

Step 1. Chaos or the source of the river – we are trusting in ourselves.

Step 2. Confusion or where the rivers hits the rocks – something inside us does not resonate. People are in total confusion and asking "What to think? What to believe?"



David Walker



Sean and Shelly Blacksten

courages Pastors in their Ministry

Step 3. Community or the tributaries of the river – we want to find people like us; to find a place to belong. God is relationship.

Step 4. Conformity or the river will work and work into a canyon – we want people to do as we do or live as we live. We work until they fit (become like us).

Step 5. Conflict or the sudden waterfall in the river – all the leaders that Fernandes interviewed faced conflict.

Step 6. Crossroad or the fork in the river – decision time. After conflict, you have a choice – Will you choose the billabong (Australian term for a stagnant lake) or will you choose the path of the flowing river? After conflict some revert all the way back to chaos; others go back to community where they just keep it going.

Step 7. Christlikeness or the journey to the ocean. We have arrived but not at perfection.

Martin in his message encouraged those attending to come to a new understanding of the challenge of Jesus to “make disciples of all nations.” The nations are coming to our doors and our churches, Martin said, and we have the privilege to make disciples of them. It is an opportunity but also a challenge.

We are together in the struggle, Martin said. Exodus 17 provides a good example of this. Moses was a reluctant leader. Three days after leaving Egypt the people

are already grumbling. There is conflict within and conflict without. But God provides protection. “Who is it that holds up your hands?” Ex 17:8 is a picture of how we can help each other by holding each other’s hands up.

There are lessons we can learn from these verses, Martin said. First, we must be change agents. We cannot follow Jesus and stay in the same place. God is always calling us to move ahead. Second, the greatest leadership challenge is ourselves. We are bent on changing others because we don’t want to change ourselves. Every challenge has to be filtered by God’s sovereign will.

Some challenges, Martin said, are specifically set up by the Lord. God gives Moses a challenge that is bigger than he is. Yet, Martin said, this prompts the next lesson which is God provides for every challenge. God’s provision is often other leaders, Martin said, as was the case with Moses. One of the reasons we exist as a convention, he said, is to help one another. God’s work is always more than one person can handle. We can do more together than we can do separately.

Another lesson is that God’s preparation for us in smaller tasks leads to larger tasks. Joshua in Exodus 17 is mentioned for the first time as a leader of a small group preparing for battle. This experience was preparing him for 40 years later when he would lead all the Israelites. Wherever God

has placed us, Martin said, we need to be faithful. God is preparing us for the next task. We never really master leadership, Martin said. We learn from our mistakes but we don’t master it. We always can learn; God is moving us along.

The final lesson from this chapter is to celebrate the victory. Remember the victories, Martin said. Mark them, celebrate them, and give credit to the people who have helped along the way. ■

29-31 May

IBC Singles’ Conference

Berlin, Germany

Theme:

“I Will Not Leave You or Forsake You”

Speaker: Brad Ellgen

Cost: € 110



Eddie Hernandez



Supporting leaders: Who is holding up your hands as in Exodus 17?

Men Challenged to “Go the Distance”

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you” (Gen. 28:15).

■ **With these words** from God I had started the journey to the IBC Men’ Conference in Switzerland. And as so often it happens, when we start on the road that God has assigned for us, temptation is not far away. So on Friday morning as we were ready to depart small hindrances occurred. As I went to rent the car for our journey the cash card was not functioning and we couldn’t get the car. But God said “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land,” so we had to trust Him on this one. After waiting a few hours for the bank to open, the problem was solved, and we were finally on our way to Lenk.

After a 10-hour drive we arrived at our destination and joined the men from the other IBC sister churches for a weekend of fellowship, Bible study, and enjoying God’s creation.

The theme of the conference: *The Quest: Going the Distance Phil. 3:14* wasn’t only about getting from northern Germany to Switzerland, but mainly about our journey to our final destination with God. As we had experienced already in the beginning of our trip, we often meet hindrances in our spiritual journey with God -- being it doubting or sins that we repeatedly commit -- whatever is diverting our focus from our destination and damaging our relationship with God.

The conference started with addressing the problem of repeated sinning and of Godly sorrow which leads to true repentance as it is described in 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. When we have sin in our lives which we struggle with and commit it over and over again, it means that we haven’t truly repented of that sin. We may have asked for forgiveness before God, but when the temptation is there, we still give in. Godly sorrow

makes us realize the pain that we cause to God when we sin and leads us to the place where we don’t give in to our fleshly desires but come to a position where we hate the sin. *For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication (2 Cor. 7:11).* Therefore, when we struggle with sin, we should ask ourselves, for instance, if we might have lost our fear of God and if we really have that zeal and vehement desire for God.

The fellowship and the group discussions that followed every evening session gave the opportunity for confession and prayer. It was an encouraging time to see how God changed lives even in the few days and to see Christian men setting an example through their behaviour.

The desire to know Christ and “forgetting those things which are behind” as stated in Philippians 3 were the next milestones on our quest: *“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” (Phil. 3:7,10).* Who is the God that we are serving? How powerful is He? Maybe it is an easy question but do we really believe the answer that we give? When we deal with struggles, do we really believe that God can change us completely? Do we really know the power of His resurrection? We know many things about God and the things that He has done and can do but we don’t truly believe.

Our walk with God is not always easy, and there are going to come times when we need to suffer for Christ and we should be ready for it. We need to stay focused



Men enjoy teaching and worship times at Lenk.

at Lenk 2009

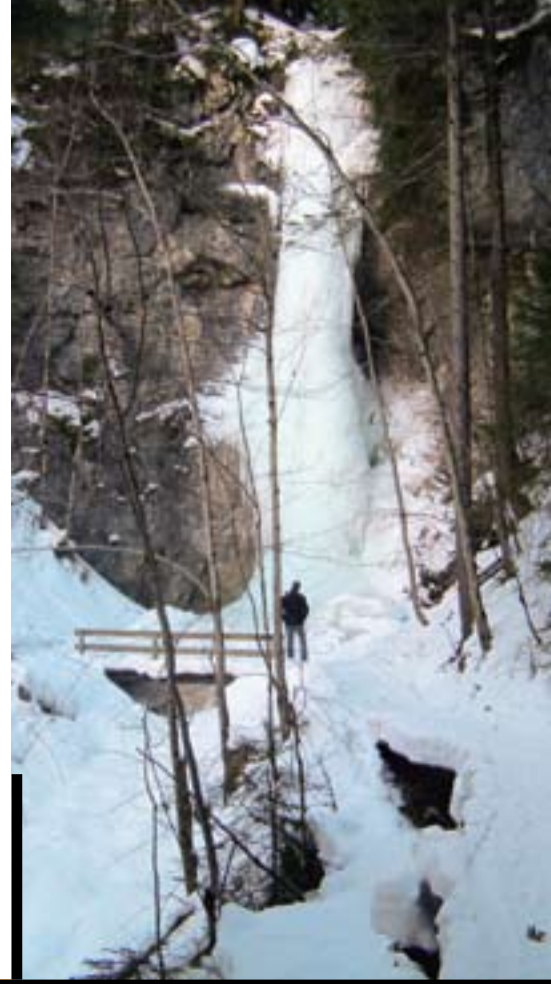
on Him and trust in His power and know that He is all we need. Don't give up when it's hard but press on just as Paul encourages us: *"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:14).

As we set off to return to Bremen, God had another word of encouragement: *Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks. But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"* (Gen. 32:24-26). When we return from conferences we come back to our regular life, maybe to the same struggles, but God expects from us that we don't give up even if it's hard. He expects us to keep on fight-

ing and to be desperate for His blessing, for His fellowship alone.

God desires our sanctification; He expects from us that we mature in our relationship with Him and know His word better: *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth* (John 17:17). We receive encouragement and come to experience God through weekends like this, but we shouldn't be dependent on conferences to get a kick in our spiritual life. It is neither the conference nor the location, but God who is our source and He is everywhere. Let us be an example for one another in showing our fire for God as we press on. ■

Paul Prodan
IBC, Bremen



Executive Council Plans Ministries

■ **The Executive Council** of the International Baptist Convention met 14 March as part of the Ministry Leadership Conference in the Algarve, Portugal. The council heard reports from General Secretary Jimmy Martin and from the ministry team coordinators and regional coordinators who make up the council.

Martin reported on the renovation work that has been completed in the basement of the IBC Office. The kitchen area has been renovated which allows for a small apartment in the basement. Robbie Hott, a volunteer from Virginia, is the first to use this area. Having this apartment available saves the IBC approximately 1000 Euro per month in rent for a volunteer apartment.

Martin also reported on recent church visits he has made including to the building dedication at IBC Bucharest which was the recipient of the 2008 Missions Endowment Fund (MEF) grant and to Trinity, Bitburg. Bitburg was the recipient of the 2006 MEF grant to purchase its parsonage. The International Baptist Church Ministries (IBCM) continues to support the IBC, Martin said, and this year provided grants for the New Testament distribution at Interlaken and to assist pastors in coming to IBC events. Martin reported that while giving through the IBCM has con-

tinued to grow, membership in the organization is declining. The IBCM board of directors is looking for people interested in joining the corporation and assisting with its ministries.

The council also brainstormed ways to incorporate the IBC Summary of Basic Beliefs in the churches. Ideas included adoption into church constitutions, basis for teaching for new believers, and a small-group study. Education Ministry Team Coordinator David Packer volunteered for the EMT to take the lead on writing a short study on the basic beliefs that can be used in small groups. They plan to have a draft ready by Interlaken.

The council also discussed the new election process for officers that will take effect in 2009. Beginning with the election in 2009, the person elected as vice president will serve one year as vice president, one year as president, and one year as past president. This will allow for more continuity within the leadership of the executive council and the convention. Thus, the person elected as vice president will be making a three-year commitment to serving. The person elected as president in 2009 will serve one year as president and one year as past president. There will be no past president in 2009.

Jeff Bloomer, president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, also attended the meeting, representing the partnership. He encouraged IBCers to attend Virginia's annual meeting, 17-18 November, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He also encouraged the convention to look for opportunities to assist Virginia. One such opportunity is to help Virginia in providing volunteers to assist with the Baptist World Alliance Congress in Hawaii in 2010. Virginia is co-hosting the event and has agreed to provide 150 volunteers.

Bill Lauchlin, coordinator for the Church Development Ministry Team, said the team has been working closely with the Baptist General Convention/Converge Worldwide (CW) in support of church planting within the convention. CW Church Planters Bob and Carol Marsh visited Germany in February to assess potential sites for a plant. The CDMT will invite the Marshes to come as the church planters for the convention and bring them to Interlaken to introduce them to the convention. The Marshes will then stay an additional week to do further assessment in the chosen city. The IBC will provide seed money for the church plant while the Marshes will raise their own support. Bob Marsh is already providing some mentoring to Victor Odadah who is leading the church plant in Nürnberg. ■

MOPS

IBC Churches Are Giving Moms What They

■ **Motherhood is one** of God's greatest gifts and one of the most challenging. Along with the joys come long days, mountains of laundry, and sleep deprivation. Taking care of a young child is extremely demanding and leaves little or no time for a mom to take care of her own needs. This is especially true for women living in a foreign country, far from home and their families. Connecting with other mothers facing the same situations who also speak the same language can be a lifesaver.

This principle of giving support and validation to mothers of small children that they so desperately need is the cornerstone of the MOPS (Mothers Of Pre-

than 30 different countries. IBC churches in Brussels, Belgium; Stuttgart, Germany; and Leidschendam, the Netherlands; are among those with local MOPS chartered groups in Europe. Other groups are located in the United Kingdom; Toulouse, France; Heidelberg, Germany; and Nyon, Switzerland. There are native language groups in the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia and Romania and several Military MOPS groups that meet on U.S. military installations and bases in Germany, the U.K., Portugal, and Turkey. The military groups are geared toward meeting the needs of mothers experiencing tough times while their husbands are deployed overseas.

it in action," said Frederiksen. "I was so touched, I became convinced it could really minister to moms." It became her vision to have monthly meetings "to demonstrate God's love to all, to help moms (like myself) recognize that being a mom really IS an important job, and to renew and equip moms to become the best mother, wife, and woman that God created us to be!"

Robyn Langford, a current MOPS Steering Team leader at IBC Brussels said, "We're all trying to be the best moms we can be, and there's so much I can learn from others. Just being with other moms, sharing and learning from one another, helps me be a better mom."

MOPS is unique because "it is designed to be a support to Christian mothers and also an outreach to non-Christian mothers in the community," said Frederiksen. "It gave me an opportunity to meet MY spiritual needs through the speaker topics, have fun with the craft, and also practice my outreach to the community. I also really liked the MOPPETS program," she said, which teaches biblical principles to children while their mothers attend MOPS. Knowing their children are being cared for in a loving environment helps moms relax so they can enjoy the meeting.

While the faces at the MOPS group at IBC Brussels have changed, the basic program remains the same. Each monthly meeting includes a video session, group discussion, craft project, and time "just to chat," said Marilou Dupagne, part of the MOPS Steering Team leadership. Members are mostly expatriates and represent a number of countries, including the U.S., Ecuador, Moldova, Georgia, France, South Africa, and Belgium. IBC Brussels also has a MOPPETS class, which started as just childcare, but is now a Bible-based program that includes a Bible story and music.

MOPS meetings have a structure that can vary slightly among groups, but all are consistent with the MOPS mission of encouraging, equipping, and developing mothers to be the best they can be.

"Starting a MOPS group in your church is simple," said MOPS International European Area Coordinator Cheryl Koevoet. "All you need is a church that understands the MOPS vision to reach out to mothers of preschoolers, to bring them in, and to minister to them and their families with the love of Christ." MOPS is one of the few outreach ministries available where non-Christians actually approach the church



schoolers) ministry. More than a hundred thousand moms around the world are currently enjoying a special kind of encouragement at MOPS: a Christian organization geared towards women with children ages 0 to 5 and first-time pregnant mothers. Its mission statement, "MOPS International exists to encourage, equip and develop every mother of preschoolers to realize her potential as a woman, mother and leader in the name of Jesus Christ," boldly reinforces the idea that better mothers make a better world.

MOPS began in 1973 as a small group with just eight women in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. It has grown to be an international ministry with more than 4,000 groups in the United States and 123 groups meeting around the world in more

The group at IBC Brussels was started by Melissa Frederiksen, a former IBC member who now lives in the U.S. "I started the MOPS group because I saw a need for mothers of young children to have their spiritual, emotional, and social needs met (mine included)," said Frederiksen. Her vision for the ministry started long before the first meeting in September 2003. "I felt God called me to that assignment. I prayed about it for at least a year before I actually did anything about it. I had heard of MOPS but never attended a meeting. It seemed too intimidating to me but God just kept bringing it back to my heart."

At the time there wasn't a MOPS group in Belgium, the closest being several hours away at IBC Trinity Church in the Netherlands. "I eventually drove there to see

Need

and ask to be a part of this ministry, Koevoet says. "If I told you I knew of a place where you could come to relax, relinquish the parental duties for a couple of hours, and just enjoy an enriching and meaningful time with your peers with no strings attached, you would want to come, wouldn't you?"

There are different kinds of MOPS groups to suit different kinds of needs. If you have a smaller church with just a few mothers, starting a MOPS@ group would be best because this is an "abbreviated" version of MOPS which can meet anywhere – in a home, restaurant, workplace, and of course, a church. In this small group format, only one or two group leaders are needed as opposed to four or five for a Classic MOPS group. No matter which kind of group you charter, each group practices the MOPS brand of "lifestyle evangelism" or "relational evangelism," said Koevoet. Using MOPS lifestyle evangelism, mothers come to Christ because of what they have seen and witnessed through MOPS, and through them, quite often their children and husbands also come to Christ, she added.

"In the seven years I have been a volunteer in the MOPS ministry, there is absolutely nothing more satisfying than seeing a mom come to Christ through MOPS. But the story doesn't stop there. These moms that have

come to Christ through the MOPS ministry become leaders on MOPS Steering Team and even go on to lead other ministries in the church," Cheryl said. "Not only does MOPS equip moms, it also equips, trains, and develops its leaders with principles for successful leadership in all stages of life."

When a church charters a MOPS group, they receive a broad range of handbooks, materials, DVDs and resources including the support and guidance of a local Council Coordinator which is a member of MOPS International Field Leader Staff. MOPS in Europe has three or four council meetings a year in different locations throughout Europe specifically for the training of local MOPS group leaders. To view the resources that are included with each charter box and for the costs of chartering a group, please visit www.mops.org. For more information about getting a MOPS group started in your church, please contact MOPS European Area Coordinator Cheryl Koevoet at koevoetfamily@hotmail.com or visit www.MOPSinEurope.org to find a complete listing of MOPS groups meeting in Europe. ■

*Nancy Blancato
IBC, Brussels*

IBCM Supports International Churches' Work



by **Larry J. Jones**
President, International Baptist Church Ministries
Former Pastor, IBC Stuttgart, 1979-1993

■ **As the newly** elected president of the International Baptist Church Ministries, Inc. (IBCM), my desire is to focus on the needs of English-speaking churches which are affiliated with the International Baptist Convention. IBCM members pray regularly for IBC churches.

The mission of IBCM is to present the Gospel to all persons with the goal of bringing them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to form local congregations for the Christian nurture of those who respond. One way we fulfill our mission is to assist U.S. citizens in supporting the baptistic work of their English-speaking international church.

IBCM was founded in 1999 and celebrated its 10th anniversary during its

annual meeting, which was held at the North Fort Worth Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, on 6-7 February. Approximately 50 IBCMers and their guests attended the celebration. Many of those in attendance have served in IBC churches and/or the IBC Office. Jimmy Martin, IBC general secretary, and his wife Laurie were also present. The honored speaker was Jim Denison, who is the theologian-in-residence for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Denison spoke of the importance of English-speaking international churches.

Please visit our web site (www.ibcmworld.org) to learn how your church can benefit from involvement with the IBCM. ■



Larry J. Jones

Love Dare Bible Study Helps Marriages



■ **Every so often** something unexplainable happens at LifeWay. When LifeWay first joined with the makers of the *Fireproof* movie to produce the *Love Dare* journal and then the *Love Dare Bible Study*, they never knew that people were going to be so drawn to the material. The movie has done remarkably well in the theaters and on DVD around the world – in many different cultures and countries.

But according to Ann Cretin, regional manager for Lifeway International, Lifeway cannot keep the journal and the Bible study kit in the warehouse. “I think that this tells us that marriages are in great need of help,” Cretin said, “but yet, people are willing and want to do something about their own marriages and the marriages in their church.”

The kit contains the entire movie on DVD, another DVD to be used in a small group setting with discussion starters pulled from the movie, one *Love Dare* journal, one *Love Dare Bible study*, one CDROM to help leaders, and sermon titles and content for the pastors on this subject. The entire kit costs \$49.95. Ad-

ditional journals (\$9.99 each) are needed for each person's personal task of taking the “love dares.” Each person also needs the *Love Dare Bible study member book* (\$6.95) for the accountability of a small group.

“I believe [the study] can be a very powerful process for an entire church to participate in,” Cretin said. “The investment for a couple could be less than a night out for dinner. Could this begin to change our culture in our world today if Christ truly became the center of our marriages?”

More details about the kit can be found on the Lifeway website: www.lifeway.com/e2/shop/?R=826658

The International Baptist Convention receives a 50% discount on this kit (plus postage and, in some cases, customs). Churches will receive this discount by sending their order to the IBC Office (admin@ibc-churches.org). The order will be sent directly to the church and you will be billed by the IBC Office (not by Lifeway). ■



In Memorium: Gary Lee

■ **Gary Lee**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rota, Spain, died unexpectedly on 9 April 2009. Lee had served as pastor in Rota since November 2008.

He is survived by his wife Deborah and their three sons James, Joshua, and Jeremiah.

Lee was born in Atlanta, Georgia on 12 December 1951. He and Deborah were married in 1974. Lee served in the U.S. Air Force for 21 years before retiring. He earned a Doctor of Ministry Studies in Missions and Evangelism and a Doctor of Practical Theology in Biblical Teaching.

Many at Rota remember him for his passion for the Beatitudes and for reaching the lost. On the church's web page was the Scripture passage: “He must increase, but I must decrease,” (John 3:30). A memorial service was held for Lee at Rota on 13 April 2009. ■

From the Editor's Pen

■ **My sister** has a fascination for lighthouses, and I guess some of it has rubbed off on me. While we were in Portugal for the Ministry Leadership Conference we saw on the maps that there were some lighthouses in the area and so we set off to see them. One of my thoughts was “Certainly we can find a cover photo for Highlights.”

But why do we often use lighthouses in a Christian setting? There are lots of possibilities – light in the darkness, hope, guidance, security. Yet, if we take the symbol too far, we can get into trouble. Besides representing light, hope, and security, lighthouses warn of danger. If we get too close, we get caught on the rocks – and we are not necessarily talking about “The Solid Rock.”

So are we being lights in the darkness to those around us? Are we, like a lighthouse, reflecting the inner light we have to those around us? Or are we not functioning and caus-

ing others to stumble on the rocks around us?

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matt 5:16). ■

Judith Lynn Maxwell

Photo by Judith Lynn Maxwell



Frankfurt, Germany

■ **Bethel International** Baptist Church Pastor Doyle Searcy will be taking furlough from May through July this year. He has completed 12½ years as pastor of BIBC and is taking some time off to rest, visit family, and take care of some business matters. Supplying at BIBC in his absence is Pastor Dave Stemmett, the pastor of one of our newest IBC churches in Cape Town, South Africa, who is also on sabbatical from his church. His wife and two university student children will be joining him

for part of that time. BIBC Deacon Chairman Fred Wallstead will be taking care of all matters of business for BIBC in the pastor's absence. ■

Doyle Searcy



Dave Stemmett and family

Cologne, Germany



Ordi Hossu

■ **On Sunday morning**, 1 March, the International Baptist Church in Cologne, Germany, joined our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Friedenskirche Baptisten Gemeinde in downtown Cologne for a joint worship service. The IBC church baptized four individuals originally from Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Germany, and California. After the baptismal service, the two congregations shared in a Lord's Supper observance with Pastors Wolfram Krebs and Lorin Cranford presiding. The service was simultaneously translated into both English and German so that all of the more than 375 people could enjoy a glorious time worshipping our God together and

sharing in renewed fellowship between the two congregations.

IBC Cologne has also called Ordi Hossu as youth pastor. Hossu will lead a new youth ministry focused on high school and university students from the Bonn/Cologne area. The church also adopted a detailed plan for structuring the youth ministry. We thank God for this major step forward in reaching people for Christ, and we are looking forward to God's blessings on this new ministry in our church. ■

Lorin Cranford

San José, Costa Rica

■ **We are grateful** to the Lord for his continued hand of blessing on the IBC, San José, Costa Rica. Recently we baptized seven people, and they were a great reflection of our church. This group included a young professional from Mexico, a college student from Japan, two Costa Rican youth from our neighborhood, a Costa Rican woman, and two young people from our church. We have had 58 women participating in the Beth Moore Bible study on Esther. We had our strongest attendance in Sunday School ever for the month of February, averaging 177. Though this is still only approximately half of our current worship attendance, it is a big leap from the 71 people we averaged in Sunday School five years ago.

March also had some exciting occurrences. We ordained four men as deacons. Then the following Sunday we celebrated all the different nations God has brought to our church by having our annual International Day. During this service we had a presentations of the flags of different nations as well as a Scripture reading in various languages. It was, as always, a wonderful worship experience. ■

Paul Dreessen



Pastor Paul Dreessen baptizes a university student from Japan.

Bremen, Germany

Carol Singing

■ **On Saturday**, 6 December, approximately 35 people from the International Baptist Church, Bremen, gathered in front of the Hauptbahnhof (main train station) to sing Christmas carols. The group attracted a nice size crowd. We handed out candy and leaflets that told about our 2008 Advent and Christmas activities. Some had the opportunity to mingle with those who passed by. The gifts of the Body were evident that day. Several people played instruments and led the singing. A number welcomed the strangers that lingered. And, others remained at the church to prepare a warm, inviting atmosphere in which to visit with new-found friends.

Robie Carnes

New Year's Eve Celebration – IBC Bremen Way

New Year's Eve marks a special time for all people around the globe. Not only does it bring flashbacks of both happy and sad moments, but it also ushers in a ray of hope and possibly new beginnings, change, or continuity. International news commentaries depict how varied the New Year's Eve celebrations are in different countries. As such, organizing an event that would suit the needs of a dynamic church with many different nationalities such as IBC Bremen brought about a lot of excitement and opened doors for creativity in our congregation.

For IBC Bremen, past year's New Year's Eve celebrations had been rather subtle with get-togethers and private fireworks organized in the homes of some of our members. However, for the 2008 New Year's Eve Celebration, we decided to create an opportunity to celebrate the new beginning with the entire church family.



IBC, Bremen celebrates the New Year in its own way.

With members and friends from all over the world, we decided to combine some New Year's Eve traditions from our respective countries and organize an evening that would not only seek to foster closer relationships within the church family but also enter the New Year under the leadership of God's mighty hand. The idea couldn't have been better! It took more than a month to organize and advertise the event. All members of the community were very excited and ideas began to pour in. Finally, a program for the event was drawn up.

The evening began with an international dinner with

delicacies from our home countries. It was a great delight to see how many dishes were presented in our unique congregation. Apart from the family spirit that was experienced in our church kitchen, it was also very interesting to witness the rather interesting looks of members as they combined and tasted the different dishes.



Carol singing attracts a crowd in Bremen.

The meal was followed by fun activities for young and old. As part of our fun section, we decided to kill two birds with one stone. Some of our members wanted to rid their homes of items they could not use anymore, but could still be of use to other members. On the other hand, our Children's Ministry also sought to raise funds for their upcoming Vacation Bible School scheduled for June 2009. As such we decided to organize an auction. In order to include all ages in the fun, we felt that a Chinese auction would be appropriate as people only have to pay the difference between the amount proposed by the last bidder and the amount they proposed. This was a huge success and more than 100€ was raised for the Vacation Bible School. The auction was followed by a short re-inventive play of the all-time favorite fairytale Cinderella. All members of our congregation had a good laugh watching our deacons play the step sisters of Cinderella with our female church secretary playing the role of the arrogant prince.

The event was crowned with a short service to usher us into the New Year. It was truly an atmosphere of togetherness as we shared the Lord's Supper with fellow members and listened to an inspiring message from Pastor Neville Johannie about God's ability to change any situation and hope for the coming year. Our church family closed this remarkable event with a firework display.

The year 2009 already seems very bright, and we certainly know that God plans to do even greater things for us.

Abena Asante-Bläschke

Joint Service

There was a real sense of excitement in the air as the seats of the Kreuzgemeinde sanctuary began to fill on the morning of Sunday, 25 January. It was that time of year again, when all the various language groups meeting in the same church building at various times and

days of the week, met together for a joint service. Looking around the room and up into the balcony, there were faces to be seen from the Spanish group, the Chinese group, the Arab group, the International Baptist Church, Bremen, and, not forgetting our host church, the German Baptist Church.

As we listened to each other's testimonies, sang and praised in song, and shared the Lord's Supper together, the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was truly felt in our midst. IBC Pastor Neville Johannie brought God's Word to us (with translation) which was a challenge to us all to become a part of the "Joshua generation" – a people wholly ready and available to the Lord for His purpose here on this earth. The sermon was closed with a call to respond and many of the hundred of God's people meeting in that place, felt the need to stand to their feet as a sign of recommitment to Him.

The sweet fellowship among us continued over a buffet lunch together, and once again we had a foretaste of that great day that's still to come – when a "great multitude, from every nation, tribe, people and language will stand before the throne of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9).

Nicola Münster

Outreach to Jacobs University

One of the things that we have been doing at IBC Bremen, is to equip our people to serve God by using the giftings that He has graciously bestowed upon them. Following our Church Retreat in August 2008, where our Pastor ministered on "Who is the Holy Spirit?," "What does the Holy Spirit do?," and "How should I respond to the Holy Spirit?," requests were received from our congregation

that we should offer some training and equipping geared to assisting us to discover, develop, and deploy our giftings.

Several workshops have been held, with further workshops planned. Each of these times has been a real blessing to our people, and also of great practical benefit, as some have been able to find their niche. We committed ourselves to prayer and to waiting on the Lord to see how He would lead us, and we have been excited to see how God has been birthing vision and initiatives from within the Body.

One of these has been an initiative to re-connect with the English-speaking, international Jacobs University (formerly, the International University of Bremen). An ad-hoc team of interested persons began to dream and plan together and an initial, informal Coffee & Cake gathering was held on the university campus on 1 March. The group representing our church was able to introduce themselves to the students who attended, and they were able to reciprocate. An informative presentation introduced those present to IBC Bremen, which was well-received. A buzzing time of fellowship ensued, during which we were also able to connect with the Christian fellowship on the campus. On the very next Sunday, we were delighted to welcome a small group of Jacobs University students to our service at IBC Bremen!

A worship service on the campus was planned for 29 March. We sense that God has His hand upon this venture, and we are looking forward to seeing how He will grow and direct it. To Him be all the glory and praise!

Neville Johannie

Kiev, Ukraine



Special events like this baptism make for a busy spring at Living Vine Baptist Church in Kiev, Ukraine. Worship times are a regular part of their ministry as well.

Sofia, Bulgaria

■ **Although the International Baptist Church Sofia** does not have a church building, we rent an auditorium in the World Trade Center (called INTERPRED by Bulgarians) for our Sunday morning worship services. A great advantage is visitors to the city can easily find us for worship. A great disadvantage is we do not have a place for prayer meetings, Bible studies, choir practice, and socials. Please pray with us that God will provide in His time.

We also enjoy many opportunities for serving the Lord. The Paul and Judy Ridgway family operate a ministry to the orphans of Bulgaria called *Bulgarian Child* (see bulgarianchild.org). Faithful believers, as well as generous companies donate clothes, shoes, medical equipment, and other articles. Our church members assist by unloading containers, sorting and preparing the items for use, and fitting the children. We traveled with the Ridgway family and George and Dorothy Hayner, fitting more than 750 pairs of shoes on children across Bulgaria.

We discovered that on these mission trips of mercy perhaps the most impor-



IBC, Sofia works with orphans in the area surrounding the city.

tant contribution is the interaction with each child. They cherish a smile, a hug, a handshake, and some kind words perhaps more than the food and clothes. *"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for Me.'"* (Matthew 25:40)

During the past year, we worshiped

with English-speaking believers from 35 nations. Included along with God's blessings are opportunities of experiencing cultures from around the world. Our congregation has thrilled to the food, music, and dances of India, Indonesia, and many other places. ■

Ray Smith

Cape Town, South Africa

■ **God has opened** the way for the Bellville Baptist Church to start a new congregation in the most cosmopolitan part of the city of Cape Town – Sea Point. According to Statistics SA, Cape Town had a population of 2.9 million in 2001. That had grown to approximately 3.5 million in 2007. The area of Sea Point is a high-density residential, commercial, and recreational part of the city, fairly close to the main CBD. It is also the site of the 2010 World Cup Soccer Stadium in Cape Town.

The leaders of Bellville Baptist Church have been praying earnestly about planting a new congregation somewhere else

in our city. It was our desire to start a new congregation along the lines of our current international congregation in Bellville. God has been blessing the church in Bellville and over the past few years we have seen large numbers of foreign nationals not only join the congregation, but come to faith, get baptized, and become active members. The senior pastor has over the years instituted a church leadership internship to equip emerging leaders from different nationalities, and because we now have a surplus of trained leaders, we felt it was time to start a new congregation.

In early February 2009, the Lord sent a former Baptist pastor, who lives and works in Sea Point to our congregation. From that meeting, the strategy to plant the new church developed. We have been able to hire the conference center of the Protea Hotel in Sea Point each Sunday for three months at the low cost of R1000 (80€) per Sunday. We will be using a boardroom in another hotel, The President, as the venue for one of our home cell groups – at no cost at all. God has made it possible for us to use these stunning, central venues. In the case of the

Protea Hotel, the general manager of the hotel has asked us to invite his entire staff to join our Sunday worship services.

Please pray for Cape Town International Baptist Church. ■

Dave Stemmett



BBC leaders plan a new church start.

Naples, Italy

■ **The International Baptist Church, Naples, Italy,** continues to grow and expand its ministry. We recently baptized three new believers and added two elders – Kes Townsend and Tyson Miller – to the elder board.

The spring promises to be busy when we will be teaching a course on Greek to Italian leaders. Five young women from Word of Life are coming to minister during their Easter break. ■

Tim Monahan