

HIGHLIGHTS

Volume 49, Issue 1

Published by the International Baptist Convention

April 2011



Jimmy Martin
**The Wave
of Worship**

Interlaken 2011
**Great Commandment,
Great Commission Love**

IBC Women's Conference
**Invincible Love
in Frankfurt**

The Wave of Worship:

Blessings and Challenges of Diverse Congregations

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For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility... His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross. ... In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:14-16, 21)

■ **A few years ago**, I attended an American baseball game in my hometown in Houston, Texas. The enthusiasm level of the game was lagging, and the crowd was getting bored. Then ... the WAVE started. One section of the stadium stood to their feet and threw their hands up in the air. The next section did the same, and the next and the next. The wave encircled the stadium until it returned to the first section, then started again. It was fun. To this day I cannot remember much about the game but I still remember the WAVE. No matter where you are from, you have probably experienced the WAVE.

Bruce Milne, in his insightful and inspiring book *Dynamic Diversity*, describes a "wave of worship" that travels around the world every week as God's people – beginning in the South Pacific Islands and continuing westward across time zone after time zone – gather in large and small groups of Christian believers, stand to their feet, and lift their hands in worship, proclaiming "Jesus is Lord." Imagine heaven as the audience of this "international celebration of the global people of God." Consider the diversity of the people of God in the wave of worship – every tongue and people, every generation and gender, every worship style and culture and social status and color and race and political persuasion – all united in their object of worship, God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. God's "multifaceted community is one as his body on earth. In Jesus they are one people, one life."

Milne, who served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Vancouver, Canada, for many years, raises the question of whether or not it is possible for God's diverse people today to experience practically and personally the unity that God desires and for which Christ prayed. Is it possible for many cultures and races and backgrounds to gather in the same *place* at the same *time* as a single congregation to celebrate Christ the barrier breaker and bridge builder?

Those of us who serve in the IBC know that it is possible; it is a vision worth pursuing and a direction worth taking. Most of our churches have at least 10 – some as many as 50 – nationalities represented. We know the blessings and challenges that come when churches dare to make the things that unite us more important than the things that divide us. Whether we are talking

about mostly military congregations or church families made up of business, diplomatic, refugee, or student populations – or a combination of those, plus nationals – IBC churches are *all* diverse racially, culturally, denominationally, and in many other ways.

I recently asked IBC pastors to share some of the blessings and challenges they face in their congregations. The responses I receive reflect the reality of serving in diverse, extremely mobile IBC congregations.

Blessings Abundant...

Many see the greatest blessing as being the enrichment that comes from the cross-fertilization of peoples from around the world. Scott Corwin (IBC Berlin, Germany) mentions the joy of "serving in a multi-cultural, multi-colored fellowship where God's people from across the globe contribute their unique expression of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Al Gary (Lubbock, TX, USA), who served for many years as a missionary to French West Indians, says that connecting with people from different cultures in an IBC church has been a real joy. "For the first time, I have made personal friendships with people from [many] different cultures." Harry Smith, interim pastor at IBC Düsseldorf, Germany, a church with members from more than 30 nations, says, "It is a wonderful blessing to worship with, and fellowship with so many committed Christians with such diversity. There is great unity, especially in our worship and in our desire to be a light shining on a hill. I am learning so much about the Lord and His people. Each culture represented gives me a little different perspective on life and faith. I am growing greatly as a person and as a believer in Christ." Another pastor noted that his own prejudices were challenged on a regular basis. Life in an international congregation forced him to "look in the face of my own cultural pride and realize the ugly sinfulness of it."

Penny Bourne (a member of Grace Fellowship, Stukeley, England) is British but belongs to a largely U.S. military fellowship. She speaks about learning from people of a different culture: "We have been very blessed as we work with these people to get an insight into a way of life and a culture that, on the surface, looks so like our own but which as we get to know folks better, is quite

HIGHLIGHTS

Published by the International Baptist Convention
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different and see many things that we would do well to take on board."

Bill Laughlin, who served for seven years but recently left Trinity IBC in Leidschendam, The Netherlands, sums up well the feeling of many IBC pastors: "By far, my greatest blessing is serving a church with believers representing 40-45 nationalities and probably a couple of dozen Christian groups and denominations. We 'major on the majors' and find acceptance and respect for the secondary issues. I often say that each Sunday we rehearse *Revelation 7:9-12* with worshippers from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues. Our worship is not 'monochrome' as so many churches experience but is in 'full color!'" Gareth Morris (IBC Prague, Czech Republic) calls the multicultural, multinational, and multi-background worship a "foretaste of heaven."

David Dixon (IBC Madrid, Spain), whose church has people from at least 40 different nations, notes that "friendships from all across the globe really stretch my sense of God's greatness as I see Him reflected in such diverse cultures and personalities who all find our unity and common purpose in Jesus Christ." Dave Pettis (IBC Munich, Germany) notes the reward of witnessing the "faith and devotion of so many people and the many different cultural backgrounds united by a simple love for their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Al Gary notes the opportunity of reaching the lost from around the world. "I have discovered that the mission field is all around us." Paul Dreesen (IBC San Jose, Costa Rica), who notes the blessing of living and serving in another country, also mentions the opportunity to "impact the world through the local church." Dave Stemmett (IBC Hamburg, Germany) also appreciates the "power of different people from different places saying the same things about the need for repentance and faith in Jesus."

One of the greatest blessings of ministering in an international church is not only reaching the world "at our doorstep," but also exporting disciples around the

world. Roger Roberts (IBC Brussels, Belgium) notes "the privilege of preaching and ministering to a broad social/economic/vocational spectrum of people from high-ranking government and business people to non-legalized refugees and to theological and other university and graduate students and research fellows, many of whom will return to their homeland to be our 'missionaries' in the work of the Great Commission literally around the world."

Jim Troutman (FBC Rota, Spain), who serves a mostly U.S. military congregation, speaks of the joy of ministering to a congregation that values the "gathering together" for the common good of all. "These are folks who are genuinely interested, not merely present for services." Roger Roberts speaks of the joy of preaching to people "hungry for and attentive and responsive to the Word."

Paul Dreesen also expresses a sentiment echoed by many pastors: "Having a lot of freedom to try and do different ministries, I feel we are more missional." Roger Roberts notes the "freedom to focus on the heart of pastoral ministry, unencumbered by expectations of being a CEO of a church in growth (statistical) competition with other churches." Dave Stemmett sees the "challenge of developing a Christ-centered, Bible-based Christian culture that speaks into 50 different cultures and even more sub-cultures" as rewarding to a pastor.

Ernie Gutierrez (Glad Tidings IF, Thessaloniki, Greece) expressed that he has been the recipient of IBC pastors and other leaders who "care not only about the church we pastor, but also the welfare of us pastors though we are miles away from each other. The help extended by the IBC so that we can be more effective in pastoring, expanding the kingdom, and personal growth is immense." Evans Kwashie (a church leader at IBC Antwerp, Belgium) noted that, in the absence of a pastor for many years, the church had been blessed by the ongoing help of IBC Regional Coordinator Richmond Ofori (pastor in Rotterdam, The Netherlands).

**EACH SUNDAY WE REHEARSE
REVELATIONS 7:9-12 WITH
WORSHIPPERS FROM EVERY
NATION AND ALL TRIBES AND
PEOPLES AND TONGUES.**



→ Jeffrey Bryan serves Trinity Baptist Church in Baumholder, Germany, a U.S. military congregation that regularly sees the majority of its members deployed for long periods of time. He notes the blessings of “meeting people at their point of greatest needs; in particular, helping young families become part of the body of Christ and learn to depend on the Lord through life’s trials.”

Several pastors mention the joy and encouragement of sharing the ministry with other godly leaders and the personal enjoyment of traveling to numerous accessible places.

Challenges Galore...

Many pastors note that the same factors that help to bring the greatest blessings of serving in diverse, highly mobile, “multi-everything” congregations also give rise to the greatest challenges. New pastors can easily make the mistake of thinking that because members speak the same language – English – their church will be similar to the churches they come from “back home.”

The diversity which can be a blessing in an international church also gives rise to the challenge of implementing a vision. One pastor says, “While we all have the same basic vision we do have disagreements on how to get there.” Administrative and people skills to bring everyone together are needed, such as finding the most effective way to merge Western and non-Western cultures. Dave Stemmett notes that the challenge of “maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace” is a challenge in a diverse church. “The potential for misunderstanding is endless.”

Pastors must deal with the tendency of people from some cultures to exclude others because of differences. This can be overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, but it is deadly to unity and peace in an IBC church and a severe hindrance to sharing the Gospel of reconciliation. Prejudice is a sin that is particularly harmful to international churches. Its roots, which often lie in cultural tradition and human pride or insecurity, must be examined and dealt with because it is a blatant denial of the Gospel of God’s grace.

Dave Stemmett notes the challenge of cross-cultural marriages in his congregation. “I spend a lot of time trying to help couples see that ‘different’ is not wrong, to help them overcome the barriers of language and culture.” The importance of biblical teaching about marriage takes on new perspectives in international settings.

Ernie Gutierrez notes that “people come and go like mushrooms.” Turnover is a great challenge. One pastor writes, “My greatest challenge is the turnover. Each year we transition 25% of our congregation, and with that comes the challenges of replacing servant-leaders, maintaining momentum in the church while re-educating new people, and sustaining institutional memory of how God has worked (and so will continue to work) among and through us.” Gareth Morris agrees: “Getting to know people quickly and involved quickly because of so many only being around for 1, 2, or 3 years is especially challenging

in finding, keeping, and growing leaders. We now have our fourth church treasurer in my 5½ years in Prague!” Roger Roberts notes the rapid turnover of trained ministry leadership at IBC Brussels, requiring constant leadership training. Turnover also is a challenge to discipleship.

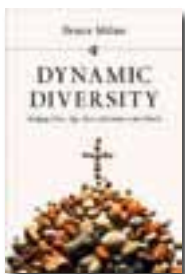
Scott Corwin notes the challenge of serving churches where the majority of members are “temporary participants in perpetual transit. Being in a constant cycle of welcoming and sending out 1/3 of your congregation every year taxes leadership, ministry, and finances.” Regarding finances, one pastor notes that financial/budget support is a challenge because many members are not well versed in strong biblical stewardship and support. “Gifts to special causes come easier than support for the budget.”

In churches where military members make up the majority of the membership, there is often the challenge of ministering in very tense, sometimes tragic, situations where family members may be wounded or killed. Jeffrey Bryan’s church has seen this very real challenge. The church serves a vital role in ministering to those “left behind.” Constant deployments also challenge leadership. Jeffrey notes the challenge of helping young believers learn to “step up and be the ones who minister,” rather than expecting to be only the recipients of ministry.

Jim Troutman expressed the common frustration of pastors when church members come with an expectation that all churches are basically the same. When they don’t find certain programs or ministries they are used to, they can become disappointed. “Well in our last church, we...” Jim says, “Ours is not the church they came from, and it will not be the church they will find when they leave.” Another pastor notes that people coming from various denominational backgrounds may be tempted to think, “We are the right group, and we have the right method or right theology.” This mentality hinders unity in the church.

Al Gary notes the challenge of presenting the Gospel: “how to show that Christ is the only answer to the multiple cultures and beliefs that I encounter. It is a challenge to move them (Asian and various Muslim cultures) from their curiosity and intellectual searching to faith and decision.” Many churches in places like Western Europe find that effective evangelism is a challenge due to the post-Christian secular mindset that is often suspicious of evangelicals and cynical toward the institutional church. One pastor notes that he serves in a place where some people have never heard the term “Baptist.” “Right away, they believe we are heretics.” Baptists are an extreme minority in many countries where IBC churches are located. In some cases, Islam is the predominant faith group. In other cases, another Christian denomination (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, etc.) is the state church or predominant group.

Cultural diversity can lead to misunderstandings and problems in communication and relationships. These require resolution in the church through a loving and unified spirit among the people. One aspect of communication that is a challenge is preaching. David Dixon expresses well the challenge of effec-



Bruce Milne:
Dynamic Diversity –
Bridging Class, Age,
Race and Gender in
the Church
 PB, 190 pages,
 ISBN:
 978-0830828067

tive preaching and teaching. "Trying to make the Gospel and its implications clear stretches my East Texas English (vocabulary and accent!) to become international enough to convey the riches and depth of God's truth and grace to people so different in ethnic and national backgrounds, as well as in language and communication styles." On a lighter note, one pastor laments, "Jokes do not translate well into other cultures, so I am learning to cut them out."

A common challenge expressed by IBC pastors is the feeling of isolation. One pastor writes, "Because your situation is so unique and because of the language barrier, it is hard to connect with other pastors." For this reason, the IBC makes a heavy investment in providing times where pastors and leaders can meet and share with one another, pray for one another, and find ways to minister together.

Other challenges mentioned by pastors include having to learn a new language and culture, education for children, going for long periods of time without a pastor, and living far away from family, especially aging parents.

The wave of worship that occurs each week around the world is experienced in microcosm in each IBC church that has learned to value its diversity and celebrate its unity in Christ. It is one of the many reasons that serving in the IBC provides an opportunity to display God's plan that His church be a "new humanity" that has experienced the power of the "barrier breaking" and "bridge building" power of the Gospel. It is not done perfectly, and probably never will be, because even at our best we are all "on the way" to becoming all God wants us to be. But the journey is a joy. It brings a smile to God, and it has an effect on the communities we are seeking to reach when we make progress and meet the challenges. As Bruce Milne expressed after 17 years of service in an international church at the heart of a secularized community, "incredible as it may sound to a generation where 'church' is commonly our greatest evangelistic liability, during these years in Vancouver, the congregation was actually our best evangelist." May it be true of each IBC church as we join the wave of worship that God intended for His people.

Joining you in THE WAVE, ■

Jimmy Martin

Ministry Leadership Conference

Helping to Grow Healthy Churches

■ **The International Baptist** Convention's Ministry Leadership Conference was held 25-29 March in Torremolinos on the Costa del Sol, near Malaga, Spain. The weekend conference provided pastors and leaders in IBC churches an opportunity to enjoy fellowship, relaxation, encouragement, teaching, and the weather and scenery of the Spanish coast. The theme for this year's conference was "Growing, Healthy Churches."

Keynote speaker for the weekend was Lindsay Brown, former general secretary of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. During his messages "Communicating the Gospel in Foreign Lands," Brown gave three models from the New Testament. The first model was the Gospel advancing to a major commercial center (Antioch as described in Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-4). The second model was based on Athens, a major university center (Acts 17:16-34). His final model described a broken-down church in the province of Asia (2 Tim 2:1-7). Paul in his letter to Timothy, Brown said, offered five exhortations for cross-cultural work:

• Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus (2:1)
 • Pass on what you know (2:2)
 • Be prepared to endure hardship or sacrifice (2:3-4)
 • Be single-minded, like an athlete (2:5)
 • Persevere like the farmer (2:6).

- Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus (2:1)
- Pass on what you know (2:2)
- Be prepared to endure hardship or sacrifice (2:3-4)
- Be single-minded, like an athlete (2:5)
- Persevere like the farmer (2:6).

Musical worship times were led by Yazz and the praise team from Calahonda Baptist Church, located 30 kilometers from Torremolinos. Yazz, a recognized pop singer in the 80s and 90s with top 10 records and a number one hit, shared her testimony during the Saturday evening banquet.

Other speakers for the weekend included Jerry Sheveland, president, Converge Worldwide, "Healthy Leaders, Healthy Churches;" Mark and Pat Juarez, Intimate Life Ministries, "Healthy Families, Healthy Churches;" and Tom Nebel, Church Planting and Lay Leadership Development, Converge Worldwide, "Healthy Disciples, Healthy Churches." The Juarez's also led a breakout session entitled "Keeping Marriages Healthy: What Do We Really Need from Each Other." Sheveland led a breakout session on "Navigating Change through Transformational Leadership." Dee Sheveland led a session on "Tips from a Therapist: Mentoring Skills for Soul Care."

Fifty-seven people representing 28 IBC churches attended the conference in addition to the praise team, speakers, and IBC staff. ■



Brown

photo by Debra Evetts



photo by Ruth Taylor

A first-timer's impression of the Ministry Leadership Conference:

Equipped to Glow in the Dark

BY MASON SMITH, PASTOR, IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, WIESBADEN, GERMANY



■ **Who doesn't love glow in the dark stars?** I loved them when I was a child. Now, even as a grown-up child, I still love them! They shine out a greenish glow, breaking up the fear and blindness of a long night.

What happens, however, if they stay in the dark forever? They eventually stop glowing! They must be recharged repeatedly within the light. I think that we leaders in ministry – pastors, teachers, deacons, and others – are very much like those glowing stars. While we are not called to be stars, we are called to be lights unto the world of darkness. Yet, if we stay only in the darkness, if all we ever do is serve, give, preach, teach, and minister, we will eventually fade into darkness ourselves. We must recharge now and again!

This is precisely the purpose of the IBC's Ministry Leadership Conference. I recently attended the MLC in Spain. It was my first experience with this refreshing oppor-

tunity to recharge within the light. It was simply wonderful! I was reenergized and motivated. I was encouraged and blessed. I was served and cared for, loved and led. Did I mention it was wonderful?

The speakers and workshop leaders clearly poured their hearts into their messages. The theme for the conference centered around the IBC's desire to see healthy churches and healthy leaders. The worship amplified these attempts and deeply ministered to my soul. As one of the worship leaders put it, "You don't have to worry about preaching next! Just worship. Just worship."

As a first-time attendee, however, there was an even deeper blessing in participating. It was a perfect chance to meet fellow pastors and leaders who are also ministering in international churches. I enjoyed hearing their stories and connecting with their senses of calling. I think that in many ways I have felt very alone in my calling to international ministry. Though I have a wonderful and supportive church, none of them can truly know what this is like for

a pastor, nor can any of my ministry colleges back in the U.S. The ministers within the IBC, however, know exactly what this is like! It can be so assuring and encouraging to hear another's story that resonates with one's own. It lets us know we are not alone.

This leads to the best part of all! Those attending the MLC are absolutely, wholeheartedly, wonderfully on YOUR side. This theme was echoed throughout the entire conference, from speakers to worship leaders, to IBC leadership and staff. I think I went for the wonderful worship and inspiring messages. What I got in support and encouragement, however, was even more valuable. In an age of denominational divisions and divisiveness, the vivid unity and fellowship of other leaders, even as diverse as they clearly are, means the world to a pastor like me. Indeed, I felt wonderfully cheered and rooted for, supported, and loved!

Now, I have a fresh charge in my glow. I am ready to shine a bit longer into the night. ■

Executive Council Meets

■ **The Executive Council** of the International Baptist Convention met 26 March as part of the Ministry Leadership Conference in Malaga, Spain. 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 that he and the Plans and Policies Ministry Team are working on a review of the Operations Manual. Ministry teams have also been asked for input.

President Erik Nielsen brought a report from the Executive Sub-Council. The IBC Annual Meeting 2011 will be held in Rome, Italy. Allistair Brown will speak on the theme of "True Grit: Effective Ministry in a Tough World." The ACM in 2012 will be held in Berlin, Germany. Bruce Milne is scheduled to be the speaker; the theme will be "Dynamic Diversity." The location of the MLC for 2011 is still to be decided. Consideration is being given to returning to Malaga.

Treasurer Bob Hnat reported on behalf of the Budget and Finance Ministry Team. 2010 ended with a deficit of 27,000 Euro. Fifty per cent of that was made up in Jan-

uary 2011, Hnat said, but the convention still needs more good months. Currently there is a 14,000 Euro deficit. The financial situation is reviewed monthly.

Darryl Evetts, coordinator for the Church Development Ministry Team, reported that Glen and Sue Herschberger have raised all of their support and will be moving to Panama City, Panama, in May to plant an English-language church there. Bob and Carol Marsh have raised 70% of their monthly support. They will be planting a church in Darmstadt, Germany. Sam Owens and the Southern Europe LEAD team are working to plant a new church in Pa'pa, Hungary. The Nordic-Baltic LEAD team is considering a church plant in Stockholm, Sweden.

Scott Corwin, representing the Missions Ministry Team, reported on the developments with the Perspectives course. There will be an orientation meeting for one week in May in Berlin for future hosts of the courses. Following that, three to four sites in Europe will be selected to host simultaneous courses. Speakers would go to each site. ■

Purpose and Passion

2011 IBC Singles Conference, Madrid, Spain, 4-6 November

■ We each have one life to live. These days will never come our way again. Wouldn't it be great to know that we are where we are supposed to be, doing what we were created to do? No regrets, just living life with purpose and passion. Come join us in Madrid on 4-6 November as we examine our lives from God's perspective and refocus ourselves on His agenda. There will be times of worship, meeting new friends from across Europe, exploring beautiful Madrid, and resting in God's Word together. For online registration and more information, go to www.ibtchurches.org and click on the events tab. See you in Madrid! ■

Preaching in the International Church

BY PAUL DREESSEN, PASTOR, INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA



“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.” 2 Timothy 4:2 NIV

■ **In his classic book** on preaching *Between Two Worlds*, John Stott uses the analogy of a preacher as a bridge-builder. He is bridging the gap between two worlds. One foot of the preacher must be firmly planted in the Bible while the other foot is planted in the contemporary world.

I could not agree more. But what happens when the contemporary world in which the preacher finds himself is incredibly diverse? What happens when the contemporary audience is made up of people from various ethnic, cultural, racial, and denominational backgrounds? Trying to have one’s foot firmly planted in such a diverse contemporary world is the challenge of preaching in an international church. Yet, when it is done well, when preaching is Biblically based, Spirit-filled, and applicable to the hearer, then there is great potential for life transformation.

Preaching to any congregation is a daunting task. Preaching to an international congregation brings about some unique challenges. The purpose of this article is to identify those unique challenges of preaching to the international church:

1. The Cultural Diversity Challenge

Because there are so many different nationalities, races, and cultures, everyone comes with a different set of filters from which they will decipher the message. An example of this would be with the illustrations we use. As an American who has spent most of his life in the U.S., I realize how many of my illustrations revolve around U.S. culture. Whether it has to do with geography, history, or sports, so much of what I use requires a decent understanding of American culture.

For example, when referring to a location like Flint, Michigan, you are assuming everyone in the audience knows that the U.S. has towns and states. This may not necessarily be true. Simply clarifying that Flint, Michigan, is a town in one of the northern states in the U.S. is helpful. However, this obviously would not need to be done with a location as internationally known as Los Angeles or New York.

When using a football illustration it’s critical you identify what kind of football you are talking about. Is it American football or the type the rest of the world plays that only Americans call soccer? Then,

you can’t assume that those not from the U.S. will know who Vince Lombardi or Joe Montana are. Again, just giving a little more detail can help clarify your illustration.

There are other examples. If you speak about driving you certainly need to be aware that there are some in the audience who have never driven and that actually owning a car is almost beyond their imagination. It doesn’t require the preacher to completely change his illustrations; it simply means that a few words of description or clarification will help the majority of the audience to understand better.

2. The Language Barrier Challenge

Though English is the main language that is being used in most international church services, you cannot assume that it is everyone’s first language. Many who attend English-speaking churches may be fluent in English but have another language as their dominant idiom. Add to this the various accents that are used, including your own, and there is great potential for people not to understand the messenger and thus miss the message. Add to the mix another factor like simultaneous translation which some international churches offer and you have a real challenge before you.

So how does one overcome the potential language barrier? Here are a few suggestions.

a. *Speak slowly and distinctly.* The majority of preachers, when they get going can speak very quickly. But just remember the quicker the pace of your speaking, the greater the chances of someone not understanding you.

b. *Be aware of your accent.* Most people cannot change their accent nor do they need to. This would be unnatural. However, most people can diminish certain strong traits of their accent in public speaking with some conscious effort.

c. *Decide thoughtfully on how much you want to use a play on words or colloquial language.* Effective speakers usually like to incorporate a joke, story, or phrase that is a play on words. It’s also very easy when preaching extemporaneously to use colloquial phrases that you grew up with. Both of these can still be used when preaching to an international audience; just be aware that it may take a certain percentage of your hearers a little longer to process and

understand what you’ve just said. I have noticed that when I use a joke or phrase that is a play on words there is a kind of ripple effect in the audience. Strong English speakers get it almost immediately but those who aren’t as strong will have a delayed reaction. I sometimes observe people laughing 30 seconds after what I said, and I realize that they are just now getting the word play.

I would like to offer some additional suggestions that have been helpful in ministering to an international church.

1. *Broaden your illustrations, stories, and jokes.* Because people do come from so many different places, try to use illustrations and humor that represent various cultures.

2. *Learn all you can about the country you reside in and interweave this information into your sermons.* Both the nationals and the internationals will appreciate it.

3. *As you learn the language of the country, don’t be afraid to interject a few phrases and words on occasion.* Those native in that language enjoy hearing their language used, and most of the others will still understand what you are saying.

4. *In preparing your message, think through how it will be received and understood by all of those who attend.* Will they understand the words you use in your key points? Are the illustrations understandable and varied?

Preaching is indispensable to Christianity. Preaching is sharing God’s Word in the power of the Holy Spirit through human personality for the purpose of life change. This is true in any church in any culture. For those who weekly stand in the pulpit of an international church there are some unique challenges that come from the diverse audience that sits gazing at you when you preach. But when we recognize the unique challenges and then we make the needed adjustments, life change can happen. We can be used by God as a bridge builder between the biblical world and our diverse contemporary world. ■



John Stott: *Between Two Worlds – The Challenge of Preaching Today*
PB, 351 pages,
ISBN: 978-0802806277



Interlaken Summer Experience

“Great Commandment, Great Commission Love” Theme



David and Teresa Ferguson



TV Thomas

■ **“Great Commandment, Great Commission Love”** is the theme for the International Baptist Convention’s annual Interlaken Summer Experience in Switzerland, 9-14 July. The theme Bible verses for the week are Matthew 22:37-39 and Matthew 28:19-20. 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.

“The week offers something for everyone,” said Scott Corwin, coordinator for this year’s event. “Families will be enriched by the teaching from our morning and evening speakers, and seminar leaders. There will be special events for singles. And 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.”

David and Teresa Ferguson will be the morning speakers. Their passion for seeing the Great Commandment of loving God and loving others lived out among God’s people has led them to impact thousands of ministers and lay people. As co-directors of Great Commandment Network/Intimate Life Ministries, they direct a multi-disciplinary team who serves more than 35,000 churches in the U.S. and abroad with training and resources.

The Fergusons have been married for more than 40 years and have co-authored several books and numerous articles. They reside in Austin, Texas (USA), and have three adult children and six grandchildren.

TV Thomas will be the evening speaker. Thomas is the director of the Centre for Evangelism and World Mission in Regina, Canada. He has served as a licensed evangelist of the Christian and Missionary Alliance since 1974. Born in Malacca, Malaysia, Thomas attended Madras and Nagpur Universities in India. With God’s call on his life for full-time vocational ministry, Thomas moved to North America in 1971 to do theological training.

Thomas and his wife Mary have three children.



His deep commitment to the cause of world evangelization calls for extensive national and international travel to minister to churches, colleges, seminaries, and conferences.

Brian Kirby and Scott Sontag will be the worship leaders. Kirby served as pastor of Emmanuel International Church, Paris, France until last year. He and his family now live in Virginia where he is involved in church ministry. Sontag is the Minister of Music and Young Adults at EIC. He is the co-founder of the Emmanuel Gospel Choir. EGC is composed of 100 members, covering 10 different nationalities and is an outreach ministry to the community.

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.

Singles attending the assembly will find a number of special activities planned during the afternoon and evening times. Dorm rooms have been reserved at the Backpackers Hostel across 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 15 June.

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 Tom and Zac Hufty (see related article below).

There is something for the children as well. During all the scheduled meetings, children of all ages will enjoy a biblical-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
- €170 Single "Early Bird" with meals (4 evening meals) / €190 Single with meals
- €320 Single "Early Bird" meals & accommodation / €340 Single meals & accommodation

Early Bird rates are available before 1 June.

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

EBWU Women Get "In Step with the Spirit"

■ **For a few days** last November, 53 women (and 2 men) from 28 countries gathered in Budapest, Hungary, for the European Baptist Women's Leadership Conference. Women came from Wales in the west to Jordan in the east, from Norway in the north to Israel in the south, to get "In Step With the Spirit."

Speakers from the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, The Netherlands, and Hungary spoke on a variety of topics including the Holy Spirit; "identity;" servant leadership, fellowship, and worship; and missions.

IBC Women's Team member Inez Spruit was thrilled to be able to take part in the conference. "What a privilege it

was to represent IBC Women at the conference. Although we don't know each other personally, we don't know each other's circumstances, through the bond of Christ we experience our Godly family ties," Spruit said. "What a blessing to be part of God's family. What a blessing to spend time with my sisters in Christ coming from so many different nations. This weekend each one of us could hear that God is very much at work where ever we live."

A highlight of the conference came Sunday morning during a communion service led by speaker Karen Smith from Wales. As part of the service, each woman was invited to place a scrap of cloth on the floor to make the shape of the cross – a reminder that Christ died for all. The pieces of cloth were all different: some plain, others patterned, some ragged, some neat, some thick, some thin. "The Church is made up of all sorts of different people," Smith said, "but all have a place in God's plan and are of value to Him." After the service, women were able to take their pieces of cloth as mementoes. ■

Margaret Brown
EBWU Committee Member



Inez Spruit

You are Not Your Own at Euroventure 2011

■ **Euroventure 2011** will take place 9-14 July in Grindelwald, Switzerland. It is designed for youth ages 12-19 and is part of the International Baptist Convention's Interlaken Summer Experience.

Euroventure will be a great place for students to understand what a relationship with Jesus Christ is all about. It will also provide a training ground and next-level experience for students who desire a deeper walk. This year's theme is "You Are Not Your Own," based on 1 Corinthians 7:22-23.

The week also includes opportunities to experience all that Switzerland has to offer including white water rafting, tobogganing, and hiking in the gorgeous Swiss Alps. Euroventure is filled with a good balance of spiritual growth times, physical activity, fun and games, fellowship, and worship.

This summer the musical portion of Euroventure will be led by Doug Pierce and Band. Pierce's upbeat worship style and amazing love for the Lord will be a blessing to all as the group prepares to hear God's Word brought to the Euroventure Experience by the father and son team of Tom and Zac Hufty.

The Hufty's will lead the morning and evening worship times. Their personal styles of speaking

will capture your attention through truth and humor. They consider each other the best "guy" friend and actively reveal their love for God's people by sharing His Word and helping students discover, develop, and demonstrate God's purpose for their lives.

Euroventure 2011 will be Tom and his wife Rhonda's 15th year of involvement with the camp. "We love this camp," they said. "We can't wait to return each year and see familiar faces and meet new friends. It has been a life-changing experience for the entire Hufty family."

Registration fees for the week are

- €240 before 1 May
- €260 from 1 May
- €280 from 1 June
- €300 from 1 July
- €180 for adult sponsors
- Two or more family members attending save €20 each.

For more information, see www.abc-churches.org/events/euroventure2011 ■



Doug Pierce



Zac Hufty



Tom Hufty

IBC Women's Conference

God's "Invincible Love" Shines

Strangers No More

And they came from faraway places – from India, China, Italy, Belgium, the United States, and many more lands – to gather together as sisters, united through their faith in the risen Christ, for a brief moment in time at an IBC Women's Conference in Frankfurt, Germany. They were a blend of newcomers, filled with excitement, anticipation, and perhaps even trepidation, as well as seasoned travelers, who had sojourned here before and welcomed opportunities for fellowship and reunion. Like the suitcases they packed for the journey, some carried heavy burdens, weighed down by the challenges of life – loss of a loved one, deployments, marital and parenting issues, or health and financial situations; others traveled lightly, taking only the essentials and leaving extraneous items behind in anticipation of filling their luggage with "souvenirs" from the weekend experience.

And all returned home blessed by the experience, with lighter loads for those who were willing to leave their burdens at the foot of the cross and with precious souvenirs tucked in their hearts and minds,

...for they learned that our God is a BIG GOD, capable of wondrous things, and they departed richer in scriptural knowledge as a result of a gifted teacher, filled with the Holy Spirit, guiding them on a weekend walk through the Bible.

...for they gathered together to worship with voices lifted in praise and sang sweet harmonies that rose to the heavens like incense.

...for they received personal enrichment through prayer time, free time, and attendance at seminars.

...for they applied lessons learned from the conference and put faith into action by ministering to the homeless in the streets of Frankfurt and distributing gift bags.

...for they witnessed God's grace covering the homeless like a warm cloak in the form of a gentle touch, a prayer, and a kind word, and conversely, witnessed the joy of giving through the universal response of a smile, a blown kiss, and weeping.

...for they came as representatives of many churches and many nations and through the buffer of God's grace and love, manifested in encouraging words and comforting embraces, they departed as sisters – strangers no more.

Mary Bendemuhl-Schlueter; Frontline Community, Ramstein, Germany

■ **When IBC women** gathered at the Sheraton Congress Hotel in Frankfurt, Germany, 1-3 April, for the "Invincible Love" conference, they were in for some special treats. Leaving behind responsibilities of work and family, they got a chance for a little pampering. The hotel's pleasant rooms, spa facilities, and yummy meals made it a true getaway for many.

Last year's conference in Madrid and the turmoil of the volcanic ash cloud taught participants so much about God's power and His control over everything. This year it seemed God wanted to pour out His love on those gathered.

Musicians Miriam Wallace and Teresa Gomez set the tone for the weekend from the first notes they played. With worship songs such as "Sing to the King" and "Here in This Place" (lyrics: Come just as you are, we are all unworthy, to enter the presence of God, for He is holy), women were encouraged to tune the world out and turn their hearts and minds to God. The laid-back style of Wallace and Gomez made for great worship times. At the first session, Wallace said she and her sister Teresa were worship facilitators and not leaders. "We're all worshippers," she said. Their love for the Lord shone through their music. The choice of songs and the style and timing of the music throughout the weekend made it easy for women to praise the Lord and raise joyful voices to Him.

After an icebreaker and skit Friday night, conference speaker Eleanor Lewis took the stage and joked that "this weekend we're going to study the whole Bible." She wasn't kidding. Lewis, an international speaker and Bible teacher, provided each woman with a copy of a Bible study she had co-authored. Using it as a guide during her four sessions, she gave an overview of the history, writings and prophecies of the Old and New Testaments. Her teaching methods and down-to-earth speaking style made what may

have sounded like a daunting task memorable for the women attending.

On Saturday and Sunday, women had the chance to attend seminars on a variety of subjects including health, photography, transition, marriage, and discipleship. The hardest thing for many was deciding which three to attend.

A highlight for many came on Saturday night, when women got the chance to take their faith to the streets of Frankfurt. Women had brought toiletry items, chocolate, and other non-perishable foods to the conference, and on Saturday afternoon volunteers prepared approximately 60 gift bags for the homeless. Before the weekend a group from Frontline Community, Ramstein, Germany, prepared 85 bags (thank you to Tanya Wood from Frontline for providing more than 100 pink bags and to Zach Knittle from Frontline who knitted scarves and hats). After the session Saturday night, 72 women went to Frankfurt's main train station and from there seven groups set out and gave the bags, which also contained Bibles and socks or other clothing items, to prostitutes and homeless men and women in the surrounding neighborhood. These streets were a far cry from the luxury of the conference hotel and helped put into perspective how truly blessed we are. Those taking part got a chance to not only give out the bags but also to give a touch or a smile and a little hope to those who had so little. Comments from women participating in the faith walk made it clear that Frankfurt's needy weren't the only ones blessed that night.

As the weekend drew to a close on Sunday, Lewis asked the women, "What has the weekend done for you?" Here are some of their comments:

- "It has taught me a lot, especially about the Old Testament and Revelation. Whoa!"
- "I listened to our Father, and I have nothing to worry about."
- "I am tired of living like that 'floppy glove.'" (This refers to one of Lewis's illustrations. She had held up a glove and said without a hand the glove is useless, just as we are useless without the Holy Spirit. It the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to love, touch, give, serve, and witness.)
- "Thank you to everyone who shared their story. I'm not alone. It was a blessing to hear what others have gone through."
- "God's love from Genesis to Revelation is so amazing. It's amazing we had a whole Bible overview."



Gomez

Lewis

photos by Debra Evetts

Through in Frankfurt



Women gather in hotel lobby before distributing gift bags to the homeless.

- "I'm blessed to be here. It wasn't planned. God provided everything, and He spoke to me personally."
- "Give up control."
- "Freedom to not have it all together."
- "I appreciate all the ladies teaching put into it. It was a blessing."
- "Our church is struggling, and we are going to bring back what we received."
- "Encouraged God has a plan for each of us."
- "God is with us. We have nothing to worry about."
- "He is sovereign over bad things and good."
- "Taking God's love to the streets. Thank you for that opportunity."

God was truly in the details of the conference. As late as 1 March, only 60 women had registered for the conference, but in the end 173 registered and 154 came. Many people joined together to plan the weekend and make sure everything went smoothly. Thank you to Laurie Martin and Debra Evetts and their hardworking teams of women (and one special man, Matt Beck) from Frontline Community in Ramstein, Germany, and International Christian Fellowship in Oberursel for giving us a weekend to remember.

If you missed this year's conference, be sure to save the date for the next one. The "Beneath His Wings" conference with speaker Liz Curtis Higgs will be held in Budapest, Hungary, 20-22 April 2012. We hope to see you there! ■

Nancy Blancato, IBC Women's Team

Giving, Receiving Love

Invincible love would be the most accurate theme for this year's IBC Women's Conference. When we walked through the doors of the Sheraton, there were women there to share God's love. Smiles, anticipation, hugs, and excitement filled the air. We were ready to give love and receive love.

Love had to be on the minds of those who prayerfully selected the location because it was comprised of a combination of luxury and comfort. We enjoyed the rooms and the company of our sisters in Christ. The food and service was excellent. The atmosphere was even better. Quality amenities were available; however, most of us opted to love on each other and meet the many new interesting women from all over the world. Everything was in place to prepare our hearts and minds for all forms of worship.

The main sessions as well as the seminars gave us practical teaching that would prove to change our lives when put into action. We were offered many dynamic seminars in which to take part. The only problem was trying to choose. Each speaker gave insightful, personal testimonies that encouraged us. They shared information through God's Word that strengthened us. We then had the opportunity to take that love out to the streets of Frankfurt. There are countless stories that we could share on how we were able to show God's invincible love. I ashamedly need to point out that I usually do not enjoy conferences for several different reasons; however, this was not the case this time. The entire experience leads me to excitedly anticipate the next one!

Paulette Thompson, Frontline Community, Ramstein, Germany

Faith in Jesus Christ: A World Thing

After living overseas for five and a half years, I have a new perspective on global Christianity.

Growing up in the church in Texas, I feel like I had a very limited worldview. Yes, I participated in mission trips (to Mexico). Yes, I was familiar with the plight of missionaries and believers in Africa and East Asia. On a day-to-day basis however, Christianity felt very much like an American thing. A Texas thing.

In Italy, God led us to an IBC church (Aviano Baptist) and in Germany the Lord sent us to another IBC church, Frontline Community. I attended conferences for IBC churches in Milan and in Frankfurt and was given the chance to see how God is at work worldwide.

Most recently at the "Invincible Love" conference in Frankfurt, surrounded by beautiful believers from all over Europe and the United States, Egypt, Kenya, Singapore, Thailand, The Philippines, Latin America, and many more, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of global unity. I am just a small part of the work He does in all corners of the Earth. How amazing to me that the Holy Spirit doesn't just speak English, but that he speaks His truth into the heart of anyone who seeks after him.

I believe these experiences are a very small taste of what heaven will be like. I reflected on the prayers and praise of those all around me with different accents, different shades of skin, different cultures, and different life experiences and was struck by the beauty of it all. I thank God for the occasion to worship with those precious women. I am so grateful to have had these opportunities and to understand faith in Jesus Christ is most definitely a "world thing."

Erin Allison, Frontline Community, Ramstein, Germany

San Jose, Costa Rica

■ **One of the great joys** of being in an international church is that it offers so many fun, culturally diverse opportunities. In the last several months the International Baptist Church, San Jose, Costa Rica, has participated in a number of events that reflect the cultural diversity of our church. One of the universities where we have students had an Africa night. They invited people from our church, and we had a good group attend. It was a night of singing, dancing, stories, and food. Another fun activity was celebrating the Chinese New Year with one of our families who are from Malaysia. They invited several families from our church and also several families from the Chinese community. One of the activities that was really special was the tossing of a "blessing salad." As

everyone gathered around and mixed the salad we were to speak blessings from the Lord to one another for the New Year. We also had our international Sunday where we celebrate our cultural diversity as a church. We included in our service songs from different countries, a parade of flags, and Scripture read in various languages.

Another highlight we've had was the opportunity to have Glenn and Sue Herschberger, who will be planting an English-speaking church in Panama City, Panama, come and share about this work. Our church will be one of their sponsors, so it was a great opportunity to personally hear from them and to catch the vision of planting English-speaking churches. ■

Paul Dreessen



Members of IBC San Jose toss a Chinese blessing salad.

Wiesbaden, Germany

Living Christmas Tree

■ **An extraordinary God** did through ordinary people something extraordinary! When I lived in Florida I had heard about the Living Christmas Tree but it was not until here at Immanuel Baptist Church,

Wiesbaden, Germany, that I could see and hear it. I felt that it was one of the rewards that God has given me personally, but also as a church. I was amazed by the sight of such splendor, creativity, and talent spilled out by people who wanted to bless others

with the love of God!

When I am in the car, my son Manoh likes to listen to the CD of the Living Christmas Tree. Memories fill my mind, and each time I am touched in my heart. It is not because I am getting sentimental; I am just touched by all who have worked on the Living Christmas Tree to come overseas, giving generously of their time and enduring trials like weather, colds, long hours, and spending Christmas away from their loved ones. We were so important to them that they came to Germany; I can't let this go by without saying "Thank you" for sharing a glimpse of heaven.

Flora McGhee



Immanuel, Wiesbaden hosts the Living Christmas Tree.



New Pastor Mason Smith gives the children's sermon on his first Sunday.

Sofia, Bulgaria

■ **The International Baptist Church** in Sofia, Bulgaria, recently called Scott Chadwick as their pastor. Scott, Sandy, and Tanner arrived in Sofia on 18 March and were officially installed on 10 April. Pastor Scott is in his 14th year of ministry and has served churches in Arkansas, Georgia, and Tennessee. Scott retired after 20 years of service from the United States Air Force in 2005. He and Sandy have 4 children: Amy, Jessica, Jordan, and Tanner, and two grandchildren. Sandy enjoys

women's ministry and has participated in missions in the U.S., Antigua, Jamaica, Brazil, and Europe. Tanner enjoys working with youth and was commissioned as a Sojourner with the North American Mission Board last summer. He has enjoyed participating in missions in Brazil and Europe. ■

Jimmy Martin offers an installation prayer for Scott, Sandy, and Tanner Chadwick.



Calahonda, Spain

■ **The International Baptist Church**, Calahonda, Spain, has had a busy few months to start the year and have seen more non-Christian families visiting the church; some were led to come after the Carol Concerts at Christmas.

In March there was great celebration as the baptismal pool was used for the first time.

The praise and worship team were asked to attend the IBC Conference, using their incredible talents throughout the

four days in Torremolinos at the end of March. Many were blessed by the conference, and new friends were made.

On Saturday, 2 April, a large group of people turned up at the church to tidy the grounds. Over the winter the weeds had taken over, pushing their way through the gravel on the forecourt and massing up the fences to almost waist height. As we don't have a gardener we had to take matters into our own hands and clear the lot. Some of the vegetation had to be

trimmed away and then a good spray of weed killer applied, but most of the weeds were pulled out by hand and that was no mean feat as the ground was dry. Plenty of refreshment was on hand as well as a warm lunch.

One of the members came up with the idea of planting donated bougainvilleas along one of the fences, which will at least make for a mass of color and give the church a beautiful feature. ■

Sue Labbett

Portimão, Portugal

■ **The Christmas season** was exceptionally busy for the International Christian Fellowship, Portimão, Portugal, with many special events for all ages, from the very young to the very old.



photo by Joy Borgan

Children at the children's home are excited with their gifts.

The first event was our Toddlers' Christmas party where we had a great turn-out of children from babies to the school-age brothers and sisters of the toddlers who come week by week. "Parents & Toddlers" is a weekly ministry of our church to young families where the parents can come for tea or coffee and let their children play. At present none of these families attend our church but please pray that this will change and that some will start to come along.

The second event was the children's home Christmas party. Grace and Josh Borgan provided Christmas music on flute and keyboard, and all 36 children received gifts. Just when we weren't sure where the money was going to come from to buy all the presents, a local Canadian couple (whom we didn't even know) contacted us and asked if they could help do something for needy children this Christmas! Isn't it amazing how God provides?

The third event was the Christmas din-

ner for the Soup Kitchen. This is a very important ministry which began this last year. It started in an old restaurant, then continued for many months on the streets. Just before Christmas when the weather was becoming too cold to be out of doors, the Lord provided another building for us to use. Just a few days before Christmas, we were able to move into the new place and serve a hot Christmas roast dinner to many people (ranging in age from 20s to 70s) who would otherwise have no special Christmas celebration at all.

The fourth special Christmas event was when our church family went to a local nursing home to sing Christmas carols and take refreshments. Visiting the home is an ongoing activity that we do once a quarter. Some of these elderly people do not have family members who come to see them so they really appreciate our visits. ■

Joy Borgan

Madrid, Spain

■ **On 30 January**, the Immanuel Baptist Church, Madrid, Spain, celebrated youth Sunday with participation from our youth and university students in multiple aspects of the service. Our university group this spring outnumbers our youth, with 20-25 of them regularly attending our biweekly Bible studies. Pray for these young people as they learn to be bilingual and multicultural, that the Lord will lift their eyes to fields that are white for harvest.

On the first Saturday in February, IBC women's coffee groups gathered for fellowship and prayer all over Madrid. The "east side" group met at Pastor David and Susie Dixon's apartment in Alcalá de Henares, with 15 women from eight different countries – among them, two "new

believers in process" from Cuba and one Spanish Catholic, wife of one of our faithful members. Most of these women have experienced the trials of "displacement" from their homeland and struggle with the issues of "singing the Lord's song in a foreign land." Together we're learning the joy of "harmony in Christ."

The "north side" women's group met at the home of Margot Van der Boor, a Dutch saint baptized at IBC four years ago, and now our VBS director for the second year in a row. Pray for Margot and all the preparations for this year's efforts to plant the seed of the Word in many young hearts, 27 June - 1 July. ■

Susie Dixon



Immanuel, Madrid women meet for a coffee group.

Hamburg, Germany

Food for the Homeless Mission

■ **Twice a month** members of the International Baptist Church, Hamburg, Germany, and other volunteers get together to go out onto the streets of Hamburg to distribute hot coffee and sandwiches to some of the city's most overlooked citizens – the men and women who live on the streets. However, it isn't about the free food and coffee, but about sharing time and the Good News with others who may very well feel forgotten, not only by their fellow men, but also by God.

The group meets alternatively on Saturday or Sunday morning, prepares coffee and sandwiches, and then goes out in pairs or groups of three, offering food and conversation to the homeless in Altona, St. Pauli, the city center, and the main train station. Although it must be added, not all of the "homeless" are without



IBC Hamburg distributes coffee and sandwiches to the homeless.

an apartment, some have just moved their social focus "to the streets."

Before going out, prayer is made to the Lord, so that the group members are placed in the right mindset. It is a reminder that we are going out for God's glory (and not our own). It emboldens us to speak freely about the Lord's grace. It must be said that often we just talk about the weather and politics with them and offer an ear to their stories and concerns. We take them how they are, and we meet them where they are.

We have yet to experience any sudden conversions on the street, but we have faith in the Holy Spirit. Sometimes just the openness and willingness of the people to listen to the Gospel or to accept a prayer on their behalf gives us this belief that God is at work. We hope and pray that a seed is being planted in their hearts. And we all know what God can do with a little seed.

Tracey Williams-Zinn

"Many Nations, One Song": The IBC Hamburg Worship CD

After many months of dreaming, praying, and waiting, the vision for the "Many Nations, One Song" worship CD came to life. The main reason behind creating the CD was to try to give a representation of the diverse songs and special people that



have blessed the church over the last few years. The International Baptist Church, Hamburg's unity in spite of our different worship traditions is a powerful testimony to how Jesus is able to unite people from every nation in praising and worshipping Him.

Seeing how God's powerful hand enabled us to complete the CD (16 tracks completed in 4 weeks!) has made this project THE highlight of the IBC worship ministry in 2010. It was amazing to see how God provided people inside and outside of IBC Hamburg who shared their valuable resources and knowledge, enabling us to have the CD available before Christmas.

With the wise and generous support from the church leadership, the faithfulness of the Prayer Team, along with the sacrificial contributions made by everyone involved, "Many Nations, One Song" grew from simply being a "worship ministry project" into an IBC Hamburg project.

It is the worship ministry's prayer that through the songs, the readings, or the testimonies (in the CD booklet), people will be drawn to praise and to worship the God who is calling out to a people to be His own from every tribe, nation, and language.

Sandra Blake-Lange

Freiburg, Germany

■ **It is a pleasure** to testify the glory of God in our ministry at Royal Family International Baptist Church to all of you. The last year has been a year of blessed moments for us. Like every year we had a number of programs with prayers and the manifestation of the Spirit of God among us. Although we have changed our place of worship, the church is still vital, and we have had some new visitors from differ-

ent nations who worship with us. Praise be to God! We believe that God will bring us to our promised land and that He who started our journey of life and ministry will lead us to the end of it. Baden-Baden, our branch, had also been witness of the greatness and majesty of God on earth. We had and still have a number of programs there which everybody who takes part in it experiences blessings, miracles,

signs, and wonders afterwards.

We know by faith that this year will be our year and that we will conquer this country and its residents. May God help all of us to reach the fulfilling of His mission – the salvation of all souls. Praise, worship, glory, and honor be unto the one and only God over all in Jesus' name.

Peprah Kwakye

Brackley, England

■ **We are rejoicing** in the way that the Lord has blessed our Little Fishes Pre-school which was started by Peter Idris and Ruth Taylor some 15 years ago. At the beginning of 2010 we were led to apply for a large capital grant from our county council and in due course we heard that we had been granted nearly £100,000. As a result we embarked on a refurbishment and building project which has just been completed at a total cost of £130,000.

The children have been using the new pre-school room since the beginning of the new term, and it is a great success. There is also a new soft-play area outside which is very popular. The number of children attending is most encouraging. We had a special celebration on 18 February when our local Member of Parliament and town mayor attended together with other dignitaries.

Roger Lewry



Brasilia, Brazil

A Present Help ... A Future Hope

■ **On Saturday**, 19 March, the International Baptist Church, Brasilia, Brazil, celebrated its 2nd annual women's conference. Women representing 14 countries came together for a time of praise, worship, and teaching of the Word. The theme was "A Present Help ... A Future Hope." The conference centered on perseverance in Christ during times of suffering and the hope God offers in Revelation 21:4: "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

The conference opened with two teaching sessions. April King (USA) taught about the struggles of Asaph in Psalm 77 and how we too are invited to be sustained by remembering God's great works and promises. Philomena Assan (Ghana) pointed to David's thirst for God in Psalm

63 and reminded the women of how we all have a responsibility to seek God, even during times of great struggle. The third teaching session included a powerful video presentation entitled "Suffering for the Sake of..." by Joni Eareckson Tada. Each woman attending was surprised to find in her gift bag a personal letter from Joni encouraging them to lean on God and persevere through their sufferings. The conference concluded with a delicious catered meal.

Whose Normal?

What does it mean to be normal? And, whose normal are you trying to satisfy? "Whose Normal?" has been the 2011 theme for students at IBC-Brasilia. Is normal defined by majority opinion? Grounded on Romans 8:29-30 and Philippians 2:1-11, students have been learning the truth that Christ defines normal – not popular opinion. People living apart from, and

in disobedience to, Christ are living the abnormal (fallen) life.

Our annual SMASH (Students Making a Stand for Him) retreat, held 25-27 March, was a continuation of this year-long theme. Students were challenged to consider Ephesians 6:10-20 and engage in the battle to live according to Christ's norm. We are pleased that a special mission team from Clearwater Community Church in Chelsea, Alabama, came to take part in the retreat. SMASH leaders Jonathan Axworthy, Jessica Axworthy, Stephanie Downing, and Lauren Wheeler worked tirelessly in coordinating a weekend marked by personal reflection, accountability, and a lifestyle of commitment. In addition to personal devotions, Bible teaching, games, and group activities, the SMASH band ("NORM") received special coaching from musicians with the U.S. missions team.

■ *Marc Day*



Women from 14 countries participate in IBC Brasilia's women's conference.



Youth enjoy activities as part of the SMASH retreat.

Bratislava, Slovakia

■ **It was at our church council** meeting in February that our Interim Pastor Don Smith said he would like to do some extended teaching on prayer. He suggested an extra afternoon session following one of our shared potluck lunches that we have on the last Sunday of each month. However one of our new council members said why not have a church weekend retreat? Now it is the policy of the church administrator to allow people who have good ideas to run with them.

So six weeks later 21 from International Baptist Church, Bratislava, Slovakia, travelled by car three hours from the city, across the border into Hungary to the Domos Bible Centre overlooking the River Danube. Rooms were comfortable and simple wholesome food prepared for us, all for the princely sum of 20€ per night.

We had a great time of fun and fellowship together with the teaching on the

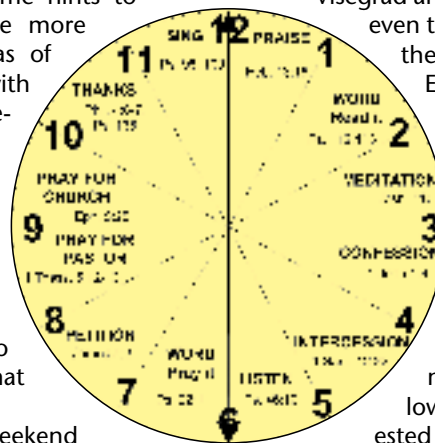
subject of prayer. We were challenged as we were taught the various facets of prayer and given some hints to make our prayer life more effective. All this was of course backed up with examples and statements from the Word. This teaching culminated in a "Sweet Hour of Prayer" when we followed the pattern shown in the diagram. This enabled the group to put into practice what we had been taught.

In a very full weekend there was time for separate seminars for the men, women, and teens and a planning session for our upcoming mission trip to the Roma community in Cino-

bana, near Lucenec in south central Slovakia. Saturday afternoon trips were made to Visegrad and Esztergom, and some even took to swimming in the thermal spring waters at Esztergom.

As I reflect on the weekend one idea has come to me: The Domos Centre could accommodate many more. If we were to repeat such a weekend, on another theme, would other nearby international fellowships perhaps be interested in joining us? It would certainly be good for our young people to meet with others.

■ *Pete Miller*



Aviano, Italy

■ **On Friday** and Saturday, 18-19 March, Aviano Baptist Church hosted a marriage seminar called "The Art of Marriage." This unique seminar is produced by Family Life Today, a branch of Campus Crusade for Christ, International. It features a variety of speakers including pastors, marriage counselors, and people whose marriages have been preserved through application of the principles taught in the seminar. The DVD seminar was purchased and presented to the church by Wade and Debbie Weisman who are faithful participants in the life of Aviano Baptist.

Forty couples from the church and the Aviano community registered for the event. Military exigencies prevented several of the husbands from attending, but

the wives came, took notes, and went home to share. Also, the entire seminar has been made available online for those who missed it at the church.

On Sunday, 20 March, Pastor Sam Owens preached on marriage from Ephesians 5 and asked all the couples to take new vows of marital commitment to each other. The women whose husbands could not attend were asked to imagine him standing there, reach out toward him, and take the vows as the pastor led. Then they were asked to go home, put their military husbands at attention, and require them to take the same vows. Pastor Owens is still waiting to see how that worked out.

Testimonies from those who attended have all been very positive, and the

church is seeking ways to make the seminar a regular part of their ministry to the young couples who God sends their way. One couple from the base community, not members of the church, have already passed on word that their marriage was literally saved by their participation in "The Art of Marriage."

The pastor and members of the IBC church in Aviano recommend this seminar to any church that is interested in strengthening Christian marriages. The pastor points out that this is not just a seminar for new marriages or for troubled marriages but for all who want to be better marital partners. ■

Sam Owens

Budapest, Hungary

■ **On 3 April**, a valedictory service was held for Pastor Lee Powell, his wife Shannon and their children, Adie and Asa, at the International Baptist Church, Budapest, Hungary. General Secretary Jimmy Martin brought greetings from the IBC and emphasized the importance of English-language churches throughout continental Europe and further afield. IBC Budapest was the first of the churches planted by the IBC behind what had been the Iron Curtain, following the fall of the Berlin Wall. After a succession of short-term, interim, and missionary pastors, the church called Pastor Lee as their first permanent pastor in November 2001. Lee and Shannon arrived in Budapest in March 2002 and served the church faithfully for nine years. The Powells will move back to the Lake Arrowhead Community, a little

north of Atlanta, Georgia (USA), where Lee will pastor the church based within the community.

God willing, IBC Budapest will celebrate 20 years of ministry during the weekend of 13-15 May. In addition to a return visit from Lee and Shannon Powell, we are also greatly looking forward to seeing Pastor Bob Zbinden again. Pastor Bob served at IBC Budapest for five years during the 1990s and is fondly remembered. We also expect past members to return

to Budapest to celebrate God's goodness with current members of the congregation. ■

Mark Bownas



Pastor Lee and Shannon Powell (2nd from L) with church elders.

Thessaloniki and Athens, Greece

■ **As the economic crises** worsen here in Greece, opportunities are sprouting like mushrooms, especially in Athens. Unfortunately our financial ability suffers too, but I reckon this is still a very exciting moment for the church. In January, Glad Tidings International Fellowship, Athens, Greece, celebrated its first year anniversary with David Fresch, pastor of IBC Stavanger, Norway, as our keynote speaker. Glad Tidings International Fellowship, Thessaloniki, Greece, celebrated its 12th anniversary with David Packer, pastor of IBC Stuttgart, Germany, as the keynote speaker.

Camille Lenoir from the USA, of French origin, playing women's basketball for Aris-Salonika asked, "Now, what is stop-

ping me from being baptized?" This is the second time in 12 years that we baptized someone during winter. I guess when they're hot for God, winter is never cold. How could I refuse? But I tell you, it was the fastest baptism prayer in 12 years.

I may be the pastor of the church, but there are many things that I cannot help the women with. And Lana Packer did more than what I cannot do. She did wonders among the women the night before the anniversary celebration. Two of the women attending are the leaders in GTIF Athens; they have been praying since then that God will make a way for Lana to do the same in Athens.

Both keynote speakers were brilliant.

They're simply amazing. They can really communicate the Word of God simply, clearly, and powerfully. Speaking in a crowded space with many different nationalities with English as the second language is no easy task. But they did great.

There were French-speaking Africans, Nigerians, and other groups who gave creative and entertaining traditional presentations. The Filipino group did a very colorful tribal and cultural presentation with dancing and songs. We give God all the praise and the glory for all that has taken place, and we look forward to the rest of 2011. ■

Ernie Gutierrez