

HIGHLIGHTS

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Jimmy Martin

Lessons for Living

Interlaken 2011

**Great Commandment,
Great Commission Love**

Two Views

**The Value of an
Interim Pastor**

Lessons for Living from the

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



A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart. (Eccl. 7:1-3).

■ **In late July Norway**, Europe and the world were dealing with the devastating news of a mass terror attack on Norway's capital and a small island that hosted young Norwegian campers. The shock of the attack was heightened when it was discovered that the terrorist was not a Muslim extremist, as first thought, but rather Anders Behring Breivik, a Norwegian. The death toll rose to more than 75, making it the bloodiest act of terrorism Norway had seen since World War II. At the same time, continuing news of the devastating effects of famine and war in Somalia and other places reminded us, if we ever needed reminding, that we live in a fallen world.

This year's wonderful week at Interlaken in mid-July was overshadowed by the sad news of Don Dawson's death during the last worship session. Don, an 82-year-old member of the volunteer team from Virginia, was videoing the children's musical presentation when he collapsed and, in spite of heroic efforts by medical personnel, died within a short time.

On a more personal level, during the week of Interlaken, my 97-year-old grandmother, Myra Johnson, died after suffering a stroke. She clung to life for about a week. Laurie and I were able to catch a flight to the U.S. and make it in time for the funeral in the state of Louisiana. My grandmother had outlived her husband, brothers and sisters, friends, and even her two children including my mother who died in 1987. She regularly questioned the reason that she was still alive.

A final story has not to do with human deaths, but the death of a church. We received news the week following Interlaken that the International Christian Church in Hannover, Germany, an IBC congregation meeting in the facilities of a German Baptist church, had officially disbanded after some severe struggles.

Ministry has its difficulties, disappointments, and severe challenges. Life is not always easy or pleasant. Death touches us all. If we live and serve long enough, we will become acquainted with sorrow, with the "dark nights of the soul." Hurt is a real, although unwelcomed, part of being a member of the human family. For the believer, it is no less painful; our Lord was no stranger to grief. We all face it. I know I do. A regular part of my ministry is helping churches and leaders who are in severe distress. The heartbreak of a ministry that is destroyed, a church that implodes, or a lead-

er who goes astray brings a dark cloud into our lives. These are as painful as personal losses we experience or see others face.

Some lessons we can learn

We are challenged by the Teacher of Ecclesiastes to take to heart the pain of suffering, mourning, and death. He says that the way of wisdom travels through the "house of mourning" more than it does through the "house of pleasure." I want to reflect on a few lessons that we may learn as we walk through the valleys of life.

First, we are called to *face the reality of human mortality*. Just before the words quoted above, the writer in 6:10-12 brings us back to the Garden of Eden and the reality that we, like the first man Adam, must face our own weaknesses. We are dependent on One who is stronger than we. We are not masters of our own fate. Life went on before us and will continue after we are gone. There are limits to what we can fix. We ourselves are often in need of being fixed. We are called to do our best with what we have been given but to realize that only God is the Eternal One and that we, at our very best, still fall short. We live in a fallen world, and we are a part of that fallenness.

The text, by coupling "a good name" with "the day of death" in verse 1, also seems to warn us that *our reputation is not secure until we draw our last breath*. "A life well lived" can be ruined by bad decisions at any point along the path of life, even at the very end of life. Far too many start well but end poorly. Faithfulness in the Christian way is not easy, but it is essential. Pastors and leaders must guard against letting anything or anyone – even Christian ministry – rob us of a vital, growing relationship with God which is the only thing that will help us to remain faithful to the end of life. When our relationship with God suffers, we can become liabilities to God's work and ruin His reputation as well as ours. Churches and groups of churches can also lose sight of their purpose and mission and thus lose life and effectiveness.

A third reminder is that *lessons learned in times of difficulty may be more important than those learned when times are good*. Sorrow is a good teacher, even if none of us chooses to enter her classroom. We are wise to reflect on life and its priorities at times when our normal defenses and barriers are stripped away, when our emotions are raw, and when we are helpless in the face of

Classroom of Death

death or disaster, discouragement, or failure. The testing of Job was not complete until he lost everything, including his own self-assurance and pride in the face of self-examination before God.

We must also learn that *the stakes in life and ministry are high, and we are wise to seize the opportunities God gives us*. Jesus calls us to be salt and light in this world, but we must choose to preserve, cleanse, flavor, and shine. As believers and churches we must choose to get beyond the “lesser things” like petty preferences, politics, prejudices, power struggles, minor doctrinal differences, and even personal hurts of the past and find ways to live as God’s reconciled family. I have worked with too many churches and believers who have let such “lesser things” destroy their witness for Christ. Refusing to make things right often scars people for life, ruins reputations in a community, quenches the Spirit of God, and causes us to remain stuck in our ineffectiveness. However, building healthy churches made up of healthy disciples speaks a clear message to a listening world that God is able to break down barriers and build bridges to Life.

At Don Dawson’s death, more than one person noted that when he died he was doing what he wanted to do in a place he wanted to be with friends that he enjoyed. He had taken an opportunity to serve the Lord, and I imagine has no regrets.

As I joined my seven brothers and sisters for our grandmother’s funeral, it struck me that the matriarch of our family was gone. Although there were other family members, great- and great-great grandchildren, and other relatives present, she was the last of her generation and that the next generation has also passed in our family. It was sobering to consider what OUR generation would do with our lives.

The theme of our Interlaken week was “Great Commandment/Great Commission Love.” Loving God and people and sharing that love in both word and deed must go hand in hand if we are to impact our world with the Good News. God is glorious. He invites us to share His glory in our lives and churches and then through our churches to the communities we serve. If we can keep His glory “front and center” in our priorities and keep our glory “out of the picture,” the lesser issues that seem so big will melt away in importance.

A fifth lesson is that *life is short and eternity lies ahead*. Later in this chapter, the Teacher advises, “*When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future*” (7:14). If we consider more often that the present is preparation for the future, we will learn to treasure the “times” that God gives us. Knowing that the eternal God holds the present and the future should help us to put good and bad times in perspective. God has “set eternity in our hearts,” giving us an instinctive knowledge that this world is not really our home if we belong to Him.

Reading through the book of Ecclesiastes, we find a lot of pessimism, yet the Teacher’s struggle with what



seems to be the “meaninglessness” of much of life does not lead him to ultimate despair or cynicism but rather to devotion to God. He finishes his book in awe and silence before God: “*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it was good or evil*” (12:13-14). “Fear God” – that is a healthy lesson in itself. Where do our questions and reflections in difficult times bring us? If we know that the One who holds tomorrow also holds today, and if we place each day as it comes in His hands, then we can live with the assurance that He is walking with us through whatever life brings. We can also face the future knowing that the One who “will bring every hidden deed into judgment” is also the One who loves us with an everlasting love and will never abandon us.

As Followers of Christ, as Families of Faith, as God’s People, remember

- God is God. We are not. Go to Him for help.
- Your epitaph is not yet written. Live so that you leave a legacy worth having.
- Pay attention to God’s voice when He speaks loudly through pain.
- *Carpe Diem* – Seize the day. It has opportunities that may be gone tomorrow.
- Live each Today in light of Eternity. Make each day count. ■

Jimmy Martin



Great Commandment, Great Commission Love

A Call to Love Deeply, Share Boldly

■ **More than** 550 adults, children, and youth participated in the International Baptist Convention's Annual Summer Experience in Interlaken, Switzerland, 9-14 July. The theme for the week was "Great Commandment, Great Commission Love," based on Matthew 22:37-39 and 28:19-20. Scott Corwin, coordinator for the event, said that the theme calls us to experience love more deeply so that we can share it more boldly.

Evening speaker TV Thomas focused on the Great Commission part of the theme. "The Great Commission," Thomas said, "done without love is done in duty. Then it is not attractive or contagious."

David Ferguson, with his wife Teresa, focused on the Great Commandment part of the theme. "You have to see people the way that God sees them," David Ferguson said. "So that you can love them the way God loves them." It is how you relate that is important, he said. "It is not just what you know or what you do; it is how you relate."

Recordings of Thomas' and Ferguson's messages are available on the IBC's website.

Brian Kirby with Scott Sontag, Erik Nielsen, and Landon White led the worship times. Kirby is the

former pastor of Emmanuel International Church in Paris, France, and now serves in Virginia. Sontag is the minister of music at EIC, Paris; Nielsen is the pastor of First International Baptist Church, Copenhagen, Denmark; White is the minister of music at IBC, Stuttgart, Germany.

The children spent the week exploring the "Big Apple Adventure: Where Faith and Life Connect." Each day they explored the big city of New York and learned how to step out in faith and connect with Jesus, sharing the message of Christ in their world. The week concluded with the children presenting the songs and Bible verses they had learned to their parents and other adults on Thursday. Once again, the children's program was led by a group of volunteers from Virginia.

Euroventure, the youth camp held in conjunction with the summer assembly, was held in nearby Grindelwald. Tom and Zac Hufty and a group of volunteer college students from Hannibal-LaGrange College in Missouri helped the youth explore the theme "You are Not Your Own" through Bible study, worship, seminars, and team experiences. Doug Pierce and Band were the worship team for the week. ■



Seminars provide opportunity to explore specific topics.



Face painting is a popular activity at the picnic.



David Ferguson



Musicians open the week with a taste of Switzerland.



Praise team leads in worship.



TV Thomas



Meeting others is part of the Interlaken Experience.



Military chaplains and wives attend a seminar specific for their needs and ministry.

Photos by Judith Lynn Maxwell



The Family Day picnic has become a tradition.

Euroventure Challenges Teens and Leaders

BY TYLER FOSTER, HANNIBAL-LAGRANGE UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEADER

■ **Euroventure 2011:** Wow. That is the only word that can come to my mind to describe the experience I had there. My name is Tyler Folster; I was a part of the New Edition traveling drama troupe from Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri (USA). A group from HLGU has helped every year at Euroventure in the past decade.

I, at first, did not know what to expect at Euroventure. Would there be a language barrier, even though we “newbies” on the troupe were told that there wouldn’t be? How can I relate to this group of teenagers that I had never experienced meeting or dealing with in my life? Those were just a few questions running through my head as I’m sitting in the back of the plane on the way to Zurich, Switzerland. My heart just started racing when kids start appearing and registering for camp. What do I do? What do

I say? Well, I’d like to say that whoever invented the game of spoons was a genius, I thank you. The game of spoons was the icebreaker between me and these kids. Also various card games and the human knot game helped make lasting relationships with these amazing teenagers.

My group of middle-school boys, ranging from ages 9-13, were amazing. At first, I did not know how to mesh this diverse group of boys who were quiet and did not want to participate in anything the first night, but I saw that I did not have to worry the next morning. These boys during team building time encouraged each other and bonded with each other, my co-leader, and me. I love my boys, and I miss them dearly. I was also so happy to have Gene Wilton as my co-leader. He was more than that to me all week. Gene became my mentor. He taught me so much in one week from

just little, as he called it “life lesson talks.” I thank God for placing him as my co-leader.

As I mentioned earlier, the only word I can use to describe Euroventure 2011 is wow. It was mind-blowing to see how these teenagers were so mature and so receptive to the Word of God and whatever God was telling them. Worshipping God in Grindelwald and being confronted everyday by His majestic beauty in the mountains He made, while seeing teenagers acknowledge His presence just brought me to awe every day, hour, minute, and second. I now have a burden to minister to this awesome group I got to experience God with at Euroventure 2011 and others like them. I am open to do whatever God calls me to do and wherever He calls me to go. If it is in Europe and to these teenagers, I will eagerly say, “Yes.” ■



Kitchen cleanup provides team-building time.



Bible study is an important part of Euroventure.



Seminars – for both youth and youth leaders – provide opportunities to learn about new things.

In Memoriam



■ **Donald J. Dawson**, a volunteer with the Virginia Baptist children's team for Interlaken, died 14 July in Interlaken, Switzerland. Just before he died, Dawson was doing one of the things that he loved to do – filming children singing. According to his friends, Dawson lived and breathed music, and choirs were his first love.

Dawson's joy and music touched many lives – some of which he probably never knew about. On the evening he died, we visited a store in downtown Interlaken that we visit each year. According to the store owner, Dawson had been in the store almost every day, bringing someone new with him, and singing and dancing with joy. He will long be remembered by this store owner and others who knew him. ■

Judith Lynn Maxwell

Congratulations

■ **Congratulations** to Tim and Paola Melton who were married in April. Tim serves as the associate pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Madrid, Spain, and the coordinator of the IBC Singles' Ministry Team. Paola serves as the preschool coordinator at IBC, Madrid. ■



Thanks to IBC Volunteers Aaron and Denise Johnson

■ **The International** Baptist Convention was blessed this summer to have Aaron



Photo by Laurie Martin

and Denise Johnson from Atlanta, Georgia (USA), to serve as volunteers for three months from mid-May to mid-August. Aaron and Denise traveled to several IBC churches to minister, using the IBC office apartment in Frankfurt as their home base. Some of the churches served included Bethel International Baptist Church, Frankfurt; International Baptist Church, Köln; and International Baptist Church, Stuttgart. In addition, Aaron served as the interim pastor in Nuremberg during this time, often preaching for two separate churches on Sunday. Denise helped with the children's ministry while in Nuremberg.

Aaron and Denise were a big help at the Interlaken Experience in July. In addition

to leading a seminar, Aaron and Denise helped with preparations and events during the week. Aaron also helped with several projects in the IBC office, such as developing materials that we can give to future interim pastors to help them better prepare for service in an IBC church. Aaron was a friend to pastors throughout the IBC.

As much as we appreciate their service, we are thankful even more for their spirit of joy and eagerness in all that they did. It was great having them to share with us in this way, having been involved with the IBC and its churches for more than eight years. ■

Jimmy Martin

"New" Bookkeeper Rejoins IBC Staff

■ **Summer is often** the time in our international churches when we say "good-bye" to some people and "hello" to others. At the International Baptist Convention Office this year, it is no different. After two years as bookkeeper, Patricia French is returning to the U.S. Judith Lynn Maxwell rejoins the IBC staff, this time as bookkeeper.

French took over the bookkeeper responsibilities during a difficult time, following the death of Fred Wallstead. An accountant and auditor, French has brought her knowledge and experience to the position and has helped to bring the bookkeeping processes and reporting in line with general accounting principles.

Maxwell served in the convention office

from 1995-98. She is an active member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Wiesbaden, Germany, and has served as *Highlights* editor since 2002. She has previously worked as a computer programmer, editor, project manager, documentation manager, and quality assurance manager. ■



Patricia French



Judith Lynn Maxwell

IBC Women's 2012 Conference Cancelled

■ **The IBC Women's Conference** scheduled for April 2012 in Budapest, Hungary, has been canceled. The women's ministry team continues to work on plans for future gatherings and looks forward to a conference in 2013.

In the meantime, we want to know how to best minister to you and your church. Please send ideas, concerns, or thoughts to Denise Marshall at sdenisemarshal@yahoo.com. Also, let her know if you interested in knowing about serving on the IBC's women's ministry team. ■

IBC Women

Pastor Shares of the Value of an Interim Pastorate

BY JOHN BROOM

INTERIM PASTOR, INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, BREMEN, GERMANY



John and Elaine Broom

■ **Every church** at some stage faces the challenge of a pastoral vacancy. This can sometimes be a prolonged and difficult process that puts a real strain on both the leadership and the congregation. Apart from the preaching and teaching ministry which has to be taken care of, there is the endless demand of daily pastoral work such as counselling those who need help, visiting the sick, caring for the bereaved and the elderly, discipling and mentoring, preparing people for membership or marriage, and ensuring that the church is administered well in the absence of a senior pastor.

Very often an interim pastor is the answer. The period of the interim pastorate may vary from a few months to a year or more, depending on the need of the local church in question.

After Elaine and I had served Baptist churches in South Africa and Zimbabwe for nearly 40 years (our last pastorate in Cape Town was 23 years), we felt God leading us to make ourselves available to help churches in an interim capacity, assisting them until the new pastoral couple was installed and ready to take over the reins of leadership.

Our first interim was a large church in a suburb of Durban, South Africa, very much like the large, multi-staff, multi-ministry, missional church we had left in Cape Town. Both senior pastors had left the church, the staff and leader-

ship were heading for possible burn-out, and the congregation was in need of restoration and the embracing of a new vision. We spent 16 wonderful months watching God renewing the leadership team, uniting the body, and then providing a new senior pastor couple to take over.

From Durban we went to the Eastern Cape city of East London where we spent the next 16 months in a very different context. Now we were in a more inner-city type church that needed a lot of help in building a new leadership and being equipped to face the challenge of becoming an effective multi-cultured church. What a rewarding time that was for us and the church, and once again what a joy to install the new senior pastor couple and leave the church in good hands.

At the moment we are having the time of our lives serving International Baptist Church Bremen, Germany, a congregation that has members from 35 different nations. We are praying that very soon God will provide their next pastoral couple who will, we trust, serve the church for many years to come.

I hope what I have written will give some ideas and maybe fresh insights to some of our IBC congregations and leaderships who may never have considered the interim route as a possibility. It is a tremendous blessing when God quickly provides a successor, but there are those occasions where a long pastoral vacancy is unavoidable, and where that is the case, an interim pastor or pastoral couple can stand in the gap and enable the church to keep healthy and vibrant. Such an arrangement can prove a mutual blessing; not only is the church served and strengthened, but the new pastor is able to take over his new charge without having to handle a huge backlog of unfinished business and pastoral work that is crying out for attention.

May the Lord richly bless each of our IBC congregations and clearly guide and provide where and when pastoral vacancies occur. No doubt in some cases His provision will be in the form of an interim. ■



Photo by Victor Ströver

Do we need an interim pastor?

BY A MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH BREMEN, GERMANY

■ **When our pastor** and his wife told us last September that they would be leaving the International Baptist Church Bremen, Germany, in order to go where they knew God was sending them, we were surprised and saddened. Many of our people wondered “Now what?” However, for a good number of us, this was not the first time we had had to say good-bye to our pastoral couple. We could testify to the fact that God had graciously provided for us again and again in the past, and we firmly believe that He still has a plan for IBC Bremen today! God already knows who our new pastor will be, and He knows when the time will be right to bring him to us, so what have we got to worry about?

In the meantime, however, we were faced with an unknown length of time without a permanent pastor and the practical implications which that involves. We prayerfully considered different options in terms of “filling the pulpit” while our deacons shared the responsibility of shepherding the flock and heading up the leadership of the church.

We contacted Jimmy Martin, IBC General Secretary, and not only did he visit us in person and bring a timely word of encouragement, but through him we also established contact with a German pastor based in Scotland, who was able to minister to us over Christmas and into the New Year.

In January and February we were blessed by English-speaking guest pastors from local churches and some other “old friends,” and we are grateful to IBC Hamburg for sharing Pastor Dave Stemmett and Pastor Christian Bach with us too.

With our immediate needs being more than simply met, we were able to consider calling an interim pastor. Encouraged by positive experiences in the past, we were very open to establishing contact with a couple who would be able to commit to IBC Bremen for a certain period of time.

God was undeniably in control, and we saw many good things all come to be – just in time. On a practical note, we were able to rent the apartment upstairs in the church building, and the church rallied to furnish and equip it, ready for use by guest pastors and interims.

Our existing ties to South Africa held strong, and we were blessed beyond measure to have Pastor John Broom and his wife Elaine serve as our interim pastoral couple from 1 March – 31 May. We were overwhelmed by their ability to come in, put their fingers straight on our pulse, and meet us right where we were. Their ministry gave us the stability, continuity, and encouragement we needed. How we benefited from their wisdom and experience!

You might think that three months is a relatively short period of time, but for us it was a very intense time of blessing. And more was yet to come. Through the Brooms we established contact with our new interim pastoral couple, Pastor Bernard Faulhammer and his wife Penny, joined by their two youngest daughters. They are now picking up the reigns, encouraging us, ministering to our various needs and leading us on through the next six months as we seek God’s will for the future of our church.



Photo by Victor Ströver

Maybe your church is without a pastor right now, or maybe this might apply to you in the future. From our experience, we can only recommend seeking an interim pastor couple to stand in the gap and help you until a permanent pastor is found. The blessing is a mutual one – both to the church and to the short-term pastor. There are many gifted couples willing to come and share. We encourage you to contact the IBC Office and/or to draw on other sources known to you. Don’t miss out on a wonderful God-given opportunity, and don’t feel you have to carry the burden alone. ■

Children's Ministry Certificates

■ **Four women** received Preschool and Children's Ministry Certificates from the International Baptist Convention during the Wednesday evening service at the Interlaken Summer Experience 2011. The certificates came as a result of a year-long study with Janice Haywood, professor at Campbell University Divinity School.

Receiving certificates were Susana Kornahrens (IBC Stuttgart), Nancy Blancato (IBC Brussels), Marilou Basurto-Mackenzie (IBC

Brussels), and Cindy Abraham (Faith Kaiserslautern). A fifth participant has one more assignment to complete before receiving her certificate.

The certification program required that participants attend training seminars at the Interlaken Summer Experience 2010 and 2011. Par-

ticipants also needed to complete assignments between the two sessions and interact with Haywood and the group on the Internet as a member of a learning community.

Highlights of the program included:

- Gaining practical knowledge about preschool and children's developmental needs and issues related to their total development, including brain research
- Learning helpful, effective, and creative teaching strategies for faith formation of preschoolers and children
- Exploring the theological and biblical foundations for preschool and children's ministry including conversion counseling and effective communication of biblical concepts such as prayer and worship
- Discovering the role and function of an effective volunteer coordinator, director, or minister
- Experiencing training in diagnosing needs and designing appropriate programs as well as choosing literature and resources for preschoolers, children, and families
- Observing and evaluating a demonstration teaching session. ■



Kornahrens, Blancato, Basurto-Mackenzie, and Abraham receive children's ministry certificates.

Teachers Challenged to Energize Your Bible Session

■ **"Energize your Bible session"** was one of the challenges brought to us by Janice Haywood during the annual Sunday School Teachers' Training Weekend at International Baptist Church, Bremen, Germany, on 21-22 May. This was a time of blessing and intense training put together in an enjoyable and fun way.

Elaine Broom provided the morning devotional and shared from Ephesians 6:10-17 with a clear focus on being strong in the Lord, putting on the full armour of God, and praying in the spirit, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Janice Haywood and Diane Smith,

from our partnership with Virginia Baptists, provided the training. Haywood led the morning, main group training session. Then in the afternoon session, we split up for specific age-group training. Haywood worked with those involved with teaching children from ages 7-12, while Smith provided the training for those teaching children from ages 3-6.

As there was a lot of information being provided in such a short time, maybe it would be best to share with all of you some of the statements made by Haywood during the training session – statements that cause one to stop, think, and reflect:

- Teaching is a calling and not just a job to do at the church. (Ephesians 4:11,12)
- We are to be teaching children and not teaching lessons.
- Children first develop a concept of God as they develop relationships with people who reflect the character of God.
- Their parents are the most powerful influencer, impacting them either deliberately or unintentionally.
- Churches must recognize their ministry priority of encouraging and teaching parents, to be intentional, in weaving faith connections between their children and God, every day, as they go about their daily lives.
- Values are set for children by age 13.
- Last but not least ... be prepared!



Sunday School teachers practice what they learned.

As the morning session ended, we were treated to a wonderful lunch provided by the Women's Ministry of IBC Bremen. Following the age-specific training, the day ended with everyone coming together for a time of discussion, with coffee and tea.

As the first day was a time of theory, the next day involved practical application. Smith and Haywood allowed the teachers to watch as they taught the children during Sunday School.

These were two very special and blessed days! May we ever be mindful of the importance of bring up our children in God's ways. Actually, they are not our children; they are His children. We thank him for providing Haywood, Smith, the building we trained in, and all those that participated. Now let us put into practice what we have learned! ■

Jeff Christopher

Plan Now to Attend!

IBC ANNUAL MEETING

24-27 October 2011
Rome Baptist Church, Italy

Accommodations should be booked now. Nearest airports are Fiumicino and Ciampino.

Introducing the IBC's Vice-President

■ **Sam Owens**, pastor of Aviano Baptist Church in Italy, was elected vice president/president-elect at the International Baptist Convention's Annual Meeting in October 2010.

Owens came to Aviano in October 2001. He was the founding pastor of San Vito Baptist Church, San Vito dei Normanni, Italy, and served there from 1982-1984. He also served as an interim pastor at the International Baptist Church in Warsaw, Poland, for three months in 1999.

Aviano Baptist Church is a primarily U.S. military church, and Owen's 21 years of service in the U.S. Air Force plays a role in his service there. He retired from the Air Force in 1985.

Owens and his wife Adele have been married for more than 41 years and they have one son, daughter-in-law, and grandson.

Upon being elected as vice-president, Owens said, "I am both humbled and inspired by this opportunity. My initial reaction was to decline the nomination, but many years ago when I realized that I could no longer neglect God's call to the Gospel ministry, I prayed a prayer of submission

in which I told my Heavenly Father, 'Any time, any place, any way!' In some way, this chance to serve the IBC falls within the parameters of that prayer. With God as my Helper, I will do all I can to honor both Him and this convention that I love so much."

Owens also shared some of his favorite Scripture passages (all from the New King James Version):

- For salvation – Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- For guidance in preaching – Ezra 7:10: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."
- For praying the Scriptures – Psalm 143:10: "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness."
- For motivation to keep on serving – Luke 17:10: "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" ■



Sam Owens

IBC Hamburg Initiates IBC Worship CD Project

■ **The initial response** to the International Baptist Convention's worship CD project was enormous, according to project leader Ben Galler. Approximately 50 original songs were submitted to be considered for the CD.

The worship CD project was initiated by the International Baptist Church Hamburg, Germany, and their worship team. The idea is to involve as many IBC churches as possible by having musicians in the individual churches submit songs in order to compile an IBC-wide CD.

In introducing the project, IBC General Secretary Jimmy Martin wrote, "In spite of

our diversity there is a wonderful unity as we partner together in strengthening one another and in spreading the Good News to all nations of the world. This project I believe will not only strengthen our ties with one another but will serve to share Christ with friends in all our churches and beyond. As I travel to IBC churches, I have a unique opportunity to observe first-hand the gifts and abilities of musicians and worship teams throughout our family of churches. We want to see more people have that opportunity."

Several years ago, the IBC did a similar project with "Many Faces, Many Plac-

es, One Message" New Testament that included testimonies and pictures of IBC church members around the IBC. The response to these was great. The CD project will be a similar opportunity for witness and ministry together.

The IBC Hamburg worship team is not only a worship team of an IBC church but also a team of professionals in the entertainment business. They have professional musicians, arrangers, producers, record label owners, publishers, graphic designers, and everything that is needed to produce a professional CD. The CD is scheduled to be released in 2012. ■



From the Editor's Pen

■ **A few weeks ago**, one of my friends asked her friends on Facebook to post where and when we met. My response, which I didn't post, would have been: "We met when you came to work at the EBC (now IBC) Office as the bookkeeper. To be specific, we met when I came to your house to show you how to ride the bus to the office." Now 15 years and three bookkeepers later, I'm taking over that same bookkeeper position. God sometimes surprises us with what He has planned for us.

Coming back to the IBC Office is a little like coming home. The office has moved and the staff has changed, but the mission and vision of the IBC remains the same. The

first time I served on staff, my job mainly entailed words – editing *Highlights*, writing and editing press releases, writing brochures, working the singles' and Interlaken committees, and, at times, serving as administrative assistant. Now, my job will deal with numbers – budgets, bills, contributions, gifts and – one thing left over from my first time – receiving the money for Interlaken registrations.

I'm looking forward to serving beside you in this new role in the IBC. I will continue to serve as *Highlights* editor so please continue to send in your news and articles. ■

Judith Lynn Maxwell

Panama City Church Plant Begins

■ **July was an exciting month.** We moved into an apartment on the 19th floor of a newer building in the area called El Cangrejo. We are all moved in but still need to pick up a few things to make the place homey. The Lord has put English-speaking people all around us; neighbors from the U.S., mini-mart owner in the building from Colombia, and a great building "super" who calls us "my friends" and is trying really hard to speak English for us. Every time we go out in the neighborhood we hear people speaking in English, and we are encouraged and know that God has put us in this place.

At the beginning of July we joined a team from Grafton, Wisconsin (USA), on an e3 mission trip in the area surrounding Panama City. We spent the week in an area that is said to be run by gangs, but never felt in danger when we were there. The church we worked with was really into

evangelism but needed some guidance in discipleship and growth for sustainability. Our translators were great, and we have remained in contact with one woman who joined our Sunday Bible study.

Two weeks ago, we attended an "expat social" in our neighborhood. We met at a local restaurant for dinner and to get acquainted with others from all around the

world. We sat with several people from the U.S. and got to hear their thoughts and views on Panama and why they chose to move here. It was pretty enlightening. Our next event includes checking out some of the sites in Panama; we are eager to spend some more time with this group of people to see what the Lord has planned for these relationships. Please pray for us in these encounters.

Our Sunday night Bible study started a study of the book of Acts the first week of August. We plan to make Sunday night a time of teaching, study, and planning for the launch of the church. We will continue to meet on Wednesday nights for prayer for the new work; this has been a sweet time of fellowship for us. Join us any Wednesday night from 7-8 for prayer for the church in Panama City. ■

Glenn and Susan Herschberger



Glenn and Susan Herschberger

Oberursel, Germany

■ **"God is Faithful!** Can you dig it?" was the theme as the children at International Christian Fellowship, Oberursel, Germany, learned of God's faithfulness during Beach Blast Kids Kamp, 1-5 August. Each morning children dug into God's Word through Bible study. They surfed their way through music, recreation, and crafts. They explored the depths of the sea to learn about missions in the Amazon, in Mali, the Grand Canyon, and on an Ostrich Farm. The week concluded with a Family Night Picnic. ■



Pastor Carsten Lotz (right) welcomes the children (below) to ICF's Beach Blast Kids Kamp.



Stavanger, Norway

■ **On 5 June,** North Sea Baptist Church, Stavanger, Norway, held an ordination service to ordain their Associate/Youth Pastor Brandon Johnson to the Gospel Ministry. Brandon came to Stavanger with his wife Jennifer in August 2010 to serve at North Sea. The service opened with a beautiful time of worship through song and Scripture reading. Brandon shared his story as he gave a testimony of his call to ministry. We were honored to have IBC General Secretary Jimmy Martin and his wife Laurie join us. Jimmy brought a wonderful message and challenged both Brandon and the congregation to be steadfast

in their commitments in ministry and service together. Following the message Pastor David Fresch read Scripture and led a group of ordained men in prayer as they laid hands on Brandon. It was a truly blessed time.

The tradition of ordination is an act of worship that we don't get to participate in every week. But when we get that opportunity, there is a joy that is felt by both the individual and the congregation as a whole. Praise be to God who equips us with all kinds of gifts in order that we may walk in the light of His Kingdom. ■

North Sea Baptist Church



Men of the church lay hands on Brandon Johnson as he is ordained to the Gospel Ministry.

San Jose, Costa Rica

■ **On 11 July**, we headed to a beautiful area of Costa Rica with 94 kids (ranging in age from 9-18) and 27 leaders in tow from the International Baptist Church, San Jose, Costa Rica. God is so amazing in the way He has moved and continues to do so here in Central America. This year was by far the biggest group of campers in camp history. The theme for camp was "Press On," which used Philippians 3:14: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" as the foundation to build upon for the week.

Each day would start with a quiet time, followed by a time of recreation and small group bonding. We would then come

back together in the afternoon/early evening for small groups, then some Rockin' Praise & Worship, and conclude with a sermon from our camp pastor. Praise God for all the blessings that flowed from the week and the hearts that He touched and changed. May we all continually "Press On" to what matters most in life; that is the prize of Christ Jesus. Youth Camp 2011 was a huge success thanks to the hard work of all who were involved, including the group from Cross Roads Baptist Church of the Woodlands, Texas (USA). Camp could not have been more of a blast! ■

Erica Wendell



Youth "press on" at camp.

Calahonda, Spain

■ **The hot days** of summer have arrived and again many of the congregation at Calahonda Baptist Church, Calahonda, Spain, have returned to their home country to escape the scorching heat in Spain and to spend time with family. This year our missionary families have also returned to the U.S. and Canada to raise support, and they will be gone two to six months. Our leadership and praise and worship team have also been reduced to a very few, leaving Pastor Jim McVicar as the sole spiritual leader for a couple of months.

Still, in spite of only a couple of leaders being present at times for the Sunday service, we are pleased to say that God has been gracious and the church has been filled and enjoying wonderful services. Indeed, a continuous stream of visitors has flowed through the doors of CBC, and the church has also seen the arrival of believers, including young families, who have moved to the vicinity of the church. They are involving themselves in the life of the church for which we are grateful. We have seen God moving to change people's lives

and in June we also had our second baptismal service in 2011.

A new Bible study evening has commenced for the summer and is well attended. The study is on Biblical characters such as Enoch and Abraham. We thank the Lord for providing this opportunity to study God's Word and fellowship together. We pray that this time will be used to encourage people to grow in their understanding of God and increase their faith in Him.

Another positive factor this summer has been the progress experienced by the Pastoral Search Committee. They continue to search for a pastor to replace Pastor Jim who, with Anne, plan to leave at the end of 2011. We are so thankful to God for His abundant grace and faithfulness in continuing to provide for CBC. We believe He will fulfill His purpose for the church and His timing will be perfect. We are trusting God to guide us as we seek to move forward with Him. ■

Aurora Denison

Prague, Czech Republic

■ **A Weekend to Remember:** It was quite a weekend for Maria Gulašova as she got married to Pavel on 4 June and was baptized the following day. Maria from Slovakia is completing her studies at the Economics University in Prague. From a Catholic background, Maria came to personal faith in Jesus about three years ago here in Prague. She and Pavel met before Christmas 2008 at the International Baptist Church, Prague, Czech Republic. Since then, they have been walking and growing in faith together. In September, they will be moving to Zagreb, Croatia, for two years because of Pavel's job. ■

Gareth Morris



Pavel and Maria Gulašova



Pastor Gareth Morris with Hana (left) and Maria (right).

Portimão, Portugal

■ **The International** Christian Fellowship, Portimão, Portugal, continues to attract a variety of people each year: this year for the first time we have welcomed visitors from one of the cruise liners that dock in Portimão. On the whole though there are fewer tourists in the Algarve now than in previous years due to the economic situation worldwide, and this has been reflected in the number of people visiting the church and also in a decrease in giving.

We have now been in our new church premises ("The Bridge") for a whole year and are very thankful to have a place to call our own. We are grateful to all those who worked so hard to make it beautiful.

One of our church ministries that has grown significantly this past year is our soup kitchen which operates every Monday in a building near the train station. We serve a hot, hearty soup, sandwiches, home-made cake, fruit, and cold drinks to approximately 30 people. We have Christian literature (tracts & Bibles) available for people to take if interested. We have a room for used clothing in the back so anyone who is in need of clothes can take

them. There is also a Teen Challenge program that is offered for any who would like to take part in a full-time rehab program, at no cost.

Just recently at the soup kitchen we were able to help a young man called Andre, a drug addict who had been coming regularly for food when we gave it out on the street. After coming every week for several months, he suddenly stopped coming, and we were worried what had happened, knowing he had serious problems. In June he started coming to our new venue but looked very ill, had diffi-



ICF, Portimão sponsors a soup kitchen weekly.

culty walking, and had a bad cough. He refused to go for medical help but kept on coming every week. One day he appeared looking much worse than usual but saying he was willing to go to the hospital for help. He was so weak that we took him in an ambulance. Several of the other homeless people made quiet comments that he would not survive. We prayed for him and now after a month in the hospital he is getting well. He was diagnosed with tuberculosis and is in the isolation unit. Some of us went to see him and although he was thin and weak, he had a wonderful smile as we told him we were all praying for him. He is very thankful for people's care, concern, and prayers. He is reading his Bible and knows that with God's help he is going to make it! Thank you for your prayers for this important ministry. There are many homeless people in Portimão whose lives are being touched.

We would ask that you continue to pray for our church that we might be faithful in proclaiming the good news of Jesus to all those around us and in showing His love in practical ways to those in need. ■

David and Joy Borgan

Bremen, Germany

■ **In Ephesians 4:29** we read: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Or, in the words of a child: "Our words should be like little silver boxes with bows on top." What we say to others should be a blessing to others, as if we were giving that person a present.

On Saturday 28 May, approximately 50 women from IBC churches in Bremen, Bielefeld, Celle and Hamburg attended a conference entitled "Silver Boxes" which

was led by IBC Bremen's interim pastor's wife Elaine Broom.

We would like to thank Elaine for encouraging us and also the Men's Ministry at IBC Bremen who took care of lunch, refreshments, and all the washing up – you were a real blessing to us!

Elaine based her talk on Florence Littauer's book *Silver Boxes: The Gift of Encouragement* and shared her own stories and experiences gathered over a number of years of sharing this valuable message all over the world. We were invited to learn how to be a greater blessing to others, how to encourage and support.

We realised afresh how powerful our words can be – both in the positive, uplifting sense but also in the negative, destructive sense. The words that come out of our mouths can be so harmful; they can ridicule, embarrass, discourage, and even destroy. And yet with that same mouth we can speak words of affirmation, thanks, comfort, encouragement, motivation, and acknowledgement – words that help others reach their potential and which convey that a person is of value. ("The ear tests words like the tongue tests food." Job 12:11). We were encouraged to encour-

age others, knowing that if the church is encouraged, it will grow.

We acknowledged that we might often *think* a nice thing but omit to actually *say* it or *communicate* it. Looking back over our own lives, we recalled occasions when we had been hurt by words and times when we had hurt others with our words. ("Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 12:18).

Knowing that it is sometimes a challenge to say good things – especially to certain people or in certain situations – we each received our own silver box with the message from Ephesians 4:29 and were encouraged to place the box where we felt we needed it most as a visual reminder. Just as we all long for a kind, affirming, encouraging word, so we need to share those words with others, leaving behind us a legacy of encouragement, passing on the baton. Words can quite literally change a person's life – for better or for worse.

Maybe you'd like to just stop and think a moment: How many silver boxes have you given away today? ■

IBC Bremen



Eindhoven, The Netherlands

■ **The women** of the International Baptist Church, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, organized a high tea spring afternoon. It was a blessing and opportunity to reach out to the other women from different countries.

We were blessed to have Lana Packer, pastor's wife from IBC Stuttgart, as our guest speaker. She shared some challenging testimonies and reinforced the importance of our lives as women serving the Lord. She talked openly about her life as a wife of a pastor and as a missionary to Asia, a mentor who encouraged women from many parts of the world.

Lana used the theme "Fabric of Life," and she openly talked about the good and darker times in her life as an example. She mentioned that as a person, we are open to God – nothing is unknown to Him. As a woman of today's world, it is a challenge for us to understand what God wants us to do.

What I remember from Lana's encouraging message was:

F: Faith to live a daily life of holiness and character. We are called to love and obey God. She said that when you are living to please yourself or others, then there is unrest within us.

A: Acknowledging WHO is in charge means obedience. We have to let God be in charge in our lives. God's will is accomplished in a way that brings glory to Him and not men. Obedience to God will often mean giving up what makes us feel secure. We need to realize that God is in control. This is quite a challenge for me.

B: Be present wherever you are. She mentioned Lydia, a God-fearing woman and a dealer of purple fabric from the city of Thyatira. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying. She had an open eye to the Gospel, allowing her household to be used by God.

R: Radical living when something should not have happened. Acceptance. Lana referred to Acts 16:16-

24 where Paul and Silas were a good example of strength and accomplishments.

I: Include praise & worship; it is a choice. Whatever situation we have in our life we should not stop praising God. Paul and Silas never stop praising God despite the situation they had been through. They experienced strength from God through praise and worship.

C: Courageously living a life that impacts the world. We, as believers of Christ, need to be courageous to use our skills that God has given us to impact the world.



Women of IBC Eindhoven enjoy games as part of their high tea afternoon.

The afternoon was filled with worship songs, fellowship, and, of course, eating and some games prepared by Carin Coay and Cristina Sequel.

Overall, it was a wonderful chance to get to know some of the women whom one may often see around but not know well. And it was a time to perhaps know one's self better and reflect on how God, the Master of the fabric of life, has colored in our own tapestries. ■

Annie Beeren

Madrid, Spain

■ **This year's VBS** at Immanuel Baptist Church, Madrid, Spain, 27 June-1 July, focused on the Jewish feasts of the Old Testament and their New Testament fulfillment. Under the theme "Shake-it-up Café," the kids learned about different foods in the lives of the Israelites and how God gave them feast celebrations for two purposes: both to remind them of how He saved them from slavery and to point forward to the salvation that the Messiah would bring. Just as God "shook up" those Israelites, His truth "shakes up" our lives as we discover His love and power and learn to follow Him.

More than 100 children, ages 3-11, were enrolled for the week, with more than 50 workers (youth and adults) helping to make things happen. The children brought offerings for a missions project "Bibles for Panama," totaling 805 Euro, to

help support the ministry of Glenn & Susan Herschberger, IBC church planters in Panama City. We pray that God will bring to fruition the seeds of His Word planted in many hearts!

Benefit Concert

On 7 May, Immanuel's Japanese Fellowship organized a benefit concert at the church on behalf of Japan, with pianist Yoko Suzuki. It was an excellent testimony, with lots of local people in attendance; an offering of nearly 2000 Euro was raised. ■

David Dixon



Top: Children learn of the food and feasts of the OT at Immanuel, Madrid's VBS.

Bottom: Pianist Yoko Suzuki plays at a benefit concert for Japan.

Stukeley, England

■ **We would be** grateful for the prayers of the International Baptist Convention as we, Grace Fellowship, Stukeley, England, lose our much-loved pastor Paul Hendrix and his wife Jepy. Many of you will know that Paul's sight has been failing for some time now, and after much prayer, they decided that it was time for them to return to the U.S. Please join us as we pray for their future service for the Lord; none of us can believe that the Lord does not have more for them to do in His service. Please also pray for our fellowship as Pete Bourne takes on the pastoral duties, aided in ministry by David Stokes, a long-term member of the church. We are seeking the Lord for the way forward and what more we can do to reach out to the villages around us. ■

Penny Bourne

Lubbock, Texas, USA

■ **The International Christian Fellowship**, Lubbock, Texas (USA), held a baptismal service in May. One of the young men who was baptized returned to his country for six weeks after his baptism, and he was amazed at how his perspective changed as a Christian. ICF Lubbock also held an event in a local park to meet new Chinese people. There were approximately 40 Chinese who attended the event. We continue to see ICF Lubbock as a global missions strategy center. ■

Al Gary



Pastor Al Gary baptizes a new believer.

Ramstein, Germany

■ **What if you knew** that by taking 10 steps across a room and saying hello to another person you could impact his or her eternity? Bill Hybels asks this question in his book *Just Walk Across the Room* and challenges believers to boldly share their stories in a way that Christ modeled for us. During the month of May, the entire Frontline Community Church, Ramstein, Germany, studied this dynamic book together. The month-long experience began

with Sunday sermons that highlighted Hybels' simple approach to evangelism. Then, in LifeGroups (small groups) each week, prayer and discussion elaborated on the topic. Throughout the series people were asked to think of and pray for people to "walk across the room" to. At the close of this series, individuals were challenged to host what Hybels calls a "Matthew Party." Hybels explains how, in Luke 5, Matthew had a burning desire to share Christ with others and so he threw a party, invited Jesus, believers, and non-believers. As a result many came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

With the idea of the Matthew Party in mind, Frontliners worked together to host two events in hope that God would use them to draw lost souls to Himself.

The first event was hosted in early June by RefresHer, Frontline's women's ministry. The entire community was invited to an event called "The Potter's Hands." This was an exclusive Polish pottery sale with proceeds donated to the local crisis pregnancy center. The sanctuary was transformed into a non-threatening environment that helped believers share the love of Christ. During the event, as women snacked on refreshments, shopped, and chatted, speakers talked about Poland, pottery, and the crisis pregnancy center. But, most importantly, a speaker shared the truth that each person was created for a purpose and fashioned by The Great Potter, our Creator and Lord.

The goal for the next Matthew Party was reaching those people who are hesitant to attend a worship service on Sunday. More than 20 of Frontline's Life-

Groups pooled together their resources and efforts to host a family carnival. With balloons and banners decorating the grounds, Frontline Community's building was made into an excellent environment for guests to experience the kindness and love of Christ. The "School's Out Bash" was complete with everything from balloon-wielding clowns, games with prizes, train rides, and face painting to plenty of BBQ, popcorn, ice cream, and drinks – all provided free! The carnival was full of happy kids and smiling parents. Relationships with guests were deepened, and interest in God was peeked. One man even asked if he could return on Sunday with his family. Now, that was the point, exactly!

Hybels encourages in his book, "Matthew Parties don't have to be expensive or elaborate, they simply need to happen!" So, would you like to throw a Matthew Party? Here are some steps to take to make your party a success:

- Start with something you like to do.
- Invite more people than you expect to come.
- Get the ratio right (invite more people that are far from God than believers).
- Pray for your party and the relational connections that will be made.
- Expect God to bless your efforts!

Hybels writes, "Fundamentally, evangelism (the Great Commission) is about submitting to God's agenda in a social situation, in a conversation, in your moment-by-moment life. And like Matthew's gospel says (Matthew 28:20b), 'He will be with you every step of the way.'" ■

Frontline Community



School's Out Bash features clowns and balloon creations.



A pottery sale was part of a Matthew Party held by Frontline Community.