

# BMFP



# FORGOTTEN CALL

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## BAPTIST MISSIONS TO FORGOTTEN PEOPLES



**Jonathan Lyons**  
President

in the midst of all that is going on in the world around us.

**Merry Christmas** from Baptist Missions to Forgotten Peoples! What an excellent opportunity to share the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ as we remember his birth.

The traffic has picked up. The shopping has started. People are out, and Christmas is in the air. Yes, even here in sunny Florida! We have much to celebrate and to be thankful for even

Our BMFP Family is spread out all over the world. Some are in countries where Christmas is not celebrated, others are in places where the celebrations are not Christ centered. For many of our missionaries, this is the busiest time of year. They put their personal desires and traditions on hold so that they can invest hours in an effort to be a blessing to others. For some, it will be the first Christmas away from family and it will be a little hard on them. Please take time to remember or call one of your missionaries over the holidays. They could use the encouragement!

Of course, we can't think of Christmas without thinking of gifts! Three important gifts come to mind as we enter this busy season:

**The Gift of the Savior!** This is what we are celebrating; His birth, His coming, His provision of hope for a lost and dying world. If He had not left heaven to be born in a stable, there would have been no hope for us!

**The Gift of Salvation!** Of all the gifts in the world, nothing can compare to this gift! Because of salvation, we have a home in heaven. This is a cause to rejoice. Thank the Lord, this life is not all there is to look forward to!

**The Gift of Service!** We have all been given the gift of service if we so desire. Some choose to enjoy and use this gift while others never take advantage of it. Being in the service of the Lord is one of the greatest joys of my life. For over 33 years Rachele and I have been in the service of the Lord. What a wonderful life. Would you consider giving your life to enjoy the gift of serving Jesus?

### **Christ—The Gift That Keeps On Giving in Ministry** (Ephesians 4:7-13)

"When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8). In this passage, Paul celebrates the risen and ascended Christ as the bestower of gifts upon men. He reminds us of the great truth in Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!"



**George Rundle**  
BMFP Bible Institute  
Program Administrator

The two words "gift" in our text refer to more than just so-called "spiritual gifts." They encompass Christ Himself, salvation, the Gospel, the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and so much more! Truly, Christ, the Father's gift to all those who trust in Him, is "the Gift that Keeps on Giving!"

**First, Christ has given the Church gifted saints** (vss. 7-10). The grace of God is as measureless as the Christ of calvary (vs. 7). Through His atoning work, the risen, ascended, and victorious Christ has become the giver of gifts to men (vs. 8)! These gifts were made possible through His "descent" and "ascent," in other words, the cross, His resurrection and ascension (vs. 9). Because of the triumph of calvary and the empty tomb, Christ has "ascended up far above all heavens" (vs. 10). Therefore, as the risen and ascend Lord, He possesses all authority in heaven and earth to bountifully gift His saints for life and ministry. Christ is all we need to live for Christ and serve others! (See Matthew 28:18-20, and Acts 2:33.)

**Second, Christ has given the Church "gifted men" to enable its healthy growth** (vss. 11-12a). He gave "some, apostles; and some, prophets" as the foundation stones of the early church, revealing the truth of the Gospel and firmly establishing the New Testament Church (Eph. 2:20-22). With the foundation established and the Word of God completed, the church has all she needs through the gifted ministries of evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The purpose of these gifted men is "for (literally, with a view to) the perfecting of the saints." This word "perfecting" has a two-fold meaning. 1) to repair that which is broken, to restore the fallen (Gal. 6:1).

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by George Rundle**

2) to equip or furnish the saints with what they need for Christ-like living and effective service (Compare 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

**Third, Christ has given to the Church the gift of ministry** (vss. 12-13). Our text makes clear the goals of these “gifted men” and, by extension, gifted saints. Notice the second word “for” in verse 12, meaning “unto” (result). Equipping is what the gifted men do. The “work of the ministry” is what the gifted and equipped saints are to do alongside and under the leadership of gifted men. The result is the “edifying of the body of Christ.”

So, what are the goals of this restoring/equipping process of the Church? The immediate goal is the maturity of the saints—measured by the unity of the body, the knowledge of Christ, and the character (“stature”) of Christ (vs. 13). It is also measured by holding fast to sound doctrine (vs. 14), healthy communication that edifies others (vs. 15), and the efficiency of the body working together to grow, each member doing their part (vs. 16).

Yes, Christ is the Gift That Keeps On Giving. In our text, we have God’s prescription for a healthy church, and sound ministry. Gifted men are to restore and equip gifted saints to participate in the wonderful gift of ministry, the joy of serving others in the body of Christ and a lost and dying world. May we look to “The Gift!”

**News From the Field**

**Gib & Kathy Wood  
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Kids are back in school, and that means that our Master Clubs ministry is back in full-swing. And so is our Sisterhood of the Vine ladies fellowship. And our Men’s Monday, weekly men’s discipleship (well, actually that never really stopped). And Kathy’s ladies Sunday School class is meeting again, after a nearly two year covid break in schedule. Along with our regular Sunday School, Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening schedule, it all makes for a full week ... every week!

And don’t forget about our tract ministry efforts as we get the Word of God into homes, both American military and German national’s. Right now we are sowing seed in Glan-Muenchweiler, Hohenecken, St. Ingbert, Kaiserslautern, and many other villages, towns, and cities in the area surrounding Ramstein Air Base and the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

**What Do Mission Boards Do?**

Finance is a critical part of life for all of us – including missionaries. God provides for His church and missions through the giving of saints in the local church. Mission agencies accept funds from local churches, then carry the burden to manage receiving, accounting, and distributing funds to missionaries, as well as, budgeting for bank and other fees associated with transferring funds around the world.

For Christmas, our choir is working on a beautiful cantata. The Sunday before Christmas I will be the narrator, and Kathy will be one of the altos. On Christmas Eve, we will join BMFP missionary Andrew Wilson and the people of the Freie Baptisten Gemeinde of Landstuhl for a special German service. And then, on Christmas Day, we will be having a special candlelight service.

**Nancy Butkevich  
Russia  
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Praise the Lord and thank you to all who prayed as we traveled back to Russia. It is a blessing to once again be in Vanvara. We were blessed to be able to continue using the apartment in the city, Krasnoyarsk. I stayed there an extra week to get registered here again with my new residency permit. The neighbor, Zina, is a blessing and it was good to visit with her. Please pray for her salvation! It was a blessing being at the church in the city, spending time with friends and having a good, but short, visit with Kate and her children. She shared how she could see God working in her life, and it was evident there has been a change in her life.

With all that is going on in the world, I praise the Lord there’s been a very good reception in returning by the people here. English continues with many of my students back, along with a new student. It has been good meeting new people while out, whether walking or at the bus stop.

**“Missions are the chief end of the Church... the chief end of the ministry ought to be to equip the Church for this. Each congregation is meant to be a training class.”  
– Andrew Murray**

***“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).***

***For Thou Shalt Go To All That  
I Shall Send Thee***

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