

2009 NORTH AMERICAN MISSION STUDY FOR ADULTS

LIVE WITH URGENCY

SOWING TOGETHER FOR HARVEST

JOHN 4:35-37

THIS DOCUMENT AND VIDEO SEGMENTS FROM “LIVE WITH URGENCY: SOWING TOGETHER FOR HARVEST,” THE 2009 NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS EMPHASIS VIDEO, ARE THE PRIMARY RESOURCES NEEDED TO CONDUCT THE NORTH AMERICAN MISSION STUDY FOR CHILDREN. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS AND IDEAS ARE AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD AND DUPLICATE AT www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study. THE VIDEO SEGMENTS WHICH ARE FEATURED IN THIS STUDY INCLUDE, “CHANGING MEMPHIS” (FEATURING WILLIE AND OZZIE JACOBS); “WHAT’S IN A NAME?” (FEATURING PAUL AND ELIZABETH BISWAS); AND AN ALTERNATE STUDY VIDEO, “RUNNING THE RACE” (FEATURING BRENDA CRIM).

The objectives of this study are for adults to learn how our North American missionaries are sowing down the gospel and how they can be involved in their work. Adults will be motivated to pray for the work of Southern Baptist missionaries and to give financially to mission efforts. They will also be challenged to consider ways they can be engaged in mission efforts in their own communities.

Pray for insight to know how to present the study material to adults. Pray that God will use the study to spark in adults the desire to share Jesus with others. Pray for God to abundantly provide for our missionaries' needs.

PREPARE

- Select a suitable location and time for the study.
- Secure technical equipment for the study, including a television and DVD player.
- Download and print copies of the listening guides for the video segments. Also secure Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® envelopes, Week of Prayer Guides, and Missionary Prayer Cards for those who participate in the study. Listening guides are available at www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study. Information on ordering the other materials is available at www.AnnieArmstrong.com.
- Publicize the study to all adult church members.
- Display a large map of North America. Consider displaying travel-type poster around the map, showing possible well-known sites in Memphis and Boston, such as river boats for Memphis and the basketball arena for Boston. These posters might be available through the Internet or through a travel agency.

1-HOUR LESSON PLAN

(Based on 1-hour session. Additional ideas are available at www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study.)

INTRODUCTION (10 MIN.)

As a fun opening, hold up various items and ask participants to spontaneously call out what is the “partner item” to what you are holding. Examples include: salt (pepper), peanut butter (jelly), bat (ball) and so forth. State that some things are just “better together.”

State that numerous examples of partners are mentioned in the Bible. Call out names of various biblical characters and challenge participants to name one of their partners. Examples include: Adam (Eve), Moses (Aaron), David (Jonathan), Paul (Timothy), Aquila (Priscilla) and so forth. Together, these individuals could do more than they could do individually. Mention that in the book of Acts, as the church was beginning, we saw partnerships among believers to expand Christ’s witness.

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Likewise, as Southern Baptists, we are better together. Explain that the theme of this North American Mission Study is “Sowing Together for Harvest.” Invite someone to read John 4:35-37. Explain that this agricultural example reminds us that the mission field is “ripe” for harvest and that many people must work together to bring in the harvest. State that it is easy to see “partnership” in the church as different members use their gifts, such as preaching, teaching, singing, praying, for ministry and witness.

Ask: “How do you think the truth of partnership is true on the mission field? How do Southern Baptists “sow together” to bring in the harvest on the mission field?” Explain that in the two videos, featuring missionaries in Massachusetts and Tennessee, we will see firsthand the importance of “sowing together for harvest.” We are partners with these missionaries and the more than 5,500 North American missionaries who serve in the United States, Canada, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. State that we are partners with them experientially, as we become personally involved in missions. We are partners with them prayerfully, as we covenant to pray for our missionaries. We are partners with them financially, as we give monetary gifts through the Cooperative Program and to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering®.

Draw attention to the map of North America, have a push-pin marking your location with a string extending from that location to pins located in Boston, Massachusetts, and Memphis, Tennessee.

MISSIONARY FOCUS: WILLIE AND OZZIE JACOBS (15 MINUTES)

Show the segment, “Changing Memphis.” If possible, use the listening guide from www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study, encouraging participants to fill in the blanks as they are watching the video.

Ask participants for a show of hands from those who have ever visited Memphis, and then invite those who have been to Memphis to share briefly some of their trip memories. State that the places mentioned in the video, where the Jacobs minister, such as Hope Fellowship Baptist Church, Impact Ministries and International Baptist Church will never be mentioned in a tourist guide to the city. Yet, they are the places where lives are being changed with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Jacobs minister to people whom society tends to marginalize—people who are struggling personally and professionally, with their finances, vocations, emotions, and so forth. Challenge participants to examine their deeply held attitudes toward these people. Are they indifferent? Apathetic? Hostile? Judgmental? Compassionate? Sympathetic? The Jacobs believe that as they help these individuals in Memphis with practical needs, they believe they are “earning the right to be heard” with the gospel. Lead in a discussion of how this approach is biblical and how Jesus often met practical needs before orally sharing the gospel. Mention that, at this time, many people are facing difficult economic hard times; America’s economic woes open up many ministry opportunities.

State that Jacobs clearly stressed: “The church needs to learn new approaches in order to reach people with the gospel and to do it in a way that is non-threatening to build relationships.” Ask participants: “Why do you think new approaches to telling the story of the gospel are an effective way to reach people for Jesus?” Challenge participants to share if they have ever tried, or if they would be willing to try, a new ministry and evangelistic approach in their personal lives—in their workplaces and neighborhoods and so forth.

State that the Jacobs would be unable to do all that they do if they did not have support. Their support comes in at least three ways: personal involvement, prayer and financial. Those who offer such support are “sowing together for harvest.” Ask: “What will you do to sow together with the Jacobs to help bring in the harvest of individuals for the Kingdom?”

State that more than 1,200 miles to the northeast of Memphis, another North American missionary couple is reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

MISSIONARY FOCUS: PAUL AND ELIZABETH BISWAS (15 MINUTES)

Show the segment, “What’s in a Name?” If possible, use the listening guide from www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study, encouraging participants to fill in the blanks as they are watching the video.

State that, although founded on Christian principles, our nation has become a mosaic of non-Christian religions. Ask: “When you meet someone with a non-Christian religious background, what is your reaction?” Participants may admit that they may react with fear or confusion. Or that they may feel intimidated that they would not be able to “defend” Christianity if asked. Some may even admit that they are nonchalant in their attitudes, almost to the point of believing that “all roads” will ultimately lead to heaven.

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Lead in a discussion of how Paul and Elizabeth Biswas may have experienced this full range of attitudes and emotions when they chose to follow Christ and Paul turned his back on his family and the faith they held so strongly. He was even willing to change his family name because of his new-found faith! In spite of the personal sacrifices he has been forced to make for his Christian faith, he continues to faithfully share the gospel in Boston and surrounding areas. Immigrants from Southeast Asia who are living in and around Boston are a fertile mission field to which Biswas is called.

Ask: “How do you think the background of Biswas uniquely equipped him for this ministry?” Challenge participants to answer the same question for themselves: “How has your personal background uniquely equipped you for a particular ministry?” For example, someone who has survived a serious illness, or endured a divorce, or served in a war may be equipped to minister to others in similar circumstances.

Emphasize, again, that these missionaries could not do their mission work if they did not have support in the realms of personal involvement, prayer, and financial. Those who offer such support are “sowing together for harvest.” Ask: “What will you do to sow together with the Biswas to help bring in the harvest of individuals for the Kingdom?”

PRAYER TIME (10 MINUTES)

State that one way that all believers can support all North American missionaries is through prayer. Divide the group into two smaller prayer groups. Prior to the study, enlist a prayer leader for each group. One group will have a time of prayer for the Jacobs and their ministry in Memphis, and the other group will have a time of prayer for the Biswas and their ministry in Massachusetts. Encourage prayer leaders to share a favorite Scripture about prayer, offer some suggested prayer requests for their missionaries and those whom they reach and then lead in a time of silent prayer as well as a time of oral prayer. Encourage prayer leaders to use the Prayer Points section on the listening guide to direct the prayer time. Explain that those who are uncomfortable praying aloud will not be required to do so.

After a few minutes, close the groups’ prayer time with a concluding prayer for all North American missionaries.

NOTES OF ENCOURAGEMENT (5 MINUTES)

Distribute blank postcards to participants. Instruct participants to write either Paul and Elizabeth Biswas or Willie and Ozzie Jacobs. Tell them to write the sentence, “I prayed for you today,” and then to write one sentence describing what they had prayed. For example, “I prayed for you today. I prayed that God would soften the hearts of those to whom you minister.” Collect the cards after a few minutes. Bundle the cards for each of the missionary couples and mail them in a package to the addresses found at www.AnnieArmstrong.com.

CONCLUSION (5 MINUTES)

Draw attention to two quotes from the videos. Consider writing these quotes on a poster board.

“Americans here are getting a new experience because the world is at their doorstep.”

Paul Biswas, North American missionary serving in Boston, Massachusetts

“We don’t have to go out of the United States anymore. God has sent the mission field to us.”

Willie Jacobs, North American missionary serving in Memphis, Tennessee

Use these quotes to encourage a mission project for your group. For possible ideas, see “Mission Project Choices for Adult Mission Study” on www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study. Consider directing your group to pray about ministering specifically to those from non-Christian religious backgrounds or to those who are struggling socio-economically.

If you know of anyone who is interested in exploring missionary service opportunities, encourage them to contact the North American Mission Board at (770) 410-6000, or visit www.namb.net, or www.answerthecall.net.

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Distribute Missionary Prayer Cards. Encourage participants to pray consistently for these missionaries during the Week of Prayer for North American Missions.

Distribute offering envelopes for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering®. Encourage sacrificial giving, emphasizing that 100 percent of the offering goes to help missionaries like those we were introduced to on the videos.

Close in prayer, thanking God for faithful missionaries like the Biswas and Jacobs. Ask for God's blessings on their ministries. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will inspire Southern Baptists everywhere to join together in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him.

Material to support an alternate study segment, "Running the Race," featuring Brenda Crim, are available on www.AnnieArmstrong.com/study.