



“Back to Babel”

“Dealing with the challenge of cultural and language barriers”

Until the time of “The Flood” it appears that the entire world spoke only one language. Afterward, and according to Genesis Chapter 11, this is what happened:

“But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. ⁶ And the LORD said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. ⁷ Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. ⁹ Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.”

Wouldn’t our task of reaching the lost world with the Gospel message be simpler and easier if we all spoke one language? Of course, it would!

However, there is only one way to do it. *We must go back to Babel!*

If we don’t go back and deal with Babel, we will only be able to reach the 16% of the World’s population. that speak English. Our biblical mandate is to preach the gospel message to every nation, tongue, and tribe!

Most Veteran Missionaries have had to submit themselves to the study of a foreign language, including this one. To a missionary, the study of a foreign language is a paradox. Nothing gives them more pleasure and satisfaction than to have a sinner respond to a message they have just delivered in a language that is not their own.

On the other hand, nothing can be more frustrating than trying to explain to the man at the hardware store, in that very same foreign language, that what they really want is that little “thingamajig” that goes inside of the “whatchamacallit” of a leaky faucet!

We all have our own little humorous stories that relate to our struggles to conquer a foreign language.

I studied Spanish for an entire year in Puerto Rico and Venezuela, South America, while still being as involved in the Work as I could, with limited language knowledge.

After I had preached one of my very first messages, a young man approached me enthusiastically, hugged me, and said, (in Spanish), *“Bro. Burns, thank you for that tremendous message! I just know that someday, very soon, you will be able to speak Spanish so we can understand you!”*

I had just preached a message and butchered his native tongue, but because it was delivered with love and preparation, he overlooked the shortcomings.

Among the humorous mistakes I made while on the way to “fluency” was the time I had Saul falling from his “hair” instead of his “horse.” Or asking the mechanic to install a “post office” in my car instead of a “fan belt.”

I even said, in one sermon, that Jesus told the lame man to “drink his milk and walk” instead of “take up your bed and walk.” (BTW, that one “brought the house down”, but not in the way I had intended!)

The number one identifier of any People or Nation is its language. If you want to understand the People you are trying to reach, it is much easier to do so if you can communicate with them in their own language.

There’s an old saying that *“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”* The souls we are trying to reach are much more accessible and approachable if we are able to communicate with them in their native tongue.

Nelson Mandela said, *“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.”*

Today, I salute and give honor to the hundreds of VGMA Veterans who have dedicated themselves to years of language study and ministering to peoples in distant lands in their target language.

Thank you for “going back to Babel!”

VGMA NEWS

Newly Appointed VGMA Region 5 Representative!

We are happy to welcome Bro. Dorsey and Sis. Priscilla Burk as the new Region 5 Representative. They are no stranger to VGMA leadership roles, having served for many years on the VGMA Executive Committee.

Heartfelt thanks to Bro. Bennie and Sis. Pat Blunt for their excellent service in this position.

**VGMA Region 5 includes the following States:
*North Dakota; South Dakota; Nebraska; Kansas;
Minnesota; Iowa; Missouri; Wisconsin and Illinois***

The VGMA welcomes New Members:

Dan and Debbie Barkley

Please make plans to attend the annual **VGMA Banquet and Business Meeting** at the Long Beach UPCI General Conference. It will be held on Friday the 4th of October, 2024 at 2:30 PM.

In addition to the election of a new Chairman, we have some very important things to discuss and decisions to make.

More information concerning the meeting location will be forthcoming.

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**HAPPY
MOTHER'S
DAY**
To all of our
wonderful
VGMA
Mothers!

VGMA Retreat Information

Benevolent Donors Needed!

We would normally be announcing the dates for the customary biennial **VGMA Retreat for 2025**. However, we cannot proceed with firm dates until the necessary funding is in place, or promised.

Our monthly PIM income has never been sufficient to support all of the legacy VGMA Initiatives we have traditionally offered at no cost to our Members.. Traveling like a missionary on deputation to raise additional PIM support is not an option. **We, therefore, have always been dependent on benevolent donors to make up the difference. The ravishes of inflation have hit us hard!**

For now, our **annual Banquet and Business Meeting** is being funded by a wonderful Missions' Giving Church.

Our "**Christmas Cheer**" initiative for all retired missionaries desperately needs a dedicated donor or group of donors.

Our most immediate need is for the Biennial VGMA Retreat initiative. We currently have insufficient funding to sponsor a 2025 Retreat. Ideally, venues need to be booked a year in advance. If the funds cannot be secured in time, we will have to skip a year and shoot for 2026.

If anyone can help, or has any wisdom or advice, please email us at vgmasec@upci.org

Thanks and God bless!

VGMA Executive Committee



*The VGMA Membership extends its heartfelt condolences to
the extended families of*

Ruth Blake

Evelyn Criswell-Dykes

They will be greatly missed by all of us!

