

*Literacy
Missions:
Combining Ministry
and Evangelism
For 50 Years
(1959 – 2009)*

“You are the light of the world. . . . let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14, 16b (NIV)

Dedication

This brief history is dedicated to the thousands of Literacy Missions workers who have allowed God to use them in Literacy Missions Ministries over the past 50 years. A special reverence is given to those who have served for 25 years or longer. Without their commitment and faithfulness to meeting needs and sharing the gospel with the “stranger in our midst” or those who are “a prisoner” to illiteracy or struggling with school work, Literacy Missions would not exist.

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2009

Foreword

Literacy Missions was started in the heart of God. He saw the needs and called out many Christians to implement His ministry. Thousands of volunteers have been trained to teach immigrants or internationals how to speak English, native English speakers to read and write their own language, or help struggling school age children with their studies. Culture, U. S. citizenship, job placement, and heightened self-esteem are but a few additional needs met by Literacy Missions. By far the most exciting needs that have been met, however, are the spiritual ones. Volunteers, in the same training that teaches them how to teach others to speak, read or write English, are also trained how to share their Christian faith. It is probably some of the most intense witnessing training done by any volunteer church program or ministry in the Southern Baptist Convention. The spiritual results have been impressive: thousands of learners accepting Christ as their personal savior and hundreds of new churches, missions or Bible study classes started. The evidence is clear that Literacy Missions has indeed combined ministry and evangelism. Mildred Blankenship, former Director of Literacy Missions for the Home Mission Board, said "Literacy work *is missions* when aligned with God's purposes."¹

There are so many "saints of Literacy Missions" that could and should be written about. All across the United States, Canada and throughout the world, Literacy Missions workers have personified Matthew 25: 37-40. They have welcomed the "stranger" and visited those who were "in prison" with illiteracy or having difficulty in school. For every worker there is at least one profound story that needs to be told. Regrettably, most are not written down. Hopefully, some of these stories will eventually be written, but for now I have compiled this history of the past 50 years of the Home Mission Board's/North American Mission Board's involvement in Literacy Missions. This history is limited to a chronological listing of the events of national and state Baptist convention leaders as experienced through HMB/NAMB Literacy Missions ministries. I'm well aware that many deserving names will be left out, but I have truly attempted to research or remember as many as I possibly could. Also, this history does not include any of the inspiring stories from volunteers. Obviously, there will be discrepancies and unintentional omissions in what I have written (I found many in the articles and books I read to research this paper), but I have used my personal journals, photo albums, books, news articles and other published material to write this paper. I have taken the liberty of inserting some personal opinions based on my experiences and memories of 45 years of service in Literacy Missions. Additionally, this history could not have been written or documented if it had not been for the gratefully appreciated assistance of the following people and organizations:

Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), Birmingham, Alabama

Cindy Johnson (WMU Archivist)

Catherine B. Allen (Associate Executive Director - Retired)

Carol Causey

Cathy Lollar

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, TN

Taffey Hall (Archivist)

Beverly Hammock (Director of Mission Ministries Division, HMB, SBC (Retired)

Nina Clark (HMB Literacy Missions Associate, ESL Lecturer, University of Memphis,
Memphis, TN)

Dr. Loretta Rivers (Faculty member at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary)

Gayle Leininger

¹ Blankenship, Mildred and Lillian Isaacs. *So He May Run Who Reads*. Atlanta, Georgia: Home Mission Board, 1984. p. 3.

Southern Baptists Begin Literacy Work

Literacy work among Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) of the Southern Baptist Convention dates back to at least 1919. Baptists most likely started literacy programs long before that date, but the first documented "venture into teaching reading" was conducted by WMU. At their 1919 annual meeting, "the president of the Neighbors League of America was invited to teach a class on "How to Teach English to Foreigners." By 1921 WMU focused on illiteracy in the South with the added feature of Star Classes for uneducated adults. In 1946, Frank C. Laubach spoke at the WMU Annual Meeting about literacy.² WMU has remained one of the staunchest supporters of Literacy Missions (LM). It has frequently provided literacy training at its national conferences. It initiated many local workshops and started LM ministries as a part of its community missions and mission action groups.

Baylor University in Waco, Texas also became involved in literacy before the Home Mission Board (HMB). Literacy pioneer Dr. Frank Laubach, Sr. spoke at Baylor in 1956 about the need for literacy ministries. As a result, the Baylor Literacy Center was established about 1957 with Dr. Richard W. Cortright as director. By 1958 Dr. Cortright was conducting workshops throughout Texas and even into Kentucky, Oklahoma, New York and California.³ It was an article that he wrote for *Royal Service* (WMU publication) in August 1958 that spurred Lillian Isaacs to begin literacy work for the Southern Baptist's Home Mission Board (HMB). In this article Cortright states that to start a literacy ministry a church should call together the Women's Missionary Society (WMS) (women's organization of WMU) and form a Literacy Coordination Committee and then contact Baylor to help with the 4-8 hour literacy workshop.⁴

Home Mission Board, SBC Begins Literacy Missions



Lillian Isaacs
Started HMB Literacy Missions Work
(1959)
 (Photo used with permission from WMU, SBC)

The Southern Baptist's Home Mission Board (HMB) became involved in Literacy Missions in 1959 when Lillian Isaacs, home missionary with her husband John, organized the first workshop sponsored by HMB. The article written by Dr. Cortright was brought to Lillian's attention by a pastor's wife in Pineville, KY. Lillian was asked to organize a training workshop in Pineville. Lillian received great assistance with promotion from the WMU of Pineville First Baptist Church, Bell County Associational WMU, Clear Creek president Dr. and Mrs. D. M. Aldridge, and Sam and Grace Faulkenberry.⁵ Funding was provided by the HMB under the guidance of M. Wendell Belew (Department of Associational Missions, HMB) and Dr. Arthur B. Rutledge (Missions Division Director, HMB). The workshop was held at Clear Creek Baptist School in Pineville, KY "on October 9-10, 1959 and attracted more than 200 prospective teachers

² Allen, Catherine B. *A Century to Celebrate: History of Woman's Missionary Union*. Birmingham, AL, WMU, 1987. p. 227,229.

³ Cortright, Dr. Richard, *Literacy News*, (May 1961)

⁴ Cortright, Dr. Richard, "Many of Your Neighbors Cannot Read", *Royal Service*, (August 1958): pp. 14-16.

⁵ Bowen, Nell Tyner. *John and Lillian Isaacs: Making the Word Known*. Birmingham, AL: Woman's Missionary Union, 1985.

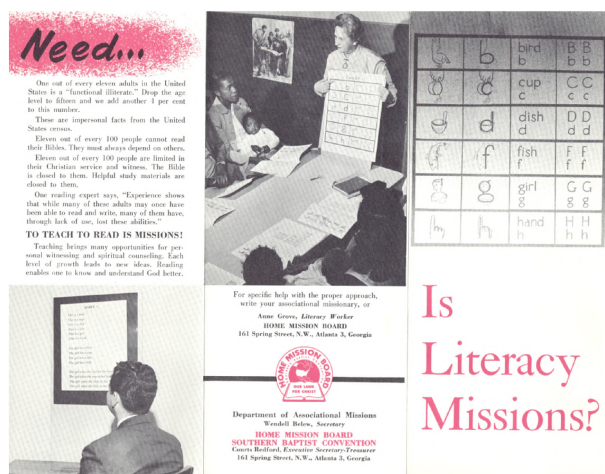
of literacy from four states and seven Kentucky counties.”⁶ Dr. Cortright from the Baylor Literacy Center in Waco, TX was brought in for the training. Thus began HMB’s endeavor in Literacy Missions.



Ann Chester Grove
First H.M.B Literacy Specialist
(1960 – 1961)

(Photo courtesy Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives)

After the phenomenal response to the workshop in Pineville, the HMB realized the need for a full-time worker assigned to literacy. They appointed Ann Grove in June 1960 as the first literacy specialist to be employed by Southern Baptists. Miss Grove came from the Literacy Center at Baylor and had previously worked for the HMB at the Carver Baptist Center in New Orleans.⁷ As literacy specialist she worked from the Clear Creek Baptist School in Pineville initially and then moved to Atlanta as the work expanded. Miss Grove was assigned to lead a “pilot literacy mission program assigned originally to the Appalachian area. The demands were great from so many sources and interest was extremely high that it was difficult to confine a private program to any area.” The first Literacy Conference of the HMB was held at the HMB building on March 23-24, 1961 presided by Wendell Belew. Twenty-three persons involved in literacy attended the conference and they became the first Baptist Literacy Missions Committee.⁸ Under Ann’s direction the first literacy missions leadership workshop to train workshop leaders was held June 1961 at the Carver School of Missions and Social Work in Louisville, KY.⁹ Ann Grove was terminated from the HMB in the fall of 1961.¹⁰



HMB brochure used to promote Literacy Missions.

⁶ Blankenship and Isaacs, p. 12.

⁷ “Missions Today”, *Home Missions*, June 1960.

⁸ Belew, M. Wendell, Preface and minutes from the first Literacy Conference of the HMB, (March 23-24, 1961) Provided by Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives (SBHLA).

⁹ Blankenship and Isaacs, p. 50.

¹⁰ “*Literacy Specialist Returns to Nashville*,” *Home Missions*, Nov. 1961.

Literacy Missions under the leadership of Mildred Blankenship (1962 – 1989)



Photo courtesy SBJLLA

The HMB continued to see the need for a full-time worker in literacy. They were looking for a man to fill the position,¹¹ but in March 1962 Mildred Blankenship was appointed as the Director of Literacy Missions. Mildred had taught in public schools and had become acutely aware of the need for literacy. She had also worked for several literacy councils in several states.

Mildred became an associate director in the HMB's Church and Community Ministries (CCM) Department in Atlanta. Literacy Missions was, of course, the greatest focus of her work. Mildred served in that position from 1962 until her retirement in 1989. Literacy Missions became one of the strongest ministries at HMB under Mildred's leadership. Beverly Hammack, HMB Director of Church and Community Missions Dept. and eventually Mildred's supervisor, said of Mildred, "You (Mildred) took one ministry and elevated it to a prominence unknown to most programs. You've made churches aware of many in their community who could not be reached except through a caring ministry." Kendale Moore, who was to take her position after she retired, said "Mildred is someone who always emphasized perseverance - she knew what she wanted to do, worked at it, not in a flashy way, but slow and steady. Intentional is a word I would use to describe her."¹² My experiences with Mildred revealed that she was slow to act because she took time to pray seriously about issues and she analyzed them seeking God's direction.

Soon after coming to the board, Mildred wrote a 34-page "*Teacher's Guide for Literacy Missions*" and soon after that a 9-page "*Teaching English to Non-English-speaking People*." Those were our first manuals for workshops. The primary curriculum for both tracts from 1959 into the 70s was Frank C. Laubach's *Streamlined English*, but Mildred looked for more effective methods and materials, especially for Conversational English (CE). She held a Literacy Missions Symposium of Resource Persons in CE at the HMB in Atlanta on November 2-4, 1970. The purpose of this meeting was: "to examine and evaluate the present workshop structure as to its effectiveness in training volunteers in techniques of teaching conversational English and to recommend revisions, additions, or a more appropriate workshop schedule."¹³ In 1971, Mildred held a Literacy Missions Conference at Tabernacle Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA. At this meeting she introduced *Pattern Practices for the New Streamlined English Series* by Susan Abbott, a Christian ESL teacher from Texas. This book was to be used with the Laubach *New Streamlined English Series* as a companion for CE. From this text, CE teachers were first introduced to the audio/lingual method of using drills. In 1970, Mildred wrote the first *Handbook for Literacy Missions* providing additional ideas for teaching the non-reading adult and the non-English speaking adult. This 31-page HMB publication was the first to include the *Literacy Prayer* written by Opal Smith of Douglas, GA. Then in 1978, the second edition of the handbook (59 pages) was written by Mildred and co-authored by Ruth Miller of Marietta, GA. Miller was a workshop leader, director of an ESL ministry and on the writing staff of WMU and other publications.¹⁴ This handbook was used in all literacy missions' workshops for over 15 years.

¹¹ Blankenship and Isaacs, p. 26.

¹² Clark, Nina, Essay: "*Changing Lives, Planting People: Mildred Blankenship*", Dec. 2002.

¹³ "Literacy Missions Symposium of Resource Persons in Conversational English," program cover, Nov. 1970.

¹⁴ Mildred Blankenship & Ruth Miller. *Handbook for Literacy Missions*. Atlanta, GA: HMB, 1978, p.v.



**Basic Literacy Missions
Workshop Award
1978**
Photo courtesy SBHLLA

Under that methodical, but steady leadership Mildred strengthened the HMB's annual national leadership workshop which trained workshop leaders (teacher trainers) from across the country, Canada and even overseas. In 1973, the training was divided into two tracks: Adult Reading and Writing (ARW) to teach American-born non-readers and Conversational English (CE) to teach spoken English to immigrants and internationals in the U.S. The term "Conversational English" was chosen because it identified the primary focus of teaching English as a second language in our ministries. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY was the sight of the National Literacy Missions Leadership Workshop from 1961 until 1973.



*National
LM
Leadership
Workshop*

*Southern
Baptist
Theological
Seminary*

1969

In 1974 the leadership workshop was held at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. With increased enrollment and a demand for more dormitory rooms, the workshop was moved to Samford University, Birmingham, AL in 1974. It remained at this location until after Mildred retired. Those who attended the leadership workshop at Samford in the early years will remember the infamous stairs leading down to the dormitory where we were housed. There were at least 30 steps going down to the dormitory. It wasn't that the steps were so awful, but carrying large, very heavy books to and from class several times a day in the hot Alabama summer was enough to put anyone in misery!

*Samford University
Birmingham, AL*

Beeson Hall



During the 1960s until early 1990s the *Handbook for Literacy Missions* was the only guide provided for those attending basic workshops or those being trained as workshop leaders at the HMB National Leadership Workshop. The Laubach *New Streamlined English Series* and a few other texts were ordered by participants prior to coming to the workshop. There were no manuals for either track (CE, ARW) and no guidelines for workshop leaders to follow, only a few handouts. The primary task at the leadership workshop was for participants to prepare their own manual to be used when they conducted basic workshops. Generally included in these manuals were their written pre-assignments, written assignments given after arrival (there were many), handouts given during the workshop and any other pertinent material they had collected. Email was not commonly accessible then so participants brought pre-assignments to the workshop and if there were critical errors with them, the participants had to go to the library on campus and re-write the assignment. Personal computers were also not readily available for most participants and assignments were often typed on a typewriter or handwritten. Their manuals were thick and heavy - 3 inch notebooks overstuffed with material - and these had to be carried all day. Notebooks were turned in on Friday afternoon and while the track leaders and staff reviewed each one well into the wee hours of the morning, participants "partied!" Graduate level college credit could be obtained if participants completed additional assignments. Those who taught at the leadership workshop while Mildred served at HMB included: Wanda Eckeberger (TX); Leta Cornman (GA); Ruth Miller (GA); Mary Allred (TN); Gayle Leininger (FL); Glenda Reece (NC); Fran deCordova (OK); Kay Harwood (VA); Jan Pitts Westbury (CA); Phyllis Merritt (GA) and Starla Yeager (AL).

One of Mildred's greatest gifts was that of encourager. She did not do it with wordy accolades, but through a developed trust and respect for many who worked in Literacy Missions. She encouraged by asking them to lead in various ways: teaching basic workshops, speaking at national meetings, serving on the HMB advisory committee, and teaching at the national leadership workshop. She sought input from many who served across the nation. She formed a LM Advisory Council and brought them into Atlanta about every one or two years. The initial council consisted of Kendale Moore (KY); Wanda Eckeberger (TX); Fran deCordova (OK); Leta Cornman (GA); Hasseltine Maxwell (FL); Dee McFarland (IL); Gayle Leininger (FL); Mary Allred (TN); Bill Hern (NC); Laurel Weise (AZ) and the HMB staff (Lester, Lillian, Mildred).

*HMB
Literacy
Missions
Advisory
Council
-1982-*



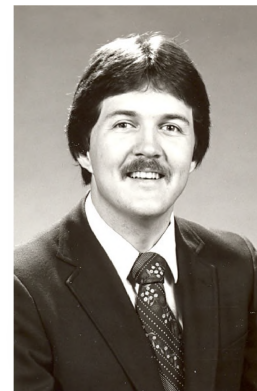
One of the greatest events organized by Mildred with the help from LM missionaries, Kendale Moore and Ada Young and the advisory council was the 1986 National Literacy Missions Convocation which was held in two locations: Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in NC on April 14 - 17 and Glorieta Baptist Conference Center May 12 - 15. It was at this convocation that Mildred received the first Mildred Blankenship Literacy Missions Award, a national award recognizing long-term commitment and involvement in LM ministry. This annual award has been received by: Helen Maxson (NM); Hasseltine Maxwell (FL); Lillian Isaacs (FL); Louise Yarbrough (AK); Floy Rawls (AL); Mary Mullins (NM); Wanda Eckeberger (TX); Eddith

Montgomery (FL); Robert and Rene Sugg (MS); Leta Cornman (GA); Mary Nance (Canada); June Tate (FL); Fran deCordova (OK); Glenda Reece (NC); and Gayle Leininger (TN).



Lynn Eckeberger
H.M.B. Literacy Missions
Consultant/West
 ← 1978 - 1981

Carl Lester Meriwether
H.M.B. Literacy Missions
Consultant/West
 1981 - 1984 →
 (Photo courtesy SBFLA)



With support from the HMB Missions Division, Mildred was provided field missionaries. Dr. Paul Adkins, Wendell Belew, Beverly Hammack, Don Hammonds and Harold Wilcox from this division always gave great encouragement to Literacy Missions. In 1960, John and Lillian Isaacs moved from Pineville, KY to Fairbanks, Alaska. As home missionaries they continued to use Literacy Missions to reach the Eskimos, native-American and military families in that area. Lillian started a literacy ministry at Friendship Baptist Mission in Fairbanks. The wonderfully inspiring stories about "Aunt Elsie Willock" and "Grandma Tucker" and other experiences Lillian had in Alaska, Kentucky and Florida can be found in the biography, *John and Lillian Isaacs: Making the Word Known*, written by Nell Tyner Bowen. Lillian traveled to Anchorage to train volunteers and under the supervision of Louise Yarbrough Conversational English and Citizenship classes were started in 1964 in that city. John retired from HMB in 1972 and he and Lillian moved to Tallahassee, FL. At that time, Mildred selected Lillian to serve as the newly created job of Literacy Missions Field Missionary and she served in that capacity until 1983. Lillian worked from her home in Tallahassee but traveled throughout the country conducting workshops and promoting Literacy Missions. In 1978, Lynn Eckeberger of Texas was selected to serve as Literacy Missions Consultant for states west of the Mississippi River. Lillian continued as Literacy Missions Consultant for states east of the Mississippi. Eckeberger resigned in 1981 and was replaced by Lester Meriwether who served until 1984. On December 31, 1983 Lillian retired and Ada Young, longtime home missionary in New England and New Orleans, took the



Kendale Moore
Literacy Missions
Consultant/West
 1984 - 1989

Ada Young
Literacy Missions
Consultant/East
 1984 - 1990



Eastern position and Kendale Moore, director of language missions for Kentucky Baptists, was responsible for the western states. Kendale held a doctorate degree in law and was an attorney and then felt the call from God to the ministry and he obtained an additional master's degree in music at Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY. He was responsible for LM while at the KY convention. Kendale also has a beautiful voice and often sings for LM conferences and other

denominational events. Ada's 30+ years of mission work in Baptist centers gave her tremendous awareness of literacy needs in the country. Her stories about teaching prisoners to read and how she used rags to further mission work are hilarious and profound at the same time. Ada was an avid baseball fan and used "colorful" words when she was cheering for her favorite team. Ada worked from her home in Louisville, KY and Kendale worked from Albuquerque, NM. With a private secretary, Mildred now had four full-time workers to carry on the work of Literacy Missions.

As the HMB continued to provide so many resources, the awareness in LM and new ministries grew tremendously in Baptist conventions. Many workshop leaders were trained at the leadership workshop, great numbers of workshops were held, new ministries started, and more and more volunteers became involved in LM. The work became so large that many states began to realize the need for someone to coordinate the work of LM around the state. Brenda Forlines, Florida's Church and Community Ministries Director, initiated the concept of a state LM consultant. Gayle Leininger was asked to serve in this position in 1985. Other states soon followed with designated state consultants/coordinators. By 1999 there were 19 appointed state LM consultants. Financial support for these consultants is varied: some receive only reimbursement for expenses, others receive a small stipend and budget for expenses, some receive part-time salary and expenses and in 1997 Georgia became the first state to appoint a NAMB full-time missionary for LM. Mary Dolvin was commissioned at that time. Florida became the second state to appoint a missionary, Cathy Lentz, in 2007 in a dual alliance with NAMB. Obviously, the LM awareness, support of volunteers and training events in conventions with assigned consultants are generally the strongest in the country. Most hold annual LM Conferences offering the basic workshops for new volunteers and continuing education for those already teaching.

State Literacy
Missions Consultants
 June Tate (CA)
 Fran deCordova (OK)
 Gayle Leininger (H.M.B.)
 Mary Dolvin (GA)
 Sue Johnson (SC)

-1995-



Florida Baptist Literacy Missions Consultants

<i>Gayle Leininger</i> 1985 - 1990	<i>Ruby Smith</i> 1990 - 1993	<i>Cathy Lentz</i> 2007 -
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Touring Literacy Missions work in Alaska was an exciting event that Mildred planned in 1989 just before her retirement. Kendale and Ada assisted her with arrangements for this tour which was designed for any LM worker who wanted to go. The occasion was the 25th Anniversary Celebration of CE and citizenship classes in the Chugach Baptist Association in Alaska. Those who attended from the "lower 48" were: Lillian Isaacs, Leta Cornman, Gayle Leininger, Fran deCordova, Martha and John Wheeler (FL), Sue Johnson (SC), Bob and Rene Sugg, Dean and Joyce Richardson (TX) and of course Mildred, Kendale and Ada. The 12-day tour was a marvelous celebration of inspiration and training held May 18-20 in Anchorage and then on to Fairbanks to visit at Friendship Baptist Mission where Lillian and John had started the LM ministry.

One of Mildred's greatest joys was introduced during the Alaskan tour in 1989. The HMB produced *English Lessons from the Bible: Book of Mark* that year. This two-volume text was a dream of Mildred's "to develop material that would be appropriate for the English language learner at a beginning level who was not familiar with the Bible or Christianity."¹⁵ The Bible/ESL lessons were written by Glenda Reece, certified ESL teacher in public schools and church-based ministries, and collaborated by Mildred. The text used the popular Lipson Method which was also introduced to the HMB leadership workshop by Reece.



¹⁵ Clark, Nina, p.4.

workshop staff with a beautiful retirement reception at the WMU headquarters building in Birmingham. It was attended by the participants of the 1989 leadership workshop, national WMU leadership, professors and staff from Samford. After retirement, Mildred moved back to her hometown, Birmingham, AL. She passed away in June of 2006 at the age of 82. She loved butterflies because they reminded her of 2 Corinthians 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." Mildred was buried with a butterfly pin attached to her jacket.¹⁶

The two founding pioneers of LM died within nine months of each other. Lillian Isaacs, went to be with her Lord in March 2007 at the age of 88. The *Lillian Isaacs Literacy Missions Endowment Fund* was established by WMU in 2000 "to provide awards for training of LM trainers, as seed money for new programs and for products and materials."¹⁷ Lillian was adored for the Bible quotes she gave almost every time she talked to her friends. There were so many of her favorites, but one that she quoted often was Psalm 34: "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good."

Literacy Missions Work Continues (1990 – 2009)

Kendale Moore served for the HMB as the Literacy Mission Consultant/West from 1984 through 1989. In 1990 he became an associate in the CCM department and Director of Literacy Missions for the HMB in Atlanta. Kendale's position as consultant was not replaced and Ada Young was reassigned as national missionary for LM. Ada retired in December 1990 and moved to her hometown of Owensboro, KY and passed away in December 2008.



*Gayle Jordan Leininger
National Missionary for Literacy
Missions (HMB/NAMB)
1991 - 2001*

Ada's position at HMB was filled by Gayle Leininger in January 1991. Gayle received her initial literacy training from Lillian Isaacs in 1964 while living in Alaska. Ironically, in 1991 she was commissioned as a HMB missionary in the same position Lillian had formerly held. She had moved to Orlando, FL with her family and in 1967 started a CE ministry at Orlando First Baptist Church. The ministry started with one student and soon grew to over 150. In 1990 Gayle had served as a volunteer CE teacher or director for 26 years, over 20 years as a CE workshop leader, 9 years as a CE trainer at the HMB leadership workshop and 5 years as the Florida Literacy Missions Consultant.

Kendale and Gayle began the process of developing workshop manuals for all the tracks: ARW, CE and Tutoring Children and Youth (TCY). (Tutoring school-age children had been one segment of the ARW training, but in 1992 TCY was introduced as a separate training track.) There was a growing need for more training materials for the basic workshop. With little

¹⁶ Leininger, Gayle. *As I Recall: Memories of a Military Kid, Mom, Mimi and Missionary*. Unpublished, 2008. p. 238.

¹⁷ "Project Help: Literacy," *Missions Mosaic*, August 2000, insert.

defined and written instructions for workshop leaders, there was a tremendous amount of inconsistency in the basic workshop. The manuals would not only guide workshop leaders through a basic workshop, they would provide direction for new ministries or new teachers from their very first class. Adaptation and creativity were encouraged, but now there would be guidance as to what constituted a HMB Literacy Missions ministry. The first manual written was the *Conversational English Workshop Manual*. It was published in 1993 by the HMB. The ARW manual was published in 1998 and the TCY in 2002. There were many draft copies of the ARW and TCY manuals before their publication and they had to be photocopied by workshop leaders for their workshops. Many state leaders, workshop leaders and leadership workshop trainers gave input to the writing of these manuals. Additionally, Gayle and Kendale wrote "*Guidelines for Workshop Leaders*" for each track. These are step-by-step instructions for conducting a LM workshop. Again, innovativeness was encouraged, but these guidelines generally assured a more consistent workshop for all leaders.

The National LM Leadership Workshop was well established, but there was a need for expanding the training. Only three times did HMB offer this week long workshop in the same year but at different locations: 1974 at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri; 1983 at California Baptist College near Los Angeles, CA (this workshop was cancelled due to insufficient registration); and 1992 at Grand Canyon Baptist College, Phoenix, Arizona (CE only). Samford University in Birmingham, AL was the leadership workshop site for almost twenty years. Many in the western states were asking for a more central location, so in 1994 and 1995 the workshop was held at Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU), Shawnee, OK. In 1996 and 1997 it returned to Samford. The idea was to rotate between these two universities and then every fifth year select an additional site. So in 1998 an attempt to reach more Baptists in the northeastern U.S. was made and the workshop was held at Eastern College in Philadelphia, PA. The enrollment, however, dropped significantly and so in 1999 the workshop returned to OBU and has been held there through 2009. Each of the campuses provided excellent support and generally good accommodations, but location and changed university policies forced the workshop to be held in one location.



Oklahoma Baptist University – Shawnee, Oklahoma – Montgomery Hall

Kendale and Gayle also initiated the National LM Leadership Workshop Update. This was primarily for workshop leaders who had attended the leadership workshop more than 5 years

earlier. The annual update started in 1993 and allowed workshop leaders to receive new ideas and materials without going through the same training they had had before. Initially, the update was tested as a week long workshop at Toccoa, GA and Glorieta, NM, but shortened to a 3-day event at Waco, TX and then rotated each year between Ridgecrest Conference Center in NC and Glorieta in NM. After 2001 the update was conducted in various locations depending on need.

1997 was a significant year for Baptist mission work in the United States and Canada. The Home Mission Board was eliminated by the Southern Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) took the responsibility of missions in the U.S. and Canada. Missionaries in the field remained the same, but most HMB staff in Atlanta were reassigned or not offered new positions by NAMB. The former Ministry Section of HMB was eliminated and LM was assigned to the Evangelism Section. Kendale Moore was reassigned from an associate in the Ministry/CCM Section to national missionary for LM. Now there were two national missionaries for LM.

Gayle Leininger retired in January 2001 leaving behind just one NAMB missionary assigned to LM, Kendale Moore. He remained in the Atlanta area but worked from his home office. Even though LM had grown greatly in the last decade and many new materials and training events were offered, the work that had been done in the 1980s by four full-time staff persons was now reduced to just one. Change came again to Kendale in 2007 when NAMB re-assigned him to Ministry and Servant Evangelism Associate with responsibility of LM and Refugee Resettlement. His office was transferred to the NAMB building in Alpharetta, GA. Kendale strives to keep the manuals and guidelines updated and organizes the leadership workshop, updates and other training. He revised the CE manual in 2004 and renamed it *Teaching English Language Learners the Good News*. The term Conversational English (CE) was also renamed ESL (English as a Second Language) because it was more commonly recognized and understood by those not involved in LM.

Literacy Missions Ministries translates Evangelism

Evangelism and ministry are inseparable. Neither is a means to the other, they simply go together. Spoken words are easily mistranslated, actions rarely are. Larry Lewis, former president of HMB, said, "The best way for a church to grow is to meet the needs of people in that community. It is better than using any multi-colored pamphlet." Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler at the 1986 SBC Convention said, "For the last 27 years WMU and the HMB have developed a LM program that shows the best evangelistic results of anything we do." A director of missions in Florida who made many of the visits with his wife to the homes of students she was tutoring in the church's TCY ministry said, "I have often been rejected when visiting for the church or blandly welcomed, but never sucked in by such eager parents. They told me the reason was because "you care about my children!" Another director of missions in Indiana said, "Our association has now started four language missions and guess how all of them were started: from students in the ESL classes!"

The results of LM make it clear that this ministry is combining ministering to the needs of people and evangelism. The national compilation from the 1999 State Convention's LM report alone reveals the following facts:

1144	Professions of faith
172	New mission or church starts since 1986 (15 in 1999)

376	On-going English Bible classes
1087	Southern Baptist churches offering LM ministries
7150	Workers involved in these ministries
25,663	Students enrolled in these ministries ¹⁸

This brief history is dedicated to the thousands of LM workers who have made LM possible for over 50 years. Without their commitment and faithfulness to meeting needs and sharing the gospel with the “stranger in our midst” or those who are “a prisoner” to illiteracy or struggling with school work, LM would not exist. As we look forward to the next 50 years, we must remember that the God who started LM in the past is the same God who will lead us into the future.

¹⁸ *The Literacy Missions Connection*, Vol. 33 No. 1, Summer 2000, p. 4