

MAGNOLIA MINDS: The heroes of short-term missions

*By Junior and Margaret Davis
Correspondents*

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There have been career International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries who spent countless years and struggles in the early days to make possible for short term trips to even take place. With every trip we make to Bangladesh the same names keep popping up. These are pioneers who have made it possible for the work to carry on. I want to honor a few of these icons and heroes of the faith:

– James and Guinevere Young.

- Tom and Gloria Thurman.
- R.T. and Fran Buckley.
- Jim and Betty McKinley.
- Their families.

During the early years of Bangladesh, the times were hard and furious. From dodging bullets in the middle of a civil war to extreme poverty and heat, the challenges were enormous but these families kept the faith and persevered through difficulties that would make most of us retreat in a few days.

Jim McKinley recounts in his book, *Death to Life*, the many struggles he and his colleagues experienced to open the door of the Gospel to the Bengali people. There was suffering, danger, toil, natural disaster, and even death that cannot be comprehended by short term volunteers.

Because many over the years have given to the Cooperative Program and went above and beyond with the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, these IMB missionaries were able to stay the course for many years.

After one day back in the comfort of our home in Mississippi, we realize if it were not for the dedication and commitment of these early IMB missionaries in Bangladesh there would be no opportunity to make these short-term trips. To say they paved the way is an understatement.

These families represent more than two hundred years of service and dedication to our Lord Jesus in Bangladesh. If we were given the option to spend one hour with a movie star, famous athlete, or one of these families, there's not a doubt in our minds which we would choose. They are our heroes.

Upon his retirement from the pastorate, Junior and Margaret were commissioned as missionaries by Williamsville Church, Kosciusko. They may be contacted at wbcdavis@gmail.com.