

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2008

## Louisiana Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship

P.O. Box 311, Alexandria, LA 71319, telephone 318-448-3402

**Men's Ministry/Special Ministry, Louisiana Baptist Convention**

Contact Person: W. Nelson Philpot, 318-927-2388 or [wnp@homerla.com](mailto:wnp@homerla.com)

**Focal Scripture.** *He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.* (Proverbs 14:31)

**Annual Meeting to be Held at the Baptist Building in Alexandria February 2, 2008.** Registration and refreshments will begin at 9:30 and the meeting will be called to order at 10:00. All persons interested in missions are invited.

The first major presentation titled *The History, Organization, and Work of Heifer International* will be made by Robbin Loewer Phelps. She will be followed by Gene Hodgkins, a retired agricultural extension specialist with LSU and IMB volunteer missionary, who will address the subject of *The Role of Agricultural Missions in Planting New Churches*. A student (name withheld) at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will discuss *My Call to Agricultural Missions*.

Following lunch, the newest PowerPoint presentation prepared by our Fellowship will be presented by Nelson Philpot. The PowerPoint is titled *Poverty and Christian Responsibility*. The business meeting will then be held and reports will be made by various committees. The meeting will end with a brainstorming session conducted by Gene Baker on how we can improve the impact of our Fellowship.

### **Facts Concerning Poverty and the Role of Agricultural Missions in Kingdom Development.**

There is a special place in the heart of God for those who are poor, hungry, and hurting. Just as evangelism is seen as winning the kingdom one soul at a time, so poverty alleviation in the name of Christ is about restoring families and communities one at a time. The IMB has reported the following facts regarding poverty and hunger in the world:

- 2 billion people in our world are hungry.
- 450 million are on the verge of starvation.
- 60% of all people do not have safe drinking water.
- 46% live in poverty; 20% in absolute poverty.
- 33% have no medical care.

We Christians must guard against compassion fatigue wherein we become desensitized to the needs and suffering of others. After all, we have both a mandate and the resources with which to respond to a world in need. Effective community development does not involve solving problems for people, but rather, it involves coming alongside the people as partners in their development efforts. In other words, the most effective

development is done *with people* rather than *for people*, which gives them confidence in their own abilities. This enables them to say they have solved their own problems, and can do so again in the future.

In true community development there are no free "giveaways." Thus, our Fellowship makes every effort to provide help in a way that honors and builds up the poor, but does not create dependency on us. Agricultural missionaries have reported the poor have an amazing capacity for solving their own problems. They also emphasize the importance of not stereotyping them because that may force them to conclude they are defective and thus are destined to remain in poverty.

**Root Problems with Poverty and Hunger.** The central problem here is that poor people are trapped in severe poverty, and they have little or no hope of rising above their circumstances unless you and I help them. Because they lack the resources with which to produce or purchase food, they become malnourished, weaker, and often sick. This makes them increasingly unable to work, which then makes them even poorer and hungrier. This downward spiral often continues until death, especially for women and children. The solution to such devastating circumstances is to implement programs that both nourish the people and build infrastructure to end their poverty through self-help programs wherein the people are empowered to help themselves.

**Project Support.** Examples of projects that individuals can support are as follows:

**Egg incubation facilities for a family = \$125.00**

**Drip irrigation for a family = \$300.00**

**Rabbit project for a family = \$200.00**

**Chicken project for a family = \$200.00**

**Quail project for a family = \$200.00**

**Small greenhouse for a family = \$400.00**

**Goat project for a family = \$300.00**

**Heifer project for a family = \$500.00**

**Water pump and pipe for a village = \$2,000.00**

*Please help us in this effort to help poor people in Southern Mexico help themselves by sending a generous check made out to Louisiana Baptist Foundation, P.O. Box 311, Alexandria, LA 71309. It is critically important to indicate the funds are for the LA Baptist Ag Missions Fellowship. Funds will be used to support agricultural mission projects in Oaxaca, Mexico, or possibly in other areas the executive committee may approve.*