

September 2008

Following God's Call to South Africa

The definition of a "venturer" is someone willing to take a risk; take a dare; to expose themselves to danger. The definition of a **Kingdom Advance Venturer** is someone who is willing to take a risk or dare to make a difference for Christ. As a Virginia Baptist Kingdom Advance Venturer, Russell Ames has accepted the dare.

Scripture

Old Testament

Life of Israel: Jonah 3:1-5, **1** Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: **2** "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you." **3** This time Jonah obeyed the LORD's command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. **4** On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" **5** The people of Nineveh believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.

New Testament

Life of Christ: Matthew 9:13-15 (New Living Translation) "One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children." And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them before he left."

Culture Study

The Venturer Program is a part of Glocal Missions and Evangelism's Mobile Mission Connection, in partnership with WMU of Virginia. This program provides hands-on mission opportunities to individuals at least 18 years of age for a period of six months to two years, in response to specific needs of our ministry partners.

In greater Johannesburg alone, over 40 babies are abandoned every month and left to die of starvation or exposure. Berea Baptist Church (senior pastor, Cheryl Allen) felt led to start the Door of Hope mission to save these babies. Many babies are left anonymously in the "hole in the wall" or "baby bin" installed in the wall of the Mission Church, where babies can be placed 24 hours a day. Hospitals phone the Door of Hope to pick up little ones, whose mothers have disappeared after the delivery, leaving their babies behind. At the Door of Hope these babies are cared for, loved, provided with medical care, and adopted to a "forever family."



Russell Ames has accepted the call to work with Door of Hope matching his gifts and abilities with the needs in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Case Study

Russell Ames is a Virginia Baptist Venturer in Johannesburg, South Africa. Venturers are short-term workers who serve in a specific area of ministry for six months to two years. Russell, a 2007 graduate of the University of Virginia, earnestly sought God's will for his life following his college graduation. As a summer missionary, he worked at the Touch Life Centre of Troyeville Baptist Church in Johannesburg, and he quickly realized that God had plans for him there. He returned to the States and began to raise support for his ministry, and he applied to the Venturer Program in pursuit of his goal. After months of gathering support and waiting, Russell returned to Johannesburg in February 2008.

In Johannesburg, Russell's two main assignments involve working with the Touch Life Centre and Door of Hope. The Touch Life Centre is a ministry of Troyeville Baptist Church, and it offers a safe, nurturing environment for preschoolers, children, and youth. Door of Hope, a ministry of Berea Baptist Church, offers help and hope to abandoned babies and toddlers in need of adoption.

Russell and other Venturers there are sponsored by the Virginia Baptist Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union of Virginia, and individual churches. Monies given through the Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions go in part to help Russell and his fellow Venturers in Johannesburg.

In John 15:17, Jesus tells us to "love one another." Russell Ames knew that God wanted him to do something special. He knew that children are important to God and that Jesus taught us to love one another. Russell traveled all the way to Johannesburg, South Africa, to do what God wanted him to do. He helps babies there who need new homes through adoption, and he helps run a day care for children whose parents work. Wherever he goes, he teaches the children how much Jesus loves them.

To read more about Russell's work in South Africa, check out his [blog](#) or access his latest newsletter [here](#).

Opportunities for Involvement

The story of Russell Ames, the Touch Life Centre, and Door of Hope may motivate some of your church members to begin a new ministry to at-risk babies and children in your area. Be sensitive to the ways in which God might be calling you to reach out in a new way. Lead a discussion with your group about ways in which your church is or is not seeking to minister to others. Prayerfully consider together how you might start such a ministry or provide ongoing support to one that already exists.

Showers of Blessing for Bland! Consider hosting a baby shower for the Bland Ministry Center. Your group can gather for fun and fellowship as you collect items for new and expectant mothers.

Knit blankets or make quilts for new Moms-to-be in your church

Collect used books such as (What to Expect When you are Expecting) and donate to a local pregnancy center.

Make small, fleece blankets for newborn babies (cut two pieces of fleece 36 x 36 inches. With the two fleece pieces together, cut 4-inch-long x 1-inch-wide fringe all the way around both fleece pieces. Keeping the two fleece pieces together, with a fringe from the top piece and a fringe from the bottom piece, tie the two together in a square knot. This is easy for children to make and is a special gift for babies.)

Commitment

Lead your group to pray now for Russell Ames, his fellow workers, and the babies and children he works with in Johannesburg. Commit to pray daily, asking God to make you sensitive to ways in which He might be calling you or your church to minister to at-risk babies and children in your community.