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'Rt g u l f g p v) u ' N g w g t "

On behalf of the entire International Mission Board, I want to personally thank you-Southern Baptist churches, church members, and pastors-for the myriad of ways you are working together for the spread of the gospel around the world. Moreover, I want to share with you that because of your partnership together through the IMB, disciples have been made and churches have been multiplied over the last year among the nations in truly breathtaking ways.

Specifically, I want to thank you for giving the highest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) in the 127-year history of this offering (\$165.8 million). As a result of your giving to Lottie Moon as well as your continual giving to the Cooperative Program, the IMB is now operating on a 2017 budget that balances our receipts with our expenses.

Moreover, I am pleased to share with you that within the framework of this balanced budget, we are also increasing the number of missionaries serving on the field with the IMB over the next year. After many consecutive years of reducing the number of IMB missionaries on the ground overseas, that trend will officially reverse in 2017. Lord willing, Southern Baptists will have more full-time, fully-supported missionaries overseas over y g'next year than we do now, in addition to more missionaries going through new pathways designed to engage students, professionals, retirees, and others as part of our mission force.

Even as we look forward to 2017, it is humbling to look back at 2016 and to reflect on the work done by Southern Baptist missionaries serving through the IMB in some of the most difficult, dangerous to reach places in the world. Over the last year, I was able to gather personally with our missionaries who work in North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, Central Asia, East Asia, and with the Deaf. I listened to story after of story of struggle after struggle involved with ministry to unreached peoples. At the same time, I heard how God is at work in the middle of the struggle. As our missionaries are evangelizing, discipling, planting healthy churches, and training leaders, the Lord is being glorified through disciples made and churches multiplied among people who at this time last year still had not even heard the gospel!

All of this is only possible through the grace of God and through the faithful and continued partnership of Southern Baptist churches. For this reason, I praise God for you, my brothers and sisters. I praise God for the ways you are giving, the ways you are supporting, the ways you are sending, and the ways you are going. And at the same time, I want to invite you to give, support, send, and go all the more in the days ahead until every tribe, tongue, people, and nation has been reached with the good news of our great King.

David Platt
President, International Mission Board