 There is a legend that one day a fella cornered the pastor after church. The church was kicking off it’s annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. And the pastor had encouraged giving. The man had a burning question that needed to be answered RIGHT THEN. The man said, “OK, Pastor, now just who IS this Armstong lady, and when are we going to get her paid off?”

You may be wonder, too, who *IS* Annie Armstrong? Annie was born in Baltimore at a time when there was little opportunity for women. Yet, her devotion to Christ led her to a life of service and leadership. She organized women to pray, to give and to meet the needs around them. She served as the first executive of the Women’s Missionary Union of the SBC. She challenged pastors and churches to action and rallied vital support for missionaries. Ultimately, Annie was recognized as a national Southern Baptist trailblazer for her visionary leadership that still inspires millions today.

The offering was started in 1895 by [Woman’s Missionary Union®](https://www.wmu.com/) (WMU) to benefit the work of the Home Mission Board (now [North American Mission Board](https://www.namb.net/)). In 1934, the offering was named in honor of Annie Armstrong, a bold missions advocate.

Every dollar given the AAEO goes to train and resource more than 3,000 missionaries and their families involved in church planting and compassion ministries who share the life-transforming gospel of Jesus Christ across the United States, Canada and their territories.

80% of AAEO goes to church planting. That means financial funding and benefits for planting missionaries, training, recruitment, ministry assistance for equipment and outreach, missionary housing, missionary care.

13% of AAEO goes to evangelism and compassion ministries. That includes evangelism resource materials and events, financial funding and benefits for missionaries involved in compassion ministry.

So. Baptists support more than 3,000 missionaries across N America.

Together, we have planted more than 11,000 churches in N America since 2010.

Why is that so important? American is **FILLED** with LOST people. Lost people are doomed, damned and headed to hell - apart from a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ.

I am told there are 371 million people in the N. American mission field. Of those, 281 million people are *lost*. That means that *>75% of the people in N America are LOST!* Here is what that means; if I am wandering around in Academy Sports looking for ammo, and if I pass four people, THREE of them may well be *LOST*! We cannot stand idly by while three out of four people are going to hell!

Everybody needs to hear the good news. I cannot fathom that SO MANY people, right here in the US do not know Jesus. We have to make sure they hear. They need to know the truth of the gospel. They need to know that :

You must be born again Jn 3.3

There are none righteous Ro 3.10

All have sinned Ro 3.23

All are dead in sin Ro 5.12, Eph 2.1

Wages of sins are death Ro 6.23

*BUT . . .*

God shows His love for us Ro 5.8

God loves us Jn 3.16

Believe & receive to be saved Jn 1.12

Believe on the Lord Ac 16.31

Call on the Lord Ro 10.13

Confess Jesus as Lord Ro 10.9

In John’s day the statistics were bad, too. The message of the gospel was just starting to spread. Itinerant ministers spread out telling people the good news that Jesus saves. They depended on the hospitality of people in the towns where they went. They depended on the support of the churches who sent them out. Our missionaries depend on *us* to support them so that they are free to do the work the Lord has called them to do.

**I. WHY did these people go out?**

*For the sake of the Name* (7) “for the Name”

**II. WHAT does John say the Christians need to do?**

A. *Receive them* (8)

To receive and show hospitality

B. *Send them forth* (6)

To bring forward on a journey; to fit out with the requisites for a journey

**III. WHY support them?**

A. *So that we may be fellow-workers with the truth* (8)

1. Partners with those who went out

2. Partners with the churches that support them

3. Partners with the Truth

a. Story (the gospel)

b. Scripture (the word of truth - 2 Tim 2.15)

c. Spirit (the Spirit of truth - Jn 14.17)

d. Savior (THE Truth - Jn 14.6)

B. So we may participate *in a manner worthy of God* (6)

C. *Because we “ought” to support them* (8)

Ought means “to owe”

Support

Tyler & Ashley Martin: Circuit Riders - Bar Nunn, Wyoming – Your NAMB missionaries . . .

Nothingness. When most people drive any direction out of Bar Nunn, Wyoming, that’s what they see. “There are no stores, no houses,” says Tyler Martin. “If you have half a tank, you better fill up because there’s not a gas station for a while.”

Yet when Tyler and Ashley Martin moved to Bar Nunn as church planting missionaries, they saw something in all that nothing. “In Wyoming, there are 203 places-mostly small towns-you can have as a mailing address. More than 60 of those don’t have a church of any kind. And God told us, ‘Those people need the gospel too.”‘ That something became Outfitter Church.

Now, Tyler is training men in Outfitter Church to go to all those small, out-of-the-way places. “Wyoming is so spread out, and we have so few resources that church planters have to come from our congregation,” he says. “So, we’re creating circuit preaching teams that will plant churches all over the state.”

Where others see nothing, Tyler, Ashley, and the congregation of Outfitter Church continue to see something. “Towns that have never had a church-ever in their history,” Tyler says, “now we’re going to get the gospel to them.”

We are supporting more than 3,000 missionaries. They step into the stories of countless people EVERY week. They touch their lives. Every time thye touch someone, we do too.

* Every time they train someone, they are stepping in to their story.
* Every time the trainee goes and tells someone about Jesus, they are stepping in to that person’s story.
* Every time we pray, we are stepping into their story.
* With everything we give, we step into the story of the missionaries.
* We step into the stories of the people to whom they witness.
* We step into the story of the churches they plant.
* We step into the story of what our Lord is doing.

We are living out the Great Commandment.

We are living out the Great Commission.

Let us live with Great Commitment!

We sing, “Stand up. Stand up for Jesus.” And we should. We need to step out, step out with Jesus.