

THREE WHO WERE CALLED

Pearle Johnson

Pearle Johnson was the first foreign missionary to come from Pittsboro Baptist Church (PBC), teaching at the Eliza Yates School of Shanghai, China from 1915-1949. The school was named after Eliza Moring Yates from Chatham County, who was the wife of Matthew Yates, the Baptist State Convention's first missionary. Miss Johnson was also the first foreign missionary from the Sandy Creek Baptist Association. While in China, Miss Johnson corresponded with PBC's Women's Missionary Society, updating the ladies on her work and on occasion asking for assistance for individuals she was serving. During visits back to North Carolina, Miss Johnson would visit Pittsboro Baptist Church and make presentations to the church as well as to the Women's Missionary Society describing her work in China. During World War II, she was imprisoned from 1941-1943 by the Japanese. She was not physically harmed, however, the camp had very limited food and supplies. It is believed that the living conditions of the camp were responsible for her cancer which forced her to return to Apex in 1949 where she died in 1952 at the age of 69. A long-standing Sunday School Class was named in her honor. The PBC Library was dedicated to her memory April 28, 1974.

Dr. George Jeter Griffin,

The third and youngest son of Martha Elizabeth and George J. Griffin, George Jeter Griffin, was born May 8, 1914 at a home on Salisbury Street, two blocks west of Pittsboro Baptist Church (PBC). He was a member of PBC until he left for college in the early 1930's. According to his diary, in the fall and winter, he would arise before daybreak to light the stove at the church so the congregation would be warm. He looked forward to summer.

After graduating from high school in Pittsboro, George attended Wake Forest College. (Class of 1935). He continued his education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and received his doctorate at Edinburgh University. On July 21, 1936, George J. Griffin was ordained into the Baptist Ministry. Dr. Griffin served as a professor of religion at Wake Forest College /Wake Forest University (1948-1981). His membership in other professional groups includes his tenure as chairman of the history committee of the Baptist State Convention of N.C.

The Pittsboro Baptist Church congregation was blessed to have Rev. Griffin preach its annual revival in August 1936. He served as interim pastor for three months in 1936-37. He was the featured speaker at the first Homecoming Day, held October 12, 1969.

Dr. Griffin died January 8, 1991 at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem, NC. At his request and that of his wife, Elizabeth Poplin, his body was returned to Pittsboro for burial in Hanks Chapel UCC cemetery, the site of his parents', brothers', and families' graves. A memorial service was held in White Chapel on the campus of WFU, where he and his wife taught.

Becky Young

In 1997, Pastor Reuben Mamatsinya from Mabopane South Africa, was the guest speaker at a Wednesday night Bible Study at Pittsboro Baptist Church (PBC), where he described his life as

a street child and later as a pastor helping street children. It was a presentation that changed Becky Young's life. Her heart was stirred and her compassion grew to what she realized was a calling to help the street children of South Africa. In 1998, the church covered her expenses for a short term mission trip to Mabopane . She returned again in 1998 accompanied by Theresa Parker. The seeds were planted on that first trip and Becky's vision for what God wanted her to do in South Africa has grown and changed over the years. Early on, Becky helped orphaned children by finding the financial support to provide food, housing, shoes, medicine, and school uniforms. Her dream to have a place where orphaned children could grow up in a family environment has become reality with Ya Bana Village. Six to eight children live in each of the eight homes with trained house mothers, who offer love, structure, security, and an authentic family life. The freely shared love of Jesus enables many of the children to develop a sense of purpose and belonging.

Becky established the Mabopane Foundation as a means to provide financial support to meet the needs of the children at Ya Bana Village. Though Becky now lives in Cary, Pittsboro Baptist members continue to support her efforts by prayer, volunteering, and purchasing items at the Mabopane Mission House week-end yard sales.