

Reverend Thomas Thurman

Thomas Thurman, a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and his wife Gloria served with the International Mission Board in Bangladesh for 35 years (1964-1999). After retiring from the foreign mission field in 1999, he has served as minister at First Baptist Church, Columbia, since June 2006. Married for 45 years, the Thurmans have two sons, Philip and David, and three grandchildren.

The couple was appointed to missionary service at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in 1964 and arrived in Bangladesh on December 7, 1965. They served in Dhaka, Comilla, Faridpur and Gopalganj, establishing and growing churches, training Christian leaders, and ministering to the poor. Through the decades, the missionaries encountered many adverse circumstances such as earthquake tremors, leprosy, floods, cyclones, convulsions, tidal waves, droughts, robberies, stabbings, broken bones, country-wide strikes, famines, struggles with the difficult language, and frequent electricity failures. Still, they claimed John 10:4 as they served: “When He has brought out all His own, He goes on ahead of them, and His sheep follow Him because they know His voice.”

The Thurmans’ work in Bangladesh received steady support from Southern Baptist Convention churches through the Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Foreign Mission Offering, and World Hunger funds. Faithful prayer partners provided intercessions for the difficult tasks that they faced.

Their testimony of over three decades of missionary service is this: “We thank God that one day He tapped us on the shoulder and said, ‘I have a place of service for you.’ We walked with Him and our joy has been full.” They wonder, “Who will go to Bangladesh now to search for the lost sheep?”