

COLUMNS

Catfish

By Tim Patterson

FENTON, MI - I often ask God, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" It seems as though some of us are constantly doing battle with life itself and at every turn there is a new challenge. I have pastored people over the years that resemble the cartoon character from the Charlie Brown series, Pig Pen, who are never without a cloud over their heads. Everywhere they go, trouble seems to follow. One man said about them, "If they didn't have bad luck, they wouldn't have any luck at all."

Yet there are others who seem to live in the lap of luxury without a care of concern in the world. "God, why can't life be as easy as it seems for some people? I would really like a lot more blessings and a lot less blisterings." Every one of us have asked the same questions and made the same observations in our lifetimes. Now, I don't have an answer to all of difficulties and problems in life, but I do believe I have some insight into at least some of mine.

My family and I are staying at Bambi Lake Conference and Retreat Center near Roscommon, Michigan for a few days affording us the opportunity to fish in its beautiful lake. We have caught several kinds of fish, but to my surprise, no catfish. That is what jogged my memory about a catfish, and the insight into problems they have provided. Most of us who were reared in the south, love catfish for obvious reasons (they are very tasty), but after reading this you might find a completely new appreciation for them.

Several years ago, I came across some fascinating information about catfish that illustrates the "why" of many of the difficulties we experience in life. In the northeastern United States, codfish are a big commercial business. There is a market for eastern cod all over the United States, especially in sections farthest removed from the northeast coastline, but the public demand posed a problem to the shippers. At first they froze the cod, then shipped them elsewhere, but the freeze took away much of the flavor. So they experimented with shipping them alive in tanks of seawater, but that proved even worse. Not only was it more expensive to ship in this manner, the cod still lost its flavor and in addition became soft and mushy enroute. The texture of this tasty delicacy of the sea was seriously affected.

Finally, some creative person solved the problem in a most innovative manner. The codfish were placed in the tank of water along with their natural enemy--the catfish. From the time the cod left the East Coast until it arrived at its westernmost destination, those ornery catfish chased the cod all over the tank. The most amazing thing happened. When the cod arrived at the market, they were as fresh as the day they were first caught. There was no loss of flavor nor was the texture affected. If anything, it was better than before.

Each one of us is in a tank of our own particular and inescapable circumstances. Yes, it is painful and sometimes almost unbearable to be in this tank we call life. I don't know

about you, but from my perspective, my tank is full. But I have come to realize that God doesn't see it that way. Because He loves us and wants us to be the best we can be, He has made sure that there are enough God-appointed "catfish" in our tanks to bring sufficient tension to keeps us alive, alert, fresh and growing. It's all part of God's project to shape our character so we will be more like Him.

At times you may think you will be eaten alive by the predators in your tank, but just remember, God is using those slimy creatures in your midst to accomplish His will in your life. Be tank-full to have them there. Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Five Benefits of Going on a Mission Trip

By Tony Lynn

FENTON, MI - The Arkansas mission team was ready to return south a little earlier than planned during July because local construction permits had not been issued allowing the demolition & remodeling of the building. Pastor Garth, of the Gathering Church Windsor, told me, "The motor of the bus could be heard idling in the church's parking lot as Arkansas volunteers prepared to leave, loading luggage, and saying their goodbyes."

In the midst of the farewells, a telephone rang, and Cindy Gietz, the Gathering's administrative assistant, put the phone to her ear. After Cindy ended the call she reported to the crowd, "The construction permits have been issued, we need to pick them up."

With cries of celebration the Arkansas volunteers exited the bus, changed into construction clothes, and picked up tools. Sledge hammers and crowbars moved through the air. The snap of boards and drywall popping was everywhere. Pastor Garth said, "The volunteers did more to help us in hours than we could have done in weeks."

Twenty-two members of Union Valley Baptist Church (UVBC) from Beebe, Arkansas came through Michigan on their way to the Gathering Church in Windsor, Canada. Pastor Tommy Miller, of UVBC Arkansas, and Pastor Garth Leno, of The Gathering Windsor, having arranged the July 2018 mission trip, were glad to see their months of planning turn into reality.

UVBC Arkansas volunteers made the 13-hour, one-way road-trip because they have a heart for missions that is larger than their own church and their own local community. The UVBC church brochure declares their mission is, "to build strong Christian families through our love of the Lord Jesus Christ." That mission was evident by their intergenerational mission team. Volunteers worked equally hard whether they were senior citizens or teenagers.

The days of partnership between the Gathering and Union Valley were filled with prayer, outreach, remodeling, and demolition. When mission trips do not go as planned fresh prayers provide divine direction. When mission teams and local church members invade

the local community with love in interesting ways, new relationships are started where the Gospel can be expressed. The blisters and Band-Aids from hours of construction and demolition are like merit badges from the mission trip. Later conversations, after mission teams return home, increase interest in serving the Lord in others who missed the recent trip.

Well-coordinated mission trips are intense lessons in becoming devoted disciples of Christ. Pastors and church leaders are missing great opportunities of learning, if they are not taking their members on mission trips outside of their local communities. Serving God in routine ways can give a person a sense of complacency. Serving God on a mission trip is more like riding a new roller coaster where every turn and drop makes a person scream. Having led many volunteers while I was an international missionary overseas, and now observing effective mission teams serving in Michigan and Canada I can list some great benefits to mission trips.

Five Benefits from Going on Mission Trips

Volunteers . . .

1. Witness God's actions in other places and in the lives of other people
2. Gain a God-sized Kingdom vision rather than a mere local church concern
3. Return home with a desire to do bolder things for the Lord
4. Learn to abandon daily routines allowing God to do the unexpected
5. Infect other people with a stronger passion for mission trips

More Opportunities for Mission Trips?

You might be asking, "Will there be more opportunities for mission trips?" The answer is a clear and loud, "YES!" All of the church plants in Michigan and in nearby Canada are at different stages of growth. Different phases mean that mission teams can partner with church plants in different ways. If you desire more information about the possibility of taking your church on a mission trip, contact one of the following two people concerning the following two areas:

- Pastor Wayne Parker, Send City Missionary of Detroit at wparker@namb.net
- Dr. Tony Lynn, State Director of Missions for Michigan at tlynn@namb.net or tony@bscm.org

After an initial conversation, we can put you in contact with the pastor of a recent church plant. We look forward to hearing from you.

It is not the size of the church

By Mike Durbin

FENTON, MI - Imagine getting on an airplane for vacation. The getaway you've been planning is finally here. You anxiously anticipate the time you will spend at your destination, but first, you have to get there. The plane is boarded. The doors are tightly shut and the flight crew is making final preparations for take off. As the flight attendant walks down the aisle, he smiles and reminds you to fasten your seat belt. You cautiously try to get both parts of the belt buckled without touching the passengers beside you. It's a real challenge!

Your seat is small - too small. You realize that is not just the seat. Everything is small - the space above your head, the leg room, the luggage compartment, the aisle - small, small, small. You don't even want to think about needing the bathroom! It redefines small. You scan the plane, and it looks like all 200 seats are taken. If you fly much, you know how real this scene is.

As you think about the plane, realize that the Sunday morning crowd in 85% of all Southern Baptist Churches could fit in this plane! Let me put it another way: The entire worshipping congregation in 42,500 of the 50,000 churches in the SBC could each fit on a 200 passenger capacity plane. Yes, we have some megachurches - churches that have an average attendance of 2,000 people or more. All the senior pastors of all these SBC churches could fit on the plane and it would only be 3/4 full. Big doesn't mean healthy; neither does small. Healthy is healthy, and Michigan Baptists are working together to have healthy churches. (I'll come back to this in a moment).

We are a convention of mostly smaller membership churches, and yet, the impact of our ministry is felt from our neighborhoods to the nations. I have been reminded over and over again that it is not the size of our churches, but the strength of our partnership in Christ that God uses to impact this world. We are a Convention of autonomous churches - churches of all sizes, ethnicities, and economic realities - that voluntarily partner together under the Lordship of Christ to send missionaries, train ministers, speak Biblical truth, minister to the hurting, and share Christ across our homeland and around the world.

The impact of our partnership was vividly demonstrated on a national level at the Southern Baptist Convention in June. Pastor Frank Pomeroy and his wife Sherri took the stage during the Send Luncheon. Tears filled my eyes as they shared the horrific events that happened November 5, 2017. As the FBC Sutherland Springs church family gathered for worship, a gunman ruthlessly started shooting into the church from outside the walls. It was the start of a rampage that left 26 people dead. The Pomeroy's 14 year old daughter, Annabelle, was killed that tragic day.

Pastor Frank's faith in Christ touched our hearts as he shared, "Though there was pain, evil didn't win." "... I would hope that when people think of Sutherland Springs, they think of Christ. And if everything that happened and everything we do thereafter gets people to focus on Christ, then that's what it's all about.

Kevin Ezell, President of the North American Mission Board, said to Pomeroy, "I've had the privilege of watching you lead in a crisis that no other pastor in this room or North America has ever led through. You have been an incredible model of leading a church while at the same time walking through crisis personally" (Baptist Press, June 12th, 2018).

You may be interested to know that our SBC family, through the leadership of Kevin Ezell, paid for the 26 funerals of the Sutherland Springs tragedy. NAMB is also leading an effort to build a brand new church building for our brothers and sisters at FBC. It's an incredible picture of what it means to be part of the family of God, and what can happen as we work together. This is only one picture, a beautiful picture, of what is happening because churches just like the one you attend partner to advance God's kingdom.

I want to thank you for your partnership with the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, especially as we approach the Frances Brown Offering for State Missions. One of the ways we use this offering is to Strengthen Churches. A major focus of our Convention is Church Revitalization.

In a recent blog post, LifeWay President Thom Rainer, wrote that in North America there are "...300,000 or 85%, of all churches needing some level of revitalization, from modest to radical revitalization" (July 9, 2018). That number is staggering! It means we have unhealthy churches and a lot of them. It caught my attention. Some level of revitalization is necessary in 85% of churches: That's big churches, small churches, and every church in-between.

The good news is that revitalization is possible. We have invited Richard Blackaby and Mark Clifton to lead us in our first Church Revitalization Conference. They will focus on the subject, "Revive, Reversing the trends, Reviving the Church." The Conference will be held, September 22 at Eastgate Baptist Church in Burton from 9:00 to 3:30. (Go to BSCM.org/event-flyers for more information). This is an event for the whole church.

Can One Person Make a Difference?

By Mick Schatz

Back in the early 90's when I was an Intern on staff with a church in Florida (my birthplace), I met regularly with Associate Pastors who would speak into my life and mentor me. During this time, I also became engaged to my forever sweetheart (now 23 years married). In one of our weekly meetings a pastor friend shared with me this statement, "What's more important, your rights or the relationship?" Wow, what a thought, especially as I was about to be a husband. That one statement has replayed itself in my mind continuously over my years of marriage and ministry, a constant guide and reminder that people are more important than my personal, selfish agenda. So, the answer is yes, one person can make a difference.

It's easy to believe you are insignificant in the grand scheme of things. However, please understand you were created by God for a specific purpose and impact in this life and this world, and God does not scheme. God is not playing games with us. This is real life

with eternity in the balance. God has placed you right where you are to impact those around you with the love and life of Christ.

Nevertheless, in case you still doubt your significance and the impact you can have on the world, let me give you a few of my favorite examples:

Moses had a speech impediment yet led a nation to freedom.

Gideon led an army of 300 to defeat an army of thousands.

David was a shepherd who defeated a giant.

Mary was a young virgin who believed by faith she was to give birth to Jesus (the son of God).

Saul was known to kill Christians yet called by God to be Paul and be a missionary for Him.

George Washington would lead a country to freedom over tyranny.

Winston Churchill led Great Britain to victory during World War Two.

Bill Gates is the founder of Microsoft.

Steve Jobs single handedly transformed the music industry.

Rosa Parks campaigned and fought against segregation and racism.

Neil Armstrong was the first man to ever walk on the moon.

Obviously, this list is just some of my favorites and it could go on and on. History is packed full of people who impacted their community and the world. God uses folks of all shapes and sizes to achieve His purposes. Your shape and your size are included in His plans.

This year our State Mission Offering is focusing on “the Power of One Multiplied.” That’s one person (you) impacting one other person who impacts another person and so on and so on. When you set your mind on accomplishing His mission and allow His life to live through you, you personify, “the Power of One Multiplied.”

May we not be content with living our lives just for our own glory and satisfaction - let’s live every day with a Kingdom mindset, on a Kingdom mission for Kingdom glory!

For more information and resources to promote the State Mission Offering in your church, go to www.bscm.org/smo.

STARTING

3 New Servant-Leaders

By Tony Lynn

FENTON, MI - We have three men who will be serving in new roles in three different areas of Michigan with one purpose. Our team is increasing once again to include more faithful and hardworking men. Would you celebrate with us? Will you pray for these new partners and their families?

The Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM), Send Detroit, and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) are pleased to announce that 3 outstanding servant-leaders have agreed to serve as Church-based Church Planting Catalysts in Michigan. While each of their respective new church plants will be their highest ministry priority these men will help us discover, develop, and deploy future church planters. We found that those who do well in church planting have a network of quality people surrounding them looking for God's calling on their lives. The three men are Eric Stewart, Ken Nether, and Matt Thompson. They begin their roles as catalysts on September 1.

Eric Stewart is the founding and lead pastor of ONELife Church in Flint. Prior to planting ONELife Church in 2014, Eric served as an associate pastor and interim pastor for almost a decade. Eric received a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science and Religion from Liberty University. He is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Eric and his wife, Lori, live in Swartz Creek with their three children.

Ken Nether is the founding and lead pastor of Crossover Church in Farmington Hills. Prior to planting Crossover Church in 2016, Ken worked as a teacher, a coach, and a professional basketball player in Europe. Ken is a graduate of Detroit Bible Institute and is pursuing another degree at Moody Theological Seminary. Ken and his wife, Tolice, have two children.

Matt Thompson is an associate pastor of Redemption Church in Grandville which was planted in 2015. Matt helped launch two new church starts including Redemption Church. This next year, Matt will become the pastor of a new church plant in Grand Rapids. Matt is a graduate of Clarks Summit University and has a Master's degree from Baptist Bible Seminary. Matt and his wife, Bethany, live in Grandville with their three boys.

These three men possessed qualities and histories that led us to invite them into our shared mission. These men have . . .

- Consistent testimonies for Christ
- Wives who share their call to Christ's service
- A clear understanding of the church planting process
- Spend time teaming with others and mentoring others in life
- God-sized burdens to see the region's people transformed by Christ

These men will join three other church planting catalysts within the state: Darren Greer, Tim Shrader, and Jason Robinson. As always, as you hear God's call leading you to discover how you, your friends, and your entire church can get more involved in church planting write me at tony@bscm.org – I can suggest pathways that will allow you to help in creating new congregations throughout the state and into Ontario.

Church planting is an exciting journey

By Michael Guyer

ANN ARBOR, MI - You spend years confirming your calling. You craft your vision, gather a team, and build partnerships. Then it gets real! After you pack up and say your goodbyes, you make the big move. As scary as it may seem, nothing compares to finally being on the ground in your city. While not every planter's experience is the same, here is a snapshot of our first month at Treasuring Christ Church. In reading this, I pray you know how to better pray for our church plant and church planters throughout our state.

Getting Settled

Every move requires time to get settled in and situated to your new home and new city. We have appreciated making our move in the summer because it has given us the space to do this. We were able to finally get unpacked after two weeks and are starting to feel at home. We have also been able to identify where to buy groceries, grab a cup of coffee, and enjoy a family meal. Now, we are eagerly awaiting the five team members who are moving from North Carolina later this month to join us in Ann Arbor.

Learning the City

Over the last four years, we have taken numerous trips to Ann Arbor and developed a good feel for the city. However, the best way to learn a city is to live in it. We have spent a lot of time looking at the community newspaper, Ann Arbor Moms Facebook group, Yelp, blogs, other online sources to get a feel of where people are and make every effort to be in those places. Summer has proven to be a great time for this in Ann Arbor. There have been numerous festivals to enjoy and opportunities to be at parks, pools, and playdates. We continually ask ourselves and others questions like: What do you love about this city? What is difficult about living here? Where are the needs in the community? What is your faith background? Do you go to church? What do you think of Jesus?

Building Relationships

Church planting is highly relational. At the top of every church planter's strategy is building relationships. We have made it our aim to build friendships with evangelism as our ultimate desire, not our ulterior motive. Everywhere we go, we are praying that God would direct us to people that He wants us to love. We linger in conversations as we go about our daily lives, and we see how much we can learn about a person in our first interaction. Then we pray, and we persist. We ask God to make this new acquaintance a friend, and get off our knees to invite that person to hang out again.

We have enjoyed meeting our neighbors, people in our community, and even other newcomers to the city. We have had people in our homes for dinner and gone over to

other people's homes to hang out. As we enjoy these new relationships, we are seeking to declare and display the gospel through our everyday lives.

Do you know any college students attending the University of Michigan this fall? We would love to connect with them and invite them to be a part of helping establish Treasuring Christ Church.

Identifying Needs

We desire to display through loving our neighbors as Christ has loved us. This means identifying needs in our community. We want to be a church known for serving our city even before we gather for our first service. We will love and serve people longer than they can mistrust us. In order to do this, we have connected with the local Parks and Rec, the Chamber of Commerce, and other non-profits organizations that are seeking to meet real needs in our community.

Fundraising

While a vast majority of fundraising is done before the planter ever moves to their target city, fundraising is an ongoing reality for church planters. In fact, we have found being on the ground in our city has proven helpful for taking the next step with a number of potential supporters—both individuals and local churches. We are seeking to raise an additional \$6,000/month through individual donors and supporting churches. Fundraising has ultimately served to remind me of my dependency on God while also positioning me to see the riches of His grace as He meets my needs.

About the author: Michael is the Lead Pastor of Treasuring Christ Church in Ann Arbor, MI. He gets most excited about enjoying friends and family, good coffee, exploring Ann Arbor, and leading others to delight in, declare, and display the gospel in all of life.

Michael, and his wife Emily, are one of many church planting efforts being supported, in part, by the Francis Brown State Missions Offering. The offering emphasis and Week of Prayer is September 9-16. For more information or resources to promote the offering go to www.bscom.org/smo.

New Faces in Ann Arbor

By Staff

Ann Arbor – Every fall a new set of fresh faces show up in Ann Arbor to begin classes at the University of Michigan. This year is no exception, but there are two faces, in particular, who will not be there to crack the books, but to crack the campus culture for Christ.

Michael and Emily Guyer moved from North Carolina to Ann Arbor this summer to start a new church near the University of Michigan campus. The church is called the 'Treasure in Christ Church.' Michael Guyer says, "Our desire is to come with the message and hope of the Gospel, the one thing that is needed above everything else is that Jesus Christ would be treasured."

For the Guyers, it will be important for their church to meet near the Michigan campus. Guyer says, "Our focus is to reach the next generation, so proximity matters so that we can build relationships and have influence." Emily Guyer adds, "We have always had a desire to go somewhere that was unreached and overlooked." So God begin to draw their hearts to the community in Ann Arbor as place they could fit in and work to reach. The Guyers are part of a number of new church starts being planted near campuses across Michigan. There are new works springing up near Michigan State in East Lansing, Western Michigan in Traverse City and Wayne State University in Detroit. The Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) Director of Missions, Tony Lynn says, "It is arguably the most obvious move of God taking place across Michigan and the rest of the Midwest." He adds, "No other organization is better than the local church at evangelizing, discipling, and mobilizing people."

The church starting efforts in Michigan are supported in part by the Francis Brown State Mission Offering. The goal for the offering is \$90,000, and this year one quarter of the offering will go to support church starting efforts. The remaining portion of the offering will go to help in the areas of strengthening churches, sending churches, and to the Bambi Lake Conference Center.

If you would like more information about the campus churches mentioned, or the offering, or resources to promote the offering in your church, go to www.bscm.org/smo.

STRENGTHENING

4 Recommendations for Motivating Missions Giving

By Chris Hefner (Adapted)

NASHVILLE, TN - Just this week a good friend of mine, Will, who serves with a large missionary sending agency came to speak at our church. He and his family are on furlough, and we invited him to share his experience as a missionary. I'm very glad he was able to work a visit to Wilkesboro Baptist Church into his schedule as we were equally challenged and blessed.

As a pastor and former missions pastor, I'm beginning to grasp the tension of ministry and missions. By that tension, I mean the busyness of daily ministry (study and preparation, prayer and counsel, pastoral care and visitation, meetings, etc.) and the importance of mission (mission trips, evangelism, mission emphases). It is often so easy for mission to be lost in the swirl of the daily ministry activity. Before you criticize my recognition of this tension, I already know that much of our ministry can include and connect to our mission. But oftentimes we are not that intentional.

Here are four recommendations that will help keep the biblical mission in front of your congregation which in turn supports mission giving.

1. Invite a missionary to speak/preach at your church. Having Will at Wilkesboro Baptist put a face and a family on the impersonal giving that we do so often. I'm blessed to be a part of a church that gives to missions, but we don't always see

the end result of that giving. Hearing Will share his experiences, ministry, and the results puts a face and a focus to our giving. His stories also challenged us in our missional living. Will told a story (from the country where he serves) about believers gathered in a room reporting on the number of evangelistic encounters they had in the past week. Upon getting to one lady, she began weeping inconsolably. She then asked her fellow believers to forgive her because she only shared the gospel 18 times that week. Some in the room had shared the gospel more than 70 times in the previous week. I'm confident many in our congregation were as convicted as I was upon hearing that story.

2. Pray regularly for missionaries and mission partners. As a church we partner with local and global missionaries and organizations. Every week in our worship service we pray for one of those partners—seeking to keep the importance of mission in front of our congregation.
3. Use mission stories and statistics to illustrate your preaching. Take time to read mission stories and books that will enliven your sermons with mission illustrations. There's an adage I've learned as a pastor, "If it's not said from the pulpit it must not be important." If we never illustrate, encourage, or talk about missions in our sermons and illustrations, then do we really value missions?
4. Lead by example. Your church will not be any more focused and involved in mission giving than you are as their leader. It is clear from Jesus' commission in Matthew 28:19-20 that we have a disciple-making mission. But are you making disciples? Are you leading the effort to take the gospel to the nations? When you encourage others to pray, give, and go, are you praying, giving, and going on mission? To refocus on mission in our churches and produce missionaries we must step out in front and lead. Give with a gracious heart. The congregation will follow.

These recommendations don't mean that everyone in our churches will go on a mission trip or give more to missions. But if we're not keeping the mission in front of our congregations, then I can guarantee we won't have mission sending and mission going churches.

About the author: Chris Hefner is an Author at LifeWay Pastors. Portions of this article have been adapted for content purposes.

Giving out of love for the Gospel -- not guilt!

By Staff

FENTON, MI - Everybody has felt it before, that sinking feeling when the offering plate is being passed in church. You have money to give, but your mind lists a thousand excuses to keep it for yourself. You feel torn because you know you should give—and part of you wants to give—but definitely not all of you.

People in your church have the same inner battle. In this moment, some withhold money grudgingly as the opportunity passes. Some give the money just as grudgingly, imagining all the bills or nice things where the money could be used. If you're a pastor or a member in the local church, seeing this ungrateful spirit might discourage you. Maybe you are the person with the ungrateful spirit. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, "God loves a cheerful giver" —so what should we do when we aren't?

In times like these, the giver's heart is the problem. There's only one way to change a heart, and, thankfully, we have access to it, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit changes hearts through the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we as the Church are giving out of guilt rather than joy, our hearts have not become gospel-centered. The gospel needs to shine into our hearts, so the Spirit can change us. The key is to find ways to link the gospel to giving, and let God's truth about giving come alive in hearts. After all, the gospel is the whole reason we give. I John 4:9 says, "We love because He first loved us." We have the capacity to give out of love because He first loved us.

God is the initiator who gave His Son—His only Son—so we could be reconciled with Him. Jesus gave Himself as a willing sacrifice, so we could be saved and follow after His example. Weaving this gospel narrative into everything our church does helps us remember the reason we give. When we remember and meditate on truth, we change. Our hearts are transformed, and when we're overwhelmed by everything God has given to and for us, we no longer feel compelled to give out of guilt. Instead, we want to give away as much as possible, simply because we want to glorify and exemplify God.

The Church should love God so much that we want to give away everything we can, simply because we love Him. Like a child who adores his father—which is exactly our relationship to God—we should want to copy Him, look like Him, and obey Him. Because we love Him, we want other people to know Him which is why we give money to offerings like the Francis Brown State Missions Offering.

So how do you motivate your church to give out of gratitude, not guilt? Remind them of the gospel. Talk about it all the time. Let others see it in your actions, words, body language, behavior—and everything else about you. When you do this, others will be constantly reminded of all God has done. As they contemplate these gospel truths, their hearts will begin to thaw. Soon they will want to give, not out of guilt, but out of sheer love. Just like God did for us.

If you would like more information or resources to promote the Francis Brown State Mission Offering, go to www.bscm.org/smo.

Giving Strength and Purpose to Your Church

By Richard Blackaby

JONESBORO, GA - God has a purpose for every church. There is much that He wants to do through every church. However, it has been our experience that God gives each church and its leaders “crossroads moments” in their history where they must make decisions based on faith if they are to continue to be used to fulfill the purposes God has in mind for them. It has also been our experience that the current health of any church is a summation of the decisions made over many years.

There are often times when churches must make changes, sometimes quite dramatic ones, but a church with Christ as its Head need never be discouraged or struggle. Recently, in the book “Flickering Lamps: Christ and His Church”, my father and I were given the opportunity to use his journey as pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan as an example of what God can do to revive any church. We believe God can, and will, transform any church if His people will surrender themselves fully to Him.

Blackaby Ministries International (BMI), in partnership with the North American Mission Board, has initiated a conference entitled “REVIVE: Christ and His Church”, and are partnering with associations and state conventions across the nation to bring this material to churches. I am excited that you will have the opportunity to join me on September 22, 2018 at Eastgate Baptist Church in Burton for the Church Revitalization Conference. We will unpack several significant truths, both from the “Flickering Lamps” book and from our ministry with pastors and churches in recent months.

Whether your church is experiencing positive spiritual health or finds itself plateaued or struggling, it is vitally important to be centered on and oriented to the Headship of Christ. It is my prayer that you will set aside time to attend the entire gathering in September, determined to park your heart before God, allowing Him to speak to you in fresh and transforming ways. Bring your key leaders so that together you can experience God’s heart for your church.

(Editors note: This year 25% of Francis Brown State Mission Offering will go to help Strengthen churches in Michigan, and will be used to support events and programs like the REVIVE Conference. The State Mission Offering and Week of Prayer is September 9-16. For more information and resources on the offering, please visit www.bscm.org/smo)

About the author: Dr. Richard Blackaby is president of Blackaby Ministries International.

Heritage of Life Change

By Staff

Roscommon- Nathan and Beth Hill have a lifelong relationship with the Bambi Lake Conference Center. It's not unlike the relationship that many Michigan Baptist church members and leaders have with the camp in Roscommon.

Beth was just 10 years old when she came to Bambi for the first time, and every year after that she and her friends looked forward to each summer. She says, "You couldn't wait to go. We would get together and talk about which summer camp we were going to go to and who would be there." Nathan's first camp was 17 years ago when he came to a Centrifuge Camp hosted by Lifeway.

Those first camps were just the beginning for both of them as they continued to come back year after year. When there were spiritual decisions to be made, Bambi was the place that offered guidance. Nathan says, "There were many countless walks around the lake to the cross at Bambi, and that's really where I figured out my call to youth ministry."

Beth would eventually go to work at Bambi Lake as a part of the camp staff, and Nathan served as a chaperone. It was two years ago that the pair first noticed each other, and last year that they were married. Beth says, "It's a pretty big deal to go from being a student, to an adult, and getting married. You bring Bambi along with you." The Baptist State Convention of Michigan's (BSCM) Director of Spiritual Enrichment and Retreats, Michael Schatz, says, "There is an amazing heritage here at Bambi. A heritage of life change, a heritage of friendships, and relationships that are continuing to this day."

Nathan and Beth are now the middle school youth ministers at Warren Woods Baptist Church in Warren. They are bringing their students to Bambi Lake to share the kind of experience that they had. Beth says, "We as leaders get to take a step back to see this next generation coming and taking leadership positions." Nathan adds, "They're now in the shoes that we were in a few years ago."

This year a portion of the Francis Brown State Mission Offering will go to the Bambi Lake Conference Center to increase its impact of starting, strengthening, and sending the churches of Michigan Baptists. If you would like to promote the offering in your church, there are resources to help at www.bscm.org/smo.

How to Motivate People to Give

By Mark Brooks

SUWANEE, GA - Nothing moves a heart like a heart that has been moved.

Elevation Church in Charlotte, NC, is using changed lives to motivate people to give. When you go to the online giving portal on Elevation Church's Web site, a video immediately begins playing of people giving their testimonies of finding Christ. They then say what number of convert they were at the church.

Then a speaker says, "Behind every statistic is a story: a story of life change, a story of restoration, a story of a second chance. And your generosity is helping every person discover their own story. Thank you for giving faithfully to help more than 11,000 people place their faith in Jesus over the past five years at Elevation Church. Your sacrifice is making a difference!"

People will give when they know their gift matters.

I believe the vast majority of Christians know they ought to give. Why is it then that most of our conversation and preaching is what I call "ought to" preaching. Instead, why not show them what their gifts do? The best way to motivate people to give is to show them that their gift matters.

Tell your story and people will give to support it.

This past summer, I got a letter from a church that was attempting to make up a budget shortfall in giving. The letter talked about how behind the church was, and that during the hot months of summer, their electric bill had increased. They then asked their donors to consider a special gift to the church. This was not some small church but rather a church that runs close to 1,000 in weekly attendance. What a demotivator!

I rewrote the letter starting out by talking about how many kids would be in VBS. I then listed the mission trips the church would take that summer. In other words, I told the story of missions and ministry happening. When you tell your story, people will give to support that story. The more compelling the story, the more money they will give!

How do you motivate people to give?

Take a minute and think through your last appeal letter or platform appeal. Was the appeal driven by guilt or desperation? Did you tell people they ought to give rather than showing them how their gift matters? It could be that how you are attempting to motivate people is failing. Why not change the way you approach asking for donations? It could mean the difference between making budget and downsizing ministries.

About the author: Mark Brooks is the founding partner of The Charis Group, Mark brings not only a rich background of ministry experience but also years of successfully helping Christian ministries raise funds for capital projects. His desire to better personalize the engagement that each ministry receives from their stewardship partner led him to begin The Charis Group. With creative, outside the box thinking, Mark has helped scores of ministries achieve maximum financial and spiritual results.

Jesus Movement & Millennials

by Tony Lynn

FENTON, MI - Distrust of the Jesus Movement. It was early 70-something . . .

On the north side of Flint, Michigan, a guy with long hair, tattered jeans, dirty bare-feet, and long hair approached me and asked in a simple, straightforward tone, "Do you know Jesus, man?" I did not scream the phrase, "Stranger-Danger," which is so readily taught to children, today. Instead, at the age of nine I looked back at the man through his rose-colored lenses and replied, "Yes sir. I know Jesus." He smiled and said, "Cool man. Cool man," then walked further into park talking to others as he had done with me.

That is my earliest recollection of a stranger mentioning Christ to me. Five years later after that day in the park, in a Southern Baptist congregation of fifty people, my admission turned from knowing about Christ to knowing Christ as my personal savior.

Remembering that stranger, I realize now that he must have come out of the "Jesus Movement." The movement was an evangelical Christian phenomenon that primarily took place during the late 1960s and early 1970s throughout North America, Europe, and Central America. During giant celebrations, hundreds were baptized in the ocean. Scripture-reading and spiritual discussions took place in houses and in third places. The Christian experience became more organic and natural. Witnessing was done on the streets by word of mouth and through newspaper distributions. Friends led friends to Christ. However, those who protected traditions and institutions responded to those within the Jesus Movement with distrust. It was an unusual and unique movement during the modern era that did not see its full potential due to the fears of those in control of the established churches and institutions of that era.

Today, as I look back over my 40 years of ministry I can recall the active, dedicated Christians whose lives were transformed during the Jesus Movement. Today, they are faithful servants of Christ in America, Europe, and other areas of the world. They still have that forward perspective and desire to advance God's Kingdom. What stood out to me as I listened to each person's personal story from the 60s and 70s was the suspicion they felt from those in established churches and institutions.

Our state executive director-treasurer, Pastor Tim Patterson will testify that his salvation came out of the Jesus Movement, in Texas, during the 70s. During that period, Patterson went from being a local bad boy to a gospel evangelist. Because local churches refused to make room for the young people coming to Christ, Patterson's congregation met in the local park and numbered 300 people in attendance. Policemen who, at first, monitored the crowd with suspicion became Christians as Patterson invited the crowd to follow Christ. He became a spiritual leader in his community and high school soon after his salvation experience. The local public-school board allowed Patterson, his Christian band, and his teenage leaders liberties to share the gospel among their classmates because they saw authentic transformations in the lives of the young people whereas local congregations and pastors were doubtful.

More recently a man in Europe explained his experiences with French churches during the 70s, "Tony, they were happy to see us enter the sanctuary and sit in the pews, but

they had no place for us to serve in the church.” Another man shared, “I felt like I had to prove myself to them over and over again. It was exhausting. That is why my friends and I started our own church.” One woman recalled how she and her husband wanted to be part of something meaningful as they were called out of the Jesus Movement to become missionaries. She said, “Everyone in the church was more interested in protecting what they had rather than change the world. They did not believe God had called us to missions, so we had to do things ourselves.”

Stop Doubting Millennials

Today, the year is 2018. The current effects of the Jesus Movement may be difficult to identify in today’s world but the God-inspired movement I see happening among Millennials is easy to recognize. Evidence is all around us. God is up to something with this young adult generation, in the nation, around the world, and in Michigan. Some call them Millennials. Others call them Generation Y or Echo Boomers. Regardless of name they were born during the years 1981-2001.

Often, I see determined young adults pursuing greater callings in life. Adults in new church plants put their careers on hold while serving tireless hours as volunteers. Some are leveraging their professional training to benefit their local church. University graduates are dedicating 2-3 years as servant-leaders in university church plants before starting their secular careers full-throttle. This young adult generation does not separate life into secular and sacred categories. They believe sincerity, transparency, and being genuine requires people to be the same at work, at home, and at church, 24/7. Young adults are more serious about a meaningful purpose than most give them credit.

Five Adjustments We Need to Make

As I compare the barriers set before those who came out of the Jesus Movement and today’s believing Millennials, I am concerned about the reluctance of many to involve young adults in their ministries. If we want to see a movement of God unleashed on our nation and our world. I think there are, at least, five things we can do that will empower Millennials in our churches and institutions. Let’s . . .

1. Anticipate that God will release His Holy Spirit upon a particular generation to do amazing things when He desires and let’s hope we see it in this decade.
2. Place more confidence in the tangible evidence that believing Millennials are hungry to do something meaningful even though they are young; so, devotion trumps age.
3. Stop assigning mundane, simple, assisting roles to young adults and instead empower them to be creative leaders by initiating fresh approaches to ministry.
4. Release our white-knuckle hold on the traditions in our churches, institutions, and calendars and instead hold these young adults up in prayer as we empower them to speak-up, serve, and even guide us into the future.
5. Fall in love with what the future brings, under God’s sovereignty, rather than allow the fear of the unfamiliar or the loss of control to cause us to take back into our hands what God started in this new generation.

Two Texts to Embolden Our Faith

Two biblical texts encourage us to adjust when God is at work making changes.

1 Chronicles 12:32 explains how God used a particular generation during an important moment of transition. It reads, "From the Issacharites, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do: 200 chiefs with all their relatives under their command" (CSB) came wholeheartedly determined to make David king over all Israel.

1 Timothy 4:12 records the moment when Paul said to young Timothy, "Don't let anyone despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity" (CSB). There must have been some doubters in Timothy's Bible studies. Others might have rolled their eyes when he spoke of the New Covenant and new ways. All Paul said to Timothy was "Don't let anyone despise your youth."

I am testifying that I see a new believing generation who are setting "an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." I say let's risk it all and take part in what God is doing in this new generation.

Karma

By Bob Johnson

ROSEVILLE, MI - Karma is the idea that for every action there is a corresponding effect. In other words, if you do good deeds, then you will get positive consequences either in this life or in your next life. If you do bad deeds, then you will get negative consequences. Karma is like an impersonal Santa Claus.

The truth is, Karma is simply an attempt to explain the laws and ways of God without God. When you consider the laws of Karma, you can see why they make sense, to a degree, and why people are attracted to those laws as a means of explaining some things in life. However, Karma can only go so far. In fact, Karma leaves you unsatisfied. There is nothing personal about it. And besides, the laws do not end up being actual laws but more like guidelines.

Karma is an attempt to answer the question of "why" do good or bad things happen, but Karma cannot answer the question of why is there Karma? Who made it up? Karma cannot explain where the idea of good and bad even came from, nor can Karma establish what is actually good or bad. Is it good Karma to lie? But, what if you lie in order to not hurt someone's feelings? What if you lie in order to protect someone's life? Or, what if you lie for a greater good? How do you know what the greater good actually is? Wouldn't you have to know all things in order to know if your lie was actually better than the truth? What does Karma do with that? On the surface, Karma has some appeal; but if you really try to think it through, it falls apart.

There is a better, more accurate, bigger way. And, therefore, an immensely more fulfilling way of looking at life. The story of Ruth in the Bible is a fascinating story of the providence of God in the lives of two women who are completely at His mercy. Ruth does good things and good things happen to her. Some would say that she has good Karma. But, if that is all they see, then they miss the point. God is sovereignly at work

through His providences to carry out a plan that He has established before He created the world. His plan to bring a Redeemer to us and for us was set into motion through what appeared to be some of the most mundane of circumstances. A girl works hard in the field for her mother-in-law day after day. Harvesting and threshing barley by hand does not look like she is changing the world; but, she is. She is not getting good Karma; she is participating in the plan that God established from before time to bring a King to rule over this earth in a glorious kingdom. Her faithfulness in the mundane is actually her participation in the glorious plan of God.

Today, you have some mundane things to do. There are diapers to change, floors to clean, meals to prepare, clothes to wash, jobs to do, phone calls to make, people to check on, plans to make, things to fix, disputes to address, sin to fight, prayers to pray, and promises to keep. In the moment, none of them look all that glorious; but, done in faith, they matter forever. Don't miss the forever in your mundane.

About the author: Bob Johnson is Pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church Roseville, MI.

Most churchgoers say God wants them to prosper financially

By Bob Smietana

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—For some Americans, dropping a check into the offering plate at church is a bit like having a Discover Card. Both offer a cash-back bonus.

About a third of Protestant churchgoers say their congregation teaches that God will bless them if they donate money. Two-thirds say God wants them to prosper. One in 4 say they have to do something for God to receive material blessings in return. Those are among the key findings of a new study on so-called “prosperity gospel” beliefs from Nashville-based LifeWay Research. For the study, LifeWay Research surveyed 1,010 Americans who attend a Protestant or non-denominational church at least once a month. Researchers found more than a few churchgoers believe giving to God leads to financial rewards, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. “A significant group of churches seem to teach that donations trigger a financial response from God,” said McConnell.

A controversial topic

The belief that God gives financial rewards in exchange for offerings is a central part of the so-called prosperity gospel, which offers a “direct path to the good life,” as Duke professor Kate Bowler puts it. That belief is both controversial and fairly commonplace. LifeWay Research found 38 percent of Protestant churchgoers agree with the statement, “My church teaches that if I give more money to my church and charities, God will bless me in return.” Fifty-seven percent disagree, including 40 percent who strongly disagree. Five percent are not sure.

Pentecostal and Assemblies of God churchgoers (53 percent) are most likely to agree. Churchgoers with evangelical beliefs (41 percent) are more likely to agree than those without evangelical beliefs (35 percent). African-American (51 percent) and Hispanic churchgoers (43 percent) are more likely to agree than white churchgoers (32 percent). Even if they don't see a direct link between offerings and blessings, many churchgoers

say God wants them to do well. Sixty-nine percent agree with the statement, “God wants me to prosper financially.” Twenty percent disagree. Ten percent are not sure.

The more people go to church, the more likely they are to think God wants them to do well. Among those who attend at least once a week, 71 percent say God wants them to prosper financially. That drops to 56 percent for those who go to church once or twice a month. Churchgoers who have evangelical beliefs (75 percent) are more likely to agree God wants them to prosper than those without evangelical beliefs (63 percent). Pentecostal and Assemblies of God (80 percent), Baptist (74 percent), non-denominational (67 percent) and Methodist churchgoers (65 percent) are among the most likely to agree. Lutherans, however, are more skeptical. Just under half (49 percent) say God wants them to prosper financially.

Blessings linked to action

Some churchgoers draw a direct tie from their actions to God’s blessings. One in 4 (26 percent) agree with the statement: “To receive material blessings from God, I have to do something for God.” Seventy percent disagree. Five percent are not sure. Southerners (30 percent) are more likely to agree than those who live in the Midwest (20 percent) or West (19 percent). African-American (44 percent) and Hispanic (34 percent) churchgoers are more likely to agree than white churchgoers (17 percent) or those from other ethnic groups (16 percent).

Pentecostal/Assemblies of God churchgoers (34 percent), Methodists (29 percent) and Baptists (28 percent) are more likely to say they have to do something for God to get a material reward than other denominations. Lutherans (12 percent) are less likely. A previous LifeWay Research study on American theological views found similar results. In that study, 1 in 4 Americans said they believe God will always reward true faith with material blessings. Americans who hold evangelical beliefs were most likely to agree with that statement. McConnell said evangelicals appear to be the most eager to embrace a link between God’s financial blessings and their actions. “A number of high-profile evangelical leaders have condemned the prosperity gospel,” he said. “But more than a few people in the pews have embraced it.”

Methodology

LifeWay Research conducted the study Aug. 22–30, 2017. The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. People in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate but do not already have internet access, GfK provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection.

For this survey, a nationally representative sample of U.S. Protestant and nondenominational adults (18 and older) who attend religious services once a month or more often was selected from the KnowledgePanel®.

Sample stratification and base weights were used for gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, metro/non-metro, home ownership, education and income to reflect the most recent U.S. Census data. Study-specific weights included for gender by age, race/ethnicity, region

and education to reflect GSS 2016 data. The completed sample is 1,010 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Evangelical beliefs are defined using the NAE/LifeWay Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs. Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced-choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Respondents are categorized as having evangelical beliefs if they strongly agree with all four statements:

- The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.
- It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.
- Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

LifeWay Research is a Nashville-based, evangelical research firm that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches. For more information on this study, visit LifeWayResearch.com or view the complete survey report PDF.

About the author: Bob Smietana is senior writer for Facts & Trends at LifeWay Research in Nashville, TN.

The Right Place at the Right Time

By Staff

Fenton- "The Power of One: Multiplied" is challenging Michigan Baptists to think about their calling to reach our neighbors for Jesus, and how what they do can be multiplied. That is the theme for this year's Francis Brown State Mission Offering and Week of Prayer.

The State Mission Offering is how Michigan Baptists give additional support to mission causes within our state. The goal for this year's offering goal is \$90,000. The gifts will be evenly divided between the areas of starting churches, strengthening churches, sending churches, and the Bambi Lake Conference Center.

The Week of Prayer for state missions is scheduled for September 9-16, 2018. During the week churches and Michigan Baptists will be encouraged to pray each day for church planters, missionaries, and different areas of ministry that are supported by the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM). Some of the ministry areas include Disaster Relief, Bambi Lake Camp, and church planting near a number of our state's college campuses.

BSCM Executive Director-Treasurer, Dr. Tim Patterson says, "when you give to our Francis Brown State Mission Offering, we guarantee that it's going to the right place at the right time. It's going to places of ministry today because of what you did yesterday." Churches interested in promoting this year's offering have a number of resources available to help. Go to <https://www.bscm.org/smo>. There are downloadable posters,

flyers and bulletin inserts. This year there are also three videos including one video sharing the offering's theme, another one about new church planting efforts, and finally, a video sharing a personal story about the impact of the Bambi Lake camp over the years.

You and I are being encouraged to prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift to this year's state mission offering. Those gifts will allow our churches and individuals to see "the power of one, multiplied."

The Revitalization Wave That Is Coming

by Thom Rainer

NASHVILLE, TN - Yes, I tend to be an optimist. I am not, however, that type of optimist who refuses to face reality. If you have been a reader of my blog or listener to my podcasts, you know I am not hesitant to face harsh realities head on.

So, when I say a revitalization wave is about to come to our churches, I am serious about it. Indeed, I am obnoxiously optimistic about the future of congregations. In this post, I will address how churches will be impacted from a high-level perspective. In my post on Wednesday, I will share why I see this major trend on the horizon.

First, let's agree there are 350,000 churches in North America. You can quibble with our estimates. Some say less; some say more. The exact number is not that important.

Second, let's also agree there are 300,000, or 85%, of all churches needing some level of revitalization, from modest to radical revitalization. Bear with me until my Wednesday post where I make my case for these numbers.

So, how will these 300,000 churches in need of revitalization be impacted by the wave that is coming? Let's look at three major categories.

1. About one-third of these churches will revitalize organically. I wish you could see what I am seeing. Never in my life or ministry have I seen church leaders seeking a path of revitalization for their churches as much as I am now. I wish you could see on a smaller scale how many of these churches are using the Church Health Report™ for their congregations. I wish you could see the hunger, the desire, and the willingness to pay the price to revitalize. About 100,000 congregations will likely revitalize organically. In other words, their revitalization will take place from within, rather than from a merger or being acquired.
2. About one-third of these churches will revitalize through replanting and/or being acquired. Another 100,000 churches will not be able to revitalize organically, but they will have the faith and sacrificial attitude to give their facilities and other assets to another church for a church replant or acquisition or both. Frankly, this new attitude and willingness was largely unheard of just a few years ago.
3. About one-third of these churches will decline and die. Unfortunately, 100,000 of the churches will not revitalize organically, nor will they be willing to give away

their assets to another church. Some of these church leaders and members are in denial. Others have just given up. They give new meaning to the hymn, "I Surrender All."

I get it. The near-term closure of 100,000 churches is not good news. But look at the other side. Two of three churches, around 200,000, will revitalize organically or through replanting. That's incredible news!

If you want to see what many churches are using as first-step tools for revitalization, see the Church Health Report <<http://churchhealthreport.com/>>™ or join us at Church Answers <<http://churchanswers.com/>>™ where we are growing healthy churches together.

About the author: Thom S. Rainer is a writer, researcher, speaker, and current president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

You and I Alone

By Eric Stewart

FLINT, MI - "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:13-16 ESV)

Introduction

In the vast majority of leadership books you read a concept about "doing what only you can do". What that means is that there are parts of what you do that a lot of other people could do, and then there are things that only you are uniquely gifted and equipped to do. These are the things that should consume a high percentage of your time and energy. When you operate in these areas then your effectiveness increases.

Jesus while preaching the sermon on the mount instructs the audience in two things that only those with the essential character that He just described in the beatitudes could do

to transform culture. What lasting good could the poor, the mourning, the meek, the hungry and thirsting, the merciful, and the ones focused on making peace and not war make on this world? What influence could they possibly have? What good can the weapon of a pure heart accomplish? Yet, Jesus says that you and you alone are the means to accomplish two significant things on earth in this world that will transform culture.

If you are a follower of Jesus then you are the hope of the world.

Jesus was optimistic about His odds. Yes, the world will persecute His followers and still the church's calling is to serve this persecuting world. Jesus told this group of Palestinian peasants that they are going to be the difference makers. They are the salt of the earth. They are the light of the world. That truth transcends that time and place and extends to every follower of Jesus who displays those blessed beatitudes. If you are a follower of Jesus then you are the hope for the world. You and I, and You and I alone, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Let's consider these two significant metaphors in more detail.

Point #1: You Are the Salt of the Earth

This metaphor may not carry as much weight in our society today as it would have during Jesus' time. We don't value salt as much today as they did then. Today salt is mainly something we use to add flavor to our food. During Jesus time it was not only used to add flavor to food, but also to preserve their meats. It was as valuable as refrigeration is to us today. It was a means of survival. In these ancient times it was often considered more valuable than gold. The Chinese minted salt into coins and people around the Mediterranean used cakes of salt as currency. The Greeks traded salt for slaves; leaving us with the saying, "He is not worth his salt." And in the times of Jesus, Roman soldiers were often paid in salt, and so from salt (sal) comes the latin word salarium, from which the English word salary is derived. This salt was so valuable not only because it added flavor to food but that it preserved the meat from putrefying. It was an instrument of survival to them. Jesus used this metaphor essentially talking about one of the most important commodities of their time.

Explain the Metaphor

You are the salt of the earth. The word earth here is properly defined as the land. That is the arena in which we live, move, and have our being. He did not tell the Israelite audience that they are to be the salt to Israel, but to all the land. This is a statement of the widespread nature of the New Covenant calling! The land is the meat in this illustration. The meat is rotting. Without the salt the meat will spoil. Jesus is saying that without Christians in the land it will rot. That is significant. Jesus is saying that His followers are the key instruments to preserving the land. That is a heavy responsibility.

This metaphor is focused more on the negative. It is focused more on stopping the rotting. The light of the world is more positive. Herein Jesus is teaching that Christians have a duty to stop the decay. To not allow unjust laws and ideas to permeate into the culture. To stand up against it. This happens at both a macro and a micro level. The macro level is resisting a tyrannical government and the abuses they promote through unjust laws. The micro is standing against unjust practices in our workplace, church, family, etc. Salt is meant to prevent the decay.

One great example from the Old Testament of what it means to be the salt of the earth is found in the story of the Hebrew handmaidens who lived when the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites. This took place about 400 years after Joseph's death. The King of Egypt (the Pharaoh) became fearful that the rate in which the Israelites were populating was problematic and so he decided that his solution was to pass an edict that all of the firstborn Hebrew males would be killed and it was the duty of the midwives to do it. Here is what happened though:

“But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.” (Ex. 1:17-21 ESV)

They resisted evil. God blessed them for it. This is what is pictured by being salt of the earth. That means today that we can not just continue to tolerate evil and adopt the world’s thinking. We cannot continue to tolerate the breakdown of the family through the LGBT movement of today. We cannot continue to tolerate the breakdown of the family through government sponsored welfare that funds sin. We can not continue to tolerate the killing of the next generation. We cannot continue to tolerate a jail system that has grown to enslave people. We cannot continue to tolerate a corrupt money system where guys are playing with our currency like it is monopoly money. Being salt means to resist injustice. It is a defensive strategy. Only Christians can do this!

A Choice

Jesus does teach that we are salt of the earth. That cannot be changed. What can change though is salt can become useless and only good for throwing down on roads and walkways acting in the same way gravel does for us today. Men will just walk over it. The wicked rulers of this day will continue to walk over us if we lose our saltiness.

How does salt lose its saltiness? NaCl is used for many purposes. It is used to add flavor to food; it is used to draw out the water in foods; it is used to cure food for longevity; it is used to create traction on icy roads. (Calcium chloride is actually used for this purpose more, but if you don’t have any of that sitting around, you can use table salt to create traction on your front step on a snowy day.) I believe that salt was even used for antiseptic purposes. So, for salt to lost is pungent saltiness, or change its physical composition, it would have to be diluted in water because it is non-reactive in its crystalline form, or electricity would have to be introduced to force the sodium chloride into its ionic components thereby changing its chemical composition.

As Christians we lose our saltiness when we are diluted in the water of the world. When the world is what creates our worldview then we are absolutely good for nothing when it comes to impacting culture. May I dare say that is the story of the American church today. In large numbers we gather together as salt that has lost all its saltiness. We are good for nothing except to be walked over by the powers of this world. You and I, you and I alone, are the salt of the earth. Let’s not dilute our saltiness with the water of the world. Defense alone is not enough though. Jesus uses another metaphor to describe our offensive duty as well.

Point #2: You are the Light of the World

Jesus is using metaphors that people would have understood as important for survival. We need light. That is why God created the sun. We need the sun to survive. Also, we need other forms of light for when the sun goes down so we can see. Before electricity was invented the common form of a light was a candle. It was common during this time that cities, like Jerusalem, would be setup on a hill with it’s various candles lit a night and

if you were at the bottom of the hill you could point up and see that the light was visible to all. Jesus said you and I, you and I alone are the light of the world. Again His focus transcends beyond just Israel. They were to be the light of the entire cosmos, the entire world.

Followers of Jesus are the light of the world not by any work they have done. You and I are the light because Jesus who is the light sent His light, the Holy Spirit to live in us. Regeneration is the key to the light. We cannot turn this switch on ourselves. Jesus had to place the lamp in us to make us light. We are the light of the world simply because of grace. The Light choice to light us up.

The World is Dark

Since Jesus says that Christians are the light of the world, it must also be clearly understood that in this analogy Jesus is living in darkness. The world apart from Christ is nothing except utter darkness. That is what Jesus is teaching here. Over in Czech Republic when our group was able to tour one of the concentration camps they took us to the individual cells in which troublemakers would be thrown. It was a little room and they would have absolutely no light in it. So, naturally we had to check it out. There was some light that came through, but we tried to imagine darkness totally. They would be left in there for weeks at a time. Picture darkness. Close your eyes. Imagine living in darkness. Jesus is teaching that this is the state of the world. They live in utter darkness. We need to stop expecting the world to be light. We rail on the way the school systems are going. They are living in darkness. They are not the light we are. Paul makes this command very clear. Read this!

Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.” (Eph. 5:7-13 ESV)

A Choice

Jesus says that you and I as Christians are the light of the world. We cannot change that. That is a reality. Jesus gifted us His light. The thing that we do have a choice in is what we do with that light. We can either hide it and be ashamed of it or we can display it for the glory of our Father. The light is displayed through good works. Good works are

not reading the Bible and praying; these prepare us for good works. Good works are actively loving our neighbor by actively being obedient to the Law. Good works are not only not murdering but promoting life. Good works are not only not committing adultery but displaying faithfulness to your spouse. Good works are not only not stealing but giving, not lying but telling the truth, not coveting but encouraging. Being a light is teaching the positive aspects of obedient living as well as actively living it out ourselves. Good works are not reading the Bible and praying; these prepare us for good works.

My friends, you are I alone our the salt of the earth. Don't lose your saltiness by diluting it in the water of the world. You and I are the light of the world. Don't hide your light but let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

About the author: Eric Stewart is the Lead Pastor of ONElife Church in Flint, MI.

SENDING

Heritage of Life Change

By Staff

Roscommon- Nathan and Beth Hill have a lifelong relationship with the Bambi Lake Conference Center. It's not unlike the relationship that many Michigan Baptist church members and leaders have with the camp in Roscommon.

Beth was just 10 years old when she came to Bambi for the first time, and every year after that she and her friends looked forward to each summer. She says, "You couldn't wait to go. We would get together and talk about which summer camp we were going to go to and who would be there." Nathan's first camp was 17 years ago when he came to a Centrifuge Camp hosted by Lifeway.

Those first camps were just the beginning for both of them as they continued to come back year after year. When there were spiritual decisions to be made, Bambi was the place that offered guidance. Nathan says, "There were many countless walks around the lake to the cross at Bambi, and that's really where I figured out my call to youth ministry."

Beth would eventually go to work at Bambi Lake as a part of the camp staff, and Nathan served as a chaperone. It was two years ago that the pair first noticed each other, and last year that they were married. Beth says, "It's a pretty big deal to go from being a student, to an adult, and getting married. You bring Bambi along with you." The Baptist State Convention of Michigan's (BSCM) Director of Spiritual Enrichment and Retreats, Michael Schatz, says, "There is an amazing heritage here at Bambi. A heritage of life change, a heritage of friendships, and relationships that are continuing to this day."

Nathan and Beth are now the middle school youth ministers at Warren Woods Baptist Church in Warren. They are bringing their students to Bambi Lake to share the kind of experience that they had. Beth says, "We as leaders get to take a step back to see this next generation coming and taking leadership positions." Nathan adds, "They're now in the shoes that we were in a few years ago."

This year a portion of the Francis Brown State Mission Offering will go to the Bambi Lake Conference Center to increase it's impact of starting, strengthening, and sending the churches of Michigan Baptists. If you would like to promote the offering in your church, there are resources to help at www.bscm.org/smo.

New Faces in Ann Arbor

By Staff

Ann Arbor – Every fall a new set of fresh faces show up in Ann Arbor to begin classes at the University of Michigan. This year is no exception, but there are two faces, in particular, who will not be there to crack the books, but to crack the campus culture for Christ.

Michael and Emily Guyer moved from North Carolina to Ann Arbor this summer to start a new church near the University of Michigan campus. The church is called the ‘Treasure in Christ Church.’ Michael Guyer says, “Our desire is to come with the message and hope of the Gospel, the one thing that is needed above everything else is that Jesus Christ would be treasured.”

For the Guyers, it will be important for their church to meet near the Michigan campus. Guyer says, “Our focus is to reach the next generation, so proximity matters so that we can build relationships and have influence.” Emily Guyer adds, “We have always had a desire to go somewhere that was unreached and overlooked.” So God begin to draw their hearts to the community in Ann Arbor as place they could fit in and work to reach. The Guyers are part of a number of new church starts being planted near campuses across Michigan. There are new works springing up near Michigan State in East Lansing, Western Michigan in Traverse City and Wayne State University in Detroit. The Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) Director of Missions, Tony Lynn says, “It is arguably the most obvious move of God taking place across Michigan and the rest of the Midwest.” He adds, “No other organization is better than the local church at evangelizing, discipling, and mobilizing people.”

The church starting efforts in Michigan are supported in part by the Francis Brown State Mission Offering. The goal for the offering is \$90,000, and this year one quarter of the offering will go to support church starting efforts. The remaining portion of the offering will go to help in the areas of strengthening churches, sending churches, and to the Bambi Lake Conference Center.

If you would like more information about the campus churches mentioned, or the offering, or resources to promote the offering in your church, go to www.bscm.org/smo.

You and I Alone

By Eric Stewart

FLINT, MI - "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:13-16 ESV)

Introduction

In the vast majority of leadership books you read a concept about "doing what only you can do". What that means is that there are parts of what you do that a lot of other people could do, and then there are things that only you are uniquely gifted and equipped to do. These are the things that should consume a high percentage of your time and energy. When you operate in these areas then your effectiveness increases.

Jesus while preaching the sermon on the mount instructs the audience in two things that only those with the essential character that He just described in the beatitudes could do to transform culture. What lasting good could the poor, the mourning, the meek, the hungry and thirsting, the merciful, and the ones focused on making peace and not war make on this world? What influence could they possibly have? What good can the weapon of a pure heart accomplish? Yet, Jesus says that you and you alone are the means to accomplish two significant things on earth in this world that will transform culture.

If you are a follower of Jesus then you are the hope of the world.

Jesus was optimistic about His odds. Yes, the world will persecute His followers and still the church's calling is to serve this persecuting world. Jesus told this group of Palestinian peasants that they are going to be the difference makers. They are the salt of the earth. They are the light of the world. That truth transcends that time and place and extends to every follower of Jesus who displays those blessed beatitudes. If you are a follower of Jesus then you are the hope for the world. You and I, and You and I alone, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Let's consider these two significant metaphors in more detail.

Point #1: You Are the Salt of the Earth

This metaphor may not carry as much weight in our society today as it would have during Jesus' time. We don't value salt as much today as they did then. Today salt is mainly something we use to add flavor to our food. During Jesus time it was not only used to add flavor to food, but also to preserve their meats. It was as valuable as refrigeration is to us today. It was a means of survival. In these ancient times it was often considered more valuable than gold. The Chinese minted salt into coins and people around the Mediterranean used cakes of salt as currency. The Greeks traded salt for slaves; leaving us with the saying, "He is not worth his salt." And in the times of Jesus, Roman soldiers were often paid in salt, and so from salt (sal) comes the latin word salarium, from which the English word salary is derived. This salt was so valuable not

only because it added flavor to food but that it preserved the meat from putrefying. It was an instrument of survival to them. Jesus used this metaphor essentially talking about one of the most important commodities of their time.

Explain the Metaphor

You are the salt of the earth. The word earth here is properly defined as the land. That is the arena in which we live, move, and have our being. He did not tell the Israelite audience that they are to be the salt to Israel, but to all the land. This is a statement of the widespread nature of the New Covenant calling! The land is the meat in this illustration. The meat is rotting. Without the salt the meat will spoil. Jesus is saying that without Christians in the land it will rot. That is significant. Jesus is saying that His followers are the key instruments to preserving the land. That is a heavy responsibility.

This metaphor is focused more on the negative. It is focused more on stopping the rotting. The light of the world is more positive. Herein Jesus is teaching that Christians have a duty to stop the decay. To not allow unjust laws and ideas to permeate into the culture. To stand up against it. This happens at both a macro and a micro level. The macro level is resisting a tyrannical government and the abuses they promote through unjust laws. The micro is standing against unjust practices in our workplace, church, family, etc. Salt is meant to prevent the decay.

One great example from the Old Testament of what it means to be the salt of the earth is found in the story of the Hebrew handmaidens who lived when the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites. This took place about 400 years after Joseph's death. The King of Egypt (the Pharaoh) became fearful that the rate in which the Israelites were populating was problematic and so he decided that his solution was to pass an edict that all of the firstborn Hebrew males would be killed and it was the duty of the midwives to do it. Here is what happened though:

"But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families." (Ex. 1:17-21 ESV)

They resisted evil. God blessed them for it. This is what is pictured by being salt of the earth. That means today that we can not just continue to tolerate evil and adopt the world's thinking. We cannot continue to tolerate the breakdown of the family through the LGBT movement of today. We cannot continue to tolerate the breakdown of the family through government sponsored welfare that funds sin. We can not continue to tolerate the killing of the next generation. We cannot continue to tolerate a jail system that has grown to enslave people. We cannot continue to tolerate a corrupt money system where guys are playing with our currency like it is monopoly money. Being salt means to resist injustice. It is a defensive strategy. Only Christians can do this!

A Choice

Jesus does teach that we are salt of the earth. That cannot be changed. What can

change though is salt can become useless and only good for throwing down on roads and walkways acting in the same way gravel does for us today. Men will just walk over it. The wicked rulers of this day will continue to walk over us if we lose our saltiness.

How does salt lose its saltiness? NaCl is used for many purposes. It is used to add flavor to food; it is used to draw out the water in foods; it is used to cure food for longevity; it is used to create traction on icy roads. (Calcium chloride is actually used for this purpose more, but if you don't have any of that sitting around, you can use table salt to create traction on your front step on a snowy day.) I believe that salt was even used for antiseptic purposes. So, for salt to lost is pungent saltiness, or change its physical composition, it would have to be diluted in water because it is non-reactive in its crystalline form, or electricity would have to be introduced to force the sodium chloride into its ionic components thereby changing its chemical composition.

As Christians we lose our saltiness when we are diluted in the water of the world. When the world is what creates our worldview then we are absolutely good for nothing when it comes to impacting culture. May I dare say that is the story of the American church today. In large numbers we gather together as salt that has lost all its saltiness. We are good for nothing except to be walked over by the powers of this world. You and I, you and I alone, are the salt of the earth. Let's not dilute our saltiness with the water of the world. Defense alone is not enough though. Jesus uses another metaphor to describe our offensive duty as well.

Point #2: You are the Light of the World

Jesus is using metaphors that people would have understood as important for survival. We need light. That is why God created the sun. We need the sun to survive. Also, we need other forms of light for when the sun goes down so we can see. Before electricity was invented the common form of a light was a candle. It was common during this time that cities, like Jerusalem, would be setup on a hill with it's various candles lit a night and if you were at the bottom of the hill you could point up and see that the light was visible to all. Jesus said you and I, you and I alone are the light of the world. Again His focus transcends beyond just Israel. They were to be the light of the entire cosmos, the entire world.

Followers of Jesus are the light of the world not by any work they have done. You and I are the light because Jesus who is the light sent His light, the Holy Spirit to live in us. Regeneration is the key to the light. We cannot turn this switch on ourselves. Jesus had to place the lamp in us to make us light. We are the light of the world simply because of grace. The Light choice to light us up.

The World is Dark

Since Jesus says that Christians are the light of the world, it must also be clearly understood that in this analogy Jesus is living in darkness. The world apart from Christ is nothing except utter darkness. That is what Jesus is teaching here. Over in Czech Republic when our group was able to tour one of the concentration camps they took us to the individual cells in which troublemakers would be thrown. It was a little room and they would have absolutely no light in it. So, naturally we had to check it out. There was some light that came through, but we tried to imagine darkness totally. They would be left in there for weeks at a time. Picture darkness. Close your eyes. Imagine living in

darkness. Jesus is teaching that this is the state of the world. They live in utter darkness. We need to stop expecting the world to be light. We rail on the way the school systems are going. They are living in darkness. They are not the light we are. Paul makes this command very clear. Read this!

Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

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My friends, you are I alone our the salt of the earth. Don't lose your saltiness by diluting it in the water of the world. You and I are the light of the world. Don't hide your light but let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

About the author: Eric Stewart is the Lead Pastor of ONElife Church in Flint, MI.

MICHIGAN NEWS

3 New Servant-Leaders

By Tony Lynn

FENTON, MI - We have three men who will be serving in new roles in three different areas of Michigan with one purpose. Our team is increasing once again to include more faithful and hardworking men. Would you celebrate with us? Will you pray for these new partners and their families?

The Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM), Send Detroit, and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) are pleased to announce that 3 outstanding servant-leaders have agreed to serve as Church-based Church Planting Catalysts in Michigan.

While each of their respective new church plants will be their highest ministry priority these men will help us discover, develop, and deploy future church planters. We found that those who do well in church planting have a network of quality people surrounding them looking for God's calling on their lives. The three men are Eric Stewart, Ken Nether, and Matt Thompson. They begin their roles as catalysts on September 1.

Eric Stewart is the founding and lead pastor of ONELife Church in Flint. Prior to planting ONELife Church in 2014, Eric served as an associate pastor and interim pastor for almost a decade. Eric received a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Science and Religion from Liberty University. He is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Eric and his wife, Lori, live in Swartz Creek with their three children.

Ken Nether is the founding and lead pastor of Crossover Church in Farmington Hills. Prior to planting Crossover Church in 2016, Ken worked as a teacher, a coach, and a professional basketball player in Europe. Ken is a graduate of Detroit Bible Institute and is pursuing another degree at Moody Theological Seminary. Ken and his wife, Tolice, have two children.

Matt Thompson is an associate pastor of Redemption Church in Grandville which was planted in 2015. Matt helped launch two new church starts including Redemption Church. This next year, Matt will become the pastor of a new church plant in Grand Rapids. Matt is a graduate of Clarks Summit University and has a Master's degree from Baptist Bible Seminary. Matt and his wife, Bethany, live in Grandville with their three boys.

These three men possessed qualities and histories that led us to invite them into our shared mission. These men have . . .

- Consistent testimonies for Christ
- Wives who share their call to Christ's service
- A clear understanding of the church planting process
- Spend time teaming with others and mentoring others in life
- God-sized burdens to see the region's people transformed by Christ

These men will join three other church planting catalysts within the state: Darren Greer, Tim Shrader, and Jason Robinson. As always, as you hear God's call leading you to discover how you, your friends, and your entire church can get more involved in church planting write me at tony@bscm.org – I can suggest pathways that will allow you to help in creating new congregations throughout the state and into Ontario.

Praise in the Park

By Stan Parker

LANSING, MI - There were 24 professions of faith as 22 children and two adults found Christ at an exciting, evangelistic event sponsored by Faith Fellowship Baptist Church (FFBC) held at Walsh Park in Lansing, Michigan in July. FFBC partnered with community businesses, local churches and the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) to make this "*Fun in the Son*" outreach event a success. More than 235 children and adults attended this year's event.

In addition to the Gospel message presentation by Pastor Stan Parker, this event engaged participants through gospel music entertainment, which consisted of Gospel groups, such as Spoken Praise (Lansing), Life Challenge (Flint), and Kings Highway group (Lansing). Each group/performer ministered a soulful praise to God that created a spiritual atmosphere, and relayed a positive message to the members of the community.

The Praise in the Park Block Party also provided a Community Family Resource Fair. The vendor selections focused on health screenings, health care sign-up, and children summer activity sign-up opportunities. And of course, no block party would be complete without prizes and games. Adults were blessed with a variety of gift cards. Two (2) of the children in attendance were blessed to receive new bikes. All children participated in various games and activities, including bowling, bean bag toss, fishing for ducks, basketball, face-painting, hula-hooping, tic-tac-toe, and bouncy castle excitement.

FFBC glorified God by engaging the community and demonstrating the love of Christ.

This engagement and display of love resulted in the adding of souls to the Kingdom of God. What a blessing! Many of the children who attended the Block Party also attended Vacation Bible School (VBS) the following week., with the potential of also attending Sunday School in the future to continue their growth in Jesus Christ. Pastor Stan Parker says, "We want to give a very special "thank you" to the BSCM for partnering with us to make this event possible. Your unwavering support continually overwhelms us. This partnership included contributions ranging from monetary donations and equipment rental support to event setup and breakdown activities."

For more information about FFBC events please contact us at 517-853-9897 or faithfellowshipplanning@hotmail.com.

About the author: Reverend Stan Parker is the senior pastor of Faith Fellowship Baptist Church Lansing.

Church planting is an exciting journey

By Michael Guyer

ANN ARBOR, MI - You spend years confirming your calling. You craft your vision, gather a team, and build partnerships. Then it gets real! After you pack up and say your goodbyes, you make the big move. As scary as it may seem, nothing compares to finally being on the ground in your city. While not every planter's experience is the same, here is a snapshot of our first month at Treasuring Christ Church. In reading this, I pray you know how to better pray for our church plant and church planters throughout our state.

Getting Settled

Every move requires time to get settled in and situated to your new home and new city. We have appreciated making our move in the summer because it has given us the space to do this. We were able to finally get unpacked after two weeks and are starting to feel at home. We have also been able to identify where to buy groceries, grab a cup of coffee, and enjoy a family meal. Now, we are eagerly awaiting the five team members who are moving from North Carolina later this month to join us in Ann Arbor.

Learning the City

Over the last four years, we have taken numerous trips to Ann Arbor and developed a good feel for the city. However, the best way to learn a city is to live in it. We have spent a lot of time looking at the community newspaper, Ann Arbor Moms Facebook group, Yelp, blogs, other online sources to get a feel of where people are and make every effort to be in those places. Summer has proven to be a great time for this in Ann Arbor. There have been numerous festivals to enjoy and opportunities to be at parks, pools, and playdates. We continually ask ourselves and others questions like: What do you love about this city? What is difficult about living here? Where are the needs in the community? What is your faith background? Do you go to church? What do you think of Jesus?

Building Relationships

Church planting is highly relational. At the top of every church planter's strategy is building relationships. We have made it our aim to build friendships with evangelism as our ultimate desire, not our ulterior motive. Everywhere we go, we are praying that God would direct us to people that He wants us to love. We linger in conversations as we go about our daily lives, and we see how much we can learn about a person in our first interaction. Then we pray, and we persist. We ask God to make this new acquaintance a friend, and get off our knees to invite that person to hang out again.

We have enjoyed meeting our neighbors, people in our community, and even other newcomers to the city. We have had people in our homes for dinner and gone over to other people's homes to hang out. As we enjoy these new relationships, we are seeking to declare and display the gospel through our everyday lives.

Do you know any college students attending the University of Michigan this fall? We would love to connect with them and invite them to be a part of helping establish Treasuring Christ Church.

Identifying Needs

We desire to display through loving our neighbors as Christ has loved us. This means identifying needs in our community. We want to be a church known for serving our city even before we gather for our first service. We will love and serve people longer than they can mistrust us. In order to do this, we have connected with the local Parks and Rec, the Chamber of Commerce, and other non-profits organizations that are seeking to meet real needs in our community.

Fundraising

While a vast majority of fundraising is done before the planter ever moves to their target city, fundraising is an ongoing reality for church planters. In fact, we have found being on the ground in our city has proven helpful for taking the next step with a number of potential supporters—both individuals and local churches. We are seeking to raise an additional \$6,000/month through individual donors and supporting churches. Fundraising has ultimately served to remind me of my dependency on God while also positioning me to see the riches of His grace as He meets my needs.

About the author: Michael is the Lead Pastor of Treasuring Christ Church in Ann Arbor, MI. He gets most excited about enjoying friends and family, good coffee, exploring Ann Arbor, and leading others to delight in, declare, and display the gospel in all of life.

Michael, and his wife Emily, are one of many church planting efforts being supported, in part, by the Francis Brown State Missions Offering. The offering emphasis and Week of Prayer is September 9-16. For more information or resources to promote the offering go to www.bscm.org/smo.

Jesus Movement & Millennials

by Tony Lynn

FENTON, MI - Distrust of the Jesus Movement

It was early 70-something . . .

On the north side of Flint, Michigan, a guy with long hair, tattered jeans, dirty bare-feet, and long hair approached me and asked in a simple, straightforward tone, “Do you know Jesus, man?” I did not scream the phrase, “Stranger-Danger,” which is so readily taught to children, today. Instead, at the age of nine I looked back at the man through his rose-colored lenses and replied, “Yes sir. I know Jesus.” He smiled and said, “Cool man. Cool man,” then walked further into park talking to others as he had done with me.

That is my earliest recollection of a stranger mentioning Christ to me. Five years later after that day in the park, in a Southern Baptist congregation of fifty people, my admission turned from knowing about Christ to knowing Christ as my personal savior.

Remembering that stranger, I realize now that he must have come out of the “Jesus Movement.” The movement was an evangelical Christian phenomenon that primarily took place during the late 1960s and early 1970s throughout North America, Europe, and Central America. During giant celebrations, hundreds were baptized in the ocean.

Scripture-reading and spiritual discussions took place in houses and in third places. The Christian experience became more organic and natural. Witnessing was done on the streets by word of mouth and through newspaper distributions. Friends led friends to Christ. However, those who protected traditions and institutions responded to those within the Jesus Movement with distrust. It was an unusual and unique movement during the modern era that did not see its full potential due to the fears of those in control of the established churches and institutions of that era.

Today, as I look back over my 40 years of ministry I can recall the active, dedicated Christians whose lives were transformed during the Jesus Movement. Today, they are faithful servants of Christ in America, Europe, and other areas of the world. They still have that forward perspective and desire to advance God's Kingdom. What stood out to me as I listened to each person's personal story from the 60s and 70s was the suspicion they felt from those in established churches and institutions.

Our state executive director-treasurer, Pastor Tim Patterson will testify that his salvation came out of the Jesus Movement, in Texas, during the 70s. During that period, Patterson went from being a local bad boy to a gospel evangelist. Because local churches refused to make room for the young people coming to Christ, Patterson's congregation met in the local park and numbered 300 people in attendance. Policemen who, at first, monitored the crowd with suspicion became Christians as Patterson invited the crowd to follow Christ. He became a spiritual leader in his community and high school soon after his salvation experience. The local public-school board allowed Patterson, his Christian band, and his teenage leaders liberties to share the gospel among their classmates because they saw authentic transformations in the lives of the young people whereas local congregations and pastors were doubtful.

More recently a man in Europe explained his experiences with French churches during the 70s, "Tony, they were happy to see us enter the sanctuary and sit in the pews, but they had no place for us to serve in the church." Another man shared, "I felt like I had to prove myself to them over and over again. It was exhausting. That is why my friends and I started our own church." One woman recalled how she and her husband wanted to be part of something meaningful as they were called out of the Jesus Movement to become missionaries. She said, "Everyone in the church was more interested in protecting what they had rather than change the world. They did not believe God had called us to missions, so we had to do things ourselves."

Stop Doubting Millennials

Today, the year is 2018. The current effects of the Jesus Movement may be difficult to identify in today's world but the God-inspired movement I see happening among Millennials is easy to recognize. Evidence is all around us. God is up to something with this young adult generation, in the nation, around the world, and in Michigan. Some call them Millennials. Others call them Generation Y or Echo Boomers. Regardless of name they were born during the years 1981-2001.

Often, I see determined young adults pursuing greater callings in life. Adults in new church plants put their careers on hold while serving tireless hours as volunteers. Some

are leveraging their professional training to benefit their local church. University graduates are dedicating 2-3 years as servant-leaders in university church plants before starting their secular careers full-throttle. This young adult generation does not separate life into secular and sacred categories. They believe sincerity, transparency, and being genuine requires people to be the same at work, at home, and at church, 24/7. Young adults are more serious about a meaningful purpose than most give them credit.

Five Adjustments We Need to Make

As I compare the barriers set before those who came out of the Jesus Movement and today's believing Millennials, I am concerned about the reluctance of many to involve young adults in their ministries. If we want to see a movement of God unleashed on our nation and our world. I think there are, at least, five things we can do that will empower Millennials in our churches and institutions. Let's . . .

1. Anticipate that God will release His Holy Spirit upon a particular generation to do amazing things when He desires and let's hope we see it in this decade.
2. Place more confidence in the tangible evidence that believing Millennials are hungry to do something meaningful even though they are young; so, devotion trumps age.
3. Stop assigning mundane, simple, assisting roles to young adults and instead empower them to be creative leaders by initiating fresh approaches to ministry.
4. Release our white-knuckle hold on the traditions in our churches, institutions, and calendars and instead hold these young adults up in prayer as we empower them to speak-up, serve, and even guide us into the future.
5. Fall in love with what the future brings, under God's sovereignty, rather than allow the fear of the unfamiliar or the loss of control to cause us to take back into our hands what God started in this new generation.

Two Texts to Embolden Our Faith

Two biblical texts encourage us to adjust when God is at work making changes.

1 Chronicles 12:32 explains how God used a particular generation during an important moment of transition. It reads, "From the Issacharites, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do: 200 chiefs with all their relatives under their command" (CSB) came wholeheartedly determined to make David king over all Israel.

1 Timothy 4:12 records the moment when Paul said to young Timothy, "Don't let anyone despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity" (CSB). There must have been some doubters in Timothy's Bible studies. Others might have rolled their eyes when he spoke of the New Covenant and new ways. All Paul said to Timothy was "Don't let anyone despise your youth."

I am testifying that I see a new believing generation who are setting "an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." I say let's risk it all and take part in what God is doing in this new generation.

The Right Place at the Right Time

By Staff

Fenton- “The Power of One: Multiplied” is challenging Michigan Baptists to think about their calling to reach our neighbors for Jesus, and how what they do can be multiplied. That is the theme for this year’s Francis Brown State Mission Offering and Week of Prayer.

The State Mission Offering is how Michigan Baptists give additional support to mission causes within our state. The goal for this year’s offering goal is \$90,000. The gifts will be evenly divided between the areas of starting churches, strengthening churches, sending churches, and the Bambi Lake Conference Center.

The Week of Prayer for state missions is scheduled for September 9-16, 2018. During the week churches and Michigan Baptists will be encouraged to pray each day for church planters, missionaries, and different areas of ministry that are supported by the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM). Some of the ministry areas include Disaster Relief, Bambi Lake Camp, and church planting near a number of our state’s college campuses.

BSCM Executive Director-Treasurer, Dr. Tim Patterson says, “when you give to our Francis Brown State Mission Offering, we guarantee that it’s going to the right place at the right time. It’s going to places of ministry today because of what you did yesterday.”

Churches interested in promoting this year’s offering have a number of resources available to help. Go to <https://www.bscm.org/smo>. There are downloadable posters, flyers and bulletin inserts. This year there are also three videos including one video sharing the offering’s theme, another one about new church planting efforts, and finally, a video sharing a personal story about the impact of the Bambi Lake camp over the years.

You and I are being encouraged to prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift to this year’s state mission offering. Those gifts will allow our churches and individuals to see “the power of one, multiplied.”

SBC NEWS

#MeToo confronts small churches, bivocational pastors

by David Roach

Date: July 25, 2018 - Wednesday

NASHVILLE (BP) -- Amid the #MeToo movement, conferences and seminaries have heightened their focus on training pastors to prevent and report sexual abuse. But associational leader Sean McMahon worries those training efforts are leaving out a sizable group of pastors: small church and bivocational "heroes" who "work 55-60 hours a week in their normal job," serve 20 hours with the church and "never take a Sunday off."

"Most bivocational pastors don't get to go to conferences," said McMahon, executive director of the Florida Baptist Association in Tallahassee. "Most bivocational pastors never set foot on a seminary campus.... To be able to get some real training in their hands" on abuse prevention and reporting "is huge."

The Florida Association is just one of the associations, state conventions, Southern Baptist Convention entities and churches seeking to communicate the urgency of abuse prevention and reporting to smaller congregations and their pastors. According to data from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 67 percent of Southern Baptist churches average 100 or fewer in worship; 89 percent average 250 or fewer. This year's SBC annual meeting in Dallas, with its emphasis on abuse, spurred McMahon and other leaders of the Florida Association to schedule a Sept. 20 event for three north Florida associations where congregations of all sizes will be trained about a church's biblical, moral and legal responsibilities related to abuse. McMahon hopes for an attendance of 60-80 church leaders, some from congregations with 20 or fewer worship attendees.

For some pastors, their training on abuse began at the Dallas annual meeting, where messengers affirmed the dignity and worth of women and heard reports of policies SBC seminaries have enacted to address any allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct. Several motions and messenger questions related to the May 30 firing of former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson, who allegedly mishandled a 2003 report of sexual assault at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary during his presidency there. Beyond the convention floor, a panel discussion in the SBC exhibit hall considered "sexual abuse in the church" and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission sponsored a panel discussion on "Gospel sexuality in a #MeToo culture."

The annual meeting's 9,632 registered messengers came from 3,796 churches in 48 states, and 35 percent were first-time attendees, according to a messenger survey. Yet implementing best practices learned at a convention can be especially difficult for small churches, McMahon told Baptist Press. By reporting suspected abuse to the authorities in a small, family church, "you're going to potentially alienate your whole church" because nearly everyone is related to the accused. "But you have a moral obligation" to report. "There is concern among associational leaders about how churches are responding to abuse and how churches are identifying issues of abuse," McMahon said.

State conventions also are seeking to train smaller churches on abuse prevention and reporting. Resources from three state conventions -- Alabama, Arizona and the Baptist General Convention of Texas -- are listed under the "Resources for Sexual Abuse Prevention" section of SBC.net. The Tennessee Baptist Mission Board's facilities and risk management manager Mark LeMay has led 50 free risk management conferences since November for some 130 Tennessee churches, he said, including training on how to prevent abuse. To highlight the importance of minimizing the risk of sexual abuse and other dangers, the Tennessee mission board changed LeMay's title in the last several years to include risk management.

Small churches are giving more attention to sexual abuse amid the #MeToo movement, LeMay told BP. "But as a general rule, it's not on their plate" because they have fewer "resources of people to address it." LeMay cited one common practice of smaller churches that needs to change: "An adult goes into a closed room with minors. There's no windows in the door. There's nobody checking. There's no background checks that have been done on those adults. "Churches "should never put a church family member in a situation where they could be accused," LeMay said.

Among SBC entities, GuideStone Financial Resources has developed an online "safety toolkit" that addresses sexual abuse along with other topics. GuideStone also has developed a relationship with the Texas law firm of Love & Norris, which trains churches to prevent and report sexual abuse through MinistrySafe conferences. "GuideStone is committed to providing risk management solutions for churches, and these are just a couple of areas where we can help our SBC churches be prepared as they proactively seek to make their churches a welcoming and safe place for their members and broader community," GuideStone spokesman Timothy Head told BP via email.

LifeWay Christian Resources offers a variety of online resources on sexual abuse, including podcasts by LifeWay President Thom Rainer, articles published in Facts & Trends magazine and a collection of videos and resources on protecting children available through the MinistryGrid training service. Eric Geiger, a LifeWay senior vice president, has written a book titled "How to Ruin Your Life," which discusses avoiding moral failure and repenting when it occurs.

A motion at this year's SBC annual meeting proposing a task force to help churches protect themselves against sexual predators was referred to the ERLC.

Seminary Extension -- a ministry of the Council of Seminary Presidents providing non-degree education for pastors who cannot attend seminary -- offers multiple courses with sections on personal integrity, Seminary Extension director Randal Williams told BP. Field mentors who guide students through courses also can give counsel on #MeToo-related issues, he said. Among resources available from churches, North Carolina's The Summit Church, pastored by SBC President J.D. Greear, published on its Vimeo channel in April a video explaining legal and moral obligations for reporting suspected abuse of children and adults. Several media outlets, including ChurchLeaders.com and Christianity Today, have publicized the video, available at <https://vimeo.com/264504579>.

McMahon, the Florida associational leader, noted that sexual abuse "has been around for a long time," and "we haven't talked about it. Well, now we've got to."

About the author: David Roach is chief national correspondent for Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention's news service. BP reports on missions, ministry and witness advanced through the Cooperative Program and on news related to Southern Baptists' concerns nationally and globally.

AROUND THE STATE

SUBMIT YOUR UPDATES

Send in your ministry staff updates, changes and open positions that we might share with all of Michigan. [Click here](#) to submit your information.
Relaunch!

RELAUNCH - We are excited to announce our relaunch of the LifeChangers one day! Our theme this year is "Mission: Possible!" Word of mouth is our greatest tool, so please share with everyone! We would love if everyone came out and supported LifeChangers one day! If you have any questions please call or text 734-620-9592 or 313-820-0391. Thank you and God bless!

Genesee Baptist Association Annual Meeting - Monday October 15, 2018, 7:00 pm
Heritage Baptist Church
5199 E. Hill Road
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

All messengers are encouraged to attend and everyone is welcome.

READ IT!

READ IT! Is a ministry of Eastside Community Church. It is a kids reading program and the children in our community love it. The program is designed to help with reading skills, especially for families with little help, no money and no time. READ IT! Focuses on getting children to read the Bible and grow in confidence both in the Word and in their reading skills. Last week 20 students attended. Eastside Community Church is providing this tool free to churches seeking ways to be part of the community. Contact Pastor Mathew Vroman for more information and to get started. Call (313) 657-1100 or email pastor@eastsidecommunitychurch.com.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classified Ad Submission Guidelines

1. Baptist Beacon classifieds are posted free of charge.
2. All classified posts will run for 2 consecutive months. Longer or shorter times may be requested. Publication of classifieds correspond with the monthly publication of the Baptist Beacon.
3. Classifieds must be from a BSCM church.
4. Be sure to include thorough details of request, name of church, contact information as well as a point of contact.
5. Submissions must be made no later than the 10th of the month prior to publication.
6. Submit all classified ads by [clicking here](#).

Bi-Vocational Pastor Needed

SALARY: TBD

LOCATION: Davison Meadows Baptist Church, Davison MI

Small Southern Baptist church seeking Bi-vocational pastor with a deep love for God and a heart for people. We have a loving, kind and helpful body of people whose standard is the King James Bible. We are also an aging congregation. Sunday services include Bible study at 10am, Worship at 11am and 6pm. Mid-week Bible study at 6pm.

REQUIREMENTS:

If you feel called to this ministry, please submit the following to the email address provided below:

- Cover Letter introducing yourself and your interest in this position
- Narrative of your Salvation Experience (Testimony)
- Your resume with your ministerial experiences, educational background, and at least three references
- Doctrinal statement regarding your theological views of core doctrines
- Must concur with the Baptist Faith and Message

CONTACT:

Chris Gilbert

dmbcpastorsearch@gmail.com

Full-time Lead Pastor Needed

Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Mt. Morris, MI is seeking a full time lead Pastor. The church currently has an average Sunday morning attendance of 100. They have been at their present location since 1972. Please send your resumes to Colonial Hills Baptist Church Search Committee, P.O. Box 432, Mt. Morris, MI 48458.
Learning Center Director Needed

Learning Center Director

Eastgate Early Learning Center (Bethel, Roseville, Motor City Metro) seeks a new director for their center. The full time position opens at the end of August but we look to hire in before then so the new person can settle in with the help of the outgoing director. Request job description at bethelbapt@sbcglobal.net.

Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship

CrossPointe Church Overview: CrossPointe Church is a medium-sized church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) located in Monroe, Michigan. We offer two identical gathered worship services on Sunday mornings which include; biblical preaching, scripture reading, prayer, theologically rich music, and regular observance of the biblical ordinances (Lord's Supper and Baptism). Our music style may be considered "contemporary" as we are led by a team of musicians (piano, guitar(s), drums, bass, vocals, etc.). Within our "contemporary" style of music, we value both old and new songs that are theologically rich and seek to glorify God (examples: Citizens & Saints, Sojourn Music, Getty Music, Sovereign Grace Music, Indelible Grace Music). Please see the following website for more information regarding CrossPointe's doctrinal statement, leadership, history, and various ministries.

CrossPointe Church Website: www.crosspointemonroe.com

Monroe, Michigan Overview: Monroe is a city of approximately 20,000 people located on the western shore of Lake Erie. It is equal distance from Detroit (MI), Ann Arbor (MI), and Toledo (OH). Monroe offers a great blend of outdoor activities, historical landmarks, and city life.

Position Overview: The associate pastor of worship and discipleship works with the lead pastor in planning and implementing all areas of the gospel-centered worship ministry at CrossPointe Church. The associate pastor of worship and discipleship also works with the lead pastor in developing and strengthening the various ministries at CrossPointe Church.

Qualifications:

- The associate pastor must be a man who humbly and joyfully desires to serve as an elder in a local church (1 Tim 3:1, 6; Titus 1:5-9).
- The associate pastor should be recognized by a local church through ordination (or willing to go through the ordination process at CrossPointe) as a man qualified for the office of elder (Titus 1:5; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 5:1-3).
- The associate pastor should be a man who is actively pursuing holiness of life by the grace of God (1 Tim 4:7-10).

- The associate pastor should be evangelical, conservative theologically, and in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.
- The associate pastor should be proficient to lead vocally in gathered worship services.
- The associate pastor should be proficient to lead instrumentally with guitar and/or piano in gathered worship services.
- The associate pastor should have experience in leading a team of musicians.
- The associate pastor should have experience with audio and video technology.
- The associate pastor should have experience developing and leading discipleship ministries in a local church.

Gathered Worship Service Responsibilities:

- Direct the planning, organizing, and evaluating of a gospel-centered worship ministry.
- Recruit, train, and schedule the worship team members (music, sound, media).
- Lead and oversee weekly rehearsals for the worship team.

Additional Worship Ministry Responsibilities:

- Develop and manage all church media content (website, social media).
- Work with the lead pastor and ministry team leaders to actively and creatively use all media content as a tool to communicate about the ministries of CrossPointe Church.
- Supervise and maintain all supplies, instruments, and equipment related to the worship ministry.
- Prepare an estimated annual worship ministry budget and administer the approved worship ministry budget.
- Upon request, assist in musical preparation for weddings, funerals, and other church and/or denomination related activities.

Discipleship Ministry Responsibilities:

- Disciple the worship team members and worship intern(s).
- Work with the lead pastor to identify and train ministry leaders.
- Work with the lead pastor to develop ministry vision for CrossPointe Church.
- Work with the lead pastor to lead CrossPointe to fulfill the Great Commission.
- Participate in scheduled ministry team leader meetings and staff meetings.
- Maintain regular office hours for focused time of prayer, study, and counseling.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the lead pastor.

Compensation:

- \$30,000 per year (25-30 hours per week)
- 3 weeks of paid vacation per year

For more information or to apply, please contact Pastor Jay Anderson:

CrossPointe Church

[1675 Stewart Road](#)

[Monroe, MI 48162](#)

(734) 457-1024

crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com

Bi-vocational Pastor Needed

Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, in Monroe MI is searching for a bi-vocational Pastor. Please send resumes to retiredchief1980@att.net or curtpat33801@yahoo.com. If you have any questions you may call Ron Doolittle at 734-752-0238.

Church Information Packets

The information previously mailed out in the Church Information Packets will now be available online at bscm.org/flyers for all churches to download, print, and use!

ABOUT US

The Baptist Beacon is the official newsjournal of the **Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM)**, in association with the Southern Baptist Convention. The mission of the Baptist Beacon is to communicate with Michigan Baptists in our shared mission of punching holes in the darkness through starting, strengthening, and sending churches.

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