

## STARTING

### 5 Reasons to Preach

By Garth Leno

WINDSOR - Once your church plant has launched a Sunday morning worship experience, you had better preach — and preach well! A quote from Albert Mohler says: “Evangelical pastors commonly state that biblical preaching is the hallmark of their calling. Nevertheless, a careful observer might come to a very different conclusion. The priority of preaching is simply not evident in far too many churches.”

So, my brothers, we must preach!

John Stott admitted to being “an impenitent believer in the indispensable necessity of preaching both for evangelism and for the healthy growth of the church.” So, preach!

D. A. Carson points out that Puritan theologian William Perkins wrote that preaching “has four great principles: to read the text distinctly, from canonical Scripture; to give it sense and understanding according to the Scripture itself; to collect a few profitable points of doctrine out of its natural sense; and to apply, if you have the gift, the doctrines to the life and manner of men in a simple and plain speech.” Simple, profound, and inspiring, isn't it?

Carson writes: “Our aim as preachers is not to be the most erudite scholar of the age. Our aim is not to titillate and amuse. Our aim is not to build a big church. Our aim is to take the sacred text, explain what it means, tie it to other scriptures so people can see the whole a little better, and apply it to life so it bites and heals, instructs and edifies.” This applies to every pulpit in every church, including the newest church plants. Good church plants require good preaching for at least five reasons.

#### 1. To glorify God

That's obvious, right? Nothing trumps this. God is the goal and the ground and the purpose of all biblical preaching. “All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name” (Ps. 86:9). “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). We preach to glorify Him.

#### 2. To make a lasting first impression

In his helpful article, “Planter, Become a Better Preacher,” Yancey Arrington suggests that newcomers will evaluate your church primarily on the basis of the preaching. So preaching may be a “first impression” element. If newcomers evaluate whether they want join this new work based on what happens in the pulpit, we had better pay attention.

### **3. To announce our theology**

The pulpit is the most effective place where newly planted congregations not only see what the church believes about certain doctrines, but also how they apply those doctrines. People enter the doors holding all kinds of notions and expectations about what a church is and how a church should act.

Again, quoting Arrington, “The pulpit ministry, then, is a catalytic instrument whereby the preacher explains how this church intends to embody its theology:

- When we say complementarian, this is what we mean . . .
- When we say we believe in God’s sovereignty in salvation, this is how that looks for us . . .
- When we say we’re missional, this is how that value surfaces in this body . . .

When we preach, we joyfully assert and clarify our theology for this congregation newly planted, and disciple them in what we believe and how we believe it.

### **4. To mature in grace**

David Mathis writes, “When we sit attentively under the faithful preaching of the gospel, not only do we forget ourselves and refill our faith, but we are genuinely changed. The gospel we preach is the fragrance from life to life, or death to death (2 Cor. 2:15–16). We grow or shrivel. Our hearts warm or cool. We soften or become callous. There is no neutrality when the preaching sounds.” “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28).

### **5. To encounter the living Christ**

Faithful, Christ-centered preaching allows people to come face-to-face with Jesus himself and experience the resurrection power of his gospel. As Martin Luther said, “To preach the gospel is nothing else than Christ’s coming to us or bringing us to him.” Jesus is the only One who can satisfy. At one of the interest meetings we held to talk about planting another church, one of our guys said, “Pastor, I’m in as long as the new church plant preaches like The Gathering!” The high value we place on preaching and teaching the gospel of God is making an impact and setting the stage for another church plant in the future.

Brothers, you had better preach, and you better preach well.

About the author: Garth Leno is a church planter working with SEND Detroit in Windsor, Ontario. His church is called The Gathering.

**New Beginnings, New Creature**

By Keturah Bouyer

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

LANSING -When approached about writing on 'New Beginnings' the above verse came to mind FIRST. As a matter of fact, I searched for it because I could not fully remember the whole verse (and praise God for a husband and biblegateway.com). However, what I found MOST compelling was not the 'behold, new things have come,' or the 'Therefore,' but '...the old things passed away.' How many times have you and I been stuck on the 'old things' in our lives, that we are not able to see that 'new things have come?'

That is the phrase I am stuck on. Why you may ask? Well I'm glad you asked, friend, because we need to realize that before we approach, arrive, or move forward to the 'new things,' we MUST remember that the 'old things' have to pass. What are the 'old things' that you have to put away? What are the behaviors, thoughts, habits, and actions that you are trying to keep attached to the 'new creature' that Paul is exposing to you and to me?

On December 18, 2018 my husband, Pastor Coye Bouyer, and I celebrated our 19<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. It's been an interesting and hard road, especially over the past three years. To put it simply, I was having a hard time believing that the 'old things had passed away.' Was I really top priority in his life? Did I really come before the church? For me, I had begun the practice of spending too much time thinking on some of the 'old things,' some 'old hurts,' some 'old baggage' instead of the realizing the 'new' had come. You see about five to six years ago my husband shared from the pulpit his need to repent...and before you go too far, NO he did not have a moral failure. However, he expressed how over the past few years he had neglected his family; and he expressed how God had begun to deal with him on his time off during August. As he cried and shared with the congregation, I sat in my seat asking myself this one question: 'Can I really believe him? Can I move past the years of asking and requesting for uninterrupted time for me and our children? Can I move forward?' Honestly, I thought I had until three years ago I came face to face with some 'old things' and realized I had not made room for the 'new' to come.

New Beginnings...say it to yourself: 'New Beginnings'. What comes to your mind? Is it the start of a new day? Is it the start of a new job? Is it the 'restart' of a relationship? Friends, as we exit 2018 and enter the New Year, I want us to pray and ask God: What are the old things that I need to allow to pass away in order to embrace the new? I truly believe, only then, can you and I experience the 'new things have come.'

Be blessed in this New Year and enjoy your New Beginnings!

About the author: Keturah Bouyer is the wife of Pastor Coye Bouyer at Kingdom Life Church in Lansing, MI.

## **The Neighborhood Missionary**

By Ed Stetzer

CHICAGO - I am a missionary and so are you. We are called to be missionaries right where we live, work and play. Often, maybe too often, we only think of missionaries as those who give their lives to go far away and serve the Lord in jungles or vastly different culture. While there are those who do and we are thankful for them, you and I are called just as they are to be representatives of the Gospel before the world around us.

Take a look at the diagram to find your way: STEPS TOWARD NEIGHBORHOOD MISSIONS!

1. Map out your neighborhood - draw the immediate area around your home.
2. Create Margin - allow time to be a missionary by scheduling your efforts.
3. Prepare for mission - what are some ways to engage your neighbors?
4. Pray up - lift up your neighbors address until you get to know them.
5. Drop By - Intentionally engage your neighbors while working outside or walking.
6. Make the ask - Invite them to church.
7. Invite Over - create opportunities for your neighbors to get to know you.
8. Look for opportunities - God will provide chances to connect, don't miss them.
9. Fuel up - Stay constant in your quiet time, your church and small groups to be ready for missionary service.

About the author: Ed Stetzer holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism at Wheaton College, Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center, Dean of the Wheaton College School of Mission, Ministry, and Leadership, and is interim teaching pastor of Moody Church in Chicago.

## **STRENGTHENING**

### **4 Reasons Small Groups are Vital to Your Church's Health**

By Ed Stetzer

CHICAGO - If you think community is an important part of healthy church life, and I hope you do, then small groups should also be important to you. They are actually crucial to the life of any church. I'm not the only one who thinks so—we have the research to back it up. For the book *Transformational Groups*, which I co-authored with Eric Geiger, we conducted a survey of churchgoers in the United States and Canada. The results were telling.

Almost 8-in-10 (79 percent) of those surveyed agreed that small groups are very important in the church. Two-thirds said that their church regularly starts new small groups. We saw widespread agreement, but perhaps not widespread engagement.

#### What's the Right Engagement?

Some would say that 50 percent of your Sunday morning attendance should be in small groups. I would say that is low, because I believe all of the people who are involved in your church should also be plugged into small community in whatever form you offer it. Realistically, though, I don't think 70 percent is an unreachable goal for churches that rightly emphasize small groups. I've been in traditional churches with 94% involvement in small groups (in this case, Sunday School). That's a lot, but it's doable. And it's important because relationships within the church body are important. Let me say that again, it is important because relationships within the church body are important.

#### Why It Matters?

I find that a lot of Christian discipleship deals with what you need to know, not who you need to be with. That is sad, because if we get the relationships right, the information will follow. If we connect people in real gospel community, they will learn. But the opposite is not always true. We're too often concerned only with conversion and information download, and we don't take community and relationship-based discipleship seriously enough.

You can't build community by way of programming, but you can use a program to create a pathway through which community can happen. Maybe you should read that sentence again; the difference in the two is subtle. Programs do not community make. However, programs can create the pathway—the opportunity—for birthing healthy community.

#### The Value of Community

When we preach the gospel to one another in close-knit community, there is spiritual growth that changes us individually and as a whole. That change causes us to position for an outward focus and encourage gospel transformation in the communities outside the church walls. As much as I love gathering with the whole of the local church for corporate worship, there is something powerfully unique about an intimate gathering around a living room, a small classroom, or a dining room table that forces us to think differently than when we are in a big room for worship.

Small groups, in fact, are where much of the theology taught in our pulpits begins to be fleshed out in conversation and action. If you want your church to be on mission, teach it from the pulpit and equip your people to wrestle with it in small groups. It's messy that way, but it's fruitful. Recognizing that, there are four factors we found in transformational churches that were foundational to small group success.

### **1. Personal Discovery**

First, personal discovery happens in small groups better than large groups for a number of reasons. You can learn, ask questions, involve yourself in the lives of others, and generally make yourself vulnerable among other people who are doing the same in small groups. You just can't do that in sermons. There is no conversation, no feedback, and no questions. There's no room to challenge the preacher or even question any part of

what's being taught. Spiritual growth happens better with others, in community, with open lines of communication and freedom to speak into one another's lives.

## **2. Smaller Communities Are More Effective**

Second and closely related to the first, smaller communities act more like, well, communities. That may seem like a given, but the bigger the group is, the less like community it feels. The kind of community I am advocating requires a level of intimacy easily lost as numbers grow. You simply cannot know everyone beyond a certain point, and you certainly will not open up about your struggles and sins in a large group of people you don't know.

## **3. Deeper Friendships**

With that in mind, the third factor is that small groups deliver deeper friendships that double as accountability. When people know you, really know you, your life becomes far more transparent, including your sin. Others learn to read you and will call you out for those sins, creating opportunities to deal with real life difficulties as they surface. This is part of what we should expect from good friends.

## **4. Maximum Participation**

Finally, small groups deliver maximum participation. There are opportunities to discuss the issues with others in the church. Church life issues can be discussed openly among trusted friends. Mission can be planned out and participated in together. Lives are sharpened and leaders developed. Small groups are an absolute necessity for involving as many people as possible in the life and ministry of your church.

### **Make Space for Community**

Community matters enough to be prioritized. It needs to be more than an afterthought, but needs to be part of our focus. We often say there is not more important ministry in the life of our church than our small groups. It's that important. Whatever your plan or program for small groups, keep these principles in mind. Understand why groups are good and take advantage of the good they can bring into your church.

About the author: Ed Stetzer holds the Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism at Wheaton College, Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center, Dean of the Wheaton College School of Mission, Ministry, and Leadership, and is interim teaching pastor of Moody Church in Chicago.

## **5 REASONS WHY YOUR CHURCH MUST PRIORITIZE SOCIAL MEDIA**

By Ministry Tech

COLORADO SPRINGS - Google the phrase, church social media, and you'll be served up over 200 million articles about using social platforms for your ministry. There's no longer any question about whether your church should be on social media or not, but being on social media isn't enough. You need to prioritize using it well. If you want to take advantage of all the opportunities social media provides you might need to elevate its importance.

Let's face it: there are a lot of churches and ministries vying for people's attention out there. If your church is involved — but not invested — in growing a digital presence and social media skills, you might be wasting your time and investment. Social media offers so many perks and possibilities it would be foolhardy not to spend some time devoted to your social media channels. In fact, it might be the secret weapon for struggling churches, or a great tool to boost your attendance for important holidays. If you can't justify the time spent on social media, I encourage you to consider the following ways your ministry might be missing out.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA MIGHT BE THE FIRST PLACE PEOPLE FIND YOUR CHURCH**

Over 46 percent of church planters say that social media is their most effective method of outreach. Think about that for a second . . . out of all the possible outreach methods, almost half of today's church plants are seeing a bigger return for time they invest into social media than anything else. So it isn't like social media is competing with your website for the most visible digital channel; it's competing with every method churches are using to draw attention to themselves.

With a thoughtful church strategy for social engagement and some regular money devoted to advertising, you can create an awareness of your ministry and send people to your website where they can learn more. Plus, when you add the Facebook pixel to your site, you can retarget the people that Facebook has sent to your website.

### **YOU CAN BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CONGREGATION'S FRIENDS**

Let's face it; this is the reason you're on Facebook. Through the likes and shares of your updates from people who already attend your church, your content is pushed into the feed of their friends and family. When you explain to your congregation that their interaction with your Facebook page is a form of outreach, you can build a strategy around sharing your culture with people who might be open to learning more.

### **FACEBOOK'S GROUPS AND EVENTS RIVAL SOME REAL LIFE CHURCH NETWORKS**

There are some great software solutions out there for churches to use to facilitate digital community. But one thing that's fantastic about Facebook is the fact that most of your people are already there every day. Using Facebook groups for ministries or studies is an incredibly easy (and free) way to keep everyone together and on the same page. You can create groups for prayer, home groups, Bible studies, classes, or lifestyle groups for

people that like to do things like hike or garden. You can make them as private as you want, and you can invite people outside the church, too. This gives people another level of exposure and interaction with your church.

Facebook events are another stellar way to raise awareness for an event. You can invite everyone in the church, and they can invite others, too. All updates and important information can be communicated in the event group. And you can even experiment with ads to promote your event. And, again, the great thing about it is everyone's already on Facebook. (Check out our 10 Facebook Tips for Churches.)

## YOU'RE MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

Community is in transition. People are building important networks and connections online, and it is becoming a valuable way for people to connect. For instance, did you know that 35 percent of the couples married between 2005 and 2012 met online? Instead of fighting this transition, the church should be embracing its inherent positives and opportunities. We should be taking advantage of every tool at our disposal to reach people where they are, and there may be no greater tool available than social media.

## YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS REPRESENT YOUR CHURCH VITALITY

I know it doesn't feel like it should be the case, but when people come to one of your social media platforms and you haven't updated it in months, it shapes their impression of your church. If you're going to have a social-media presence it's important for you to regularly update it. This means that you need to be very particular about the social-media platforms your church adopts. It's better to have one or two platforms you really excel at than to be on every platform and to do them terribly.

About the author: *MinistryTech* Magazine is the go-to source for the latest information on technology and its use in ministry, known as technical ministry. We feature articles on things like church management software, electronic Bible study, Internet security, websites, e-giving and more.

## **Baby-saving ministry ready to extend its reach**

By Grace Thornton

FLINT (BP) -- Justin Phillips said it's the best and worst thing he's ever done with his life. Every day, he stands across the strip mall parking lot from a door marked simply G-3422. It's sandwiched between two dollar stores. Every week, 20 to 30 babies are aborted there. "We're out there pleading with moms and dads to have mercy on their child, and we'll help," said Phillips, a full-time missionary with ONElife for Life, a ministry of ONElife Church in Flint, Mich.

Since ONElife for Life began in May 2016, dozens of babies that they know of have been saved out of G-3422. And the ministry has grown, said Eric Stewart, pastor of ONElife Church and president of ONElife for Life. They've acquired a building next to the strip mall that will be a pregnancy resource center and they've been given a bus that will be used as a mobile ultrasound.

They've also expanded their reach to conversations outside a second abortion clinic in town. It's been slow growth. Stewart's big-picture goal is for Christians to have a presence outside each of the nation's 720 abortion clinics. Right now, ONElife for Life is covering two. Stewart and Phillips have been speaking in churches in recent months trying to awaken a desire to pick up the mantle. When he speaks, Stewart said the first thing he does is ask the church he's visiting to repent with him. "For years, I did nothing, but if it's really murder, then we have to face that reality," Stewart said. "If someone drove into our town and wiped out an entire kindergarten class every week, we wouldn't sit idly by and say, 'It's not affecting me.'"

The story of the Good Samaritan demands the liability of the bystander, he said. Stewart said he thinks about it all the time, ever since he heard a story about how one particular church in Nazi Germany would sing louder on Sundays so they wouldn't have to hear the trains chugging by on the way to the concentration camps. "We hear that story, and do we not wish that there would have been Christians who went to the point of injustice and said, 'No, we can't let this happen,'" Stewart said. "We have our opportunity now. We are living in the American holocaust and we have the opportunity to [speak] in Christ's name."

For churches interested in being involved, Stewart and Phillips can provide training in how to start a ministry like ONElife for Life and have conversations with people outside abortion clinics. They aren't there to protest, Stewart said. They're simply there to show love and offer mothers the help they need to bring a baby full term. "We want to equip the church. We've learned how to train people to do this kind of ministry -- we've learned from our own mistakes and would love to pass that along so that people don't have to reinvent the wheel," Stewart said. "We've thrown our lives into this, and we would love to duplicate it all over the place. We need Gospel-saturated missionaries to confront the darkness and abolish the evil of abortion. It really is a life-or-death situation."

There's an emotional toll to the ministry of standing at a "modern-day concentration camp," Stewart said. There at their tent across the parking lot, Phillips and volunteers from the church have conversations with anyone who will talk to them. They offer to adopt the baby or cover any financial needs the parents might have for the baby's first three years of life. They remind each mother that God knows the baby in her womb. Sometimes those babies are still aborted. "But we're compelled to go because we're told to go to orphans in their distress, and these children have been disowned by their parents," Phillips said.

And at least 85 have been saved. It could be more. They only know about it if a tearful mother meets them there on the edge of the parking lot and tells them she's decided not to go through with it, or if the parents later choose to swing back by and let them meet the baby. "Every month we have people who come back and say, 'Hey, I never said anything, but here's my baby,'" Stewart said. "So we know there's probably more."

God is at work there, shining light into the darkest of places, Phillips said. "We just stand there and watch Him move. It's all Him. He brings people to us and saves babies all the

time." One woman told Phillips that she didn't want to talk to him, but her legs just walked her over there. After talking with him, she chose not to go through with it.

"It's a battlefield all the time, and it's an honor to stand there proclaiming a message of hope," Phillips said. "We do that, and God does the rest. We can't change hearts, but He can." It hasn't been without pushback, too. Sometimes the clinic will have people posted in the parking lot to "shepherd" women into the building so they won't have conversations with Phillips. Other times people have approached him with threats. But in Christ, Phillips said he knows he goes out victorious already.

"It's a horrible ministry, horrible to watch it every day," he said. "But at the same time, to be able to lay down our lives in that way on behalf of Christ and His love for these babies is incredible."

About the author: Grace Thornton is a writer based in Birmingham, Ala.

### **Our SBC Cooperative Program is amazing**

By Bob Carpenter

HOLT - As 2017 began The Cedar Street Church found herself in a season of unrest with some important decisions to be made for her future. When the dust cleared in July, the church was without a Pastor. The importance of the role played by our Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) Executive Staff cannot be overstated as the guidance given to the church brought us to a promising future.

Tim Patterson, Mike Durbin, and Tony Lynn met with Church leaders as the challenge unfolded. Their counsel and training led to a swift organization of a Pastor Search Committee. Their sage direction was a precursor to the ready help they would prove to be critical over the next eighteen months. As a group they demonstrated a remarkable ability to counsel and help while carefully avoiding directing the decision-making process.

The product of their efforts and the Search Committee's hard work was the calling in September, 2017 of Dean Mathis as the Intentional Interim Pastor. In the intervening months the wisdom of calling Pastor Dean has proven obvious as his experience and "folksy" style brought a much-needed chance for our church to take a collective breath, and prepare for a preferred future led by God. Pastor Dean, and wife, Betty Sue, finish their assignment this month with an obliging love from the congregation.

Now as 2018 has concluded we are about to take the next step. The Cedar Street Church has called Matthew Carter of Garner, NC as our Pastor and he's expected to be here to lead us beginning in January. This Southeastern Seminary graduate will have a couple months to enjoy his first winter in Michigan! We are excitedly looking ahead to new life in our church. As you get the chance, send Pastor Matt a note of welcome and encouragement to 1705 Cedar Street, Holt, 48842-1803.

If you haven't seen thousands of examples before, then perhaps Cedar Street Church's experience will serve to inform of the efficacy and vitality of our cooperative form of denominational life. Through the blessings of the SBC Cooperative Program these servants were educated, called, and employed by the BSCM. They came alongside of our church as we looked beyond the challenges of the moment to the promises for the future. Their steady resource was invaluable and we are forever thankful.

Bottom line, our SBC Cooperative Program giving makes Jesus known around the globe while also providing the BSCM with leaders who will enable the serving and resourcing of our churches. Call them from time to time and especially when you need them!

About the author: Bob, a Michigan native, is a graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, a retired Navy Chaplain, and member of The Cedar Street Church. He and wife, Sue, list hunting, fishing, travelling, and reading among their earthly diversions as they pursue the purposes of God.

### **Study: Infidelity, porn prevalent sex sins in church**

by Diana Chandler

OMRO, Wis. (BP) -- A great majority of Protestant pastors were approached by staff or members for help with marital infidelity, premarital sex, pornography and other sexual sins, according to new data released by Barna Group spanning a year. But only a third of pastors said they felt "very qualified" to address the preponderance of issues staff and members broached, Barna said in the survey of 410 mainline and non-mainline senior and executive pastors.

Eighty percent of pastors including Southern Baptists were asked to help or counsel a staff or church member dealing with marital infidelity, the most prevalent problem in the study, Barna said. On average, staff and members approached pastors regarding half of a list of 18 concerns Barna addressed, the study found. Issues brought to the attention of more than half of pastors were, in descending order of prevalence, marital infidelity, premarital sex, sexual problems within marriage, lust, pornography use by a husband, sexual abuse or assault, porn use by a teen, sex offender issues, sex education questions, and porn use by an unmarried adult.

The findings are the first in a projected series of reports from the Sexuality and the Church study commissioned by the Brushfires Foundation, a sexual integrity ministry in Omro, Wis. The collaborative research project is supported by 24 national and state groups including Focus on the Family, Enough is Enough (EIE), the American Family Association and the Louisiana Family Forum. Southern Baptist pastors, considered non-mainline by Barna, were among respondents from 29 other denominations as well as non-denominational churches, Brushfires said in releasing its findings Nov. 15.

Brushfires president Daniel Wiess described the findings as concerning. "It doesn't alarm us that pastors are encountering so much sexual brokenness over the course of a year. We know such issues exist," Weiss said in a study press release. "What concerns us is so few pastors feel very qualified to handle these difficult and painful issues. "There is a great need for ministry leaders to be trained," he said, "and for outside caregiving ministries to work directly with local churches to handle these issues in a caring and professional way."

EIE, which works to make the Internet safe for children and families, said the findings evidence that the church is not immune to porn. "The church body, men, women and children, are not immune from the gross consumption of pornography, contrary to what many believe," EIE President Donna Rice Hughes said in an EIE press release. "Internet pornography consumption is at an all-time high, fueling pornography addiction, sexual exploitation and the breakdown of marriage both in and out of the church. "Pornographers understand the content they produce and distribute is highly addictive," Hughes said, "and they will likely have a consumer for life unless the addiction cycle is broken."

The Southern Baptist Convention has adopted numerous resolutions since the mid-1900s focusing on sexual behavior, pornography and marital fidelity, most recently a resolution "On The Holiness and Integrity of Ministry Leaders" at the 2018 annual meeting in Dallas. A 2015 resolution adopted at the annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio, focused "On Pornography and Sexual Purity." And in 2010 in Orlando, Fla., messengers promoted marital love and fidelity in a resolution "On The Scandal of Southern Baptist Divorce." Additionally, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty has focused on sexual issues during annual conferences and events, and offers educational and spiritual resources at [erlc.com](http://erlc.com).

Among top findings in the study conducted in October 2017 regarding the previous 12 months, according to Brushfires, are:

77 percent of non-mainline pastors such as Southern Baptists said the church should address sexual brokenness, compared to 56 percent of mainline pastors. Overall, 68 percent of pastors strongly agree that the church should help people deal with issues of sexual brokenness.

Churches of fewer than 100 members and budgets under \$150,000 encounter fewer sexual concerns, and are less likely to think the church should address such concerns. 23 percent of pastors offer DVD or Bible studies on sexual topics, and 16 percent are hosting related support groups.

19 percent of pastors are training lay leaders to assist with sexual concerns.

86 percent of pastors offer pastoral counseling and 76 percent refer people to professionals when approached by someone with a sexual concern.

Among the sexual issues 47 percent or fewer pastors were approached regarding are, in descending order of prevalence, struggles with same-sex attraction, sexting, transgenderism/gender dysphoria, masturbation, same-sex parenting situations, porn use by a child under 12, erotica/written porn, and porn use by a wife.

Study results are available at [brushfiresfoundation.org](http://brushfiresfoundation.org).

About the author: Diana Chandler is Baptist Press' general assignment writer/editor. BP reports on missions, ministry and witness advanced through the Cooperative Program and on news related to Southern Baptists' concerns nationally and globally.

### **THE BOOK BAG: “Everybody Always” by bestselling author, Bob Goff**

By Staff

“Arguments won’t change people. Simply giving away kindness won’t either. Only Jesus has the power to change people, and it will be harder for them to see Jesus if their view of Him is blocked by our opinions.” Chapter One, page seven.

Bob Goff, is an unlikely sort to be found on the bestseller stand of our local book store, or speaking before literally millions of people telling stories and touching lives. He is not a preacher, nor a theologian, rather Bob is a lawyer, and were it not for his persistence he may not have garnered that achievement. Bob has a passion for people and it is this passion that permeates his books, and will motivate the reader to pursue their God-given passion in order to be fulfilled, happy, and successful.

“Everybody Always” is filled with first-person stories and the lessons learned as Bob has become love to a world full of difficult people, challenging circumstances and scary surroundings. His love for people is best demonstrated in how he treats them. It has been written, Bob teaches love to others Jesus-style, with an extravagant grace. He believes God doesn’t want us to spend our lives studying Him, as much as imitating Him by being love to the world. It is time to step out from the closed doors of our churches and homes to express love to the unloved.

Another bestselling author, Carmine Gallo, of “Talk Like Ted” and “The Storyteller’s Secret” examines the way communications has become an art form of storytelling. We see it in our commercials, gone are the days of simply selling a product. Commercials take the audience on an emotional journey, “Love is what makes a Subaru,” “Eat a Snickers, you aren’t yourself when you’re hungry,” or an all time favorite, “Guess what day it is...” The American audience would be bored within seconds if a product was displayed along with a narrator telling of how good it is. “We” are visual snobs, and expect more. We want to be entertained.

As a result, the need for entertainment has driven speakers, authors and even preachers to share relational stories that can be tied to a message. The best stories make an emotional connection, and it is with emotions an audience is moved to action. That action maybe to get involved in a needy cause, or it may persuade the decision of that next purchase, but either way the audience has made a connection and are touched.

As you read, “Everybody Always” there is an almost certainty of connection. Goff’s stories are compelling and motivating. His writing style leaves you feeling changed, energized to do something, and want more. So, dig into your book bag and pull out this incredible read, “Everybody Always” that in the new year of 2019 your life will be different. If you don’t own it, there are both digital and hardback copies available. It’s another bestseller by Bob Goff.

### **The New Year provides a fresh start**

By Sue Hodnett

FENTON - Beginning a new year is always a thrilling time. The excitement of opening up a brand new calendar planner, (Yes, I still use one). There is nothing like it! Unsoiled and unfolded pages, fresh crisp paper, no coffee stains, no red penned scratched out appointments, and no arrow markings moving events to different dates. The awesomeness of a freshly printed task list. All those neatly organized lists and schedules with deadlines that seem so attainable. No pressures or worries, everything is perfect. Right?!

The New Year also provides a fresh start and a chance to set new ministry goals. Careful planning and new ministry ideas are always the goal of the BSCM Women’s Ministry Team. Planning attractive and high quality ministry projects is the perfect way to keep our leadership team and you passionate about the ministries offered for you to participate in. We have planned 24 plus women’s ministry and WMU mission events for 2019. For an up to date list of events, visit the ***bscm.org*** website or follow us on FaceBook: ***BSCM Women’s Ministries & Missions – Michigan WMU.***

As a leader in your church, spend quality time with your team members, praying, planning, evaluating and sharing your ministry goals. Encourage your team to set personal goals as well as goals for the ministry. Brainstorm together on what it will take to reach these goals. Pray for God’s leading and follow.

Organizing and preparing yourself for the New Year is just as important as for ministry. Assessing and setting personal goals is essential for individual growth. The first factor to consider is your personal Bible study time. How much time are you spending in God’s word? Set some Bible study goals now. Decide on a new study book or Bible reading plan. Find a friend who will meet with you to do a study. There are so many resources available and our women’s ministry team is available to assist you in finding fresh ideas that will work for you. Just email us at ([wmu@bscm.org](mailto:wmu@bscm.org)) or give us a call at the office.

Consider goals related to reaching the community for Christ, and ministering to the needs that are found in your area. Ask yourself, who is available to come alongside of you to help reach these goals? We can help you find the resources needed to accomplish these great tasks.

Consider leadership development. What tools and resources are needed to help each team members accomplish these goals? The BSCM Women's Ministry is available to help with resources. Our team's main goal this year is to focus on leadership development. We want to help the women in your church develop the skills and gifts that God has given them as leaders. There are resources available for women to study on their own as well as in groups. Developing their leadership skills, to refine or discover the gifts that God has given to be used in His Kingdom work, may unleash an untapped resource in your church. We can provide many avenues and pipelines to help you sharpen your leadership skills and become the ministry leader God intends for you to be.

The Women's Ministry has a network of women ready to support the ministries that you have envisioned to help the hurting in your community. As you assess the needs, share them with us. How can we come alongside to help you to reach your goals? Today, more than ever, people want to be involved in something that makes a difference. No longer are we content with just going to church and learning more, women want to be an active part in changing lives, ministering to people, making Christ visible and active in the world through them. Women's Ministry is all about that – developing leaders, ministering to people, seeing lives changed, developing disciples that make a difference wherever they find themselves, and becoming the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Yes, 2019 is a new calendar and it's ready to be filled with the best we have to offer Christ. Join us, let us come alongside of you, whatever the case, we are here to help.

About the author: Sue Hodnett serves as women's ministry leader for the BSCM as well as WMU Michigan Executive Director. She has dedicated her life to ministering to women in Michigan.

## **When is Giving Enough?**

By Bruce Scott

ST. CHARLES - Late last year I was having a discussion with a relative who was concerned about how much she owed to the church to meet her tithe. She was literally distraught over the situation not wanting to allow the end of the year to pass without meeting her obligation. While many pastors would be pleased to have such a congregant with this attitude, I submit it's not the posture that would most honor the Lord. So, when is giving enough?

Jesus talked a lot in the Bible about money. He talked about our relationship to and stewardship of money. The truth is, everything we have, our money, our property, our time, talents and everything else, belongs to God. We have been entrusted with it for a purpose, some would conclude a divine purpose. We are to steward it, manage it for the

One that owns it. Jesus used a parable to illustrate this truth and his pleasure with the one that got the most out of it.

The Apostle Paul said, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV.

I'll leave the discussion of the tithe to others but it's clear that God set the standard in giving. He so loved that he gave. We've all heard it said that you can give without loving but you cannot love without giving. We've also heard our checkbook tells the story of what we love. But the bottom line is that generosity is a Godly characteristic and giving our money is one example of generosity and should be part of every believer's life.

Consider these questions in relationship to your giving:

1. How much should I give?

Actually, I think the answer to this question starts with the wrong perspective. It assumes the ownership of that which we're giving. The question really should be, how much should I keep. How much of the owner's (God) money would he want us to keep as our management fee? Since it is not ours to keep we should feel good about giving some away. It's God's money and he should be making the decision about how much is given and how much is kept.

2. What should I do with it all?

You see, as a steward we are responsible and accountable for everything God has entrusted to us, not just financially. How we treat the possessions he has entrusted us, and what we do with it all, is a question of stewardship. Similar to the question of how much to give we should be in constant contact with the Father, following His lead in sharing all we've been entrusted to whomever, whenever and however.

If we start every conversation about our time, talent and resources with the concept that it belongs to God, it will change how we approach the conversation and it will change the outcome. The result will be investing the things he has given you and I for his glory differently. We will question a purchase before we make it and think about it differently. Our lives will be lived differently. We will be more motivated to use what he's given us for his glory than for our comfort. Try it!

About the author: Bruce Scott is the Senior Vice President for Westfall Gold, the nation's leading innovator and implementer of major donor events. Westfall Gold has raised nearly a billion dollars for their clients. In addition to serving as VP Bruce has previously served as Executive Director of Revenue for a major para-church ministry and as local pastor. He's married and has one daughter who is also involved in major donor philanthropy with a Christian University.

## SENDING

### **Disaster Relief 2019 Training and Service Opportunities Await**

By Bob Kiger

FENTON - As Michigan Disaster Relief begins the New Year, there will be many opportunities to volunteer and serve, both in Michigan and across the country. We have the finest training available, and the best people to go out and share the love of Jesus in times of need. If you are looking to get trained, we have varied opportunities for you to take advantage of your talents.

The first Basic Training event will be Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at The Valley Church in Saginaw from 10am to 1pm. If you are interested in hearing more about becoming a Disaster Relief volunteer, please call Judy Roy at 810-223-2465 and register for the training.

The next scheduled training is scheduled for May and will be held at Bambi Lake Baptist Retreat and Conference center. This training will be in conjunction with a week-long chainsaw opportunity to help Bambi trim and fell trees to enhance the visual appearance of the property. You may be surprised to learn qualified chainsaw operators are a huge need when disaster strikes. Besides, this particular week is always a great time of fellowship and worshipping at Bambi.

Even if you are not trained in the chainsaw discipline, please join us. There is always work that can be done while enjoying the time together. In addition to cutting trees there is always lots more to do, like brush removal and burning. Keep checking back as the exact dates and details will be shared in posts on the Baptist Beacon.

It may surprise you to learn, we have a massive opportunity each spring to work with college students. This year, there will be several opportunities to volunteer during college spring breaks. Crew chiefs are needed during the month of March to help supervise student teams. Our student volunteers chose to spend their spring break repairing or rebuilding damaged homes instead of vacationing. It is always a rewarding and refreshing experience to see the youth of our Michigan spend their time off sharing their faith and demonstrating the "good Samaritan" love to these families. This year's opportunities are predominantly located in Puerto Rico, North Carolina and Florida as those areas continue to recover from hurricanes in 2018.

North Carolina was devastated by Hurricane Florence, and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams from all over the country, including Michigan, have been instrumental in the recovery and are continuing rebuild efforts. At one time, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief kitchens were operating at ten different sites providing food to survivors. You might not be aware that we offer training in the culinary arts specifically for large capacity cooking. A total of 1,057,623 HOT meals were prepared and served from ten sites! Michigan

Disaster Relief sent a chainsaw team to assist in the initial response efforts. Since the hurricane, 4500 recovery jobs have been completed and now have moved into rebuild efforts. The goal for 2019 is to assist 2,000 families in returning to their residences. This is a long-term project (2 to 3 years) and will require thousands of volunteers to help, including you.

Hurricane Michael did extensive damage to the Florida panhandle and similar types of efforts have been deployed to that area. Michigan DR responded by sending volunteers to help work in a kitchen, preparing 150 meals a day for the volunteer teams. This work is ongoing as we care for the volunteers, providing food, shelter and even laundry service for them.

As you can see, there are plenty of opportunities for volunteers whether it is feeding, chainsaw, flood recovery or chaplaincy. If your church or association wants to conduct Basic Training or training in any of the other areas, please call to schedule a time.

Encourage your church members to get involved so they can be blessed by blessing the victims of disasters. "And the King will answer them, I assure you: Whatever you did to the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40

If you want to find out more information about sending a team from your church or association to help, you can go to <https://baptistmission.org/Mission-Projects/By-Mission-Type/Disaster-Relief/Hurricane-Florence/Get-Involved>.

About the author: Bob Kiger is the state director for Michigan Disaster Relief efforts at the Baptist State Convention of Michigan.

## COLUMNS

### **Biometric Access is the only way in**

By Tim Patterson

FENTON - A few years ago I was in the Trauma Center at University Hospital in Jacksonville, FL. A member of our church family was there with her father who was involved in a serious automobile accident. People were running everywhere and it seemed like mass chaos. One group of people were huddled in the corner, clinging to each other as tears rolled down their faces, and open sobs were heard throughout the waiting area. Nurses and technicians were scurrying about trying to meet the needs of so many hurting people. It was not unlike some scene from a television program like E.R. or New Amsterdam.

I am not a stranger to these situations or places, but this time there seemed to be a more intense atmosphere that filled the corridors. I needed to be with my friends and

their father, but others needed more immediate attention. I tried to get someone to help me, but they were busy with more important matters. The actual treatment areas where the patients were cared for were separated from the waiting and admission area by a large double door.

I knew I needed to be on the other side of that door but I was not allowed. The sign over it clearly stated that absolutely no one was to be admitted without proper clearance. I did not have that clearance, and only someone with such authorization could get me in. This one door kept me from where I needed to be. But something fascinated me about this door, and it was the fact that it did not have a conventional lock and key system or a push button lock activation pad.

The entrance locking mechanism was controlled by a biometrics security system. I had seen these devices in various places in my travels, but I had not seen one of these in use at a hospital before, so it did catch my attention. A biometrics security system is a system that scans fingerprints, palm prints, voice and facial patterns, or even the retinal structures of the eye, and then compares what it "sees" with data stored in a digitized memory bank. At this particular door a palm print scan was used, and all that was necessary to open the door was "yourself" --as long as you had your hand with you and you were on record.

After finally getting the attention of one of the trauma nurses and explaining my situation she simply placed her hand on the scanner and in less than two seconds the door opened. No fuss and no problem. I was in. No worrying with keys or numbers that could be stolen, lost or forgotten, all one need do is lightly place their hand on the scanner. If I had tried to enter through that door by placing my hand on the scanner it would have denied me entrance. No matter how much I needed to be on the other side of those doors, and no matter how much I desired to be given entrance, it would still be denied me because I was not on record with the data bank.

One day we will all stand before the gates of heaven. They won't be controlled by some biometrics security system, but one fact will still be the same, unless you and I are found in the "Heavenly Data Bank", (The Book Of Life) no matter how important it is for us to enter in or how much we desire to be on the other side of the Gates of Heaven, we will be denied entrance. No good works, no church membership, not ritual or deed will let us in.

What is required is for you and me to be sure the right information is in the right book. Is your name there? I know mine is and I want you to know yours is as well. Read, John 3:16-18. Cry out to God for His forgiveness and believe. You will be saved! May I encourage you to begin this year knowing your eternal information is recorded in the Book of Life. Don't be denied entrance into heaven. If you have questions or want to talk to someone about this, call me! (904) 408-9521 is my direct number, and I am always eager to talk about the love of Jesus.

## Creating Effective Teams

By Tony Lynn

FENTON - Happy New Year! I would like to give you an overflowing bucket of “new-starts” for 2019. I want this year to be “God-sized” and unlike any other year for you!

If you know me, you know I do not enjoy ordinary routines. I do not watch car races circling on tracks hundreds of times. I watch movies one time. I do not watch TV reruns. I do not repeatedly return to the same vacation spots. I do not eat habitually at the same restaurant. Instead, I love to explore new territories. I want to meet new people. I want to have new conversations on new subjects with old friends. I enjoy new adventures.

When it comes to a new year, if we are not careful, we will end up running around the same track and filling the calendar with the same past events with no anticipation of God-sized outcomes while looking to the same team members and leaders. The teams with whom we work might be community groups, civic clubs, or church teams. By placing the “correct” people on teams, you can come to expect bolder outcomes. When we are looking for new teammates, let’s examine the following areas:

**Character** – Is this person trustworthy in all that they do in life? Would I trust them to care for my spouse and my savings? Does this person display the same type of self-control in challenging times that he or she does during the good times?

**Calling** – Does this person understand the intense focus of a team, and what the team is specifically trying to achieve? Are they willing to invest physically and emotionally into the task?

**Competency** – Is this person knowledgeable on the necessary subjects or hungry to learn all that is needed to become a valued team member? Will they read, study, and train in order to acquire all they can on the matter at hand?

**Commitment** – Is there a proven track record in other areas of life that this teammate does not give-up when striving to achieve new results in his or her own life? Will he or she be able to dream-up new initiatives and implement the important steps to achieve bolder outcomes?

**Chemistry** – Does this person play well with others? When you see them at gatherings, are they surrounded by other people? Do others feel valued by this person? Do not be fooled by those who use people, enlist those who love people.

**Confirmation** – Ask other people their opinion as to whether or not an individual would make a valued teammate. Sometimes in our circles, out of mercy, we enlist the broken and put them onto teams before they are ready, before they are healed. Spiritually, emotionally, and morally unfit team members slow and derail a team’s effectiveness.

In closing consider three final questions. If you were to measure yourself by these six areas, how would you measure up? Are there any changes that need to take place in your life? Will you make those changes before redesigning the teams with whom you work?

I hope these brief suggestions will encourage you and help to create vibrant teams around you for the glory of the Lord. Each year, I see many talented and devoted people working hard and often alone, who would be strengthened by working alongside the “right” people. God says it best in Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NLT), “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.” May we all live by that text during 2019. Happy New Year!

### **Michigan/Texas Partnership Begins Now**

By Mike Durbin

FENTON - Applause filled Grace Church during the 2018 BSCM Annual meeting as Tim Patterson announced our new partnership with the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). It's something that the BSCM Executive Director and David Hardage (BGCT Executive Director) have been working on for three years. These two visionary leaders developed this partnership to punch holes in the darkness of both states. The Michigan/Texas Partnership will focus on 3 key areas: Church Revitalization, Church Starting, and Evangelizing Urban Centers.

Tom Howe, representing Texas Baptists, was with us to kick off the partnership. During his report to the convention messengers, Tom challenged Michigan Baptists to help Texas Baptists meet the massive human needs on the border with Mexico. He set the tone by saying, “I’m going to let the politicians take care of the politics. I’m talking about the human need that we can meet to make a difference in people’s lives.” He shared about 300 people make their way to the Texas border every day from Mexico and other countries. Many of these men, women and children arrive after a long, arduous journey, often without money and supplies that have long since been depleted. They need help with basic human needs. One of the many ways Texas Baptists demonstrate their compassion is by providing hygiene kits. Tom said, “It’s a way to love people in the name of Jesus.” We, churches of Michigan, can make these kits and send them to Texas for distribution.

Below is a list of the items that go into make the Hygiene Kits. Please lead your church to collect these items, especially during the months of January and February. A mission team from Michigan will be leaving for McAllen, Texas February 28. Let’s help them help others in the name of Jesus by providing a truck load of hygiene kits to share! Let’s serve well alongside our Texas Partners to share the love of the Lord.

Michigan Baptists, after you’ve collected and bagged the hygiene kits, bring them to the Baptist State Convention of Michigan Ministry Building at: 8420 Runyan Lake Road, Fenton, MI 48430. The hours are Monday – Thursday, 8am-4pm. We will ship the items to the River Ministry Hygiene Kit Project in Texas.

That's just one way Michigan Baptist churches can help our Texas Partners. January is the month of new beginnings. This year your church can be part of helping others beyond our state through the new BSCM partnership with Texas Baptists. Ask how your church can get involved.

## **A New Year, New Beginning**

By Mick Schatz

ROSCOMMON - Happy New Year from Bambi Lake! 2018 was a fantastic year for the camp, and we anticipate 2019 being even more exciting as we witness God using Bambi Lake in amazing ways. A new year for many of us often marks a "New Beginning," an opportunity to rethink or retool our everyday life and our plans for the future. Maybe a new year sparks new dreams or prompts us to refresh old ones in a new way.

However we approach this "New Beginning" it will most likely require a reboot to our thinking. How we view our finances, our health, our relationships, our family - we have to look at these through different lenses. I recently had to start wearing glasses and they have literally changed how I see the world. They are progressive lenses so they help me see things far away, not so far away and up close. I now have the choice to live in my former blurred reality or a new clear reality. My new glasses have provided me a "New Beginning" that is now allowing me to see clearly - I can read my phone now!

However, making the decision to go to the eye doctor, and have my sight examined required a new mindset. I had to acknowledge my eyes were not functioning properly, and decide this was no longer acceptable. As silly as it may seem, this required admitting I was getting older, going to the doctor, probably wearing glasses (one more thing to keep up with), paying for something I don't want, etc., etc. Nevertheless, I decided my need was greater than my pride. This was my "New Beginning" moment that ushered in a new reality. Which brings me to this question - Is pride keeping you from a "New Beginning"? Is pride keeping you from a "New Reality" like it was me?

I have no way of knowing the area of life you desire a "New Beginning", but allow me to encourage you with this thought, this reality - "Grace Has Overcome!" Grace wins! What a liberating and life altering reality to live in, just realize this reality requires a new mindset. It requires surrender. Surrender demands humility and humility is the key that unlocks this "New Beginning" in our lives. We have to acknowledge our insufficient strength and resources to handle life on our own. Only by completely surrendering to and relying on the work of God's grace can we truly have a "New Beginning" in any area of life. "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" Ephesians 2:8 (ESV). Grace saved you, now let it change you and let it permeate every breathing moment of your existence. Choose a "New Beginning" with grace. Live in the reality that your striving is insufficient BUT His grace is sufficient!

My only hope is in the cross, my Savior died, He paid my cost  
A slave to sin my soul in chains, until His grace, flowed down like rain  
Amazing grace how sweet the sound, when Your grace like rain comes flowing down,  
It's a beautiful sound!

Your Grace, Your Grace has overcome, overcome!  
Your Grace, Your Grace the battle won, the battle won!  
Forgiven I stand in victory, for the glory, of my Savior King,  
Your Grace has overcome!

(Grace Has Overcome-Michael Schatz)

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **Baby-saving ministry ready to extend its reach**

By Grace Thornton

FLINT (BP) -- Justin Phillips said it's the best and worst thing he's ever done with his life. Every day, he stands across the strip mall parking lot from a door marked simply G-3422. It's sandwiched between two dollar stores. Every week, 20 to 30 babies are aborted there. "We're out there pleading with moms and dads to have mercy on their child, and we'll help," said Phillips, a full-time missionary with ONElife for Life, a ministry of ONElife Church in Flint, Mich.

Since ONElife for Life began in May 2016, dozens of babies that they know of have been saved out of G-3422. And the ministry has grown, said Eric Stewart, pastor of ONElife Church and president of ONElife for Life. They've acquired a building next to the strip mall that will be a pregnancy resource center and they've been given a bus that will be used as a mobile ultrasound.

They've also expanded their reach to conversations outside a second abortion clinic in town. It's been slow growth. Stewart's big-picture goal is for Christians to have a presence outside each of the nation's 720 abortion clinics. Right now, ONElife for Life is covering two. Stewart and Phillips have been speaking in churches in recent months trying to awaken a desire to pick up the mantle. When he speaks, Stewart said the first thing he does is ask the church he's visiting to repent with him. "For years, I did nothing, but if it's really murder, then we have to face that reality," Stewart said. "If someone drove into our town and wiped out an entire kindergarten class every week, we wouldn't sit idly by and say, 'It's not affecting me.'"

The story of the Good Samaritan demands the liability of the bystander, he said. Stewart said he thinks about it all the time, ever since he heard a story about how one particular church in Nazi Germany would sing louder on Sundays so they wouldn't have to hear the trains chugging by on the way to the concentration camps. "We hear that story, and do we not wish that there would have been Christians who went to the point of injustice and said, 'No, we can't let this happen,'" Stewart said. "We have our opportunity now. We are living in the American holocaust and we have the opportunity to [speak] in Christ's name."

For churches interested in being involved, Stewart and Phillips can provide training in how to start a ministry like ONElife for Life and have conversations with people outside abortion clinics. They aren't there to protest, Stewart said. They're simply there to show love and offer mothers the help they need to bring a baby full term. "We want to equip the church. We've learned how to train people to do this kind of ministry -- we've learned from our own mistakes and would love to pass that along so that people don't have to reinvent the wheel," Stewart said. "We've thrown our lives into this, and we would love to duplicate it all over the place. We need Gospel-saturated missionaries to confront the darkness and abolish the evil of abortion. It really is a life-or-death situation."

There's an emotional toll to the ministry of standing at a "modern-day concentration camp," Stewart said. There at their tent across the parking lot, Phillips and volunteers from the church have conversations with anyone who will talk to them. They offer to adopt the baby or cover any financial needs the parents might have for the baby's first three years of life. They remind each mother that God knows the baby in her womb. Sometimes those babies are still aborted. "But we're compelled to go because we're told to go to orphans in their distress, and these children have been disowned by their parents," Phillips said.

And at least 85 have been saved. It could be more. They only know about it if a tearful mother meets them there on the edge of the parking lot and tells them she's decided not to go through with it, or if the parents later choose to swing back by and let them meet the baby. "Every month we have people who come back and say, 'Hey, I never said anything, but here's my baby,'" Stewart said. "So we know there's probably more."

God is at work there, shining light into the darkest of places, Phillips said. "We just stand there and watch Him move. It's all Him. He brings people to us and saves babies all the time." One woman told Phillips that she didn't want to talk to him, but her legs just walked her over there. After talking with him, she chose not to go through with it.

"It's a battlefield all the time, and it's an honor to stand there proclaiming a message of hope," Phillips said. "We do that, and God does the rest. We can't change hearts, but He can." It hasn't been without pushback, too. Sometimes the clinic will have people posted in the parking lot to "shepherd" women into the building so they won't have conversations with Phillips. Other times people have approached him with threats. But in Christ, Phillips said he knows he goes out victorious already.

"It's a horrible ministry, horrible to watch it every day," he said. "But at the same time, to be able to lay down our lives in that way on behalf of Christ and His love for these babies is incredible."

About the author: Grace Thornton is a writer based in Birmingham, Ala.

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By Bob Kiger

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Tom Howe, representing Texas Baptists, was with us to kick off the partnership. During his report to the convention messengers, Tom challenged Michigan Baptists to help Texas Baptists meet the massive human needs on the border with Mexico. He set the tone by saying, "I'm going to let the politicians take care of the politics. I'm talking about

the human need that we can meet to make a difference in people's lives." He shared about 300 people make their way to the Texas border every day from Mexico and other countries. Many of these men, women and children arrive after a long, arduous journey, often without money and supplies that have long since been depleted. They need help with basic human needs. One of the many ways Texas Baptists demonstrate their compassion is by providing hygiene kits. Tom said, "It's a way to love people in the name of Jesus." We, churches of Michigan, can make these kits and send them to Texas for distribution.

Below is a list of the items that go into make the Hygiene Kits. Please lead your church to collect these items, especially during the months of January and February. A mission team from Michigan will be leaving for McAllen, Texas February 28. Let's help them help others in the name of Jesus by providing a truck load of hygiene kits to share! Let's serve well alongside our Texas Partners to share the love of the Lord.

Michigan Baptists, after you've collected and bagged the hygiene kits, bring them to the Baptist State Convention of Michigan Ministry Building at: 8420 Runyan Lake Road, Fenton, MI 48430. The hours are Monday – Thursday, 8am-4pm. We will ship the items to the River Ministry Hygiene Kit Project in Texas.

That's just one way Michigan Baptist churches can help our Texas Partners. January is the month of new beginnings. This year your church can be part of helping others beyond our state through the new BSCM partnership with Texas Baptists. Ask how your church can get involved.

### **Our SBC Cooperative Program is amazing**

By Bob Carpenter

HOLT - As 2017 began The Cedar Street Church found herself in a season of unrest with some important decisions to be made for her future. When the dust cleared in July, the church was without a Pastor. The importance of the role played by our Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) Executive Staff cannot be overstated as the guidance given to the church brought us to a promising future.

Tim Patterson, Mike Durbin, and Tony Lynn met with Church leaders as the challenge unfolded. Their counsel and training led to a swift organization of a Pastor Search Committee. Their sage direction was a precursor to the ready help they would prove to be critical over the next eighteen months. As a group they demonstrated a remarkable ability to counsel and help while carefully avoiding directing the decision-making process.

The product of their efforts and the Search Committee's hard work was the calling in September, 2017 of Dean Mathis as the Intentional Interim Pastor. In the intervening months the wisdom of calling Pastor Dean has proven obvious as his experience and "folksy" style brought a much-needed chance for our church to take a collective breath,

and prepare for a preferred future led by God. Pastor Dean, and wife, Betty Sue, finish their assignment this month with an obliging love from the congregation.

Now as 2018 has concluded we are about to take the next step. The Cedar Street Church has called Matthew Carter of Garner, NC as our Pastor and he's expected to be here to lead us beginning in January. This Southeastern Seminary graduate will have a couple months to enjoy his first winter in Michigan! We are excitedly looking ahead to new life in our church. As you get the chance, send Pastor Matt a note of welcome and encouragement to 1705 Cedar Street, Holt, 48842-1803.

If you haven't seen thousands of examples before, then perhaps Cedar Street Church's experience will serve to inform of the efficacy and vitality of our cooperative form of denominational life. Through the blessings of the SBC Cooperative Program these servants were educated, called, and employed by the BSCM. They came alongside of our church as we looked beyond the challenges of the moment to the promises for the future. Their steady resource was invaluable and we are forever thankful.

Bottom line, our SBC Cooperative Program giving makes Jesus known around the globe while also providing the BSCM with leaders who will enable the serving and resourcing of our churches. Call them from time to time and especially when you need them!

About the author: Bob, a Michigan native, is a graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, a retired Navy Chaplain, and member of The Cedar Street Church. He and wife, Sue, list hunting, fishing, travelling, and reading among their earthly diversions as they pursue the purposes of God.

### **Potential Sale of BSCM Building: Q&A**

By Jamie Lynn

FENTON - At the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at Grace Church in Jackson Michigan, it was voted by the church messengers to grant the BSCM Executive Board the ability to sell the BSCM Ministry Building in Fenton, MI.

The officers of the State Convention along with the State staff thought it best to respond in writing to the questions that they have been receiving during personal conversations.

As always, we are better as a Convention as we clearly communicate with one another while pursuing God's desires. Below are some of the frequently asked questions that we received along with the responses given by the BSCM Officers (President Scott Blanchard, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Roy Henry, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Ed Emmerling, Past President Jerome Taylor and the BSCM Executive Leadership Team).

1. Where will the BSCM staff work if we sell the building?
  - Jerome Taylor - Our BSCM staff are exceptional in their understanding that their labors are in the field. They do work that requires miles of travel to meet

in the cities, suburbs, and rural communities of the state of Michigan. They also travel around the U.S. to connect with ministry leaders in order to recruit kingdom laborers to our state. As such, the use of a home-based office with the ability to stay mobile is the direction that seems most effective. The staff however do realize the need of a physical strategic location with a smaller footprint. In seeking such...the options for this type of location include

- Partnership with an active local church that has a physical facility with space to accommodate additional office work.

- Leasing a communal office space to be a central meeting place as needed.
- Taking on the responsibility of a non-active church facility that is smaller than our current building and more cost effective.

- Tim Patterson - When the Convention in full session voted on the building sale issue that did not mean that the building in Fenton would be sold, only that the state board was given the opportunity to sale the building if the sale met the criteria that had been previously considered.
- Roy Henry - The BSCM staff has multiple options for work locations, should we find a buyer for the building who would pay the expected amount. Working from home is a very viable option for our staff (especially since they spend so much time in the field already), and the plan is to have a smaller footprint, physical office space that will be rented at a considerably lower rate than we are paying for maintenance on our current building. Pastor Tim, our Executive Director, would still be able to provide oversight and accountability for our staff who are working remotely.
- Scott Blanchard - When we sell the building, there will be several options in regards to where the staff will work during the week. One thing for sure - we do not want the staff to work remotely from their home or a local coffee shop. We do see the value for synergy and unity when staff are under the same roof. Ideally, we would like to stay within a 30-mile region of our current office location since most of our staff lives within the area and it has proven to be a central location for a majority of our churches. Some ideas for an office location (but we're not limited to these) would be: one of our churches that has unused office space or rooms that could be converted into offices; or we find a good deal on a lease for 2,000 sq. feet or so.
- Pastor Tim Patterson – There are several options as to future space for office housing. There are smaller footprint office spaces for lease, rent or purchase in the Flint and Detroit area. There is also the possibility of utilizing excess space in some area churches. Many churches have offered their facilities to host our board meetings and any events that are planned.

2. What are the benefits to selling the building?
  - Ed Emmerling – Anything we can do to put more resources into the Kingdom work in Michigan, I want to do. The invested income from the sale of the building will help us do that. I see us using the investments of the sale to carry out ministry in Michigan for decades to come.
  - Pastor Tim Patterson – The benefits of selling the building would be to convert the value of the building into cash that could be invested in our foundation and the returns be used for ongoing and developing ministries. The Thomas Duke Company was asked to give us a current estimate value of the building and property and they said it would be \$1,000,000 or more.
  - Jerome Taylor - The cost of maintaining our current building which greatly surpasses our needs does not seem to be great stewardship. The building is currently worth around one million dollars as an asset but it costs more than \$50,000 a year to maintain it. It also resides in a physical location that is somewhat distant from having a significant impact on a present community surrounding it. There could be an opportunity to make a greater kingdom impact should the physical location be in a greater populated area. Secondly, the value of the building, should it be sold with such a value, could provide for greater future work through our foundation.
  - Tony Lynn – The sale of the property and building would provide a large body of funds that could be placed into investments through the state's foundation. The interest from those investments would allow us to do more financially in ministry. The current property and building size exceeds the small team we have serving the state convention. We only need one-third of the space we are currently occupying.
3. Since the BSCM building is paid off, doesn't it make sense to keep it?
  - Jerome Taylor - The current value of the building as an asset against the cost of maintenance for the upkeep of the building seems to outweigh the benefit of keeping the physical location.
  - Pastor Tim Patterson – At present, there are 25 office spaces and multiple support staff spaces. Currently, we only utilize 5 spaces on a daily basis and 3 spaces are used one day a week. The BSCM President and I will be putting together a blue-ribbon team of representatives from our churches to give guidance, counsel and insight with planning and any transition that may take place.
  - Mike Durbin – Like many other MI Baptists, I volunteered during the construction of our current building. It has served us well, but in the not too distant future, the building will need new shingles, resurfacing of the parking lot, new carpet, and some updating. It's a lot of building to maintain and update in light of our office needs.

- Tony Lynn – When we are able to allow strategy to drive ministry we gain as churches working together to reach Michigan with the Gospel of Christ. The ministry leaders spend a lot of time on the road training, gathering, and encouraging others throughout the state. Members of our churches are constrained with both spouses working and obligations to children’s schedules; therefore, we drive to meet with them. Very few people from our churches visit the offices during the year.
  - Pastor Tim Patterson - our Executive Director said he did not want to sell the building if it did not clear at least \$900,000.00 that in turn could be invested. “I do not believe it would be a wise choice to sell for less. The financial advantage would be too diminished.”
4. How will selling the building affect the work/ministry of the BSCM to the churches?
- Scott Blanchard - The staff will continue to work together on behalf of our churches. A “building” does not dictate the effectiveness of our team. In fact, the strong vision from Dr. Tim Patterson is leading our team to be more effective than it ever has been before. As we continue to see that vision, we will see the ministry of BSCM come through regardless of what building they are placed in.
  - Roy Henry - I cannot see how the sale of the building would affect the work/ministry of the BSCM to the churches, since the vast majority of that ministry takes place in the field.
  - Mike Durbin – Fenton is only one of the places we work. Pastor Tim, Tony and I are often away from the “office” as we serve Michigan Baptists and meet with partners.
  - Ed Emmerling - Most of the work done by the BSCM staff is done in the field. I see this move as putting even more people in the field. That is the heart of our present-day state staff, wanting to be with people in the field. This will continue to have a positive effect on our state convention.
  - Tim Patterson - The consideration for the sale of the building came from conversations among various board members and pastors. The value of the building was discussed as well as the cost of maintaining the facilities. Also, the size of the building in relation to the number of staff that presently use the building was discussed. Those conversations lead to the question being raised in an Executive Committee meeting.

5. Where will the Executive Committee and Board meet for their quarterly meetings?

- Roy Henry - Executive Committee and Board meetings can take place on a rotating basis around the state, hosted by our sister churches. This would enhance the relationship between our churches and the BSCM, while also periodically reducing the travel burdens our officers and board members often incur (time, fuel, wear and tear, etc.). With these meetings taking place around the state on a regular basis, these reduced burdens would encourage more participation of our churches on the Executive Board.
- Jerome Taylor - These meetings would also be strategically be placed in regional communities that provide the greatest connection point for these entities to convene. Some of these would meet in local church buildings.
- Scott Blanchard - One of the great benefits of not having a building will be allowing our Executive Committee and Board meet in various locations in our state. Our meetings can be held in just about any churches that will allow us. It gives our churches the opportunity to serve our state convention as well.

I believe Pastor Tim's quote is a good summation, I personally would like to stay right where we are. It would be so much easier to remain in these facilities, but I do not believe that I would be giving good leadership if we did not at least consider the options. We as a state convention must be good stewards of the assets that God has provided us. To have a property valued at one million dollars or more that is not being utilized to the fullest and that it's worth could be realized in helping advance the Kingdom, is not something that should be ignored. If it sells, it sells. I have no driving agenda here. Together as a convention family we will walk through this process together. The outcome will be in our Father's hands, and I will be happy with whatever that might be."

About the author: Jamie Lynn is Executive Assistant to Tim Patterson, Executive Director-Treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. She serves in many capacities and is Tony Lynn's wife.

### **The New Year provides a fresh start**

By Sue Hodnett

FENTON - Beginning a new year is always a thrilling time. The excitement of opening up a brand new calendar planner, (Yes, I still use one). There is nothing like it! Unsoiled and unfolded pages, fresh crisp paper, no coffee stains, no red penned scratched out appointments, and no arrow markings moving events to different dates. The awesomeness of a freshly printed task list. All those neatly organized lists and schedules with deadlines that seem so attainable. No pressures or worries, everything is perfect. Right?!

The New Year also provides a fresh start and a chance to set new ministry goals. Careful planning and new ministry ideas are always the goal of the BSCM Women's Ministry Team. Planning attractive and high quality ministry projects is the perfect way to keep our leadership team and you passionate about the ministries offered for you to participate in. We have planned 24 plus women's ministry and WMU mission events for 2019. For an up to date list of events, visit the [bscm.org](http://bscm.org) website or follow us on FaceBook: **BSCM Women's Ministries & Missions – Michigan WMU**.

As a leader in your church, spend quality time with your team members, praying, planning, evaluating and sharing your ministry goals. Encourage your team to set personal goals as well as goals for the ministry. Brainstorm together on what it will take to reach these goals. Pray for God's leading and follow.

Organizing and preparing yourself for the New Year is just as important as for ministry. Assessing and setting personal goals is essential for individual growth. The first factor to consider is your personal Bible study time. How much time are you spending in God's word? Set some Bible study goals now. Decide on a new study book or Bible reading plan. Find a friend who will meet with you to do a study. There are so many resources available and our women's ministry team is available to assist you in finding fresh ideas that will work for you. Just email us at ([wmu@bscm.org](mailto:wmu@bscm.org)) or give us a call at the office.

Consider goals related to reaching the community for Christ, and ministering to the needs that are found in your area. Ask yourself, who is available to come alongside of you to help reach these goals? We can help you find the resources needed to accomplish these great tasks.

Consider leadership development. What tools and resources are needed to help each team members accomplish these goals? The BSCM Women's Ministry is available to help with resources. Our team's main goal this year is to focus on leadership development. We want to help the women in your church develop the skills and gifts that God has given them as leaders. There are resources available for women to study on their own as well as in groups. Developing their leadership skills, to refine or discover the gifts that God has given to be used in His Kingdom work, may unleash an untapped resource in your church. We can provide many avenues and pipelines to help you sharpen your leadership skills and become the ministry leader God intends for you to be.

The Women's Ministry has a network of women ready to support the ministries that you have envisioned to help the hurting in your community. As you assess the needs, share them with us. How can we come alongside to help you to reach your goals? Today, more than ever, people want to be involved in something that makes a difference. No longer are we content with just going to church and learning more, women want to be an active part in changing lives, ministering to people, making Christ visible and active in the world through them. Women's Ministry is all about that – developing leaders, ministering to people, seeing lives changed, developing disciples that make a difference wherever they find themselves, and becoming the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

Yes, 2019 is a new calendar and it's ready to be filled with the best we have to offer Christ. Join us, let us come alongside of you, whatever the case, we are here to help.

About the author: Sue Hodnett serves as women's ministry leader for the BSCM as well as WMU Michigan Executive Director. She has dedicated her life to ministering to women in Michigan.

## **SBC NEWS**

### **5 Reasons to Preach**

By Garth Leno

WINDSOR - Once your church plant has launched a Sunday morning worship experience, you had better preach — and preach well! A quote from Albert Mohler says: "Evangelical pastors commonly state that biblical preaching is the hallmark of their calling. Nevertheless, a careful observer might come to a very different conclusion. The priority of preaching is simply not evident in far too many churches."

So, my brothers, we must preach!

John Stott admitted to being "an impenitent believer in the indispensable necessity of preaching both for evangelism and for the healthy growth of the church." So, preach!

D. A. Carson points out that Puritan theologian William Perkins wrote that preaching "has four great principles: to read the text distinctly, from canonical Scripture; to give it sense and understanding according to the Scripture itself; to collect a few profitable points of doctrine out of its natural sense; and to apply, if you have the gift, the doctrines to the life and manner of men in a simple and plain speech." Simple, profound, and inspiring, isn't it?

Carson writes: "Our aim as preachers is not to be the most erudite scholar of the age. Our aim is not to titillate and amuse. Our aim is not to build a big church. Our aim is to take the sacred text, explain what it means, tie it to other scriptures so people can see the whole a little better, and apply it to life so it bites and heals, instructs and edifies." This applies to every pulpit in every church, including the newest church plants. Good church plants require good preaching for at least five reasons.

#### **1. To glorify God**

That's obvious, right? Nothing trumps this. God is the goal and the ground and the purpose of all biblical preaching. "All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name" (Ps. 86:9). "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). We preach to glorify Him.

**2. To make a lasting first impression**

In his helpful article, “Planter, Become a Better Preacher,” Yancey Arrington suggests that newcomers will evaluate your church primarily on the basis of the preaching. So preaching may be a “first impression” element. If newcomers evaluate whether they want join this new work based on what happens in the pulpit, we had better pay attention.

**3. To announce our theology**

The pulpit is the most effective place where newly planted congregations not only see what the church believes about certain doctrines, but also how they apply those doctrines. People enter the doors holding all kinds of notions and expectations about what a church is and how a church should act.

Again, quoting Arrington, “The pulpit ministry, then, is a catalytic instrument whereby the preacher explains how this church intends to embody its theology:

- When we say complementarian, this is what we mean . . .
- When we say we believe in God’s sovereignty in salvation, this is how that looks for us . . .
- When we say we’re missional, this is how that value surfaces in this body . . .

When we preach, we joyfully assert and clarify our theology for this congregation newly planted, and disciple them in what we believe and how we believe it.

**4. To mature in grace**

David Mathis writes, “When we sit attentively under the faithful preaching of the gospel, not only do we forget ourselves and refill our faith, but we are genuinely changed. The gospel we preach is the fragrance from life to life, or death to death (2 Cor. 2:15–16). We grow or shrivel. Our hearts warm or cool. We soften or become callous. There is no neutrality when the preaching sounds.” “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28).

**5. To encounter the living Christ**

Faithful, Christ-centered preaching allows people to come face-to-face with Jesus himself and experience the resurrection power of his gospel. As Martin Luther said, “To preach the gospel is nothing else than Christ’s coming to us or bringing us to him.” Jesus is the only One who can satisfy. At one of the interest meetings we held to talk about planting another church, one of our guys said, “Pastor, I’m in as long as the new church plant preaches like The Gathering!” The high value we place on preaching and teaching the gospel of God is making an impact and setting the stage for another church plant in the future.

Brothers, you had better preach, and you better preach well.

About the author: Garth Leno is a church planter working with SEND Detroit in Windsor, Ontario. His church is called The Gathering.

**SBC's 'season of change' is a chance to pray**

by Biblical Recorder staff

CARY, N.C. (BP) – A review of this year's top stories reveals one particular topic that seems to stand out -- change. And it is presented here as a call to pray for the many churches, organizations and individual Christians involved -- that is to say, all of us.

The Southern Baptist Convention began what appears to be a season of change in 2018, signaled most noticeably by vacancies in executive leadership roles at five SBC entities. Yet, there was also a wave of other openings, transitions or announced departures in seats of influence at state and national entities, as well as local churches. Below is a collection of news snippets that, when stitched together, offers a broad perspective on current events in Southern Baptist life.

Frank S. Page resigned his position as head of the SBC Executive Committee in March due to personal, moral failings.

Paige Patterson, a dominant personality in Baptist life, was terminated as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in May amid a swirl of controversy and scandal.

Thom S. Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, announced in August his intentions to retire in the coming year.

In September, David Platt exited his leadership role at the International Mission Board to pastor full-time at McLean Bible Church in metro Washington, D.C.

Chuck Kelley announced in late fall his intentions to retire from his post at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2019.

Also declaring plans to retire in the coming months were three Baptist state executive directors: David Hankins in Louisiana, Robert White in Georgia and Lynn Nikkel in Wyoming. Three editors of Baptist state news agencies reported their upcoming retirements as well: Gerald Harris of Georgia's Christian Index; Allan Blume of North Carolina's Biblical Recorder and Bob Terry of the Alabama Baptist.

A number of pastors at influential churches across the SBC signaled plans to pursue various ministry opportunities. Well-known preacher and former SBC president Johnny Hunt left First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., to lead the North American Mission Board's evangelism and leadership training initiative. Mark Harris stepped away from the pulpit of First Baptist Church in Charlotte to campaign for office in the United States Congress. And former SBC president Bryant Wright announced his plans to retire as pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga.

A spate of faculty resignations over moral concerns touched three of the SBC's six seminaries this year, including Alvin Reid from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, David Sills from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Christian George from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

A small number of the vacancies listed above have been filled, but many are still open or are expected to be filled soon.

Jeffery Bingham was named interim president of SWBTS shortly after Patterson's departure.

Paul Chitwood was chosen to replace Platt as the next leader of the IMB, leaving open his former position as executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Jeremy Morton now occupies Hunt's former pulpit at Woodstock in Georgia.

Jennifer Davis Rash currently works as editor-elect for the Alabama Baptist and will assume the lead role Jan. 1, 2019, upon Terry's retirement.

Thomas Hammond will step into Georgia's executive director seat after the first of the year following White's departure.

Likewise, Quin Williams will bear the leadership mantle for the Wyoming Convention on Nikkel's exit.

Some of the transitions listed above are somber and sobering. Others are the result of the natural ebb and flow of life and ministry. Still more changes are exciting and encouraging. Regardless, each is an opportunity for Southern Baptists to pray. We are, above all else, a praying people, believing in God's faithfulness to answer our prayers.

This story first appeared on the Biblical Recorder website (brnow.org), newsjournal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

### **SBTS slavery & racism report stirs media flurry**

by David Roach

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) -- Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's 71-page report on the institution's history of slavery and racism garnered coverage in hundreds of media outlets during the week following its release. Reaction to the report ranged from affirmation by many evangelicals to criticism from both the left and right. "Insofar as there is any legitimacy to any criticism, we need to hear it," Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. said Dec. 17 on NPR's On Point radio broadcast. "... I intend to deal with honest partners in this, with people who want to engage in a conversation about the Christian responsibility that we face as Southern Seminary. And I think Southern Baptists would be willing to enter into that conversation."

The report was researched and drafted by a six-member committee of current and former faculty appointed by Mohler in late 2017. Their work, released Dec. 12, documents the racist history of the Southern Baptist Convention's flagship seminary -- from its slaveholding founders in the antebellum South to its segregation-defending faculty in the early 20th century.

Overall, reaction has been "overwhelmingly positive," Southern told Baptist Press. Among those to praise the report are African American pastors on social media. Dwight McKissic, a Texas pastor long known for speaking to racial justice issues in the SBC,

tweeted Dec. 12, "I'm unaccustomed to reading racial truth & transparency at this level from author(s) who were not liberal or African American. Refreshing to get an honest, insightful, and helpful historical overview of race/slavery. Truth that you acknowledge & act upon will set you free."

Thabiti Anyabwile, a Washington pastor and speaker at Gospel Coalition events, tweeted Dec. 12, "One of the things to point out about this report is that there's a faculty at the institution that was being prepared over many years, not just when someone decided to write a report. The report is only possible because the Spirit has been at work in private for a long time."

Among conservative evangelical critics of the report was Douglas Wilson, a Reformed author and pastor known for defending some aspects of the Confederacy. The report, Wilson wrote in a Dec. 17 blog post, seems to succumb to "a bizarre form of works righteousness" that repeatedly rehashes past racial sins without offering full forgiveness and pardon to members of the offending group. "With regard to this original sin of American slavery, under no conceivable scenario will Al Mohler ever be allowed to stand before the students of Southern Seminary and declare to them that their sins are entirely and completely forgiven," Wilson wrote.

Other critics claimed the report should not have ended its historical survey with the mid-1960s. Emory University historian Alison Greene told the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal the report failed to address more recent alleged instances of white supremacy among Southern Baptists. "You don't get the whole story of the seminary's history of white supremacy," Greene said. "They are almost claiming it is not relevant." Lawrence Ware, an Oklahoma State University philosophy professor, said "the vast majority" of Southern Baptist churches still "are going to be white supremacist churches, and we have to kind of deal with that and be honest about that." Ware made his comments during an On Point appearance with Mohler and Curtis Woods, a member of the report's drafting committee. Woods, co-interim executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, challenged Ware. "We have to have research in order to back a statement like that up," he said. Woods also recounted steps toward racial inclusion taken by the SBC and its entities.

Still other critics claimed Southern Seminary must revise its theology entirely to address adequately its racist history. North Carolina Baptist minister Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove wrote in a Dec. 13 Washington Post op-ed that Southern Baptists stand in the tradition of "slaveholder religion" and need "a theological reckoning that gets to the heart of what it means to read the Bible, to share its Good News and to be saved." "Slaveholder religion makes a relationship with God separate from one's obligation to work for God's justice," Wilson-Hartgrove wrote. "It made it possible for Southern Baptists in the early 20th century" to "feel righteous in their defense of white supremacy" and for today's Southern Baptists "to say they're concerned about the evangelization of migrants" while also claiming "they are in no way obligated to work for policies that would help those people find homes in the United States or anywhere else."

When asked on NPR about such criticism, Mohler said he thinks "there will be very little interest on the part of Southern Baptists -- or for that matter, evangelical Christians -- in discussing the dismantling of Christianity in order to meet a political objective." SBC President J.D. Greear was among positive reactors to the report. He tweeted Dec. 13, "I am grateful for this historic step of gospel healing @albertmohler & @sbts have taken. No matter how painful it can be to learn, we cannot heal what we do not know."

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.

## CLASSIFIEDS

Bi-Vocational Pastor Needed  
Church Name: Faith Baptist Church  
Location: Monroe Michigan

We are a small Southern Baptist Church and member of the Southeastern Baptist Association, seeking a Pastor who is compelled to serve the Lord by tending the flock. The members of Faith Baptist Church are dedicated to supporting and serving the Lord through various ministries and missions.

Additional information about Faith Baptist Church can be found on our website: [www.monroefaithbaptist.org](http://www.monroefaithbaptist.org)

Spirit led candidates should have the following characteristics:

- A born again follower of Jesus Christ living a life of exemplary behavior
- Should demonstrate leadership abilities and a passion for worship
- A student of and endorses the Baptist Faith and Message
- Spirited willingness to administer to the church's pastoral duties, support counseling and church sponsored events.

Requirements:

- Bachelors degree majoring in Christian Ministries or equivalent
- Ministry experience of at least 5 years preferred
- Cover letter of introduction
- Application letter of interest in the position
- Resume with a minimum of 3 references (1 from former Pastor, 1 from employer)

Submit the above requirements:

By email to [faithbaptistmonroe2266@gmail.com](mailto:faithbaptistmonroe2266@gmail.com)

OR

Faith Baptist Church  
C/O Pastor Search Committee  
2266 Sandy Creek  
Monroe, MI 48162

### **Bi-Vocational Pastor Needed**

Oak Park Missionary Baptist Church  
1560 Wordsworth  
Ferndale, Michigan 48220  
248-548-8960

The Oak Park Missionary Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational Pastor as shepherd of our great church. We are a small church with tremendous growth potential located in Ferndale, Michigan. Oak Park is the "Lighthouse on the Corner" a place to grow, connect, and serve. We are an established Missionary Baptist Church anchored in solid Baptist teaching with a strong love for high praise and worship. The church has historically been involved in the spiritual growth and education of the local communities we serve which has been the hallmark of the church over her history. The Oak Park Missionary Baptist Church is seeking a visionary pastor with strong leadership skills, who will preach the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ, teach sound Baptist doctrine, engage in pastoral care ministries, and also provide spiritual leadership.

A successful candidate must meet the following qualifications:

- Be a Born-again, baptized believer in Jesus Christ with qualities and characteristics reflected in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Galatians 5:22-23, and Malachi 3:10.
- Be a licensed/ordained, Baptist minister, skilled in preaching and teaching sound doctrine to individuals of all ages and demographics.
- Leads by consensus – is not dictatorial.
- Provide documented experience as a minister significantly involved in church administration and ministry.
- A strong proclaimer of the Word whose sermons are bible based, dynamic, and is led by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual counselor who demonstrates a high level of maintaining confidentiality. College educated and/or degree from an accredited theological seminary or school of divinity is preferred or can provide evidence of comparable experience.
- Be approachable, display love for the church and passionate for reaching out and attracting newcomers to our church.
- Be a visionary thinker, strong minded, and planner with sound judgment and discernment in keeping with the tradition, vision, and mission of Oak Park Missionary Baptist Church.

- Loyal to Southern Baptist Convention beliefs as expressed in the Baptist Faith and Message.
- Be an advocate of Christian Education and capable of teaching Sunday School, Bible Study, etc.
- Demonstrate ability to apply principles of financial management and work with leadership to cooperatively manage the church's resources effectively and efficiently.
- Must be ethical, possess strong faith, integrity, dedication, and live a lifestyle that is reflective of God.

Interested candidates should submit the following:

- Letter of Interest and Resume
- Copy of License/Certificate of Ordination
- Verification of college degrees, seminary or theological training course work, if any.
- Three (3) letters of recommendation (clergy, layperson, personal reference). Optional:
- Recording of a recent sermon.

All material should be submitted to:

Pastoral Search Committee Oak Park Missionary Baptist Church  
P.O. Box 312  
Southfield, MI 48034

The committee will acknowledge receipt of all resumes and letters of interest. All information presented will be kept confidential. All final candidates must submit to a history background check.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTAL OF PACKET IS FEBRUARY 5, 2019

## **Worship Pastor**

Warren Woods Baptist Church is located in Warren, Michigan, the third largest city in the state. As a church we strive to Encounter God, Experience Community, and Engage the World. As Pastor of Worship, you will work with the pastor and others to help the body Encounter God each time we worship. You will be working with an extremely gifted worship band and praise team. Your pastor plans his messages a year at a time so you will always know what direction to take. We are looking for someone who has a real heart for contemporary worship and an ability to weave the great hymns of the church into the worship experience.

### DESCRIPTION:

- What we really NEED is someone with strong vocals and a minimum of three years experience as a Worship Pastor who can lead praise and worship from keyboards or guitar. We would like them to be as comfortable with today's contemporary Christian music as they are with the classic hymns and able to blend them into our services for our multi-generational congregation. A qualified candidate will be expected to schedule and hold practice sessions during which our talented musicians and vocalists will be mentored to improve their God-given skills.

- It would be really, really nice to have someone who can arrange harmonies for our vocal team and maybe even write out staff music for orchestra-type instruments.
- We have some other “wishes,” but we expect you will too, so we will continue that conversation when we talk. A formal job description will be provided.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Be a committed Christian in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000; preferably a four-year college and three-year seminary graduate with an emphasis in Worship and Music; a minimum of three years experience as a worship pastor.
2. Have strong administrative, organizational, leadership and communication skills and be able to work with the worship band, praise team, office staff and other members of the church as needed, including technical abilities necessary to fulfill the job duties.
3. Be a Christian who feels a call by God into ministry. This is demonstrated through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, character and behavior, and your work with pastor and others to help your church family encounter God each time we worship.

**CONTACT:**

Please send resume, cover letter, and audio/video submissions to [pcarnline@warrenwoods.org](mailto:pcarnline@warrenwoods.org) by 10/31/18.

**Worship Leader/Director Opportunity**

Our English Ministry (Covenant Fellowship) at Korean First Baptist Church in Rochester Hills ([127 E Avon Road, Rochester Hills, MI 48307](http://www.koreanfirstbaptistchurch.com)) is looking for a volunteer worship leader which could potentially turn into a part-time position. Covenant Fellowship is the newly named English ministry, averaging around twenty members, and up to 30+ students and adults when everyone shows up. Although small, the ministry is seeking to become a multi-ethnic, missional church that is serious about authentic community and church planting. We are in need of a solid, worship leader who could help lead both our youth and adults in praise. There are a few members who have led while we are searching, but we could use a committed and passionate leader, who also has a vision to implement solid Gospel-centered music in our Sunday Gatherings. We are open to all styles that would help us praise Jesus, from hymns to modern and contemporary worship music.

A stipend is offered, along with any costs regarding worship materials, such as strings or books.

Please send any inquiries to:

Lead Pastor of Covenant Fellowship - Peter Yi  
[kvojinyi@gmail.com](mailto:kvojinyi@gmail.com)  
253-961-7391

**Senior Pastor Needed**

The Monroe Missionary Baptist Church (MMBC) located in Monroe, Michigan, a Southern Baptist Convention affiliate, is seeking to fill the position of Senior Pastor to lead a congregation of more than 600 regular attending members. Our current Senior Pastor of 22 years desires to retire from the pulpit to pursue missionary opportunities. Monroe Missionary Baptist Church constituted in 1937 and currently meets at a campus-style 41 acre site and facility just south of Monroe. MMBC is also affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of Michigan and the Southeastern Baptist Association. We are currently fixed-debt free and focused on the mission of the New Testament Church. MMBC currently supports full-time ministerial Minister of Families and Discipleship, Minister of Worship and Media, and office clerical and support members in addition to the position of Senior Pastor.

The desired candidate will have the following characteristics:

- A born-again believer in Jesus Christ and living an exemplary life modeling the call, character, and competencies becoming of a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ,
- Demonstrates a servant spirit as a growing disciple of Jesus Christ,
- Agrees with and supports the Baptist Faith and Message,
- Displays honorable work ethics by maintaining adequate office hours in order to effectively administrate the ministries of the church,
- Displays the spiritual gift of edification to this local body and the general community through preaching, teaching and pastoral ministries,
- Proven ability to lead a Pastoral team in planning and leading in worship, discipleship in fulfilling the Great Commission,
- Provide effective direction and oversight of the administrative and volunteer ministry teams of the congregation.

A Bachelor's degree in a Christian ministry field is highly desired and consideration will be given to candidates with a combination of equivalent education and proven experience including at least five (5) years of proven experience as a Senior Pastor.

Additional information on MMBC may be found at our website, [www.mmbconline.org](http://www.mmbconline.org). If you feel the Holy Spirit prompting you to consider this ministry opportunity, additional information may be obtain at the following link: [www.mmbconline.org/learn/employment/](http://www.mmbconline.org/learn/employment/)

Search Team Contact:  
Audie (Russ) Bates  
Personal Phone: (419) 340-3132

Resumes may be emailed to [searchteam@mmbconline.org](mailto:searchteam@mmbconline.org) or mailed to:

Senior Pastor Search Committee  
Monroe Missionary Baptist Church  
14260 South Dixie Highway  
Monroe, Michigan 48161

**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](mailto: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**

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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com)

## AROUND THE STATE

### 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!

### 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](mailto:pastor@eastsidecommunitychurch.com).

## 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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