

## COLUMNS

### **Change Is In The Air**

By Tim Patterson

The month of November always brings with it a change in atmosphere in many ways. I remember well when we lived in Florida how the temperatures would drop with the onset of those Northern fronts sweeping down from Canada, and on occasion some of that frigid air would actually make it to the Peninsular State. We could actually experience temperatures in the sixties! Amazing. It was always a welcome change for dryer air to invade our regions, and push some of that humidity back out to sea. The hunters especially love the change because it will bring “Bambi” out into the open when even the best of scent attractors fail.

I have discovered here in Michigan that November also brings a change in atmosphere in the midst of the people who inhabit this area. I’m not sure what truly precipitates the change, but I have noticed that we seem to move into a slower, more lethargic mode coming out of the summer months. Things are more relaxed, and not as fast paced. Apple orchards and cider mills beckon us to come and stroll through the rows of fruit and consume inordinate amounts of donuts. Turning and falling leaves demand our attention to take in the changes, and soak up the colors. It could be some internal instinct being triggered that is preparing us for the big freeze and the soon to be present Christmas season, with it’s maddening rush to celebrate. Once that season officially begins the day after Thanksgiving, this short season of rest will be long gone.

Whatever the reason for the slowing down, I greatly enjoy it, and highly value the season for the opportunity to quietly review the blessings of my life and the goodness that God has sent my way. The cool calmness of November affords me time for perspective and provokes me to a spirit of thankfulness. It helps me to be thankful for the opportunity to share the Gospel with a world that is lost without Him. It helps me to be thankful for a country in which the freedom of worship and the right to freely express that worship is unimpeded by the laws of man. It helps me be thankful for my immediate family and the extended one called Michigan Baptists with which I am blessed to be part. It helps me to live a life of thanksgiving.

As you know, this month we will officially celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday as a nation. It is interesting to note that it wasn’t until we were at war, the Civil War to be exact, that Congress officially recognized our Thanksgiving holiday. It had started in the small Plymouth Colony in 1621 when the English Pilgrims feasted with members of the Wampanoag Indians who brought gifts of food as a gesture of goodwill. The custom grew in various colonies as a means of celebrating the harvest.

In 1777, over 100 years later, the Continental Congress proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving after the American Revolution victory at the Battle of Saratoga. But it was twelve years later that George Washington proclaimed another national day of thanksgiving in honor of the ratification of the Constitution, and requested that the

Congress finally make it an annual event. They declined and it would be another 100 years and the end of a bloody civil war before President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November Thanksgiving. The year was 1865. It might surprise you to learn that it took still another 40 years, the early 1900's, before the tradition really caught on. For you see, Lincoln's official Thanksgiving was sanctioned in order to bolster the Union's morale. Many Southerners saw the new holiday as an attempt to impose Northern customs on their conquered land. It is apparent that deep wounds do not heal quickly, but none the less Thanksgiving is now nationally recognized.

The fact is, we do not need a national holiday to tell us to be thankful. Thanksgiving should be the natural outflow of the heart of a people who know "from whom all blessings flow." I am glad that our forefathers understood the importance of a nation acknowledging God as its source and supply. God does not need our thanks, but we need to be thankful.

Just as the climatological atmosphere of the Fall permeates and affects our surroundings and attitudes, I pray that the atmosphere of our lives be one of Thanksgiving and that it has a marked affect on everything about us. It is also my prayer that we maintain this atmosphere all year long.

May this November be a wonderful month of transition for you, and may it be filled with Thanksgiving.

### **Thankful for Our Associations**

By Tony Lynn

Moscow made me stop and take a picture. Not that Moscow. I am talking about Moscow, Michigan on a rainy, windy Sunday in October. The colorful wet leaves dropped from the trees as I waited for my camera to focus.

The building in the picture is what remains of the former Moscow Plains Methodist Church that was erected in 1852. The typical church cemetery is at the rear of the building. Old headstones, smooth and aged laid in the same yard as the 2012 plot for Dick Herman, Jr. of Monroe, MI. Dick attended Michigan State University Farmer's Short Course, but was a big rig instructor and driver most of his adult life before passing away. At least, that is what Dick's obituary reported. It is easy to see that the site meant something to people from the past, and it still means something to families today. The former church is surrounded by farmland. One quiet, lonely looking white house with bright-green trim across the road, was the stage for the sale of a faded, dark colored SUV.

I walked the yard before I entered the store. The yellow, burgundy, and white sign for the "Moscow Trading Post" was accurate. There were antiques and vintage items everywhere. Vanes from a modest-sized farm windmill caught my eye but at \$75 I kept on walking. Rain was falling and the wind was starting to pick up.

I walked the long access ramp, slippery from the morning rain and the wet, orphaned leaves lying on the boards. Inside, I found Terry and Brenda Kittle who own and run the place. They purchased the building during the summer of 2016. Terry has dark, short hair and a day's growth on his face. He wears a flannel shirt comfortably and his kind spirit is amplified by his invitation, "Come on in. There's coffee on. Looking for anything in particular?" Terry motioned me toward the single-cup coffee maker. Terry's wife stood to his side. Brenda was quiet and seemed shy but she had a warm, little smile.

A young couple arrived at the same time I did. Dressed casually, they talked aloud to one another about the delicious brunch they had eaten in Jonesville. All of us in the small warm building heard about their morning over the creaking wooden floor beneath our feet. The pair walked quickly from one aisle, in the former church, to another discussing whether or not that object or another would go well on the wall between the entryway and living room of their home. They made their rounds, to the upstairs balcony, the basement, and then returned to the main floor with a purchase in hand. The husband was certain it would fit measuring it again with the tape measure that had been repeatedly placed and withdrawn from his pant's pocket during the shopping spree.

On that particular Sunday morning when I happened upon the Moscow Trading Post, I had already spent the morning with Hillsdale Baptist Church and Pastor Daniel Pann for Missions Sunday. I spoke twice. I enjoyed a fellowship meal and I visited with members until a dozen of us remained in the fellowship hall. I started my drive back home to Brighton. I had both hands on the steering wheel since the 40-mile per hour gusts were punching my pickup back and forth. I drove in silence and left the radio off. I thought to myself, "This has been an enjoyable week: South Central Association in Hastings to the southwest, the Upper Peninsula Association in Newberry in the north, and Hillsdale to the south. All within four days. I love the people, and I love their dedication."

As I maneuvered the entrance to I-94 East after leaving the rural roads of Hillsdale and Spring Arbor behind me, the Moscow Trading Post came to my mind again, "How should I feel about a former 1852 church building being turned into a store?" Pragmatic in nature like I am I stopped thinking about whether or not I liked a church becoming an antique store. I consoled myself with the thought, "Perhaps the congregation grew so large that they moved to a larger lot or near more homes in the community."

More importantly, my mind turned toward the fellowship I had enjoyed, all week long in Baptist associations and with Hillsdale Baptist. Specifically, I was grateful that the churches with whom I spent time are striving to find ways to impact their local areas, independently and corporately as associations. I expressed to the Lord, during my drive, how thankful I was for Baptist Associations and churches like Hillsdale that are engaged with local, state, national, and international ministries.

I thought to myself as I drove past Jackson, "Change is out of our control!" Buildings are going to outlive their usefulness. Churches will move from one location to another. Communities that surround churches are going to change. There is little to nothing we can do about that; but I do hope that we will always address those changes together.

Effective Baptist Associations bring people together. Congregations that unite for certain events and causes can achieve more by working together than they can apart. Social and moral causes can be addressed. Prayer gatherings can overcome obstacles with God's movement. Daring and discouraged Christians can share their seasons of effectiveness and setbacks. The unsaved in a community will listen to the Gospel more often if local congregations and their membership are living out holy lives in the community. Fellowship reminds every church member and every church that they are not alone in their undertaking to change the world for Christ. That is why this November, during Thanksgiving, I am taking time to express my gratitude for Baptist Associations.

I am also grateful for a popular book by Will Mancini entitled, *God Dreams*, in which he writes, "Think about it: God's doesn't stand in heaven with a photocopy machine every time a local church is started. Your church was born an original; don't let it become a carbon copy on your watch."

I believe that the better churches and the better associations discover what it is that they do well and lean into that unique quality that makes them better. During this holiday season and into 2018, I hope you will explore your local association and discover the strength that comes from uniting together over the local area for specific missions that you and other churches are uniquely equipped to handle. If you need help understanding who in your area is part of the local Baptist Association call us at (810) 714-1907. We can direct you.

By the way, you might be interested in the couple's purchase. They found their treasure! The store owners and I knew it the moment the search was over. The couple's foot-stomps suddenly stopped. In the quiet we heard the wife gush in a reverent whisper, "Honey, can you pull that third door out from the stack leaning against the wall? I love the old panels of glass in the door. Look at how that old paint is curled up in spots over the bottom panels. You can see years of color on that door. I love it!"

I must confess, I moved to a position in the store so that I could see the expression on the husband's face. I raised an old metal toy, crusted with rust, to eye level so I could spy on the couple. I wanted to see if the man was as happy as his wife sounded. It appeared so. The man noted the absence of the door handle, none the less, he was careful not to break off the layers of curled paint as he moved the precious door from the wall, to Terry Kittle, and finally to a soft blanket in the back of his pick-up.

Reflecting later on, still miles from home and with the sound of my wiper-blades warning me the rain was letting-up with the squeak of rubber against dry glass, I rolled the switch and turned off the wipers. I thought, "That couple's emotions, at the store, resembled what I've sometimes heard when young couples realize they found the right church." Oh, that God would let us hear something like that throughout the churches in Michigan a thousand times this next year, "Oh honey, I love it! We found what we've been looking for."

**Mi moment**

By Mike Durbin

FENTON, MI - I am looking forward to our time together at the annual meeting of the Convention of Michigan November 7-8 at Middlebelt Baptist Church. We are launching an evangelism strategy called "Mi Moment." It is all about believers sharing life's greatest moment. We use Mi because it refers to Michigan Baptist believers sharing their moment of trusting Christ. "Mi Moment" equips followers of Jesus to talk naturally about their faith using three simple tools:

**One Story:** People share stories everyday about what is happening in their lives all over Michigan. Some are about great moments of celebration. Others are about brokenness and tragedy. As people share the many moments in their lives, we have an opening as believers to share our greatest moment - the moment we trusted in Christ as our Lord and the difference He makes in our lives. Since it's our story, we are the experts. We can speak with confidence, authority, and assurance knowing that God is pleased when we talk about Him. We can also know that God is at work in the life of the person to whom we are talking, and He brings people into our path with whom we are uniquely wired to connect.

**One Verse:** MI-Moment uses one verse from the Bible to share the Gospel. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). This verse is easy to remember and helps us share the Gospel message. Wages, sin, and death paint a dramatically different picture than gift, God, and eternal life. The difference between living in one reality or the other is Jesus Christ and our relationship to Him. It's a vivid contrast, and only Jesus can move us from the one reality to the other as we commit our lives to Him as our Savior and Lord.

**One Illustration:** Michigan is known for its two peninsulas, and the Mackinaw Bridge that unites them. The peninsulas are completely separated from each other by two of the largest lakes in the world. It's impossible to go from the Lower to the Upper Peninsula by land from anywhere inside the state. It takes the five mile long Mackinac Bridge to unite them. This unique Michigan reality can be used as a powerful illustration to show Jesus is the bridge between man and God.

Look for more information about this exciting resource at our annual meeting. We will be sharing the presentation, the learning materials, and encouraging one another to share their mi-moment with the people in their lives.

## The Language of Thanksgiving

By Mick Schatz

FENTON, MI - Next to Christmas, Thanksgiving is my favorite time of year. Even though it involves a couple of my favorite things - food and family - I most enjoy the pause of life at Thanksgiving. I enjoy the emphasis of being thankful for how God has blessed us. Thankfulness for Salvation, grace, forgiveness, family, food, job and numerous other blessings. It serves as a reminder that each day we should live with an attitude of thankfulness and learn to speak the Language of Thanksgiving.

Scripture is plentiful with its exhortations to be thankful or give thanks.

Psalm 106:1 "Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever".

Psalm 95:2-3 "Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods."

Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Just from this very small sample of scriptures we can read how God listens, and is moved by our thankfulness. As a dad with three children, I get it. There is nothing that melts my heart faster than hearing "Thanks Dad" from a grateful heart. I will move heaven and earth to please a thankful attitude. So if I'm geared that way, how much more is our Heavenly Father moved by our thankfulness! It's all about the heart. The only way we can speak the Language of Thanksgiving is with a humble heart. A heart overwhelmed by the love of God, the goodness of God, the grace of God. You see, when my children express "thankfulness" to me, it's a window into their soul. It lets me see a heart filled with love and selflessness, not pride and selfishness. That makes a dad happy! How pleased our Heavenly Father must be to see reflections of Himself in us.

Since "Thankfulness" is a condition of the heart it does not have to be affected by our circumstances. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 tells us, "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." I have to admit, personally this can be difficult. When life throws me a curve ball my first reaction is not always "thank-you Jesus". It's more like "are you kidding me?". My pride likes to be in control. However, when I deny my pride and let the Lordship of Christ reign in my heart, I can express thankfulness for His grace and provision in my life. I can be thankful knowing He has my back, always. I can be thankful and rest in Him. When I'm resting in Him I'm not panicking about me. This makes me a better person. This makes my life more about Him than about me. This allows me to encounter the world around me with the "Language of Thanksgiving".

Happy Thanksgiving!

## STARTING

### **Connected to the family**

by Kevin Ezell

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) -- When I met Dan Coleman a few years ago, he was a church planter with a vision for reaching the state of Maine for Jesus but he didn't have a lot of resources. Maine can be a lonely place for a church planter. There are only a handful of Southern Baptist churches, encompassing fewer than 1 percent of the population. Across Maine, only 22 percent of the population attend a church of any kind on a weekly basis.

Still, God was working through Dan's church plant, and Kennebec Community Church in Augusta had grown to 200. In fact, they had outgrown their meeting space. A church building across town was for sale but the \$1 million price tag was impossible for a church of Kennebec Community's size.

Because of Southern Baptists' resources sent to the North American Mission Board through the Cooperative Program and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, NAMB is able to give loans to church plants like Dan's. Most commercial lenders would not touch a church plant but our in-house property buyer was able to negotiate the \$1 million price down to \$400,000 and we were able to provide the loan.

Overnight, Kennebec Community Church went from a building with a capacity of 75 people to one that holds 500. The church now averages 1,100 in weekend services. This story is only possible because Dan is connected to the greater SBC family. I see the difference it makes every single day. Because of that connection, Dan is not alone. Now, his church is training several church planting interns who will soon be planting churches in the Northeast.

This kind of a network means the world to our church planters and missionaries. Yes, they need financial resources, but even more importantly, they need prayer and to know they are not forgotten. I hope you will take a moment and visit [PrayForPlanters.com](http://PrayForPlanters.com). We will connect you with a missionary for whom you can pray. It's a simple, easy way you can start having an impact right now in pushing back lostness across North America.

Kevin Ezell is president of the North American Mission Board.

## STRENGTHENING

### **500 YEARS: The Reformation & Baptist life**

by David S. Dockery

DEERFIELD, Ill. (BP) -- The Lord blessed me with the wonderful privilege of growing up in a Christian home -- a faithful, Baptist home. Sundays included Sunday School, church services, afternoon choir practice as well as Bible Drill, Discipleship Training and Sunday evening after-church fellowship. It was generally a very busy day. Wednesdays included church suppers, prayer meetings, mission organizations, committee meetings and choir practice.

During the week there were opportunities for outreach visitation, WMU and other activities. Summer calendars were built around Vacation Bible School, church camps and other church-related events. My family planned weeks and seasons around church activities. Our heroes were Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Bill Wallace of China.

But apart from a world history course as a high school student, I do not recall ever hearing stories about the Reformation, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin or other early 16th-century Protestant leaders in any church-related activity.

My guess is that my experience parallels that of many other Baptists. Why, then, should Baptists pay attention to the many events and programs taking place this year to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation for we are not Lutherans nor Anglicans nor Presbyterians. Yet, whether we realize it or not, many of our core convictions as Baptists have been influenced or shaped by those 16th-century thinkers.

What was the Reformation?

Many people across Germany and Switzerland over a period of several decades contributed to the wide-ranging movement of theological and spiritual renewal in 16th-century Europe known as the Reformation. But the most visible event according to tradition took place on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther (1483-1546), a monk and university professor, nailed 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther was concerned with papal abuses and the selling of indulgences in the Roman Catholic Church, along with what he considered to be faulty understandings of justification by faith, biblical authority and other important doctrinal matters.

Philipp Melancthon, one of Luther's colleagues who knew him as well as anyone, called Luther the Elijah of Protestantism and compared his influence to that of the apostle Paul in the first century. Luther roused the church from her slumber, reopened the fountain of God's Holy Word for many people and was responsible for directing a generation to know Jesus Christ as their Lord. When one thinks of the Reformation period, one reflects on the titanic force of Luther, the good sense and preaching ministry of Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) in Zurich, Switzerland, as well as the biblical exposition and theological articulations of John Calvin (1509-64) in Geneva. Among these three important leaders

of the Reformation, there is general agreement that the one with the greatest influence was Martin Luther.

### **What have Baptists inherited from the Reformers?**

For many people who grew up in a home or church with experiences similar to mine, we somehow had a sense that our parents, grandparents and pastors had received an understanding of the Christian faith as if it had come directly to them from the first-century apostles. We were naively unaware of what went on in between then and now. By and large, Baptists do not know very well our heritage, our history or our theological identity. The reality is that while we are "a people of the Book," shaped, formed and informed by Holy Scripture, we also have the privilege of standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us who stood on the shoulders of others.

Such a debt to those who have gone before us was recognized by seventeenth-century Baptists who, in the Orthodox Confession of 1678, acknowledged that they stood with and affirmed with all Christians everywhere the teachings of the Nicene Confession, a fourth-century document that clearly maintained a commitment to the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ as well as Trinitarian orthodoxy. Francis Wayland, a most significant Baptist leader in the 19th century, wrote these words in "The Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches" (1861):

"I do not believe that any denomination of Christians exists, which, for so long a period as Baptists, has maintained so invariably the truth of their early confession.... The theological tenets of the Baptists, both in England and America, may be briefly stated as follows: they are emphatically the doctrines of the Reformation, and they have been held with singular unanimity and consistency."

While most of us have not been directly influenced by the Reformers, our Baptist heritage and beliefs have been informed by the teaching of the Reformers as we will see in part two of our series.

David S. Dockery is president of Trinity International University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. This article first appeared in the Illinois Baptist, newsjournal of the Illinois Baptist State Association. Dockery, the author or editor of more than 30 books, is the former president of the Tennessee Baptist-affiliated Union University and former chief academic officer and professor of theology and New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

## **A Season of Thankfulness**

By David Whitaker

Houghton - There's nothing greater than times of reflection. Times where you can stop the pace of life for a moment! I am the Pastor of a young and growing church in Houghton. My wife and I have been a part of this church over fourteen years and on staff nine years.

With every thought of thankfulness, there's a thought of triumph. Times where we have overcome great difficulty, times where we pushed passed the noise of life and ministry and times where we stayed the course regardless of what's been thrown at us. There's a great misconception in the church today about the lives of their leaders, and it's this, that the Pastor and his wife virtually suffer very little. It's actually quite the opposite. In fact, most leaders suffer quite a bit. It's God's way of refining us and preparing us.

This idea of thankfulness never reveals itself unless there's been problems, different life struggles, hurdles to overcome. This last year, our family has endured many trials, many obstacles. Our oldest son, Caden wrestled with a rare blood disease most of last summer and fall. He spent over a month in the hospital dealing with treatments, six months of being very ill. Not to mention, I have wrestled with my own illness for the last sixteen months, putting me in the hospital multiple times for multiple surgeries. Meanwhile, our church was building a large addition to house 100 more on Sunday mornings. It's been quite the year.

We never stopped! We never looked back. We kept going forward.

The valleys teach us a spirit of thankfulness. The hardships and times of great trials and suffering teach us to be thankful for times of peace and times of growth. The darkness teaches us to appreciate the light. This time last year with our son was still very sick, and me ill, not to mention, we just completed the building project, we were unsure what God was going to do.

Today, I am thankful that the Good Shepherd not only took care of my son, but he healed my son. I am thankful that the Great I Am, not only encouraged me through the valley, but He's led me out of the valley. I am thankful that God used this season to grow us and grow our church. We averaged 109 a year ago and now we are averaging 145 each Sunday. Sometimes, 150 plus. Only God does stuff like that. We've led 6 to Christ this summer, and have baptized 25 new converts this year.

Despite the seasons of darkness, God gives us seasons of thankfulness. Our story is not unique. We all go through such things, and come through stronger and more thankful than where we started. But we must look to God through both seasons. Ephesians 3:20 says "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us."

Pastor David A. Whitaker, wife Gillian. Children, Caden, (9) Riann (7) and Kiptyn. (3)  
We've been married 11 years and have served on staff at Houghton Baptist Church for

the last 9 years. God has called us to reach as many for Christ as humanly possible. We have much work to do!

## **Failure Breeds Thanksgiving**

By Ian Minielly

BESSEMER, MI - A Bible passage that is easy to miss because of the cataclysmic events surrounding it, is one we would be wise to remember for the abundant hope it gives to the repentant. In Luke 22: 31-38 we read in the English Standard Version that Satan demanded to have Peter so he might sift him like wheat and that Jesus has prayed for Peter that his faith may not fail.

This is a scary thing. Who among us simple Christians can hope to withstand the provocations of Satan, which not even Peter could manage after being directly discipled and prayed for by Jesus. If Peter is going to bungle his response to Satan's sifting, what are we normal folk going to do when facing similar pressure?

The use of "demand" in the ESV is much more challenging to our sense of faith than the use of "asking" or "desired" in other commonly used translations. If we reference our Greek, which is not my "strong" suit, pun intended, we see the Greek is *eksaitéomai* or "totally hand over" with a corresponding Strong's Greek # of 1809, and that this word only occurs in Luke 22: 31. Being the sole place with this verb, we would do well to understand the strength behind Satan's intention to remove Peter from the security of Jesus protection, and bring him into a state of condemnation and loss. Peter, unbeknownst to him, is going to be the site of another cosmic battle between the goodness of God and the wickedness of the devil.

This is not a good place to be for Peter, and as the disciples frequently did, he totally missed the urgency and strength of Jesus' warning. Peter tells Jesus that he is ready to go to prison and even die with him. Peter makes a very bold proclamation of his faith and love of Jesus, and provides us evidence he failed to hear the warning in Jesus words as he did so. Jesus responds by telling Peter he will deny him three times today, affirming the falling, and that it is not the end of the story for Peter or Jesus.

What is easy to miss in this exchange, and I missed it every time I read this story until preparing to preach this text to Catalyst Baptist Church, is the hope Jesus truly offered Peter. First off, Jesus prayed for Peter's faith, knowing full well he was going to stumble and sin. Secondly, Jesus prayed for his faith in an intercessory manner that when Peter repented of his sin and turned back towards God, Peter would use his experience to strengthen the brothers. God really can get good out of bad and be glorified in the process. Now this is something we can and should all be thankful for.

In our failures and repentance, Jesus still provides the promise of forgiveness and even more, that our failures can be used to actually strengthen others, and lift them up as they face their own sifting by the Devil. Our failures can breed hope and thanksgiving in ourselves and lift others because of the glory and faithfulness of God as it says in 2

Corinthians 4:15, "For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God."

Ian Minielly, pastor of Catalyst Baptist Church, where I am finding joy again in fostering a drug-exposed bundle of joy with my wife Stephanie the past ten months. Answering God's call to minister and love an orphan, which God our Father accepts as pure and selfless worship is one of the greatest joys of our marriage and Christian walk, now if we can just keep ourselves unstained in the world.

### **Give thanks to the LORD**

By Jerome Taylor

BURTON, MI - When I was a small child, my grandmother would place me by her side on a bench in front of her old, dark wood stained piano. She would open up the little black and gold hymnal, and start singing "This Is The Day" and have my cherub-like voice (kidding) to sing along. That song still resonates in the corners of my mind every so often. It reminds me of precious moments with my grandmother of course, but it also reminds of something greater (which I think is the lesson Mamaw was trying to teach me). That we should, as Psalm 118 declares, "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His faithful love endures forever." And that we should be reminded each and every day God has granted us is a gift of His marvelous grace. We indeed can be glad in them.

As I look back over this last year, serving as your president of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM), I can't help but be grateful and glad in the days that God has given us. I am thankful and I believe thankfulness is best expressed in "thank you".

Thank you LORD for giving us days filled with love, care, and sacrifice from families that share their time to serve in Kingdom Work. Without their willingness to set aside these days the movement, that I believe has launched in this state, could have scarcely begun. We can never fully count the man-hours that have been yielded by volunteers from the churches in Michigan, and in our cooperative partnership with the BSCM. When I think upon this, I am indeed amazed, glad, and can't help but say thank you.

Thank You God for rekindling the hearts of our churches in evangelism. The Gospel is the gracious gift of our glorious God. It is the good news of Jesus that gives us hope in these days and the promise of better days. But of course, as Carl F.H. Henry once aptly stated, "The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time." We must be about the business of getting the greatest news of all time to people in their time of need and to tell them of the time to come. We are here for such a time as this.

Indeed, this year, the rekindled flame of evangelism has been fanned. From training workshops to conferences, from renewed emphasis in churches to hosting harvest evangelists, from new church plants to mobilizing established churches with innovative strategies... It is a new day in Michigan. It is a day that declares we will not go quietly into that long dark night, but we will strive for that greatest of days. Indeed, this deserves gladness and the sincerest of thank yous.

As your president this year, I have seen where we have been in past years. I see where we are now, building upon the great foundations of yesterday with what is needed for today. And all of this is so that we may look ahead and serve well in the days our gracious Lord continues to give. We want to be faithful as we move forward, but let us not forget to be thankful.

Share your thanks to the Lord and to those he has placed around you, and do it today. For it is a day the Lord has made, let us rejoice within it.

About the author: Jerome Taylor is the pastor of Eastgate Baptist Church in Burton, Michigan. He was elected to serve as president of the BSCM in 2017.

### **Leading Your Child toward Authentic Faith**

by Jimmy Scroggins

WEST PALM BEACH, FL - The responsibility facing parents is overwhelming. Not only are they to raise their children to function effectively in the world, but, more importantly, they are given the task of training them to love God and others. This work is intimidating for many parents who then abdicate their role as spiritual leaders. In this Ebook, Jimmy Scroggins provides a challenge and model for parents seeking to build authentic faith in the lives of those precious children God has entrusted to their care.

A better understanding of salvation, knowing what the Bible teaches concerning your children, and your role as a parent will give you biblically-centered confidence.

The evidences of salvation can seem overwhelming to Christian parents. Some parents might find it easier to take their child to see a pastor as simple remedy, but this option shouldn't be the default.

Eternity is written into the heart of our children. This is why Jesus said, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

A list of PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS that will offer comfortable ways of engaging your son or daughter, enlisting a good family example and drawing upon prayer as you lead in your home.

You can have, free of charge, this valuable ebook, provided by the North American Mission Board, SBC. Just click the link below and follow the instructions.

Link for download via NAMB.net

[Ebook: DOWNLOAD "Leading Your Child Toward Authentic Faith"](#)

About the author: Jimmy Scroggins become a Christian at age six, and his desire was to live his life for Jesus. Intending to pursue a military career he accepted an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Shortly thereafter, a bout with

cancer resulted in a change of course and ultimately a sense of God's calling to preach. He married his wife Kristin in 1994 and they are the proud parents of eight children. Jimmy has a degree in Economics, Masters of Divinity and Doctor of Philosophy. Before accepting the role of pastor in West Palm Beach, FL, he served both as a Dean/Professor of Youth Ministry and Evangelism at Boyce College while serving as Teaching Pastor at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, KY.

## **What's Your Identity?**

By Char Parker

LANSING, MI - When I became a Pastor's wife, there was quite a change that took place. I noticed that most "people" started referring to me as "Pastor Stan's wife." In fact, when they see me on the street they often ask, are you "Pastor Stan's wife?" I went to Kroger's the other day, and a lady came up to me and said, "You are "Pastor Stan's wife," right? Now, I really wanted to say, if you know my name, I will give you \$20, \$30, going once, going twice ☺ ....but she may not have seen the "humor" in my statement.

You have probably guessed by now, I really lost my "identity" that is, no one seems to know my name. Yes, "Identity Theft" has taken place. I have often been "identified" by my relationship to the Pastor. Secondly, it is quite interesting "how" a person responds when they come into contact with a Pastor, when he is with his wife. I have noticed that most of the time, it seems as if they only "see" the Pastor and he is eagerly greeted with smiles, hugs, etc. It appears that there is "tunnel vision." I often have to say, "Hi, how are you?" and then I may receive "recognition" but, not too many hugs. In addition, there is another example of "identity theft." The Pastor's wife, the "unidentified one" is sometimes referred to as the "First Lady" and I have asked "where is that "title" in scripture"? Again, another term given to the Pastor's Wife by the "people." If there is a First Lady, who is the Second Lady, or the Third Lady?

This is a "call" to the Pastor's Wives. Do you know "Who" you are? I hope you know "Whose" you are. Just a reminder, we have "Identity" in Christ. The Bible teaches that In Christ, There is now, no condemnation for me (Romans 8:1), I can never be separated from God's love (Romans 8:38, 39), I am a new Creation (II Corinthians 5:17). I was chosen (Ephesians 1:11), I have received God's Grace (Ephesians 2:7), and God knows "My Identity", because He made me in His Image and He made me beautifully and wonderfully. As a Pastor's Wife, I must know that God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, and that "whosoever" believeth in Him, shall not perish but, shall have everlasting life. St John 3:16... and I know that God Loves Me. Therefore, I Love God, and must love His "people." May everything that God has made, remind us of His goodness, love and care. God's Love is true. God is expanding opportunities for me to love more, to increase and to abound in His Love.

As a result, as a Pastor's Wife, I must show love and care for others, as I "identify" with Christ. I know I have been chosen to continue in His Love. By this, shall all know that we are His Disciples, indeed.

Sis Char Parker is a graduate of Mich. State Univ.(MSU). She is the First Lady of Faith Fellowship BC , Lansing, MI, where her husband, Dr Stan Parker has been the Senior Pastor for 18 yrs. . She has been the Keynote Speaker at Women's Conferences, and Missionary Programs. Sis Parker is also the loving Mother of four Adult children, five Grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

### **Would Jesus go to a football game?**

by Eric W. Ramsey

FORT SMITH, Ark. (BP) -- This fall, like every other fall, the most densely populated pieces of real estate in many cities and towns are high school football stadiums on Friday night. The cheers, the band, the clashing of helmets and shoulder pads and the voice of the announcer ring through the cool night air, creating an electrifying atmosphere. It is one of the significant places where "life happens," fostering lifelong memories and relationships.

When Jesus walked this earth, He intentionally spent time in the places where "life happens." Water wells, markets, outer temple courts, seashores and even wedding celebrations.

Jesus spent time among the masses. And within those masses were families and individuals with whom He interacted and even shared meals. He expressed love and kindness to both the young and the elderly, to the rich and the poor, to the simple and the educated, and to the socially prominent and the outcast.

As believers, we are commanded to be "salt and light" and to be witnesses and make disciples. This requires that believers be with people who need Christ. The easiest way to do this is the way Jesus did -- intentionally being among others and sharing life with them.

In your town, is there a better place to do this than at a football game? If there's a better place, go there. But if not, go to some high school football games. Meet people, foster relationships and be where "life happens." And when you go to games, don't just sit with your church friends. Make an effort to go out of your way to meet people, learn their names, understand family connections and share life together.

Would Jesus go to a high school football game? It's a hypothetical question, but I believe He desires to be there now. As believers, we should intentionally take Christ and "be Christ" in our culture. And in many communities, a big part of our culture is high school football.

Go team!

Eric W. Ramsey is an evangelism and mission strategist serving as associate pastor of First Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Ark. He is a former president of the Conference of

Southern Baptist Evangelists. This column first appeared in the Arkansas Baptist News ([www.arkansasbaptist.org/news](http://www.arkansasbaptist.org/news)), newsjournal of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

## SENDING

### **Chaplain's Sacred Moments: Perfect Pain**

By Bob Dennis

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – I received a call that Mrs. K was in the hospital with an infected knee from her second knee surgery. It was reported that she was going to need her third surgery, was in a lot of pain and emotional distress, and needed a chaplain visit desperately. She was a “well seasoned” Christian and worshipped every Sunday, but pain and the anxiety of possibly losing her leg caused depression to overtake her.

As I entered her hospital room the tears in her eyes instantly told me she was in bad physical pain and spiritual distress. She was at the top of her pain cycle, and was not quite due for her pain medication for another half hour. As a chaplain, one of the most wonderful moments of my ministry was to see the face of Mrs. K. change from despair to hope. In chaplain training we talk about the ministry of presence, and it is just training until you see how much power is present when you represent the presence of God.

When I reached out my hand to her it was a moment indescribable and meaningful. My hand was that of the Undershepherd of Jesus. It was a feeling of humility and a sense of unworthiness, yet a moment that I would not trade for any other. The emotional impact caused me to grasp for words, and I said “I heard that you were just about perfect.” She said “how can that be?” She thought I had lost my bearings or my “elevator was not going to the top floor.” I read from my Bible (ESV) in James Chapter 1:2-4,

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” Through all the pain she realized she was just about perfect in her faith and steadfastness. She eventually lost the leg after the third surgery but became even stronger in her faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

As a chaplain at the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, I see our precious brothers and sisters fight the same battle of pain every day. As their chaplain pastor I preach messages and lead Bible Studies making every effort to not only equip them to witness for Jesus, but to be prepared when the testing of their faith hits hard. I minister to the members of our Home, and when “Perfect Pain” comes their way they minister to me with spiritual strength that is amazing. What a blessing it is to be an Undershepherd Chaplain for Jesus.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have been called by God to be a chaplain or to be of support to our chaplains in prayer please feel free to contact me at ( [bdennis@bscm.org](mailto:bdennis@bscm.org) ). You can also see more information on our BSCM website at [bscm.org](http://bscm.org) and look under "SEND" to find the Chaplaincy page.

### **With a heart for missions**

By Margaret Marcus

FLINT, MI - Involvement in missions has always been close to my heart. At an early age I went with my mother to her missions meetings, watching and helping the ladies do overseas mission projects. I wasn't Southern Baptist at the time, so we did things a little different, but still my appetite for missions was stimulated.

When my daughters were little, I homeschooled them, and the curriculum I used for them was highly permeated with missions. My youngest daughter, who was about 5 at the time, got to listen to a story from a different country each week. We would find the country on the map and put a sticker on it. We would do various activities to learn about that country, and we would also pray for the different countries each week. Her favorite stories were about Asia. At about that time we started hosting international exchange students. We hosted four girls through the years. One of our exchange students was from Japan, and our daughter ended up being an exchange student herself for a summer in Japan. Growing up the girls were also in Mission Friends, and in Girls in Action (GA). It was in GA's that our youngest daughter learned how to eat with chopsticks and she loved it. I could never get the hang of it myself, but she mastered it.

Needless to say I was not very surprised when she felt the call to missions herself, and of course, it had to be Asia. Many people ask me how I could let her go away from home for twelve months. They would ask, "Are you worried about her?" or "I bet you really miss her." Truthfully, I knew she belonged to God, and He was much better at protecting her than I was. The Bible says that children are arrows, and arrows are to be taken out of the quiver and shot, not remain in the quiver. I've always felt we were raising our children to serve the Lord. Through the years we've tried to involve them in our ministry, as much as possible. God has been very gracious to us and we have been allowed to see all four of our children serving the Lord in some way, with our youngest passionate about international missions.

That same daughter is now married and she and her husband both feel God wants them back on the mission field in East Asia, so international missions will become even more of a beacon in our family. For this reason I have left out her name on purpose. We will experience something new though, as we have never had grandchildren in another country before. We will have to learn how to use social media better in order to keep a close relationship with them. We will also, Lord willing, be able to experience missions in a new country since I'm sure we will be going to visit them and see their work.

About the author: Margaret Marcus and her husband, Jim, serve together in the Genesee County area. Jim is the DOM of Genesee Baptist Association. They also serve as Pastor and wife of First Baptist Church of Clio. Margaret leads "The Connection," a

group for pastor's wives in the Genesee Association who meet together regularly. She has also served as a trustee for the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for the past 8 years.

## **SBC NEWS**

### **Patterson-Humphreys atonement debate remembered**

by David Roach

NASHVILLE (BP) -- A 1987 debate on Christ's atonement between Paige Patterson and then-New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary theology professor Fisher Humphreys may have had "greater significance" in the Southern Baptist Convention's Conservative Resurgence than some have thought. That's the conclusion of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary provost Jason Duesing, who has published an essay to commemorate the debate's 30th anniversary in the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*.

Theological conservatives "had things well in hand" by 1987 in their quest to gain control of the SBC's committees and trustee boards, Duesing writes. But the debate revealed a need for ongoing "theological examination in all of the Convention's agencies" to ensure theological orthodoxy prevailed on every point of doctrine.

Among topics at issue in the Oct. 19, 1987, debate hosted by New Orleans Seminary was whether Christ died as a substitute for sinners to bear the divine punishment they deserved -- a view known as "penal substitution." Some 300 students and faculty watched the three-hour debate, which stemmed from a longstanding discussion of the atonement in person and in print between Humphreys and Patterson, then president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas (now Criswell College).

Patterson, a leader within the Conservative Resurgence, argued penal substitution is "the ultimate model in the Bible" for understanding Christ's death, Baptist Press reported at the time, and the "one indispensable model" on which the Gospel depends. Humphreys, whom some viewed as among the SBC's moderate camp, said penal substitution was one of many biblical models for understanding Christ's death and not necessarily the most important. He spoke of the atonement in terms of "sacrifice," which he said does not always involve punishment.

Patterson, in reflecting back on the debate, told BP, "Dr. Fisher Humphreys is a great friend, a fine scholar and a formidable opponent for a debate. Even though I was a graduate of NOBTS, the faculty was in the camp of Dr. Humphreys and the students and other visitors were 90 percent in favor of their professor. "So, I remember being pretty uncomfortable going into the debate," Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in written comments. "Fisher chose to debate the subject of the atonement along philosophical and theological lines. I elected to turn the debate to exegetical considerations. That decision gave the advantage to me."

Humphreys, retired professor of divinity at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, told BP he proposed the debate because he "hoped that in a small way a debate might help to reduce the conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention by correcting mistaken ideas some people had acquired about my understanding of Jesus' saving work." "During the debate," Humphreys said in written comments, "it became clear that both Dr. Patterson and I believe that Christ's death and resurrection were historical events that really occurred in the first century; we both believe in the glorious Christian Gospel that Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead; and we both believe what the Bible teaches about the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection.

"Although some individuals were reassured by the debate, it unfortunately did little to reduce the broader conflict, so in my opinion it was a minor event in the life of the convention," Humphreys said. In 1987, Humphreys told Louisiana's Baptist Message newsjournal his differences with Patterson were minor and technical. The two agreed, he said, on "what Paul calls in 1 Corinthians the fundamental, the first and foremost things."

Duesing, a former vice president at Southwestern who served under Patterson, sees significance, however, in the points of disagreement. The "often overlooked" debate, Duesing writes, suggested faculty members at seminaries given a clean bill of health by the SBC's Peace Committee -- including New Orleans Seminary -- advocated some views "divergent" from the theology of rank and file Southern Baptists.

The Peace Committee was formed in 1985 and asked to determine causes of the SBC controversy. The committee's major report, issued three months before the Patterson-Humphreys debate, said the controversy was primarily theological. The committee noted theological problems among faculty at some other SBC seminaries, but not New Orleans.

As evidence for his view, Duesing cited Humphreys' contention that penal substitution seems unjust to some observers. "In a human law court," Humphreys said according to Duesing's transcription of the debate, "when Jones is the mass murderer, you don't let Smith die for him.... For some people, this creates a problem for them. They're saying, 'Would God be doing something that looks like it would be wrong if a human judge did it?'"

In the debate, Patterson claimed Old and New Testament believers alike understood sacrifices as the punishment of a person or animal in place of a sinner. "The penalty for sin is death," Patterson said. When Old Testament believers "put their hands on the head of that goat or that lamb ... and they confessed their sins on the head of that lamb, they understood that lamb, that goat was dying the death that they should die. And that they were going to be free from sin because that guilt had been transferred.

"Now ultimately that's exactly what John the Baptist does then when he points to Jesus and says, 'Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world,'" Patterson said. Both participants agreed, BP reported at the time, that the cross and resurrection were historical events, that Christ's death reconciled the world to God, that the Gospel must be believed and preached and that all biblical teaching on the cross is truthful. Still,

at the end of the debate, Patterson declined to sign a statement of agreement unless it also noted what he deemed to be significant points of disagreement.

Duesing claimed the debate "reveals a great deal not only about the views of the participants but also about the state of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1987." Patterson noted in hindsight, "I will forever be grateful to Humphreys for his investment in my life and for his proposal for this discussion and the written discussions that followed. With all of my heart, I love this fellow pilgrim and wish him the best for the future. I am also thankful for Jason Duesing's assessment of the debate. Most of all, I remain thankful for Jesus, who gave His life for us all."

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.

### **Send Relief 'pastor packs,' SBDR helps Puerto Rico**

by Brandon Elrod

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (BP) -- When people started showing up seeking food and water after Hurricane Maria, pastor Johnny Baez knew he couldn't just sit back and do nothing. "People around my church started asking me for water to drink and food to eat," said Baez, who serves at Iglesia Bautista Familia Santurce (Baptist Church of the Family Santurce) in San Juan, Puerto Rico. "So, I asked pastor friends for a water filter, and they let me use one. I asked another pastor for a gas stove and another pastor for a gas tank. Now we are cooking Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday."

Soon they started averaging between 110 and 115 people per meal. "Somebody asked me, 'Pastor, why'd you do that? How'd you do it?'" Baez said. "I did it because the need is there. The people are waiting for something, and the church has to respond because that's the church." While God provided for the needs in Baez's area by bringing together the tools and food necessary to start feeding the community, many pastors had the same heart and desired to do the same for their communities, but the resources were harder to come by.

On Oct. 8, an MD-80 aircraft was loaded with 50 pallets of Send Relief supplies -- enough to make 45 "pastor packs." Each pack includes a generator, a Coleman stove, a propane tank, a water purification system, a chainsaw and several other items designed to facilitate clean-up and recovery efforts. Another 45 pastor packs will arrive by air on Sunday (Oct. 22). Six containers of supplies are expected to arrive by sea this weekend as well. Once the pastor packs are distributed throughout the island, Puerto Rican churches will have more tools to serve and share the Gospel in their communities.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and Send Relief have also been coordinating to send volunteers to Puerto Rico. SBDR sent 80 trained volunteers who served two weeks, and Send Relief is accepting trained and untrained volunteer registrations at [sendrelief.net](http://sendrelief.net)

through Dec. 1 with expectations to extend through Dec. 31. "Churches and individuals have the opportunity to come alongside pastors like Johnny Baez," David Melber, president of Send Relief, said. "Southern Baptists can come alongside churches in Puerto Rico to help them reach their communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and see their area changed in the aftermath of a terrible disaster."

Kenton Hunt, disaster relief director for the Baptist Resource Network of Pennsylvania/South Jersey, served across the island with other SBDR volunteers from around the United States. They cleared debris and cleaned out flood-damaged homes. "Take the same passion that you have for reaching people at home, and bring it with you here," Hunt said to encourage SBDR volunteers who respond. "It's going to be an opportunity to spread the Gospel, to minister to people in Jesus' name. There's so much need here that's been identified."

### **Relief responses in California, Texas and Florida**

Sam Porter, the North America Mission Board's national director for disaster relief, landed in California on Wednesday (Oct. 18) along with Eddie Blackmon, NAMB's disaster response coordinator. Together, they visited Mike Bivins, the volunteer mobilization specialist in the California Southern Baptist Convention, to encourage and strengthen SBDR volunteers who will respond to wildfires.

Work also continues in Florida and Texas as SBDR and Send Relief teams provide help and hope in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Mud-out operations are moving forward in southeast Texas as teams start to move into long-term recovery mode.

For more information on how you can help, visit [sendrelief.net](http://sendrelief.net) or contact your state convention.

Brandon Elrod writes for the North American Mission Board.

### **World Series is latest challenge for pastor's kid**

by Tim Ellsworth

ATLANTA (BP) -- There's no telling how many hours Scott McHugh and his wife Teresa have spent watching their son Collin play baseball over the years. From little leagues, to high school ball in the hot Georgia sun, to his college years at Berry College, to five seasons in the minor leagues, Collin toiled through wins, losses, triumphs and failures -- with his parents never far away.

Now they're getting to see him on an even bigger stage, as Collin is a pitcher for the Houston Astros playing in his first World Series. With the series moving to Houston, Scott and Teresa will be there if and when Collin makes his World Series debut. "It is a joy and delight for us to see him on that stage, all because we've watched him over the years and the process that he has gone through," Scott McHugh said. "It is still surreal to us. It's hard to imagine that your son is playing in the World Series."

A former Southern Baptist pastor, Scott came to the Lord as a 20-year-old in college preparing for a career in the medical field. Within a couple of weeks of his conversion, he knew that the Lord was calling him into the ministry. He left school in 1973 and began working in youth ministry a few months later at a church in Atlanta. Over the years he served in a variety of roles at churches in the Atlanta area before returning to college at Toccoa Falls to complete his undergraduate degree. He then graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary before moving to Naperville, Ill., to become pastor of Trinity Baptist Church.

In 1994, McHugh said he and his wife felt a strong call from the Lord to return to the Atlanta area. He started a church in Alpharetta and is now doing international work in Israel as president and CEO of Patriarch Global LLC. The New York Mets drafted Collin out of Berry College in 2008. Over the next four years, he worked his way through the farm system -- a sometimes grueling experience, especially for players like him who were drafted late, got small signing bonuses and often existed on little pay, lousy food and long bus rides.

But then Collin got the call in 2012. "Just to see that turn was an amazing thing," Scott said. "We believe it was a God thing, that has really given him not only determination but favor in the system."

When Collin made his big league debut with the Mets -- an impressive start in which he pitched seven scoreless innings, striking out nine and giving up just two hits -- Scott and Teresa were there at Citi Field in New York.

Collin moved on to Colorado the following year for a brief stint before being released. After the Astros acquired him in 2014, he pitched just a few innings in the minor leagues before sticking with Houston for good. He won 11 games that year before an exceptional year in 2015 (19 wins, a 3.89 ERA and eighth in the Cy Young Award voting). This year, Collin missed the first half of the year with an elbow injury but returned to win five games down the stretch. In the American League Championship Series against the Yankees, he pitched four scoreless innings in a loss in game three, his only appearance in the playoffs thus far in 2017.

"In all of this, Collin and his wife Ashley have kept their love for the Lord and their understanding that they have a platform and really a responsibility to honor Him and to stay focused in their walk as well as manage this highest level baseball career," Scott McHugh said. In a recent Sports Spectrum article, Collin talked about how he continues to cling to God during the ups and downs that invariably come in baseball and in life. "If I had a terrible year this year or got hurt this year or won the Cy Young or won the World Series, if any of these things happen, all the variables that could happen in baseball, it's not going to change the way God feels about me, it's not going to change anything," Collin said.

"For me, this year, I'm just trying to enjoy the time God has given me to play this game that I really do love. Everything is kind of icing on the cake at this point. Obviously, I'm going to go out there and work my hardest, and give it everything that I have and try to

do some great things in this game, but He has already given me so much that I want to tell people about it."

Tim Ellsworth is associate vice president for university communications at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.

## AROUND THE STATE

### SUBMIT YOUR UPDATES

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

### CHRISTMAS PLAY COSTUMES NEEDED

Eastside Community Church is in need of costumes for a first century Christmas play. If anyone has them and is not using them I would love to be able to borrow them. Please contact me: Pastor Mathew Vroman, Eastside Community Church Pastor, 313-657-1100.

### 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).

### CLASSIFIED

#### Classified Ad Submission Guidelines

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

**The GREATER DETROIT BAPTIST ASSOCIATION****Seeks a Church Strengtheners/Mobilizer**

\*Replaces the Position of Associational Missionary (Director of Missions)

**Specific Responsibilities:**

Strengthen churches, and church plants by:

- Encouraging churches to commit themselves to Christ and to one another for accomplishing the mission of the local church.
- Developing a close relationship with pastors by giving encouragement and counsel.
- Offering assistance with training of church leadership.
- Assisting churches to develop a growth philosophy.
- Working closely with and advising pastorless churches.
- Assisting churches in mission education and coordination of mission team projects.
- Assisting with the development of educational programs using denominational resources.
- Encouraging and assisting the churches in making evangelism a priority.
- Encouraging and assisting the churches in making Christian Social Ministry a priority.
- Encouraging and assisting the churches in developing individual and cooperative stewardship.
- Work with other Strengtheners/Mobilizers and Churches to promote joint ministry events.
- Encouraging and assisting church planters.
- 

**Financial Support:**

- Salary shall be provided by the Greater Detroit Baptist Association as Part Time Status, 16 hours per week, \$1,000 per month
- Fringe benefits provided by Greater Detroit Baptist Association: \$1,000 a year for travel expenses, \$1,000 per year for ministry expenses, paid vacation, 1 week for 1 year experience, 2 weeks for 2-4 years experience, 42 hours of non-accumulating sick leave per year. ½ of these hours can be used as personal leave. No health, life or disability insurance is provided.
- 

**Desired Skills:**

- Personal Evangelism.
- Background in Cross-Cultural Ministry.
- Supervision
- Conflict Mediation

**Education:**

- A minimum of a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited institution with some theological training as part of the degree or in addition to the degree.

**Ministry Experience:**

- A minimum of 5 years of pastoral experience either as part of a church leadership staff or as senior pastor.

**Theological Views:**

- Must affirm the Baptist Faith and Message of 2000.
- Must be a member of a church in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Contact:**

Send cover letter and resume to by December 8, 2017

Mrs. Linda Mathis, Administrative Assistant

24250 Joy Road

Redford, MI [48239](#)

[lindadetassn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lindadetassn@sbcglobal.net)

313-533-2663

**Part-time Worship Leader**

CrossPointe Church is seeking a part-time worship leader to work with the lead pastor in planning and implementing all areas of our Christ-centered worship ministry. Our music style is considered “contemporary” as we are led by a team of musicians (piano, guitar(s), drums, bass, vocals). 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, Getty Music, Sovereign Grace Music, Indelible Grace Music). We are 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). Please visit [www.crosspointemonroe.com](http://www.crosspointemonroe.com) for more information regarding CrossPointe’s doctrinal statement, leadership, history, and various ministries. To apply for this position or request more information, please email resume along with links to samples of your worship leading to [crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com](mailto:crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com).

**Bi-vocational Pastor Needed**

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

**Church Information Packets**

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

## **ABOUT US**

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

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