

COLUMNS

Assumption of security

By Tim Patterson

FENTON, MI - Sabrina and I have been blessed to serve in ministry in various capacities and locations. On two separate occasions we had the privilege of serving in South Texas. We first moved to the lower regions of our nation when I was called as the Youth and Music pastor at First Baptist Church of Odem, Texas. It was a small farming community just about twenty miles from Corpus Christi. We lived there for several years before we moved to Oklahoma to pastor Emmanuel Baptist Church of McAllister.

Following the Oklahoma pastorate, we were called to pastor Calvary Baptist Church of Kingsville, Texas.

We loved the climate and culture of South Texas. It was very similar to that of our place of service in Florida. One of Sabrina's favorite topographical characteristics of this area was the beaches and especially South Padre Island. She is fully convinced that almost any difficulty can be remedied by a few days of sun, sand and surf.

Now most of you know of South Padre Island because of its notoriety concerning the wild and woolly spring breaks that saturate the island with hundreds of thousands of college students, who unwind like the rubber winding on the inside of a tightly wrapped golf ball. They come from all over the United States, Canada and Mexico once a year to bake in the sun, play in the sand and get saturated with suds. (And I'm not talking about soap!)

Before it became a popular tourist destination, South Padre Island was home to a few hundred folks who lived there and scratched out a living the best they could. Some even commuted back to the mainland for employment. It was a different time and place for sure.

Gaining access to this oasis was simple. The only way across the Laguna Madre to the island was by way of the Queen Isabella Causeway. At one time it was Texas' longest bridge and has been there for many years. Through the years, people just took for granted that the bridge would be there every day and every night. It was, after all, a means of traversing the waters between the two lands, the only means.

One evening in 2001, four loaded barges crashed into the bridge taking out a 240-foot section. The Brown Water V tug and its barges crashed into one of the columns toppling two 80-foot sections of the bridge. A third section would collapsed later as a result of the impact. Eight people lost their lives in the incident, most plunging the 85 feet to the waters below that were at least 50 feet deep. Thankfully, thirteen others were rescued from the waters that fateful day.

Sabrina and I have crossed the Queen Isabella Causeway on many occasions and thought nothing of it. We, as did countless others, just assume it would always be there, and that it would be available for us to traverse the Laguna, any time we needed it. One

day it was there and the next it was gone. That which we thought was so reliable and sure was rendered useless in a matter of minutes.

Many of us depend on a great many things in our lives and to be quite honest, take them for granted. We just assume they will always be there. We put faith in our automobiles to take us from point "a" to point "b". We believe our loved ones will be ever present, and that our employment is steady and true. The fact is, I could fill pages with items we assume will be consistently present, but there is only one thing that I know of that will always be there. There is only one thing that will never fade or falter. Only One that never sleeps or slumbers. Only One the keeps constant watch over those in His charge. That one is God the Father. He is far more than a bridge over troubled waters, and is everlastingly constant in His presence and power. Some things falter and fail. He does not. Take time today to thank Him for just being there. Eternally constant. Psalm 121:4

Unseen Movement

By Tony Lynn

It's early, too early as I am writing this column, so I'm recovering with a tall coffee and an early morning pause at Panera Bread. One cream and two Splenda. I awoke at 3 AM. I went to the office at 4 AM to straighten up after another blessed executive board meeting. Finished with clean-up by 5 AM, I drove to Plymouth, Mile City Church's new location, at the Burroughs Building. Knowing I had 3 hours before my meeting would start, I decided to check emails and write this column. So, here I sit.

Last night, at the state's executive board meeting, I unloaded a lot on everyone. As I rushed through the report describing God's movement over the last 3-4 months in Michigan. I often remind others that I am simply reporting the obvious or the "seen;" Far before I get to testify to what God is doing in our state, the Lord is at work in unseen ways in people's' lives.

The high points went something like this:

Last church planter assessment retreat we endorsed 4 new couples to start new churches in Michigan: Bridges, Caldwell, Guyer, and Ruffin. Three of those four couples are from Michigan. One couple is from North Carolina.

Antonio & Jessica Wimberly will create a new church in Inkster, late in 2018. Thank God for Middlebelt Baptist Church and Pastor Larry Johnson who are encouraging a second church in their local community and by sending out their associate minister.

Seth & Taylor Springs, being trained on the westside of the state at Redemption Church in Grandville, will move to Highland, Michigan, this summer, where Pastor Rob Freshour and Highland Baptist Church and Motor Cities Metro Baptist Association will help them plant a new church in Waterford.

Chris Gentz, along with a launch team, will create a new church in Kalamazoo on the campus of Western Michigan University, midyear in 2018.

Torion & Jasmine Bridges will create a new church in Redford in 2019.

Roland & Tedirika Caldwell, along with a launch team, will start a new church in Detroit in 2018.

Michael & Emily Guyer, within 3 days, found an apartment into which they can move in June of 2018 so they can plant a new church on the campus of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor. Launch team members will join them in August, moving their lives from North Carolina to Ann Arbor.

Ray & Mariama Ruffin are making plans to plant a new church in Redford during 2018. John & Jane Doe (will reveal their real names later) are exiting their current ministry in Tennessee during June to create a new church in the Greater Grand Rapids area. Two couples, whom will remain nameless for now, have finished their initial online assessment. They are making plans to attend our upcoming assessment in October and if they pass will partner with us creating new churches in Marquette and Traverse City. Austin & Lesley Wadlow, part of a large collegiate church planting network in Iowa, announced they will come to plant a new church in East Lansing on the campus of Michigan State University. Within 5 days of their life-changing announcement, Austin and Lesley had over 60 Iowa students attending an information meeting seeing if the Lord wanted them to move to Michigan for the new church start.

At the time of this writing, two pastors in the Saginaw/Bay City area are packing so they can attend a re-planting assessment retreat in Georgia. If things go well, one will become a Sending Pastor and the other will become an endorsed re-planter leading an existing church on an upward trajectory.

I cannot be any more specific than this, except to say that an associate minister from one of the top ten most notable Southern Baptist churches in the nation, will revisit Michigan during 2018 to see if this is where he should come to plant a new church. Talking with our church planting catalysts and our Send City Missionary in Detroit, I would estimate that we might have 8-9 candidate couples attending our upcoming October church planter assessment retreat.

In further conversation with our church planting network teammates, it appears we may have an additional 40-50 people within our church planting pipeline headed toward becoming church planters in Michigan.

As I come to the final lines of this rapid report, I hope you sense the same anticipation that I do. Not only do I see what God is doing within our state, but I believe the Lord is doing even more, in unseen manners while he prepares our region for a major movement of God. If you want to participate in or provide provisions for this movement contact me. I can share ideas on how you can help. In the meantime, keep watching because God is up to something miraculous.

Looking to Jesus

By Mike Durbin

FENTON, MI - We got busted! Our son and daughter-in-law were having our first grandchild. Like often happens, she was in labor for hours, and our children graciously invited us to share this moment with them so we hung out with her parents for most of the day. When the contractions got intense and close, we knew from experience that it would not be long. Four parents expectantly waited in the hall outside the door to hear that first cry. Then the nurse came by: "You need to go to the waiting room down the hall." Busted! In moments like this, it takes enormous, beyond human willpower to keep me from saying something (to that nurse) like: "You bumped your head."

Disappointed, we turned toward the waiting room, until she was out of sight then we quickly developed our recognizance plan. We would take turns walking down the hall and call the rest when the birth was imminent. It is hard to believe how approximately seven pounds of what has been described as "crying on one end and a total lack of responsibility on the other" changed our lives! It was an incredible new beginning for all of us.

Jesus used the analogy of birth to tell Nicodemus, "You must be born again." The Apostle Paul captures the transformation Jesus makes in our lives with the words: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has_ come" (2 Corinthians 5:17 CSB).

One of my favorite new birth stories is that of Charles Spurgeon. He was on his way to church in a snowstorm. It got so bad that he decided to turn down a side street and attend a different church instead. A small group of 12 to 15 gathered for worship. The pastor was not there that morning - probably due to the storm. A man opened the Bible and preached an impromptu message on the text, LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH (Isaiah 45:22 KJV)

Spurgeon is not very flattering in the way he describes the singing and the preaching of that snowy day. When the preacher finished his ten-minute message, he looked directly at Spurgeon and said, "Young man, you look very miserable... and you always will be miserable--miserable in life, and miserable in death, --if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.... You man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live."

Those words hit their mark. Spurgeon realized that he needed only to look to Christ and Christ alone for his salvation. He looked to Christ that day and describes what happened: "Simply by looking to Jesus, I had been delivered from despair, and I was brought into such a joyous state of mind that, when they saw me at home, they said to me, "Something wonderful has happened to you;" and I was eager to tell them all about it...."

As we see the new beginnings of Spring all around us, let's be eager to tell about the greatest new beginning of all - the one we experience in Christ!

Ignore it and hope it goes away

Mick Schatz

ROSCOMMON, MI - By the time you read this article, hopefully the snow will be melted and spring will be bursting forth with sunshine, flowers and new growth. Here at Bambi we have been covered up with the white stuff for what seems life forever. As spring breaks through everything that was once covered in a sheet of white is becoming visible again. A hammer I thought I lost has turned-up again. Covered-up projects left uncompleted are now back on the to-do list along with the unfinished landscaping that was so easy to ignore as long as you couldn't see it. Since the snow has melted everything that was once hidden has become visible again and requires some attention.

Honestly, as much as I get tired of the snow, it is nice to have a rest from weeding, mowing, edging, and all the other yard maintenance stuff. Nevertheless, left unattended the grass and the weeds will become overwhelming and difficult to cut back. I know this for a fact because I have often ignored yard work and just the thought of mowing and trimming the yard back into a manageable situation is overwhelming. The longer it is ignored the more difficult it is to fix and so on and so on. If I would just do regular maintenance on the yard it would never grow out of control.

Well, such is life.

I don't like it but it's true. My natural tendency in dealing with conflict, relational issues, or frustrating circumstances of any kind is to ignore it and hope it goes away. Often, in the moment it seems so much easier to ignore the situation. It is easier to cover it up with rationalization, denial or busyness. If I can keep my mind preoccupied then I do not have to think about the problems. Obviously this does not fix anything. Unfortunately, as broken humans, we use all sorts of coping mechanisms or escapes to white-out anything we don't want to deal with or see. I like to dive into a project I really enjoy so I can validate the time I'm not spending on fixing the problem. No matter your choice of escape, all are equally wrong because it reinforces our selfish, sinful nature, and denies an opportunity for God to intervene. My pride will keep me from experiencing God's provision. My pride will keep me from experiencing God's healing in me and those around me. This will prohibit new growth and fresh life in my relationship with Christ. Spiritual/life maintenance is crucial to our spiritual growth.

Colossians 3:12-14 tells us, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony." As God's children we are to live life with compassion, humility, meekness and patience so we can continually maintain our relationships with others by holding them up in times of need, and forgiving. Love is to be our default heart condition - we should never be without it! Oh the frustration, anger and stress we would avoid if we just maintained our lives with these Godly actions. Imagine the growth we would experience if we just act out of God's love and not our own selfishness. Imagine the warmth of healing melting away the cold of bitterness. Celebrate, it's spring!

STARTING

Class of 2017 church plants proclaim Jesus, change lives

By Brandon Elrod

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) -- One October morning in 2017, a young lady visited a new church in Montréal. She didn't have a positive view of Christianity, but something struck a chord with her that morning.

"She came up to me after the service and told me she didn't understand what she was feeling," said Jackson Ntumba, pastor of La Chapelle Ahuntsic, a church plant that launched in September 2017. "She didn't know Jesus, but she wanted to know more about Him." She spent time after La Chapelle's Sunday services in the church's one-on-one ministry which is designed to facilitate conversations about Christianity. She gave her life to Christ and was baptized the following month.

La Chapelle in Ahuntsic is the second church to be birthed out of La Chapelle in Montréal, which itself was planted only five years ago. The young church averages between 350-400 people and has already baptized nine people.

Each year, Southern Baptists start hundreds of new congregations across North America. Most receive logistical and financial assistance from outside sources. Those sources include Sending or Supporting Churches, state Baptist conventions and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) Send Network. As the national entity with the assignment to assist Southern Baptists with church planting, NAMB offers all Southern Baptist planters membership in its Planter and Spouse Care Network. NAMB also provides funding, training, coaching and other resources for many church plants and planters.

In 2017, Southern Baptists planted 691 new churches in North America. An additional 284 churches affiliated with Southern Baptists, bringing the total number of new churches added to 975. "We are incredibly grateful for every new church that was started last year and for the missionaries who are leading them," said NAMB president Kevin Ezell.

Bridging generations in Colorado

Trailhead Church launched in January of 2017 in Wellington, Co. One of the church's first baptisms was a 72-year-old man named Gene who attended their final preview service in 2016. After months of discipleship, church planting missionary John Richardson baptized Gene on Sept. 24, 2017. "Gene has only missed one service since he first came," Richardson said, "and he's become a regular volunteer and encourager in our church."

Since Trailhead's launch, they have baptized 17 new believers and are currently averaging 157 in weekly worship attendance. They also have 102 people engaged in small groups.

A church for the campus and the community

Drew Stevenson and Jordan Adams have been a part of the collegiate church planting movement and launched Salt City Church in Minneapolis in Sept. 2017. Already, they average around 225 people in worship attendance. They have baptized ten people and seen at least 15 salvations, two of those being an engaged couple. Stevenson emphasized the importance of NAMB and the Southern Baptist community. “I just had my sixth child. My son Jude was born with a congenital heart defect,” he said. “Within twelve hours of tweeting about it, Micah Millican, [NAMB’s director of planter and spouse care], reached out to me. Then Kevin Ezell retweeted the tweet, and I felt like family when people started praying for us.”

Through Send Network, NAMB emphasizes to church planters that their SBC partners—churches, associations, state conventions and entities—operate like a family. The Send Network team also regularly finds ways to improve its strategy so the Southern Baptist churches NAMB helps plant get off to a solid start, are built to last and are designed to multiply.

Since 2010, NAMB has restructured the way it counts church plants to better track and assess progress. Churches that newly affiliate with the SBC are separated out from the annual count. Every new church plant is required to have an identification number to ensure churches will be included only once in NAMB’s tally. The updates and improvements, coupled with NAMB’s more rigorous assessment process for planters, have led to a drop in the number of churches planted since 2010. The changes have allowed for increased accountability in Southern Baptists’ church planting efforts. The result has been church planters who are better equipped for ministry over the long haul.

Overall, 81 percent of churches planted since 2010 are still active in the 2016 ACP report. Since an average of 900 churches die or otherwise drop off Southern Baptist roles each year, Ezell says Southern Baptists need to plant around 1,200 new churches annually. “We need more qualified church planters,” Ezell said. “A lot of our work right now is focused on helping churches identify and develop leaders in their church who might someday feel called to plant. There is a huge harvest, and we all need to pray for more workers.”

About the author: Brandon Elrod writes for the North American Mission Board.

STRENGTHENING

BSCM and oneMISSION.tv: A Partnership in Telling Michigan's Story

By Staff

Fenton – Three years ago, as the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) began a new stage of leadership, one of the primary goals was for the staff to do a more effective job of communicating with churches across the state. One of the most immediate results of that goal was for newly elected Executive Director, Tim Patterson, as well as, State Director of Missions, Dr. Tony Lynn and State Evangelism Director, Mike Durbin, to hit the road. The three men set out for face-to-face visits with as many churches and pastors as possible. In a matter of a few months, the trio logged hundreds of hours and thousands of miles all over Michigan.

The second step in the communication goal was to do a better job of maintaining that dialogue on a day-to-day basis. So the decision was made to migrate the state newspaper, the Baptist Beacon, from a month-to month printed edition to a more organic and responsive online newsjournal.

That decision led to a relationship with oneMISSION.tv, a media production company with more than 10 years of experience working with ministries and non-profit organizations, and specifically experience in assisting Southern Baptist state conventions and other SBC agencies such as the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board, and the SBC Executive Committee. Their motto is “helping ministries tell their story”. President and managing partner of oneMISSION.tv, Doug Keesey says, “The partnership between us and the BSCM has given us a great joy, and not a day goes by that we don't consider new ways to tell the story of Michigan Southern Baptists.

oneMISSION.tv not only led the transition of the Baptist Beacon to an online publication, but also helped the BSCM with a total rebranding of its logo and website. Over the more than two-year partnership, oneMISSION.tv has served as the managing editor for the Beacon, as well as, handling the graphic design for all of BSCM's promotion and flyers.

In addition, they have produced videos the last three years to unveil BSCM's yearly themes and emphases. The most recent example is the video for this year's theme, The Power of One.

BSCM leadership believe that they need to continually look for better ways to communicate with the churches they serve, so this year they commissioned oneMISSION.tv to produce a 28 page magazine laying out “The Power of One” theme.

It included columns and stories about the many ways that Michigan Southern Baptist churches are fulfilling the Great Commission and punching holes in the darkness through starting, strengthening, and sending churches.

BSCM Communication Coordinator, Jamie Lynn says, “oneMISSION.tv gives the BSCM a quality pathway of communication to stay connected. They understand Michigan Baptists, and enthusiastically help us reach our churches.”

Later this year, oneMISSION.tv will once again assist in the promotion of the Frances E. Brown State Mission Offering. They will produce numerous resources to assist churches in promoting the mission offering including; flyers, bulletin inserts, and videos that tell the stories of the Michigan's different ministries that are assisted by the offering.

As the BSCM enters into the third year of it's new goal to better communicate with the churches that make up the Michigan convention, they strive to find new and better ways to build the partnership between the staff and the churches they serve. oneMISSION is blessed to be a partner in achieving these efforts for them and with them.

Discipleship: When one man walks alongside another

By Grace Thornton/Alabama Baptist

BUTLER, Ala. (BP) -- It was late one Saturday night when Terry Long plunged into his darkest hour. He stood alone in a small church in south Alabama, plunging his paintbrush over and over into a can of paint, hoping to change the color of his surroundings. In the metaphorical sense, it wasn't working. Things still looked bad.

After being forced to take a stand at the church where he served as pastor, Long had been asked to leave. In order to keep food on the table, he had taken a painting job hours away in Alabama while his wife and four children stayed behind to try to sell the house. "It was my lowest point," Long said. "I felt completely lost." And as he kept the brush moving, the phone in the church kitchen next to him began to ring over and over.

"It finally dawned on me that someone might be trying to get in touch with me," he said. So he picked up the phone. And on the other end, a familiar voice said, "Hey, Terry, it's Cliff." Cliff was a chicken farmer Long had become friends with back when he was serving as a pastor in Arkansas more than a decade before. "We met at 5 a.m. once a week to study the Bible before he went to work," Long said. "I had poured into him as best I could."

And around the same time Long moved, the farmer moved too, up to Tennessee. The two lost touch. "I've been trying to find you for two weeks," the farmer said. "God spoke to me and said, 'You need to call Terry Long and tell him what's happened since he disciplined you.'" What had happened was that the farmer had immediately begun to do with someone else what Long had done with him -- he led a man to Christ, then stuck with him for six months to show him how to walk out his faith. Then that man did the same with another, and that man did the same with yet another.

"There are three generations of men in Tennessee who are godly men, active in church and solid in their families because you took the time to invest in my life," he told Long. And it didn't stop there. The farmer had then moved from Tennessee to Kentucky and did the same thing again. Then he moved to Missouri and did the same thing again. "He said, 'I don't know what you're doing now, but there are men in three states who are faithful to God and faithful to their families because of what you invested in my life,'" Long said. "I can't put a price tag on what that meant to me."

Long, now director of missions for Choctaw Baptist Association in Butler, said that moment of clarity snapped him back to a reality he knew deep in his heart -- that pastoral ministry is important, but discipleship is the core of what all Christians are called to do. "What I've learned is that as I've invested in men on the back burner apart from my public ministry, God brings long-lasting fruit," Long said.

He noted he was in his 20s before he heard the concept of one-on-one discipleship explained. "I had been a Christian for eight years before I ever heard anyone talk about discipleship. I didn't have a clue what that meant," he said. But in 1984 at a conference in Atlanta, a missionary to Brazil shared a message that changed Long's life and changed his whole approach to ministry. In Brazil the missionary had worked out a way to come alongside new believers for six months and help them learn to walk out their new faith. That thought got buried in Long's mind and he carried it back with him to his church in Picayune, Miss.

"I had been witnessing to a young man in the church who was about my age, in his mid to late 20s," he said. "His name was Danny and his wife attended our church but he wouldn't come." After that conference, Long went to visit him with new motivation tucked in his heart. "After pleading with him for about an hour, his excuse was that he believed all of it but that he didn't think he could live it. He thought he would fail," Long said. "I said, 'Danny, if you knew someone who would meet with you and pray with you and help you along the way, would that change anything?' And he said if that were the case, he would be saved right then."

So Long told Danny he would be that guy. "I told him I would walk with him for six months and help him get grounded in his faith," Long said. "And what was to be six months turned into a year because we became very close friends." It wasn't so much that Long was the teacher and Danny the student as it was that they were friends who invested in each other's lives. They fished together, read the Bible together and got their families together on a regular basis.

"This was all off the radar," Long said. "It wasn't a public program -- that's the beauty of discipleship." But people began to notice Danny and how fast he was growing in his faith. "He was changing. His whole life was different," Long said. "So I began to see that there really was something to this discipleship thing. And I was benefiting from it as well." In the last decade or so, the two had lost contact, but a few months ago Long got a call at his office from Danny's wife.

"She said, 'If this is the Terry Long who was a pastor in Picayune, please call me,'" Long said. "So I called her back, and she told me Danny was extremely ill with heart problems and other physical issues and knows his time is limited." When Long gave him a call they reunited and reconnected. "He thanked me for the time I invested in his life in 1985," Long said. "He's asked me to preach his funeral when the time comes. But for the last 33 years, he's been living a faithful life."

All that from just a promise to walk beside him as a friend who pointed to Jesus, Long said. "It's not flashy. It's on the backburner. It's quiet," he said. "There comes a time that every pastor in ministry has to make a decision -- go for the applause of men or decide I'm going to invest my life in men and people in a way that results in long-lasting fruit."

The second is what Jesus wanted when He gave His disciples the Great Commission, Long said. "Every pastor can do this. Every Christian can do this because you don't have to be a speaker. You don't have to be on the platform," Long said. "It's not a church program. It's a relationship. When you try to make a program out of it, you lose something." That's what he remembered again that night as he hung up the phone in that little church kitchen and got back to painting -- that the brightest spots of his ministry weren't the times his church drew the crowds. "It's the time invested in those men's lives and how I've seen it affect their children and their grandchildren," Long said. He's done this over and over across the years. He's got several men he's pouring into now, right where he is in Choctaw County.

"I pour my life into them. I try to be transparent with them," he said. "The guys I've invested in personally, I tell them, 'This is who I am and this is what it's about, and you're going to fail, but I'm going to walk with you no matter what.'" And that, he said, is how it was always meant to be. "It's not about a program," he said. "It's about just having a heart for people."

About the author: Grace Thornton is a correspondent for The Alabama Baptist (thealabamabaptist.org), newsjournal of the Alabama Baptist Convention.

Equipping the American church for missions

by Emily Verlin

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) -- Before I moved back to the U.S. after serving as a missionary for two years in South Asia, many people told me to expect a difficult season as I returned home. They told me I would experience reverse culture shock in a variety of ways.

Reverse culture shock is a common experience for many returning missionaries. And, speaking from experience, it would be easy to let these struggles paralyze "us" when we return from the field. However, our field experience -- whether it was two years or 20 -- has given us a tremendous opportunity to continue the work back home. Scripture holds a high view of the local church and gives us examples of how people like Paul and Barnabas equipped the local church for mission (Acts 14:24-28). Like them, missionaries can take their passion for sharing the Gospel and turn it into a desire to equip the American church.

Sharing the Gospel through shared experiences

Last Christmas, I invited a South Asian friend to go see Christmas lights around our city. Instead of going with her by myself, I decided to invite a fellow church member, Sarah, to go with us. During the evening, many doors were opened for Gospel conversations. Sarah shared the Christmas story and later elaborated on why we serve the one true God. Afterward, Sarah was overcome with joy. We talked about what a privilege it was to share the best news of all. She was reminded of how easy it can be to have spiritual conversations, and she shared her desire to make Gospel proclamation a higher priority. She was convicted that she had not taken full advantage of the Gospel opportunities with her own South Asian neighbors.

The Lord used that evening to challenge and encourage me in three specific ways.

Build relationships with the unreached in my city, share the Gospel with them, and bring fellow believers with me.

Jesus exemplified this methodology by bringing his disciples with Him as He preached the Gospel in word and deed. Believers can attend every evangelism class and training that comes along, but there is something about actually seeing another believer demonstrate Gospel proclamation that makes it click. I have found that my best evangelistic conversations have happened alongside another believer. Just as Sarah said, sharing the Gospel is not that hard!

Invite more of my believing friends into my relationships with South Asians.

Before we went to see Christmas lights that night, my South Asian friend invited us in for chai with her husband. We ended up staying a full hour before we ventured out. Sarah mentioned later how unusual that experience was for her. Her first instinct when we were invited in for chai was to say no. She didn't want to be a burden on the couple.

However, South Asian culture is very different from American culture. Although we may see guests as an inconvenience, South Asians see guests as an honor. Many Americans Christians fear stepping into cross-cultural relationships because they have not had a cross-cultural experience. As returned missionaries, we can use our experience to teach other believers about and invite them into our cross-cultural relationships. In doing so we help lessen initial fear and discomfort and increase a desire to build cross-cultural and missional relationships.

Believers experience great joy when we share the hope of the Gospel with someone who has not heard and is searching.

We are not merely saved from our sin. We are saved to make disciples of all nations. We fully live out the life God intends for us when we share the Gospel with the unreached around us. In doing so, we glorify God and experience the unique joy of joining God on mission -- part of the intended purpose of our salvation. This joy we experience can only come from our obedience to proclaim the good news. It is a unique and contagious joy.

I pray as missionaries come back from the field, they are burdened with the state of faith here in America and with the lack of joy many American Christians experience when they are not obedient to share the Gospel. It is an act of love toward your fellow believer to encourage and equip them to live on mission. I also pray that many more believers would choose obedience to the Great Commission for the glory of God and the sake of the lost around them.

Returned missionaries can use their unique cross-cultural experiences to equip the American church to share the Gospel with those around them. As missionaries come back from the field, I pray they will take advantage of this unique opportunity and allow themselves to be used in catalytic ways. I also pray that the Lord will raise up an army of American believers passionate about sharing the Gospel and making disciples of all nations starting in their backyard.

If you would like more information about serving as a missionary or simply sharing your faith through conversation, go to imb.org.

About the author: Emily Verlin is a missions minister at a local church in Tennessee. Previously she served in South Asia with the 2+2 program through the IMB and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Blessing Bikers, Not Bikes

by: Darrel Manuel

GARDEN CITY, MI - Merriman Road Baptist Church F.A.I.T.H. Riders will host their Annual Biker Blessing on Saturday May 19th 2018.

This year is the 10th annual Biker Blessing, what's a Biker Blessing you may ask? in short it's an opportunity to share the Gospel message with motorcyclists. 46 years ago a Catholic Church in Baldwin, Mi started a "Blessing of the Bikes", where they have a Priest sprinkle holy water on your motorcycle and say a pray of blessing and safety over your bike. This has since evolved into a giant 3 day party. It's a great fundraiser for there food pantry, but not very evangelistic.

When the Garden City F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapter was commissioned in 2009 they wanted to offer an alternative. They wanted to be the free, family-friendly, Biblical alternative. Their goal was simply to invite bikers from to the church parking lot for some free food, music, a bike wash, and a bike show. Then, they would tell them and show them they are loved by the church and most importantly Jesus Christ. There's a short message and a prayer and blessing over the "Biker" not the bike. The chapter explains that the bike is just an inanimate object, and that God wants to bless them and have a relationship with them. They are then invited to accept that relationship. Since 2009 hundreds of bikers have come to hear the Gospel message.

In 2010, Darrel Manuel was diagnosed with throat cancer, 2 chapter members lost their brothers to lung cancer, and a young man in our church lost his battle with a brain tumor. From those experiences was born the Matthew Brotherton Memorial Cancer Ride. After the blessing and for a small fee of \$20 (\$25 with passenger) supporters go on a guided ride through beautiful S.E. Michigan. All the money raised goes to benefit the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Ride for Kids.

About 4 years ago a new feature was added, the 3 Minute Story. The 3 Minute Story is an opportunity to share the Gospel with someone in a one-on-one situation by giving an opportunity to enter them into a "raffle." The cost of the ticket? 3 minutes of your time in which we share the Good News of Jesus Christ. We do give out a prize, too. This year's grand prize will be a \$250 gift card.

The F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapter is inviting everyone to attend Saturday May 19th from 10a-2p at Merriman Road Baptist Church, 2055 Merriman Road Garden City and to bring an unchurched friend. All are welcome no matter what they ride, or even if they ride.

F.A.I.T.H. Riders is an International Motorcycle Ministry with over 300 chapters in North America and 2 in Cuba for more information about F.A.I.T.H. Riders go to:

www.faithriders.com

About the author: Darrel Manuel is the Chaplain / Director of the Merriman Road Baptist Church Chapter of F.A.I.T.H. Riders he is an endorsed Chaplain through the North American Mission Board, a Millwright by vocation, a father and husband.

Four discoveries when Christians exercise their faith and proclaim the gospel

By Dave Malnes

MERIDIAN, ID - Chuckling in your face. Wincing in disapproval. Polite smiles with a faraway look in their eyes. God's Word has that effect on lost souls.

When believers receive disappointing responses from proclaiming the gospel, it can cause us to think twice when opportunities arise again. What are ways that a Christian believer can continue to be bold witnesses? It starts with discovering that strength comes from our weaknesses.

We tend to think that gifted evangelists never seem to get rattled. They appear bold and fearless. They readily talk about their faith with anyone God places in their lives. But for many Christians, including myself, we are prone to be reluctant witnesses. We twinge with awkwardness at the prospect of sharing a gospel message with a lost soul. And when golden moments arise for us to step out and share our faith with others, we become mute. Who has stood on the shores of guilt and watched missed opportunities float away in full sail?

What prompts us to dive off the high board of our own inadequacies and be God's ambassadors? What dares a redeemed soul to jump off the bridge and share the Good News of forgiveness and peace found only in Christ? Are we like Gideon, demanding a sign before we step out in faith? Are we like Jonah, who think all our neighbors are Ninevites?

The Apostle Paul answers these questions. He acknowledges fear. He confesses timidity. He understands weakness. In fact, he declares that only in his weaknesses that he finds his strength. (2 Cor. 12:10) Perhaps Paul was not gregarious, outgoing, or an extrovert — all characteristics that we may consider necessary to be witnessing giants. Instead, Paul would agree that in humility, we are bold. In gentleness, we are resolute. In patience, we are persistent. In peace, we are discerning. The source of Paul's strength found in his weaknesses, was Christ living in him. A believer's weaknesses are often exposed in evangelism. This is the reason why verbally proclaiming the gospel is uncomfortable, intimidating, and scary.

There will always be threats – real or imagined – and potential consequences associated with being God's ambassador and verbally sharing his message with others. Yet, only through the power of the message can lost souls receive the knowledge of the Truth. God sets apart believers to communicate its message and unsheathe its power. Every evangelist gets rattled. Their boldness is not necessarily a personality trait, but an

outward appearance of an inward trust in God's promises. And the greatest promise God gives us with the Great Commission is that he is with us. Faith trusts God's promises and takes him for his Word. Proclaiming the gospel is an exercise of a faith.

When believers exercise their faith and proclaim the gospel, they make four discoveries: After jumping off the high dive of our own inadequacies, we discover that Christ has always been there. Like a little child jumping off the side of the pool, we fall into our father's waiting arms and realize that there was nothing to fear. There was no need to be intimidated.

After jumping off the ledge of our own fears of rejection, we discover that God provides unique opportunities specifically designed for us. We were arriving at an appointment that is often pre-arranged by God.

After receiving a disappointing response by people, we discover that we don't need to take their response at face value. It's not personal. It's between them and God. Believers process rejection by understanding that receiving faith is often a process. Their soil was not ready for them to respond well.

After sharing God's Word, we discover that proclaiming the gospel is not natural. Verbally proclaiming the gospel requires courage and a measure of boldness. It is something that we cannot generate on our own but comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. The promise of his presence (Matt 28:19) comes true. He is with us.

Evangelism exposes our weaknesses. Believers are blessed by the activity of verbally proclaiming the gospel by trusting and receiving God's promises in a powerful way. *Adapted by previous blog post, "Four key discoveries in overcoming the fear of evangelism."* (November 2013)

Evangelists are effective when they:

Trust that God's Word is sufficient for salvation. They need nothing more than the message.

Understand that their most powerful tool is God's Word and use it exclusively to bring as many people to heaven as possible.

Understand that God's Word alone is all they need to proclaim to others the only way to life with God – both now and forever.

Understand that the Holy Spirit works through the Word to bring salvation to everyone who believes. Their role in evangelism is to get the Word out.

Accept God's commission to go out into the world and unsheathe the powerful Words of Truth.

Are more intent on winning souls than winning arguments. They focus on planting seeds of the gospel and trusting that God will cause the seed to grow.

About the author: Dave Malnes is the founder and director of Praise and Proclaim Ministries in Meridian, Idaho (www.praiseandproclaim.com). This ministry is all about providing meaningful opportunities for Christians to actively share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Four Reasons We Don't Share the Gospel

Article by Steven Lee

Minneapolis, MN - This time of year my yard is littered with awful yellow weed-flowers. Yes, dandelions. As a kid it was great fun to pluck a fuzzy white one, hold it up, and blow. This scattered the fluff into the air, eventually landing again in the grass. At the time, I had no idea I was spreading this wild invasive weed to disturb the carefully manicured grass. Now as a homeowner and the resident gardener, each weekend I toil to pluck up this weed that seems to spread regardless of what I do to stop it.

Dandelions multiply and spread by nature, much like the gospel. Consider for a moment how news of Jesus spread wherever he went (Mark 1:21–28, 40–45; 5:1–20). Despite Jesus's best efforts to temper the excitement, his fame and healings spread far and wide. It was like the ripe dandelion scattering into the wind, taking root wherever it flies. The gospel travels like that, from person to person, family to family, and community to community.

The word of God takes off like this, with a life of its own, in the story of Acts:
"But the word of God increased and multiplied." (Acts 12:24)
"And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region." (Acts 13:49)
"So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily." (Acts 19:20)

So if the word of God — the good news of Jesus Christ — inherently possesses the power to increase and multiply through the work of the Holy Spirit, then why is evangelism so difficult? Why don't we share the gospel more than we do? We need to ask if we are a fresh wind that causes the seed of the good news to spread, or instead, obstacles that keep it from moving further and faster. Unfortunately, many of us are more wall than breeze. But why?

Four Obstacles to Evangelism**1. Lack of Gospel Knowledge**

How many times have you heard the gospel in a sermon, book, or conversation? If you've been a Christian, even for a short time, you have likely heard the gospel hundreds of times. Yet, many of us still struggle to articulate the truths of the gospel in a simple, coherent, and intelligible way. Could you share the essential message of the gospel in sixty seconds, right now?

2. Apathy

Some of us just don't care that much about lost people. We wouldn't ever say it, but our priorities and lives reveal it. We make no time in our busy schedules to interact and engage with those who don't know Christ. We have long stopped praying for lost people in our neighborhoods and workplaces. We have no non-Christian friends, and barely any ties. Lost people are a low priority. For instance, when was the last time you invited someone into your home who did not know Christ?

3. Fear

What will others think of me? What if they don't like me or my family? Some are paralyzed by the thought of being disliked, marginalized, laughed at, or openly mocked. We're afraid we'll lose business or get passed up for that promotion. What if they stop inviting my kids to the birthday parties? What if talking about Christ makes seeing my

neighbors awkward? What if they lump me together with Ned Flanders or the Westboro Baptist Church-cult?

4. Lack of Compassion

We lack compassion for the lost. We have long forgotten what it was like to live without hope, lost and apart from Christ. We rarely consider that those who do not obey Christ “will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 1:9). We just don’t care that much. We might say we care, but we rarely cry out to God for the salvation of our lost neighbors, coworkers, and classmates. Paul’s compassion in Romans 9:3 is utterly foreign to us: “I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers.”

We Overcome Obstacles Together, Not Alone

If making disciples is our mission (Matthew 28:18–20), how can followers of Christ overcome these obstacles to be conduits of grace to the lost? One of the primary ways we can overcome our lack of gospel knowledge, apathy, fear, and lack of compassion is by gathering together with fellow believers to remember and cultivate our core calling and convictions.

We are people who have died to ourselves and live for Christ (Galatians 2:20). We have the profound privilege of spurring on fellow believers to love and good works that God has set before us (Hebrews 10:24; Ephesians 2:10). Some of those good works will be giving verbal testimony to the grace of God in our lives and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the lost. Within the context of Christian community, another believer can speak and remind us of the very truths we need to hear. Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it this way: “We speak to one another on the basis of the help we both need. We admonish one another to go the way that Christ bids us to go. We warn one another against the disobedience that is our common destruction. We are gentle and we are severe with one another, for we know both God’s kindness and God’s severity.” (Life Together, 106)

All Christians need fellow believers to help them grow in their understanding of the gospel. We all need others in our lives who spur us on to a greater compassion and zeal to love the lost by sharing the good news of Jesus willingly, winsomely, and boldly. Here are four ways this can work itself out in a community.

Four Steps to Sharing More

1. Pray Together for the Lost

As Christians are gathered together in small groups or missional communities, we ought to make it a priority to pray for the lost in addition to our normal prayer concerns. In Acts 4:23–31, after Peter and John are released from prison, the disciples gather to pray for God to give them boldness to speak his word. If the early church needed to pray for greater evangelistic zeal and boldness, how much more do we need to pray similarly in our gatherings?

One simple way to consistently do this in a Bible study or small group setting is to conclude your study with this question: What truths did we learn about God and who can we share this with in our spheres of influence? This can naturally transition to praying for those who need to know Christ in our lives. As we pray for God to work in the lives of our lost friends, apathy is transformed to an eagerness and readiness to engage others for the sake of Christ.

2. Recall the Gospel Together

In 2 Timothy 2:8–13, Paul reminds Timothy of the truth of the gospel to encourage him to press on and be faithful to the message that has been entrusted to him. If Timothy — a student of Paul, a faithful servant, a pastor, preacher and teacher — needed to be reminded of the truth of the gospel to keep going, how much more do you and I need to be reminded of the eternal truths of the gospel?

Much of this reminding happens in the context of gathering together with fellow believers. As God's people recall his truths — week to week in homes and gathered together in worship — we combat gospel-amnesia by reminding one another that God's mission is to save sinners through the work of his Son Jesus. As we re-preach the gospel to ourselves and to one another, we'll be more prepared to speak it afresh to those without Christ.

3. Apply the Gospel Together

In Galatians 2:11–14, Paul opposes Peter because Peter's conduct and behavior were not in accord with the gospel. Similarly, we need fellow Christians who will tell us that it's not okay to not care about the lost. Such attitudes are not in accord with the gospel. When fear and apathy are exposed, it is a fresh opportunity to apply the gospel to our own lives. If we are fearful of what others may think, we are reminded that our identity is in Christ and our lives belong to him. If we lack compassion, we are rebuked as we consider God's deep compassion for sheep without a shepherd.

Evangelism is one measure of our spiritual maturity. For many, theological knowledge does not translate to fruits of the Spirit — into love for fellow believers, or serving others, or sacrificial giving, or evangelism. Together in community we help one another become more like Christ by being faithful disciple-making disciples.

4. Prove the Power of the Gospel Together

If we do not believe the sufficiency of the gospel, we will never share it boldly and simply. Yet, if we truly believe that God's word does the work of conversion through the power of his Holy Spirit, we will unabashedly share the simple and unadorned truth of the gospel. A truncated and inadequate gospel will quickly be abandoned and never shared. But a gospel that can save by grace through faith — apart from works — as a free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9) is believed, treasured, and declared boldly.

With fellow believers, we must remind each other of the sufficiency of God's word to do his work for his purposes. If we are confident in the ability of the gospel to transform lives, we can boldly and indiscriminately proclaim this good news with sacrificial love to the lost in the hope that some will be saved.

About the author: Steven Lee is the lead pastor of the North Campus of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, where he lives with his wife Stephanie and their five children. He is a graduate of Bethlehem College & Seminary.

How to Make a Difference Through Prayer

by Ronnie Floyd

WASHINGTON, DC - Let me ask you a question: How can millions of people gathering together in prayer impact our nation?

Each year since 1988, the National Day of Prayer has been designated as the first Thursday in May. A law that originated in 1952 was unanimously amended by both the House and the Senate and then signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on Thursday, May 8, 1988.

This year — May 3, 2018 — will be the 30th anniversary of the **National Day of Prayer**.

According to the National Day of Prayer website, more than 30,000 observances of the 2017 National Day of Prayer were attended by 2 million people. From sunrise in Maine to sunset in Hawaii, 40,000 volunteers organized prayer observances for our nation from small towns to state capitals to Washington, D.C. Additionally, people stopped their activities to pray for America in schools, businesses, churches, homes, county courthouses, and on the steps of city halls. The National Day of Prayer was also experienced in some way in more than 80 countries of the world and is even printed on Hallmark® calendars.

The Need for Prayer in America has Never Been Greater

Mobilizing unified public prayer for America may be the most important thing we can do right now for our nation. America is broken. Division is undeniable. Racial tension is alarming. Lawlessness abounds. Reconciliation appears impossible. Government cannot fix us. Politics will not heal us. America needs God now more than any time in our generation.

It is prayer that precedes and forwards the advancement of the gospel. It is prayer that precedes any great movement of God. It is prayer that will precede the revival of the church and the next great spiritual awakening. In this desperate and urgent hour when turmoil and division are evident in America and security threats are very real, it is imperative that we do all we can to mobilize unified public prayer for America.

Unity Is Our Theme in 2018

Each year we choose a theme for the annual observances across America. This year our theme is “Pray for America ... Unity,” and our Scripture text is “Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

The culture’s dark, hopeless condition is the perfect backdrop to call America to unity. There is not one person who has lived in this nation in the past five years who would try to convince anyone that this nation is the picture of unity. Our culture is the complete opposite of unity.

The National Day of Prayer is positioned to pray for our nation to experience unity. That is why we are working hard each day to become a multi-church, multi-denominational,

multi-ministry, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-generational movement of prayer for America. We need to infiltrate this entire nation with the message of unity.

Become Involved in Your Community's Prayer Event

In this season of my life and ministry, I am deeply convinced that one of the greatest things we can do is rally millions of people to pray for America. A great spiritual revival is the greatest need in the church, and the next Great Awakening is the greatest need in America. Prayer must and will precede our generation's realization of these great needs. That is why I have taken on this calling to lead the National Day of Prayer. I cannot do this without you. In your community, please help us mobilize unified public prayer for America. Whether you are a layperson or the God-called pastor of a local church, God can use you to make a difference through the National Day of Prayer.

Here are five ways you can prepare to be involved on Thursday, May 3, 2018:

1. Begin to engage with us now. You can begin to participate with us by signing up for our newsletter on our [website](#) (see the banner at the top of the page). You will receive various articles and communication about all that is occurring between now and May 3. We will communicate consistently to keep you informed.
2. Plan now to participate in your community's prayer events. Find an observance in your community or region, and plan to attend. If you do not know of an observance, start one with some friends or through your church.
3. Begin an additional or a new observance of the National Day of Prayer in your community. Our team is ready to talk to you about what this means. If you go to the "Volunteer" section of our website and you can find out how you can create an observance. We will equip you to do it.

If you are ready to ask others to be part of your team, together you can plan an event somewhere in your community. You can pray for America in schools, businesses, churches, homes, county courthouses, and on the steps of city halls. Your observance may last only 30 minutes in a business setting or as long as 90 minutes in a large event in your community. Regardless of how long it lasts, we can assist you in planning what is most important.

4. Involve your church in prayer for our nation. If I had the opportunity to personally speak with every pastor and church in America, I would explain that the National Day of Prayer provides a unique opportunity to engage all kinds of people in their communities who love America and hope for its best. Some of these community members may not know Christ personally, but this service or observance can introduce them in a positive, non-threatening way to the things of God and the claims of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, talk to your pastor about your church leading an observance of the National Day of Prayer. A church can host an early morning observance as well as another one at a different time of day. Just think what would happen if each pastor and church in America established a service or observance on the National Day of Prayer.

Realize you can create as many observances in your community as desired and there will still not be enough to mobilize your entire community to pray for America. May 3 should be a day in America where at least 100,000 gatherings occur in observance of the National Day of Prayer. It is my hope that every Christ-follower would want to join with others to pray for America.

5. Support the National Day of Prayer in prayer and with a financial gift. For 364 days a year, we prepare for the National Day of Prayer on the first Thursday of May. Additionally, it is our desire to see God create a great prayer movement in every community that would become a catalyst for the revival in the church and a spiritual awakening in America. Pray for me and for our team. If God leads you, send a financial gift to the National Day of Prayer or to the National Day of Prayer Task Force, P.O. Box 64225, Colorado Springs, CO, 80962, (800) 444-8828. You can help us mobilize unified public prayer for America. You can make a difference.

About the author: Dr. Ronnie Floyd serves as president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force and senior pastor of Cross Church in Springdale, Arkansas. He is the author of 20 books, including *The Power of Prayer and Fasting*, and served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 2014-2016. He and his wife, Jeana, have two sons and daughters-in-law and seven grandchildren.

MOTHER'S DAY: Those precious babies melt your heart, and then....

By Vickie Munton

O'FALLON, IL (BP) -- It is inevitable, you know. Those precious babies melt your heart, and then one day they break it.

Disclaimer: I am an empty-nester, and I was by no means a perfect parent of perfect children in drawing some conclusions from my years of parenting. Knowing that parenting as a team is crucial, my husband took an active role. While many decisions naturally occurred when he was not home, we vowed to have a united front no matter who was leading the way.

We have four children. Two boys and two girls, each one very different. Same DNA from their parents, no drastic differences in their adolescent years, yet distinctively different in personality and perspective in our family unit. While birth order and gender differences account for some of the distinctions, they also account for some of the shared similarities (common memories, shared experiences and even family jokes that only we would understand!).

Two siblings (one boy and one girl) tend to be analytical and often see the world as black and white. You would think, as is often the case, that they would be the "rule-keepers." While this is true for the most part, it wasn't a standard that either could live up to. They taught me to be realistic and to be careful about setting reasonable goals for all of my children.

While the oldest child may be tagged the rule-keeper, the middle child might be labeled as the precocious one. My middle daughter is what I would call "spunky," but truth be

told, every child will try to bend and break the rules at some point along the way. It became obvious -- long before they were teenagers -- that each of them would make detrimental decisions -- some that they clearly thought through and others, well, not so much. Learning to be patient and to not overreact when a child makes a bad choice, I saw the benefit of staying calm and loving, yet firm. As a general rule, modeling self-control goes a long way in resolving a conflict.

I knew that it was futile to pray that my children would not mess up. It doesn't take long to discover that you don't have to teach a 2-year-old to climb too high, touch something off-limits or even kick the dog. I decided early on that I would not allow this futility to frustrate me, so I prayed -- not that they wouldn't make a mistake -- but that they would get caught when they did!

That was one prayer they didn't like so much. But I wasn't just praying for them to get caught so I could punish them. I believe strongly that children need to be disciplined, and that part of our God-given responsibility as parents is to train them to make choices that are good and right.

There is no joy in seeing your child mess up -- or in having to decide what type of discipline would be of most benefit in a particular situation. The desire of a parent's heart should be to help them see the consequences of their mistake -- and most of all, to learn from it. Yet the joy does come! It comes when they look you in the eye and say, "I'm sorry, Mommy," or when you see them responding in a way that shows true repentance. Watching them humbly make restitution to a sibling they have wronged will melt your heart.

Despite the differences in each of our children, I believe these five principles can apply to any child of any age whenever they make a mistake:

1. Stop and pray

While a toddler might need immediate intervention for his/her own safety, what I'm referring to here is when you discover a misstep and realize that you have to correct it. It might only be a prayer quickly breathed before you have to jump into action, or it could be that you need time on your knees to get God's perspective and wisdom. I've done both. The important thing is that you respond -- not react.

As we read in James 1:5: "Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him."

2. Take action

After you decide the appropriate way to handle the situation, be clear, be consistent and be kind. While there may be feelings of anger, be sure to keep them under control and focused on the action -- not the child.

Proverbs 15:1: "A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath."

3. Forgive

There is no greater demonstration of a parent's love for their child than when they forgive an offense, especially if the child has harmed you personally by insult or assumption. We demonstrate our heavenly Father's agape love most vividly when we take them in our arms and reassure them of our love for them.

Colossians 3:12-13: "Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, accepting one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive."

4. Forget

I know you can't remove the memories of the past, but you can LET. THEM. GO. Don't remind them of past mistakes. Don't use idle threats of "If you ever do this again...." Every offense has its own consequence. Don't let the consequence be that you will bring it up time and time again and remind them of their failures constantly. Aren't you glad God isn't like that?

Psalms 103:11-13: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His faithful love toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him."

5. Refocus

One of the best ways to get past the pain of an indiscretion is to focus on something positive. It is said that the ratio of positive comments to negative should be 5:1. In other words, let your negative words be few and be sure to reaffirm them with positive alternatives. When you choose to focus on the good and the right, you give them the tools they need to make better decisions in the future.

Philippians 4:8: "Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable -- if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise -- dwell on these things."

Being a parent is the most difficult and most rewarding responsibility on the planet. While every child is different, and even the circumstances surrounding their choices can influence the decisions they make, we have an obligation to do our part in being prepared for those moments that we know are coming.

When your adorable little Timmy or sweet little Tammy suddenly turn rebellious, you had better be on your knees asking God for wisdom and direction. Not every child will respond the way you want, and often you won't see immediate results from your laborious attempt to plant and water and prune seeds of righteousness, but I can assure you that standing on the principles of God's Word you will see fruit in due season.

My babies are having babies now and I can honestly tell you that they are great parents. I can only pray that they learned from what I did right -- and what I did wrong. With

confidence I can say that I tried. I begged God for wisdom before they were ever born, and trusted Him to guide them, convict them and correct them -- and to show me what my part was in all of it.

You cannot be your child's Holy Spirit, but you can be their prayer warrior. Be encouraged today. You are not alone. You are not perfect and neither is your child. That's why we need the Lord. He is the ultimate authority on parenting, and He loves them even more than you do!

About the author: Vickie Munton serves alongside her husband Doug, pastor of First Baptist Church in O'Fallon, Ill.

Personal touch drives churchgoer giving, study shows

by Bob Smietana

NASHVILLE (BP) -- When it comes to charity, a personal touch works 10 times better than Facebook -- at least for churchgoers, according to a study released April 17. A new report from LifeWay Research found more than half of Protestant churchgoers say a personal connection inspired them to give money to a charity for the first time. The evangelical research firm conducted the survey this past Aug. 22–30.

Social media such as Facebook inspired only 4 percent of similar donations.

Three-quarters of churchgoers support at least one charity besides their church. According to the survey, nearly half do volunteer work, while a similar number have made changes to the charities they support. Churchgoers like to give -- and to get involved, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. "The question is, where will churchgoers give this year? The answer lies in having a personal connection," McConnell said. "It turns out charity really does start close to home."

Charitable giving

The nationally representative study asked adults who attend a Protestant church at least once a month to look at their charitable giving from 2016. Sixty percent of those churchgoers gave to the same number of charities in 2016 as they did the previous year. Fifteen percent gave to more charities. Eight percent gave to fewer, while 15 percent were not sure. Among those who donated to charities, 49 percent made changes in which charities they supported in 2016. This included about a third (31 percent) who gave to a charity they'd never supported before.

"The reality is that funding for charities is anything but stable," McConnell said. "When a donor adds a charity, it can take away from ministries they have supported in the past." When asked what factor most prompted them to give, 21 percent say they knew someone who worked there. Nineteen percent had met someone from the charity, while 18 percent say friends of theirs supported the charity. Fifteen percent had been to a fundraiser, while 15 percent had received a letter from the charity. Eleven percent had volunteered for the charity. Phone calls (5 percent), television ads (5 percent), social network sites such as Facebook (4 percent), online ads (3 percent) and email appeals (2 percent) were less influential.

Most donors support a few charities

LifeWay Research also asked churchgoers how many charities they gave to last year, aside from their local congregation. Those charities could be religious or non-religious. The donations could not be property or volunteer time. Seventy-three percent of churchgoers gave to at least one charity beyond their church. This includes 15 percent who gave to one additional charity and 58 percent who gave to multiple charities. About a third (34 percent) gave to two or three additional charities. Nineteen percent gave to between four and seven charities. About 6 percent gave to eight or more additional charities.

About a quarter (27 percent) gave to no additional charities.

Churchgoers from Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal backgrounds are most likely to give only to their church (38 percent). Nondenominational Christians (30 percent) and Baptists (29 percent) were more likely to give only to their church than Lutherans (14 percent). Lutherans (29 percent) are more likely to give to five or more charities than Baptist (13 percent), nondenominational (12 percent) or Assemblies of God/Pentecostal churchgoers (10 percent).

About half (48 percent) of churchgoers say they volunteer at a charity -- including their church. Forty-four percent don't volunteer. Eight percent aren't sure. Those who go to church at least once a week (51 percent) are more likely to say they volunteer than those who attend once or twice a month (30 percent). More than half of Methodist (63 percent), Lutheran (55 percent) and nondenominational churchgoers (53 percent) volunteer. Baptists (38 percent) are less likely.

"Donors come and go frequently," McConnell said. "It helps to know why they give in the first place -- typically a personal connection to the ministry or charity."

Methodology

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

For this survey, a nationally representative sample of U.S. Protestant and nondenominational adults (18 and older) who attend religious services once a month or more often was selected from the KnowledgePanel. Sample stratification and base weights were used for gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, metro/non-metro, home ownership, education and income to reflect the most recent U.S. Census data. Study-specific weights included for gender by age, race/ethnicity, region and education to reflect GSS 2016 data. The completed sample is 1,010 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.

LifeWay Research is a Nashville-based evangelical research firm that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

About the author: Bob Smietana is senior writer for Facts & Trends magazine.

Summer Fun at Bambi Lake

By Nancy Spears

Every day is a new day at Bambi Lake. New challenges, new experiences, new people await you. If you don't know what I am talking about, you have not been to Bambi.

Only last week, snow and ice were plentiful, making travel around the camp difficult at best. Many of the staff had vehicles stuck somewhere between home and the lodge, so walking became the best mode of travel. Melting snow brought deep ruts of mud and rivers of water running and pooling, making travel by foot undesirable, so vehicles splashing through puddles was the best mode of travel and it was fun!

This week a beautiful new day dawns as the sun rises, bringing us a sunny and bright spring day. The tapping of a woodpecker and the warbling of another bird are heard, making a most wonderful song to greet the day. Two deer bound down the path and into the woods. The trees are budding and spring is finally showing true signs of its arrival. Winter is over, and the promise of a new day has come.

Today the puddles have dried up. The grass is visible in many places. It is a new day! "His mercies are new every morning, great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:23. Spring is the best time to start the new outdoor projects for the year and clean up from the winter storms. We have many volunteer work teams providing manpower necessary to accomplish a large number of projects around the camp. Michigan Disaster Relief is coming to cut out dead trees and get our supply of firewood ready for summer campfires. North End Youth plan to clean up the grounds. Riverwalk Youth have a building painting project planned. The Chilton Builders for Christ are coming to renovate the bathhouse and build cabins in the campground. Hillsdale Baptist Church is bringing a team to tackle whatever else needs to be done before the summer camping season begins. Volunteer opportunities are always available at Bambi Lake.

Another couple has joined the Bambi staff living at camp, bringing our total staff to six, and our summer staff will be joining us soon. A full staff of sixteen or more will be available to meet the needs of campers this summer. To provide the level of service we are striving for at camp, the additional staff is meeting a critical need.

New camps and events are planned for the summer season. Kicking off with the first big name gospel concert being held at Bambi Lake, the Martins, will be performing on Saturday evening during Memorial Weekend.

The God and Country Gospel Concert event, featuring Karen Peck and New River, will be held in on the Fourth of July.

Summer camps will feature two Wild Weeks for teens with a different band for each week as well as a comedy group featured mid-week. Wild Week II will provide an opportunity to work on a ministry project with Habitat for Humanity.

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Having a visionary leader directing the camp makes every day a new adventure. Bambi Lake Camp is moving forward and changing on a daily basis. In addition to the new camps, retreats and events, there are always dreams and ideas of ways to make the reach of our BSCM camp more effective. To have a camp that is successful means that it is busy year round, well-attended by the people from our churches and the communities around the state, and is ministering to people where it is planted. Bambi Lake is becoming that camp! To God be the glory!

Video games studied in new theological framework

by Brian Koonce/The Pathway

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) -- Matt Millsap admits he made up the word "theoludology" for his doctoral dissertation in systematic theology. Google theoludology (pronounced theolude-ology) and literally every result includes Millsap's name. Broken up into its roots, his dissertation topic becomes clearer, even if doesn't become easier to pronounce. "Theo-" and "-ology" are clear enough. "Ludo" is the Latin root for "game" or "play."

Mashed together, Millsap created a new discipline: thinking about video games from a theological point of view. Millsap is assistant director of library services at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and teaches courses such as Christianity and the Arts at the seminary's Spurgeon College.

And he's a bit of a video game nerd.

Literally every surface of his office is piled high with systematic theology textbooks and academic journals, but his home entertainment center is piled high with a PlayStation 4, Xbox One and a Nintendo Switch. While some may dismiss gaming as a time-wasting holdover from boyhood or a trivial escape from the rigors of academia, Millsap would ask them to press pause. Theologians regularly interact with media and the arts, he notes. Film and television are common topic for theological dialogue, and religious thinkers have been pondering painting, literature, sculpture and music for thousands of years.

Why isn't the same true, he asks, for an art form that's emerged in the past 40 years?

Beyond Pac-Man & Super Mario

One reason Millsap feels the time has come to consider video games with God in mind is that they have seriously evolved as technology has improved. "We are naturally a storytelling people; that's how God made us to communicate," Millsap said. "You think back to arcade games of the late 1970s and the graphics were very crude. There wasn't a whole lot technologically we could do to convey a story."

So there basically wasn't one. Games were simple and straightforward. Players dropped Tetris blocks into place, urged a hapless Frogger across a busy road, or frantically pressed UP UP DOWN DOWN LEFT RIGHT LEFT RIGHT to cheat an early shoot 'em up. Forty years later, gone are the primitive pixels of Pong or Pac-Man and the simple sprites of Super Mario or Space Invaders.

"Now, in 2018, game designers have millions of dollars and all sorts of technology at their disposal," Millsap said. "They can tell a story much in the same way that a film can. Not all games do this, but people want to play stories."

Indeed, it's now common for the most popular and awarded games to feature 10-, 20- or even 50-hour storylines complete with motion-capture acting and top-tier voice talent. Many high-profile games are essentially interactive movies, and a compelling single-player story can overcome technological weaknesses or the occasional gameplay flaw.

Theological framework

And just like the opening level of an unfamiliar game, Millsap has come up with a tutorial for tackling these story-focused games and figuring out and critiquing what they might communicate about God. "Games are their own thing," he said. "You have to respect the medium in terms of what it does and how it communicates, then bring theology into the conversation and meld them together."

So he came up with a game studies -- or ludological -- method, drawing from the Wesleyan Quadrilateral, a traditional Methodist way of approaching Christian theology that begins with Scripture, then folds in tradition, reason and experience. Being a good Baptist, Millsap keeps Scripture primary -- an "extraludic norm," he calls it. With that in mind, Millsap cautions that Christians should be discerning about which games they play to ensure that no content will cause them to sin, just as they should do with movies or literature, and they should limit games to their appropriate audiences.

"Anything we discover as we dialogue with a video game has to be held up against the standard of Scripture," Millsap said. "If it doesn't, then we have to reject whatever they might be saying about God as false." With the overarching umbrella of scriptural primacy in view, game studies had its own versions of tradition, reason and experience. Gaming's traditions, or doctrines, become a sort of gaming literacy. Once a player "gets" how a certain genre of game works and is structured, they know what to expect and how to approach the next one. One doctrine informs the next.

"It's much like how you can't talk about Christology; the doctrine of Jesus without having that bleed into your soteriology; the doctrine of salvation," Millsap said.

Video gaming's milieu

Next, reason equates to game mechanics and structure: the press of a button or the nudge of a joystick will trigger this. Just as there is order and structure to the universe as God created it and He has given mankind reason to ponder it, video games follow the rules of their own creator.

For experience, its ludological twin is what Millsap calls player identification and agency. "We have to be careful not to elevate an individual experience to a level it should not be in theology," he said, "but the way it interacts with a video game is different. You're transporting yourself into the role of that character. "When your character performs an action, it's different than an actor on a movie screen performing that action. You are the one controlling it. If that character believes something, do you believe it too? Are you acting in your own beliefs or that character's?"

Millsap's go-to illustration of this type of theological thinking is the game "Journey." A title originally released for the PlayStation 3 in 2012, it is also available for the PlayStation 4. Players take control of a mysterious, unnamed, hooded character to go on a journey. You wake up, see a light on top of a mountain, and start your story. That's it. The Game of the Year according to the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences, it racked up plenty of praise: various gaming publications called it "a hallmark of excellence," "a glorious, thoughtful, moving masterpiece" and "mysterious and beautiful." Not bad for a game with no dialogue, no instructions and no text. Players inherently know the game's designers have something planned out to experience.

"They wanted to make something you could interpret, and that's where I apply that theoludology framework," Millsap said. "What might this say about a Christian's journey through life in terms of what God has called us to? It all leads up to the final culmination which is this great eschatological having to do with the end times; scene where you think that -- "

Millsap won't give away the ending for those concerned with spoilers, but the scene "makes a lot more sense from a Christian interpretation than any other religion." So what's the point? Millsap is not saying that mashing buttons is a path to a deeper understanding of God or defeating the next game's challenge is a discipleship tool. The idea is just that it's worth considering the stories and scenarios that gamers encounter from a theological perspective. "I play video games anyway as a form of recreation," Millsap said. "It's something I enjoy in my spare time much in the same way I enjoy reading a book or listening to music, which are gifts from God that He made us able to enjoy as recreation. It's like watching someone play football or playing it yourself; we play and watch sports and games for the sheer joy of playing, even without that explicit theological component to the narrative.

"But because so many video games now go in a narrative direction and tell a story, it makes sense that we would want to consider them from that perspective. I need to ask myself important questions, and think about whether I believe what it's saying is true. If a video game is intending to tell a serious narrative and I don't approach it seriously, thoughtfully and from a Christian perspective, then I'm not doing it justice."

Game Over

About the author: Brian Koonce is assistant editor of The Pathway (mbcpathway.com), newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

SENDING

Equipping the American church for missions

by Emily Verlin

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) -- Before I moved back to the U.S. after serving as a missionary for two years in South Asia, many people told me to expect a difficult season as I returned home. They told me I would experience reverse culture shock in a variety of ways.

Reverse culture shock is a common experience for many returning missionaries. And, speaking from experience, it would be easy to let these struggles paralyze “us” when we return from the field. However, our field experience -- whether it was two years or 20 -- has given us a tremendous opportunity to continue the work back home. Scripture holds a high view of the local church and gives us examples of how people like Paul and Barnabas equipped the local church for mission (Acts 14:24-28). Like them, missionaries can take their passion for sharing the Gospel and turn it into a desire to equip the American church.

Sharing the Gospel through shared experiences

Last Christmas, I invited a South Asian friend to go see Christmas lights around our city. Instead of going with her by myself, I decided to invite a fellow church member, Sarah, to go with us. During the evening, many doors were opened for Gospel conversations. Sarah shared the Christmas story and later elaborated on why we serve the one true God. Afterward, Sarah was overcome with joy. We talked about what a privilege it was to share the best news of all. She was reminded of how easy it can be to have spiritual conversations, and she shared her desire to make Gospel proclamation a higher priority. She was convicted that she had not taken full advantage of the Gospel opportunities with her own South Asian neighbors.

The Lord used that evening to challenge and encourage me in three specific ways.

Build relationships with the unreached in my city, share the Gospel with them, and bring fellow believers with me.

Jesus exemplified this methodology by bringing his disciples with Him as He preached the Gospel in word and deed. Believers can attend every evangelism class and training that comes along, but there is something about actually seeing another believer demonstrate Gospel proclamation that makes it click. I have found that my best evangelistic conversations have happened alongside another believer. Just as Sarah said, sharing the Gospel is not that hard!

Invite more of my believing friends into my relationships with South Asians.

Before we went to see Christmas lights that night, my South Asian friend invited us in for chai with her husband. We ended up staying a full hour before we ventured out. Sarah mentioned later how unusual that experience was for her. Her first instinct when we were invited in for chai was to say no. She didn't want to be a burden on the couple.

However, South Asian culture is very different from American culture. Although we may see guests as an inconvenience, South Asians see guests as an honor. Many Americans Christians fear stepping into cross-cultural relationships because they have not had a cross-cultural experience. As returned missionaries, we can use our experience to teach other believers about and invite them into our cross-cultural relationships. In doing so we help lessen initial fear and discomfort and increase a desire to build cross-cultural and missional relationships.

Believers experience great joy when we share the hope of the Gospel with someone who has not heard and is searching.

We are not merely saved from our sin. We are saved to make disciples of all nations. We fully live out the life God intends for us when we share the Gospel with the unreached around us. In doing so, we glorify God and experience the unique joy of joining God on mission -- part of the intended purpose of our salvation. This joy we experience can only come from our obedience to proclaim the good news. It is a unique and contagious joy.

I pray as missionaries come back from the field, they are burdened with the state of faith here in America and with the lack of joy many American Christians experience when they are not obedient to share the Gospel. It is an act of love toward your fellow believer to encourage and equip them to live on mission. I also pray that many more believers would choose obedience to the Great Commission for the glory of God and the sake of the lost around them.

Returned missionaries can use their unique cross-cultural experiences to equip the American church to share the Gospel with those around them. As missionaries come back from the field, I pray they will take advantage of this unique opportunity and allow themselves to be used in catalytic ways. I also pray that the Lord will raise up an army of American believers passionate about sharing the Gospel and making disciples of all nations starting in their backyard.

If you would like more information about serving as a missionary or simply sharing your faith through conversation, go to imb.org.

About the author: Emily Verlin is a missions minister at a local church in Tennessee. Previously she served in South Asia with the 2+2 program through the IMB and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Blessing Bikers, Not Bikes

by: Darrel Manuel

GARDEN CITY, MI - Merriman Road Baptist Church F.A.I.T.H. Riders will host their Annual Biker Blessing on Saturday May 19th 2018.

This year is the 10th annual Biker Blessing, what's a Biker Blessing you may ask? in short it's an opportunity to share the Gospel message with motorcyclists. 46 years ago a Catholic Church in Baldwin, Mi started a "Blessing of the Bikes", where they have a Priest sprinkle holy water on your motorcycle and say a pray of blessing and safety over your bike. This has since evolved into a giant 3 day party. It's a great fundraiser for there food pantry, but not very evangelistic.

When the Garden City F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapter was commissioned in 2009 they wanted to offer an alternative. They wanted to be the free, family-friendly, Biblical alternative. Their goal was simply to invite bikers from to the church parking lot for some free food, music, a bike wash, and a bike show. Then, they would tell them and show them they are loved by the church and most importantly Jesus Christ. There's a short message and a prayer and blessing over the "Biker" not the bike. The chapter explains that the bike is just an inanimate object, and that God wants to bless them and have a relationship with them. They are then invited to accept that relationship. Since 2009 hundreds of bikers have come to hear the Gospel message.

In 2010, Darrel Manuel was diagnosed with throat cancer, 2 chapter members lost their brothers to lung cancer, and a young man in our church lost his battle with a brain tumor. From those experiences was born the Matthew Brotherton Memorial Cancer Ride. After the blessing and for a small fee of \$20 (\$25 with passenger) supporters go on a guided ride through beautiful S.E. Michigan. All the money raised goes to benefit the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Ride for Kids.

About 4 years ago a new feature was added, the 3 Minute Story. The 3 Minute Story is an opportunity to share the Gospel with someone in a one-on-one situation by giving an opportunity to enter them into a "raffle." The cost of the ticket? 3 minutes of your time in which we share the Good News of Jesus Christ. We do give out a prize, too. This year's grand prize will be a \$250 gift card.

The F.A.I.T.H. Riders chapter is inviting everyone to attend Saturday May 19th from 10a-2p at Merriman Road Baptist Church, 2055 Merriman Road Garden City and to bring an unchurched friend. All are welcome no matter what they ride, or even if they ride.

F.A.I.T.H. Riders is an International Motorcycle Ministry with over 300 chapters in North America and 2 in Cuba for more information about F.A.I.T.H. Riders go to:
www.faithriders.com

About the author: Darrel Manuel is the Chaplain / Director of the Merriman Road Baptist Church Chapter of F.A.I.T.H. Riders he is an endorsed Chaplain through the North American Mission Board, a Millwright by vocation, a father and husband.

Four discoveries when Christians exercise their faith and proclaim the gospel

By Dave Malnes

MERIDIAN, ID - Chuckling in your face. Wincing in disapproval. Polite smiles with a faraway look in their eyes. God's Word has that effect on lost souls.

When believers receive disappointing responses from proclaiming the gospel, it can cause us to think twice when opportunities arise again. What are ways that a Christian believer can continue to be bold witnesses? It starts with discovering that strength comes from our weaknesses.

We tend to think that gifted evangelists never seem to get rattled. They appear bold and fearless. They readily talk about their faith with anyone God places in their lives. But for many Christians, including myself, we are prone to be reluctant witnesses. We twinge with awkwardness at the prospect of sharing a gospel message with a lost soul. And when golden moments arise for us to step out and share our faith with others, we become mute. Who has stood on the shores of guilt and watched missed opportunities float away in full sail?

What prompts us to dive off the high board of our own inadequacies and be God's ambassadors? What dares a redeemed soul to jump off the bridge and share the Good News of forgiveness and peace found only in Christ? Are we like Gideon, demanding a sign before we step out in faith? Are we like Jonah, who think all our neighbors are Ninevites?

The Apostle Paul answers these questions. He acknowledges fear. He confesses timidity. He understands weakness. In fact, he declares that only in his weaknesses that he finds his strength. (2 Cor. 12:10) Perhaps Paul was not gregarious, outgoing, or an extrovert — all characteristics that we may consider necessary to be witnessing giants. Instead, Paul would agree that in humility, we are bold. In gentleness, we are resolute. In patience, we are persistent. In peace, we are discerning. The source of Paul's strength found in his weaknesses, was Christ living in him. A believer's weaknesses are often exposed in evangelism. This is the reason why verbally proclaiming the gospel is uncomfortable, intimidating, and scary.

There will always be threats – real or imagined – and potential consequences associated with being God's ambassador and verbally sharing his message with others. Yet, only through the power of the message can lost souls receive the knowledge of the Truth. God sets apart believers to communicate its message and unsheathe its power. Every evangelist gets rattled. Their boldness is not necessarily a personality trait, but an outward appearance of an inward trust in God's promises. And the greatest promises God gives us with the Great Commission is that he is with us. Faith trusts God's promises and takes him for his Word. Proclaiming the gospel is an exercise of a faith.

When believers exercise their faith and proclaim the gospel, they make four discoveries: After jumping off the high dive of our own inadequacies, we discover that Christ has always been there. Like a little child jumping off the side of the pool, we fall into our father's waiting arms and realize that there was nothing to fear. There was no need to be intimidated.

After jumping off the ledge of our own fears of rejection, we discover that God provides unique opportunities specifically designed for us. We were arriving at an appointment that is often pre-arranged by God.

After receiving a disappointing response by people, we discover that we don't need to take their response at face value. It's not personal. It's between them and God. Believers process rejection by understanding that receiving faith is often a process. Their soil was not ready for them to respond well.

After sharing God's Word, we discover that proclaiming the gospel is not natural. Verbally proclaiming the gospel requires courage and a measure of boldness. It is something that we cannot generate on our own but comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. The promise of his presence (Matt 28:19) comes true. He is with us.

Evangelism exposes our weaknesses. Believers are blessed by the activity of verbally proclaiming the gospel by trusting and receiving God's promises in a powerful way.

Adapted by previous blog post, "Four key discoveries in overcoming the fear of evangelism." (November 2013)

Evangelists are effective when they:

Trust that God's Word is sufficient for salvation. They need nothing more than the message.

Understand that their most powerful tool is God's Word and use it exclusively to bring as many people to heaven as possible.

Understand that God's Word alone is all they need to proclaim to others the only way to life with God – both now and forever.

Understand that the Holy Spirit works through the Word to bring salvation to everyone who believes. Their role in evangelism is to get the Word out.

Accept God's commission to go out into the world and unsheathe the powerful Words of Truth.

Are more intent on winning souls than winning arguments. They focus on planting seeds of the gospel and trusting that God will cause the seed to grow.

About the author: Dave Malnes is the founder and director of Praise and Proclaim Ministries in Meridian, Idaho (www.praiseandproclaim.com). This ministry is all about providing meaningful opportunities for Christians to actively share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

MICHIGAN NEWS

BSCM and oneMISSION.tv: A Partnership in Telling Michigan's Story

By Staff

Fenton – Three years ago, as the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) began a new stage of leadership, one of the primary goals was for the staff to do a more effective job of communicating with churches across the state. One of the most immediate results of that goal was for newly elected Executive Director, Tim Patterson, as well as, State Director of Missions, Dr. Tony Lynn and State Evangelism Director, Mike Durbin, to hit the road. The three men set out for face-to-face visits with as many churches and pastors as possible. In a matter of a few months, the trio logged hundreds of hours and thousands of miles all over Michigan.

The second step in the communication goal was to do a better job of maintaining that dialogue on a day-to-day basis. So the decision was made to migrate the state newspaper, the Baptist Beacon, from a month-to-month printed edition to a more organic and responsive online newsjournal.

That decision led to a relationship with oneMISSION.tv, a media production company with more than 10 years of experience working with ministries and non-profit organizations, and specifically experience in assisting Southern Baptist state conventions and other SBC agencies such as the North American Mission Board, the International Mission Board, and the SBC Executive Committee. Their motto is “helping ministries tell their story”. President and managing partner of oneMISSION.tv, Doug Keeseey says, “The partnership between us and the BSCM has given us a great joy, and not a day goes by that we don’t consider new ways to tell the story of Michigan Southern Baptists.

oneMISSION.tv not only led the transition of the Baptist Beacon to an online publication, but also helped the BSCM with a total rebranding of its logo and website. Over the more than two-year partnership, oneMISSION.tv has served as the managing editor for the Beacon, as well as, handling the graphic design for all of BSCM’s promotion and flyers.

In addition, they have produced videos the last three years to unveil BSCM’s yearly themes and emphases. The most recent example is the video for this year’s theme, The Power of One.

BSCM leadership believe that they need to continually look for better ways to communicate with the churches they serve, so this year they commissioned oneMISSION.tv to produce a 28 page magazine laying out “The Power of One” theme.

It included columns and stories about the many ways that Michigan Southern Baptist churches are fulfilling the Great Commission and punching holes in the darkness through starting, strengthening, and sending churches.

BSCM Communication Coordinator, Jamie Lynn says, “oneMISSION.tv gives the BSCM a quality pathway of communication to stay connected. They understand Michigan Baptists, and enthusiastically help us reach our churches.”

Later this year, oneMISSION.tv will once again assist in the promotion of the Frances E. Brown State Mission Offering. They will produce numerous resources to assist churches in promoting the mission offering including; flyers, bulletin inserts, and videos that tell the stories of the Michigan's different ministries that are assisted by the offering.

As the BSCM enters into the third year of it's new goal to better communicate with the churches that make up the Michigan convention, they strive to find new and better ways to build the partnership between the staff and the churches they serve. oneMISSION is blessed to be a partner in achieving these efforts for them and with them.

Summer Fun at Bambi Lake

By Nancy Spears

Every day is a new day at Bambi Lake. New challenges, new experiences, new people await you. If you don't know what I am talking about, you have not been to Bambi.

Only last week, snow and ice were plentiful, making travel around the camp difficult at best. Many of the staff had vehicles stuck somewhere between home and the lodge, so walking became the best mode of travel. Melting snow brought deep ruts of mud and rivers of water running and pooling, making travel by foot undesirable, so vehicles splashing through puddles was the best mode of travel and it was fun!

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Spring is the best time to start the new outdoor projects for the year and clean up from the winter storms. We have many volunteer work teams providing manpower necessary to accomplish a large number of projects around the camp. Michigan Disaster Relief is coming to cut out dead trees and get our supply of firewood ready for summer campfires. North End Youth plan to clean up the grounds. Riverwalk Youth have a building painting project planned. The Chilton Builders for Christ are coming to renovate the bathhouse and build cabins in the campground. Hillsdale Baptist Church is bringing a team to tackle whatever else needs to be done before the summer camping season begins. Volunteer opportunities are always available at Bambi Lake.

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SBC NEWS

Equipping the American church for missions

by Emily Verlin

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Reverse culture shock is a common experience for many returning missionaries. And, speaking from experience, it would be easy to let these struggles paralyze "us" when we return from the field. However, our field experience -- whether it was two years or 20 -- has given us a tremendous opportunity to continue the work back home. Scripture holds a high view of the local church and gives us examples of how people like Paul and Barnabas equipped the local church for mission (Acts 14:24-28). Like them, missionaries can take their passion for sharing the Gospel and turn it into a desire to equip the American church.

Sharing the Gospel through shared experiences

Last Christmas, I invited a South Asian friend to go see Christmas lights around our city. Instead of going with her by myself, I decided to invite a fellow church member, Sarah, to go with us. During the evening, many doors were opened for Gospel conversations. Sarah shared the Christmas story and later elaborated on why we serve the one true God. Afterward, Sarah was overcome with joy. We talked about what a privilege it was to share the best news of all. She was reminded of how easy it can be to have spiritual conversations, and she shared her desire to make Gospel proclamation a higher priority. She was convicted that she had not taken full advantage of the Gospel opportunities with her own South Asian neighbors.

The Lord used that evening to challenge and encourage me in three specific ways.

Build relationships with the unreached in my city, share the Gospel with them, and bring fellow believers with me.

Jesus exemplified this methodology by bringing his disciples with Him as He preached the Gospel in word and deed. Believers can attend every evangelism class and training that comes along, but there is something about actually seeing another believer demonstrate Gospel proclamation that makes it click. I have found that my best evangelistic conversations have happened alongside another believer. Just as Sarah said, sharing the Gospel is not that hard!

Invite more of my believing friends into my relationships with South Asians.

Before we went to see Christmas lights that night, my South Asian friend invited us in for chai with her husband. We ended up staying a full hour before we ventured out. Sarah mentioned later how unusual that experience was for her. Her first instinct when we were invited in for chai was to say no. She didn't want to be a burden on the couple.

However, South Asian culture is very different from American culture. Although we may see guests as an inconvenience, South Asians see guests as an honor. Many Americans Christians fear stepping into cross-cultural relationships because they have not had a cross-cultural experience. As returned missionaries, we can use our experience to teach other believers about and invite them into our cross-cultural relationships. In doing so we help lessen initial fear and discomfort and increase a desire to build cross-cultural and missional relationships.

Believers experience great joy when we share the hope of the Gospel with someone who has not heard and is searching.

We are not merely saved from our sin. We are saved to make disciples of all nations. We fully live out the life God intends for us when we share the Gospel with the unreached around us. In doing so, we glorify God and experience the unique joy of joining God on mission -- part of the intended purpose of our salvation. This joy we experience can only come from our obedience to proclaim the good news. It is a unique and contagious joy.

I pray as missionaries come back from the field, they are burdened with the state of faith here in America and with the lack of joy many American Christians experience when they are not obedient to share the Gospel. It is an act of love toward your fellow believer

to encourage and equip them to live on mission. I also pray that many more believers would choose obedience to the Great Commission for the glory of God and the sake of the lost around them.

Returned missionaries can use their unique cross-cultural experiences to equip the American church to share the Gospel with those around them. As missionaries come back from the field, I pray they will take advantage of this unique opportunity and allow themselves to be used in catalytic ways. I also pray that the Lord will raise up an army of American believers passionate about sharing the Gospel and making disciples of all nations starting in their backyard.

If you would like more information about serving as a missionary or simply sharing your faith through conversation, go to imb.org.

About the author: Emily Verlin is a missions minister at a local church in Tennessee. Previously she served in South Asia with the 2+2 program through the IMB and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

How to Make a Difference Through Prayer

by Ronnie Floyd

WASHINGTON, DC - Let me ask you a question: How can millions of people gathering together in prayer impact our nation?

Each year since 1988, the National Day of Prayer has been designated as the first Thursday in May. A law that originated in 1952 was unanimously amended by both the House and the Senate and then signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on Thursday, May 8, 1988.

This year — May 3, 2018 — will be the 30th anniversary of the **National Day of Prayer**.

According to the National Day of Prayer website, more than 30,000 observances of the 2017 National Day of Prayer were attended by 2 million people. From sunrise in Maine to sunset in Hawaii, 40,000 volunteers organized prayer observances for our nation from small towns to state capitals to Washington, D.C. Additionally, people stopped their activities to pray for America in schools, businesses, churches, homes, county courthouses, and on the steps of city halls. The National Day of Prayer was also experienced in some way in more than 80 countries of the world and is even printed on Hallmark® calendars.

The Need for Prayer in America has Never Been Greater

Mobilizing unified public prayer for America may be the most important thing we can do right now for our nation. America is broken. Division is undeniable. Racial tension is alarming. Lawlessness abounds. Reconciliation appears impossible. Government cannot fix us. Politics will not heal us. America needs God now more than any time in our generation.

It is prayer that precedes and forwards the advancement of the gospel. It is prayer that precedes any great movement of God. It is prayer that will precede the revival of the church and the next great spiritual awakening. In this desperate and urgent hour when

turmoil and division are evident in America and security threats are very real, it is imperative that we do all we can to mobilize unified public prayer for America.

Unity Is Our Theme in 2018

Each year we choose a theme for the annual observances across America. This year our theme is “Pray for America ... Unity,” and our Scripture text is “Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

The culture’s dark, hopeless condition is the perfect backdrop to call America to unity. There is not one person who has lived in this nation in the past five years who would try to convince anyone that this nation is the picture of unity. Our culture is the complete opposite of unity.

The National Day of Prayer is positioned to pray for our nation to experience unity. That is why we are working hard each day to become a multi-church, multi-denominational, multi-ministry, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-generational movement of prayer for America. We need to infiltrate this entire nation with the message of unity.

Become Involved in Your Community’s Prayer Event

In this season of my life and ministry, I am deeply convinced that one of the greatest things we can do is rally millions of people to pray for America. A great spiritual revival is the greatest need in the church, and the next Great Awakening is the greatest need in America. Prayer must and will precede our generation’s realization of these great needs. That is why I have taken on this calling to lead the National Day of Prayer. I cannot do this without you. In your community, please help us mobilize unified public prayer for America. Whether you are a layperson or the God-called pastor of a local church, God can use you to make a difference through the National Day of Prayer.

Here are five ways you can prepare to be involved on Thursday, May 3, 2018:

1. Begin to engage with us now. You can begin to participate with us by signing up for our newsletter on our [website](#) (see the banner at the top of the page). You will receive various articles and communication about all that is occurring between now and May 3. We will communicate consistently to keep you informed.
2. Plan now to participate in your community’s prayer events. Find an observance in your community or region, and plan to attend. If you do not know of an observance, start one with some friends or through your church.
3. Begin an additional or a new observance of the National Day of Prayer in your community. Our team is ready to talk to you about what this means. If you go to the “Volunteer” section of our website and you can find out how you can create an observance. We will equip you to do it.

If you are ready to ask others to be part of your team, together you can plan an event somewhere in your community. You can pray for America in schools, businesses, churches, homes, county courthouses, and on the steps of city halls. Your observance may last only 30 minutes in a business setting or as long as 90 minutes in a large event

in your community. Regardless of how long it lasts, we can assist you in planning what is most important.

4. Involve your church in prayer for our nation. If I had the opportunity to personally speak with every pastor and church in America, I would explain that the National Day of Prayer provides a unique opportunity to engage all kinds of people in their communities who love America and hope for its best. Some of these community members may not know Christ personally, but this service or observance can introduce them in a positive, non-threatening way to the things of God and the claims of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, talk to your pastor about your church leading an observance of the National Day of Prayer. A church can host an early morning observance as well as another one at a different time of day. Just think what would happen if each pastor and church in America established a service or observance on the National Day of Prayer.

Realize you can create as many observances in your community as desired and there will still not be enough to mobilize your entire community to pray for America. May 3 should be a day in America where at least 100,000 gatherings occur in observance of the National Day of Prayer. It is my hope that every Christ-follower would want to join with others to pray for America.

5. Support the National Day of Prayer in prayer and with a financial gift. For 364 days a year, we prepare for the National Day of Prayer on the first Thursday of May. Additionally, it is our desire to see God create a great prayer movement in every community that would become a catalyst for the revival in the church and a spiritual awakening in America. Pray for me and for our team. If God leads you, send a financial gift to the National Day of Prayer or to the National Day of Prayer Task Force, P.O. Box 64225, Colorado Springs, CO, 80962, (800) 444-8828. You can help us mobilize unified public prayer for America. You can make a difference.

About the author: Dr. Ronnie Floyd serves as president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force and senior pastor of Cross Church in Springdale, Arkansas. He is the author of 20 books, including *The Power of Prayer and Fasting*, and served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 2014-2016. He and his wife, Jeana, have two sons and daughters-in-law and seven grandchildren.

Personal touch drives churchgoer giving, study shows

by Bob Smietana

NASHVILLE (BP) -- When it comes to charity, a personal touch works 10 times better than Facebook -- at least for churchgoers, according to a study released April 17. A new report from LifeWay Research found more than half of Protestant churchgoers say a personal connection inspired them to give money to a charity for the first time. The evangelical research firm conducted the survey this past Aug. 22–30.

Social media such as Facebook inspired only 4 percent of similar donations.

Three-quarters of churchgoers support at least one charity besides their church. According to the survey, nearly half do volunteer work, while a similar number have made changes to the charities they support. Churchgoers like to give -- and to get involved, said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. "The question is, where will churchgoers give this year? The answer lies in having a personal connection," McConnell said. "It turns out charity really does start close to home."

Charitable giving

The nationally representative study asked adults who attend a Protestant church at least once a month to look at their charitable giving from 2016. Sixty percent of those churchgoers gave to the same number of charities in 2016 as they did the previous year. Fifteen percent gave to more charities. Eight percent gave to fewer, while 15 percent were not sure. Among those who donated to charities, 49 percent made changes in which charities they supported in 2016. This included about a third (31 percent) who gave to a charity they'd never supported before.

"The reality is that funding for charities is anything but stable," McConnell said. "When a donor adds a charity, it can take away from ministries they have supported in the past." When asked what factor most prompted them to give, 21 percent say they knew someone who worked there. Nineteen percent had met someone from the charity, while 18 percent say friends of theirs supported the charity. Fifteen percent had been to a fundraiser, while 15 percent had received a letter from the charity. Eleven percent had volunteered for the charity. Phone calls (5 percent), television ads (5 percent), social network sites such as Facebook (4 percent), online ads (3 percent) and email appeals (2 percent) were less influential.

Most donors support a few charities

LifeWay Research also asked churchgoers how many charities they gave to last year, aside from their local congregation. Those charities could be religious or non-religious. The donations could not be property or volunteer time. Seventy-three percent of churchgoers gave to at least one charity beyond their church. This includes 15 percent who gave to one additional charity and 58 percent who gave to multiple charities. About a third (34 percent) gave to two or three additional charities. Nineteen percent gave to between four and seven charities. About 6 percent gave to eight or more additional charities.

About a quarter (27 percent) gave to no additional charities.

Churchgoers from Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal backgrounds are most likely to give only to their church (38 percent). Nondenominational Christians (30 percent) and Baptists (29 percent) were more likely to give only to their church than Lutherans (14 percent). Lutherans (29 percent) are more likely to give to five or more charities than Baptist (13 percent), nondenominational (12 percent) or Assemblies of God/Pentecostal churchgoers (10 percent).

About half (48 percent) of churchgoers say they volunteer at a charity -- including their church. Forty-four percent don't volunteer. Eight percent aren't sure. Those who go to church at least once a week (51 percent) are more likely to say they volunteer than those who attend once or twice a month (30 percent). More than half of Methodist (63 percent), Lutheran (55 percent) and nondenominational churchgoers (53 percent) volunteer. Baptists (38 percent) are less likely.

"Donors come and go frequently," McConnell said. "It helps to know why they give in the first place -- typically a personal connection to the ministry or charity."

Methodology

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

For this survey, a nationally representative sample of U.S. Protestant and nondenominational adults (18 and older) who attend religious services once a month or more often was selected from the KnowledgePanel. Sample stratification and base weights were used for gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, metro/non-metro, home ownership, education and income to reflect the most recent U.S. Census data. Study-specific weights included for gender by age, race/ethnicity, region and education to reflect GSS 2016 data. The completed sample is 1,010 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.

LifeWay Research is a Nashville-based evangelical research firm that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

About the author: Bob Smietana is senior writer for Facts & Trends magazine.

AROUND THE STATE

Harper Creek Baptist has a new pastor

Harper Creek Baptist Church, located at 13222 Beadle Lake Road, Battle Creek, Michigan, welcomed Jeffery Renard, M. Div., as its Pastor on Palm Sunday (March 25, 2018). Brother Jeff is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri, and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. His wife, Sharon, is also a graduate of Southwest Baptist University with a degree in Elementary Education. They are originally from Wichita, Kansas.

Jeff and Sharon, will be moving to Battle Creek, from Albertsville, Alabama. They served for 21 years as missionaries in Brazil with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. They have have four adult children.

Harper Creek Baptist Church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Please visit their website at www.harpercreekbaptist.org for more information.

CLASSIFIEDS

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.

Pastoral Internship - Summer 2018

Cornerstone Baptist Church offers a 2-year Pastoral Internship to male seminary graduates who are pursuing pastoral ministry. This internship provides ministry experience, on-going training, assessment, and much hands on involvement with a well established church. The senior pastor has been at the church for 28 years and the staff, including other interns, offer multiple learning and training opportunities. The position is a full-time position and includes a salary, health insurance, and a house to use that is close to the church. If interested in reviewing a more detailed position description **please contact the church (586) 445-8910 and ask for Jan Alvaro.**

Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship

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

Music, Getty Music, Sovereign Grace Music, Indelible Grace Music). Please see the following website for more information regarding CrossPointe's doctrinal statement, leadership, history, and various ministries.

CrossPointe Church Website: www.crosspointemonroe.com

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

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

Qualifications:

The associate pastor must be a man who humbly and joyfully desires to serve as an elder in a local church (1 Tim 3:1, 6; Titus 1:5-9).

The associate pastor should be recognized by a local church through ordination (or willing to go through the ordination process at CrossPointe) as a man qualified for the office of elder (Titus 1:5; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 5:1-3).

The associate pastor should be a man who is actively pursuing holiness of life by the grace of God (1 Tim 4:7-10).

The associate pastor should be evangelical, conservative theologically, and in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

The associate pastor should be proficient to lead vocally in gathered worship services.

The associate pastor should be proficient to lead instrumentally with guitar and/or piano in gathered worship services.

The associate pastor should have experience in leading a team of musicians.

The associate pastor should have experience with audio and video technology.

The associate pastor should have experience developing and leading discipleship ministries in a local church.

Gathered Worship Service Responsibilities:

Direct the planning, organizing, and evaluating of a gospel-centered worship ministry.

Recruit, train, and schedule the worship team members (music, sound, media).

Lead and oversee weekly rehearsals for the worship team.

Additional Worship Ministry Responsibilities:

Develop and manage all church media content (website, social media).

Work with the lead pastor and ministry team leaders to actively and creatively use all media content as a tool to communicate about the ministries of CrossPointe Church.

Supervise and maintain all supplies, instruments, and equipment related to the worship ministry.

Prepare an estimated annual worship ministry budget and administer the approved worship ministry budget.

Upon request, assist in musical preparation for weddings, funerals, and other church and/or denomination related activities.

Discipleship Ministry Responsibilities:

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

Compensation:

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

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

CrossPointe Church
[1675 Stewart Road](#)
[Monroe, MI 48162](#)
(734) 457-1024
crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com

Bi-vocational Pastor Needed

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

Classified Ad Submission Guidelines

Baptist Beacon classifieds are posted free of charge.
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.
Classifieds must be from a BSCM church.
Be sure to include thorough details of request, name of church, contact information as well as a point of contact.
Submissions must be made no later than the 10th of the month prior to publication.
Submit all classified ads to beacon@bscm.org

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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