

## COLUMNS

### **Cure-alls, Can you trust them?**

By Tim Patterson

It seems as though almost everyday someone is claiming fantastic benefits from using their product, procedure or following a prescribed practice. Everything from simple dietary supplements to radical blood cleansing processes are being touted as the physical, mental and spiritual cure-all's of the world.

I recently read an article that was beyond bizarre. Charles B. Loftin, vice president of San Antonio college of Chiropractors, was quoted in an AP item as saying: "Had ex-Kaiser Wilhelm received chiropractic adjustments for whatever abnormal conditions from which he was suffering, the World War would have been averted." Right, and if Saddam Hussein had better dental care the Gulf War would have been unnecessary! If Slobadan Milosevic had access to better hair care products then we would not be in the mess we're in right now.

Now before you go off on me about chiropractors and their benefit to healthcare in America, just know that chiropractors provide a wonderful and needed service. On many occasions they have been of great benefit to me personally, and I believe are a legitimate health care provider. The point I am making is that we generally exaggerate the positive, and gloss over the negative when we want someone to buy into our way of thinking. It is human nature to want to be right and have others agree with you, but it is wrong to stretch the truth or lie, no matter what your motive.

I am afraid that most who are promoting the new "cure-all's for what ails us" are doing so for one reason. Money. And what is worse is that millions of Americans are following these "Pied Pipers of Promise" into physical and financial ruin. They are taking advantage of mankind's hope for health and prosperity and using the naiveté of the masses to deceive and manipulate, never disclosing the dangers and damage they can cause.

I sure am glad that our Lord didn't use the tactics of these modern day hucksters. He was straight-forward and open about what it would mean to be a "follower" of His. No hidden agendas. No undisclosed problems. No fine print. Everything was, and is, in big bold letters, "Take up your cross and follow me." That's it! He doesn't want just part of us, He wants our lives. Total, complete surrender. In return He truly is "the cure all for what ails us." And what is even better is that what He offers really works. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 KJV)

**Choose Joy**

By Mick Schatz

"The joy of the Lord is my strength  
The joy of the Lord is my strength  
In the darkness I'll dance  
In the shadows I'll sing  
The joy of the Lord is my strength"

ROSCOMMON, MI -This song chorus by Rend Collective is a powerful and challenging confession. It feels good to say it, but it can be difficult to flesh out. James 1:2-4 says "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Seriously? I should be full of joy when circumstances come against me? My joy should increase as pressures mount? This sounds completely crazy and counterintuitive. My self-nature is not wired this way! Joy is a spiritual response grounded in faith. One of my favorite sayings is, "People make choices and choices make people." Choosing joy is a great example of this. When you choose joy in the face of struggle you are choosing hope, faith, and strength. You are choosing reliance on Christ and His power and protection instead of your own. You are choosing to see with His eyes and perspective instead of your own dimly lit eyesight.

By choosing joy you are allowing Christ to form you more and more into His image! When we choose fear we are saying "yes" to depression, discouragement, anxiety, apprehension, unbelief, disobedience and on and on. This usually means we made a choice to react out of selfishness and pride. We chose a fleshly reaction grounded in unbelief. Unbelief is a virus capable major life-changing damage.

There have been times in my life when unbelief crept in, and began to wreak havoc on my belief system (God's Word) and my relationship with Christ. Questions began to play on repeat in my mind - if God really cares, why is this happening? - Is this all there is? - I've given my life to you God and this is my reward? Sound familiar?

Do you hear a theme in this whining? Selfishness. Me, me, me! Nevertheless, God has always been gracious to forgive my sinful selfishness and remind me of His faithfulness even in the middle of my faithlessness. I have discovered when I reflect on the joy of my salvation, the joy of my calling, the joy of kingdom ministry, the joy of marriage and family, the joy of friends and the faithfulness of God, unbelief disappears, the virus is destroyed. My heart changes, my faith enlarges and I can face any circumstance because the "joy of the Lord is my strength!"

On a final thought, I have also discovered joy is contagious. Visible joy in difficult times will always provoke questions from those around us. How can you be so optimistic? Why aren't you a basket case right now? How can you keep going?

The answer is simple - "I choose joy!"

**September 22 - Revitalization**

By Mike Durbin

Christ is speaking to His Church! For many of us the study, "Experiencing God" by Henry Blackaby and Claude King was transformational in our spiritual lives. They helped us see that God is always at work around us, and to learn Biblical principles to identify what He is doing. We were challenged to align our lives with God and join Him in His work.

The spirit of listening to and obeying the risen Christ will take center stage at the Church Revitalization Conference, September 22, at Eastgate Baptist Church in Burton. Richard Blackaby and Mark Clifton are helping churches across North America through: "Revive. Reversing the Trends. Reviving the Church."

The conference will focus on:

"Christ's Presence and His Church"

"Christ's Purpose and His Church"

"Reclaiming the Glory"

"Developing a Powerful Praying Church"

"Leading Out of the Overflow"

And Q/A with Richard and Mark

I want to encourage you to do all you can to attend. Come with your church family as Michigan Baptist Churches seek Christ together.

Burton is a long way from many of our churches, and we want to help you get there. If you drive with two (or more hopefully) in your car, and travel more than 200,-250 miles round trip, we will send the driver a check for \$25 to offset the gas expenses. If you have 2 (or more hopefully) in your car and drive over 251 miles round trip, we will send the driver \$40 to offset the gas expenses. (Please note that you must fill out a W9 and turn it in at the event to receive your check. This offer is only available the day of the CRC.

Everyone who attends will receive lunch and two books:

Flickering Lamps and Reclaiming Glory.

All of this for \$10 per person!

Register at [BSCM.org/register](http://BSCM.org/register).

Richard Blackaby is the President of Blackaby Ministries International. He travels internationally speaking on spiritual leadership in the home, church, and marketplace, as well as on spiritual awakening, Experiencing God, and the Christian life. Richard regularly ministers to Christian CEO's as well as church and family leaders. He served as senior pastor at Friendship Baptist Church in Winnipeg, and then as President of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary in Cochrane, Alberta, Canada for 13 years. He continues to serve as the seminary's Chancellor. He has written or co-authored more than 30 books (From his bio).

Mark Clifton is the Senior Director of Replanting at the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Mark has served as a pastor, church planter, church revitalizer, mission strategist, coach and mentor to young leaders. He has planted and replanted numerous

churches, and has also served as a national and regional leader for church planting and missions. His experience includes serving as the lead mission strategist for the Kansas/Nebraska Southern Baptist Convention, leading church planting efforts in the regions of north metro Atlanta, Georgia, serving as a church planter in Montreal, Quebec, as a Southern Baptist National Church Planting Missionary for eastern Canada, and has lead Southern Baptist church planting projects west of the Mississippi. Mark has been planting, replanting, and providing strategic mission leadership since 1978. (From his bio).

### **Win 1 of 20 Free Books**

By Tony Lynn

I am giving away 20 FREE BOOKS!

I will give away 10 editions of John MacArthur's, "Called to Lead: 26 Leadership Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Paul"

I will also give away 10 editions of Robby Gallaty's, "Growing Up: How to be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples"

For those interested here are the requirements and rules to participate:

1. On or before midnight, Tuesday, September 11, 2018 you must send a one-paragraph email to [Andrew@bscm.org](mailto:Andrew@bscm.org) explaining why you need to learn more about becoming a more effective leader.
2. In that same email, you must share your
  - a. Email address
  - b. Mobile (preferred) or home phone number
  - c. Church's name and location
  - d. Mailing address so that we can ship your book to you if you win
3. You must be an attender, member, or leader of Southern Baptist church in Michigan who currently gives to the Cooperative Program through the Baptist State Convention of Michigan.
4. You may only send in 1 email to [Andrew@bscm.org](mailto:Andrew@bscm.org) and those entering can win only 1 book during this upcoming drawing.

Drawing to be held on September 13 at 1:00 PM

The results of this drawing will be conducted through a Zoom Online Meeting on Thursday, September 13, 2018 at 1:00 PM. You need not be present to win, but your presence would be preferred. Names of those winning 1 of the 20 editions will be posted on the Baptist State Convention of Michigan Facebook page.

### **Free Zoom Online Discussions**

Free Zoom Online Discussions will take place during September, October, and early November for those interested in learning more about effective leadership through online discussions. Tony Lynn will facilitate those discussions. Dates for those online

discussions will be released at the time of the drawing on Thursday, September 13, 2018 at 1:00 PM.

### Why Discuss Leadership?

Why give books away on the subject of leadership? Why should we study and discuss this matter together? I am convinced more than ever that many of us share similar knowledge and experiences, but some of us lack the ability to influence others toward the greatest calling of life. That can become discouraging and even frustrating. A leader must be able to influence others. I want to help more of us discern how we can become more effective leaders.

### The Authors

John MacArthur has served as the pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, since 1969. His ministry of expository preaching is unparalleled in its breadth and influence. In more than four decades of ministry from the same pulpit, he has preached verse by verse through the entire New Testament (and several key sections of the Old Testament). He is president of the Master's University and Seminary. and can be heard daily on the "Grace to You" radio broadcast (carried on hundreds of radio stations worldwide).

Robby Gallaty is the Senior Pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee. In 2008, he founded Replicate Ministries to educate, equip and empower disciples to make disciples. He holds a M.Div., Th.M., and a Ph.D. in preaching from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife Kandi have been investing in believers for more than a decade and are the proud parents of two sons, Rig and Ryder.

What are you waiting for?!

## STARTING

### **Debunking common church planting objections: It costs too much**

By Shane Critser

LOS ANGELES - When you decide, as the pastor, to lead your church for the first time to be a Sending Church and take responsibility to start a new church, it's likely you will receive objections from your people. This is common. Any time a pastor attempts to shape and lead a church in a new direction, he is sure to face opposition.

A critical thing to consider is how you, as pastor, respond to those objections. Will you respond harshly or will you respond confidently with compassion that will help you lead your people to be passionate about multiplication? There are, of course, numerous objections that could be raised, but let's just take a look at a few in this series of blog posts.

"It costs too much."

This most common objection in most people's mind is the cost. The reality is there are few churches with massive vaults of resources just sitting around waiting to be spent. Most churches are living lean — attempting to conserve their resources and do what they need to in order to meet their annual budget. The thought of adding something new, particularly something that is unlikely to produce any immediate dividends to the church, can be daunting to many.

Most people feel this way because when they think of starting a new church, they only have your church in mind. Your church may have a building, programs, and maintenance that cost money to maintain. They think about the challenges your church faces each day and cannot comprehend starting another church and doubling the same challenges financially.

Here are three ways to counter this objection:

First, the truth is not all church planting costs a lot of money. Some church plants may not cost any money, depending on the model and the context. It's entirely possible for a church plant to live lean for a number of years as it strives to engage the lost and make disciples. It could be years before the church has the type of financial needs that typically come to the mind of most.

While a new church will contain your DNA, it will not be a mirror image of your established church. We have to lead our church to understand that the new church may not look like us. If you need an illustration, consider my two daughters. Thank the Lord they don't look just like me. They would be ugly girls if they did! My wife gave birth to daughters, not duplicates. Help your church members understand that when you start a new church, you are birthing a daughter, not a duplicate.

Second, even if the church wanted to be a part of something requiring high financial costs, partnering with other small churches can spread the burden of resources. The SBC is a denomination of small- to medium-sized churches. For these churches to

engage in church planting, they must think beyond a model that requires a singular sending church to do all of the work. Instead, multiple churches can work together to help the church financially.

Third, financial risk, while intimidating, requires the Sending Church to assess the current use of its resources and discern how it might conserve or save in order to fund what is truly important. Without the external pressure of a church plant, many would-be Sending Churches are never forced to ask hard questions about their current spending and find ways to give to planting endeavors. Though this type of self-reflection is rarely fun, it's necessary for a church to truly embody its Great Commission identity.

In summary, the cost of becoming a Sending Church is only one aspect of creating new avenues for reaching our world with the Gospel. How do you put a price on that?

About the author: Shane Critser

Shane Critser lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Jennifer, and their three kids, Chase, Chloe and Charley. Before moving to Los Angeles, Shane served as the director of church and missionary discovery at NAMB. He previously served as the mission pastor at Hope Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nev. You can follow Shane on Twitter @shanecritser.

Courtesy of NAMB #Send Network Blog

## **STRENGTHENING**

### **UNSHAKABLE PURSUIT - 60<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of Michigan WMU Celebrating Michigan Missionaries**

By Sue Hodnett

Chasing the God Who Chases Us: Unshakable Pursuit

“There’s a God pursuing us in love, tapping our shoulders, and telling us life will only find its rhythm when we chase after Him with everything we’ve got. There’s a world walking the paths God has orchestrated, just waiting for someone to be fully engaged in His story and share it with them.” (Grace Thornton, Unshakable Pursuit)

You are invited to join the pursuit, and if you chose to connect, your mission will never be the same!

Celebrate with us at the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Michigan Women’s Missionary Union. A Missions Celebration of all that God has done and will continue to do through the churches of our Baptist State Convention of Michigan.

Our time of celebration will feature missionaries from; the International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), and our Michigan Baptist Staff. The Celebration is scheduled for, Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9AM and ending at

4PM. The missions experience will take place at the Bambi Lake Conference Center, in Roscommon, MI. More information and registration details are available at: [bscm.org](http://bscm.org)

## Why Attend?

Does your church have a ministry project, missionary or mission theme it supports or wants to support? Michigan WMU recognizes that churches in our Baptist State Convention have a heart for missions. We have prepared a one-day mission celebration that invites and will highlight missions, missionaries, and ministries in Michigan and around the world. We have over 40 missionaries and ministries who will be available to share information with you in the Display Center. If you are interested in having a table to share about your church plant, ministry or missions project, please contact [wmu@bscm.org](mailto:wmu@bscm.org).

## What for?

Your participation is sure to...

- inspire and energize your church members to get involved in mission both locally and globally.
- emphasize the foundation of Southern Baptist Cooperative Program of missions and evangelism.
- educate leaders about practical strategies to lead their churches in mission work that empowers, celebrates and shares God's love with all.
- invite the your church to be on mission through prayerful and pledged financial support.

## What is planned?

You can engage actively with state and global missionaries, hear from national and local guest speakers, worship time, and personally connect with missionaries around the world. You will develop partnerships and gather information about opportunities to be involved in local missions. We will celebrate mission work already underway and present a vision for what could happen by coming together as the church with the common purpose of reaching Michigan for Christ.

## Why Partner Together?

Experiencing missions together, Multiplies "The Power of One".

## So What Do I Do Now?

Pray and ask God if this is a celebration you should attend? Pray and ask God if this is an opportunity you should encourage other to attend?

The "pursuit" is on...now that you know, standing still is no longer an option!

## **A Call to Bambi Lake**

By Staff

Roscommon - Brett and Niccole Luker's lives took a detour this summer. Brett serves as an associate pastor for Christian Challenge at Michigan State University, and Niccole who loves the arts was working as a cake decorator when they got a call. "This wasn't on our radar. Bambi Lake was something that we weren't expecting to happen," Brett says, "We got a phone call, and we felt God just says 'Go'." He adds, "That has really impacted us as a couple because it's really allowing us to experience what God can do when he tells you to go."

Leaving my comfort zone to serve - <https://vimeo.com/286939339>

So Brett and Niccole spent the last few months as summer missionaries on staff at the Bambi Lake Conference Center. What that has meant has been lots of roles as needed. Niccole says the assignment "has gotten us out of our comfort zone, and has given us the opportunity to just serve a lot of people." Brett adds, "You never know what's going to happen the next day. You always have to be expecting the unexpected."

What does Bambi Lake have to offer? - <https://vimeo.com/286939415>

Brett and Niccole did a lot of hard work as part of their summer calling. Brett helped with much of the maintenance and revitalization of the camp, and Niccole serves behind the scenes in the kitchen and many other places in the camp. But the real reason that they are here is to have a spiritual impact. Brett talks about leading a young student to a profession of faith. "This young man came and responded to an altar call that we had. I had the opportunity to share the gospel with him, and he was open. It was wonderful."

Getting away from it all - <https://vimeo.com/286939542>

Niccole understands the impact a week at camp can have on a young student's life because of her own experience at a camp as a high school student even before she had become a believer. She says, "That was just the beginning for me, but the thing I love about Bambi is that it gives you the opportunity to get away from noise and you just have the ability to just come and focus just on God."

Where will God show up? - <https://vimeo.com/286939668>

The Bambi Lake Conference Center has a long history of being the launching point for many of Michigan Baptists over the years. It supports the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's (BSCM) three areas of focus; starting, strengthening and sending. This year a portion of the Frances Brown State Mission Offering will go to the Bambi Lake Conference Center to increase it's impact of starting, strengthening, and sending the churches of Michigan Baptists. If you would like to promote the offering in your church, there are resources to help at [www.bscm.org/smo](http://www.bscm.org/smo).

**FIRST-PERSON: Back-to-school prayers for our children**

by Melanie Lenow

Date: August 20, 2018 - Monday

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) -- I don't know where I first heard it, but I have always loved the saying, "Having happy children is good, but a parent's real job is to mold great adults." It is with this thought running through my mind that I make my list of prayer requests for my children this school year.

Yes, I would love for my children to ace all of their classes, always have someone to sit with at lunch and receive all of the best awards at the end of the year. However, would the ease of a great year truly build strong character and emotional endurance? Yes, it would be easy, but muscles are not built by a life of ease. In the same way, my overarching prayer for my children this year is that their spiritual, emotional and academic muscles will grow stronger and their endurance through instruction and personal relationships will grow deeper and wider.

Specifically, these are the three ways I will pray for my children during the coming school year.

1. I pray they will grow in their love of God and learn to trust Him more. Just recently, all four of my children have accepted Christ as their Savior. I pray this year they will continue to grow in knowledge of Him.

I wish this was as easy to measure as their physical growth, but this year I will look for opportunities to gauge where they are in their walk with Christ. I pray that my children will see Him move in ways they have not experienced before. I know this cannot always be done with sunny skies and cool breezes. I pray when the hard days come for my children, I can help them turn to Christ for comfort or direction.

Of course, this means that I myself need to strive after the Lord wholeheartedly as well. If I desire them to draw closer to Christ, I must draw closer to Christ as well.

2. I pray they will continue to grasp the command of Colossians 3:23: "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." As they do their math homework, as they do their chores, as they help a sibling, I want them to grow in their understanding of God-focused work. The sin tendency within us automatically gravitates towards laziness and self-centeredness, but I pray we will learn to counteract that tendency with a heart toward working for the Lord in whatever we find ourselves doing.

In the same vein, the second part of this verse is equally important. Many tasks are attached to immediate rewards, either personal or social. A child does his schoolwork in hopes of a good grade. She completes chores with the expectation of an allowance. He practices an instrument to impress the instructor. Earthly rewards are not bad for children, and in some instances they help spur them on to work harder.

However, the insatiable desire to please their Savior and honor Him with a good work ethic is important over a lifetime. Therefore, my prayer this year is that my children may simply grow in their understanding of what it means to "work as unto the Lord."

3. I pray my children will have opportunities to learn to love well. At school, there are many different personalities. Each instructor, each peer will have good days and bad days. I pray that my children will flex their love and compassion muscles to show grace to those around them. Honestly, this does not come easily for all my kids, but to love those around us is a way we can point people to Christ in a very tangible way.

I pray my children will look for opportunities to be kind and to love with the same love that Christ has so greatly given us. When I first began to pray intentionally for my children in this way, they were in pre-school and early elementary. Now, they span middle elementary to middle school. Each has grown a lot in knowledge and stature. Their walk with the Lord is living and active, and it is the true joy of a parent to watch the Lord work in them personally.

One of the greatest benefits of praying for your children is to see their daily struggles and triumphs. It is when I pray for them that I slow down and think, in depth about each of my children, each personality, each circumstance, each talent, each struggle. As this school year starts, it is my desire to continue praying for them with renewed purpose. May this year be fruitful and powerful in drawing each of us, myself and my children, closer to the Lord.

About the author: Melanie Lenow and her husband Evan, an ethics professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, are parents to four children. This column first appeared at [BiblicalWoman.org](http://BiblicalWoman.org), a blog of Southwestern Seminary.

### **FIRST-PERSON: God's portion -- sufficient to sustain & delight**

by Abi Waters

Date: August 21, 2018 - Tuesday

CONCORD, N.C. (BP) -- Spending some time in Brazil this summer was an experience I will treasure forever, and the Lord taught me so many precious truths. I've always known various cultures exist, but to experience it firsthand was something entirely new for me. My observations evoked a number of thoughts that I began to wrestle with:

Would I be a more effective missionary if I looked like and spoke the language of those I am trying to reach? If I am supposed to point these people to Jesus, why is there a cultural barrier between us?

This lady who was persecuted by her father for following Christ is so spiritually mature. Would I be a better Christian if I had grown up like her? If I had met Jesus later in life?

Why do I get to go to college and get a Christian education when this Brazilian pastor reads at a seventh-grade level? Is my knowledge in vain?

I love being in Brazil and I love these people, but should I feel guilty for missing Chick-fil-A and my home in Concord, N.C.?

The Lord was faithful to teach me something that brought rest to my conflicted spirit. By His sovereign hand, God has apportioned each of His children different gifts. My portion looks different from the portion that belongs to my Brazilian brothers and sisters, and it looks different from yours as well. God has His own unique plan for each of us, and they should all be celebrated for what they are: gifts from the Lord Himself. I learned to love another culture, but that didn't mean that I had to forsake my own. God gave me my own portion to enjoy, and it would be a sin if I abandoned all that He has given me in pursuit of an admirable gift that belongs to somebody else.

How freeing it was for me to understand that the way God uniquely made me is sufficient to bring glory to His name! Our portions may look different from one another, but they are all enough for the mission at hand and to find fullness of joy. One of the biggest lies Satan can tell us is that we should doubt God as a good gift-giver. It is how he deceived Eve to sin. He persuaded her to think that God was holding out on her.

Though the Lord had given her many trees in the Garden of Eden to eat from, she became convinced that she needed fruit from the only tree that God had graciously forbidden. Eve took what she did not own instead of trusting that her portion from the Lord was not only enough to sustain, but to give fullness of joy. Satan cannot touch our salvation, but he will do everything he can to keep us from enjoying God and His gifts.

My spirit trembles in wonder and awe to think of how beautifully diverse God made the world. Each unique color, culture and creature is a testament of how vast and unsearchable are the riches of God's glory. We serve a good Gift-Giver. He has a distinct plan for each of us, and that is something to be celebrated. Though our lives may vary in what they look like, we are united by this truth: In every portion that the Lord gives, He is giving us Himself.

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness," we read in Lamentations 3:22-24. "'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, therefore I will hope in him." What God has denied us, we do not need. What He has granted us is sufficient to sustain and delight us. God's portion is enough. Let us find joy in it.

About the author: Abi Waters is a student in Christian studies and Teaching English as a Second Language at North Greenville University in Tigerville, S.C.

**FIRST-PERSON: Don't ditch your denomination**

by Fred Luter

Date: August 22, 2018 - Wednesday

NEW ORLEANS (BP) -- In September 1986, my life was changed forever when I was elected as pastor of a dying Southern Baptist mission called Franklin Avenue Baptist Church. I grew up in the National Baptist denomination. I was the middle of five kids raised by a single mom who required everyone in her house to attend church on Sunday mornings.

At the age of 21, I was radically saved while lying in Charity Hospital in New Orleans not knowing if I was going to live the next 24 hours because of a serious head wound. A deacon of the church I grew up in put his finger inches from my face and said without apology, "Boy, obedience is better than sacrifice. If you were obedient to your mom, you would not be sacrificing your life here in this hospital!" That night I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life and woke up the next morning with a commitment to live the rest of my life as a born-again Christian.

After getting out of the hospital, I started a street ministry in the neighborhood I grew up in because I wanted everyone to know about this Jesus who turned my life around. While preaching one Sunday at a National Baptist church, someone mentioned to me that Franklin Avenue was looking for a pastor and asked if I would be interested. I said, "Franklin Avenue is a white church, blacks do not go there!" That's when I was told about the transitioning neighborhood and how Franklin Avenue was now an African American congregation. Well, I submitted my resume, and as the saying goes, the rest is history.

After meeting with the pulpit committee several times, I was then scheduled to teach a church-wide Sunday School and preach for the 11 a.m. worship service. After the service, there was about a 90-minute Q&A time with 35 to 40 members. Later that evening, I got a call from the pulpit committee chair to inform me that I had been elected as the mission's pastor. After hanging up the phone, I was both excited and scared because I had never led a church before.

Upon becoming the pastor, I was committed to ask for help in all areas I thought could assist us as a church and me as a pastor. And that's when I was first introduced to the many benefits of the Southern Baptist Convention. I met on a biweekly basis with leaders from our local association and then was introduced to professors, staff and facilities at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Our association trained our Sunday School teachers and ministry leaders while our seminary provided the space we needed for outreach events. Because of our growth, within three years we were able to become an autonomous church.

While brainstorming with our church leaders, one of our older members asked a question I did not expect. The question was: Since we are now an autonomous church, why don't we get out of the Southern Baptist Convention? I was floored by the question and asked, "Why?" I was once again floored when I was told about the history of the Southern Baptist Convention. I never knew that the convention I was now a part of started as a result of slavery.

After a brief history lesson and intense discussion, I made a statement that I knew came from God. I looked each of those members in their eyes and said, "All of us have a past. All of us have done something in our past that we regret. However, there is nothing we can do about our past, but we can do a whole lot about our future." With that said, I then stated a number of reasons why I felt it would be in our best interest to not get out of the Southern Baptist Convention:

- Southern Baptists allowed us to worship in the building we were in at no cost.
- The SBC, through our local association, provided training for our ministry leaders without cost.
- The SBC, through the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, allowed us to use the gym and other buildings for outreach events.
- The SBC stands on the infallibility of the Word of God.
- The SBC does missions, both local and international, better than any other group in the nation.
- The SBC is a key leader in disaster relief nationwide.
- The SBC believes in the importance of evangelism, discipleship and planting churches.
- The SBC is the most racially diverse convention in the nation.

I then stated, "The SBC is not a perfect convention by any means, but I truly believe that the SBC exists to do the will of God on this earth. So let's stay with this convention and help to carry out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I then asked for a vote and the vote was unanimous to stay in the Southern Baptist Convention. Looking back on that night, without a doubt, deciding not to "ditch our denomination" was one of the best decisions we have ever made as a church.

About the author: Fred Luter is pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

### **LABOR DAY: Owen Cooper's faith keyed array of ventures**

By Tim Tune

YAZOO CITY, Miss. (BP) -- On Labor Day, Americans will celebrate U.S. workers who have built and shaped the nation and influenced the world. One of the most successful entrepreneurs of the 20th century in Mississippi was also one of Southern Baptists' most influential laymen. The late Owen Cooper, who died Nov. 8, 1986, worked tirelessly in both arenas.

The year before Cooper's death, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board named him Layman of the Century. He was the second of only two laypeople ever elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, serving two terms, 1972-1974. Many who knew him say his commitment to Christ and Christ-like ministry inspired his vision for bold endeavors. His passionate interests drove him into many arenas to leverage his farm-

boy upbringing as well as a master's-level education in economics and political science from the University of Mississippi in 1936 and a law degree from Mississippi College's School of Law (then Jackson School of Law) in 1938.

His business acumen and political knowledge, as well as his speaking and persuasion skills, would all come into play frequently over the years. "Mr. Cooper had an amazing ability to envision and then inspire masses of fellow citizens to implement a simple, elegant solution to a huge need and problem," writes Jo [sic] G. Prichard III, Cooper's longtime executive assistant at Mississippi Chemical Corporation (now Mississippi Chemical Co.). Prichard, author of "Making Things Grow: The Story of Mississippi Chemical Corporation" (1998), provided his reflections to Baptist Press.

The seeds for Mississippi Chemical were planted 75 years ago in 1943 as World War II was winding down. Mississippi agricultural researchers were studying ammonia as a source of nitrogen to improve crop yields. Cooper was then executive director of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, which represented 250,000 farmers and rural families. By March 1947, the research had proven ammonia's effectiveness as a fertilizer. But as demand for the product exploded, short supply made it expensive. That's when Cooper laid out his vision to create Mississippi Chemical, his best-known business enterprise.

As Farm Bureau executive director -- and a Christian concerned about the food supply in post-war America -- Cooper challenged farmers across the South to buy stock in a new co-op enterprise that would build the world's first farmer-owned ammonia-nitrogen fertilizer plant. Farmers, Mississippi banks and a loan from the federal government provided \$4.25 million for the plant, which was built in Yazoo City, Cooper's hometown, 50 miles north of Jackson, now with a population of 11,000. The first bags of fertilizer were produced on March 16, 1951. Over the next decade, the company built three similar plants in the United States and on the South American island of Trinidad.

In the 1960s -- with support from other American fertilizer producers and the U.S. Agency for International Development -- Cooper helped farmers in India build their own plants. Cooper's interests in India also included missions, where the Indian government limited permanent visas available to missionaries. Cooper suggested the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) hire Indian nationals to help. When he learned it was against board policy to hire nationals, Cooper created Universal Concern to hire Indian Baptist preachers to go into unreached areas to start churches. The effort was so successful the mission board revised its policy and merged Universal Concern into its ministries.

Another of Cooper's interests in India was Serampore College, founded by British Baptist missionary William Carey in 1818, which will celebrate its 200th anniversary this fall. Cooper's interest is linked to Hattiesburg, Miss.-based William Carey University (formerly William Carey College). "Mr. Cooper was supportive of William Carey University because ... we are named after Carey, the 'father of the modern missionary movement,'" Tommy King, president of the Baptist-affiliated institution, said in email comments to Baptist Press.

Cooper's wife Elizabeth, who died in 1999, served on Carey's board. The university's Owen and Elizabeth Cooper Institute of Missions is named in honor of the couple. Carey is buried in a cemetery near Serampore, King said. "When Mr. Cooper was there years ago, he discovered that William Carey's grave was in a deplorable condition and disrepair. And it was being flooded every time the river overflowed." King said Cooper came back to America and "raised money to renovate and repair the cemetery and build a levee to protect it from the river. So that's the kind of thing he did. He just saw needs and took steps to meet those needs." Cooper also took steps to meet the pressing social needs he saw in his hometown of Yazoo City during the racially turbulent 1960s and '70s.

His daughter Nancy Gilbert, 78, of Madison, Miss., recounted that after a year of study in Europe as a Baylor University junior, "My view of the world greatly increased" beyond the racial inequality she had known as a child growing up in Yazoo City. When she returned home from college in the early 1960s, Gilbert said, she and her parents had "a very rough" experience aligning their views on racial equality. Eventually, she said, "There was mutual stimulation ... let's put it that way. And Daddy ... began to get involved in the social justice arena."

His involvement included:

- Promoting tolerance and cooperation between blacks and whites.
- Helping organize the Mississippi Religious Liberty Council that spoke out against attacks on churches and synagogues.
- Partnering with the NAACP to form an organization to run the largest Head Start program in the South.
- Recruiting and hiring Louise Dean, Mississippi Chemical's first black professional, to work on his personal staff.
- Advocating the peaceful desegregation of the workplace, public facilities, colleges and public schools.

Cooper's efforts in race relations were recognized by national media on Jan. 7, 1970, when public schools in Yazoo City were peacefully integrated. But involvement in civil rights came at a cost to Cooper, who wanted to run for Mississippi governor, Prichard writes. "He would have been a formidable candidate and would have been a great governor," Prichard writes, but Cooper sensed that his civil rights efforts "doomed any possibility of his running for governor in the Deep South of the 1960s and 1970s." Still, Prichard notes, in his business and faith initiatives, "He always seemed to insist: 'We can do this ourselves. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.'"

About the author: Tim Tune is a faith-based writer based in Fort Worth, Texas.

## **Learning to cherish older men in church planting**

By Jacob Hatfield

Monticello, MN - As church planters, pastors, and ministry leaders, we must be vigilant in our pursuit of spiritual disciplines. Most of us are aware of the obvious ones (prayer, spending time in the Word, etc.), but as I find myself in the months leading up to launching our first church plant, there is one area I have had to cultivate with more intentionality: the discipline of being mentored by older, more mature men.

At a glance, that may not sound like a spiritual discipline, but I have come to believe it is as crucial to my spiritual development as almost any other area. In the following paragraphs, I want to give you three reasons why I feel so strongly about this, and offer a word of caution as well.

1. Being mentored by an older believer is healthy for the dynamic of leadership in your church. Those of us who are called to be preaching or lead pastors often are put in scenarios where we have the decisive vote. By nature of the position, the flock (and other elders) will look to us to cast vision, take the lead, and confidently follow the Lord as we shepherd His flock. Indeed, this is what we are called to do (1 Pet. 5:1-4). However, we must be wary of constantly putting ourselves in positions where we are the highest authority.

Having a plurality of elders helps this immensely, but is not a failsafe. We must be in situations where older, wiser believers can speak into our lives and offer course corrections, encouragements, and exhortations. As a leader, this will help correct the notion that you are on the top of the pile. A good leader must lead with humility, putting the needs and desires of those in his care ahead of his own, and this is sometimes better learned from the experience of an older saint.

2. Being mentored by someone more mature than ourselves is modeled in Scripture. Consider the relationship Paul had with Timothy and Epaphroditus, as recorded in Philippians 2. From this text (and the book of Acts), we can infer that Paul spent a great deal of time with these men. Timothy traveled with Paul on some of his missionary journeys, and eventually, after training and mentoring him, Paul deployed him to establish churches in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1). We get a window into what this mentoring looked like when we read the pastoral epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy. In these, Paul reminds Timothy of many things they had discussed, and offers continuing admonishment, support, and encouragement to his protégé.

This is what biblical mentorship should look like in our churches. Those who have walked with the Lord for 15, 20, or 30 years should gladly take on the task of training up the next generation of pastors, church planters, and all believers. This model is not confined to the New Testament however, in Psalm 71:17-18 the psalmist says: "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come."

It should be the normative pattern of our lives that we are taught by God, through Word-centered preaching, discipleship, and fellowship, and we then in turn pass that on to the next generation.

3. Being mentored by a mature believer has shaped my life and ministry. The last reason I have to give comes from my own experience as a church leader and, now, a church planter. As I look back on how God has brought my wife and me to the place of planting our first church, I recognize very clearly the impact mentoring relationships have had on me, most significantly with two men named Brad and Dan. More often than I can recall, I have gone to these men for advice, wisdom, example, and stability, and they have come through every time. They have seen trends come and go, have weathered difficult times in church life, and can reassure me it will pass. They have experienced betrayal, loss, frustration, and anxiety, and can help me navigate through those times in my life and ministry.

Your wife will be one of your greatest allies as you endeavor to pastor, plant, or lead, but there is a special strengthening effect that comes from being able to process with someone who is (probably) more objective, and has walked through these things before.

Lastly, I offer a brief word of caution: Just because someone is physically older than you are, does not automatically qualify them for the role of mentor in your life. It is very possible you have peers who surpass the older generation in spiritual wisdom, discernment, and experience. More often than not, there is great value in the experience of years, but use discernment when choosing someone to help shape and mold you in your ministry. I personally enjoy my time with older saints, and no matter where you are in your ministry journey, I encourage you to take time to be mentored. It is biblical, it is wise, and it will bear much fruit in your life.

About the author: Jacob Hatfield lives in Monticello, Minnesota, with his wife and four sons. He is in the process of planting an SBC church there with the North American Mission Board.

### **Political divides in church focus of new study**

by Bob Smietana

Date: August 24, 2018 - Friday

NASHVILLE (BP) -- America has become increasingly divided by politics in recent years. So have its Protestant churches, according to a study released Thursday (Aug. 23). More than half (57 percent) of Protestant churchgoers under 50 say they prefer to go to church with people who share their political views. And few adult Protestant churchgoers say they attend services with people of a different political persuasion. Those are among the findings in a new report on churchgoing and politics, conducted Aug. 22–30, 2017, by LifeWay Research.

"Like many places in America, churches are divided by politics," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. "And churchgoers under 50 seem to want it that way."

### Political divide

For the study, LifeWay Research surveyed 1,010 Americans who attend services at least once a month at a Protestant or nondenominational church. Forty-six percent agree with the statement, "I prefer to attend a church where people share my political views." Forty-two percent disagree. Twelve percent are not sure. More than half (57 percent) of churchgoers ages 18 to 49 agree. Fewer churchgoers ages 50 to 64 (39 percent) or ages 65 and over (33 percent) agree. Men (51 percent) are more likely to agree than women (43 percent).

Methodist (57 percent), nondenominational (51 percent) and Baptist (49 percent) churchgoers are more likely to agree than churchgoers from other denominations. Lutherans (33 percent) are less likely to agree. "Only a third of churchgoers in the study had strong feelings on this subject," McConnell said. Twelve percent strongly agree, while 22 percent strongly disagree. "Politics doesn't seem to be a high priority for most Protestants when choosing a church to attend," he said. "But for a small group of churchgoers, it's really crucial."

LifeWay Research also asked Protestant churchgoers if their political views match those of people in their church. Half agree (51 percent), while 19 percent disagree and 30 percent are uncertain. Churchgoers ages 35 to 49 (61 percent) are more likely to agree than those ages 50 to 64 (47 percent) or those 65 and older (44 percent). Men (58 percent) are more likely to agree than women (46 percent). Those who attend services at least once a week (52 percent) are more likely to agree than those who attend once or twice a month (43 percent).

American churchgoers who hold evangelical beliefs (57 percent) are more likely to agree their political views match others in their church, compared to those who don't hold evangelical beliefs (44 percent). Baptist (58 percent), nondenominational (54 percent) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostal (53 percent) churchgoers are more likely to agree. Lutherans (31 percent) are less likely. Protestant churchgoers and other Americans who attend worship services at least once a month made up about half of voters (52 percent) in the 2016 presidential election, according to data from Pew Research. Churchgoers might stick around even if they disagree over politics. A previous LifeWay Research study of Protestant and nondenominational churchgoers found only 1 in 10 (9 percent) would consider leaving their church over political views.

"More than a few churchgoers in the most recent study (30 percent) don't know the political views of people besides them in the pews," McConnell said. "Politics isn't the only thing that churchgoers care about," he said. "In some churches, politics isn't mentioned at all -- at least in the pews."

### 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) which attends 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 an evangelical research firm that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

About the author: Bob Smietana is senior writer at Facts & Trends ([factsandtrends.net](http://factsandtrends.net)) of LifeWay Christian Resources.

### **SWBTS appoints 9-member presidential search committee**

by SWBTS & BP Staff

Date: August 24, 2018 - Friday

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) -- A search committee comprising nine Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees has been appointed to recommend the seminary's next president. Led by chairman Danny Roberts, an at-large trustee and executive pastor of North Richland Hills (Texas) Baptist Church, the search committee was appointed by trustee chairman Kevin Ueckert and announced to the full board Aug. 23.

In addition to Roberts, the committee includes: Denise Ewing (Ill.), Jamie Green (at-large, search committee secretary), Guy Grimes (Calif.), Todd Houston (N.C.), Tom James (Ky.), Philip Levant (at-large), Andre Palmer (N.Y.) and Calvin Wittman (Colo., search committee vice chair). Ueckert and board vice chair Connie Hancock are ex officio members of the committee. Roberts is an alumnus of Southwestern (master of church music, 1979) and has served as a trustee since 2016, sitting on the Communications, Policies, and Strategic Initiatives Committee.

According to an Aug. 24 news release from the seminary, the committee includes two women, one African American and one Hispanic. The committee is diverse geographically and mixed in terms of trustee tenure (with five being in their first five-year term and the other four in their second five-year term). Only two search committee members are members of the trustee executive committee.

Ueckert, pastor of First Baptist Church in Georgetown, Texas, said, "Between now and the October Board meeting, the presidential search committee will be focused on developing the candidate profile and the application process, as well as entering a time of focused prayer." The committee will nominate a successor to former Southwestern

president Paige Patterson, who was moved to president emeritus status in May and terminated less than a week later. Patterson had been under fire since late April for statements he has made about domestic abuse and women's physical appearance. He also drew criticism for his handling of an alleged 2003 sexual assault at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served as president from 1992-2003.

Southwestern's bylaws state a president must be elected by the trustee board. Presidential nominations and expressions of interest should be submitted to [swbtpresidentialsearch@gmail.com](mailto:swbtpresidentialsearch@gmail.com).

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

### **The importance of the church getting involved in their community**

BY Sara Shelton

SALISBURY, MD - In the early days of his church plant, pastor Ryan Weaver and his team at Remedy Church scoured the newspapers looking for ways to serve the people of Salisbury, Md. It was a small ad asking for landscaping help that eventually caught their eye. "We saw the landscaping ad and when we realized the need was on Booth Street we knew it was the right place for us," Weaver explains.

Few others in the area might consider Booth Street to be "right place" for them to serve. This pocket of the community is marked by the darkness of crime and poverty that covers the local news on a weekly basis. Most of the families live in low-income housing and are struggling against the cycle of destitution that has permeated Booth Street for so long. Rather than shy away, Weaver and his team jumped into service on Booth Street, taking 25 people to the area for a day of service.

"We showed up that day and just served—landscaping, weed-eating, cleaning up trash," Weaver recalls. "But I noticed members of our team slowly starting to talk to the people on Booth Street, getting to know them and figure out their specific needs. That was really the catalyst to starting our congregation's relationship with our friends on Booth Street. "Serving them enabled us to intersect in their stories and start having the kind of conversations that build trust and relationships. Service was the only way we were going to be able to share the gospel with our friends on Booth Street."

That kind of service is the heart behind the North American Mission Board (NAMB). They encourage churches to host a day or season of service in their communities in an effort to share the gospel in action with neighbors in need. And a service day is exactly the avenue to do that. Send Relief believes the Church is the solution. Our initiatives equip and encourage churches to engage in their communities and be the places that serve the least of these. Be part of Send Relief today.

Tonaka Houston cried a lot in her first year of teaching at a Title 1 school in Memphis, Tennessee. The school was one of the lowest-performing schools, absenteeism was a problem and 95% of the children in the school were on the free lunch program. Many did not know how to read. While the situation seemed hopeless to Tonaka, help was on the way. A simple reading program in the Memphis area helped second graders in Tonaka's class, and many other classes, learn to read using a curriculum based on sight words.

Low-income schools in the Memphis area saw 142% increase in children reading sight words on grade level. That program was ARISE2Read, a ministry begun through Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tennessee. ARISE2Read and Send Relief have partnered to train other volunteers and churches to use sight words to help increase literacy in low-income students. Donna Gaines, founder of ARISE2Read, describes why this ministry is so important: "The Lord commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves. These children are my neighbors. This is my motivator and it has given me a real sense of urgency." The training for ARISE2Read is simple to provide, and the ministry works with each volunteer spending one hour a week working with two second graders. The results for those children and adults have been life-changing.

#### The Needs In Your Community

It is important to first take time to discover and understand the unique needs within your community. Explore the physical community, listen to and learn from people living and working in the area and seek God's guidance by prayer-driving and prayer-walking the neighborhood. To learn more about how to identify needs in your community, download the Discovering the Needs of Your Community guide. If not, check out some of our other ministry guides for opportunities that fit for your church's gifting and community's needs.

#### The Need For Literacy Ministry In America:

- Two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare.
- Almost 85% of teenagers in the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.
- More than 70% of prison inmates in the U.S. cannot read above a 4th-grade level.
- Students who are not proficient readers by the 3rd grade are four times more likely to dropout of school.
- 61% of low-income families have no books for children in their homes.
- 75% of Americans who receive food stamps are in the lowest two levels of literacy.
- Teenage girls between ages 16-19 who live below the poverty level and have below average reading skills are six times more like to have children out of wedlock than girls who read proficiently.
- But, children in low-income homes who read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade have an 89% rate of graduation from high school.

While these statistics paint a grim picture, there is hope! ARISE2Read found that in one year of working with these at-risk students, students showed a 135% increase in reading skills on the Fry Word grade level test in seven schools. That means that these students moved from a 31% proficiency level in October 2015 to 80% proficiency in May 2016.

ARISE2Read partners with evangelical churches and businesses within local school districts to help strengthen second graders' reading proficiently so they can enter third grade reading at the third grade level.

The program works with each volunteer working individually with two second graders for 30 minutes each. It's a one-hour a week commitment per volunteer that will have a lifetime impact on students and communities. The bottom line is this: You, and your church, can be a part of helping eradicate illiteracy in your community.

#### Strategically Consider Ministry Opportunities

Take the next step by enlisting a small group of people within the congregation to assess ministry opportunities by working through the following questions with you:

- What partnerships in your community have you considered connecting to meet this need and use this resource? These could include government officials, school officials and teachers, other community churches and leaders, local shelters or other pre-established programs addressing literacy.
  - Who in your church is passionate and equipped to lead or participate in this ministry? Consider children's workers, parents and/or families, teenagers or youth groups, Sunday School classes, senior adults, anyone with a desire to make a difference in children's lives through reading.
  - What resources and relationships has God given your church to support this ministry? Consider missions offerings, other financial resources, church members who are connected to local schools and Sunday School classes as places to start. These questions can lead this small group of local missionaries to determine whether or not:
    1. There a desire within the congregation to meet this need.
    2. There are resources of people, space and money to meet this need.
    3. This ministry is sustainable over time.
    4. You feel God leading you as a congregation in this direction.
- 5 SEND RELIEF: PROVIDING AN ARISE2READ MINISTRY

#### STARTING AN ARISE2READ MINISTRY

God may be moving you to be the catalyst of starting a literacy ministry in your community. If so, where do you start? We've provided eight steps that can lead you to successfully meet this much-needed ministry:

1. Create awareness of the need for a literacy ministry.
  - Enlist a group of people who are interested in reading and literacy (teachers, school administrators, children's workers, parents, senior adults, teenagers).
  - Evaluate what you've learned through local community leaders and individuals about the literacy needs of your community.
  - Review what local programs are doing to address literacy needs in your community.
  - Contact a local elementary school in a low-income area about working with second graders. Determine how the school wants to handle security with adults coming into the school each week.

- Contact second grade teachers to identify at-risk children who would benefit from one-on-one tutoring.

2. Create a ministry plan based on your findings. ARISE2Read uses the simple word curriculum called Team Read. ARISE2Read also provides teacher training in how to use the curriculum, and explains the requirements for new background checks for all volunteers. Contact ARISE2Read or Send Relief for specific instructions about enlisting and training volunteers.

3. Enlist an ARISE2Read Director. Begin by enlisting church approval and support of the ministry. The director has responsibility for:

- Enlist a leadership team and lead the team to establish program objectives.
- Work with area school second grade teachers to identify at-risk students.
- Keep school administrators informed. Be good partners.
- Coordinate the schedule of times when volunteers are at the school.

Contact NAMB Send Relief for more information and available resources to begin your ministry to children. Make a difference in your community for the future.

Courtesy of NAMB Send Relief

### **Unfinished Sentences**

By Ian Minieilly

IRONTON, MI - How many of us, with our final breath, will be able to say, "It is finished." I ask this question because we have Jesus' final words, "It is finished," as he bowed his head and gave up his spirit in John 19: 30. Jesus completed the full mission before him during his short life as another example of us to follow as we strive to finish the race. How many of us will be able to say the same? I am not questioning a believers eternal life and salvation as a legalistic fellow might do, only what is written in the Book of Life under each of our names. How many incomplete sentences are under your name? This is something that keeps me awake at night, what have I left undone that God gave me the opportunity to do for his kingdom?

In the Book of Revelation, chapter 20: 11-15, we read:

"Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done....And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

How many unfinished sentences will be in the book of life under your name? In Jesus' case, we know he fully accomplished the mission, he put a period at the end of each sentence. Jesus did everything required so people could be reconciled with God through his ultimate sacrifice for their sins. There are no unfinished sentences under his name.

What about yours though?

Has God whispered in your ear to share the Gospel with your neighbor and you have not? That is an unfinished sentence. Have you always felt a call to a foreign or local mission, but made excuses like finances and time not to go? Those are unfinished sentences.

Does your church and community have needs you could fill, but you do not want to risk missing a football game or sacrificing some of your own time and money? That is an unfinished sentence. Is there a Bible Study available in your church where your presence would make a difference in another person's walk, but you did not commit to being there for whatever reason? That is another unfinished sentence. Remember, if you can, all those people throughout your life God put in your path and you were too scared to share the Good News of Jesus with them? Those are all unfinished sentences.

We will all stand before the throne and the book of life will be opened. We will be judged for our own lives, not anyone else's. Therefore, I urge everyone to finish those sentences in the book of life and in so doing, give even greater glory to God. When you do this, be prepared to stand out among the crowd. People will ask why your faith is so transformative and you can honestly tell them, "I do not want unfinished sentences in the book of life."

I urge all Christians to get more involved, and finish those sentences. We have one life; let's write more than a short story and glorify Jesus.

About the author: Ian Minielly is pastor Catalyst Church in Ironton, MI.

### **Why people are reluctant to talk about their faith**

By The Barna Group

Social media and mobile devices have fundamentally changed the way we communicate—particularly about faith. Substantive spiritual conversations have become harder not only because of 280-character limits but also because of shifts in the way the public perceives or subscribes to religion in the first place.

For his most recent book, *Learning to Speak God from Scratch*, Barna worked with religion columnist Jonathan Merritt to interview U.S. adults for whom spiritual conversations are rare or nonexistent to find out why they don't talk more often about faith. This research can also be seen in *Spiritual Conversations in a Digital Age*, a new report in partnership with Lutheran Hour Ministries.

People who don't talk very often about faith offer different reasons, but most of these fall into two broad categories: avoidance and ambivalence. For instance, the two avoidant responses (among the top four) given for not engaging in conversations are: "Religious conversations always seem to create tension or arguments" (28%) and "I'm put off by how religion has been politicized" (17%). The other two responses indicate ambivalence: "I'm not religious and don't care about these kinds of topics" (23%) and "I don't feel like I know enough to talk about religious or spiritual topics" (17%).

Here's the full list of options:

- Religious conversations always seem to create tension or arguments: 28%
- I'm not religious and don't care about these kinds of topics: 23%
- I'm put off by how religion has been politicized: 17%
- I don't feel like I know enough to talk about religious or spiritual topics: 17%
- I don't want to be known as a religious person: 7%
- I don't know how to talk about religious or spiritual topics without sounding weird: 6%
- I'm afraid people will see me as a fanatic or extremist: 5%
- I'm embarrassed by the way religious language has been used in popular culture: 5%
- I've been hurt by religious conversations in the past: 4%
- Religious language and jargon feels cheesy or outdated: 4%

Among all adults who rarely engage, Boomers are significantly more likely to say they are not religious and don't care about these kinds of topics (32% vs. 17% Millennials and Gen X, 22% Elders). Likewise, political liberals are more likely than conservatives to choose this option (28% vs. 15%). These groups tend more toward ambivalence or indifference than to frustration or fear.

Millennials, however, are much more likely to feel afraid that people will see them as a fanatic or extremist (10% vs. 3% Gen X, 4% Boomers, 1% Elders). This generation has grown up in a culture that values tolerance and freeing people to make their own decisions. One of the great evils is to be perceived as bigoted. It makes sense that a fear of coming across as intolerant (often associated, as Millennials came of age, with religiosity) could turn them away from the topic altogether. Additionally, as we know from other research, young adults are more likely than any other age group to have friends who are different from them: different ethnicities, different religions, different social and political beliefs. They tend, therefore, to be more sensitive to offending other groups. They expect to live in a pluralistic society and so fear association with a group—fundamentalist Christians—that is often represented as opposed to ways of thinking or believing other than their own.

#### About the Research

The primary source of data in this report is a survey of 1,714 U.S. adults, comprised of an over-sample of 535 Millennials and 689 Practicing Christians, conducted online June 22–July 13, 2017. Respondents were recruited from a national consumer panel, and minimal weighting was applied to ensure representation of certain demographic factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity and region. The sample error for this data is plus or minus 2.2% at the 95% confidence level for the total sample.

A subgroup of participants had either: “shared my views on faith or religion in the last 5 years” OR “someone has shared their views on faith or religion with me in the last 5 years.” Self-identified Christians select “Christian” from a list of religious affiliations. Non-Christians do not self-identify as Christian. Practicing Christians identify as Christian, have attended church within the past month and strongly agree that their faith is very important in their life today. Non-practicing Christians identify as Christian, but do not qualify as practicing under the definition above.

### About Barna Group

Barna Group is a private, non-partisan, for-profit organization under the umbrella of the Issachar Companies. Located in Ventura, California, Barna Group has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984.

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## SENDING

### **FIRST-PERSON: God's portion -- sufficient to sustain & delight**

by Abi Waters

Date: August 21, 2018 - Tuesday

CONCORD, N.C. (BP) -- Spending some time in Brazil this summer was an experience I will treasure forever, and the Lord taught me so many precious truths. I've always known various cultures exist, but to experience it firsthand was something entirely new for me. My observations evoked a number of thoughts that I began to wrestle with:

Would I be a more effective missionary if I looked like and spoke the language of those I am trying to reach? If I am supposed to point these people to Jesus, why is there a cultural barrier between us?

This lady who was persecuted by her father for following Christ is so spiritually mature. Would I be a better Christian if I had grown up like her? If I had met Jesus later in life?

Why do I get to go to college and get a Christian education when this Brazilian pastor reads at a seventh-grade level? Is my knowledge in vain?

I love being in Brazil and I love these people, but should I feel guilty for missing Chick-fil-A and my home in Concord, N.C.?

The Lord was faithful to teach me something that brought rest to my conflicted spirit. By His sovereign hand, God has apportioned each of His children different gifts. My portion looks different from the portion that belongs to my Brazilian brothers and sisters, and it looks different from yours as well. God has His own unique plan for each of us, and they should all be celebrated for what they are: gifts from the Lord Himself. I learned to love another culture, but that didn't mean that I had to forsake my own. God gave me my own portion to enjoy, and it would be a sin if I abandoned all that He has given me in pursuit of an admirable gift that belongs to somebody else.

How freeing it was for me to understand that the way God uniquely made me is sufficient to bring glory to His name! Our portions may look different from one another, but they

are all enough for the mission at hand and to find fullness of joy. One of the biggest lies Satan can tell us is that we should doubt God as a good gift-giver. It is how he deceived Eve to sin. He persuaded her to think that God was holding out on her.

Though the Lord had given her many trees in the Garden of Eden to eat from, she became convinced that she needed fruit from the only tree that God had graciously forbidden. Eve took what she did not own instead of trusting that her portion from the Lord was not only enough to sustain, but to give fullness of joy. Satan cannot touch our salvation, but he will do everything he can to keep us from enjoying God and His gifts.

My spirit trembles in wonder and awe to think of how beautifully diverse God made the world. Each unique color, culture and creature is a testament of how vast and unsearchable are the riches of God's glory. We serve a good Gift-Giver. He has a distinct plan for each of us, and that is something to be celebrated. Though our lives may vary in what they look like, we are united by this truth: In every portion that the Lord gives, He is giving us Himself.

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness," we read in Lamentations 3:22-24. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, therefore I will hope in him." What God has denied us, we do not need. What He has granted us is sufficient to sustain and delight us. God's portion is enough. Let us find joy in it.

About the author: Abi Waters is a student in Christian studies and Teaching English as a Second Language at North Greenville University in Tigerville, S.C.

### **Southern Baptist workers introduce Kenyan family to the Great Physician**

<https://www.imb.org/2018/08/16/great-physician/>

By IMB Staff

Fatuma\* is raising her five children in a one-room metal house in the slum-of-slums of Nairobi, Kenya. Fatuma knows that despite the squalid living conditions, her children have something she never had as a child: love. After she was orphaned, Fatuma was sent to be raised by her aunt and uncle. They treated her like a servant and kept her home from school to clean. Her hunger to learn once resulted in a beating after she leafed through a cousin's school book.

#### Prayers for healing

Recently she and her husband Abdi\* were scared when their 14-year-old daughter Aalia\* had a bleeding issue that wouldn't stop. One day Abdi was out in the neighborhood when foreigners walked up. Before Abdi knew it, he was sharing with total strangers that his daughter had a bleeding problem. The American man told him a story about Jesus, and Abdi invited them to visit his family.

The next day Fatuma welcomed her husband's guests into their home. The visitors told another story about God. They said they weren't trying to take advantage of Aalia's

illness to convert the family to Christianity. “We’re here because we are followers of Jesus,” they said. When they asked if they could pray to Jesus for healing, she agreed. Within a week, Aalia’s bleeding completely stopped. Fatuma was overjoyed to give the report to the American woman when she visited them again.

### Blessed book

Decades after the beating she received for her curiosity, Fatuma’s hands finally closed around a small book of her own — a New Testament in Arabic and Swahili. This time no one will beat her. Fatuma opens the pages of her book and ponders what she is learning about Jesus. Something — or Someone — is drawing her. Your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® support Southern Baptists who are taking the hope of Jesus Christ to the people of Nairobi’s poorest areas, people such as Fatuma and Abdi. Thank you for giving.

In 1950, Sub-Saharan Africa had no cities with populations of more than 1 million. Today, it has over 40. The fastest growing metropolises, such as Nairobi, Kenya, are expanding at rates of almost 4 percent per year. That is almost twice as fast as Houston, one of America’s fastest-growing metropolises.

\*Names changed

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® is a registered trademark of Woman’s Missionary Union.

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### **The importance of the church getting involved in their community**

BY Sara Shelton

SALISBURY, MD - In the early days of his church plant, pastor Ryan Weaver and his team at Remedy Church scoured the newspapers looking for ways to serve the people of Salisbury, Md. It was a small ad asking for landscaping help that eventually caught their eye. “We saw the landscaping ad and when we realized the need was on Booth Street we knew it was the right place for us,” Weaver explains.

Few others in the area might consider Booth Street to be “right place” for them to serve. This pocket of the community is marked by the darkness of crime and poverty that covers the local news on a weekly basis. Most of the families live in low-income housing and are struggling against the cycle of destitution that has permeated Booth Street for so long. Rather than shy away, Weaver and his team jumped into service on Booth Street, taking 25 people to the area for a day of service.

“We showed up that day and just served—landscaping, weed-eating, cleaning up trash,” Weaver recalls. “But I noticed members of our team slowly starting to talk to the people on Booth Street, getting to know them and figure out their specific needs. That was really the catalyst to starting our congregation’s relationship with our friends on Booth Street. “Serving them enabled us to intersect in their stories and start having the kind of

conversations that build trust and relationships. Service was the only way we were going to be able to share the gospel with our friends on Booth Street.”

That kind of service is the heart behind the North American Mission Board (NAMB). They encourage churches to host a day or season of service in their communities in an effort to share the gospel in action with neighbors in need. And a service day is exactly the avenue to do that. Send Relief believes the Church is the solution. Our initiatives equip and encourage churches to engage in their communities and be the places that serves the least of these. Be part of Send Relief today.

Tonaka Houston cried a lot in her first year of teaching at a Title 1 school in Memphis, Tennessee. The school was one of the lowest-performing schools, absenteeism was a problem and 95% of the children in the school were on the free lunch program. Many did not know how to read. While the situation seemed hopeless to Tonaka, help was on the way. A simple reading program in the Memphis area helped second graders in Tonaka’s class, and many other classes, learn to read using a curriculum based on sight words.

Low-income schools in the Memphis area saw 142% increase in children reading sight words on grade level. That program was ARISE2Read, a ministry begun through Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tennessee. ARISE2Read and Send Relief have partnered to train other volunteers and churches to use sight words to help increase literacy in low-income students. Donna Gaines, founder of ARISE2Read, describes why this ministry is so important: “The Lord commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves. These children are my neighbors. This is my motivator and it has given me a real sense of urgency.” The training for ARISE2Read is simple to provide, and the ministry works with each volunteer spending one hour a week working with two second graders. The results for those children and adults have been life-changing.

#### The Needs In Your Community

it is important to first take time to discover and understand the unique needs within your community. Explore the physical community, listen to and learn from people living and working in the area and seek God’s guidance by prayer-driving and prayer-walking the neighborhood. To learn more about how to identify needs in your community, download the Discovering the Needs of Your Community guide. If not, check out some of our other ministry guides for opportunities that fit for your church’s gifting and community’s needs.

#### The Need For Literacy Ministry In America:

- Two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up in jail or on welfare.
- Almost 85% of teenagers in the juvenile court system are functionally illiterate.
- More than 70% of prison inmates in the U.S. cannot read above a 4th-grade level.
- Students who are not proficient readers by the 3rd grade are four times more likely to dropout of school.
- 61% of low-income families have no books for children in their homes.
- 75% of Americans who receive food stamps are in the lowest two levels of literacy.

- Teenage girls between ages 16-19 who live below the poverty level and have below average reading skills are six times more like to have children out of wedlock than girls who read proficiently.
- But, children in low-income homes who read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade have an 89% rate of graduation from high school.

While these statistics paint a grim picture, there is hope! ARISE2Read found that in one year of working with these at-risk students, students showed a 135% increase in reading skills on the Fry Word grade level test in seven schools. That means that these students moved from a 31% proficiency level in October 2015 to 80% proficiency in May 2016. ARISE2Read partners with evangelical churches and businesses within local school districts to help strengthen second graders' reading proficiently so they can enter third grade reading at the third grade level.

The program works with each volunteer working individually with two second graders for 30 minutes each. It's a one-hour a week commitment per volunteer that will have a lifetime impact on students and communities. The bottom line is this: You, and your church, can be a part of helping eradicate illiteracy in your community.

#### Strategically Consider Ministry Opportunities

Take the next step by enlisting a small group of people within the congregation to assess ministry opportunities by working through the following questions with you:

- What partnerships in your community have you considered connecting to meet this need and use this resource? These could include government officials, school officials and teachers, other community churches and leaders, local shelters or other pre-established programs addressing literacy.
  - Who in your church is passionate and equipped to lead or participate in this ministry? Consider children's workers, parents and/or families, teenagers or youth groups, Sunday School classes, senior adults, anyone with a desire to make a difference in children's lives through reading.
  - What resources and relationships has God given your church to support this ministry? Consider missions offerings, other financial resources, church members who are connected to local schools and Sunday School classes as places to start. These questions can lead this small group of local missionaries to determine whether or not:
    1. There a desire within the congregation to meet this need.
    2. There are resources of people, space and money to meet this need.
    3. This ministry is sustainable over time.
    4. You feel God leading you as a congregation in this direction.
- 5 SEND RELIEF: PROVIDING AN ARISE2READ MINISTRY

#### STARTING AN ARISE2READ MINISTRY

God may be moving you to be the catalyst of starting a literacy ministry in your community. If so, where do you start? We've provided eight steps that can lead you to successfully meet this much-needed ministry:

1. Create awareness of the need for a literacy ministry.

- Enlist a group of people who are interested in reading and literacy (teachers, school administrators, children's workers, parents, senior adults, teenagers).
- Evaluate what you've learned through local community leaders and individuals about the literacy needs of your community.
- Review what local programs are doing to address literacy needs in your community.
- Contact a local elementary school in a low-income area about working with second graders. Determine how the school wants to handle security with adults coming into the school each week.
- Contact second grade teachers to identify at-risk children who would benefit from one-on-one tutoring.

2. Create a ministry plan based on your findings. ARISE2Read uses the simple word curriculum called Team Read. ARISE2Read also provides teacher training in how to use the curriculum, and explains the requirements for new background checks for all volunteers. Contact ARISE2Read or Send Relief for specific instructions about enlisting and training volunteers.

3. Enlist an ARISE2Read Director. Begin by enlisting church approval and support of the ministry. The director has responsibility for:

- Enlist a leadership team and lead the team to establish program objectives.
- Work with area school second grade teachers to identify at-risk students.
- Keep school administrators informed. Be good partners.
- Coordinate the schedule of times when volunteers are at the school.

Contact NAMB Send Relief for more information and available resources to begin your ministry to children. Make a difference in your community for the future.

Courtesy of NAMB Send Relief

### **Unfinished Sentences**

By Ian Minieilly

IRONTON, MI - How many of us, with our final breath, will be able to say, "It is finished." I ask this question because we have Jesus' final words, "It is finished," as he bowed his head and gave up his spirit in John 19: 30. Jesus completed the full mission before him during his short life as another example of us to follow as we strive to finish the race.

How many of us will be able to say the same? I am not questioning a believers eternal life and salvation as a legalistic fellow might do, only what is written in the Book of Life under each of our names. How many incomplete sentences are under your name? This is something that keeps me awake at night, what have I left undone that God gave me the opportunity to do for his kingdom?

In the Book of Revelation, chapter 20: 11-15, we read:

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done....And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

How many unfinished sentences will be in the book of life under your name? In Jesus’ case, we know he fully accomplished the mission, he put a period at the end of each sentence. Jesus did everything required so people could be reconciled with God through his ultimate sacrifice for their sins. There are no unfinished sentences under his name.

What about yours though?

Has God whispered in your ear to share the Gospel with your neighbor and you have not? That is an unfinished sentence. Have you always felt a call to a foreign or local mission, but made excuses like finances and time not to go? Those are unfinished sentences.

Does your church and community have needs you could fill, but you do not want to risk missing a football game or sacrificing some of your own time and money? That is an unfinished sentence. Is there a Bible Study available in your church where your presence would make a difference in another person’s walk, but you did not commit to being there for whatever reason? That is another unfinished sentence. Remember, if you can, all those people throughout your life God put in your path and you were too scared to share the Good News of Jesus with them? Those are all unfinished sentences.

We will all stand before the throne and the book of life will be opened. We will be judged for our own lives, not anyone else’s. Therefore, I urge everyone to finish those sentences in the book of life and in so doing, give even greater glory to God. When you do this, be prepared to stand out among the crowd. People will ask why your faith is so transformative and you can honestly tell them, “I do not want unfinished sentences in the book of life.”

I urge all Christians to get more involved, and finish those sentences. We have one life; let’s write more than a short story and glorify Jesus.

About the author: Ian Minielly is pastor Catalyst Church in Ironton, MI.

## MICHIGAN NEWS

### **UNSHAKABLE PURSUIT - 60<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of Michigan WMU Celebrating Michigan Missionaries**

By Sue Hodnett

#### Chasing the God Who Chases Us: Unshakable Pursuit

“There’s a God pursuing us in love, tapping our shoulders, and telling us life will only find its rhythm when we chase after Him with everything we’ve got. There’s a world walking the paths God has orchestrated, just waiting for someone to be fully engaged in His story and share it with them.” (Grace Thornton, Unshakable Pursuit)

You are invited to join the pursuit, and if you chose to connect, your mission will never be the same!

Celebrate with us at the 60<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Michigan Women’s Missionary Union. A Missions Celebration of all that God has done and will continue to do through the churches of our Baptist State Convention of Michigan.

Our time of celebration will feature missionaries from; the International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), and our Michigan Baptist Staff. The Celebration is scheduled for, Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9AM and ending at 4PM. The missions experience will take place at the Bambi Lake Conference Center, in Roscommon, MI. More information and registration details are available at: [bscm.org](http://bscm.org)

#### Why Attend?

Does your church have a ministry project, missionary or mission theme it supports or wants to support? Michigan WMU recognizes that churches in our Baptist State Convention have a heart for missions. We have prepared a one-day mission celebration that invites and will highlight missions, missionaries, and ministries in Michigan and around the world. We have over 40 missionaries and ministries who will be available to share information with you in the Display Center. If you are interested in having a table to share about your church plant, ministry or missions project, please contact [wmu@bscm.org](mailto:wmu@bscm.org).

#### What for?

Your participation is sure to...

- inspire and energize your church members to get involved in mission both locally and globally.
- emphasize the foundation of Southern Baptist Cooperative Program of missions and evangelism.
- educate leaders about practical strategies to lead their churches in mission work that empowers, celebrates and shares God's love with all.
- invite the your church to be on mission through prayerful and pledged financial support.

### What is planned?

You can engage actively with state and global missionaries, hear from national and local guest speakers, worship time, and personally connect with missionaries around the world. You will develop partnerships and gather information about opportunities to be involved in local missions. We will celebrate mission work already underway and present a vision for what could happen by coming together as the church with the common purpose of reaching Michigan for Christ.

### Why Partner Together?

Experiencing missions together, Multiplies “The Power of One”.

### So What Do I Do Now?

Pray and ask God if this is a celebration you should attend? Pray and ask God if this is an opportunity you should encourage other to attend?

The “pursuit” is on...now that you know, standing still is no longer an option!

## **A Call to Bambi Lake**

By Staff

Roscommon - Brett and Niccole Luker's lives took a detour this summer. Brett serves as an associate pastor for Christian Challenge at Michigan State University, and Niccole who loves the arts was working as a cake decorator when they got a call. “This wasn't on our radar. Bambi Lake was something that we weren't expecting to happen,” Brett says, “We got a phone call, and we felt God just says 'Go'.” He adds, “That has really impacted us as a couple because it's really allowing us to experience what God can do when he tells you to go.”

Leaving my comfort zone to serve - <https://vimeo.com/286939339>

So Brett and Niccole spent the last few months as summer missionaries on staff at the Bambi Lake Conference Center. What that has meant has been lots of roles as needed. Niccole says the assignment “has gotten us out of our comfort zone, and has given us the opportunity to just serve a lot of people.” Brett adds, “You never know what's going to happen the next day. You always have to be expecting the unexpected.”

What does Bambi Lake have to offer? - <https://vimeo.com/286939415>

Brett and Niccole did a lot of hard work as part of their summer calling. Brett helped with much of the maintenance and revitalization of the camp, and Niccole serves behind the scenes in the kitchen and many other places in the camp. But the real reason that they are here is to have a spiritual impact. Brett talks about leading a young student to a profession of faith. “This young man came and responded to an altar call that we had. I had the opportunity to share the gospel with him, and he was open. It was wonderful.”

Getting away from it all - <https://vimeo.com/286939542>

Niccole understands the impact a week at camp can have on a young student's life because of her own experience at a camp as a high school student even before she had become a believer. She says, "That was just the beginning for me, but the thing I love about Bambi is that it gives you the opportunity to get away from noise and you just have the ability to just come and focus just on God."

Where will God show up? - <https://vimeo.com/286939668>

The Bambi Lake Conference Center has a long history of being the launching point for many of Michigan Baptists over the years. It supports the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's (BSCM) three areas of focus; starting, strengthening and sending.

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

## SBC NEWS

### **FIRST-PERSON: Don't ditch your denomination**

by Fred Luter

Date: August 22, 2018 - Wednesday

NEW ORLEANS (BP) -- In September 1986, my life was changed forever when I was elected as pastor of a dying Southern Baptist mission called Franklin Avenue Baptist Church. I grew up in the National Baptist denomination. I was the middle of five kids raised by a single mom who required everyone in her house to attend church on Sunday mornings.

At the age of 21, I was radically saved while lying in Charity Hospital in New Orleans not knowing if I was going to live the next 24 hours because of a serious head wound. A deacon of the church I grew up in put his finger inches from my face and said without apology, "Boy, obedience is better than sacrifice. If you were obedient to your mom, you would not be sacrificing your life here in this hospital!" That night I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life and woke up the next morning with a commitment to live the rest of my life as a born-again Christian.

After getting out of the hospital, I started a street ministry in the neighborhood I grew up in because I wanted everyone to know about this Jesus who turned my life around. While preaching one Sunday at a National Baptist church, someone mentioned to me that Franklin Avenue was looking for a pastor and asked if I would be interested. I said, "Franklin Avenue is a white church, blacks do not go there!" That's when I was told about the transitioning neighborhood and how Franklin Avenue was now an African American congregation. Well, I submitted my resume, and as the saying goes, the rest is history.

After meeting with the pulpit committee several times, I was then scheduled to teach a church-wide Sunday School and preach for the 11 a.m. worship service. After the service, there was about a 90-minute Q&A time with 35 to 40 members. Later that evening, I got a call from the pulpit committee chair to inform me that I had been elected as the mission's pastor. After hanging up the phone, I was both excited and scared because I had never led a church before.

Upon becoming the pastor, I was committed to ask for help in all areas I thought could assist us as a church and me as a pastor. And that's when I was first introduced to the many benefits of the Southern Baptist Convention. I met on a biweekly basis with leaders from our local association and then was introduced to professors, staff and facilities at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Our association trained our Sunday School teachers and ministry leaders while our seminary provided the space we needed for outreach events. Because of our growth, within three years we were able to become an autonomous church.

While brainstorming with our church leaders, one of our older members asked a question I did not expect. The question was: Since we are now an autonomous church, why don't we get out of the Southern Baptist Convention? I was floored by the question and asked, "Why?" I was once again floored when I was told about the history of the Southern Baptist Convention. I never knew that the convention I was now a part of started as a result of slavery.

After a brief history lesson and intense discussion, I made a statement that I knew came from God. I looked each of those members in their eyes and said, "All of us have a past. All of us have done something in our past that we regret. However, there is nothing we can do about our past, but we can do a whole lot about our future." With that said, I then stated a number of reasons why I felt it would be in our best interest to not get out of the Southern Baptist Convention:

- Southern Baptists allowed us to worship in the building we were in at no cost.
- The SBC, through our local association, provided training for our ministry leaders without cost.
- The SBC, through the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, allowed us to use the gym and other buildings for outreach events.
- The SBC stands on the infallibility of the Word of God.
- The SBC does missions, both local and international, better than any other group in the nation.
- The SBC is a key leader in disaster relief nationwide.
- The SBC believes in the importance of evangelism, discipleship and planting churches.
- The SBC is the most racially diverse convention in the nation.

I then stated, "The SBC is not a perfect convention by any means, but I truly believe that the SBC exists to do the will of God on this earth. So let's stay with this convention and help to carry out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I then asked for a vote and the vote was unanimous to stay in the Southern Baptist Convention. Looking back on that night, without a doubt, deciding not to "ditch our denomination" was one of the best decisions we have ever made as a church.

About the author: Fred Luter is pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

### **LABOR DAY: Owen Cooper's faith keyed array of ventures**

By Tim Tune

YAZOO CITY, Miss. (BP) -- On Labor Day, Americans will celebrate U.S. workers who have built and shaped the nation and influenced the world. One of the most successful entrepreneurs of the 20th century in Mississippi was also one of Southern Baptists' most influential laymen. The late Owen Cooper, who died Nov. 8, 1986, worked tirelessly in both arenas.

The year before Cooper's death, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board named him Layman of the Century. He was the second of only two laypeople ever elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, serving two terms, 1972-1974. Many who knew him say his commitment to Christ and Christ-like ministry inspired his vision for bold endeavors. His passionate interests drove him into many arenas to leverage his farm-boy upbringing as well as a master's-level education in economics and political science from the University of Mississippi in 1936 and a law degree from Mississippi College's School of Law (then Jackson School of Law) in 1938.

His business acumen and political knowledge, as well as his speaking and persuasion skills, would all come into play frequently over the years. "Mr. Cooper had an amazing ability to envision and then inspire masses of fellow citizens to implement a simple, elegant solution to a huge need and problem," writes Jo [sic] G. Prichard III, Cooper's longtime executive assistant at Mississippi Chemical Corporation (now Mississippi Chemical Co.). Prichard, author of "Making Things Grow: The Story of Mississippi Chemical Corporation" (1998), provided his reflections to Baptist Press.

The seeds for Mississippi Chemical were planted 75 years ago in 1943 as World War II was winding down. Mississippi agricultural researchers were studying ammonia as a source of nitrogen to improve crop yields. Cooper was then executive director of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, which represented 250,000 farmers and rural families. By March 1947, the research had proven ammonia's effectiveness as a fertilizer. But as demand for the product exploded, short supply made it expensive. That's when Cooper laid out his vision to create Mississippi Chemical, his best-known business enterprise.

As Farm Bureau executive director -- and a Christian concerned about the food supply in post-war America -- Cooper challenged farmers across the South to buy stock in a new co-op enterprise that would build the world's first farmer-owned ammonia-nitrogen fertilizer plant. Farmers, Mississippi banks and a loan from the federal government provided \$4.25 million for the plant, which was built in Yazoo City, Cooper's hometown,

50 miles north of Jackson, now with a population of 11,000. The first bags of fertilizer were produced on March 16, 1951. Over the next decade, the company built three similar plants in the United States and on the South American island of Trinidad.

In the 1960s -- with support from other American fertilizer producers and the U.S. Agency for International Development -- Cooper helped farmers in India build their own plants. Cooper's interests in India also included missions, where the Indian government limited permanent visas available to missionaries. Cooper suggested the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) hire Indian nationals to help. When he learned it was against board policy to hire nationals, Cooper created Universal Concern to hire Indian Baptist preachers to go into unreached areas to start churches. The effort was so successful the mission board revised its policy and merged Universal Concern into its ministries.

Another of Cooper's interests in India was Serampore College, founded by British Baptist missionary William Carey in 1818, which will celebrate its 200th anniversary this fall. Cooper's interest is linked to Hattiesburg, Miss.-based William Carey University (formerly William Carey College). "Mr. Cooper was supportive of William Carey University because ... we are named after Carey, the 'father of the modern missionary movement,'" Tommy King, president of the Baptist-affiliated institution, said in email comments to Baptist Press.

Cooper's wife Elizabeth, who died in 1999, served on Carey's board. The university's Owen and Elizabeth Cooper Institute of Missions is named in honor of the couple. Carey is buried in a cemetery near Serampore, King said. "When Mr. Cooper was there years ago, he discovered that William Carey's grave was in a deplorable condition and disrepair. And it was being flooded every time the river overflowed." King said Cooper came back to America and "raised money to renovate and repair the cemetery and build a levee to protect it from the river. So that's the kind of thing he did. He just saw needs and took steps to meet those needs." Cooper also took steps to meet the pressing social needs he saw in his hometown of Yazoo City during the racially turbulent 1960s and '70s.

His daughter Nancy Gilbert, 78, of Madison, Miss., recounted that after a year of study in Europe as a Baylor University junior, "My view of the world greatly increased" beyond the racial inequality she had known as a child growing up in Yazoo City. When she returned home from college in the early 1960s, Gilbert said, she and her parents had "a very rough" experience aligning their views on racial equality. Eventually, she said, "There was mutual stimulation ... let's put it that way. And Daddy ... began to get involved in the social justice arena."

His involvement included:

- Promoting tolerance and cooperation between blacks and whites.
- Helping organize the Mississippi Religious Liberty Council that spoke out against attacks on churches and synagogues.
- Partnering with the NAACP to form an organization to run the largest Head Start program in the South.
- Recruiting and hiring Louise Dean, Mississippi Chemical's first black professional, to work on his personal staff.
- Advocating the peaceful desegregation of the workplace, public facilities, colleges and public schools.

Cooper's efforts in race relations were recognized by national media on Jan. 7, 1970, when public schools in Yazoo City were peacefully integrated. But involvement in civil rights came at a cost to Cooper, who wanted to run for Mississippi governor, Prichard writes. "He would have been a formidable candidate and would have been a great governor," Prichard writes, but Cooper sensed that his civil rights efforts "doomed any possibility of his running for governor in the Deep South of the 1960s and 1970s." Still, Prichard notes, in his business and faith initiatives, "He always seemed to insist: 'We can do this ourselves. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.'"

About the author: Tim Tune is a faith-based writer based in Fort Worth, Texas.

### **Political divides in church focus of new study**

by Bob Smietana

Date: August 24, 2018 - Friday

NASHVILLE (BP) -- America has become increasingly divided by politics in recent years. So have its Protestant churches, according to a study released Thursday (Aug. 23). More than half (57 percent) of Protestant churchgoers under 50 say they prefer to go to church with people who share their political views. And few adult Protestant churchgoers say they attend services with people of a different political persuasion. Those are among the findings in a new report on churchgoing and politics, conducted Aug. 22–30, 2017, by LifeWay Research.

"Like many places in America, churches are divided by politics," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. "And churchgoers under 50 seem to want it that way."

#### **Political divide**

For the study, LifeWay Research surveyed 1,010 Americans who attend services at least once a month at a Protestant or nondenominational church. Forty-six percent agree with the statement, "I prefer to attend a church where people share my political views." Forty-two percent disagree. Twelve percent are not sure. More than half (57 percent) of churchgoers ages 18 to 49 agree. Fewer churchgoers ages 50 to 64 (39 percent) or ages 65 and over (33 percent) agree. Men (51 percent) are more likely to agree than women (43 percent).

Methodist (57 percent), nondenominational (51 percent) and Baptist (49 percent) churchgoers are more likely to agree than churchgoers from other denominations. Lutherans (33 percent) are less likely to agree. "Only a third of churchgoers in the study had strong feelings on this subject," McConnell said. Twelve percent strongly agree, while 22 percent strongly disagree. "Politics doesn't seem to be a high priority for most Protestants when choosing a church to attend," he said. "But for a small group of churchgoers, it's really crucial."

LifeWay Research also asked Protestant churchgoers if their political views match those of people in their church. Half agree (51 percent), while 19 percent disagree and 30 percent are uncertain. Churchgoers ages 35 to 49 (61 percent) are more likely to agree than those ages 50 to 64 (47 percent) or those 65 and older (44 percent). Men (58 percent) are more likely to agree than women (46 percent). Those who attend services at least once a week (52 percent) are more likely to agree than those who attend once or twice a month (43 percent).

American churchgoers who hold evangelical beliefs (57 percent) are more likely to agree their political views match others in their church, compared to those who don't hold evangelical beliefs (44 percent). Baptist (58 percent), nondenominational (54 percent) and Assemblies of God/Pentecostal (53 percent) churchgoers are more likely to agree. Lutherans (31 percent) are less likely. Protestant churchgoers and other Americans who attend worship services at least once a month made up about half of voters (52 percent) in the 2016 presidential election, according to data from Pew Research. Churchgoers might stick around even if they disagree over politics. A previous LifeWay Research study of Protestant and nondenominational churchgoers found only 1 in 10 (9 percent) would consider leaving their church over political views.

"More than a few churchgoers in the most recent study (30 percent) don't know the political views of people besides them in the pews," McConnell said. "Politics isn't the only thing that churchgoers care about," he said. "In some churches, politics isn't mentioned at all -- at least in the pews."

#### 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) which attends 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 an evangelical research firm that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

About the author: Bob Smietana is senior writer at Facts & Trends (factsandtrends.net) of LifeWay Christian Resources.

### **SWBTS appoints 9-member presidential search committee**

by SWBTS & BP Staff

Date: August 24, 2018 - Friday

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) -- A search committee comprising nine Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees has been appointed to recommend the seminary's next president. Led by chairman Danny Roberts, an at-large trustee and executive pastor of North Richland Hills (Texas) Baptist Church, the search committee was appointed by trustee chairman Kevin Ueckert and announced to the full board Aug. 23.

In addition to Roberts, the committee includes: Denise Ewing (Ill.), Jamie Green (at-large, search committee secretary), Guy Grimes (Calif.), Todd Houston (N.C.), Tom James (Ky.), Philip Levant (at-large), Andre Palmer (N.Y.) and Calvin Wittman (Colo., search committee vice chair). Ueckert and board vice chair Connie Hancock are ex officio members of the committee. Roberts is an alumnus of Southwestern (master of church music, 1979) and has served as a trustee since 2016, sitting on the Communications, Policies, and Strategic Initiatives Committee.

According to an Aug. 24 news release from the seminary, the committee includes two women, one African American and one Hispanic. The committee is diverse geographically and mixed in terms of trustee tenure (with five being in their first five-year term and the other four in their second five-year term). Only two search committee members are members of the trustee executive committee.

Ueckert, pastor of First Baptist Church in Georgetown, Texas, said, "Between now and the October Board meeting, the presidential search committee will be focused on developing the candidate profile and the application process, as well as entering a time of focused prayer." The committee will nominate a successor to former Southwestern president Paige Patterson, who was moved to president emeritus status in May and terminated less than a week later. Patterson had been under fire since late April for statements he has made about domestic abuse and women's physical appearance. He also drew criticism for his handling of an alleged 2003 sexual assault at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he served as president from 1992-2003.

Southwestern's bylaws state a president must be elected by the trustee board. Presidential nominations and expressions of interest should be submitted to [swbtspresidentalsearch@gmail.com](mailto:swbtspresidentalsearch@gmail.com).

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

### **Vision team to help implement SBCAL recommendations**

by Diana Chandler

Date: August 17, 2018 - Friday

MCDONOUGH, Ga. (BP) -- An 11-member vision team will study ways to help Southern Baptist state associations implement recommended changes including a new title and system-wide professional proficiencies for directors of missions (DOMs). The Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders (SBCAL) vision team will research ways to help state associations implement a study team's recommendations that were adopted during the SBCAL annual meeting in June. The new vision team will report its findings to the SBCAL executive team in advance of the 2019 SBCAL annual meeting in Birmingham, Ala., June 9-10.

Included in SBCAL-adopted recommendations are the use of the title "associational mission strategist" for all directors of missions and the adoption of certain foundational, relational and strategic proficiencies for the job description. Vision team leader Bob Lowman, executive director of the Metrolina Baptist Association in Charlotte, N.C., told Baptist Press the proficiencies are more important than the name change.

"The title is an important factor," Lowman told BP. "The proficiencies discovered and recommended as well as the partnerships that can develop to help promote those proficiencies -- those are really the more important factors to be emphasizing." Among recommendations are six foundational, five relational and six strategic proficiencies deemed essential for the DOM position.

Each DOM, or associational mission strategist, should also be called by God to associational leadership and be a person of character, spiritually mature, committed to learning, emotionally intelligent, authentically vulnerable, a supportive coach, an active listener, a vision caster, a leadership multiplier (developer) and a consultant, among other proficiencies, according to the study team report posted online at [www.sbcassociations.org/report.html](http://www.sbcassociations.org/report.html).

"Our goal will be to take the findings of the study team ... and do our best to implement those and encourage implementation of those findings in associations across the country," Lowman said. "We really want to take what was learned through the team's work over the past year and then translate that into action and vision and renewed mission on behalf of associations across the convention."

Partnerships between associations, state conventions and SBC entities, as well as changes in the name and structure of the SBCAL itself, are being considered, Lowman told BP. "Right now we're the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders, but

that name may be adjusted. It has been adjusted in the past, but it may be adjusted to better fit the findings of the study team and what the vision team recommends to SBCAL."

Joining Lowman on the vision team, announced in the August SBCAL Encourager newsletter, are ex-officio member Ray Gentry, SBCAL executive director, McDonough, Ga.; Stan Albright, pastor, First Baptist Church, Oxford, Ala.; Mark Dance, director of LifeWay Pastors, Nashville; Dale Fisher, executive director and associational missionary, Caldwell Baptist Association, Lenoir, N.C.; Steve Holt, church services director, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board; and Jason Lowe, DOM of the Pike Association of Southern Baptists and executive pastor of First Baptist Church, Pikeville, Ky.

Completing the team are Mark Snowden, director of missional leadership, Cincinnati Area Baptist Association, Cincinnati; David Stokes, executive director and lead church consultant, Central Kentucky Network of Baptists, Lexington, Ky.; Rick Wheeler, lead missional strategist, Jacksonville Baptist Association, Jacksonville, Fla.; and Tony Wolfe, director of pastor/church relations, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

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

## AROUND THE STATE

### SUBMIT YOUR UPDATES

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

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

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

All messengers are encouraged to attend and everyone is welcome.

## READ IT!

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

## CLASSIFIEDS

### Classified Ad Submission Guidelines

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

### Senior Pastor Needed

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

The desired candidate will have the following characteristics:

- A born-again believer in Jesus Christ and living an exemplary life modeling the call, character, and competencies becoming of a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ,
- Demonstrates a servant spirit as a growing disciple of Jesus Christ,
- Agrees with and supports the Baptist Faith and Message,

- Displays honorable work ethics by maintaining adequate office hours in order to effectively administrate the ministries of the church,
- Displays the spiritual gift of edification to this local body and the general community through preaching, teaching and pastoral ministries,
- Proven ability to lead a Pastoral team in planning and leading in worship, discipleship in fulfilling the Great Commission,
- Provide effective direction and oversight of the administrative and volunteer ministry teams of the congregation.

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

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

Search Team Contact:

Audie (Russ) Bates

Personal Phone: (419) 340-3132

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

Senior Pastor Search Committee  
Monroe Missionary Baptist Church  
14260 South Dixie Highway  
Monroe, Michigan 48161  
Bi-Vocational Pastor Needed  
SALARY: TBD

LOCATION: Davison Meadows Baptist Church, Davison MI

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

REQUIREMENTS:

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

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

- Must concur with the Baptist Faith and Message

**CONTACT:**

Chris Gilbert

[dmbcpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:dmbcpastorsearch@gmail.com)**Full-time Lead Pastor Needed**

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

**Learning Center Director Needed**

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

**Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship**

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

CrossPointe Church Website: [www.crosspointemonroe.com](http://www.crosspointemonroe.com)

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

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

**Qualifications:**

- The associate pastor must be a man who humbly and joyfully desires to serve as an elder in a local church (1 Tim 3:1, 6; Titus 1:5-9).
- The associate pastor should be recognized by a local church through ordination (or willing to go through the ordination process at CrossPointe) as a man qualified for the office of elder (Titus 1:5; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 5:1-3).
- The associate pastor should be a man who is actively pursuing holiness of life by the grace of God (1 Tim 4:7-10).
- The associate pastor should be evangelical, conservative theologically, and in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.
- The associate pastor should be proficient to lead vocally in gathered worship services.
- The associate pastor should be proficient to lead instrumentally with guitar and/or piano in gathered worship services.
- The associate pastor should have experience in leading a team of musicians.
- The associate pastor should have experience with audio and video technology.
- The associate pastor should have experience developing and leading discipleship ministries in a local church.

**Gathered Worship Service Responsibilities:**

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

**Additional Worship Ministry Responsibilities:**

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

**Discipleship Ministry Responsibilities:**

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

**Compensation:**

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

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

CrossPointe Church

[1675 Stewart Road](#)

[Monroe, MI 48162](#)

(734) 457-1024

[crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com](mailto:crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com)

## **Bi-vocational Pastor Needed**

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

## **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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