

## STARTING

### **'Welcome' is a powerful word for International Students entering USA**

by Terry Sharp

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) -- No one likes being the new kid on the block. Just thinking about it now takes me back to difficult times when I experienced loneliness and unfamiliarity in new places. It even reminds me of those awkward years trying to fit in with others in my early school years. That's why being welcomed into a new community can be such a wonderful experience. The simple truth is that "welcome" is a powerful word.

Over the course of 42 years, my wife Kathy and I have moved a number of times, and with every move came the same unnerving feelings. Whether here in the United States or overseas where we served as missionaries, we always felt like the new kids on the block. I will always remember one particular move when our new neighbors rushed right over. They welcomed us and invited us over for dinner that night. It felt great to receive such warm hospitality. A single family reaching out to us made us feel completely welcomed to our new city and neighborhood.

During the time we lived in Brazil, we moved from the city where we attended language school to our new city of ministry a thousand miles to the south. We tried to connect with our new neighbors next door the way our previous neighbors had done with us. They were cordial enough, but our conversation was stilted and superficial. However, I will never forget the Sunday morning when their shallow greetings turned into something more. They invited us over for Chimarrão, which is a caffeine-rich infused tea that's quite popular in southern Brazil. Being invited over to our neighbors to drink tea was exciting. We felt welcomed and honored to be included in one of the most culturally important customs of the region.

"Chimarrão é amizade" is one of the local sayings. Translated, it means "Chimarrão is friendship." Our neighbors shared that adage with us, adding that drinking Chimarrão with family, colleagues or friends created a social bond. It didn't take long to become good friends with our neighbors. Our daughters were soon best friends and spent a lot of time together.

What does it mean to "Be a Welcoming Neighbor?"

International students especially feel lonely when they move to a new, unfamiliar place. They arrive with the pressure to excel in their studies in a second language, all while learning a new culture. It must be totally overwhelming, and feeling welcome in their new hometowns can likely help offer some much-needed comfort. We have an incredible opportunity in the U.S. to welcome almost a million international students who arrive from countries all around the world to attend American colleges and universities every year. Knowing that 75 percent of international students are never invited into an American home increases the importance of welcoming them in.

Consider this excerpt from a WorldView column by missions writer Erich Bridges in 2011: "A foreign student preparing to return home after several years at an American university left behind a full suitcase with his roommate. 'What's this?' the roommate asked. 'It's full of the gifts I brought to give Americans when they invited me to their homes,' the student replied, a tinge of sadness in his voice. 'No one invited me.'" The opportunity for believers to serve international students through simply welcoming them and helping them acclimate to their new home and culture is astounding. No international student who wants to have an American friend should ever be lacking.

Here are some practical steps to get you and your church started.

1. Contact your local university and ask about becoming a host family to an international student. This is usually arranged through a program in the international student office. Programs may differ but you'll generally receive a form to fill out that matches your family and a participating student. You'll typically be asked to host your assigned student throughout the school year. Currently, my family is hosting two students, and we make a point of including them in holiday festivities and meals as well as family birthdays, shopping excursions and worship opportunities with our church.
2. Pick up international students from the airport and help them get settled into their dorms or apartments.
3. Provide household goods and furniture for international students. Some churches and Baptist associations have developed ministries to provide these items. International students secure household goods and furniture as they settle into their new places of residence and return them at the end of the school year or when they return home.
4. Embrace students as a part of your life and become a genuine friend. Invite them for meals and to special family events, church activities and excursions such as ball games, bowling and amusement parks. On holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, explain the meaning of your observances and traditions. Remember that they want to experience life in America, and you are their guide.
5. Invite students to church. Offer to pick them up or coordinate with your church to provide a van that stops on campus taking students to and from church activities.

When you reach out, you'll discover a multitude of opportunities to build friendships, meet needs and minister the Gospel to people God has brought to your community. All of this opportunity is available simply through the power of welcoming others into your life.

Terry Sharp (@terrysharpimb) is the International Mission Board's state, association and diaspora network leader. This article first appeared at the mission board's [imb.org](http://imb.org) website.

## **Easter: What if?**

By Josh Tovey

Grandville, MI - Easter is the most important Sunday of the year! It's the day when many people who don't attend church regularly go to church. When I was a kid, I can remember going out the Saturday before Easter to buy new clothes, because on Easter Sunday everyone dressed up. It was important to look good on Easter, and for some reason wearing a tie equalled "best." It was the only Sunday I wore a tie as a kid to church. I remember singing songs, and people being more excited about being together. I remember hearing more "Amens" on that day than any other Sunday the rest of the year. I remember it was very clear who we were worshipping as well. We were all gathered together, dressed in our best, to worship the Resurrected King! Why did we make sure we were in church that day? Why were we dressed in what we thought was our best? Why were we more excited to worship and gather together? Because it was the Superbowl of Sundays'... It was Easter Sunday!

Now, as I am in the process of leading a Church plant, which will be two years old this Easter, I have a different view than I did when I was a kid. We wrestled with these questions when embracing the prompting of the Spirit to plant Redemption Church in Grandville, Michigan. Even though we go all out at Easter... What if what we celebrated on Easter, we celebrated every single time we gathered as a church? What if Jesus' resurrection was not just celebrated once a year, but celebrated every week? What if we realized that Jesus is the point of our existence? What if every message brought people into a deeper understanding of all that is ours in Christ? What if we understood that the Gospel is the most profound message the world has ever heard? What if we understood the great depths of the Gospel and had a commitment to never move past it? What if we recognized that if we move past the Gospel, then our message would turn into moralism? What if we realized that Hell will be full of really good moral people? What if we never told our people what to do without first reminding them of what Jesus has done? What if we were convinced of this important biblical truth-that we would never give a message where Jesus wasn't the point? What if we understood that the person and work of Jesus is the greatest motivation in our obedience to him? What if we understood that God has you where he has you to advance the Gospel through you? What if we embraced the reality that everybody around me has been intentionally placed there by the Lord? What if we understood that everything we do is because Jesus is the point? What if we believed that Jesus changes everything?

How would this change everything? Whether you're reading this right before Easter Sunday, or two weeks after Easter Sunday, or even if you're reading this in mid December, know that this coming Sunday is another HUGE opportunity to celebrate the glorious truths of the Gospel, the reality that Jesus is alive, and that HE changes everything! What if we never missed the main point and we realized that Jesus is the main point, and further, realize that Jesus wasn't joking when He said...

John 5:39, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."

Josh Tovey is Lead Pastor of Redemption Church in Grandville, Michigan. Redemption will be two years old in April of 2017. Redemption has been blessed to see God move in mighty ways in their short history. We are currently praying through what God is calling

us to do next to reach greater Grand Rapids for Jesus. Redemption is excited about future opportunities to multiple what God is currently doing in Grandville throughout West Michigan.

## **Missionaries in Michigan**

By Tony Lynn

Fenton- Did you know dozens of missionaries live near you? They do and you can find them and their email addresses at: [www.bscm.org/sendmemi](http://www.bscm.org/sendmemi)

Each of these men and their wives are considered missionaries. They have answered God's call to plant a church. Yet, in other ways these men and couples are a lot like you. They have bills to pay. They have children who become ill. They are caring for aging parents. They need date nights. They need encouragement. They need your prayers. I will share a few examples.

Daniel Tackett is a Detroit police officer and police chaplain. Tackett often works the night shift and then after brief hours of sleep connects daily with the church leadership and members. His wife and family are passionate partners in the ministry. Despite their early stage at the church, Tackett has two associate pastors helping the church in outreach and discipleship in Wyandotte.

Our church planters serve in a variety of settings:

- Rural communities
- Small towns
- Lakeside resorts
- Medium-sized cities
- Suburbs
- Urban pockets of Detroit

Stanley McLellan is the pastor in Standish. Retired women make up the church membership and faithful, and support McLellan as Pastor. They are waiting on a miracle of new and continual growth. The women report that McLellan, who suffers from cerebral palsy and is legally blind, has led them in some of the best Bible teaching they have ever received over the years.

Our church planting families are different in their make-up:

- Single men
- Young couples with no children
- Young couples with plenty of children
- Middle-aged couples with adult children out of the home
- Semi-retired couples redeploying as missionaries

Drew Ansley labors in Detroit on two fronts. First, he and his wife disciple residents and the homeless of his area often times allowing them to live with them and their daughter in their home. Those who share their home are overcoming addictions and dark phases in their lives. Secondly, Ansley is focused on reaching the students of Wayne County Community Colleges. Ansley, a Florida surfer who moved to Michigan, impressed me

one day when he said, “Tony, I focus on the students at the community colleges knowing that most of them will remain in Detroit after graduation. If I can reach them for Christ during their college years and they remain in the community then Detroit will really be transformed.” I thought, “Wow!”

Our church plants are at different stages of growth, some are:

- Getting started and gathering a core team of volunteers
- Growing rapidly and consistently
- Leveling off on a plateau and must redefine their future advances
- Less than 1 year old, many are 1-3 years old, and a few are 7 years old

David Pennell and his tireless team organized a short-term solution for the homeless and helpless in Menominee. Church members join Pennell daily caring for those in need. In a former Catholic school, Pennell and his team feed school children before they are transported to nearby public schools. The daily morning devotion time is where the adults are instructed in the Bible and vent their feelings. Everyone feels the mutual sense of family and connection whether you are there for days or a few weeks. Stories of rebuilding and renewal occur each month. Local business people and vendors participate and believe in what Pennell and the church are doing for their city.

On occasion, I hear people say, “I would like to meet some missionaries.” Well, here is your opportunity. Let me suggest you plan two or three getaways this summer traveling throughout Michigan. Locate the church planter and location that peaks your interest and make plans to visit their church.

While traveling, here are some ways in which you can assist or encourage the missionaries serving in Michigan:

- Pray for them & send them a note letting them know you prayed
- Visit a church plant and express your gratitude face to face to the family
- Gather a special offering and give it to the church plant
- Ask the church planter for a special need that requires funds and mobilize people in your church to collect until the amount is achieved and then celebrate with the church plant
- Ask the church planter if you can organize a short-term event or ministry that would increase relationships for the new church; such as, Vacation Bible School, a concert, door-to-door gifts and invitations, remodeling/updating the building or church yard, or follow one of your inspirational ideas

Whether you are in a new church plant or a church celebrating a 40-year anniversary our mission is the same, we’re here to punch holes in the darkness and lead our neighbors to Christ. Please, take time to look at [www.bscm.org/sendmemi](http://www.bscm.org/sendmemi)

## **STRENGTHENING**

**'The Shack' film stirs debate as did preceding book**

by Diana Chandler

NASHVILLE (BP) -- A fictional and emotionally destroyed Mack Phillips answers a mysterious invitation to a remote, isolated cabin. There he finds a trinity of fatherly love in a woman named "Papa" whose cohorts teach Phillips forgiveness and the faith to run on water -- literally.

It's the synopsis of the movie "The Shack," based on William Paul Young's New York Times bestseller and award-winning book by the same title, that some described as a biblically sound parable. And as with the 2007 controversial book that sold more than 20 million copies, others are criticizing the movie as a farce that serves to deeply distort rather than affirm biblical truths. Among critics of the film is Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. If the movie is anything like the book, he says, it is dangerous in its false portrayal of the Holy Spirit, even though the book is a fictional fantasy.

"We need to be clear. This depiction of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the Gospel is profoundly unbiblical," Mohler told Baptist Press. "The Bible warns against any false depiction of God and calls it idolatry. Making that into a compelling story just compounds the theological danger, and when all of this is added to the creative storytelling power of Hollywood, it also becomes very seductive." James B. De Young, a Western Seminary professor who countered the book with his own 2010 book "Burning Down 'The Shack': How the Christian Bestseller is Deceiving Millions" has likewise criticized the film. "If the film is a faithful portrayal of the events and the theology of the book," DeYoung has told Christian News Network, "then every Christian should be gravely alarmed at the further advance of beliefs that smear the evangelical understanding of the truth of the Bible."

The movie's makers promote it as an educational depiction of the love of the true God, and offers free resources intended to be evangelistic and educational, including movie clips, a downloadable Scripture-laden discussion guide, bookmarks and flyers. "Our discussion guide is designed to help you dive deeper into the themes of The Shack with members of your church, school, community and others," the guide is described at [theshackresources.com](http://theshackresources.com). "We've added Scripture verses and discussion questions to help you unpack each section. Feel free to follow the prompts or use this guide as a jumping off point for your own insights. You may present the movie clips in your service or group setting."

Eugene Peterson, retired Presbyterian pastor and author of the award-winning "The Message" Bible, praised the book as comparable to the classic "Pilgrim's Progress," but Peterson is not listed among the movie's endorsers. Instead, top endorsements on the movie's website are offered by Dick Rolfe, co-founder and CEO of the Dove Foundation; Geoff Tunnicliffe, former head of the World Evangelical Alliance and Bob Waliszewski, director of Focus on the Family's (FOTF) media and culture department, among others. "The film will do a lot to point a world desperately looking for answers to a God who loves and cares," Waliszewski said at [theshackresources.com/endorsements](http://theshackresources.com/endorsements), but did not review the film on FOTF's Plugged In movie review program he directs. Waliszewski has since posted a review of "The Shack" at [pluggedin.com](http://pluggedin.com).

Mohler believes the movie is dangerous as entertainment as well as education, he told BP, because of the incredible power inherent in storytelling. "There are many Christians who sadly may not be sufficiently grounded in biblical doctrine to understand just how unbiblical this movie is," Mohler said. "Secondly, they'll be many people who are not believers, who will go away believing that the movie depicts biblical Christianity, true

Christianity. It creates a cultural conversation in which the bottom line issue is that the makers of this movie have sought to create an entertaining story at the expense of biblical truth."

In a 2010 review of the book on which the movie is based, Mohler points out the book's skewed presentation of the Trinity and its concepts of universalism, universal redemption and ultimate reconciliation. In the book "Jesus tells Mack: 'Those who love me come from every system that exists. They were Buddhists or Mormons, Baptists or Muslims, Democrats, Republicans and many who don't vote or are not part of any Sunday morning or religious institutions. I have no desire to make them Christian, but I do want to join them in their transformation into sons and daughters of my Papa, into my brothers and sisters, my Beloved.'"

LifeWay Christian Resources no longer offers the book.

"We stopped carrying 'The Shack' a few years ago," LifeWay Director of Communications Carol Pipes emailed BP, "because although it is a work of fiction, the theology presented as integral to the story clearly conflicts with the Bible on many issues, especially in regards to the character and nature of The Trinity."

Mohler describes the book, and the movie to the extent that it aligns with the book, as the opposite of Pilgrim's Progress. "It is not credible under any standard of Orthodox Christianity," Mohler said. "Pilgrim's Progress is a parable that affirms Scripture. The Shack you might say is a parable at the expense of Scripture."

The movie is now showing in theaters and stars Academy Award winner Octavia Spencer, Grammy Award winner Tim McGraw and Sam Worthington. Brad Cummings and Gil Netter (The Blind Side and The Life of Pi) are producers; Stuart Hazeldine is the movie's director.

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.

## **A Night to Shine Celebration**

By Djuana Dismuke

Lansing - This year, 2017, marked the third anniversary of Night to Shine, sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. In just three years, this unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs, ages 14 and older, has become a worldwide movement. This year, more than 150,000 volunteers in more than 375 churches around the world served more than 75,000 honored guests simultaneously on one night, Friday, February 10, 2017. The 375 host churches represent all 50 states, 11 countries, 28 different denominations, and mark an 850% growth from year one.

Faith Fellowship Baptist Church partnered with the 2|42 Community Church to host the Night to Shine event for the Lansing, MI area. The Lansing area honored approximately 200 guests with a red-carpet entrance complete with a friendly welcome from paparazzi,

limousine rides, hair and makeup glam party, and, of course, a dance floor! Every guest was donned with crowns/tiaras – because they are all Kings and Queens, corsages/boutonnieres, and a catered five course meal served for each King and Queen.

It is a night not only for guests to shine, but for churches to shine, for volunteers to shine, and most importantly, for Christ to shine. The lives of 200 young men and women were touched by loving and caring individuals and churches who had come together to show Christ.

This article was written by Djuana Dismuke, she is the Community Education Specialist at Faith Fellowship Baptist Church in Detroit. She coordinates our After School Program for our Community Center.

### **A Pastor Wife's Journey through the Years**

By Kristin L. Norman

I began writing the poem, The Wind, one stormy night while I was living in Southern California. I was born and raised in New York and after getting married, moved with my husband to the West Coast so that he could complete seminary. I was far away from family and everyone I had ever known (my husband not included). We had been trying to get pregnant, unsuccessfully, for over a year. I had recently had a miscarriage and I couldn't get a full-time job. I felt useless and lonely.

There aren't too many stormy nights in Southern California, but as the wind shook my windows I felt as though it was shaking my very soul. So, I began to write. And as I did, I was reminded of the Psalms and how, so often, no matter how difficult the circumstance, the Psalmist would end it with hope. As I meditated on the Psalms and wrote, my soul was comforted.

After my husband completed seminary and was ordained, we moved to Traverse City, Michigan. We accepted the call to a senior pastorate at The Orchard Church and I was still infertile and unemployed. I was excited about this new opportunity to serve, but then another storm came. Again, I found myself lying awake in bed hearing the wind against my windows, and although several years had passed, I was still without a child or a full-time job. I still felt alone.

God did not give me either a child or a full-time job for five years. It was a long five years, filled with sorrow, pain, but also joy and new friendships. Then, within one month, I received my daughter through foster care, found out I was pregnant, and received my first contracted teaching position. I am now a full-time teacher, a mother of two amazing children, and so much more. My life is full and chaotic but so very wonderful. There was a drought in my life for five years and then God opened up the floodgates and the storm no longer brought pain but joy. The rain that pounds on my roof is no longer a symbol of sorrow, but of God's profound grace in my life. God is our very hope.

Kristin L. Norman was born and raised in the 'forgotten borough' of New York City. She has lived on each coast and now resides in Traverse City, Michigan. She is a pastor's



wife, mother of two, teacher, worship leader, and author. You can follow her at [www.facebook.com/KristinLNorman/](http://www.facebook.com/KristinLNorman/)

## **Awakening in Ada: Ada, First events draw 200 decisions**

Posted on March 9, 2017 By Brian Hobbs

ADA—If God were to begin a spiritual awakening in the “Bible Belt,” He might just choose a place like Ada to do it. That is what Brad Graves, pastor of Ada, First, believed. Through a multi-day event in February called “Awaken Ada,” the church saw approximately 200 spiritual decisions and has recorded more than 65 baptisms.

“Many describe what happened in Ada, Okla. last week as unbelievable, overwhelming, anointed; and most said it was simply indescribable,” said Graves who mentioned there were a few “only God” attributions leading up to Awaken Ada. To prepare for the event, which would be headlined by revival evangelist Ken Freeman, members of Ada, First “cleansed the Temple” with 300 people reading aloud the entire Bible, cover to cover, in the sanctuary. Following this, approximately 100 members fasted for 21 days, calling on the Lord to send awakening and revival in Ada. Hearts were set as Freeman arrived on a Wednesday, and a series of events took place.

Speaking at five school assemblies involving five different area schools, God clearly began to move on the hearts of people. Giving his “choices” school assembly speech, many students connected with Freeman’s message. “With one of the largest crowds hosted on a Wednesday Night Youth Service this school year, Ken spoke to a packed room of students, and the first 18 decisions for Christ were made,” according to Graves. On Friday evening, more than 100 students and adults traveled to the Ada Lodge at Falls Creek for a weekend Winter Camp. During worship services, 13 more decisions for Christ happened.

Then, at a Saturday night Communion Service, which lasted for hours, students worshipped the Lord with great intensity. This sparked a number of student-led prayer groups at schools, the following week. According to Graves, the community participated in the awakening. “One local high school even added the Wednesday night service in its daily announcements. Posters and invite cards were distributed around our area by the hundreds, and countless people gave rides, picked up people and walked,” he said. All of these events led up to the Sunday morning worship service, which kicked off the five-service revival week. That morning, the church baptized 19 students.

From Sunday through Wednesday, Graves and the congregation saw the crowd sizes only grow. During the times of response, the altar was full of people. “On Wednesday we had other churches join for worship, and with a crowd of between 1,500 and 2,000 people, we believe it to be the largest crowd our sanctuary has held,” said Graves. “We had the balcony full, choir loft full, students and adults crammed into pews, and many students sitting on the floor. We also had a nursery and elementary kids service for 4th grade and below in the gym. With the size of our town it is easy to celebrate that close to 10 percent of our population came to our service that night.” “I was overwhelmed with emotion, because we had been praying for a moment like this for years,” said one church member.

Each evening, dozens of people came to faith in Christ. At the time Ada, First had recorded 199 decisions for Christ, with 68 baptisms and more baptisms scheduled. These people came from all walks of life, from teens to married couples. "I have been in a lot of revivals and crusades, even Billy Graham and Luis Palau, but Wednesday night was the most historic and anointed service that I may have ever been a part of," he said. "Someone asked if I knew this was going to be this epic of a movement. I replied that I knew it was going to be this special, not because of the crowds, salvations or baptisms, but because I saw the intensity and passion of the students in their worship. I have never seen that many students that sincere and intense on just worshipping God, and with God's promise to inhabit the praises of His people, He did not disappoint," added Graves, who believes the prayer and fasting was a key to focusing the church on God."

Graves' prayer is that this outpouring of blessing from God changes the spiritual landscape in Ada. With God's help, an awakening like what was seen in Ada also can spread to other parts of Oklahoma and the nation.

**NOTE:**

Evangelist Ken Freeman is coming to Michigan the week of May 14-17. He will be speaking at Riverwalk Baptist Church in Bay City with Pastor Steve Roe. If you would like Evangelist Ken Freeman to come to your church, please contact the BSCM at 810-714-1907 or Ken Freeman at [dude@kenfreeman.com](mailto:dude@kenfreeman.com) to schedule a date.

Brian Hobbs is the Editor of the Baptist Messenger in Oklahoma, an initiative of Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Today, the Baptist Messenger is mailed to nearly 45,000 households every week, making it the third-largest newspaper in terms of paid subscriptions in the state of Oklahoma. In November 2011, Messenger Digital was launched, a full online edition of The Baptist Messenger, along with the Messenger Mobile companion app. On May 15, 2012, The Messenger celebrated its 100th year. Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 3800 North May Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73112 © 2017 All Rights Reserved • [BGCO.org](http://BGCO.org) • 405.942.3800

**Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion**

By Tim Patterson

Every pastor and leader of a ministry should read this book every year! During a time in my ministry, this book was the tool that God used to keep me from imploding, and helped me refocus my life and work. Since that time I have purchased cases of this book and shared it with as many pastors as possible and will continue to do so. It is a fact that many leaders will become so focused on their work that they neglect their own spiritual, physical and emotional health. This in turn causes foundations to begin to crumble and the structure of life just falls apart. Author Wayne Cordeiro writes in Leading On Empty about these dangers and gives practical and productive means by which one can be restored to health and wholeness as well as protect from future failures.

The review in Kindle states: "Wayne Cordeiro found himself paralyzed by burnout. He had been in ministry for 30 years, and 10 years after founding what is now the largest church in Hawaii, he found himself depleted. Wayne took a season out of his growing

ministry to recharge and refocus on the truly important. He was able to get back in touch with his life, get back in proper balance, and re-energize his spirit through Christ in a way that propelled him forward to greater levels of service. Wayne first gave this message at a recent Willow Creek Leadership Summit, where it was the highest-rated presentation by those in attendance. Pulling no punches, Wayne talks about the walls leaders must break through, and how to move on with integrity. Included are ways to care for oneself physically and emotionally as well as spiritually.”

I strongly recommend this book so much so that if any pastor in the Baptist State Convention of Michigan cannot afford a copy, email me and I will be glad to provide one for him. [tim@bscm.org](mailto:tim@bscm.org)

Timothy C. Patterson  
Executive Director  
Baptist State Convention of Michigan

### **Dive In ! - MICHIGAN GIRLS MISSION CAMP 2017**

By Sue Hodnett

Fenton, MI - Michigan girls and teen girls, are you ready to "Dive In" to a crazy fun week of camp? Take a boat ride, visit the miniature golf course, cast a fishing line, swim in Bambi Lake, and learn about the wildlife of northern Michigan. How about worship with friends from churches all over our state, work on service mission projects, and meet with a real missionary? It is not too early to start planning. Register today for our Michigan Girls' Mission Camp 2017 at Bambi Lake Retreat and Conference Center! ([www.bscm.org](http://www.bscm.org))

Join your friends (old and new) for Girl's Mission Camp 2017! Our theme "Dive In" will challenge campers wherever they are in their journeys to love God more and to love others more. The theme Scripture is Luke 10:27-28 (NIV): "He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength and with all your mind." And, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'" 'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do that, and you will live.'" Through Bible-based activities and fellowship, campers are provided foundational knowledge of Christian principles as well as practical ways to share their faith and testimony. Along with fun activities that encourage physical and mental development, campers are involved in exciting, fun activities and camaraderie; they are also involved in activities that provide practical as well as challenging Christian development.

God calls us to fellowship with others, share the Good News of God's grace, and grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. At Girls Mission Camp, campers learn how God invites us to reach out to the world by being Christ's presence to others every day! Here are the details:

**When** is Girls Camp 2017? MI Girls Mission Camp is July 10-14, 2016. (starting time: Monday- 1:30pm, departing time: Friday - 10:30am)

**Where** is Girls Camp 2017 located? MI Girls Mission Camp is held at Bambi Lake Retreat Center a beautiful place, in northern lower Michigan. Send mail to: P O Box 487, Roscommon, MI 48653

Is the camp fully **equipped and comfortable** for living? Yes; its lodge-style dormitories, dining hall, and conference center. The recreational facilities are engaging and readily available for camp activities. Sunscreen and insect repellent are recommended supplies for campers to bring with them.

**How** do I get to Girls Camp? Many church groups bring vans while some parents bring their camper to camp. Please contact us if we can help you connect with a church van ride. (wmu@bscm.org)

**What** is the age group allowed to attend? The age group of girls allowed to attend Girls Mission Camp is girls completing grades 3rd-12th.

**Are** there any prerequisites to attending Girls Mission Camp? Girls Mission Camp is a Christian camp open to all girls (grades 3-12) from any faith or culture.

What are the **necessary forms** I need to complete, and where can they be found? You must complete these forms to attend: camper registration and a medical form. These forms will be available starting June 1st. online at [www.bscm.org](http://www.bscm.org).

How much does it **cost** to attend Girls Camp 2017? \$155 per camper.

What should my child bring to camp? A **"what to bring" list** will be located on the registration form page.

If I have questions, how can I contact the Girls Camp Director? Email: [wmu@bscm.org](mailto:wmu@bscm.org)

How do I donate **camp scholarship funding**? To make a donation to Girls Camp, please send a check to: Girls Camp 2017, BSCM, 8420 Runyan Lake Road, Fenton, MI 48430. Please make checks payable to: BSCM.

What is **the history** of Girls Camp? Many women will remember going to G.A. Camp when they were younger. Girls Camp is the same, a missions-education camp. The camp is called Girls Camp and is open to all girls desiring to experience a Christian camp and to grow in their relationship with friends and Jesus!

Is there a **Boys Camp**? Yes! Boys have their own camp at the Bambi Lake Retreat Center. Boys Camp will be held August 7-11, 2017, for registration information check the [www.bscm.org](http://www.bscm.org) website.

I have never been to camp, can I bring my Mom? Not, for this one, But, you can bring your mom, your grandma, aunt, older sister to **Mom and Me Camp!** Mom and Me Camp is, July 14-15, 2017 at Bambi Lake Retreat Center. The cost is \$50, (\$25 for campers 8 & under). Mom and Me Camp is designed to share the experiences of the mission camp. It helps mom and daughter to understand what mission camp is, as well as providing an opportunity for quality time together. Registration information can be found on the [www.bscm.org](http://www.bscm.org) website.

We are looking forward to seeing you "Dive In" to Girls Mission Camp!

## **PALM SUNDAY: When the crowd gets it right**

By Doug Munton

O'FALLON, III. (BP) -- The crowd is often wrong. Popular opinion frequently misses the truth. And unfortunately, it seems that unrighteousness is usually trending.

From the earliest days of human history that has been so. The crowd was wrong in the days of Noah, as it was in the gathering at Babel. Godliness was often forsaken in the days of the prophets, and the dominant culture was usually wrong in the days of the early church. But the crowds that gathered as Jesus entered Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday weren't wrong. They got it gloriously right.

The crowds that gathered in the city just days later would call for the murder of Jesus. Many political and religious leaders would exult in His crucifixion. But on that first Palm Sunday the gathered people welcomed the Messiah and Savior of the world.

Let's note three ways the crowd got it right on that first Palm Sunday as we consider our response to Jesus on this Palm Sunday.

### THE CROWD WAS RIGHT TO GIVE HONOR

The people got word that Jesus was entering the city and they immediately stepped forward to honor Him. He entered on a borrowed donkey which both fulfilled Old Testament prophecy and spoke to humility. People rushed to cushion each step by placing palm branches and even their own cloaks on the ground before Him. We rightly honor Jesus by our care for the things of God. When we care more about the glory of the Lord than our own comfort, we honor Him. When we sacrifice our time and energy and possessions, we honor Him. When we look for ways to bless His work, we honor Him.

I pray you will honor the Lord with your life this Palm Sunday and Easter season. Honor Him by loving the things that matter. Honor Him with your sacrifice for the things that count. Honor Him with a bent knee and a giving heart. On Palm Sunday we remember all that Jesus is and all that He has done. And we honor that memory and that mission as we gather with the crowd.

### THE CROWD WAS RIGHT TO WORSHIP

The people began a spontaneous worship service as Jesus passed by on the first Palm Sunday. They sang out snatches of the Psalms. Their cries of "Hosanna" -- a word of praise from the Hebrew word for "salvation" -- rang out above the noise. They sensed the working of God to save mankind from sin and could not contain songs of loudest praise.

I hope you will worship the Lord joyfully this Palm Sunday and Easter season. He is worthy of all your praise. By His death, we can find life. By His work, we can find meaning and purpose in the work of our lives. By His resurrection, we have power over death and the grave. We have ample reason to praise our Messiah, Savior and Lord.

When you gather for worship on Sunday, remember who Jesus is and what He has done. And praise Him from the depth of your heart. Jesus told the skeptical Pharisees who hated this praise that the rocks would cry out if the people didn't. We have a reason to sing and a reason to shout and Palm Sunday reminds us of this privilege. Let no stone be needed to take your place in worship. Praise His name fully and powerfully.

## THE CROWD WAS RIGHT TO PROCLAIM

Matthew's Gospel tells us the city was shaken by the crowd's praise. People asked who it was that passed by. The crowd proclaimed, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee!" (Matthew 21:11). We gather in worship on Palm Sunday and the Easter season to proclaim the message of Jesus. We proclaim the Gospel message that Jesus is God's only begotten Son, that He died to pay the penalty for our sins, that He was buried but that He rose from the dead on the third day. We proclaim Christ as our Savior and as our King. We proclaim that He is the only hope for the world. We proclaim that He will return one day to claim His own and that those who repent of their sins and place their faith in Him will live for eternity with Him in heaven. This is our proclamation in song and sermon and life.

The crowd got it right on that first Palm Sunday. Let's gather with other believers and all those who will hear and, together, honor and worship and proclaim the name of Jesus. There will be no need for stones to take our place.

Doug Munton is first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church in O'Fallon, Ill.

### **What Easter Is**

By David Smith

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central tenant of the Christian faith. Unlike other events in the life of Christ we know when it happened, down to the hours of the day. We know why it happened, where it happened, and most of the incidental events which accompanied it.

The Apostles made it clear that it was the essential element of the gospel message. The resurrection of Christ featured prominently in their preaching as did the suffering of the cross. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18).

The New Testament stresses the resurrection in its teaching as Paul argues, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). We cannot diminish the primacy of the resurrection or the suffering of the cross to minor points of theological debate. Without them we do not have a living faith, merely a dead religion.

Yet, when most people hear the word, "Easter" they don't think of these things. I used to work in a mall. Most of the time I took my lunch break at the food court. Every spring, on the outskirts of the food court, the mall entertained a notable visitor. Sometime around March/April the Easter Bunny held court. Parents and children would come there to have

their pictures taken and memories made. While I always found the family dynamic a tender scene I never thought to myself, “Wow, what a wonderful representation of the resurrection of Christ!” There is nothing about eggs and bunnies that teach Christ’s passion.

Don’t misunderstand, I’m all for eating chocolate bunnies. My concern is that we’ve allowed the images of an increasingly secular culture take over the clear teaching of the Scriptures in our churches and our families. We’ve become so numbed by the culture that it seems we’ve forgotten that these events are central to the gospel message.

So what is the solution to this erosion of a biblical spirituality? The pastor. He stands firmly between the culture and the congregation. It is his job to teach and preach in such a way that the truth of Christ’s passion and resurrection is heard, learned, and understood. Paul tells the Ephesian elders that it is their job to, “feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

The pastor is only one part of the answer. The Christian must also be diligent in their devotional life, following the lead of the pastor and holding to the Church Covenant. The Covenant helps us here, “We also encourage family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances. To walk cautiously in the world;” If we were to add this kind of focused life to biblical teaching we would never worry about the gale winds of culture.

Preaching and teaching the cross and the empty tomb won’t win any popularity contests, especially in a time when free speech has been replaced by approved speech. But we are not called to be popular. We are ordained to tell the truth.

David Smith is an author, speaker and podcaster. He is pastor of Creek Road Baptist Church in Sharonville, OH.

## **WMU Missions Retreat Highlights Native Americans**

By Bill Haas

Bill Haas and his wife, Cindy were the featured speakers at this years’ annual Michigan WMU Retreat at Bambi Lake. More than one hundred women came to hear what God is doing among Native American people in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Sault Sainte Marie has been a historic Native American gateway and gathering place for centuries. Situated on the United States side of the U.S. and Canadian border, it is home to the largest Native American tribe in the state of Michigan. The Sault Tribe of Chippewa has over 40,000 members spread out across Michigan. The Haas are looking at an opportunity to start a new church in Watersmeet in the western U.P. This is near where they live, and they say the Lac Vieux Desert Reservation has great need.

Haas says, “I have been praying for this reservation near where we live. You can only imagine how our hearts were thrilled when we heard about the Michigan WMU ladies who decided to begin praying for every Native American reservation and community in the state” He adds that they are seeing God move among Native people. A man that

they had lost touch has resurfaced and is very interested in having a Baptist church started in Watersmeet. Three days before they heard from this man, a pastor in Ironwood told them about a Chippewa woman who is interested in a church, too.

Watersmeet is home to the Lac Vieux Desert Reservation. Like many in Michigan and even in Wisconsin, it is an Ojibwe (Chippewa) reservation. The Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Ottawa are part of a group called the Anishinaabe. The Anishinaabe are only 5% evangelized across the United States and Canada. Just north of the reservation is Bond Falls. Haas describes the area, "It is a beautiful place of mighty rushing water and yet is peaceful as well. It reminds me of the power of God and the peace of God simultaneously. The Gospel that we preach is both a powerful message and a peaceful message of hope to all who receive the Savior. Even the name, "Bond" Falls, brings to my mind the bond that you and I have as we agree together to take the message of hope through Jesus Christ to our Native American people."

Haas is inviting anyone interested to contact him for ways to be a part of their team of partners.

Bill Haas, Church Planter/Missionary at Grace Fellowship of Sault Sainte Marie, in Northern Michigan. Working among Potawatomi, Native Americans.

## **SENDING**

### **Chaplain's Sacred Moments III**

By Chaplain Bob Dennis

I had visited Mr. "R" for a year because his health was declining and he was staying in a care facility. He was no longer able to make it to his Church. He was a happy seasoned Christian and always greeted me as a special connection to God. Every visit with him was a blessing for me as it was for him. The feeling that I received with his hand shake was far beyond the term "Chaplain." It is a humbling feeling to be God's representative chaplain- pastor. There is no way I could feel qualified for the position other than by the Amazing Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. To be a chaplain at the right place and the right time as God's representative is not a job title, it is a special calling. That itself is a sacred moment with each visit.

My last visit with Mr. "R" was truly a sacred moment I will never forget. He was no longer in a wheelchair and too weak to get out of the bed. I told him I had picked out a portion of scripture that I thought would encourage him and he said "NO." He said "I want the one about the Lord being my Shepherd. It was racing through my head over and over again." I read the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm to him as requested then he shared the story of his life with me because he knew it would be my last visit with him.

He said "you know I was a blueberry farmer for many years. My business was successful and provided for my family because my business partner was God. I just did a little work and my partner brought the sunshine and rain. My partner actually made the blueberries we just had to pick them and sell them." How simple was his life story. How



profound was his life story. How sacred was the moment he shared it with his chaplain. The following week, I shared his story at his funeral, just as he had planned.

If you have been called by God to be a chaplain or to be a support to our chaplains in prayer please feel free to contact Chaplain Bob Dennis at [bdennis@bscm.org](mailto:bdennis@bscm.org)). For more information about the Michigan Chaplaincy ministry go to the BSCM website at [bscm.org/chaplain](http://bscm.org/chaplain).

2017 BSCM Chaplain Training Events: The first annual BSCM Chaplain Training will be during the Church Equipping Conference at Cornerstone Baptist Church, 1707 E. Twelve Mile Road, Roseville, MI 48066 on September 16, 2017. There will be a great key note speaker and topics selected.

## **EASTER: Three commands from an empty tomb**

By Steve Gaines

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) -- "The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you'" (Matthew 28:5-7 NASB).

Springtime is here. Dogwoods and daffodils bloom as winter retreats and warmer days are welcomed and across America, churches will soon be packed on Easter Sunday.

Why?

Easter is about forgiveness and hope through a sacred death and an empty tomb. Easter is about the grimness of the grave being overcome. It is about Jesus Christ rising bodily, victoriously and eternally from the grave. Behold our resurrected Lord triumphantly displaying the keys to death, hell and the grave in His nail-scarred hands! No wonder Easter is the annual apex for all Christians. No other religion dares to make such claims. Muslims readily admit that Muhammad is dead. Buddha and Confucius are also in the grave, as is Joseph Smith. But after Jesus died, He rose from the grave, never to die again.

The women who followed Jesus to Jerusalem from Galilee had gone to the tomb to properly anoint their Lord for burial. There they found an angel who gave them three significant commands:

THE FIRST COMMAND WAS "DO NOT BE AFRAID" (V.5)

Those women came to the tomb wondering how they would remove the stone so they could anoint Jesus' body (cf. Mark 16:1). But when they arrived, an angel had already rolled the stone away (cf. Matthew 28:2). Jesus was not there -- He had risen! And because He had risen, there would never again be a valid reason for fear. As Bill Gaither's song says, "Because He lives, all fear is gone."

THE ANGEL'S SECOND COMMAND WAS "COME, SEE" (V.6)

There was nothing to hide. Jesus' body had not been stolen. This was no gimmick or fabrication, as the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem slyly suggested (cf. Matthew 28:11f). Jesus was really alive. The angel rolled the stone away, not to allow Jesus to leave the grave, but to let the women and everyone else to look in! Jesus' burial proved His actual death. His empty tomb proved His actual resurrection. Now everyone could "come, see" for themselves.

THE THIRD COMMAND WAS, "GO QUICKLY AND TELL" (V.7)

The good news of Jesus' resurrection demanded sharing. The angel's words at this point were similar to those spoken by Jesus after His resurrection and prior to His ascension: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15 NASB). Jesus had risen from the grave and His disciples were commissioned to take that good news to the ends of the earth.

As they proclaimed the gospel message, people repented of their sins, believed that Jesus died and rose for their salvation, and received Jesus as Lord and Savior by calling on His name in humble prayer. The book of Acts describes how those early disciples boldly shared the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome in just three decades. They could not stop speaking of what they had "seen and heard" (cf. Acts 4:20). Today we who follow Jesus must continue to tell the world the saving message of His death, burial and resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

No religion in the world claims anything like Jesus' empty tomb. His vicarious death and victorious resurrection are what make the good news "good." The angel's three commands echo through the centuries, calling out to us this Easter season. By faith, with spirit-ears, we still hear His commands:

"Jesus is alive! Do not be afraid!"

"Jesus is alive! Come, see!"

"Jesus is alive! Go quickly and tell!"

That is the message of Easter! That is what we must share with our lost neighbors. We must tell everyone that there is hope, healing and forgiveness for anyone who comes to Christ in repentance and faith, and that salvation comes from the bloody cross and empty tomb of Jesus.

Do not be afraid. Come and see. Go quickly and tell.

Have a glorious Easter!

Steve Gaines is president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of the Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church.

## **International Student Daniel Meets Jesus**

By Rob Parsons

Garden City, MI - When you hear the name Daniel you probably don't think of a young man from the Shandong Province of China. As you might have guessed, Daniel has a Chinese name as well but to make it easier for Americans, he simply goes by the name Daniel while here in the United States.

Daniel's story is not unique. He was sent to America as a visiting scholar by the Chinese government to conduct research at Wayne State University. In order to come he had to leave behind his wife and daughter and everything and everyone else he knew. Like most visiting scholars, he was chosen to come and had little to say in the matter. Of course, looking back, if he had been given a choice knowing then what he knows now I have little doubt that he would have jumped at the chance to come.

Where Daniel's story is unique is that unlike so many other international students, he met a group of Christians who love the Lord and were willing to reach out him with the gospel. Daniel's life while polished on the outside was slowly falling apart on the inside. He says in his own words speaking about his life before coming to America, "As I was achieving each and every goal of my life, I found myself unable to find the meaning of life. Moreover, the strong belief that I had in the government and communism was slowly crumbling." He went on to say, "The passion and devotion that I had towards my career were substituted with heartlessness and discouragement. I exchanged the love for my wife and child with anger and insensitivity."

The message of God's grace and the gift of life that Jesus offers literally brought tears to Daniel's eyes from the first time he heard it. He said, "Jesus' precious blood covered all my sin and rescued my soul. God used his love to lead me back to Him. "

The changes in Daniel's life since coming to faith in Christ have been amazing. He can't stop telling people about Jesus, and really struggles to understand why anyone would ever reject God's love once it's offered to them. In fact, his relationship with his wife and daughter has been miraculously restored. He shares, "The Holy Spirit reformed me. He patiently taught me the real meaning of love and how to love my family. Genesis 2:24 reads: 'That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.' Through this verse, I understood how important my wife is to me and I am now able to love her beyond the flesh. I used to not answer my wife's telephone calls, but now I yearn for my phone to ring. Our short routine dialogue increased to an hour, two hours, or even three hours of loving conversations. The Holy Spirit taught me how to love my brothers and sisters in Christ. How great it is to be able to experience every day the sweetness of love! Praise the Lord!"

Daniel will leave to go back to China in May and his biggest prayer request is that his wife and daughter, who have heard the gospel message and seen the changes in his life, respond in faith. Tears fill his eyes each time he speaks of his love for them and how, so far, they have not placed their own faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Daniel's passion for sharing the Gospel leaves the question, whom will we tell?

Rob Parsons is College Pastor at Merriman Road Baptist Church in Garden City Michigan and Collegiate Director for the Greater Detroit Baptist Association. Rob and his wife Kelley are self-supported NAMB MSC missionaries who work together on the

campuses of Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan; Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Michigan and Henry Ford College in Dearborn, Michigan.

### **Reaching the “converted”**

By Bob Johnson

Roseville- Some of our most obvious evangelistic opportunities are with the people who are already members of our churches. You already have a relationship with them. You already have the advantage of consistently telling them and exposing them to the gospel. You also have some God-ordained opportunities to personally point them to Christ.

Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20) that fierce wolves would come in among them and seek to do great damage to the flock. Christ warned several of the churches in Revelation 2-3 that they had unbelievers who were part of their membership. If these churches had unbelievers in them, we probably have some in ours too. But, how do we reach them?

I am assuming that you are faithfully preaching the gospel and pointing your people to Christ. The effect of faithful gospel preaching is like napalm. It has a way of wiping out the terrain of everything else. But, in order to conquer, you still need troops on the ground. So, while you are joyfully preaching Christ, pursue these steps as well.

Pray about the conversions of your church members.

Pray that God would reveal the posers from the possessors. When your elders are praying this and you are publicly praying this, it helps to create a climate in your church where it is no longer assumed that just because you are a member then you are without a doubt a genuine follower of Christ. Most of you, I would assume, publicly pray at the beginning and conclusion of your preaching. These are wonderful opportunities to pray about this critical matter.

Preach about the conversion of your church members.

If you are preaching expositionally, you cannot preach too many sermons before you run into the issue of false conversions. The reason why this issue comes up so much in the Bible is obvious. This is a relevant issue in our churches. In your preaching, illustrate the point with stories from your own church family. When someone gets baptized, we give them the opportunity to explain the gospel and how they came to faith in Christ. Last month, David told our church family how he had pretended for years to be a believer. His story is a great example that I use and a great encouragement to those who are wondering about the validity of their own conversion.

Be aware of this in counseling opportunities.

Devin (not his real name) and his wife met with me for some marriage counseling. Devin was not all that interested since, as it eventually was revealed, he thought that he had found someone else. One Sunday, I stopped him after the service and told him that if

continued down that road, he needed to know that he could no longer confidently claim to be a follower of Christ. In fact, his determination to pursue this adulterous relationship may be an indication that he had never become a genuine follower of Christ.

Devin did not repent, but Greg (not his real name) did. Greg met a girl on a business trip and was ready to leave his wife and kids over her. I sat at his kitchen table one night and asked him what would it be: Christ or the girl, because he could not have both. Although Greg had professed faith and joined the church many years before, his life had demonstrated very little gospel fruit. Greg bowed the knee of his heart to Christ and by the grace of God, his was not only redeemed, but his marriage was rescued.

Be aware of this in hospital visits and other life and death situations.

Chuck (his real name) was in the hospital. The doctor had just told him that there was nothing left that could be done for his heart. He had already outlived the expectations, but the end was near. Chuck was a successful businessman, and had been involved in many Christian organizations. In previous churches he had served on boards and taught classes. Now, he was dying and he was terrified. Chuck carried around a secret that very few people knew. During W.W.II he flew bombing missions over Japan dropping thousands of pounds upon that country. He knew that he had killed hundreds if not thousands of lives. On his 24<sup>th</sup> mission, his plane was shot up pretty badly, but he was able to get it back to base. His co-pilot however, died. Chuck was eligible to go home after his 25<sup>th</sup> mission, but he was so angry about the death of his co-pilot that he signed up for another 25 missions and then another 25 missions so that he could kill more Japanese. And he did.

After 76 missions, he finally went back home. On his way back to Michigan, he was at a base in California where he met some Japanese prisoners of war. Some of them were very kind and told him that they did not want the war. They just wanted to go back to their home as well. They showed him pictures of wives and children. Chuck's anger turned to fear. He assumed that he had killed some of their wives and children. He began to realize that he had not only killed civilians, but he had signed up to do it. Now, sixty years later, the reality of facing God revealed his deepest fear. He would die and be condemned to hell. Chuck finished his story, tucked his knees under his arms, turned away from me and stared at the wall. His frail body made even a hospital bed look big. Chuck had heard me preach the gospel for years. But that day it was obvious that while he thought it was true, it just wasn't true for him. His case was different.

I sat silent and tried to imagine the weight of his guilt and then said, "Chuck, you are a big sinner, but Jesus is a bigger Savior than you are a sinner." Chuck responded like he had been hit by lightning. He looked at me like he had heard this for the very first time. His eyes got big, his face was animated, and he said, "That's it, isn't it?! Jesus is a bigger Savior than I am a sinner."

Chuck died two weeks later. The joy of his life in those last two weeks made it evident to everyone who visited him, his chains were broken. His heart was free.

Your members will let you into some of their most private thoughts. You may discover that they need Christ.

Born in Canton, Ohio in 1960, Bob is a lifelong Buckeyes fan, for which he deservedly endures immeasurable abuse. He is married to the love of his life, Cathi (a Detroit girl), and they have three children, Bobby (married to Taylor), Rebecca (married to Stephen McGee), and Arianna (in Army Officer's Training School). Bob has been serving as the Senior Pastor of Cornerstone since 1989. He has a Masters of Divinity degree from the Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary (1997).

## **COLUMNS**

### **A Time To Share - A Time To Tell**

By Tim Patterson

I don't know about you and your family but one of our pastimes is going to the "Mall". It seems as though the desire to shop is hereditary since both of our boys have taken on the traits of their parents, especially those of their mother.

Without a doubt she is the consummate bargain shopper. If there is a sale within thirty miles, her seventh sense will pick it up and she can hone in on it like a shark following a blood trail. When she arrives at the "kill point" she will circle and survey it for hours at a time until she makes that final decision to move in. It is at that point that an unwary salesperson could be in danger of bodily injury or dismemberment if they tried to direct her to a more expensive "better value". Trying to bait and switch her would be tantamount to death.

It was during one of these Mall Excursions several years ago when we lived in Dallas, that I had a most interesting experience. While she and the boys were circling a sale table I followed my nose to a nearby candy store that sold assorted goodies. The aroma of the popcorn is used like free cocaine on the streets to lure unsuspecting customers into its retail clutches. My sugar drug of choice are imported Gummy Bears. I don't know if it is the taste, texture or the pleasure I receive from biting off their little heads. (Pastors do carry about a tad bit of frustration at times!)

While I was standing by the counter and munching away on my gummy bears, a young boy came and stood beside me. He was about five years old and from his appearance had not had a bath in the last two of those years. He didn't say anything but just stared at my "gummies" and me. Well, being the great benevolent individual that I am, I decided to bless this poor little fellow. I thought how nice it would be to see the smile on his face and the warmth in my heart if I were to buy him some candy. I bent down and peered into his dark brown eyes and said, "Hey fella, would you like a bag of candy?" He replied with his southern accent and a twinkle in his eyes, "Yes Sir!" So I purchased the candy he selected and placed it in his dirty little hands.

It was then I said to him, "Would it be alright if I had one piece of your candy? I've never tried that kind before." Without a halt in his voice or a hesitation in his decision he replied, "No way sucka', these is mine!" and took off running down the aisle. I guess you can imagine how I felt. All I could do was stand there with my mouth agape and my feelings hurt. The attendant at the counter looked over the top of her bifocals and said, "I bet you won't do that again." It was later that day as I was recalling the event that God

began to speak to me. In essence He said, "That's the way many of my children treat me. Everything they have comes from My grace and goodness, yet they refuse to acknowledge the source and will not share. When I ask them to share the Gift I have given them, they refuse and try to run and hide."

I wonder if you and I are guilty of the same selfish and ungrateful spirit that was displayed in that little boy? Don't you believe God's heart is broken by our insensitivity toward Him and others? All good gifts come down from the Father, especially the gift of salvation. Someone in our life loved us enough to take the time to tell us the Good News of the Gospel. How can we be so stingy when our Father has been so generous? It is time for us to share. It is "A Time To Tell."

### **I'm Mike Durbin and this is my story**

By Mike Durbin

I woke up on a sandy beach somewhere on the Gulf Coast. The noise of the early morning commute woke me making it impossible to sleep anymore. It was still dark but the sun was starting to rise on the horizon. The painful scratches on my hand and arm reminded me of the previous night's activities. I had been drinking heavily and got in a fight with a friend. I took a swing at him. Thankfully, he ducked, or I could have been waking up in detention. The scratches came from the broken glass of the window I put my hand through when I tried to hit him. What started out as the adventure of a lifetime when we decided to hitchhike from Michigan to Disney World ended on the beach that morning.

I woke up hungover, alone, lost, embarrassed, and in pain. The things I thought would make me happy - freedom, parties, and good times - left me empty and afraid on a sandy beach. I was 16 years old and my life was a mess. Most of the people around me at the time would have said that I had a pretty good life. That's what it looked like on the outside. I was always surrounded by people. I never struggled in school. One year I was president of the class and another, captain of the football team. But beneath the facade I was struggling. Almost everything in my life was broken and to top it off, I ended up getting kicked out of the house for some bad choices I made.

A family down the street, Husted and Patty Lynn (Tony Lynn's parents) let me stay with them until things worked out at home. I saw firsthand what their family looked like, and the importance of faith in their lives. They took me to church with them whenever I was willing to go. I wasn't living with them at the time, but one Sunday I went with them to church. I heard a man preach about the encounter between Nicodemus and Jesus in the Bible. Nicodemus was a good man, a leader of his people and a devoted follower of his faith. Nicodemus was everything I was not. Jesus looked at this good and decent man and said, "You must be born again."

Those words of Jesus, "You must be born again" grabbed hold of me. I wanted a new birth - a new beginning in life. The preacher went on to share how Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, was buried, and rose from the grave three days later. He invited us to trust in Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord and I did. That moment changed my life.

Please don't get me wrong. I readily admit that I'm far from perfect, but I've come a long way since I woke up on that sandy beach years ago. Most of the people around me today, would say that I have a pretty good life. I have a wonderful family, a beautiful home, and a great job. And they're right. I have a pretty good life. That's what it looks like on the outside. And that's what it feels like on the inside. Thank you Jesus!

What about you? What's your story? One of the most powerful ways to share the Gospel is your personal testimony. Paul shares his story in Acts 22. He builds his testimony by sharing his life before Christ, how he received Christ, and his life since following Jesus. Give it a try, won't you?!

### **It's time to tell!**

By Michael Shatz

I am extremely excited to be afforded the privilege to serve here at the BSCM and especially Bambi Lake Retreat and Conference Center. God has used Bambi Lake to impact many lives in the past, and I look forward with great expectation to many more lives transformed in the future. Great days are ahead!

At the recent Men's Retreat at Bambi Lake, the guest speaker spoke of being desperate to see an Awakening - a move of God that would shake the foundations of our nation as individuals surrender to the Lordship of Christ. As he spoke I began to think about the word "desperate". I asked myself "what is desperate" and "am I desperate"? God reminded me of a time when my son, Noah, was 16 months old. We were living in a new house, at a new church and my oldest daughter, Julia, was 3 years old. It was a relaxing Saturday morning and I told my wife, Jackie, to stay in bed and I would give the kids their baths. She thought this was a good idea and went back to sleep as I prepared the tub.

I put both children in the tub - Julia in the back and Noah in the front sitting in a bath tub chair for toddlers. I filled the tub a quarter of the way, just enough to cover Noah's legs and turned off the water. As they were kicking and making waves I decided to check on Jackie and let her know what a great husband she had married. As I headed back to the bathroom the phone rang and I answered. As I was talking on the phone I heard the water running in the bathroom. As quickly and politely as possible I said goodbye and tentatively walked to the bathroom.

In the short time I had been gone, Julia had decided to turn the water on full throttle and fill the tub. This in turn caused the toddler seat to flip forward tossing Noah head first into the water. I quickly removed his floating body from the water and placed him on the floor - he was bloated and blue and not breathing! I yelled for Jackie to dial 911 and began to administer CPR, for which I never had training. In those moments, on the bathroom floor as I administered CPR, I began to desperately cry out "God let me have my son back!," "God let me have my son back!". Miraculously, by God's hand, before the paramedics arrived Noah had coughed-up all the water and was breathing on his own. God had let me have my son back.



Desperate? Yes, I have been desperate for my son, for my family. What about the rest of the world? My neighbors, my co-workers, other people groups, those who believe different than I do? Am I DESPERATE for the salvation of their lives? It is a life and death situation. IT'S TIME TO TELL!

Michael Schatz, State Director of Spiritual Enrichments and Retreats since March 1, 2017 where he moved from the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. He and his wife Jackie have 3 children, Julia, Noah, and Emily.

## **What I Heard Growing up in the Mid-70s**

By Tony Lynn

“A time to tell” is this year’s theme for our state convention. We want to remind ourselves that every moment of every day is an opportunity for redemption. That reminder is worth more when it leads to action. What part can you play in someone’s salvation by making sure they hear the Gospel?

Looking back on my pathway to following Christ, I remember people who played a role in my salvation during the mid-70s. I remember important moments. You can see my laundry list below. You probably have a list of people and moments that marked your pathway to Christ, too.

- Mom
- Classmate
- Men
- Youth Group
- Brother Young
- Gift Bible

**Mom** - During the late-60s, our family moved from Flint to Swartz Creek. Like other men, my dad worked a lot of overtime at General Motors. We dropped out of a church in Flint during the move. As I entered Swartz Creek High School during the mid-70s, my mom renewed her efforts to get the family back in church. To no avail, Mom begged me to attend church with my sisters and her.

**Classmate** – After my mom and sisters visited the First Baptist Church of Swartz Creek near the high school on Sunday, a classmate named Mark spoke to me during gym class. His invitation to church was straightforward. Mark said, “Your mom and sisters visited our church this past Sunday, why don’t you come with them?” My reply was short, “Sundays are the one day I spend with my dad. We watch TV then work on the yard or house.” Mark persuaded me with, “I have three sisters near your age. Come to church and you can date any one of them.” I made instant plans to attend church.

**Men** – During the early days of church while trying to win over one of Mark’s sisters, the men in the church won me over. The church’s average attendance was 40 people. My dad remained at home while the rest of the family went to church. I learned to address the men as Brother Young or Brother Horner. I learned the men formed a sort of fraternity who loved the Lord. One preached. One led music. One served as a deacon.

One taught Bible study. Each man did something for God. However, all of the men made me feel welcome and valuable. They greeted me. They shook my hand. They called me by name. They asked about my team's performance. Each time I exited the church they said, "Tony, I look forward to seeing you again."

**Youth group** – Initially, the children of three families formed the youth group. The youth group leader led us in simple Bible studies. Activities were carefree and cheap. Parties were held at homes. Teenage crushes came and went; but the huge constant for me was the sense of belonging and acceptance I felt in the youth group and a beginning of a hunger for the Word of God. Somehow I discovered more about myself in a youth group of 20 than I did in a high school with 2,000 students.

**Brother Young** – The pastor of the small church of 40 people was bi-vocational, widowed, and retiring when I started attending. I hid away quietly in the dining room, one day when Brother Young stopped by to invite my dad to attend church with the family. The two of them were sitting in the living room. I still remember how I froze and didn't breathe when I heard Brother Young explain salvation to my dad. Brother Young didn't know it, but he shared his faith with two men that day, my father and me.

**Gift Bible** – During the early days of church, I received a black cover, gift Bible from my parents in the King James Version. It had a zipper that closed and opened easily on three sides of the Bible. A cross hung from the zipper serving as the pull. The Bible was central to everything at church. We read the Bible during class, youth group, and worship. We read Scripture from the back of the hymnals taking turns in what was called responsive readings. My hunger grew for Scripture. When I read the Bible I sensed God was speaking to me in a personal conversation. I loved it! One Sunday night just before bedtime, after a great day at the small church, I zipped my Bible closed and slipped to the side of my bed and whispered this prayer to God:

"God, I don't understand everything about you; but, I believe Christ is your Son and that He died on a cross for me. Forgive me for all that I've done against you. Come into my life and lead me in all that I do. In Jesus name, Amen."

During the mid-70s, people in my life told me about Christ. Did you see the progress? What was formerly of no concern became important to me. What became important, became my quest. What became my quest, became my purpose in life. All because others knew it was a time to tell Tony that God loved him.

This year as with all years, let's remember "It's a Time to Tell." Would you, please, find a way to tell others that Christ loves them? Would you play a role in someone's life like those whom God used in my past? And, if you would, please, let me know how God uses you to transform someone's life.

## **CLASSIFIEDS**

### **Part-time Worship Leader**

CrossPointe Church is seeking a part-time worship leader to work with the lead pastor in planning and implementing all areas of our Christ-centered worship ministry. Our music style is considered "contemporary" as we are led by a team of musicians (piano, guitar(s), drums, bass, vocals). Within our "contemporary" style of music, we value both

old and new songs that are theologically rich and seek to glorify God (examples: Citizens & Saints, Getty Music, Sovereign Grace Music, Indelible Grace Music). We are a medium-sized church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) located in Monroe, Michigan. We offer two identical gathered worship services on Sunday mornings which include; biblical preaching, scripture reading, prayer, theologically rich music, and regular observance of the biblical ordinances (Lord's Supper and Baptism). Please visit [www.crosspointemonroe.com](http://www.crosspointemonroe.com) for more information regarding CrossPointe's doctrinal statement, leadership, history, and various ministries. To apply for this position or request more information, please email resume along with links to samples of your worship leading to [crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com](mailto:crosspointeworshipleadersearch@gmail.com).

### **Bi-vocational Pastor Needed**

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

### **Senior Pastor Needed**

Roscommon Baptist Church is currently searching for a pastor. Please submit resume to [roscommonbaptistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:roscommonbaptistchurch@gmail.com) or mail to P.O.Box 178, Roscommon, MI 48653. For more information contact the church [roscommonbaptistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:roscommonbaptistchurch@gmail.com).

### **Firewood needed throughout winter months!**

The Ministry of Life Challenge of Southeast Michigan, has an on-going need of Firewood donations. If you cannot deliver it, they will come and make the pick-up. This ministry provides "hope, healing, and help for people who struggle with Addiction. We are located at 17667 Pierson St., Detroit - 48219. Call us at ( 313) 531-0111 or (313) 461-7618 to coordinate delivery. Thank you in advance for your assistance, Rev. Nathaniel Bishop, Sr.

### **Church Information Packets**

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

### **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)

## **AROUND THE STATE**

### **CROSS WALK**

Pastor Tim Jones and members of the church will be carrying the cross on Southfield Road and Allen Road in Allen Park from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on Good Friday, April 14, 2017. The cross is 10 feet tall and made of 4x4 cedar posts. Southfield Road Baptist Church, 14880 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 381-3979

### **GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

Good Friday Service begins at 5:30 pm, April 14, 2017. Worship service may take place outside the church, weather permitting. Southfield Road Baptist Church, 14880 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 381-3979

### **EASTER EGG HUNT**

Children of all ages are invited to find thousands of eggs with candy and non-candy treats at the Old Lapham School Field (East of Allen Road on Horger Street) from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, Saturday, April 15, 2017. Bring a basket if you have one; if not, there will be plastic bags available for the children to collect their eggs. Southfield Road Baptist Church, 14880 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 381-3979

### **RESURRECTION WORSHIP SERVICE**

11:00 am, Sunday, April 16, 2017. Southfield Road Baptist Church, 14880 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101. (313) 381-3979

### **FREE WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

Every Tuesday at 10 am or 6 pm. The ladies will be studying "WAR ROOM," by Stephen Kendrick and Alex Kendrick. You can attend either class. Southfield Road Baptist Church, 14880 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101, (313) 381-3979.

### **FREE YOUTH BASKETBALL**

Every Tuesday from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Southfield Road Baptist Church, 14880 Southfield Road, Allen Park, MI 48101, (313) 381-3979.

## **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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