

STARTING

Coming to America

By Aaron Tanap

BELLVILLE, MI - It was always our hearts' desire to be able to do ministry in the United States or Canada. Most of my wife's relatives live in Windsor, Canada or here in Michigan. We had heard that our Filipino Churches can use more pastors from the Philippines to do Church planting work and ministry.

For the first time, in 1993, our family tried applying for permanent residency in Canada. All of us, especially our kids, were so excited, but the excitement soon turned to sadness and gloom when we learned we had failed the consulate interview. So we said, though it is sad, we will wait on the Lord. While waiting on the Lord, we kept on keeping on, pouring ourselves into our church work, and focusing on the youth and couples, and winning others for Jesus.

After much consideration, prayers, preparation and the passionate encouragement of friends and relatives in the States, we went ahead and applied again in the spring of 1998, both in Canada and the United States. We learned from other peoples' experiences that it is very difficult to get tourist visas to North America, especially when you bring all of the family. Coming from a third world country didn't help either, so we needed a lot of prayers. Moreover, the thought of uprooting a whole family (Chrissy was 15 yrs. old, Ivan 13, & Jourdane 11,) who had lived in the Philippines all their lives, and moving to the United States resulted in questions, some doubts, and fears.

It all happened as my brother-in-law was getting married, and they wanted Nancy to attend their wedding. At first, it was only Nancy who was coming, but she wanted me to go with her, then eventually we wanted our children to come, too. So in the end, we were doing what we wanted to do, 5 years before. First, we applied for a Canadian visa, we got approved. Then, we applied for a US Visa and got approved. In spite of the difficulty of our situation we were excited to say, USA here we come!

We set foot in the United States on April 25, 1998, landing in L.A, then Columbus, Ohio, and finally our destination, Detroit. It took us 3 layovers, 3 different planes, almost 20 hours of flying, to finally arrive in Michigan. We didn't care, we didn't mind, this is the United States of America and we had finally arrived. We were here!

Here in Michigan we found a home, and we found the work that God wanted us to do. We immediately connected with a Philippine International Baptist Church in Dearborn, and became actively involved in the ministry of that church. While serving PIBC, we started to pray and plan to do church planting in Canton, MI. With the prayers, support and help of PIBC, Bethlehem Baptist Church in Canton was launched, and on April of 1999 we held our first church service. That was one year after arriving in this country. Three years ago, Bethlehem moved from its original Canton location to Belleville,

Michigan and last month, June 25, we celebrated our 18th Anniversary as a church. Indeed, the Lord has been faithful through the years, and the rest, as they say, is history.

About the Author: Aaron Tanap & his wife, Nancy have 3 children, Chrissy 34 yrs. old with three children; Ivan our son is 32 and Jourdane is 30. They live in Canton, Michigan, where he has served as Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Belleville, MI since 1999. The Tanaps also planted two churches in the Philippines, serving as an associate pastor and pastor there.

Chinese Baptist Fellowship shares church planting efforts

by Myriah Snyder

PHOENIX (BP) -- Church planting drew the spotlight of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship's June 13 meeting in Phoenix. In fact, the mission of the fellowship is threefold, according to Benny Wong, president of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of USA and Canada and senior pastor of First Chinese Baptist Church of Los Angeles. The fellowship exists for planting, caring and training. The fellowship's gathering was held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting on June 13-14.

As a fellowship, their goal is to see 600 Chinese church plants by 2020. An International Mission Board worker among East Asian peoples (name not disclosed for security reasons) explained some of the work that his family is doing in East Asia. They work with a people group in East Asia who has a high illiteracy rate. Much of the work his family does is in oral Bible storying and Bible translation. "We want to encourage you to connect through the IMB so that you can go and be a part of reaching out to your brothers and sisters in those countries," he said, explaining that many of those present have family and friends in that area.

Jeremy Sin, a national church planting strategist with the North American Mission Board, brought with him a team of Send City missionaries to share about church planting efforts in Send Cities throughout North America. Chris Wright in Chicago shared that Chicago is filled with immigrants from all nationalities, including Chinese. There are 42,000 Chinese people in the city, he noted. Three years ago there was only one existing Chinese Southern Baptist church in the city, but in the last three years two additional churches were planted. "We're very grateful to have two (more) Chinese planters, but it's simply not enough," he said, noting there are ongoing efforts to reach Chinese in Chicago.

Seattle, Ron Shepard said, has become "the number one destination for mainland, Mandarin Chinese," and that they believe it's "God's time for us in Seattle church planting to focus on reaching the Mandarin Chinese." The city now has a church planter on the east side of the city, a church planter in Chinatown, downtown Seattle, and south of Seattle. "We really need prayer and engaged partners more than we need money. We need prayer partners," Shepard said. "We need encouragers. We need people who understand the unique challenges of immigrants and refugees and those who are ministering cross-culturally," he said. "We believe that God is going to reshape the greater Seattle metro-area with the Asian culture, and that we have a unique opportunity."

Other Send City missionaries, church planters and strategists who shared what God is doing in the Chinese populations in their cities included Joshua Whestine in Minneapolis, Linda Bergquist in San Francisco, Jerico Deveyra in Denver, Ray Woodard in Vancouver, and David Butler in Boston. In addition, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Gateway Baptist Theological Seminary have extended their programs to include Chinese or Chinese/English bilingual programs.

The next meeting of the Chinese Baptist Fellowship will be held in June 2018 in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas. Their biennial conference will be a cruise in Los Angeles in Sept. 2018.

About the author: Myriah Snyder is assistant editor of the Western Recorder (www.westernrecorder.org), newsjournal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Filling the Pipeline

By Dan Ghramm

HUDSONVILLE, MI - A friend of mine recently started a new job as a buyer with a large food distribution company in the area. He was describing the ins and outs of forecasting what products his customers are going to need in the next 2 to 3 months. So far, he had not under-purchased or over-purchased by any great amounts. Keeping the right amount of product in the pipeline keeps his boss and the customers happy.

I laughed a little to myself, when he told me the story about a coworker who completely forgot to order hamburger buns for a large chain of burger restaurants in the area. You can imagine, there was some scrambling going on to find buns in order to prevent a drop in burger sales. In any industry, it is important to plan ahead, not only with product but also with people. Having The resources on hand to accomplish the job takes a lot of preparation, time, and energy. It is not done overnight. This kind of thinking is also important in ministry in the Kingdom of Jesus. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus did with his disciples. He trained them before, during, and after he sent them out for ministry. If we are going to see a movement of making disciples all around the state of Michigan and beyond, we are going to need to develop more missional leaders. We need to fill the pipeline and keep it filled.

I am excited about a new tool called, the Church Planting Pipeline, that will be available from the North American Mission Board in August. Our church planters go through a rigorous pre-assessment process. The extensive report created from this process helps us determine if a planter is ready to move forward; an assessment retreat and then on to planting, or if we need to hit the pause button and get them some more training. Jeff Christopherson, vice President of the Send Network says, "The Church Planting Pipeline is a simple and systematic way for a local church to prepare leaders to become effective disciple-makers in a post-Christian world. Implementing the system in the heart of a church is the discipleship plan – they can prepare homegrown missionary teams that literally transform their communities. This puts the missionary movement back where it was always meant to be – in the local church."

The Church Planting Pipeline is a tool for our pastors to raise up leaders and planters within their own church. It can be up to three years worth of material helping them prepare to plant a church. Level One (L1) focuses on spiritual formation and theological foundation. Level two (L2) focuses on missiology and disciple making. Level three (L3) is all about church planting. Each year has ten 4-week modules that the planter can complete under the guidance of pastors and coaches. I am especially excited about this opportunity because I have a number of men who are not ready to plant a church yet, but are confident in their call. They simply need more time and training. Beginning this fall, we will have four interns or residents using this material in at least two churches here in West Michigan.

We need pastors and churches all around our state to fill a pipeline of missional leaders, not only for church planting, but for shepherding as well. We would love to get this tool into your hands. Feel free to reach out to me, any of our CPC's or Tony Lynn, our SDOM and we can walk you through more details. Let's work together to create a pipeline of missional leaders, both young and old, in preparation for a disciple-making movement here in our great state of Michigan.

About the author: Dan Ghramm serves as a Church Planting Catalyst with BSCM/NAMB in Southwest Michigan. He is married to Amanda, a Sign Language Interpreter. They have five children: Elijah, Malia, Jacob, Joshua, and Sophia. They live in Hudsonville, Michigan and are members at Redemption Church, a two-year-old church plant in Grandville a suburb of Grand Rapids.

Life of a Church Planter Catalyst

By Darren Greer

Kingsley - A church planter catalysts is as diverse as the area he serves. I have the privilege of serving in an area that stretches from Flint to Ironwood and across to Sarnia, Canada. This means God has allowed me to see churches catalyzed in two time zones and two countries! Some of the most exciting times include work started with the Native Americans, African Americans as well as Anglo churches. Recently, we have seen God replant in areas like Petoskey, Clio and Bellaire. This means that we have a struggling congregation that has new leadership, sees a new vision, and learns to grow and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as well as their new church planter pastor.

One of the great blessings of my ministry was being on the ground level of a suburban church plant in Grandville. I also got to help plant a rural church in northern Michigan and watch the planter be encouraged by a block party event sponsored by our WMU. Currently, there is an African American church plant on the east side of Flint I am blessed to support. I also cross a few bridges in the literal sense - going across the Blue Water Bridge in Port Huron to visit with one of our newest plants in Canada, or crossing the mighty Mac (Mackinac Bridge) to visit with our planter in the Soo (Sault Sainte Marie). All of this new work brings great joy to my soul.

With so much traveling you may wonder if I ever sleep. Well, my days begin quite early with personal Bible study and prayer. One of the things I pray for daily, as Jesus

commanded, is to have workers. He said the fields are white, pray for workers and the harvest. I would challenge you to pray with me this prayer because there are many places with great needs and opportunities. One of these great needs is in Marquette (the largest city in the Upper Peninsula) that has no Southern Baptist work. Alpena, the largest area on the sunrise side of the state is also without a Southern Baptist Church. On the west side of the state Traverse City, a growing and popular city, needs another church work planted.

In addition to my support and encouragement of church planters, I look for men who are called by God to a specific area or to a people group, along with men and women, who are entrepreneurial and willing to start something new from nothing. I also look for the leaders who train disciples who then train disciples. I am grateful that God allows me to be part of His kingdom and to invest and work in the lives of Mid and Northern Michigan as well as Canadian churches and church planters. Let me invite you to come visit the prettiest part of our state and join me in punching holes in the darkness.

About the author: Darren Greer came to Michigan as a summer missionary in 1985. Since he has served in northern Michigan 27 of the last 30 years as a church planter, minister of education, pastor, DOM and now serves as Church Planting Catalyst with NAMB and BSCM in Mid and Northern Michigan.

So Grateful for Training

By Tim Shrader

OSHKOSH, WI - A little over twenty years ago, while serving on the staff of a large church in Fort Worth, Texas, God called my family to plant a church in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. God used the study, "Experiencing God" to call me to go. I knew little about Oshkosh when God orchestrated a move there. All I knew was that there were thousands of spiritually lost people in that small city of 65,000. God called together five adults and five children, all Southern Baptists from somewhere else, to move there, and believe a new church should be planted to reach the lost around them.

That reality is key: They believed a new church should be planted to reach the lost around them. We weren't focused on reaching other people from the south who had moved north, we were focused on reaching the indigenous lost people of our city. That is what church planting is about, and that has not changed.

Now, as a church planting catalyst in Michigan, I have the privilege of working with new church planters. They have the same passion and calling to reach spiritually lost Michiganders as we did those twenty years ago to reach spiritually lost Wisconsinites. One thing that has changed, though, is training. I am happy to say that our NAMB church planters today are offered the best training in the church planting world.

When we planted a church years ago in another state, the approval process was minimal, to say the least. For many, just saying that you wanted to plant a church was enough to get you approved. Sadly, during those years, we had many failed church plants due to pastors not being fully assessed, equipped and coached. Since coming to

Michigan one year ago, there is now a thorough NAMB approval process that seeks to make sure that the potential planter is called, equipped, and ready to plant a church.

Thankfully, there is ample training to equip and encourage the new church planter, too. New Michigan church planters are given a trained and approved church planter coach, connection with the regional church planter catalyst, encouragement from the Sending Church Pastor, as well as the access to training. Although church planting is still difficult and challenging, the church planter should never feel isolated.

As one of Michigan's NAMB church planting catalysts, I get to train some of our new planters in a course called "Multiply". Multiply helps new church planters master the competencies that NAMB has identified are necessary for successful church planting.

We cover:

- calling
- character
- missional engagement
- vision
- bold faith
- values
- fundraising
- disciple-making
- systems and structure
- team building
- communication
- multiplication

That's definitely a lot of material to cover, but each one of these competencies are key to seeing a gospel-centered, evangelistic church planted that will not only reach the lost around them, but will also plant other churches in the near future.

I am grateful for the way God blessed our church plant in Oshkosh years ago, but oh how I wish I had the opportunity to learn the way our new church planters are learning through Multiply. I am confident that many of the mistakes I made would have been avoided with proper training. That training is offered now, and it is excellent.

So if you are reading this and sense that God is calling you to plant a church, be a supporting or sending church, or joining a church plant launch team, but you are reluctant because you don't know how, contact Dr. Tony Lynn at the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, tony@bscm.org. He will connect you with the church planting catalyst in your region and they will help you discover the joy of reaching the lost around you through church planting.

About the author: With degrees in music and divinity, Church Planting Catalyst Tim Shrader has more than 30 years experience in ministry. Tim Shrader was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and raised in the Metro East area of Granite City, Illinois. He has been happily married to Debbie since 1980 and they have 3 children, Beth Anne, Rachel, and

Nate. In his spare time, Tim loves the St. Louis Cardinals baseball, Green Bay Packer football, and motorcycling.

STRENGTHENING

I am called to Love

By Rose Santos

TAYLOR, MI - From the Hot Climate of the Philippines to a cold state, obeying and following the calling of the Lord, I, together with my husband and 5 children (ages 3-11 years old), moved to Michigan in September 1990. My husband, Roberto was called to pastor the First Filipino Baptist Church in Dearborn, MI. It was a big transition for me as a mother and as a pastor's wife. It was not easy for my children as well. We struggled for the first 3 years both financially and emotionally. I had to work to help support my husband in the ministry and in providing for our family. Such struggle has been a valuable tool for me in encouraging other Filipino pastors' wives as they transitioned into the ministry here in Michigan. God has used our church, now called Philippine International Baptist Church, in starting 5 churches in Michigan and in Windsor, Canada.

Looking back, I entered seminary in 1973. In my years of study at the seminary, I prayed that God would give me someone who is also involved in the ministry, not knowing what to expect, God gave me a pastor. Roberto, entered the seminary in 1975 and in 1978 we tied the knot, and since have been partners in the ministry serving the Lord wherever He leads us.

As a pastor's wife, I learned to be flexible in meeting the needs of our family, our members and the Filipino community in Michigan. During the early years of our ministry in Michigan, my husband and I tried to reach out to new immigrants by affording them some help, like teaching them how to secure a driver's license, open a bank account, and driving them around when needed. We would also invite them to our home for a time of fellowship and Bible study. As a result, we became an extended family to many of them and by the grace of God, many of them have come to know the Lord.

I have been a big sister to some of the women. They called me Ate Rose ("Ate" means big sister). Now, most of them are married and have children. I see my role now as giving them motherly counsel and to be there for them whenever needed. The Lord is not done with me yet. My desire is to continue helping others, especially young pastors' wives, and encouraging them to be steadfast in the ministry despite the struggles involved. God called me to serve Him with my whole heart wherever He puts me. I am called to a life of love, service, and obedience. I am responsible to live out my faith wherever I am today, trusting and honoring God. I am blessed.

About the author: Rose Santos is a wife, mother, teacher and women's ministry leader, who lives in Dearborn, MI. Her husband, Roberto Santos, is Senior Pastor of Philippine International Baptist Church- Taylor, MI. They have 5 grown children – 3 of which are

married with 7 grandchildren. Rose holds three degrees: BA in business administration, Masters in Christian Counseling and Theology.

LifeWay opens new store in Sterling Heights

By Carol Pipes

STERLING HEIGHTS, MI -- LifeWay Christian Stores recently opened a new store in Sterling Heights. The new 5,400-square-foot store features Bibles, books, reference tools, children's products, Christian music and movies, gifts, Bible studies and church supplies. In operation for more than 90 years, LifeWay Christian Stores is the largest Christian bookstore chain in the U.S. with more than 170 stores in 31 states.

Cossy Pachares, vice president of LifeWay Christian Stores, said he is excited for the opportunity to serve the Sterling Heights community. "LifeWay Stores' desire is to come alongside individuals, families and churches as they seek to know and serve God by providing biblical solutions that spiritually transform lives and communities," Pachares said. LifeWay Christian Stores will celebrate its new location in Sterling Heights with a grand opening through July 8. This will mark LifeWay's first store presence in Michigan. There will be some special offers and discounts along with giveaways during the grand opening celebration.

Located in the Clinton Valley Shopping Center on Schoenherr Road near Office Depot, the store is open 10 a.m. – 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday. LifeWay Christian Stores are closed on Sundays to give store associates time for worship, family and rest. The LifeWay store filled the location previously occupied by a Family Christian Store, which recently closed all of its stores. "Our hope and prayer is that people and churches will give us an opportunity to serve them," Pachares said. "We have store employees who are trained to help. We match the prices of any online or brick-and-mortar store. And because we are a nonprofit ministry, when people support their local store, it enables more people to be reached with the gospel and for us to remain in the communities."

The Sterling Heights store is one of four new stores nationwide in locations where Family Christian Stores previously operated. The other locations are in Boise, Idaho; Fort Wayne, Ind.; and Mentor, Ohio. "Many people don't realize LifeWay already has stores in 141 of the previous Family Christian Store communities," Pachares said. To get to know previous Family customers better, LifeWay is offering special discounts and allowing customers to "trade in" an unused Family gift card for \$20 off their first purchase in any LifeWay Store until the end of July. "We are looking forward to serving everyone!"

LifeWay Christian Stores are owned and operated by LifeWay Christian Resources with headquarters in Nashville, Tenn. The nonprofit publishing and retail company is known for publishing best-selling author Beth Moore, the New York Times bestseller *The Love Dare*, the Christian Standard Bible translation and other Christian resources as well as being the largest Christian bookstore chain in the U.S.

About the author: Carol Pipes is director of communications for LifeWay Christian Resources.

Spurgeon collection launched online

by T. Patrick Hudson

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) -- A website expected to hold the largest digitized collection on the internet of writings by famed British pastor Charles H. Spurgeon is now available. Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in partnership with B&H Academic, launched the website on June 21.

Also known as "The Spurgeon Archive," Midwestern Seminary's original Spurgeon Center website has been combined with www.spurgeon.org, which was founded and donated by Phil Johnson, the executive director of "Grace to You." The Spurgeon site will consist of accessible sermons, writings, links, and a number of other Spurgeon-related documents. The site invites readers to check back weekly for additional sermons and other resources. "We view this website as a resource available to the local church that makes visible the life, legacy and library of Charles Spurgeon," Midwestern President Jason Allen said. "Our ultimate goal is to make Spurgeon's works accessible to the world in a way that has never been done before. This site does just that."

In addition to facsimiles of sermons that visitors can search through, the site will also feature a regularly scheduled blog by Spurgeon Library curator Christian George. There are also links highlighting Spurgeon's Daily Meditations, where guests can access his morning and evening readings for each day of the year, as well as Spurgeon's commentary on Psalms, "The Treasury of David," the *Sword and Trowel* magazine, and artifacts from the library. "The heartbeat of this website is to make Jesus Christ shine through Spurgeon," George said. "We are uploading a treasure chest of sermons, commentaries, Puritan writings, and preaching helps designed to encourage pastors and edify the church. My prayer is that God will use the same books that shaped Spurgeon to shape new generations of Christians throughout the world."

George, who is in the process of publishing the 12-volume *Lost Sermons of C.H. Spurgeon* series, noted that there are plans to add a discussion/interactive element to the site, which he hopes will bring scholars together. "Spurgeon scholarship is a growing field," George said. "There's so much we are still learning. Our desire is to create a hub for pastors, doctoral students, Spurgeon enthusiasts, and anyone interested in contributing to the field. Collaboration will be key to constructing a three-dimensional portrait of the pastor." Midwestern Seminary purchased C.H. Spurgeon's personal library from William Jewel College in 2006. The collection consists of more than 6,000 books, and hundreds of artifacts, letters, and assorted materials.

In 2014, Midwestern established the Charles Spurgeon Center for Biblical Preaching, which includes the Spurgeon Scholars initiative that offers a limited number of scholarships to exceptional, full-time residential students called to pastoral ministry. Additionally, each fall semester the Center hosts The Spurgeon Lectures. Notable evangelical leaders such as John MacArthur, R. Albert Mohler Jr., Mark Dever and Alistair Begg have delivered the lectures. A \$2.5 million gift from Bill and Connie Jenkins of Paoli, Ind., enabled Midwestern to remodel its former chapel into the Spurgeon Library, which consolidated and showcased the collection appropriately. The library was dedicated in October 2015.

T. Patrick Hudson is executive assistant to the president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Story of July 4th

By Constitution Facts

PHILADELPHIA, PA - Our Declaration of Independence (including excerpts)

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness...

We celebrate American Independence Day on the Fourth of July every year. We think of July 4, 1776, as a day that represents the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the United States of America as an independent nation. But July 4, 1776 wasn't the day that the Continental Congress decided to declare independence (they did that on July 2, 1776). It wasn't the day we started the American Revolution either (that had happened back in April 1775). And it wasn't the day Thomas Jefferson wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence (that was in June 1776). Or the date on which the Declaration was delivered to Great Britain (that didn't happen until November 1776). Or the date it was signed (that was August 2, 1776).

So what did happen on July 4, 1776?

The Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. They'd been working on it for a couple of days after the draft was submitted on July 2nd and finally agreed on all of the edits and changes. July 4, 1776, became the date that was included on the Declaration of Independence, and the fancy handwritten copy that was signed in August (the copy now displayed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.) It's also the date that was printed on the Dunlap Broad sides, the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout the new nation. So when people thought of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776 was the date they remembered. In contrast, we celebrate Constitution Day on September 17th of each year, the anniversary of the date the Constitution was signed, not the anniversary of the date it was approved. If we'd followed this same approach for the Declaration of Independence we'd be celebrating Independence Day on August 2nd of each year, the day the Declaration of Independence was signed!

But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.

How did the Fourth of July become a national holiday?

For the first 15 or 20 years after the Declaration was written, people didn't celebrate it much on any date. It was too new and too much else was happening in the young nation. By the 1790s, a time of bitter partisan conflicts, the Declaration had become controversial. One party, the Democratic-Republicans, admired Jefferson and the Declaration. But the other party, the Federalists, thought the Declaration was too French and too anti-British, which went against their current policies.

By 1817, John Adams complained in a letter that America seemed uninterested in its past. But that would soon change.

In every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People.

After the War of 1812, the Federalist party began to come apart and the new parties of the 1820s and 1830s all considered themselves inheritors of Jefferson and the Democratic-Republicans. Printed copies of the Declaration began to circulate again, all with the date July 4, 1776, listed at the top. The deaths of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams on July 4, 1826, may even have helped to promote the idea of July 4 as an important date to be celebrated. Celebrations of the Fourth of July became more common as the years went on and in 1870, almost a hundred years after the Declaration was written, Congress first declared July 4 to be a national holiday as part of a bill to officially recognize several holidays, including Christmas. Further legislation about national holidays, including July 4, was passed in 1939 and 1941.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES...

God Bless America!

About the Author: constitutionfacts.org provided the information included in this article.

Why do I need training to be a DR Volunteer?

By Win Williams

FENTON, MI - Remember the TV commercial that stated, "I'm not a (fill in the blank) but I did stay at the Holiday Inn last night!" That is sort of how Disaster Relief training works. We need volunteers who have taken the time to train so they can come to the aid of those in need. We need volunteers, willing to listen and learn, so we can bring you back spiritually blessed, and not physically broken. We have found that where I Cor.9:24-27 talks about training and the prize of working for the real crown to be our encouragement.

As the State Director for SBC Disaster Relief, I am often asked, 'Why do I need training to be a volunteer'?

Not only is that a great question that everyone should ask, but the answer is equally important. The government Emergency Management Officials we work with require that all volunteers be credentialed by an organization, like ours, before they are allowed to work in a disaster response area. Our training is designed to meet these requirements, and to prepare volunteers to do effective ministry when called upon. The Disaster Relief training prepares us in our understanding of disasters and the needs that arise in times of disasters. But the greatest reason to train is that God deserves our very best, and to achieve the best requires discipline, effort and knowledge.

Disaster Relief training opportunities allow us to grow as believers in Christ so that when God calls, we are prepared and ready, both physically and spiritually. I encourage you to attend the next training opportunity and learn the other 8 reasons to take disaster relief training before volunteering. We need you, but we need you trained.

The Disaster Relief Full Trainings this fall (unless we are activated to a major disaster) are:

Lake Bible Church
309 Decker Rd.
Walled Lake, MI
Sept. 29-30th

Bambi Lake Retreat and Conference Center
Old 76 Highway-using Exit 222, 3468 East Robinson Lake Road,
Roscommon, MI
Oct.6-7th:

Friday, Oct. 6th at 7:00pm-10:00pm
Basic Training (Involving Southern Baptists in Disaster Relief)
Cost \$10.00

Saturday, Oct. 7th at 8:30am-3:00pm
Unit Training
Feeding - Chain Saw - Mudout - Shower/laundry - Water Purification Chaplaincy
Cost \$25:00

Cost covers background, ID badge, and cap. Lunch on Sat. will be provided by feeding team. Free to stay over night, bring your sleeping bag, cot and your personal need items.

Please register by calling Judy Roy at [810-223-2465](tel:810-223-2465) or email at judyroy26@gmail.com

About the author: Win Williams has been the State Director of Disaster Relief for Michigan since 2007. He has been married to his bride, Carolyn, for 53 years. Win has been involved with Michigan Southern Baptists since 1961.

SENDING

'Stage is set,' Platt tells Baptists at IMB dinner

by Julie McGowan

PHOENIX (BP) -- How many missionaries could be sent from just a fraction of all Southern Baptist churches today? At the International Mission Board dinner June 12 in Phoenix, IMB President David Platt and the crowd of approximately 1,350 Southern Baptists estimated that their congregations, right now, have a combined potential of 28,551 missionaries. Those in attendance compiled the number of students, singles, husbands, wives, moms, dads, kids and grandparents in their churches who might take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the billions of people who have yet to hear it.

"A word we've been using a lot in the IMB lately is 'limitless' -- and tonight, we invite you to imagine the truly limitless possibilities that exist for the spread of the Gospel in the world if we will take seriously the sending of missionaries from every one of our churches," Platt told the church members and leaders attending the event held in conjunction with the SBC annual meeting. During the dinner, Platt shared the sacrificial story of historic missionary Adoniram Judson. Newly married, Judson and his wife Ann sailed on a 114-day voyage to India, with plans to continue their missionary journey to Burma.

"As soon as they arrived in India, everyone told them, 'You can't go to Burma,'" Platt recounted. "Ship captains, government officials, missionaries, even William Carey himself said, 'Get Burma out of your mind.' The country is ruled by a despot, they're known for savage, barbaric practices, they have no religious toleration, and you just plain can't survive ... every missionary who had gone to Burma had either died or left." Eventually the Judsons boarded a ship docked that was on its way to Rangoon -- a city in Burma. But only days into the journey, Ann gave birth to a stillborn baby, and the young couple buried their child at sea.

"When they arrived ashore, they found a land filled with swarming crowds, Buddhist temples, leprous beggars, and children running around with no clothes while smoking cigars like they were adults," Platt said. "Immediately, they started learning the language, and as soon as possible, they started working on translating the Bible into

Burmese." Judson continued his mission with deep resolve, but not without significant trials: It took six years after landing at Rangoon to witness the first Burmese person baptized. Judson buried multiple children and two wives. He was imprisoned, tortured, and suspected of being a spy. As the end of his life neared, Judson concluded, "One prayer, my God! Thy will be done -- one only boon I crave: To finish well my work -- and rest within a Burma grave!"

Platt said Judson's commitment to share the Gospel at all costs reflects the very reason Southern Baptists are meeting in Phoenix now. "And tonight, I want to call pastors all across this room to raise up and send out multitudes more Adoniram and Ann Judsons from our churches -- multitudes more men and women who will give their lives and their families for the glory of Christ in nations where His name is not yet known," Platt urged. "For years now, we have declined in the number of Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the world. But this year, the stage is set for that trend to be reversed. The stage is set for Southern Baptists to send more missionaries, through a multiplicity of pathways."

Platt recounted that when Ann was home in America, she pleaded, "I want the Baptists throughout the United States to feel that Burma must be converted through their instrumentality. They must do more than they have ever yet done. They must pray more, they must give more, and make greater efforts to prevent the missionary flame from becoming extinct." Platt urged church members and leaders to answer the Judsons' heart cry. "Oh, Southern Baptists, 200 years later, would that be said of us, that we felt the nations must be converted through our cooperation, through our praying more than we ever have before, giving more than we ever have before, and sending more than we ever have before," he said.

About the author: Julie McGowan is IMB public relations manager.

A Parent's Vow

By: Dae H. Yoo

ROCHESTER HILLS, MI - When it comes to talking about my Christian pilgrimage, first, I would like to mention my parents. This is because my parents made a vow to God when I was born. They wanted me to become a pastor when I grew up. Even though I appreciate my parents now, I was disappointed about their vow. I didn't believe in God until I was a high school student. I just went to church with my parents.

I had a significant, amazing experience when I was a freshman in high school. I attended a youth group retreat at church. The pastor at the retreat challenged us by saying that God has a plan for us. In the course of time, I really wanted to meet God. I prayed with my whole mind. After a while, I could remember the Bible verses from Job 23: 9-10 "When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." I recognized that God wants to test me in my earthly life. When I found God's amazing plan for me, I confessed my sins and received my Salvation.

After I came back from the retreat, I joined the high school Campus Crusade for Christ. In C.C.C, I studied the Bible. What's more, I was the director of C.C.C choir and a Bible study group leader. When I was a senior in high school, I decided to enter seminary. I attended Korea Baptist Theological Seminary. At the seminary, I was very interested in

Christian Counseling. I recognized that even though Christians have faith, they also have a lot of emotional and mental problems. In addition, I found that God has given me the spiritual gift of counseling. Thus, I attended a Christian Counseling class at the seminary. In Christian Counseling class, I decided that I wanted to become a counselor.

After graduating from the seminary, I prayed for the opportunity to study and minister in the US because I was eager to study seriously and deeply. God opened the door for me to study at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. I could learn not only Biblical Counseling, but also could deeply study theology at Southeastern. After I had completed both Masters of Divinity and Masters of Theology courses at Southeastern, I prayed for the opportunity to minister in my country. God allowed me to return to South Korea where I served as an associate Pastor at Samho Baptist Church and then the Church of Dream, South Korea. At the start of my ministry, I was not very skilled in any administrative or practical processes. But through the years, experience has refined my abilities. After finishing from the ministry in my country, God gave me a chance to become the Senior Pastor of Korean First Baptist Church at Rochester Hills, Michigan. We were excited to come to America and serve.

My entire ministry began with a vision and vow from my parents.

About the author: My deepest passion is to lead people to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. To fulfill my goal and my passion, I teach the Word of God and help people gain spiritual maturity to impact the world of God. As the Senior Pastor of the Korean First Baptist Church, I will love, care, equip, and teach people with discipleship training and evangelistic preaching so that they can expand the Kingdom of God through their lives.

INDEPENDENCE DAY: 'We face another challenging hour'

By Chaplain (Major General) Doug Carver, U.S. Army, Retired

PHOENIX (BP) -- One hundred years ago 5,543 registered messengers gathered in New Orleans for the 62nd session of the Southern Baptist Convention. A month earlier President Woodrow Wilson had declared war on Germany for violating its pledge to suspend unrestricted submarine warfare in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean, as well as its attempts to entice Mexico into an alliance against the United States.

Our nation immediately began drafting all able-bodied young men between the ages of 18 and 31 into the military. Over 25 percent of this age group, 4.7 million Americans, would be called up to serve in World War I, a global conflict that took the lives of 11 million military personnel and 7 million civilians. More than 107,000 U.S. troops lost their

lives in this "war to end all wars," including 23 military chaplains. One of those chaplains was a Southern Baptist from Salemburg, N.C., Auremas T. Howard.

The 1917 SBC was the first gathering of any religious group following America's entry into World War I. Prayer was a prevailing theme of the convention. Messengers were encouraged to pray for the commander in chief, our national leaders and members of the Armed Services who would be required to make grave and costly decisions. They were reminded of how a world war would profoundly affect the economic and industrial base of America as well as its costly and immeasurable impact on our churches and local communities. The call for prayer would heighten in the spring of 1918 when an influenza epidemic began that would sweep the world, killing an estimated 50 million people.

R.H. Pitt, editor of Virginia's state paper, *The Religious Herald*, said, "In these testing times ... Southern Baptists ... cannot afford to be dumb or indifferent. The seriousness of our situation must not be ignored. No one can forecast the duration of the struggle or estimate the sacrifices which the country will be called upon to make. "Facing the stern and terrible realities of war, men will turn their thoughts instinctively and inevitably to God," Pitt noted. "There will be opportunities in the military training camps and in the trenches of Europe and in our communities for bringing people to Jesus such as we have never known."

E.Y. Mullins, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said that the best way we could support our troops during the war was to strengthen their moral and spiritual life through the preaching of the Gospel, especially to those young men from Baptist homes and Baptist churches who were laying their lives on the altar of their country. In the world's most trying hour, Southern Baptists stood firmly in support of our national leaders and our armed services. Southern Baptists directed that we put "strong, devout, and consecrated pastors" into the military as chaplains and made every effort to take the Gospel to our troops as they mobilized, trained and deployed for combat.

Today, 100 years after America's entry into World War I, we face another challenging hour filled with anxiety and uncertainty that most certainly requires the unfailing support of our armed services. For such a time as this, our troops and their families need our daily and constant prayers. We enter into a sacred trust with our troops the moment they put on the uniform. When they raise their right hands and take the oath of enlistment, our troops swear to support and defend America against all enemies, foreign and domestic, knowing they may, at some point, have to stand in harm's way, daily, through exhaustive heat and numbing cold, under almost 80 pounds of body armor and equipment, against a tough, often barbaric, enemy, never knowing as they go outside the forward operating base whether they'll be greeted with a smile or a suicide vest.

The continued sacrifices of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coast guardsmen allow us to meet freely in our churches and share the Gospel in our communities. They have made it possible for us to live safe and secure lives, pursue our dreams and exercise our religious liberty. The sacred trust with our troops was forged in the hardships endured by our American military from Lexington to Yorktown, the bloody Civil War battles at Bull Run and Gettysburg, the trench warfare faced by our doughboys and marines in France and Belgium, the deadly assaults launched by our troops on the

beaches at Normandy, the heroic stand of our soldiers and marines east of the Chosin reservoir in Korea, and the jungle warfare our troops waged against an almost invisible enemy in Vietnam.

It's a trust paid for in the blood, sweat and tears of over 1 million Americans who've given their lives in all wars, including the almost 7,000 killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 16 years. Let us pause and remember that a Marine is risking his life for us advising Afghan soldiers in the Helmand Province ... a soldier is training Iraqi Security Forces in Mosul; an airman is flying critical supplies to our troops in the

Horn of Africa; a sailor is far from home, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, protecting the freedom of the seas. Our troops do this for us; they do this for their country; they do this because, like millions before them, they answered a higher calling, to preserve our freedom and that of other nations.

For such a time as this, let us continue to give thanks to Almighty God for the blessing of liberty. Let us give thanks to and pray for our veterans and their families who have given so much of themselves for the freedoms we enjoy. And let us remain faithful stewards of the freedom we've been granted by the men and women who have, through their brave and sacrificial service, kept America the land of the free and the brave. As we are exhorted by the apostle Paul, "I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Timothy 2:1-3 ESV).

About the author: Chaplain (Major General) Doug Carver, U.S. Army, Retired, serves as executive director of chaplaincy services for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He delivered these remarks at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting, June 13 in Phoenix.

Send Detroit News Brief SBC 17 Edition Detroit church plants are fruitful and multiplying!

God continues to amaze us as we seek him in prayer by multiplying the efforts of church planters here. He continues to multiply and grow disciples at our existing church plants and now we are seeing many of those church plants multiply and "give birth" to new churches themselves! God is continuing to send forth laborers into the harvest!!

Journey Church just launched on Easter Sunday with about 60 in attendance. Pastor Chad Nelson is giving leadership as they meet in the historic Emerald Theater right in the heart of Mt. Clemens.

Crossover Church (Southfield), continues to reach the lost and baptize families of new believers! On April 23 they celebrated as 6 were baptized. Please continue to pray for these new believers to grow and for Pastor Ken and Tolice Nether and their family to have strength and vision for this church.

Narrow Path Church (St Clair Shores) is coming up on three years of being in its' community as a "biker-friendly, tattoo-loving, come as you are" church and now Pastor Joker Bruinsma is looking to begin a second location in Adrian-Tecumseh area where there is great need and opportunity for bikers to have a church presence. Pray for them as they seek to launch this new work on July 15.

The Gathering (Windsor) celebrated its 3rd Birthday on May 7 with a worship service and three baptisms! Pastor Garth Leno preached on "vision" and their vision as a newly planted church in the city. A birthday party followed at a local public school where many members and people from the community gathered for a "Kids' Safety Day". They were able to give-a-way many significant prizes that created opportunity for more conversations.

The Gathering looks forward to this summer where they will be hosting (with the help of partner churches) SURGE Sports and Arts Camp and a Free Park Event to continue to build friendships with families in the community. They are focused on engaging the local Walker Gate community with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and continue to look to raise up those whom will be sent to other communities in Windsor and Ontario to bring the light of Christ.

Mile City Church (Livonia), still less than two years old has ventured out to send Shea and Andrea Prisk to plant Grumlaw Church (Grand Blanc, MI) in January 2018. In May they held a vision night to continue to share the dream for this new church and to build a core team. They now have over 30 people committed to join them in this adventure for Jesus!

Rejoice also over the five little ones who came to know Jesus at Mile City and were baptized in the church's first baptism of children.

The Church at Clawson (Clawson, MI), pastored by Bob Morrissey continues to baptize new believers as they place faith in Christ. Pray for Bob, his wife Cindy and their children as they serve to seek to reach people and help the church gather and grow.

Pray for their specific needs concerning their family housing situation. –For grace in time allowance to accomplish the work mandated by the city on our parking lot and building. –For wisdom in the steps needed to make before re-launching. –For a permanent sign for the church.

120 people registered for our first Detroit BLVD Symposium on May 30-31. The two session gathering was led by Pastor Dharti Lewis of the North American Mission Board and Blueprint Church. Pastors, church planters and church leaders gathered to discuss issues facing those who are ministering to urban neighborhoods in Detroit. Between the two sessions, Wayne Parker, of Send Detroit, led a vision tour connecting participants with church planters and church planting needs in the city. The symposium was a great encouragement to the participants. We hope it will foster future conversations for urban church planting.

We are asking that you commit to pray for church planters in Detroit. You can get a list, requests and updates by registering at prayforplanters.com

Mission Teams Wanted!

Mission opportunities include remodeling homes and facilities, helping with kids camps or a block party. The house pictured was acquired by Refuge Detroit (Drew Ansley) and needs rehab for use in ministry.

Detroit is a great city where the gospel moving forward. We would love to have you partner with a church plant, or come and see where new works are needed to begin work through your church. Consider catching the vision and bringing your church leaders to see how you can connect for the sake of lost souls and the glory of God!

Please reply to this e-mail to schedule a time where you can come to see what God is doing in Detroit!

COLUMNS**Has God Blessed America?**

By Tim Patterson

FENTON, MI - This month we celebrate the birth of our nation. Many today are about the business of revising history to fit their philosophy of life and to justify moral proclivities or the lack thereof. Some do so out of political motivations or to promote a personal cause. No matter what some may say, an accurate and unbiased study of our history reveals that our nation was founded on the Word of God and Christian beliefs. To try to devoid our nation of it's rich Christian heritage and foundation is not only unethical, but is also untrue.

As I have studied the writings and records of our founding fathers, I have come to the firm belief that these men looked to God's Word for direction and guidance in forming our government. Not all of them were believers and some were deists, but their understanding of and belief in the guiding principles of the Bible are evident. The following are just a few statements from these great men that confirm such convictions. To even the casual reader, there can be no doubt as to where their faith and allegiance abided.

George Washington -- It is impossible to govern rightly without God and the Bible.

Benjamin Franklin -- God governs the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?

James Madison --- Religion is the basis and foundation of the government.

Patrick Henry --- America was not founded by religionists, nor on any religion, but by Christians on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Samuel Adams -- (after signing Declaration of Independence) We have this day restored the Sovereign, to whom alone, men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven, and from the rising to the setting of the sun may His kingdom come.

Thomas Jefferson --- Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a convictions in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?

Abraham Lincoln -- I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man....But for this Book we could not know right from wrong.

Andrew Jackson --- The Bible is the rock upon which our republic rests.

Psa 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.

WHY HAS GOD BLESSED AMERICA?

I believe that God has blessed America because we were founded, as a nation, on Biblical principles and as a result, has been the premier country on this planet in the promotion and propagation of the Gospel. The reason we are still a nation today is because God has preserved us to be the vessel by which He pours out the Gospel to the whole world.

God bless America. And He will, as long as we are a blessing to Him. Tim

Learn to Speak Their Language

By Tony Lynn

FENTON, MI - If you've ever felt mistreated or wanted to fight an injustice, you will get a kick out of my experience. #ak47, #stoppedforreason, #injustice

When Jamie, our three children, and I lived in Africa during the 90s as Southern Baptist international missionaries, the AK-47 was the preferred weapon used by the police and military throughout the sandy capital city of Niamey, Niger Republic. The AK-47 has a reputation for functioning under the worst conditions and the desert sands provided proof enough. Two decades later, I still recall the sound of those weapons sweeping over us. During our mission trips, in and out of the city, and even moving around within the city, uniformed officers, carrying AK-47s, had the authority to flag us down to the side of the road at their discretion; and they frequently did so.

Once stopped, two men paced up and down both sides of our dusty, white 4x4 Toyota gawking at the children and ogling Jamie with their weapons raised, as if we were escaping criminals. A third man would take his position, squared-up to my left shoulder, where I would be required to present my government papers from my driver's seat. Routine questions would start and before you knew it, the outspoken armed man would insist that there was some reason I should pay a cash fine personally and instantly before we would be released. With the red dust of the Sahara Desert staining his soiled and sweat-soaked uniform he and his men repeatedly tried to extort money from us

during our first year as missionaries. By the grace of God, I was always able to talk the extortionists down without incident until one day when I was alone.

I was inside the capitol city, when my encounter began as a typical shakedown, but took a serious turn when the lead officer refused to give back my government documents. He took everything; my passport, my Nigerien driver's license, and the papers for the dusty, white 4x4 Toyota. He cooked-up an allegation that I was driving illegally and insisted that I drive the vehicle to the police station, with him sitting in the passenger seat; but, then he offered a "convenient" alternative. He whispered, "Pay me whatever you have in your wallet right now and I will accept that as the fine. You can go on your way as soon as you pay me."

At that moment, I don't know who was being more stubborn; the officer with a sidearm holstered on his white belt against his sun-faded fatigues, or me, the infuriated expatriate just trying to help these people. Without thinking, I replied in the loudest French I had ever spoken, "I cannot believe you. You are entrusted to serve and protect the people of this country and instead you spend your days robbing from expatriates like me. I have never given any of you money and I am not about to start now." I wanted to cover my mouth in surprise of what I had just said.

While I was still in shock at my comments, the officer exited the passenger seat of the 4x4. Just before shutting the door and with a steely-eyed glare, he leaned back into the vehicle and said in a menacing tone, "When you are ready to pay your fine and retrieve your papers come by the police station. I will be there." The officer sped off on a motorcycle and left me there without one shred of proof of who I was and that I legally owned the vehicle I was driving. I was worse off than I was ten minutes earlier. As I sat alone in my 4x4, I reviewed the incident and reflected on what I saw as my three options:

Option 1: "I should have paid that jerk some money. That could have gone much worse than it did."

Option 2: "I could go see Jamie and the veteran missionaries and seek their advice."

Option 3: "I could go get my government papers for my vehicle and me without telling anyone."

As you would suspect, option three seemed the most gratifying at the moment. So, I drove carefully to the police station, a distance of nearly two miles away from where the officer had taken all of my documents. While I was driving, I passed two other sites where other officers were stopping and searching vehicles. By God's grace, I arrived at the busy police station without further incidence. There were uniformed officers of all ranks roaming the open courtyard while other officers were reciting their morning prayers on rugs, shoulder to shoulder under the shade of a large neem tree.

As I exited my vehicle, a junior officer, in his best French language, innocently asked me if he could be of service. As I scanned the crowded courtyard locating my blackmailer, I replied loudly enough to interrupt the dozens who were reciting prayers, "Yes, take me to the chief of police because I want to file a complaint against the conman who is dressed in a police uniform and reciting his prayers, right there!" I Pointed my finger toward the man with my arm stretched as far as it could in arrogance.

In less than two minutes, my blackmailer and I were escorted from the courtyard and found ourselves standing in front of the chief of police of the capital city of Niamey. At first, the chief of police and the officer spoke together in one of the African languages of the Niger Republic rather than using French. "What did you do?" "I just tried to get a little money from the expatriate." "Who is he?" "I don't know, but he is angry and he might cause us trouble." "Let's try to settle this and get him out of here!" they said.

After two or three minutes of what the two men thought was a private conversation, the chief of police looked toward me and addressed me in French, "I'm sorry there's been some misunderstanding. Here are your papers. You are free to go." I received the papers and clutched them in my hand but before leaving I spoke to them in a firm and respectful tone in the same African language they had been speaking supposedly in private, "I understood everything you just said because I have learned the language your mothers spoke to you when you were children."

The expression on the faces of the chief of police and the officer was priceless! They were in shock. They knew their con game was up. I continued in the Zarma language, "I cannot believe you. You are entrusted to serve and protect the people of this country and instead you spend your days robbing from expatriates like me and you rob the people of your own country in police clothing. I have never given any of you money and I am not about to start now."

The chief of police responding with a beaming smile rose to his feet. He pumped my arm in a large handshake and called me his brother. The offending officer followed his lead. They escorted me to my vehicle introducing me, in the Zarma language, to officers in the courtyard, "This is our brother from America. He is here to help our people. He speaks our language."

From that day, officers never stopped me again. In fact, they would salute me as I drove past their sites. On occasion though when Jamie was driving through the city, the notorious officer would flag Jamie to the side of the road and he would ask, "How is Tony?" After Jamie offered an update, the officer would salute her and wish her well then let her go without a threat. There were no more AK-47s, no more random inspections, and no more extortions.

So, what is the takeaway from this brief account in my personal history? Simply this, learn to "speak the language" of the people you are trying to reach for Christ. Learn to relate to them where they are and you will discover the advantage of listening carefully and speaking up when it really counts. Be strong in your beliefs. Don't back down. Be a spokesperson for Christ. Tony

Light up the Dark

By Mike Schatz

ROSCOMMON, MI - One of my favorite celebrations is July 4th. I love the color, the pageantry and celebrating the fact that our country was established on Christian principles. No matter how old I become, I still get excited to watch and hear the fireworks. My favorite place to watch fireworks is in Flagler Beach, Florida, close to the pier where the fireworks are launched.

As a kid there was nothing better than laying on the beach looking straight into the sky and feeling as if the kaleidoscope of colors were going to fall right on top of me while waiting to hear the boom of the next round of fireworks being launched. The colors would be so vivid and expansive it seemed as if you could reach out and grab them. The boom would be so loud and explosive it would make your teeth rattle and shake you to the core of your being. The only bad part of the evening was it seemingly ended too soon; however it would go out with a bang – a continuous 3-4 minutes of explosions of color and sound would fill the beach sky – it was always an amazing finale!

Reflecting back on those childhood experiences I am reminded of how God has called us to be light. In Matthew 5:16 we are instructed to let our light (God in and through us) shine before others so they may see our good deeds and bring glory to our Father in heaven. Imagine for a moment living a life so infused with Christ, so empowered by His love, so visibly loud for His glory, our lost neighbors would be in awe of our lives and know that only God could be responsible. Amazingly, we do not need to just imagine it.

When we die to our old nature and let God's nature supernaturally change us from the inside out we become reflectors of His glory. We begin to shine in dark places and light up the night sky like the 4th of July. We are to let the light of God manifest and shine so brightly in all we do that the world will not only take notice, but will give glory to God our Father for it! Oh, and do not forget, this light does not disappoint! This light has no end. It has no finale. It shines on and on for all eternity.

Eradicating darkness wherever it shines! Healing broken lives, resurrecting lost dreams, restoring hope to the hopeless, replacing heaviness with joy, restoring relationships – this is the power of God's light. So, don't hide His light, do not be afraid where it may lead you. As long as His light is illuminating the path you can be sure of your next step. You never know, you may just be the fireworks that grabs the attention of a co-worker. You may just be the boom that causes your lost family member to wake up and look up. Go! Let your life light up the dark night. Light it Up! Mike

Mike Schatz serves on the staff of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. He is the State Director of Spiritual Enrichment and Retreats and lives at Bambi Lake.

Why CEC '17

By Mike Durbin

FENTON, MI - Michigan Baptists will gather from churches all across the state at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Roseville on September 16th for the **Church Equipping Conference**. This one day gathering is designed to equip ministry and lay workers in multiple ministry areas in order to make a greater impact for Christ through their local church.

So, why should you attend **CEC '17**?

Because it will impact your spiritual life. The conference is designed to encourage, equip, and enrich you as a follower of Christ. God will speak powerfully to you through the anointed preaching of incredibly gifted expositors of the Word (see the flyer). God will draw you into His presence as you join fellow believers from across Michigan and we collectively lift our voices in praise and adoration of His Holy Name.

Because you can expect to develop greater skills and increase knowledge in your area of ministry. This conference is designed to equip you and your team for ministry. Every one of the presenters is a follower of Christ who is actively engaged in ministry. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience, and offer it in abundance. You will gain new insights and ideas to implement as you serve Christ in your church.

Because God will affirm much about your current ministry. Let's face it, we can all benefit from encouragement. There can be "dry" times in ministry - times when we feel like nothing is happening. Sometimes we struggle, wonder if we're doing it right, and get discouraged. This year's **CEC** is sure to be the encouragement needed for the days ahead. You will discover that you are on the right track and God will renew your spirit.

Because you will connect on a deeper level with brothers and sisters in Christ at the conference and within your church family. You will get to know others in new ways, be encouraged as you realize you are on a team of people who love Christ, who want Him glorified, who want to see people come to Christ, and who want your church to grow deeper and larger. Something powerful happens when church leaders come together with the desire to serve Christ and grow in ministry. Something wonderful happens when God's people come together as one.

Because your church will experience new energy as your team gets equipped together. Most equipping events do not provide the breadth of workshops that you find at the **CEC**. Imagine all the leaders in your church taking next steps in their areas of ministry at the same time. This event has the potential to equip, to motivate, and to inspire your church family. Rarely will you find a conference as broad and deep as the Church Equipping Conference '17. Mike

Special guests include:

H.B. Charles is the Pastor-Teacher at Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church of Jacksonville and Orange Park, FL where he has served since 2008. Prior to his work at Shiloh

Metropolitan Baptist Church, Charles led at the Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church of LA for 18 years. This is where his career began at the age of 17.

Charles continues to keep himself busy by regularly speaking at churches, conferences and conventions around the country. You can also hear him on his radio show “Cutting it Straight” and his podcast “The On Preaching Podcast” which is dedicated to helping pastors preach faithfully, clearly and better. Lastly, you can find his voice on the Shiloh Choir CD “Joe Pace Presents: H.B. Charles Jr. and the Shiloh Church Choir” where he wrote and led several of the songs.

Charles’ resume does not stop there. He is also the author or contributing author of eight books which include, *It Happens After Prayer*, *On Preaching*, *On Pastoring*, *The Difference Jesus Makes*, *Power in the Pulpit*, *Secret Sex Wars*, and *Nelson’s Annual Preacher’s Sourcebook 2016*. His greatest accomplishment is being married to his wife, Crystal which together they have three children, H.B. III, Natalie, and Hailey.

Dr. Richard Land is president of Southern Evangelical Seminary. In addition to his presidency, Dr. Land also teaches courses at the seminary. Prior to becoming president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, Dr. Land served for 25 years as the President of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Southern Baptist Convention’s official entity assigned to address social, moral, and ethical concerns, with particular attention to their impact on American families and their faith.

Dr. Land graduated with the Bachelor of Arts degree (magna cum laude) from Princeton University and with the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Oxford University in England. He also received a Master of Theology (Honors Program) degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where he served as student body president and received the Broadman Seminarian Award as the outstanding graduating student.

He hosts a daily two-minute radio commentary on faith issues and how they relate to current issues, “Bringing Every Thought Captive,” heard on over 400 stations nationwide. Dr. Land and leading Christian apologists discuss significant social, religious, and political topics on SES’s “Bring Every Thought Captive” TV program, which airs 8 p.m./ET on the NRB Network.

His record as a pro-family advocate is capped by his proudest accomplishment—his over 45-year marriage to his wife Dr. Rebekah Land (a psychotherapist in private practice) and his personal investment with her in the lives of their three adult children, Jennifer, Richard, Jr., and Rachel.

Curtis Woods currently serves as the Associate Executive Director for Convention Relations at Kentucky Baptist Convention. He received his Master of Theology in Pastoral Ministries degree from the Dallas Theological Seminary. In 2006 he was appointed as the Campus Minister for the Baptist Campus Ministry at Kentucky State University. Woods is married to his wife Tracey, who raises their three children Curtis Anthony II, Timothy Ivory, and Tristan Gabriel in Frankfort, KY.

Our theme for this year's CEC 17 is "Breakthrough." We are praying that this will be a "Breakthrough" year for you and your church to "Breakthrough." For more information regarding the Church Equipping Conference '17 call us at: 810-714-1907. Register at: BSCM.org/Register.

Remember the date: September 16, 2017 at Cornerstone Baptist Church, 17017 E. Twelve Mile Road, Roseville, MI 48066.

AROUND THE STATE

Praise in the Park

July 8 – Faith Fellowship Baptist Church from 12 Noon to 4pm, Jul 8th. Held at Walsh Park, Lansing, MI. For more information contact Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, 1001 Dakin Street, Lansing, MI 48912, (517)853-9897, or faithfellowshiplansing@hotmail.com.

Vacation Bible School

July 10-13 – Faith Fellowship Baptist Church Lansing, MI. For more information contact Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, 1001 Dakin Street, Lansing, MI 48912, (517)853-9897, or faithfellowshiplansing@hotmail.com.

LifeChangers 2017 – Youth Mission Trip – Since 1996

LifeChangers is an exciting, week long, hands-on, co-educational, youth Missions Camp now in its 22nd year of serving and ministering in the Brightmoor Community of Northwest Detroit. The dates are July 16 to 22 with a \$50 pre-registration fee due by June 16. The total cost is \$165 p/person. Wellspring, Spring Arbor University praise and Worship team, will again lead exciting worship. The Camp Pastor this year is Nathan Eda, Youth Pastor at Ann Arbor Chinese Christian Church. For the past two years Bro. Nathan, alongside his wife, Jennifer, and their Daughter, Asha, have been providing personal discipleship and pastoral care at AACCC. Following LifeChangers they will return to India where Nathan will teach three classes in the Seminary and assist his Father with his mission church.

All information is available at the website, www.golifechangers.org. Or you can call Wayne or Pam Vann at 734-718-4922 or 23, email golifechangers@aol.com. You can register at the website.

Back to School Bash

September 9 – Free school supplies and backpacks, clothes and giveaways. Faith Fellowship Baptist Church. For more information contact Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, 1001 Dakin Street, Lansing, MI 48912, (517)853-9897, or faithfellowshiplansing@hotmail.com.

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.

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

CLASSIFIEDS**Senior Pastor Needed**

Harper Creek Baptist Church in Battle Creek, Michigan (Southern Baptist Convention) is looking for an experienced Pastor to lead a congregation of 30 to 50 people. This dynamic group of worshipers is grounded in the Word of God and enjoys a blended type corporate worship. HCBC offers salary commensurate with years of experience. If you are interested in helping us share Jesus and grow in our faith, please visit our web site at www.harpercreekbaptist.org to learn more. You may also send inquiries or resumes to: PastorSearch@harpercreekbaptist.org or mail to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 2467, Battle Creek, MI 49016.

Church Strengtheners/Mobilizer position

The Greater Detroit Baptist Association is seeking an individual for a Church Strengtheners/Mobilizer position. This position will replace the position of Associational Missionary (Director of Missions). [CLICK HERE](#) for more information about specific responsibilities, financial support, desired skills, education requirements, education requirements, ministry experience, and theological views. Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume by July 31, 2017 to:

Mr. Nonnie Lesada,
Administrative Assistant
24250 Joy Road
Redford, MI 48239
detbaptasn@sbcglobal.net
313-533-2663

Family Ministry Leader

Warren Woods Baptist Church in Warren seeks a Family Ministry Leader to assist the church in developing a ministry to children, youth, and their families with the goal of inspiring faith, love and growing discipleship. Children's and youth ministry will reflect a balance of Bible study, fellowship, worship, service, and outreach.

Qualifications:

- A person with an undergraduate degree equivalent or with experience in children's and/or youth ministry
- Strong organizational, leadership, and communication skills
- Experience and ability in teaching and training
- The ability to build and lead volunteer teams
- A love for children, youth and families
- In alignment and agreement with the Baptist Faith & Message 2000
- A Christian who feels a call by God into ministry and demonstrates a personal relationship with Jesus Christ evidenced by Christian character and behavior
- This is a 20 hour per week position. Pay commensurate with qualifications. Please submit a resume to pccarnline@warrenwoods.org prior to May 31, 2017.

Singer or Speaker for Women's Group

Mary Hester is the pastor's Wife of The Shore Church in St. Joseph, Michigan where she serves with her husband, Church Planter and Pastor Kevin Hester. Mary has been involved in ministry for twenty plus years. She is a homeschooling mother of eight children with a passion for changed lives through the life changing power of God's word. Mary studied music at Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana and at Grace Bible College in Wyoming, Michigan. Mary is available to give full or partial concerts or for speaking engagements to women's groups. To schedule a concert or a speaking engagement contact Mary at mry_hester@yahoo.com.

Free Books for Church Library

Crossroads Community Baptist Church in Ann Arbor (2580 Packard Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48104) has a large supply of library books from our non-functioning church library that we would like to give to a church who has a working library. The only requirement is for that church to pick up the books. Please call (734) 971-0773 to see if they are still available and to arrange a pick up time.

Senior Pastor Needed

On January 1, Steve Oswalt resigned from Crossroads Community Baptist Church in Ann Arbor and started as senior pastor of Broadman Baptist Church, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. In the interim, Worship Pastor Douglas Keasal is serving as senior pastor. The search process for a new senior pastor is underway. Inquiries can be made directly to the church: Crossroads Community Baptist Church in Ann Arbor (2580 Packard Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48104) (734) 971-0773.

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 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.

Bi-vocational Pastor Needed

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

Senior Pastor Needed

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

Church Information Packets

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

ABOUT US

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

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