

## Bold Steps In Sharing The Light

August 31, 2016 | by Staff



**FENTON, MI** – This year the Mission Committee for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) has taken a bold step toward impacting more communities for Christ across the state of Michigan. This year's goal for the Frances Brown State Mission Offering has been set for \$90,000. During the week of September 11-18, Michigan Southern Baptists are being called to pray for state missions using the theme "Sharing the Light".

The theme is based on the scripture in John 12:46 where Jesus says, "I have come as a light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in the darkness." That passage blends with the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's goal of punching holes in the darkness of our state. BSCM Executive Director, Dr. Tim Patterson shares, "We are not the producers of the light, we are possessors of the light, and it is our absolute responsibility to share that light."

The gifts collected during this special emphasis will go specifically to areas of ministry needs in the state of Michigan. Those areas fall into the three categories of "Starting, Strengthening, and Sending". Patterson says, "This offering will help us do more to impact the local church in Michigan like we never have before."

A packet of promotional materials have been sent to every Southern Baptist church in Michigan, and all of the promotional materials are also available online at [bscm.org/smo](http://bscm.org/smo). Some of the materials include a DVD, a poster, flyers, bulletin inserts, and prayer bookmarks. The BSCM leadership and State Mission Offering committee are encouraging church and mission leaders with a heart for the mission field here in Michigan to use these exciting new tools to help their churches catch the vision of what we can do together as we go forward "Sharing the Light".

## Redemption Church

August 31, 2016 | by Staff



**GRANDVILLE, MI** – "Sharing the Light is a lifelong calling. We put it this way, God has you where he has you, to advance the Gospel through you", says Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM) church planter Josh Tovey. Redemption Church is less than two years old, but is already seeing more than 150 attendees each week. The church plant is part of a partnership that includes the BSCM and the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Gifts from Michigan Southern Baptists to the Francis Brown State Mission Offering makes new churches like Redemption possible in the state.

Lead pastor, Josh Tovey and his wife Stephanie have made a lot of sacrifices and overcome many trials to see Redemption grow to this point. Just 11 months into their marriage, Stephanie was diagnosed with cancer. The cancer returned four times, and Stephanie endured two bone marrow transplants over a seven year period. Despite the constant medical battles, the Toveys continued to pursue God's call in their lives, and Stephanie has now been cancer free for four years. Stephanie says, "After all of that, I look at the future as one day at a time, not planning out years in advance because God might have something different planned."

Eventually, God called the Tovey's back to where they grew up to start Redemption in Grandville where they, as well as the other two staff couples, lived with their in-laws for more than a year to make the church plant possible. BSCM Church Planter Catalyst, Dan Ghramm jokes, "I'm not sure that is a sacrifice, I would be willing to make for God." But Ghramm adds on a serious note, "My heartbeat is to add more lights, church plants, to carry the light of Jesus Christ to those who don't know him. So we're committed to doing whatever it takes."

The 2016 goal for the "Sharing the Light" State Mission Offering is \$90,000. Please consider your gifts to the offering to help support more church planters like the Toveys. For more information and resources to promote the offering, visit [bscm.org/smo](http://bscm.org/smo).

## Building A Legacy

August 31, 2016 | by Staff



**CLIO, MI** – The First Baptist Church of Clio was started in the 1950's, and has a long history of ministry in the state of Michigan. The church had reached an attendance of 500 or more over the years, and sponsored the starting of many of the churches of northern Michigan. It was a church that had a long historical legacy, but over time First Baptist lost it's way. Time has a way of doing that if we aren't careful.

Two years ago, FBC Clio had fallen to just 20 people on a typical Sunday. The remaining members had come to the point where it looked like they would not be able to afford to keep the doors open much longer. Longtime member, Tom Yost said, "When we first joined First Baptist in the 70's, the church was vibrant, but over the years it has aged and not gracefully." At that time, this last remnant made a bold choice, and voted to become a legacy church. That meant that the leadership would turn over control of the church to a group made of representatives of the association and Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM).

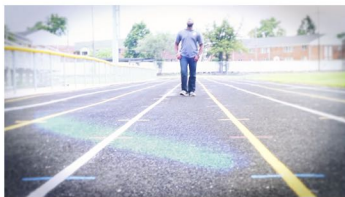
That group led the church through an 18 month process of preparing itself to become a church replant. A church replant is when an existing church seeks a do-over of sorts in order to find new life and bring in new families. Genesee Baptist Association Director of Missions, Jim Marcus says, "By doing this, they were not just gaining the resources of the association, but also from the North American Mission Board (NAMB), and the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM)."

Now, First Baptist Clio has called a new pastor, John Bordeau, who was also selected by NAMB as a church replanter. Bordeau says, "I see this awesome support system (GBA, NAMB and BSCM), and they want to see a church grow. They want to see people come to Christ, and I absolutely love that heart that I have found here." So now, FBC Clio is launching into a new chapter of its long history, and building on the legacy that was already there. Longtime member Yost says, "We have this beacon right in the center of Clio, and if we could have that light shine that would be fantastic."

The 2016 goal for the "Sharing the Light" State Mission Offering is \$90,000. Please consider your gifts to the offering to help support more churches like FBC Clio. For more information and resources to promote the offering, visit [bscm.org/smo](http://bscm.org/smo).

## Uncovering The Hurt

August 31, 2016 | by Staff



**DETROIT, MI** – Victory Fellowship Community Church and Pastor Darryl Gaddy are reaching their part of a very tough area of Detroit. Gaddy says, "We've been challenged to have a broken heart over the broken walls of cities like Detroit. The way that we try to reach this community is, by first of all, being the hands and feet of God to them."

In addition to his role as pastor, Gaddy also serves as a church planter catalyst for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan (BSCM). For nearly two years, Gaddy has been mentoring Stephan Murphy to be a church planter with Victory Fellowship as his sponsor. So it was surprising to many when Gaddy and Murphy began to plan to start a new church not in another one of the economically hard hit areas of Detroit, but in Madison Heights, a more well-off suburb. Gaddy says, "The folks in the surrounding cities of Detroit need the gospel as much as the folks right here in the city. When you move out into the suburban communities it doesn't look as tough. And that's because they have the resources to hide the hurt that looks bad here in the city."

Madison Heights is the community where Murphy graduated from high school, and currently coaches a high school track team. Murphy says, "My life has become intertwined with the Madison Heights community, and so the Lord said, 'Why not Madison Heights?' Murphy and Gaddy are taking the opportunity to model the call to plant churches in Michigan regardless of the circumstances or challenges. Gaddy adds, "We need to be sharing and showing that light across our communities, across our state of Michigan." With the assistance of the Frances Brown State Missions Offering Gaddy and Murphy will continue punching holes in the darkness.

The 2016 goal for the "Sharing the Light" State Mission Offering is \$90,000. Please consider your gifts to the offering to help support more church planters like Stephan Murphy. For more information and resources to promote the offering, visit [bscm.org/smo](http://bscm.org/smo).



## Personal Invitation From Dr. Tim Patterson

August 31, 2016



Mark Twain said that he could live a whole week on just one compliment. That is because encouragement is the energy of life and it is just a fact of life, that we all need encouragement to keep us energized.

This year's annual meeting of the BSCM will be one of those places where you can get energized. A place where you can get refueled and filled. You will be encouraged to discover that our concerted efforts as a state convention is making a difference in Michigan and beyond as we together punch holes in the darkness.

You will hear reports from the various ministries that we support and you will hear the testimonies of changed lives and churches. There will be music and worship that touches your heart and moves your soul. And of course there will be preaching and teaching from God's Word by great preachers that will be life changing.

I promise this will NOT be some boring business meeting where we drone on and on about nickels and noses. We will inform you of those things but most of all you will be encouraged in your walk and work for the Father.

This is going to be fun. This is going to be inspiring. This is going to be encouraging. I look forward to seeing you there.

In Him,  
Tim

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tim Patterson is Executive Director/Treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. Elected unanimously in May of 2015, Patterson formerly served for 9 years as pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. He also served as trustee chair and national mobilizer for the North American Mission Board.

## Affton Replant Reclaims Its Community

August 31, 2016 | by Karen L. Willoughby

AFFTON, MO (BP) – An interim pastor told the dwindling, aging congregation he was to help "transition," that First Baptist Church of Affton was on its death journey. He showed them the statistics, demographics, and physically less-able status of members mostly in their 70s and beyond, and, "We told him we weren't just going to roll over and play dead," said Bill Wright, 72 and chairman of the deacons. But the church did die -- intentionally -- and on Easter, a new church was born.



An enthusiastic group of students greets Jason Helmbacher when he teaches English in Sarajevo, Bosnia, each summer, building on relationships that have continually grown since Helmbacher and his family lived there in 2008–2010. (Photo courtesy of the Church at Affton)

Affton is an unincorporated urban community eight miles southwest of the Gateway Arch memorial in St. Louis, Mo., and within the I-270/255 beltway that defines the metro area. St. Louis is known for the multiplicity of cultures within its beltway, including, since the late 1990s, about 70,000 Bosnians, a Muslim people group that worldwide is less than .01 percent evangelized. The heavily-traveled intersection the church sits on is the center of the Bosnian community in St. Louis. "Their presence is reflective of the diversity in St. Louis," said Jason Helmbacher, called as pastor of First Baptist Church of Affton, and now planter of Church at Affton. "First Baptist Affton had become an isolated island in a sea of incredible change. What became clear was that First Affton could not continue as it was."

He told the congregation he had a different perspective than that of the interim who had heard the church's death rattle. "Jesus said He would build His church, and the gates of hell could never prevail against it," the planter/pastor explained. "The church can't die. The church is a people, not a place; a body, not a building. But what can -- and sometimes must -- die are institutions, organizations, forms and structures." The First Affton congregation had a choice to make. Did they want to continue their steadily-shrinking status quo in the face of a continually changing community, or did they want to be Jesus' hands, feet, arms and heart to whoever lived in Affton?

"We aren't the same thing with new packaging," Helmbacher said. "This was by no means simply a rebranding. Starting Easter, I transitioned from pastor to church planter and our members from consumers of our religious goods and services to church planting team." The replant utilized the same debt-free building, now cleaned and moving toward a complete remodel, with internal change the most obvious difference. "That was one of the hardest things in the world for us to take," Deacon Wright said. "Pastor Jason told us for this church to go forward, you're going to have to accept some things you don't agree with, and that one little thing said a lot to me.... If we're going to save this ministry on this corner, then we're going to have to change. 'I have a good friend at church who is 80,' Wright continued. "When he heard this he said, 'I'm in. I'm all in. Whatever it takes.' That's the attitude that was the ripple effect that went through our congregation."



## Affton Replant Reclaims Its Community (continued)



More than two hundred people Easter Sunday attended the official launch of Church at Affton, in a building that previously housed First Baptist Church of Affton. (Photo courtesy of the Church at Affton)

About 50,000 people live within a two-mile radius of the campus that has a building complex dating to the 1940s, and that as recently as the 1980s saw some 400 people in Sunday morning worship. "We are longing to see something exciting here," said Helmbacher, who became pastor in August 2015. "Whatever the Lord does, it will grow from the soil of that desire to see the Gospel pressed out at whatever the cost. The real miracle here is the willingness of this remnant to 'die' in order to bear fruit." That desire grew as church members individually changed. "The first six months -- September to March -- was about us," Wright said. "As we got our hearts in the right place, we had a free garage sale and hauled off dumpsters of stuff."

"We couldn't have done it without the Lord, and without generous partnering churches," Wright noted. "You could see His hand in everything we were doing." Jeanette Grider, among the youngest members of Church at Affton at 62, explained her understanding of the decline at First Affton. "I think so many times we, churches as a whole, become all about us," Grider said. "We did a lot of good work in the community but didn't open our heart to the people. When the interim said, 'I'm here to help you shut things down,' that sparked something in us. "A whole lot of people said, 'No! We're not dead! We can make a difference in this community,'" Grider continued. "People are going to know about us in the best possible way, and Jesus is going to shine through."

Helmbacher led the congregation through six aspects of rebirth: Gospel reading, praying, inviting, engaging, changing and giving. "It wasn't about changing the name and the wrapping," the pastor said. "It was about us changing. Unless our heart changes, nothing changes. We'll keep doing the same thing. "My heart was to see this people revived in their souls," Helmbacher said. "I committed to leading them to become a church planting team."

When told a huge dumpster would be dropped off for everything that needed to be thrown away, consternation arose among people reared in a "save everything" era. So Helmbacher took the congregation -- even those with walkers and canes -- on a tour of the church one Wednesday evening. "This is a huge facility that had been neglected many years," Helmbacher said. "I took them through every room and junk-filled nook. We even walked down through the baptistery filled with dirt and grime because it hadn't been used in so long."

By New Year's, First Affton had died. By Easter, Church at Affton was born. More than 200 people participated in the resurrection celebration. "The team is encouraged," Helmbacher said. "There were a lot of questions but Easter was a big encouragement. Now to maintaining that enthusiasm, maintaining that continued desire to be changed, to be used by God, being engaged with the Gospel, that's what's next. "Our people are the front door of the church," the pastor continued. "We're going to have to live intentionally for the King of Kings."

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karen L. Willoughby is a national correspondent for Baptist Press and SBC LIFE, where this article first appeared.



## One Year, One Body, One Lord

August 31, 2016 | by Ian Minielly

**IRONWOOD, MI** – By the time this is published, Catalyst Baptist Church will have existed in Ironwood for thirteen months. We had our first service August 3rd 2015 and celebrated one year in operation July 31st 2016. A lot happened in that year, some seen, most not, but we are here and gaining strength. We are not an island; we are part of the Upper Peninsula Association of Southern Baptists, and the westernmost SBC church in Michigan. I like to think Catalyst is planted at the starting point, not the most distant. It is just a small change in perspective!

Our first service consisted of seven people, three of which were from Tecumseh Missionary Baptist Church (TMBC) while the other four were family. We baptized two last fall and by the end of 2015 we were hosting seven to ten people every Sunday. By our anniversary in July after three more baptisms, we were running a consistent fifteen with as many as twenty, but closer to thirty if everyone showed up. Wouldn't it be great if everyone showed up every Sunday! As it is, I wait every Sunday morning to see which 10-15 will show. I am still struggling how to rectify this; maybe you have an idea?

Our association has helped many times and we have not missed a single meeting. I look forward to association meetings and seeing my fellow shepherds. One of the reasons I elected to stay in the convention and not strike out as an independent, was the value I placed on being a part of a bigger group of churches with like beliefs. There is strength in numbers. I have not regretted it one time.

We were blessed to host the Executive Director Tim Patterson for our annual spring association meeting. I suspect we are probably the smallest church he has visited since coming to Michigan, but I am not sure about that. For most of the association it was the first time visiting Catalyst. Here is what they saw at that meeting, the faithful implementation of many blessings. Our chairs and soundboard are from Abundant Life, Menominee. Our furniture, shelves, and printer are complements of the faithfulness of TMBC and its members and our decorations and walls are complements of First Baptist, Gwinn. We are the sum of our parts, just like Paul wrote in Ephesians 4: 4-7.





## One Year, One Body, One Lord (continued)



If you looked closely at Catalyst, you would see a storefront church that is one year old. Inside you would see a new group of believers, part of an association, bound to a state, comprising a convention that has all agreed there is only one Lord and way to eternal life with a commission from God himself to share the Gospel. We may be at the westernmost edge of Michigan, but we are a vibrant church punching holes in the darkness while winning souls for Jesus. Thank you Baptist State Convention of Michigan, my wife and I love it here and you can take solace in knowing the welcome we received by Michigan Baptists dwarfs anything we would have received in the south.

Please join us in Spirit by praying for more church planters to hear the call and come to Michigan. I speak from experience, there is no place I would have rather gone, and the world was our oyster to choose from. Thank you Michigan, and thank you Jesus for bringing us here.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Minielly is the pastor/church planter at Catalyst Baptist Church in Ironwood, MI.

## Girls Mission Camp: An Amazing Race

August 31, 2016 | by Sue Hodnett

**ROSCOMMON, MI** – On Monday morning, July 11th more than 20 women leaders prepared the courses and finalized the routes for an amazing “Run the Race” Girls’ Missions Camp week. By midafternoon, parents had finished dropping their runners (campers) off at the starting gate in their respective lanes (cabins). The list of runners totaled 108 excited participants, representing several churches in all of our 14 Michigan Associations.

A year’s worth of planning had all come down to this long anticipated moment, the start of the “Race”. “On your marks, get set... GO!” Runners were ready for a challenging, spiritually awakening experience that would provide a life changing mile marker for many. By Monday evening the Runners were off and moving at a great pace. The girls got acquainted with their coaches and teammates for the week. A station break at the camp ground pavilion offered a great cookout meal and fellowship time.

Fitbits would continue to rack up the miles as the rest of the week would move runners into exploratory Bible studies, moving worship services, and engaging missionary lessons. One of Michigan’s own missionaries, Mrs. Sharon Hessling, who served in West Africa with the International Mission Board was the guest missionary for the week. Hessling shared with the girls her heart for missions, told stories of her work in North Africa, and offered opportunities for cultural experiences. Tasting foods, drinking tea and dressing in native outfits became unforgettable moments for the girls.

On one leg of the race, Hessling challenged the Runners as she virtually took them down the “Dusty Dirt Road”. She stressed the importance of training well in the Word of God, and being ready to choose to say, “Okay God I’m ready.” “Run, (insert your name) Run”, God is with you whenever you are going in His will! Finishing the challenge with, “when you allow God to step in, you will always win!”

Developing strengths in the Runners was a high priority of the camp environment. Building on team spirit was an important quality that was encouraged as the Runners trained in canoeing, paddle boating, swimming, volleyball and mini-golf. Home cooking skills, sewing, and crafting were opportunities for hands on projects. Archery, fishing and a guided hike through the woods with the Department of Natural Resources officer gave girls a first time chance to experience the northern Michigan outdoors at a new level.

Preparing future leaders for a mission lifestyle was the overall objective of the camp experience. This race would not be completed until the Runners maneuvered through the obstacle course of the Missions Celebration. Each team put what they had learned all week into practice, and held a Missions Celebration to share with compassion their love for each other. As many were about to “hit the wall”, encouraging teammates would continue to cheer them on to be all they could be, as we serve together.

A missions offering totaling \$500.00 was collected for The Bridge Gathering Church, a church plant in Port Huron, MI and Sarnia, Ontario. Warren & Sharon Hessling are on the core leadership team of The Bridge Gathering. As the runners approached the race finish line, the most important leg of the race was before them. The opportunity to make a decision. The decision to accept Jesus into their heart was made by 8 of the girls. Several decisions of rededication and interest to serve in the mission field were also voiced.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sue Hodnett is the Women’s Ministry & WMU Consultant for the BSCM as well as the Executive Director for WMU of Michigan. She attends Lakepointe Church in Macomb, MI.

## God's Man As High Priest Of Home

August 31, 2016 | by Bryan L. Kent



**CALLING ALL MEN**  
Who are willing to stand with Jesus Christ,  
transforming their families, church  
and community with the Gospel!

**BSCM**

**GOD'S MAN:**  
*High Priest of His Home*  
Not a retreat but a call to action!

**2016 Fall  
Men's Conference**  
September 23-24, 2016

**Registration Begins  
July 1**  
[BSCM.org/Register](http://BSCM.org/Register)  
Click the button for Events at Bambi Lake

**Breakout Sessions and Activities**  
Worship  
Bonfire  
Prayer  
Hiking  
Fishing  
Sportsman Events

**Fees and Expenses**  
per person: includes meals,  
lodging and fees  
Single - \$103  
Double - \$93  
Triple - \$85  
Quad - \$81  
5 Max - \$78  
Dorm - \$76

For more information contact:  
**Bryan Kent**  
517.699.5433 or  
[Bryan@cedarstreetchurch.org](mailto:Bryan@cedarstreetchurch.org)

**National Facilitator for Prayer and Compassion Initiatives for the Mission America Coalition located in Palm Desert, CA**  
**GARY FROST**

**Senior Pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Battle Creek, MI recognized as a graceful navigator to families going through difficult times.**  
**ROY HENRY**

**Bambi Lake**  
BAPTIST RETREAT & CONFERENCE CENTER

**HOLT, MI** – The timeless solution for the problems of today: God's Man as the High Priest of his Home.

Everywhere you look you find people angry, hurting, lonely, and afraid. Political unrest prevails far beyond our own troubled republic. Racism, terrorism, globalism, and radical gender wars all compete for the top trend in social media or lead in the headlines. Where in the world do families and the Church turn for answers and stability in a world with constant cultural seismic shifts? We turn to men.

The answer for today's trouble is found in yesterday's unknown and unheralded efforts by simple men seeking to lead their families God's way. God's Word presents the clearest path for peace and stability in home and Church: Biblical men leading under the headship of Jesus Christ. We need to revisit and recapture this model now more than ever, and that is the plan. Make plans now to join men from around the state at the 2016 Men's Fall Conference at Bambi Lake Conference Center. The theme will be "God's Man: High Priest of His Home." The purpose will be to lay out a clear and simple roadmap for men of all ages to embrace and make evident in their homes and Churches.

There will be Biblical preaching from Dr. Gary Frost and Pastor Roy Henry. As well, attendees will have the option to select practical breakout sessions aimed at equipping men to live out their High Priesthood each day. Each session will be filled with great hymns and praise songs lead by the Cedar Street Church "Veritas Band," along with times of prayer, testimony, and celebration. Come up early and stay late to enjoy great fishing, playing cards, hiking, and mini-golf. This Friday night through Saturday afternoon conference is power-packed with relevant teaching, singing, fellowship, and adventure. Moreover, attendees will get back just in time to enjoy worship with their Church family on Sunday, they will be hard pressed to find a better value in the midst of their busy schedule.

2016 Fall Men's Conference, September 23rd-24th. Register now at [bscm.org/register](http://bscm.org/register). Click on the button to "Register for Bambi Lake Events".

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bryan Kent has served as the Associate Pastor of Adults at Cedar Street Church, Holt, MI, since September 2010 focusing primarily on Small Groups and Discipleship. Bryan is a 2008 graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is currently completing his Church Consultation Certification. Bryan is married to Tonia Kent (homemaker) and has three beautiful girls, Caroline (15), Mikayla (13), and Gracie (11).



## "Sharing The Light" Together!

August 31, 2016 | by Sue Hodnett

**IRONWOOD, MI** – Virtual Prayer Walk / Mission Trip going to the uttermost parts of Michigan! After crossing over the "Mighty Mac" (Mackinac Bridge), westward through the U.P. (Upper Peninsula), along the shores of the Great Lakes, bypassing historical lighthouses, pausing cruise control through small towns and searching National Forrest's for the indigenous Bigfoot, our mission teams arrived in the City of Ironwood. Catalyst Baptist Church in Ironwood is 2 miles east of the Michigan Upper Peninsula Wisconsin border. Pastor Ian & Stephanie Minielly are North American Mission Board Church Planters in Ironwood, a community of about 6,000 people. The nearest Michigan Baptist church is more than a 2 hours drive away.

On Saturday, August 13th, Pastor Ian and Stephanie's Michigan Baptist brothers and sisters were no longer over hundreds of miles away. Six mission teams combined to total over 30 people representing 6 Michigan Baptist churches came together to celebrate the 1 year anniversary of Catalyst Baptist Church at Historic Ironwood Depot Park. The 6 churches represented included, Catalyst Baptist in Ironwood, North End Baptist in Mt Morris, The Orchard Church in Traverse City, Lakepointe Church in Macomb, Potter's Wheel in Fenton, and First Baptist of Gwinn in Gwinn. The celebration included a Community Block Party with bounce houses, face painting, back-to-school backpacks loaded with supplies, snacks, hotdogs and water. Entertainment was proved by The Potter's Wheel Band, Fenton, MI.

This was Joshua Tyson a member of North End Baptist Church first mission trip, he said, "The experience at Ironwood's block party was incredible and rewarding. Giving out the backpacks was a blessing." More than 200 people from the community attended the Block Party. Contact cards were filled out and the data collected showed 74 families, 168 students, 75 adults were shown the love of Christ. 122 backpacks with supplies were given to elementary school children, 200 mission dolls and 200 water bottles were handed out. An awesome total of 34 people requested a follow up contact from Pastor Ian.

"God honored the prayers and hard work of Michigan Baptists by flooding Depot Park with over 200 people. Last year we drew 17. If that is not a blessing by God I don't know what is." Ian Minielly, NAMB Church Planter, Pastor of Catalyst Baptist Church. "Isn't it amazing how God brings people together from all walks of life, with different backgrounds and gifting, from different places of birth etc., to converge in one focused place and effort for the sake of the gospel message!" Marc Burnett, Senior Pastor, Potter's Wheel, Fenton, MI.

For two days prior to the Block Party, mission teams prayer walked and engaged with people in several neighborhoods of the surrounding community. Knocking on doors and sharing flyers announcing the block party in the park. The team had several opportunities to stop and pray for special needs with families. One family was in need of a staircase off the back of the home for added safety for the children. As the team began to pray it was impressed upon their hearts to meet that need. Chuck Danzer, North End Baptist Church, Mt. Morris, put his carpentry skills to work and completed a set of steps for the family. Afterwards, he said, "There were blessings beyond expectations!"

There were many opportunities to pray with and hear the hearts of Pastor Ian and his wife Stephanie. It was very obvious that God had called them to Ironwood and that they have a passion for the people of Ironwood and want to share the Hope of Christ with as many as they can. "I really enjoyed being a part of the mission trip to Ironwood. God greatly blessed our time there. We felt the Lord's presence and loved getting to know Pastor Ian. We'll continue to pray for his ministry there." Carolyn Stephens, North End Baptist Church, Mt. Morris. Prayer walking offered the mission teams many engagement opportunities. A single mom with three children shared her story of being homeless and had just been able to find a home for her family. A team member noticed that the children all had snow boots on in the middle of August. That soon charged and the little boy was heard saying, "You are the nicest lady ever, Thank you!" "Look how high I can jump now!" "I saw God's light and love in the actions of the team that served the community of Ironwood. The greater thing, though, was seeing that light reflected in the faces of those whose needs we met – not just basic needs for school supplies or food or the like – but the need for love. So many of them feel forgotten and invisible, beaten down by life. God used our team to be his hands and feet to remind them they are still seen. It was a humbling privilege to be used by God in this way." Andra Williams, The Orchard Church, Traverse City.

This Prayer Walking Mission Trip was captured and shared by the WMU of Michigan Team as a virtual FaceBook event. More than 60 Michigan Baptist joined the team virtually over the 5 day trip, viewing video posts, pictures and writing in prayers as the mission team served in the community of Ironwood. The event page is still available for viewing from the Women's Ministry & WMU Mission Education Facebook page.

Chuck Turner, President of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, joined the virtual prayer walk and shared this, "I have been blessed as I have participated in this virtual prayer walk. I continued to praise God for what He accomplished through the efforts of many. Thank you."

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sue Hodnett is the Women's Ministry & WMU Consultant for the BSCM as well as the Executive Director for WMU of Michigan. She attends Lakepointe Church in Macomb, MI.

## It's Time To Pray

August 31, 2016 | by Jim Glidewell



**PORTAGE, MI** – Because of the spiritual climate of our country Franklin Graham is leading Prayer Rallies on state capitol grounds throughout 2016. The Rallies extend a challenge to Christians across our land to boldly live out their faith and to pray fervently and faithfully for our nation. In each rally Franklin shares the Gospel and invites a personal response. During the first 32 state stops more than 150,000 from across denominations have gathered for Decision America Tour Prayer Rallies. There have been over 1,000 who have made decisions for Christ.

On Tuesday, October 4th, Franklin will be leading a Decision America Tour Prayer Rally on the capitol steps in Lansing. The Rally will provide the body of Christ, the opportunity to stand together in our allegiance, not to a political party but to Almighty God. I hope you will come and bring your church body. It is important that we pray and not just talk about praying. It is important that we pray together. My church must pray, Michigan Southern Baptists must pray. But more than that the body of Christ in Michigan must come together and pray. It is important that we stand together before the Throne of Grace in full view of our nation that is living in such darkness.

The presidential campaign is in full swing. There is no real ground for hope in political parties or campaign promises. But there is real hope in our promise keeping God. It's time to pray.

Join fellow Christ followers from across Michigan.

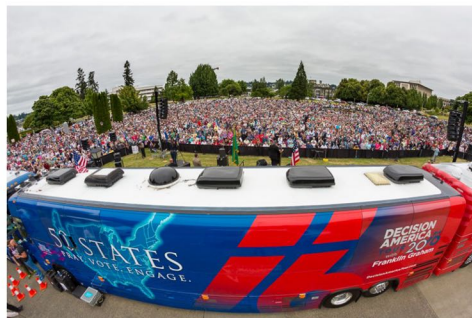
**When:** Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at 12:00 p.m.

**Where:** on the Capitol East Steps at 100 N Capitol Ave in Lansing.

For more information, visit: [DecisionAmericaTour.com/tour/michigan](http://DecisionAmericaTour.com/tour/michigan)

To involve your church and volunteer to serve, visit: [DecisionAmericaTour.com/get-involved](http://DecisionAmericaTour.com/get-involved)

PRAY. VOTE. ENGAGE.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jim Glidewell is the Michigan Field Rep for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He works with My Hope and the Decision America Tour. He is also the pastor of Amazing Grace Baptist Fellowship and serves as Associational Missionary for South Central Baptist Association. Jim retired from the North American Mission Board in 2011 having served in Michigan and Ontario, Canada.



## Prayer Link Chicago

August 31, 2016 | by Staff

### A Great Commission Prayer Experience



**CHICAGO, IL** – You are invited to SBC PrayerLink in Chicago, Illinois on October 7, 2016. Don't miss this important gathering! We are believing God for a strategic and transforming prayer experience as we join our hearts to seek His face! The date is fast approaching. We are excited about praying for awakening in our nation, and experiencing a work of God in our midst!

Are you planning to attend? It is not too late. Make your plans now? If you are planning to participate please RSVP at [www.eventbrite.com/e/prayerlink-tickets-25803943289](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/prayerlink-tickets-25803943289). Your participation is vitally important. Come, join us on our knees before God.

"Ten: Twenty: Thirty—a Great Commission Prayer Experience" will be hosted by SBC PrayerLink. This will be a corporate prayer experience with other prayer leaders from across the greater Chicago area joining with others from across the nation. This Prayer Experience begins at 9:00am until 5:15pm and will be centered on the outline of Acts 1:8. SBC PrayerLink is being held in conjunction with the State Leaders and Prayer Coordinators gathering at Broadview Missionary Baptist Church located at 2100 S 25th Ave, Broadview, IL 60155. The meetings will be held over a four day period beginning on October 5 and running through October 9, 2016. The day of prayer is only one of the experiences planned during this time.

Need hotel accommodations? Please reserve lodging for PrayerLink Chicago at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites O'Hare at 6600 N. Mannheim Road Rosemont, IL 60018 by [clicking here](#) or call toll free reservations at 877-408-9681. Please use the group code "PRA" when making all reservations. Reservation Deadline is September 21, 2016. Complimentary shuttle service will be provided from Holiday Inn Express and Suites O'Hare at 8:00 am on this Friday morning.

We look forward to you joining us for this amazing day in October. Please join us in prayer that the Lord will do a fresh work in our midst!

## Surge Camp

August 31, 2016 | by Garth Leno

**WINDSOR, ON** – Mission teams from across the US partnered with The Gathering to host three weeks of SURGE Camp. SURGE camps focus on the areas of sports and the arts as a tool to help the church reach into it's community in Windsor, Ontario. There were a total of three weeks of camps that included sports coaching and instruction in the areas of activities like baking, woodworking, art, and karate. Mission teams from Springfield, TN, Juliet, TN, and Wilmington, NC joined with members of The Gathering to host the camps.



Pastor Garth Leno said, "As the children were submerged in the Word of God throughout the week, it became evident to us that the Holy Spirit was at work. By the end of week three, we witnessed several children trust in Christ for eternal life! We are now following up with their parents and talking to a few about water baptism."

During the first week of camps in downtown Windsor, a number of Muslim families were among the participants in the camp. Garth asks for Michigan Baptists to pray with and for The Gathering for a great in-gathering of people for the Kingdom.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Garth Leno is senior pastor at The Gathering in Windsor, Ontario. You can find out more information about Pastor Leno and the church at [www.thegathering.com](http://www.thegathering.com).



## 'Can These Bones Live?' Motorcycle Event

August 31, 2016 | by Darrel Manuel

**ROSCOMMON, MI** – This month Bambi Lake will host its first-ever motorcycle event on September 16th-18th! It will be a time of renewal and refreshing. It will be a great time to unite together in the beautiful surroundings God created at Bambi Lake. Everyone is welcome no matter what or if you ride. The theme is "Can These Bones Live?" based on Ezekiel 37:1-14. God tells the dry bones to hear the word of the Lord. The bones pull together with muscle, flesh, and breath and begin to live. That's something only God can do in our lives. Join us for some bone refreshing in the Lord.

There will also be a color ride of cruising Northern Michigan's great scenery at such a perfect time of the year. Registration is open now. Go to [bambilake.campbrainregistration.com](http://bambilake.campbrainregistration.com) or call (989) 275-5844 or check out the event page on Facebook at [facebook.com/mrbcfaihriders/events](https://facebook.com/mrbcfaihriders/events)



**BAMBI LAKE FALL BIKER RETREAT**  
September 16th-18th

Everyone Welcome!  
Music, food, fellowship,

**"can these bones live?"** Ezekiel 37

Color tours.  
Relaxation, renewal.

To sign up go to:  
[www.bambilake.campbrainregistration.com](http://www.bambilake.campbrainregistration.com)  
Or Call (989) 275-5844

3468 E Robinson Lake Rd, Roscommon, MI 48653

### Registration is now open!

The pricing for 4 meals and 2 nights lodging at Bambi Lake:

1 per room = \$122  
2 per room = \$102  
3 per room = \$86  
4 per room = \$78  
5 per room = \$72  
Dorm/Pinegrove = \$70  
Camping = \$82 w/ meals  
Camping = \$58 w/out meals

Price per person includes dinner Friday, & Saturday and Breakfast Saturday & Sunday, a commemorative t-shirt and choice of 2 really cool color tours on Saturday, plus guest speakers and great fellowship! For more information about the event, you can also contact Darrel Manuel at [ChaplainD13@gmail.com](mailto:ChaplainD13@gmail.com). For more information about Bambi Lake Baptist Retreat and Conference Center, visit [bscm.org/bambi](http://bscm.org/bambi).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Darrel Manuel was born and raised in Michigan, graduated Garden City High School in 1986, married my beautiful wife Theresa in the fall of 1994, I have 2 sons one 20 and one 17. Employee of Ford Mo.Co. (Millwright). Saved and baptized in the spring of 2001 at 32 years of age, at Merriman Road Baptist Church, served in many capacities within the church, currently youth worker, and Chaplain/Director of the MRBC F.A.I.T.H. Riders Chapter, Commissioned as a SBC Chaplain in 2010, I'm a LifeChangers board member, Mayors Committee for Underprivileged Children board member, Ride for Kids Task Force Member, Wolverine State Victory Riders Victory Motorcycle Club Chaplain, Bambi Lake advisory team member.

## SBDR Deploying 4 Kitchens To South Louisiana

August 31, 2016 | by Joe Conway

**ALPHARETTA, GA (BP)** – The death toll in south Louisiana's unprecedented flooding has risen to 11, and at least 40,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed. In response, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) is deploying volunteers, equipment and resources to the affected area, including four kitchens in Baton Rouge, Hammond, Lafayette and Walker. The American Red Cross has requested four kitchens which each have capacity of 10,000 meals per day. All four DR teams deploying have twice that capacity. Additional support is expected given the scope of the disaster and the long-term nature of the relief work to be accomplished.

"The spring floods in Louisiana this year affected 10,000 homes, and the response duration was 80-90 days," said David Melber, vice president for Send Relief at the North American Mission Board (NAMB). "Currently we are estimating as many 50,000 affected homes and a much longer response." The four kitchens will be staffed by SBDR volunteers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. Alabama SBDR, like many states, is preparing for the response and will be sending volunteers and at least one shower unit.



DR loading truck for Baton Rouge, Louisiana flooding. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer Ron Monson loads supplies that will aid flood survivors in Louisiana onto a truck at the North American Mission Board warehouse. Some south Louisiana residents have compared the magnitude and scope of the flood devastation to Hurricane Katrina. Rebuild is expected to take years. Monson is a member of First Baptist Church, Cumming Ga. (Photo by John Swain/NAMB)



DR loading truck for Baton Rouge, Louisiana flooding. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer Matthew Kinnard helps prepare a shipment of supplies headed from the warehouse of the North American Mission Board to field operations in Louisiana in response to massive flooding in the southern part of the state. Southern Baptists will have four kitchens operational in the state this week. (Photo by John Swain/NAMB)

"We have multiple states getting mobilized at this point," Melber said. "The four key meal preparation areas will be located at Baptist churches, including Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Woodlawn Park Baptist Church in Hammond, The Bayou Church in Lafayette and Walker Baptist Church in Walker. Additionally, we have 16 other Baptist churches set up as defined worksites." First Baptist Church in Livingston will host the Incident Command Center. Louisiana Baptist Convention state SBDR director Gibbie McMillan is directing the state's response. Arkansas SBDR is providing an Incident Command team to help coordinate relief efforts.

"Eddie Blackmon from NAMB's SBDR team is already at the American Red Cross headquarters in Baton Rouge," said Mickey Caison, executive director for SBDR at NAMB. "There were reports of 280 road closures and some recues still occurring yesterday. This is going to be a long-term response, and the water has yet to recede." Caison said some south Louisiana residents have compared the magnitude and scope of the devastation to Hurricane Katrina. He said he expects the long-term nature of the rebuild to take years.



## SBDR Deploying 4 Kitchens To South Louisiana (continued)

"We are, of course, still serving in West Virginia, and there are 5,000 homes to restore there," Caison said. "This is a marathon, not a sprint. The amount and type of responses we have already experienced this year have been taxing on disaster relief funds. People have been generous, but we will need a tremendous amount of support to address the recovery in south Louisiana." "Almost immediately starting tomorrow, we will be bringing our Emergency Response Vehicles, our ERVs, will start going into neighborhoods and distributing food and will continue that for a long time," Craig Cooper told Lake Charles' KPLC TV on Wednesday (Aug. 17). Cooper is coordinating the American Red Cross response in Baton Rouge.

"One of our partners is the Southern Baptists," Cooper said. "If you remember, after Katrina, Ike and other disasters, the

Southern Baptists are contracted to set up these massive mobile kitchens. They are four or five semi-trucks, and they pop up like a kid's Transformer toy and produce the food that will feed a very large crowd." Melber and Caison will be in Louisiana late this week for a site visit as SBDR volunteers begin the task of assessment. The four kitchens are expected to be operational by Thursday (Aug. 18).

Those wishing to donate to SBDR relief can contact the Baptist convention in their state or visit [donations.namb.net/dr-donations](http://donations.namb.net/dr-donations). For phone donations, call 1-866-407-NAMB (6262) or mail checks to NAMB, P.O. Box 116543, Atlanta, GA 30368-6543. Designate checks for "Disaster Relief." NAMB coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state Disaster Relief ministries.

Southern Baptists have 65,000 trained volunteers -- including chaplains -- and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chainsaw, mud-out, command, communication, child care, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild and power generation. SBDR is one of the three largest mobilizers of trained disaster relief volunteers in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.



Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Kitchen set up and ready to serve. (NAMB Stock Image)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Joe Conway writes for the North American Mission Board.

## 3,202 Decisions For Christ Reported In Brazil

August 31, 2016 | by Will Hall

**BELO HORIZONTE, BRAZIL (BP)** – Southern Baptists returning from Belo Horizonte, Brazil, are sharing testimonies of widespread revival in churches, communities, prisons and schools, following an 8-day schedule of crusades, medical ministries and other outreach efforts in this South American country. Wayne Jenkins, director of evangelism and church growth for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said there were a recorded 3,202 salvation decisions resulting from events conducted July 10-17.

"God did exceedingly above all that we could think or ask," Jenkins said. "Even working for the first time with this Brazilian association, the way was smooth in constructing three church buildings in five business days and reaching the number of people who came to know Christ, especially in some difficult areas. "Moreover, the Gospel was received by every age group and social class," he added. "On top of that," Jenkins noted, "it is remarkable to think that Burl Cain was given favor, in such a short amount of time, in lining up the three entities in the country needed to get permission to replicate in a Brazilian federal prison the same spiritual and moral rehabilitation program we have in Angola." Cain served as warden of the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola for 21 years before retiring in 2016.

In 1995, he initiated a four-year college degree program at the prison -- with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary -- which is now being reproduced around the United States because of its success in the moral rehabilitation of its graduates. Jenkins coordinated the mission trip, his 25th to Brazil with the Louisiana Baptist Convention but the first time to work in Belo Horizonte. He was joined by 60 Louisiana Baptists representing 10 congregations, and another 37 Southern Baptists from Utah, Texas, North Carolina, Florida and California.

### Testimonials

Mission team members shared a number of compelling reports about individuals who responded positively to the presentation of the Gospel in Brazil.

### Stones will cry out



Carlos Meza, pastor of Calvary Spanish Mission Church in Shreveport, used a store mannequin in a town near Belo Horizonte, Brazil, to catch the attention of a passer-by in order to share the Gospel -- and the young man gave his heart to Christ. (Photo courtesy BaptistMessage.com)

Carlos Meza, pastor of Calvary Spanish Mission Church in Shreveport, and his wife Lupe told the Baptist Message the mission trip was "exciting and memorable" even though it was his 16th outreach in Brazil and her ninth. He said one of the highlights of the trip "was using a mannequin" to lead a young man to the Lord while conducting street evangelism in a small village.

"I started 'witnessing' to the mannequin using an evangelism tract," in order to attract the attention of passers-by, Meza said. "A young man stopped and said, 'Mister that mannequin can't talk or read,' and I asked him if he could," Meza explained. "When he said, 'Of course I can,' I handed him the tract, he read it and after a brief explanation of the Gospel he said, 'I believe every word the tract says' and he surrendered his life to Christ!" "Yes, God can use a mannequin to lead someone to His kingdom. To God be the Glory!" Meza exclaimed.

### Every tongue confess

His wife Lupe was a member of the medical services team which included a pediatrician, ophthalmology staff and a physician and nurse, as well as

other volunteers. She said a particularly special blessing was sharing the Gospel with an "18-year-old girl from Bolivia." "It was so unusual to witness to someone in Spanish while in Brazil," where Portuguese is the official language, Lupe Meza said.

"She was so young, and it was apparent she had been influenced by the Jehovah's Witnesses," Meza observed. "I felt I had to be gentle, so as not to frighten her or make her feel like I was being pushy." The girl had a blank look early on, Meza shared. But after carefully explaining about Jesus as the Son of God, "she accepted Christ, and she was at church service Sunday night!"

### Blind shall see

In all, the medical outreach effort responded to the health needs of nearly 700 community members, Monday through Friday, including free prescription eyeglasses for about 350 individuals with vision problems. But team members also inquired about the spiritual condition of everyone who came to the clinic and 106 were recorded as professing Christ as Lord.



## 3,202 Decisions For Christ Reported In Brazil (continued)

Sue Johns, a member of First Baptist Church in Graceville, Fla., who came with her son, Brent Johns, administrative and discipleship pastor at First Baptist Church in Houma, La., was one of several volunteers with the ophthalmology team who helped fit individuals with eyeglasses -- matching right and left eye measurements for near and far vision, astigmatism, as well as reading clarity.



A church helper and a volunteer interpreter react with tears of joy upon learning an elderly woman could now see with the help of donated prescription eyeglasses fitted by Sue Johns, a member of First Baptist Church in Graceville, Florida, and mother of Brent Johns, administrative and discipleship pastor at First Baptist Church in Houma. (Photo courtesy BaptistMessage.com)

Johns said two older patients stood out in her mind. A 72-year-old man had heard the Gospel several times during his visit to the eye clinic, and while waiting for Johns to find a pair of glasses

which matched his vision needs, "he came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit" and began singing a hymn, Johns said. "He had fallen away from church for some time and I prayed with him to get right with God and get back into church."



Lupe Meza, a member of Calvary Spanish Mission Church in Shreveport, made use of her knowledge of Spanish in Portuguese-speaking Brazil to share about Jesus with a young Bolivian girl who was under the influence of Jehovah Witnesses. (Photo courtesy BaptistMessage.com)

During the Sunday night service he found me before the service to say "I am here," she added, and after the message, he went forward and "prayed to ask Christ to forgive his sins." Johns also told of a frail woman well past 80 years of age, who was almost blind and lived alone with her dog. "She was frequently falling because of her lack of vision and church members were worried about her," she said.

"We were able to find her some very strong prescription glasses," Johns recalled, "allowing her to see the top 3 lines on the eye chart and do close up reading. She came in unable to read at all and unable to see the chart. We were all very emotional when we saw that smile come on her face when she realized she could see."

### Captives set free

Tamarah Wales, who was raised at First Baptist Church in Lafayette and is a member at Family Life Church, Lafayette, served as a member of the street evangelism team which had a unique prison visit. Wales said they typically encounter "some difficulty" when they try to minister to inmates. "The warden and his assistant came out to talk to the team and just like at other facilities there was some reluctance to let us in," she explained. "But during the course of the conversation, we had the opportunity to share the Gospel with them and both trusted Christ."

"After that they allowed us to go to every area of the prison to talk with the prisoners," Wales said, adding, "and the warden and his assistant led the way. We witnessed almost 300 salvation decisions that day!"

### Bread of Life (& Gumbo)

June Charrier and Lisa Breau conducted a unique cooking ministry while in Brazil. Charrier, wife of church planter Louis Charrier, both members of Washington Baptist Church in Opelousas, and Breau, a member of First Baptist Church in Lafayette, provided a gumbo meal as an enticement for influential individuals -- who were unsaved and resistant to home visits or invitations to attend worship services -- to hear the Gospel.

Charrier mentioned in particular the meal at First Baptist Church in Veneza where 30 people had gathered for what was billed as "a Louisiana specialty prepared by Americans." "We cooked dinner and a dessert and shared a little bit about the history of gumbo and its origins with African slaves," she said. "After the meal the people listened to a message on 'Who needs Jesus'," she continued, "and they were given a chance to repent of their sins and submit their hearts and lives to Jesus as Lord."

When the prayer ended, Charrier said she looked up and four men had been saved -- a vice mayor, city attorney, well-known businessman and church "member" who had been the subject of many prayers by the congregation, according to the pastor. Breau summed up for both of them the joy they take away from their cooking ministry. "It reminds us a little gumbo goes a long way, even to eternity," she said.

## 3,202 Decisions For Christ Reported In Brazil (continued)

### Unfinished business

Jenkins said the group intends to return to Belo Horizonte next year to build on the work accomplished in 2016. "One of the Brazilian convention officials told us this region has more cities with fewer believers than cities in Saudi Arabia," Jenkins said, and he challenged Louisiana Baptists to consider joining the 2017 team that will be going there.

"There is a place for everyone," Jenkins said. "VBS teams, drama teams, construction teams, sports camp teams -- every member of a family can find a place to plug in and I want Louisiana Baptists to seriously pray about being part of this family mission trip. "Moreover, this is a great place to go for a first-time church mission trip," he said. "We have lodging in a safe place, and everyone is well-fed. But most importantly, this is the place where you can faithfully do the work of an evangelist and see growth and experience growth.

Gary and Darlene Maroney agreed. Gary is president of the Louisiana Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, a multi-state organization, and both are members of Eastside Baptist Church in New Braunfels, Texas. In a note to the Baptist Message, they jointly expressed strong sentiments about their experiences.

"There are so many people in bondage all over the world, and we were blessed to be a part of this team who diligently fulfilled their specific assignments and saw God work miracles in the lives of 3,202 people," they said. "We are confident that there were many more individuals who made decisions for Christ, but this 'Pentecost number' represents those whose names are recorded and will be followed up by the national pastors.

"Belo Horizonte means beautiful horizon," the Maroney's explained in closing. "We were so blessed to see the spiritual horizon that stretched across that city last week and know that we were used of God to witness such beauty!!"

For more coverage on this mission work in Brazil visit [BaptistMessage.com](http://BaptistMessage.com).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Will Hall is editor of the Baptist Message ([www.baptistmessage.com](http://www.baptistmessage.com)), newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

## 5 Facts About Boko Haram

August 31, 2016 | by Elizabeth Bristow

**NASHVILLE, TN** – The Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram has a new leader who has [vowed to bomb churches and kill Christians](#) while ending attacks on mosques and markets used by ordinary Muslims. Here are five facts you should know about one of Africa's most dangerous extremist groups:

1. Boko Haram is the Hausa language nickname for Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Congregation of the People of Tradition for Proselytism and Jihad). The nickname, which translates to "Western education is sinful," was given because of the group's initial focus on opposing Western education in African countries.

2. Founded in 2002, the terrorist group is comprised of radical Islamists who oppose both Westerners and "apostate" Muslims. Based in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger, the organization seeks to establish a "pure" Islamic state ruled by sharia law, putting a stop to what it deems "Westernization." Its followers are said to be influenced by the Koranic phrase which says: "Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors.

3. Despite the group's nickname, Boko Haram's agenda is much [broader than just education](#). The group promotes a version of radical Islam which makes it "haram", or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. This includes voting in elections, wearing shirts and trousers, or receiving a non-Muslim education.





## 5 Facts About Boko Haram (continued)

4. In 2009 the group launched military operation to create an Islamic state in Africa. The group carried out a [number of attacks](#) on police stations and other government buildings in Maiduguri. Nigeria's security forces were able to capture the group's leader, Muhammad Yusuf, the group's headquarters, and many of its fighters. The Nigerian government thought the threat was suppressed, but the organization regrouped under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau.

5. Since 2009, Boko Haram has carried out numerous attacks against Christians. (In Kano, a city of more than 9 million people, Boko Haram even threatened to kill any Christians living there.) On Easter 2012, [38 people were killed](#) in a car bombing in the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna. Kaduna lies on the dividing line between Nigeria's largely Christian south and Muslim north. During the night of April 16, 2014, dozens of armed men from Boko Haram captured over 300 Christian girls aged 12 to 15 who were sleeping in dormitories at Chibok Government Girls Secondary School in northeast Nigeria. Some of the kidnapped girls have been [forced into "marriage" with their Boko Haram abductors](#), sold for a nominal bride price of \$12, according to parents who talked with villagers. All of the girls risk being forced into marriages or sold in the global market for human slaves. The kidnappings were the focus of the 'Bring Back Our Girls' social media campaign that garnered significant attention in 2014.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Elizabeth Bristow is Communications Coordinator for the Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission (ERLC). The Weekly is a rundown of news by the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission highlighting the week's top news stories from the public square and providing commentary on the big issues of our day.

## DR 'Angels' Continue To Aid La. Flood Survivors

August 31, 2016 | by Carmen K. Sisson



National Guard chaplains meet with their colleague Thomas Fletcher (center), who also pastors flood-damaged Faith Baptist Church in Baker, La. From left are chaplain's assistant Richard Watkins; Chaplain Major Page Brooks of the 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; Fletcher; and Faith Baptist youth minister Matt Robertson. (Photo by Marilyn Stewart)

**BATON ROUGE, LA (BP)** – Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers continue flood recovery efforts across south Louisiana, coping with intermittent rain as they tear out insulation, sweep mud from houses and carry buckets of sodden clothing to curbs. Few areas were left unscathed last week when nearly 7 trillion gallons of rain fell, killing 13 people and damaging more than 60,000 homes in 20 parishes. State officials estimate the damages will exceed \$20 billion, making the 500-year flood event one of the worst disasters to strike the United States since Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

The damage begins in Hammond, La., and extends 160 miles west toward the Texas border. Along Interstate 12, once lush foliage is withered and gray. Trash flanks fences. Advertisements for home guttings become more numerous with every mile. Neighborhoods and side streets tell a heartbreaking story. Clothes, mattresses and household furniture lay strewn across wet lawns in hopes that the sun will shine long enough to dry them. Everything that was not salvageable is piled high along the roadways, transforming shady lanes to narrow pathways, children's toys providing the occasional jolt of color.

Even some of the most seasoned volunteers were surprised by both the scope and intensity of the damage. A few weeks ago, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDRL) chaplain Roy Christy, a member of Northern Hills Baptist Church in Holt, Mo., was tearing out walls in flood-damaged Texas. This week, he is assessing homes and offering emotional support to flood survivors in Baton Rouge, where more than 19 inches of rain fell in 15 hours. In Watson, La., northeast of Baton Rouge, more than 31 inches of rain fell. "The damage is impressive, very extensive," Christy said. "But the people here help each other out a lot. They're very focused on the community, not just themselves." Christy and his team are working out of Zoar Baptist Church while assisting local homeowners.

## DR 'Angels' Continue To Aid La. Flood Survivors (continued)

Flood survivor Fay McDowell, 82, has been a member of Zoar since 1962. Her home, located on a busy inland highway, has never flooded, but when the water began rising, she knew she had to leave. She had just enough time to pack a few clothes and place her terrified cat, Mimi, in her attic. Then she grabbed her suitcase and her dog, Honey, and opened the door. Water poured into her kitchen, and it was continuing to rise. So she fled to the only place she knew she would be safe -- her beloved church. When she was finally able to return home, the sight brought her to her knees. Everything in the house below waist-level was ruined. "Oh, God, how do people make it that don't have God's help," she said Monday morning, crying as she recalled how bleak things looked. Her husband died three years ago, and she wasn't sure how she would get the help she needed to begin piecing her home -- and her life -- back together. Hope arrived wearing gold shirts and carrying shovels.

"God brought me to my knees, and I want to tell you, y'all made me stand back up," McDowell said as she stood in a prayer circle with Christy and the other SBDR volunteers. "God sent me angels." Their work is a race against time. They have already removed most of the sheetrock, baseboards and flooring, but mold is beginning to appear, and they are scrambling to get the house gutted and sprayed with Shockwave, a disinfectant designed to kill and prevent mold. McDowell is currently living in her 12-by-18-foot sunroom with her dog and cat but hopes she will soon be back in her three-bedroom house. She is appreciative for the little things. While one group of volunteers set up a dog kennel in her backyard, filling it with cushions and a bucket of fresh water, others struggled to get her air conditioner running.

"Thank the Lord," she said, when the first wafts of cool air began flowing from the vents. "I'll never again doubt God and His miraculous work. These people are like angels. God has some special people doing this work." But the blessings go both ways, said volunteer Sheila Gatlin. She and her husband Roder Gatlin attend Pismo Baptist Church in Excelsior Springs, Mo. The couple began volunteering with SBDR several years ago. "We feel very blessed as a couple that we can serve the Lord and communities in need," Sheila Gatlin said. "Fay has such a spirit of knowing that the Lord is in control and He's going to provide."



SBDR volunteer Roger Gatlin, a member of Pisgah Baptist Church in Excelsior Springs, Mo., shovels soot from Louisiana homeowner Fay McDowell's fireplace so it can be sprayed with a mold preventative, Aug. 22, 2016, in Baton Rouge, La. McDowell is one of thousands of Louisiana residents whose homes were damaged by floods last week. (Photo by Carmen K. Sisson)



Homeowner Fay McDowell, of Zoar Baptist Church, hugs SBDR volunteer Bud Skinner, a member of Browning Baptist Church in Lathrop, Mo., following a prayer meeting at her house, Aug. 22, 2016, in Baton Rouge, La. McDowell is one of thousands of Louisiana residents whose homes were damaged by floods last week. Skinner, along with other SBDR volunteers from Missouri, is helping tear out sheetrock and spray fungicide to prevent mold from growing. (Photo by Carmen K. Sisson)

Emotions after the flood run from one extreme to the other, Christy said. Some, like McDowell, draw comfort from their faith. Others are struggling. Christy carries orange pens bearing the words, "Jesus loves you." When he said those words to a flood survivor during Sunday services at Zoar, she wrapped her arms around his neck and began crying. Minutes passed as he held her, absorbing her pain as she sobbed. She never spoke. "She needed to get that out," Christy said. "We are here to give people hope and help. We always feel when we go home that we were the ones who were blessed."

Disaster relief efforts are ongoing as assessors traverse the state, looking for people in need. So far, more than 96,000 individuals and households have registered for assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. As for McDowell, she said she knows now that she will be okay. She renewed her flood insurance, just in time. And SBDR is on the scene to provide not only labor but also the emotional and spiritual support she needed. "My faith was strengthened beyond belief when I saw those yellow shirts," McDowell said. "They gave me hope the minute they came in and said, 'Jesus is with us. We came to help.'"

Those wishing to learn more about disaster relief efforts can contact the Baptist convention in their state or donate to the cause by going to [donations.namb.net/dr-donations](http://donations.namb.net/dr-donations). Or, call 1-866-407-NAMB (6262)

or mail checks to NAMB, P.O. Box 116543, Atlanta, GA 30368-6543. Designate checks for "Disaster Relief."

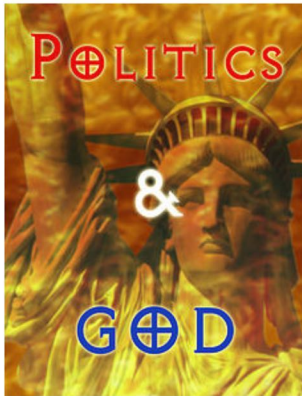
### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carmen K. Sisson is a freelance writer reporting for the North American Mission Board.



## Talking About Politics, God Focus Of New Study

August 31, 2016 | by Bob Smietana



**NASHVILLE, TN (BP)** — Politics trumps God for most Americans when it comes to conversations with their friends, a new study shows. Six in 10 Americans are more comfortable talking about politics than their spiritual beliefs. And most say they aren't interested in having more spiritual conversations. By contrast, evangelical Christians prefer talking about God over politics by a 2-to-1 margin.

Those are among the findings of an online survey of 1,004 Americans about their views on spirituality and politics from LifeWay Research. Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, said Americans like to talk about both politics and religion, which are sometimes considered off limits in polite conversation. But they often prefer one to the other. "People tend to discuss the things that matter most to them," he said. "For evangelicals, that is their faith."

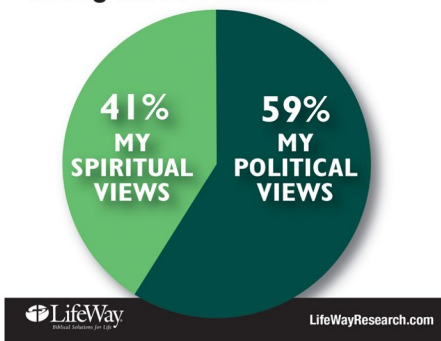
As part of the survey, researchers compared how often Americans talk to others about politics to the number of times they talk about spirituality. Two-thirds of Americans (64 percent) say they had at least three conversations about politics in the last month. Eight percent had no conversations about politics. By contrast, fewer than half (44 percent) had three or more spiritual conversations in the same time frame. Twenty-two percent had no conversations about spirituality.

Overall, 6 in 10 Americans (59 percent) say they're more comfortable discussing their political views than their spiritual beliefs. But there are distinctions among certain groups. Women (51 percent), those who go to church at least once a week (57 percent), and those with evangelical beliefs (63 percent) prefer to talk about their spiritual views. Men (69 percent) and those who don't have evangelical beliefs (65 percent) prefer to talk about politics.

Most Americans also say they have about as many conversations about spirituality as they can handle. About half (51 percent) say they have "just the right amount" of discussions on spiritual beliefs. A quarter (23 percent) want fewer spiritual discussions. Only 1 in 5 wants more. Six percent aren't sure. Hispanics (38 percent), those 18 to 35 (35 percent), and those who live in the West (30 percent) are more likely to say they have spiritual conversations "more often than I would like." Those with evangelical beliefs (32 percent), those 55 and over (26 percent), and those in the South (24 percent) are more likely to say they have such conversations "less often than I would like." Churchgoers are split. Three in 10 (29 percent) of those who attend at least once a week say they want fewer spiritual conversations. One in 4 (26 percent) wants more spiritual conversations.

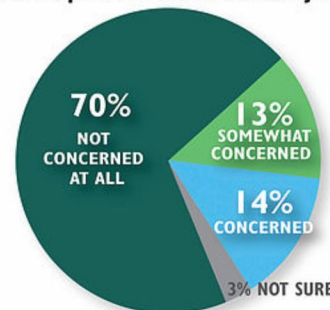
Among Americans:

**Which are you more comfortable talking about with others?**



Among Americans:

**How concerned are you about people in your neighborhood who have different spiritual beliefs than you?**



LifeWay

LifeWayResearch.com

Still, many

Americans are open to hearing what other people think about faith. About half (52 percent) believe they have as much to find out as they do to share during a spiritual conversation. A quarter (26 percent) say they have more to find out. A similar number (22 percent) think they have more to share. Evangelicals are more likely to believe they have more to share (32 percent) in a spiritual conversation. They're less likely to say they have more to find out (17 percent). Frequent churchgoers also believe they have more to share (33 percent). Those findings don't surprise McConnell. Sharing one's faith in order to convert others is a core evangelical conviction. Still, he said, those with evangelical beliefs may need to listen more during a spiritual conversation. "If you don't care what your neighbors believe, chances are they won't listen to what you have to say," he said.

Philip Nation agrees. Nation helps manage Bible Studies for Life, which sponsored the survey. Evangelicals who want to share their faith may need to listen first, he said. "The culture wants dialogue about spiritual beliefs," said Nation, director of content development for LifeWay Christian Resources. "Evangelicals too often only want to lecture our neighbors," he said. "We need to learn the needs and worldview of our neighbors so we can effectively discuss the Gospel."

## Talking About Politics, God Focus Of New Study (continued)

Among other findings:

-- Americans are split over sharing spiritual beliefs on social media. While 38 percent are comfortable or very comfortable doing so, a similar number (36 percent) are either not comfortable or don't use social media.

-- Few Americans (17 percent) say they are most comfortable sharing their views on social media. Three-quarters would rather discuss their beliefs one-on-one (40 percent) or in a small group (33 percent). Six percent would prefer not to share their views.

-- Americans seem lukewarm about starting a spiritual conversation. Three in 10 say starting a conversation is interesting (30 percent), easy (29 percent) or natural (29 percent). Few say starting a conversation is scary (9 percent), boring (5 percent) or embarrassing (4 percent).

-- Most churchgoers (72 percent) say they have the right amount of training to help them share their faith.

-- About half of churchgoers (49 percent) say their church treats sharing the Gospel as extremely urgent (24 percent) or urgent (25 percent).

-- Seven in 10 Americans say they are "not concerned at all" if their neighbors hold beliefs different from their own. Six in 10 (61 percent) say they aren't concerned if their family has different beliefs.

Overall, McConnell believes Americans are open to talking about faith. Few seem turned off by spiritual conversations, he said, especially if those conversations are in person and are respectful. "If your friends are tired of arguing about politics on Facebook, trying asking them about God," he said.

Methodology: The online survey of adult Americans was conducted March 17, 2016. A sample of an online panel representing the adult population of the United States was invited to participate. Responses were weighted by region, age, ethnicity, gender and income to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,004 online surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error from this panel does not exceed plus or minus 4.2 percent. Margins of error are higher in subgroups. For more information, view the survey PDF at LifeWay Research.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Smietana is senior writer for Facts & Trends magazine. LifeWay Research is a Nashville-based evangelical research firm specializing in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect the church.

## ERLC President Russell Moore Announces Multi-Faith Statement Opposing California Assault on Religious Liberty In Higher Education

August 31, 2016 | by Elizabeth Bristow

**WASHINGTON D.C.** — Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, announced a multi-faith statement calling on the California Assembly to abandon Senate Bill 1146, a bill that takes drastic measures against the free exercise of religion in higher education in California.

Commenting on both the Senate bill and the statement itself, Moore said:

"The fundamental problem with SB 1146 is not that it advances a particular viewpoint, but that it seeks to suppress and undermine dissent, harming students along the way. Applying legal or political pressure on institutions that disagree with the cultural majority of the moment is not merely unwise or unfair—it is un-American. A healthy American culture is one in which ideas can freely be discussed and debated, in good faith, among people who, though they disagree, would defend the right of the other to participate.

"I'm joined on this statement by men and women from a diverse set of backgrounds. Many of us disagree on important points of theology, and not all of us agree on questions of sexuality and gender identity, but we all agree that our country is better when dissenters are protected, not prosecuted. We stand opposed to legislation that attacks these institutions' right to self-definition and free exercise.





## ERLC President Russell Moore Announces Multi-Faith Statement Opposing California Assault on Religious Liberty In Higher Education (continued)

Signatories on the statement include pastors, college administrators, academic and legal scholars from across the theological and political spectrum, including Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon and Muslim representatives. A few of the notable signatories include:

**Russell Moore**

President  
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

**Barry Corey**

President  
Biola University

**Rick Warren**

Pastor  
Saddleback Church

**Robert P. George**

McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence  
Princeton University

**Yuval Levin**

Fellow  
Ethics and Public Policy Center

**Hamza Yusuf Hanson**

President  
Zaytuna College

**Helen Avare**

Professor of Law  
Scalia Law School at George Mason University

**Douglas Laycock**

Robert E. Scott Distinguished Professor of Law  
University of Virginia

**David Blankenhorn**

President  
Better Angels

Signatories of the letter said in the statement, that though this bill, “purports to eliminate discrimination, Senate Bill 1146 results in its own form of discrimination by stigmatizing and coercively punishing religious beliefs that disagree on contested matters related to human sexuality. If SB 1146 were to pass, it would deny students’ ability to participate in state grant programs—programs that exist to help low-income students, and which are overwhelmingly used by racial minorities—at schools that are found in violation of the bill. Moreover, it would severely restrict the ability of religious education institutions to set expectations of belief and conduct that align with the institution’s religious tenets.”

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Elizabeth Bristow is Communications Coordinator for the Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission (ERLC). The Southern Baptist Convention is America’s largest Protestant denomination with more than 15.2 million members in over 46,000 churches nationwide. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission is the SBC’s ethics, religious liberty and public policy agency with offices in Nashville, Tenn., and Washington, D.C.

## Grommets

August 31, 2016 | by Tim Patterson

**FENTON, MI** – Dad said that if I could get it running he would let me drive it around the back roads in the oilfields where I couldn't do any real damage. It was an old clunker of a truck that had seen much better days but to a boy of 14 it was as beautiful as a new sports car. Apparently it had been in the employ of our state government at one time because what paint was still remaining on its metal skin could be definitely identified as "highway department yellow". The rest of the color was bondo pink, mixed with a beautiful brown rust.

The bumpers were missing, as was the right rear fender. The odometer had turned over so many times that it had vertigo. The wooden bed was absent several slats, which made it very difficult to deliver a complete load of gravel, dirt or for that matter anything smaller than a basketball. Then again, my desire for this marvel of machinery was not for the purpose of hauling stuff, but for hauling me. I wanted to drive (learn to drive) in the worst way and this was my chance.

I worked for days just trying to clean out all of the debris that had accumulated in the cab. I was forced to evict several rat families and all of their household possessions. They seemed to highly prize the stuffing material that was used in the seats of that old metal behemoth, and had rearranged most of it to suit their lifestyles. The interior of the cab needed special attention. The bench seat was in such bad shape that it had to be replaced with a turquoise beauty that came from a Nash Rambler. The seat was never bolted down but that just added to the excitement of driving this rolling rattle trap, especially when we came to a sudden stop.

It had a straight six engine under the hood that was supported by the finest six-volt electrical system known to man at the time of its creation. I scavenged spark plug wires and battery cables from other junk cars that were stored behind our service station and borrowed the necessary tools from good old Dad. After removing at least 300 lbs of multilayered grease and dirt from under the hood it actually began to look like it had the slightest vestiges of life remaining.

When I finally cranked the old girl, and she sputtered to life it was like giving birth. My new baby was alive and kicking. It consumed almost as much oil as it did gasoline, but my dad owned a service station so the financial drain on me was not too bad and Dad never complained. It did create a small atmospheric disturbance when running because of the unquantified amounts of smoke it produced. My neighbors said that thanks to me there was not a mosquito within five miles of our neighborhood.

The only mechanical problem that was of any real annoyance to me was that the shifting linkage on the transmission. It was a column shift and the linkage to the transmission was as loose as the morals of a New Orleans hooker and periodically if one did not allow the rpm's of the engine and transmission to come to a mutual revolutionary agreement, then it would lock up between first and second gear. The only way to resolve the problem was to turn off the ignition, let it come to a complete stop, get out of the truck, crawl under it, and coax the linkage to release its grip. And of course, during the whole procedure I would get covered with grease and dirt.

When you are first learning to drive and the sheer thrill of just having a means of transportation is of foremost importance then this is a mere necessity that comes with the privilege of being cool. But as the new and the excitement wears off, so does one's patience. This was especially disconcerting and annoying when there happened to be a female peer in the vehicle or driving by and within eyesight. It was not cool!

I didn't learn until years later that the problem with my linkage was caused by the loss of a few spacing parts called grommets. They were just small plastic or brass washers that kept the opposing gears at bay and allowed the proper gears to engage. Linkage is important, especially when it comes to the transmissions of 40 model trucks with a bazillion miles on them, but linkage is also important in the life of a Believer. Linkage to the Father. Linkage to family. Linkage to friends. Linkage to the church. Linkage to life as a whole.

I have found that most of the time when we get locked up in moving from one point to another in a relationship with our Father, family, friends or any other situation, the culprit can usually be identified as something as small and seemingly unimportant as a grommet. A harsh word. An unconfessed sin. A promise broken. A call not returned. You get the picture. Things can be running along smoothly then all of the sudden you are going nowhere fast. Not only is it not cool, but embarrassing and it can also be downright debilitating.

Like my old truck, you may not have what you consider the best-life-around but nonetheless this is who you are. It is your only means of transport while on this terrestrial ball. Don't let some little thing keep you from enjoying the ride of your life. Replace the grommets of relationships that have gone bad, and get back on the road. Don't put up with having to stop and coax those gears back into agreement every time you shift. Take the time to fix the problem. You will go a lot farther, faster and you will enjoy the ride. Besides, all that grease and dirt doesn't do much for your appearance.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



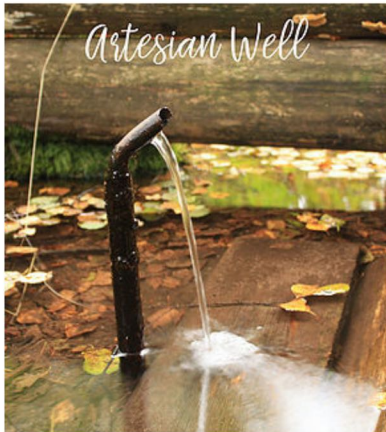
Tim Patterson is Executive Director/Treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. Elected unanimously in May of 2015, Patterson formerly served for 9 years as pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla. He also served as trustee chair and national mobilizer for the North American Mission Board.





## Lives Impacted Up North by Artesian Well

August 31, 2016 | by Tony Lynn



**FENTON, MI** – August 7, 2014, my wife, Jamie and I attended an important event in the life of New Beginnings Baptist Church in Dodge City, Michigan. Two roads converge at the church's site and an ever-flowing pipe provides refreshing water for everyone from an artesian well three feet from the church building. The church is seven miles east of Harrison, Michigan. That morning, I knelt, at the altar, beside a young boy named Michael. He might be 12 years old. He wore a t-shirt with a camouflage pattern, shorts, and tennis shoes. Pastor Alan LaVigne invited anyone who wanted to come to the altar at the beginning of worship to silently pray while pastor voiced the congregation's requests and gratitude.

My parents tell me that when I was very young, 4-9 years old, that I had a keen interest in all things God, church, and ministry. I don't recall the early events they recount today. But I believe them because in 1977 I experienced an undeniable call to ministry. On this recent August 7, I knelt beside Michael because I saw his intense interest in all things God. What's more, I saw Pastor Allan and his wife, Vilna, love and guide people as if they were their children, whether they were young or old. Preschoolers twirled in place as Vilna led worship. Pastor Allan gently hushed a little boy who was getting a little noisy trying to get the attention of a little girl. The young father of that toddler admiringly watched as Pastor Allan quieted his son without stress. We watched and listened all day long as Pastor Allan shared pearls of

wisdom from God's Word with his loving congregation.

I also enjoyed seeing the rewards of others who had invested in this church plant. Pastor Bruce Winter of Sunrise Church in Midland, Michigan was the "sending pastor." That means that Winter and Sunrise, two years ago, had accepted the responsibility of praying for and encouraging the new church plant from start to sustained. Sunrise Church was blessed to nurture a Bible study that now has birthed into a new church.

Pastor Darren Greer is the church planting catalyst in the area. He is the man who reaches out to potential church planters and church planters providing guidance and resources, as they need them. It is important for Pastors to have someone they can turn to for godly wisdom. Pastor Allan can seek guidance and help from Darren.

Dr. David Roberts was also there to encourage the constitution of New Beginnings Baptist Church. David is the associational minister serving the local churches in that region of Michigan. He will stay connected with Pastor Allan and the new congregation and help them in any way possible. David, like the other men, craves to see lives transformed by Christ.

As I look back on that special August 7th Sunday, when a mission became a church, I remember the sound and the sight of that artesian well. An Artesian well is created by pressure from a mysterious source that pushes water up out of the ground without the assistance of a pump. That is what the people of New Beginnings Baptist Church have become. They are an artesian well of Living Water, locally and globally. John 14:4 records the words of Jesus Christ who said, "But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life," (NLT).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tony Lynn is the State Director of Missions for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. Before coming on staff at the BSCM, Tony served as lead pastor for more than six years at Crosspoint Church in Monroe, Michigan. He and his wife, Jamie, also served with the International Mission Board in Africa and in Europe.

## Our Impromptu Get-A-Way

August 31, 2016 | by Mike Durbin

**FENTON, MI** – Breathtaking! That's the best word to describe what Shar and I saw during a hike to Pictured Rocks in Munising in the Upper Peninsula. We both grew up in Michigan but neither one of us had ever been to this fascinating place. We decided on the spur of the moment to make the trip. It wasn't our best planned outing to be honest, but it was an incredibly refreshing time together.

The cool wind and crystal clear blue water of Lake Superior were amazing. As we stood on the cliffs looking over the rock formations and the vastness of the lake, our hearts were moved to thank God for the beauty of His creation. We made our way down to the beach and walked hand in hand in the sand together taking in every moment of this idyllic setting. The sheer size of Lake Superior overwhelmed us. It looked more like the ocean than a freshwater lake. I read on a display in the park that Lake Superior is big enough to hold the other four Great Lakes combined and then some!

We didn't talk much as we made the mile long hike up the hill to our car. The sound of the waves eventually disappeared as we walked further away. Our breathing grew deeper, beads of sweat formed on our foreheads, and we felt muscles we hadn't used in a while yet we felt alive, refreshed, rested, somehow.



My wife, Shar, celebrating our get-a-way with me.  
(Photo by Mike Durbin)



One of the many incredible lakeside formations we encountered.  
(Photo by Mike Durbin)

Our impromptu get-a-way was a spiritual experience. The natural beauty of Michigan moved us to worship. The glory of God was on full display in the cliffs, the water, the sand, the trees, wildlife, and flowers. We experienced the grandeur of God through the canvas of His creation. The Psalmist declared, "Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable" (145:3). I did a quick search through the Gospels and saw that Jesus often made His way to natural settings like mountains, the Sea of Galilee, and even wilderness places. These were quiet, less populated places where Jesus could seek God uninterrupted and spend time investing in His disciples. Jesus knew when it was time to withdraw and where He could refresh Himself. These moments, surrounded by the testimony of creation proclaiming the Glory of God, refreshed our awe of Him.

Getting away was also good for my relationship with Shar. We have been married for 38 years and are on a journey through this life "till death do us part." We've been through some incredible moments together that we will cherish the rest of our lives. We've also weathered some threatening storms, but we've done so together. Investing in us - in our relationship as husband and wife - is never a waste of time or money.

I have left a number of ministry settings, and they have all survived (some have even thrived) without me. Others can pick up where I left off, but no one can take my place in Shar's life or hers in mine. Many years ago, God gave me a verse for our marriage; "Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love" (Proverbs 5:18-19). During our time together, we laughed, we talked, we

remembered, we dreamed, we had moments of silence that were not awkward at all, and we loved. Just being together renewed our love and made God smile.

We covered a lot of miles between our home and Marquette in this little get-a-way. We passed everything from densely populated areas to places where homes are few and far between. We talked about places we passed where we had churches punching holes in the darkness and places where we need churches. There were a lot of things we passed on our trip, but we didn't pass a single person in this state who God doesn't care about. Our little get-a-way rekindled in us the reality that God loves every person in Michigan and beyond. He knows each of them by name, but not all of them know Him. We were reminded that our work isn't done until all have heard the Good News of Jesus.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

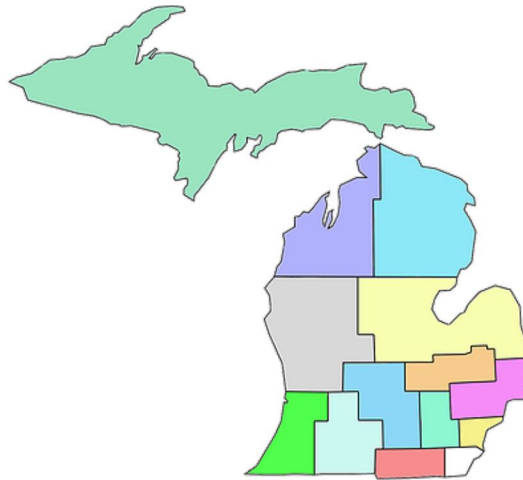


Mike Durbin is the State Evangelism Director for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan. Before joining the state convention staff, Mike served as Church Planting Catalyst and Director of Missions in Metro Detroit since 2007. He also has served as a pastor and bi-vocational pastor in Michigan, as well as International Missionary to Brazil.



## AROUND THE STATE: CHURCH EVENTS & STAFF CHANGES

August 30, 2016



### ALL BSCM PASTORS, MINISTERS, CHURCHES AND MUSICIANS:

You are invited to celebrate with us on September the 11th at 3:00pm as we install Rev. Stan Sargent, as Pastor of New Life Christian Church, formerly known as Gateway Baptist Church.

We are located at 5603 S. Henry Ruff Rd. Westland Mi. 48186.

Rev. Sargent is an awesome man of God, he takes great interest in the community, and in the people of New Life Christian Church, he is truly dedicated to the ministry, and the Word of God, ONE THING about Rev. Sargent, he has a sincere heart, of love, compassion, faith, hope, forgiveness and understanding. So we are asking that if you could find in your true spiritual heart to come out celebrate with us.

Rev. Sargent has open doors for fellowship and praises. Dinner will be served after the service and we would like to get a count on who will be attending.

Also we are asking for your help and support; please if anyone has a **event tent, or pop-up tent, extra table and chairs** that we could use on this day it would be greatly appreciated.

Please Contact Rev. Sargent for this information.

Thank You,  
New Life Christian Church  
5603 S. Henry Ruff Rd.  
Westland, Mi. 48186

### 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.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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### Senior Pastor Needed

Crestview Baptist Church located in Clayton, OH is prayerfully seeking a full-time Senior Pastor. CBC recently celebrated 60 years as a Southern Baptist affiliated congregation. Our mission is to glorify God by reaching a developing people for Jesus Christ. We are seeking a man that reflects our Articles of Faith and can share through ministry his love for Christ with the church congregation and the community. Please send your professional resume, references, testimony of Salvation, personal statement of faith and calling into the ministry to [cbc@crestview.org](mailto:cbc@crestview.org) or:

Crestview Baptist Church  
Pastoral Search Committee  
6600 Salem Ave  
Clayton, OH 45315

### Senior Pastor Needed

Northwest Baptist Church, located in the greater Milwaukee area, is seeking a full time senior pastor. Information about our congregation may be found by visiting our [church website](#). The Pastor Search link will connect potential candidates to our [Church Profile](#). We are currently accepting resumes for the position.

With gratitude,  
Bonnie Lee  
Discipleship Team Leader  
Chair of Pastor Search Committee

4373 N. 92nd Street  
Wauwatosa, WI 53222  
(414) 463-3630  
[www.northwestbaptist.com](http://www.northwestbaptist.com)

### Senior Pastor Needed

On behalf of the Pastor Search Committee of Dunkirk Baptist Church in Dunkirk, Maryland we are seeking applicants to fill our senior pastor position. We are part of the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network and the Potomac Baptist Association. Visit our website at [www.dunkirkbaptistchurch.org](http://www.dunkirkbaptistchurch.org) for a complete job description. Resumes are being accepted via email at [pastorsearch@dunkirkbaptistchurch.org](mailto:pastorsearch@dunkirkbaptistchurch.org) or by standard mail to Pastor Search Committee, c/o Dunkirk Baptist Church, 10816 Town Center Blvd., Box 234, Dunkirk, MD 20754. Resumes will be accepted from July 13 through August 24, 2016.

### Part-time Administrative Assistant Needed

Tecumseh Missionary Baptist Church in Tecumseh, MI seeks a part-time administrative assistant. The primary purpose is to organize and direct the activities of the church office, support the pastor, and support the other ministries of the church as needed. We are looking for someone with strong: organizational, communication and computer skills. This person should desire to serve the Lord while requiring minimal direction. Please send resumes and cover letter to Pastor Brian/Secretary Search Team at [bjonesbunch@aol.com](mailto:bjonesbunch@aol.com).

### Bi-vocational Music/Worship Leader

First Baptist Church in Brighton Michigan is seeking a bi-vocational music / worship leader to serve His congregation through the Church's music ministry. We are seeking a leader who is comfortable with and capable of leading a blended style of worship. For information, or to forward a letter of interest / resume, please send all inquiries to [info@fbcbrighton.com](mailto:info@fbcbrighton.com) or contact Pastor Dwaine Kaiser at [dwaine.kaiser@gmail.com](mailto:dwaine.kaiser@gmail.com)



## CLASSIFIEDS (continued)

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### Computer Repair

Need a trusted and reliable laptop & desktop repair or a basic networking technician in the Detroit Metro area? Golgotha Romanian Baptist Church strongly recommends Victor Sabadus. Contact at (248) 520-0930 or [domn100@hotmail.com](mailto:domn100@hotmail.com).

### Worship Pastor Needed

Lakeside Community Church is a strong contemporary church in the suburbs north of Detroit. We are seeking a person called to the worship ministry. This will start as a part-time position with the expectation the position will become full-time in the future. We are specifically seeking someone with strong vocal ability, skill in a lead instrument and a passion and skill for leading worship. We currently have multiple vocalists and instrumentalists. Our worship style is fully contemporary using music from Hillsong United, Chris Tomlin, Fee, Lincoln Brewster, and others. Send resume and video/audio link of you leading worship to Ken Render at [worshipposition@lakesidechurch.net](mailto:worshipposition@lakesidechurch.net).

### 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)

## ABOUT US

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The Baptist Beacon is the official newsjournal of the [Baptist State Convention of Michigan \(BSCM\)](http://www.bscm.org), 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.

Editor: Tim Patterson - [tim@bscm.org](mailto:tim@bscm.org)

Managing Editor: OneMissionTV, LLC - [baptistbeacon@bscm.org](mailto:baptistbeacon@bscm.org)