



## Focus on the Landscape... Across Utah and Idaho

The past couple of months have been quite busy as we seem to be getting back to a more regular routine. Most everything seems to be opening up post COVID lockdowns and mask mandates are not being renewed. Still, we are reminded that the virus is still active as over the weekend one of our pastors called me asking for prayer as one of their church leaders just went into ICU with COVID. Recently, Kent Burchyett, well-loved Worship and Youth Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church Idaho Falls, went home to the Lord unexpectedly after contracting COVID for the second time. Please join me in continuing to pray for his bride of seven months, Porsha, Kent's family, and the Calvary Baptist Church family.

June has been quite busy as I noticed many of our church plants welcoming mission teams again and many of our churches hosting Vacation Bible School. It was also time for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting that was held in Nashville, bringing out nearly 17,000 messengers. Utah-Idaho churches had a larger than usual showing with around three dozen in attendance. I kept seeing folks among the crowds that I did not know were attending and heard of others that unfortunately I missed connecting with in person.

If you are interested in all that went on, I recommend not reading all the blogs or listening to national media. Yes, the messengers pushed back on the majority of the business, but I never saw a fight or a split. Not all the votes went the way I would have preferred, yet I feel it was healthy and reminded those in leadership who truly are the voices of the churches. The highlight was over 18,000 in the convention center on their knees praying and seeking God's direction and yes, the commissioning of 64 new International Mission Board missionaries supported by our Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offerings. It also reminded me that 2027 will be here sooner than we realize when the Southern Baptist Convention will be held right here in Salt Lake City for the second time.

On a personal note, I was reminded at the note burning at First Baptist Church, West Valley City, by our former Executive Director and Retired pastor, Dr. Jim

## UISBC Cooperative Program Giving Report

### April-May 2021

Cooperative Program giving	April \$72,490.55
	May \$63,326.59
Cooperative Program budget	\$63,391.58
Over/Under CP budget	April +\$9,089.97
	May -\$64.99
State Missions Offering given	April \$10,277.78
	May \$4,392.48

### January-May 2021

Cooperative Program giving	\$329,466.97
Cooperative Program budget	\$316,957.90
Over/Under CP budget	+\$12,509.07 (+3.9%)
State Missions Offering	\$36,016.67
State Missions Offering 2021 Goal	\$95,000

Lee cont.

Harding that July 1<sup>st</sup> marked my thirtieth anniversary serving you, the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention. It is such a joy to serve the Lord by serving you. God has done many great things during this time and yet I know He has even greater things in store as we “Share Christ, Start Churches and Strengthen Churches” together. I am praying you have a great and fruitful summer.

Rob Lee

## In the Know...

- ◇ First Baptist Church of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, is seeking a Youth and Music Pastor. They are taking resumes through July 31, 2021, to receive applications. Contact **Roger Naylor**, Senior Pastor | First Baptist Church for further info at, 6711 El Paso St. | Bonners Ferry, ID 83805, Office: 208.267.3215 | Cell: 912.614.6598, [pastorroger@fcbbonnersferry.org](mailto:pastorroger@fcbbonnersferry.org), [www.fcbbonnersferry.org](http://www.fcbbonnersferry.org)
- ◇ First Baptist Church, Aztec, New Mexico, is accepting resumes for a Minister to 6th-12th grade Students and Media. Please email resumes to [mnapier@firstaztec.org](mailto:mnapier@firstaztec.org).
- ◇ The International Mission Board is providing free, full-color prayer guides on recent current events. <https://www.imb.org/2021/06/04/current-event-prayer-guides-made-available-imb/>
- ◇ Have you seen our pages on Facebook? Take a few minutes to follow the convention and its ministries.
  - [Utah Idaho Southern Baptist Convention](#) (Page)
  - [Alive—Utah-Idaho SBC Women](#) (Private group)
  - [Utah/Idaho Youth](#) (Public group)
  - [Utah-Idaho SBC Disaster Relief](#) (Private group)

*Indeed, God is my salvation; I will trust Him and not be afraid, for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.*

*Isaiah 12:2*

# U & I Praying Together

## Pastorless Churches

- Sevier Valley Baptist Church, Richfield, Perry Causey, Interim
- Salt Lake Chinese Baptist Church
- Stites Baptist Church
- Central Valley Baptist Church, Cascade
- Teton Valley Cowboy Church
- First Baptist Church, Orofino, Bill Kessler, Interim
- First Baptist Church, Moab
- Red Hills Southern Baptist Church, Enoch
- Roosevelt Baptist Church, Scott Maxwell, Interim
- \*Mountain View Baptist Church, Layton

\*New church since last Connections

## Welcome New Pastors

Christian Community, Mesquite, NV, Pastor Bruce Wisenhunt

## Prayer & Praises

- Pray for our churches and mission teams reaching out through VBS and other outreach events through the summer to have open doors to share the gospel.
- Continued prayers for our pastors and pastors' wives recovering from COVID-19.
- Prayers for our pastors, pastors' wives, church leaders, and churches as they continue to adapt and make decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic impact on ministries.
- Continued prayers for pastor's wife, Hope Waldrop. She has completed treatment.
- Prayer for Ben Neiser, State Collegiate Ministries Coordinator, campus minister at BYU and Utah Valley State University and co-planter in Provo of Mosaic and family for comfort and peace in his dad's going home to the Lord.
- PTL for Pastor David and Clairice Michael on their recent marriage. David has been a long-time member of our state convention's TeamWest SS training team and current Executive Board member.
- Pray for retired pastor Andy Hornbaker, Sr. as he recovers from a recent hospital stay.
- Pray for Porsha Burchyett and Calvary Baptist Church, Idaho Falls as they grieve associate pastor, Kent Burchyett's home going as a result of COVID.
- Pray for the family of Ruby Lee Ashworth, wife of Richard Ashworth, who passed away at the age of 92.

# Missions, outreach is ‘what we do,’ Idaho pastor says

By Karen L. Willoughby

MERIDIAN, Idaho – Central Valley Baptist Church isn’t waiting for Thursday’s (May 6) National Day of Prayer to start praying. The church began its Prayer for America last July, and a list of 10 specific prayer requests has been posted to its website since then.

Central Valley Baptist believes in the power of prayer and in the power of hands-on and financial support of God’s kingdom work, Pastor Clint Henry said as he described various ways the congregation reaches out locally, throughout its state convention, nationally and globally.

Henry uses the analogy of a braided rope to show the congregation the importance of the Cooperative Program. People in the rural West understand the value of a rope. It connects a rider on horseback to the calf he’s after, secures hay bales to a wagon, serves as a temporary fix until a sturdier option is available. A braided rope is one of many strands of fibers twisted together for compounded strength.

“We talk about holding the rope,” Henry said. “Missionaries are counting on us to hold the rope, the Cooperative Program rope. If that was gone, it would be pretty tough to do the work on their own.

“The Cooperative Program is a lifeline. We talk about that around here all the time. The Cooperative Program is a unique way to unite churches of any size in an incredible missions plan where even the smallest church can take as much credit as the biggest church.”

About 430 people attend Sunday morning worship at Central Valley Baptist. Almost every year since it was started in 1982 – Henry was called as pastor in 1995 – the church has given at least 10 percent of undesignated offerings to missions through CP. It’s been as high as 13 percent, but as more church members are called into fulltime missions, the church has settled on its CP giving being the church’s tithe, with another 14 percent going to other missions endeavors.

“We support the Cooperative Program first because of the Great Commission. We want to be obedient to Jesus’ command,” Henry said. “Secondly I see the impact it has on the local church. There’s an increased desire to share the Gospel, and more people wanting to participate in overseas projects. We’ve gone on 32 overseas trips in the last five years, and that certainly impacts the church’s decision to support the Cooperative Program.”

Mexico and Thailand are among countries where Central Valley Baptist has a multi-year interest. A member who is from Mexico and his wife returned there to start a church and related ministries. Another member who is from Thailand and her husband also felt called to go there for missionary work.

In addition to its global missions work, hands-on and through the Cooperative Program, Central Valley Baptist is an active partner in its local association and two-state convention. Henry has served in elected positions at the Treasure Valley Southern Baptist Association, the Utah-Idaho Southern

Central Valley cont. on page 4

## WRAP-UP: SBC elects Litton, takes control of EC investigation

By David Roach

NASHVILLE (BP) – From the moment the gavel dropped – or actually, with the gavel that dropped – calling them to order, it was clear messengers to the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting June 15-16 in Nashville were ready to make changes and challenge traditions in the name of advancing the Gospel.

SBC President J.D. Greear had previously retired the Broadus Gavel, which was named for slaveowner John Broadus and had been used continuously at annual meetings by SBC presidents since 1872. Instead, he gavelled the convention to order with the Judson Gavel, named after Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson.

The convention’s 15,726 messengers – the most since 1995 – seemed to follow Greear’s lead, taking action to protect victims and hold leaders accountable even when it meant overturning the decisions of convention committees – especially the Executive Committee.

Messengers called for creation of a task force, appointed by the new SBC president, to oversee an independent review of the Executive Committee over allegations of mishandling reports of sexual abuse. They overwhelmingly defeated a revision of the SBC Business and Financial Plan proposed by the EC.



Incoming SBC President Ed Litton (left) pauses for selfie with outgoing SBC President J.D. Greear, who had just passed off the gavel to Litton. Photo by Robin Jackson

Ed Litton, pastor of Redemption Church in Saraland, Ala., was elected SBC president in a runoff with a 52 percent majority over Georgia pastor Mike Stone, immediate past chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and a steering council member for the Conservative Baptist Network (CBN), a group alleging leftward drift in the convention. Litton has suggested the CBN is unnecessary because Southern Baptists are unwaveringly conservative.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Albert Mohler and Northwest Baptist Convention executive director Randy Adams also were nominated for president but failed to make the two-person runoff.

Southern Baptists “are a family, and at times we may seem dysfunctional,” Litton told reporters after his election. “But we love each other.”

Messengers presented 32 motions from the convention floor, the most since 2010.

While at times tense, the debate was punctuated with

Annual meeting cont. on page 4

Baptist Convention, the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board.

“Central Valley is our largest SBC church,” Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention Executive Director Rob Lee said. “They are our leading church in missions engagement locally and internationally. The church staff have a passion for the nations coming to Christ, and church membership follow their example.

“Central Valley has been the leading church in their gifts through the Cooperative Program for our state convention. They have broken records the past two years in gifts through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for the ‘most-ever giving’ by one of our state convention’s churches.”

Central Valley has planted or partnered to plant 11 church type missions and provides ongoing support to nine other ministries both local and abroad.

Members are encouraged to think creatively about how God could use them, which leads to a continually expanding list of ministries backed by the church.

“We encourage people to pray as we look to see where God is at work and prepare to join Him,” Henry said.

In addition to hands-on involvement in the local ministries the church financially supports, there’s a community garden on the church property, Providence High School for students looking for a biblically based education, divorce care specifically for women and Launch Pad Ministries for public high school students, and this year, the church began participating in Saturate USA.



In addition to providing produce for the community and church members, the garden attracts neighborhood youngsters who learn how to garden even as they make friends with church members.

“We try to use it to help meet needs we’re aware of,” Henry said. “We’ve always used it as more of a blessing ministry than a church growth ministry.”

The church started Providence High School two years ago because, “We’ve been very concerned about providing a quality biblical-based education,” the pastor continued. “It [the 45-person student body] would be bigger if we had more space.”

For students in public high schools, Central Valley Baptist participates in Launch Pad Ministries to provide biblical teaching that guides teens toward Jesus, equips them with biblical convictions, and launches students to make a difference for the kingdom of God. This ministry takes place during the school system’s weekly “release time.”

Saturate USA is a gospel-outreach ministry that provides, at no cost, materials including a Gospel tract, a DVD of the *Jesus* film, information about the participating church, and the bag to put the items in that members hang on the front doors of homes in a given zip code. By church members going out one Saturday a month, the entire 83646 area – 23,000 homes – will be saturated with the Gospel within three months, Henry said. “This is important to me,” the pastor said. “While we may be a great giving and going church, the only thing we really have to brag on is Jesus Christ. We want Him to get all the credit for what we do.”

*Karen L. Willoughby is a national correspondent for Baptist Press. Used from Baptist Press.*

Annual meeting cont.

moments of unity. A day after the presidential election, Litton took a floor microphone as a messenger to commend Mohler as a “statesman” and “gift of God” to Southern Baptists during Mohler’s Southern Baptist Theological Seminary report. Mohler responded by congratulating Litton publicly on his victory.

**Committees face resistance**

The Executive Committee (an 86-member body charged with acting on the SBC’s behalf between annual meetings) drew opposition at multiple junctures, with messengers claiming the EC had too much authority and needed to be held accountable.

Tennessee pastor Grant Gaines moved that the new SBC president appoint a task force to oversee a previously announced investigation into alleged EC mishandling of sexual abuse claims. Initially, the

motion was referred to the EC by the Committee on Order of Business, but messengers overturned the ruling by a two-thirds vote and overwhelmingly adopted the motion Wednesday (June 16).

The EC had voted June 14 not even to consider a similar proposal by one of its own members, Jared Wellman of Texas.

EC President Ronnie Floyd said in a statement following the convention’s action, “Today’s decision, in whose outcome we are confident, will have the ultimate blessing of removing all doubt in the minds of our community of Southern Baptists allowing us to chart a more confident future, together.”

The EC encountered an overwhelming defeat in a proposed revision to the SBC’s Business and Financial Plan. EC officer Robyn Hari said the proposal sought to

strike a balance between accountability and autonomy of the SBC entities. But messenger Vance Pitman of Nevada called the proposal “an unprecedented expansion of the Executive Committee powers.” The recommendation failed on a raised-hand vote.

The convention approved Vision 2025, a five-year plan setting a series of goals for Great Commission advancement. Messengers added to the EC’s five proposed Vision 2025 goals on missions, evangelism and CP giving a sixth stating the convention’s intent to eliminate all incidents of racism and sexual abuse. They also amended a goal placing emphasis on reaching teenagers to those under age 18.

Another EC recommendation rejected by messengers was a proposed revision of Lifeway Christian Resources’ Mission and

Ministry Statement. The proposal, initiated at the request of Lifeway trustees, was defeated on a ballot vote after messenger Michael Schultz of Kentucky spoke against its adoption due to a proposed deletion of Lifeway's responsibility to assist churches with "homeschool ministries."

The EC also lost an officer when Tom Tucker, a vocational evangelist from South Carolina, was not given a second term by messengers, who voted against an attempt to overturn the Committee on Nominations, which had declined to renominate him. Tucker, a member of the CBN steering council, had been reelected as vice chairman June 14 by the EC, which acted despite the knowledge that while eligible to serve, his term was expiring and he was not among nominees to the EC for the coming year, and that he could only fulfill the post if messengers amended the 2021 Committee on Nominations report to include Tucker among nominees.

Tucker's term was originally set to expire in 2020, but was extended a year by the cancellation of the 2020 SBC Annual Meeting because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tucker was then elected EC vice chairman in June 2020.

Messengers accepted EC proposals granting the second of two required approvals to an SBC constitutional amendment listing racism and mishandling sex abuse as grounds for disfellowshipping a church.

The EC was not the only committee to have a recommendation overturned by messengers. The Resolutions Committee declined to bring to the floor a resolution submitted by Oklahoma messenger Bill Ascol that called for abolishing abortion, but messengers voted by a two-thirds majority to consider it. Then they adopted the resolution after a one-word amendment to soften its initial rejection of any "incremental approach to ending abortion."

### Diversity

The SBC constitutional amendment against racism was among several ways messengers attempted to catalyze ethnic diversity in the convention.

Juan Sanchez, pastor of High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, became



Messengers vote by raised ballot during a business session of the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting. Photo by Eric Brown

the first Hispanic elected convention preacher. He will deliver the convention sermon next year in Anaheim, Calif. Messengers also elected a Hispanic first vice president, Ramón Medina, lead pastor of the Spanish ministry at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston. Medina was elected in a runoff over another Hispanic nominated for the post, Georgia pastor Javier Chavez.

Southern Baptists tapped to serve on committees likewise were diverse. A majority (51 percent) of Greear's presidential appointments to committees were non-Anglo, as were 30 percent of those elected to serve on boards and committees.

In his final presidential address, Greear drew a standing ovation when he addressed racial tension within the SBC and told "people of color": "We need you."

Critical race theory (CRT) – the subject of a 2019 SBC resolution that has sparked controversy over the past two years – drew several mentions during the convention, including messenger motions and resolution submissions calling for its denunciation as well as questions to SBC presidents during their reports. Yet no official convention action addressed CRT by name.

Instead, messengers adopted a broad resolution regarding race and racial reconciliation. The resolution repudiated "any theory or worldview that denies that racism, oppression, or discrimination is rooted, ultimately, in anything other than sin." It also reaffirmed a resolution regarding racial reconciliation on the SBC's 150th anniversary in 1995 in which messengers apologized to African Americans for "condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systemic

racism."

Other resolutions adopted by messengers covered, among other topics, the Equality Act, the Hyde Amendment and permanent disqualification from the pastorate of those who have committed sexual abuse.

### In other business:

\* Messengers elected Lee Brand Jr., a Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary administrator, as first vice president over California pastor Anthony Dockery. Medina was elected second vice president in a runoff over Sanchez. Brand and Sanchez

are members of the CBN's steering council. Missouri Baptist Convention executive director John Yeats was reelected recording secretary for the 24th time over Virginia pastor Adam Blosser.

\* Don Currence, administrative pastor at First Baptist Church in Ozark, Mo., was reelected registration secretary by acclamation. He was nominated by Kathy Litton, wife of Ed Litton, who was elected registration secretary over Currence in 2019 but stepped down when her husband's candidacy for SBC president was announced.

\* Sixty-four new International Mission Board missionaries were appointed June 14 in a Sending Celebration. They will join 3,631 IMB missionaries already on the field around the world. The vast majority of the new missionaries stood behind a screen during the service, as they could not be identified due to security concerns in their locations of service.

\* The North American Mission Board reported that Southern Baptists have planted more than 8,200 churches in the past decade. They comprise nearly 17 percent of all Southern Baptist churches and represent nearly 19 percent of all baptisms reported in the SBC.

\* Florida pastor Willy Rice preached the convention sermon, urging Southern Baptists to avoid factions and build their testimony on the Gospel.

Next year's SBC Annual Meeting is slated for June 14-15, 2022, in Anaheim, Calif.

David Roach is a writer in Mobile, Ala.

# U.S. Protestant Pastors Say Sexually Abusive Ministers Should Step Down Permanently

By Aaron Earls

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — As Christian groups and denominations debate the proper response to clergy sexual misconduct (both child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault), most pastors believe those who commit such crimes should withdraw from public ministry permanently.

At the recent Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, the topic of pastoral sexual abuse and assault dominated much of the conversation and business, including passing a resolution that “any person who has committed sexual abuse is permanently disqualified from holding the office of pastor.”

A study from Nashville-based Lifeway Research revealed a significant majority of U.S. Protestant pastors share that opinion whether the victim is a child or an adult.

“Most current pastors believe the office of pastor is incompatible with having sexually abused or assaulted another,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. “This does not convey that they believe these behaviors are beyond God’s forgiveness, but a large majority believe sexual abuse is a permanent disqualification from ministry leadership.”

## Child sexual abuse

More than 4 in 5 Protestant pastors (83%) say if a pastor commits child sexual abuse, that person should permanently withdraw from public ministry. For 2% the time away should be at least 10 years, while 3% say at least five years and 3% say at least two years.

Few point to a shorter time frame as appropriate—1% say at least 1 year, and fewer than 1% say either six months or three months. Another 7% say they aren’t sure how long the time frame should be.

While majorities of every demographic group of pastors support a permanent exit from public ministry for child sexual abuse, some are less supportive than others. Pentecostal pastors (60%), African American pastors (67%), pastors with no college degree (69%), and pastors 65 and older (76%) are among those least likely to support permanent withdrawal.

The U.S. Sentencing Commission reported that 98.8% of sexual abuse offenders were sentenced to prison and their average sentence was almost 16 years.

“The five years or less time frame, that 7% of pastors suggest is appropriate, does not even cover the length of the typical prison sentence for offenders convicted of sexual abuse,” said McConnell. “In contrast, more than 10 times that number of pastors do not hesitate to say the disqualification from ministry should be permanent for a pastor who commits child sexual abuse.”

## Adult sexual assault

*Assault cont. on page 9*

# Church planter ‘broken ... for the people of Utah’

By Karen L. Willoughby

EAGLE MOUNTAIN, Utah – Barry Smith, bi-vocational pastor at Pioneer Community Church, is in his second attempt to plant a church southwest of Salt Lake City. Both plants committed at the outset to allocate 10 percent of their undesignated offerings to missions through the Cooperative Program, the way Southern Baptists work together to advance God’s kingdom work in states, around the U.S. and worldwide.

“As a NAMB planter I know where the money goes,” Smith said. “We see the fruit of churches across the Southern Baptist Convention partnering together. We are part of that fruit. We benefit from the larger churches, and giving to CP teaches us. It embeds giving and being generous with our funds.”

“The 10 percent of our little church won’t change the world but we’ve been Southern Baptist our whole lives. We know what we [Southern Baptists] do



together – through the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board – and we really appreciate being part of that.”

The Smith family moved to Utah in 2013, sent as lay missionaries by First Baptist Church of Windemere, Fla., now known as Family Church, where Chuck Carter is lead pastor. God had redirected their lives when First Windemere invited Adam’s Road to speak. Adam’s Road is a music and testifying group of former Mormon “missionaries,” who had been sent out as young adults to convert others to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but have since come to true faith in Christ.

Barry Smith owned and operated a fleet of bike taxis and his wife Jennifer had “a good desk job” (so the family had benefits). But the message from Adam’s Road changed their path.

“Hearing there wasn’t this great Gospel presence we have in Florida, we were both broken individually for the people of Utah and both of us felt called to do something in Utah,” Smith said.

As soon as the Smith family arrived in Utah, they began working with various groups ministering to Mormons. Two years later, after the Smiths’ pastor, Carter, had attended a

*Eagle Mountain cont. on page 7*

# GenSend sharing the Gospel in Utah

By Daniel Savage

The North American Mission Board's GenSend summer program is back in full swing across the United States and Canada after a year off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Utah has been blessed to be a part of it once again. The GenSend website describes the program as, "An opportunity for college students to join God's great story in some of North America's greatest cities...as teams of students learn mission principles while living them out in the context of the city."

Utah is currently hosting 27 young missionaries from all over the country with students hailing from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Students arrived June 18th and will depart July 30th. There are four different "cohorts" working in some of Utah's largest cities: Logan, Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City. Each cohort is also paired with a local church in the town where they are serving. The students receive coaching from local pastors and are also encouraged to attend and get plugged into the local body while they are here. The entire Utah group also meets together every other Wednesday to receive training from Provo church planter and Utah Collegiate Network Director Ben Neiser, along with other pastors and planters in the area.

One recent highlight involves the Ogden cohort. They have been meeting people on historic 25th Street, Weber State University, the Ogden Temple, and even at the local Target where they do their grocery shopping. In only the second week that the



Ogden Cohort: (L-R) Jay Clark, Alabama; Trip Bumgarner, South Carolina; Scotti Brown, North Carolina; Macey McLaurin, South Carolina; Jennifer Thrasher, Arkansas; Sarah Woodall, North Carolina; Tara Puthenveetil, North Carolina.

students were in town, several guys from the group formed a friendship with a Target cashier named Connor. After seeing him several times while shopping, they invited him to join them for dinner. The GenSend students shared the gospel with Connor and he confessed his sins to Jesus and trusted Christ as his savior!

"People have been very open to having spiritual conversations", said Trip Bumgarner, a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina in Columbia. "Almost everyone we talk to is willing to share with us what they believe, and they will usually listen to what we have to say once they've been heard. We've been very surprised at the openness that people have had in the short time that we've been here".

"It is so exciting to see these young people fired up about the gospel and to see them sharing with anyone and everyone who will listen", said Nick Erickson, pastor of Redemption Church and one of the GenSend coaches. "Our

prayer is that they will have boldness while they are here in Utah, learn a lot about our missional context, and then implement what they have learned in their hometowns or wherever God sends them next. Selfishly, we even pray that God will eventually bring back some of these amazing students to serve right here in the most lost state in America".

Utah is blessed to have these GenSend college students serving here in the summer of 2021, and with God's blessing, this won't be the last year that that is the case.

## Eagle Mountain cont.

NAMB church-planting conference and then prayed what that might mean for First Windemere, he called the Smiths and asked them to consider transitioning from lay missionaries in Utah to church planters.

After praying about it, Barry and Jennifer Smith went through the NAMB assessment process and chose the Eagle Mountain location. Newly started out of barren ground in 1996, Eagle Mountain had grown from 2,000 residents in 2000 to about 44,000 by 2020. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation, in one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, thanks to a vibrant economy.

The first plant, started in 2016, never did "gain any traction," Smith said, meaning that no one came to their in-home Bible study except those already connected with another church, and a couple who

had moved from Florida for a time to join the Smiths in starting a church in a town that had no evangelical Christian witness.

Bruised by the lack of success, the Smiths persevered, sure of God's call to minister in a place where the majority religion was not Christianity. Barry stayed focused on ministry while continuing to work his fulltime secular job in logistics for an international shipping firm. Jennifer, disabled, was homeschooling the two children they still had in the home while leading the church's worship and doing all the church's administrative work. The Smiths have five children, two of whom are in law enforcement, and two grandchildren.

"Teaching 'Transitions,' a class that focuses on the journey from Mormonism to biblical Christianity, helped prepare us for church planting," Smith said. "It gave

us context for what people are going through in Utah County," which includes the towns within the metro Provo area, 45 miles south of Salt Lake City. Provo is home to the Mormon-owned Brigham Young University.

Their strategy wasn't to reach Mormons specifically, but just people who needed Jesus, the pastor said.

"Pioneer Community Church promotes itself as a safe place to explore your faith," Smith said. "The church's goal is to see the people of Utah redeemed, renewed and restored by the power of Jesus Christ."

The peaceful Salt Lake Valley, where Mormon leader Brigham Young's westbound caravan first settled in 1847, is today home to nearly 2 million people as it stretches more than 100 miles north

# Kentucky's RIMM Rock mission trip to Idaho

June 19-25, 2021, RIMM Rock took our first ever mission trip to the Rural InterMountain west. Eight people from Salem Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Kentucky embarked on a weeklong adventure into the dry and thirsty land that is south eastern Idaho. We worked with the people of Victory Baptist Church of Malad City, ID. SE Idaho is a dry and thirsty land; both physically and spiritually. Located in the northern reaches of the Great Basin Desert, Oneida County, Idaho is indeed dry. According to the residents, it is dryer than usual. "We are in a ten-year drought," noted one man. There is no snowpack in the mountains, and the irrigation reservoirs are running low on water. If we don't get rain soon, the farmers will have to let the crops die." They are praying for rain. On our mission trip we were hoping for rain too. We were praying that God would rain down His spirit upon this dry and thirsty land.

The spiritual landscape of SE Idaho is just as dry as the land. The area is heavily saturated with adherents to the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-Day Saints (LDS). Evangelical churches are few and far between. Most Bible believing churches in this area are small and spread out. Victory Baptist Church is the only Bible believing church in Oneida County.

We also visited Bear Lake County, Idaho. With 99.6% of its residents adhering to Mormonism, Bear Lake is among the most unreached counties in North America.

Our team did a Beach Reach event on the beach at Bear Lake State Park. We set up a tent, tables, and a grill. We invited other beach goers to come to our free cook out. We had a pretty good turnout. Twenty-five people came to eat with us. We had the opportunity to share a full gospel presentation with nine people on the beach. We witnessed to or handed tracts to the rest. All the people we met that day were LDS.

We also served a group of Christian cowboys at a Rodeo Bible Camp in Downey, Idaho. Thirty kids, ages 12-19, participated in the three-day long camp. We helped serve food, move livestock, and set up the stage for Cowboy Church.

On Wednesday night, the kids got to participate in an actual rodeo to show-off the new skills they learned that week. Our team sold merchandise and operated the cattle shoots for the team roping events. The announcer at the rodeo was the camp pastor for the week. Of course, he shared the gospel as part of his announcing duties.

We ended our week by helping Victory Baptist Church with a community cook-out in the Malad City Park. We once again cooked and gave away a free meal. Pastor Jack gave away gifts



to all the guests. He also preached a gospel message focusing on God's free gift of salvation as opposed to the works-based salvation the LDS church demands. Our team witnessed to people one-on-one at the cookout.

All in all, we shared the gospel with thirty people. We also helped the Christians from the Cowboy Church love on thirty kids. I would say that is a successful trip! So yes, we are praying for rain. Not just rain that will water the parched desert land of SE Idaho, we are

praying for spiritual rain. That God will rain down His blessings in the form of the Gospel. That God will break the chains of works-based salvation that the LDS church has placed on the people. We pray that God will break the control that the LDS church has on communities and families. We pray that God will protect new Christians from the persecution that they will face from their families, their community, and the LDS church when they become born again believers.

## **MARKED BY JOY**

One thing that will stick with me from this trip is the level of joy that the Christians of SE Idaho possess. Victory Baptist Church has about fifteen people attending. Only about half of their congregation has returned since COVID. Though the church is small and faces many obstacles, its people are filled with joy.

*"For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and JOY are in His place." -1 Chronicles 16:26-27*



## Assault cont.

A sizable majority of Protestant pastors (74%) also supports a permanent withdrawal from public ministry for any pastors who commit sexual assault and abuse of any adult member of the congregation or staff. One in 20 say the time away should be at least 10 years (5%), at least five years (5%), and at least two years (5%).

Again, few pastors back shorter time frames, with 2% saying at least a year, 1% at least six months, and fewer than 1% at least three months. Fewer than 1% say the pastor does not need to withdraw at all. Almost 1 in 10 (9%) say they're not sure.

Pentecostal pastors (44%) are the only demographic in which a majority do not support permanent withdrawal from public ministry for pastors who commit sexual assault of adults under their care and supervision in church. Other demographics are also less supportive of the pastor stepping away permanently, including African American pastors (58%), pastors without a college degree (63%), and pastors 65 and older (69%).

"When someone sexually assaults an adult, it is both a violent sin and a crime. It is the opposite of the love, care and respect toward another the Bible teaches," said McConnell. "The role of pastor has incredibly high standards in the Bible, including that the overseer of those in the church be above reproach or beyond criticism. Seventeen percent of pastors think someone could move beyond reproach in this matter given enough time."

A 2019 Lifeway Research study found many Protestant churchgoers believe there are additional undisclosed instances of Protestant pastors sexually abusing children or teens (32%) or sexually assaulting adults (29%). In that same study, 3 in 4 churchgoers (75%) say they want a careful investigation of the facts if someone accused a pastor at their church of sexual misconduct. Few (14%) say their reaction would be to want to see the minister protected.

## Adultery vs. assault

Compared to their perspective on abuse, pastors are much more divided over the proper response to adultery, according to an additional 2019 Lifeway Research study. While clear majorities say pastors who commit child sexual abuse or sexual assault should withdraw permanently from ministry, only 27% believe that should be the result of a pastor committing adultery. A plurality (31%) is not sure.

"While adultery implies a consensual affair, it is not such a simple distinction for those serving in the role of pastor, as indicated by the 31% who were not sure in the previous survey," said McConnell. "For a pastor who holds a position of trust and spiritual authority over those in their congregation, an adulterous relationship with one of them, where an imbalance of power exists, would still constitute sexual assault."

*Aaron Earls is a writer for Lifeway Christian Resources.*

## Ministry cont.

and south and to the east as far up the slopes of the Wasatch Mountain Range as it can. The only room to grow is west. That's where Eagle Mountain is. That's why it has grown so fast as Metro Salt Lake has prospered.

Smith said they had always planned to relaunch and did so in May 2019, as Pioneer Community Church.

"This was the only commercial building in Eagle Mountain," he said. "The owner gave us such a good deal. Our [personal] giving covered the rent and expenses to relaunch. We still have the same deal: the use of the whole building and parking lot, and we have keys! It's been a blessing."

When not being used for Pioneer Community Church's worship services, the building is used as a dance studio. They also host a preschool and karate classes.

"We have about 40 people who are part of the church; 25 on Sundays," Smith said. "Pre-COVID we were in the high 30s attending."

"We have several chronically ill," the pastor said. "Nine are women – that's a huge number in a church this size – and we had 21 hospital stays last year."

His wife Jennifer endures sometimes debilitating rheumatoid arthritis as well as Crohn's disease.

"There's a graciousness between those who suffer," Smith said. "It's good because we're able to minister, but we have fewer to do the work."

"We have youth coming Wednesday night who are not part of the church, eight to 12 of them," he said. "I taught middle school boys in Florida, 21 kids. Now I preach to 21 people."

The Smiths started Pioneer Community Diaper and Formula Pantry when they started the church.

"We started it first as a mercy and outreach ministry," Smith said. "Even if parents are making bad decisions the kids have no say and still need diapers and formula. My wife does 90 percent of deliveries and mission teams help."

"We deliver on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Provo down to Spanish Fork, and we have a card that has other Utah County church names and addresses where people attend. They might not be able to come to Eagle Mountain, but they know from the card that there are other Christian churches around."



*Along with the launch of Pioneer Community Church, the Smiths also started Pioneer Community Diaper and Formula Pantry.*

# Church Connections initiative forges relationships in Alabama

**Editor's note: The International Mission Board recently initiated Church Connections to facilitate connections between IMB missionaries and churches who do not have direct contact with a missionary. Church Connections efforts began in 2020 with a pilot involving 10% of IMB's missionaries. April 5 was the official launch of Church Connections, and 900 missionaries have since been assigned 22,000 churches to contact. It's estimated that by the middle of 2022, every Southern Baptist church will receive a personal contact from a missionary.**

*By Drew Moss*

My family's involvement in Church Connections has provided opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships to be formed between our family and Southern Baptist churches. Through these new relationships, we have been encouraged, prayed over and sent out as we walked through a difficult season of transition to a new field of service in northwest London. As we've connected, churches have heard our gratitude for their giving as well as stories of how their generosity has made an impact across the globe.

Most of the churches we've contacted have had no previous connection to the International Mission Board.

One way we connected with a church in our area, Hill Spring Baptist Church, in Mobile, Alabama, was by joining them in a special project. We heard they were building a family life center and had planned a workday to concentrate on the framing work for the building. We saw this as a great opportunity to not only say but demonstrate our thanks by joining them by swinging hammers and lifting walls.

That morning we shared with several church members about our previous role as church planting strategists in eastern Europe, and during the lunch break, we were asked to share a testimony about God's faithfulness. I expressed gratitude to the church for their partnership and thanked them for how their giving enabled us to go to the mission field.

After lunch, I connected with Hill Spring's pastor, and in the following weeks, I periodically texted him to offer encouragement. One day, he called and told me he needed shoulder surgery but had held off because he didn't have anyone to fill the pulpit. He asked if I would be willing to preach for him so he could have that surgery. I welcomed the invitation.

As I preached, I shared our story of God's faithfulness, how He is working across Europe and how the church's giving enables that work. After the sermon, many people from the congregation committed to join us in prayer for what God is doing among the nations. Months later, we still receive emails from those church members who continue to faithfully pray for us and our ministry.

It is rewarding to have the privilege to express gratitude to churches for their giving through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®.

The connections we made were not only beneficial for the IMB and our family but also for the churches that faithfully support our work through prayer, giving and going. Making personal contact allowed them the opportunity to put a face and a name with the IMB, and hearing "thank you" directly from us makes the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® personal. These connections encourage their perseverance and commitment to partnership in the Great Commission.

If your church is ready to connect with an IMB missionary, email [info@imb.org](mailto:info@imb.org).

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

*Drew Moss serves with his family in northwest London.*

## SBC messengers treated to screening of new Kendrick brothers film

*By Aaron Wilson, Lifeway Christian Resources*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting attended Lifeway Films screenings of two upcoming faith-based movies, "Show Me the Father" and "Sabina".

"Show Me the Father," by Sony Pictures' Affirm Films, will release in theaters nationwide on Sept. 10, 2021. The film is the first documentary from the Kendrick brothers, whose past film credits include "Overcomer," "Courageous" and "War Room."

The documentary weaves stories of fatherhood experiences, both good and bad, from individuals around the country, including Sherman Smith, former NFL running backs coach, Jim Daly, Focus on the Family president, and filmmaker

Stephen Kendrick. These moving and often surprising accounts interspersed with short teaching segments on the fatherhood of God from Dr. Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, sparked collective gasps from the audience during the SBC screening.

"Everyone has a father story, but not everyone has learned how to redeem it for their own good and the good of others" said executive producer Stephen Kendrick. "Even though fatherlessness is directly connected to so much brokenness in today's world, we wanted to go beyond traditional documentaries and show how God is the perfect Father and can amazingly provide the love and healing to anyone at any stage in life."

On Tuesday evening, SBC messengers attended the screening of the live-action film "Sabina: Tortured for Christ, the Nazi Years" by Voice of the Martyrs.

Filmed on location in Bucharest, Romania, "Sabina" traces the true story of Sabina Wurmbrand, co-founder of Voice of the Martyrs, who passed away in 2000. After Wurmbrand's parents and siblings were killed in Nazi concentration camps, she and her husband Richard ran an underground ministry to refugees and Russian occupation troops in Romania and Budapest.

At separate times in their lives, the Wurmbrands were arrested and sent to slave labor camps and prisons. Reunited in 1964, the couple eventually escaped Romania and testified before the U.S. Senate about the inhumane conditions of Communist prisons. The Wurmbrands spent the rest of their lives working with Voice of the Martyrs to assist the persecuted church around the world.

"Sabina" will release in theaters Nov. 8, 2021.