

MEET NEW COLORADO CHURCH PLANTERS

MOMENTUM

ISSUE #12 • OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF COLORADO BAPTISTS

COLORADOBAPTISTS.ORG



THE GOSPEL IN
SHADES OF PINK



IMPORTANCE OF
GUARDING THE GOSPEL

FUELED BY THE GOSPEL

Colorado Baptists have an unrelenting passion for sharing the gospel. We are about serving every Colorado church in its next step journey to accelerate gospel impact.

+ COLORADO BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF: A YEAR IN REVIEW



FUELED BY THE GOSPEL

CAN YOU IMAGINE YOUR WHOLE LIFE you've heard that your people will be saved by a Messiah? He will come and rescue you and reestablish your nation to rule itself and reign.

Then he comes. He changes everything.

But this kind of change is more of a spiritual salvation than a geopolitical salvation. It's a salvation that saves us from our deepest selves. It's a salvation that takes us from a path of destruction to a path of abundance. To life. Life forever.

You come to realize it deep down in your soul as you follow this Messiah for three years. Then this messenger's message is ultimately validated as you watch him take on the cross, be buried in a tomb, and then raised three days later from the grave.

There is no doubt. Salvation has come. You can be reconciled in your relationship with the Father. Not through your good works, but by the sacrifice of a perfect person. Jesus Christ. God himself.

And then as you begin receiving the fullness of this life—life eternal, life abundant, life everlasting, life that satisfies your every longing, a life where every bit of your internal, emotional, physical, mental, spiritual struggle will find its completeness—Jesus turns to you and says, this life is not for you only, but for others also. Now go and proclaim it.

This is where we are in the continuum of time. We are not only receivers of this great life, but we are messengers of this great message. We are witnesses to the transforming power of the gospel in our own lives. Each one of us are co-missionaries with God to proclaim to others how they too can receive this life.



We follow the Spirit's leading into towns, communities, and neighborhoods. Connecting with others—others who are different, others who are searching, others who are looking for hope—and we proclaim the message that they've been looking for.



And it is beyond a shadow of a doubt that this world is longing for life. It's cries for justice, for righteousness, for understanding are coming from passengers on a road to destruction looking for an off-ramp. Is there any hope?

As a response to this new life, we live in radical obedience with a calling that is far beyond any purpose this world could conjure up. We follow the Spirit's leading into towns, communities, and neighborhoods. Connecting with others—others who are different, others who are searching, others who are looking for hope—and we proclaim the message that they've been looking for.

The gospel. The power of God for salvation.

And just as the disciples were sent out with this message to take it beyond themselves, we too network together to take the gospel throughout all parts of Colorado and beyond!

Collaboratively, we move into urban centers and country sides. We move into the plains and into the mountains. We connect with natives, non-natives, and refugees. We set up outposts where this message is not only proclaimed, but lived out in a way for people to experience it in community.

And we boldly share what we can't help but share. The gospel.

Colorado Baptists are fueled by the gospel.

This is the unrelenting passion of your staff at Colorado Baptists. We are about serving every Colorado church in its next step journey to accelerate gospel impact.

Urgency demands clarity. Clarity demands focus. Focus demands intentionality.

What is your next step to accelerate gospel impact?

How can we serve you? ColoradoBaptists.org



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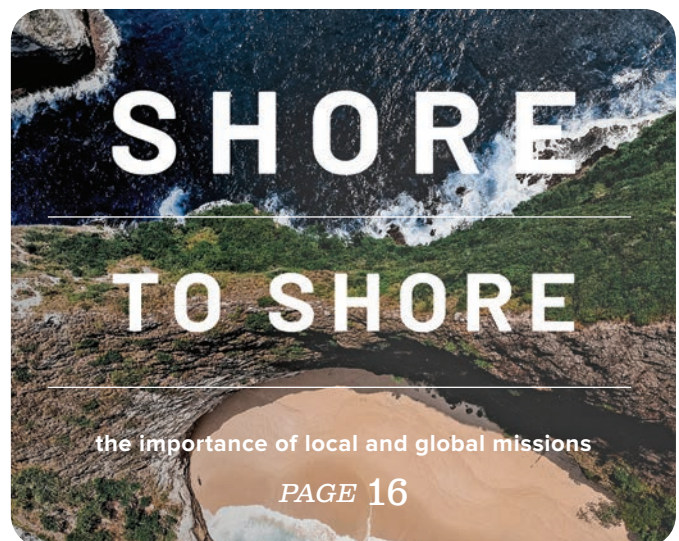
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ONE BLACK MAN'S PERSPECTIVE

“Always prefer
balance to extremes.”

-CHUCK SWINDOLL

EVER SINCE I HEARD DR. SWINDOLL utter those words, I've attempted to practice them in every aspect of my life, ministry, and vocations. For me, “balance” has become a personal value. I recognize that the answer to an issue is rarely black or white, but usually shades of gray. It's not usually yes or no, but oftentimes, maybe. If I'm honest, I'm not usually all right, nor the opposition, all wrong. How do we strike a balance in our thoughts, beliefs, and practices?

Such is the question regarding race relations in America and within the Southern Baptist Convention. As your President, I've committed to you that race will never divide us; I maintain that commitment to you. We also cannot ignore it. Even if you hold the theological position of some, that race is not real but a social construct of man, that doesn't change the fact that humans exist in varying shades, colors, and ethnic backgrounds, and that those differences are a source of division. Thus, it is a bit naïve, and possibly even derelict, for leaders to address the issue by simply claiming it not to be real.

As I've studied the race argument and heard varying perspectives, I've often thought to myself, *what would I say if I could write an open letter to the world?* So, I did. Some of you will agree with my sentiments and some of you won't. In the interest of

balance, I only ask that you read my “open letter” understanding that both you and I have thoughts on the issue that we'd do well to give ear to. Here goes...

Black People: I am so thankful to be black. We are a people of a rich heritage, marred with injustices, which have been committed against us. However, as we raise a window to point out, we must also raise a mirror and look internally. It's a breach of integrity to tout “white privilege” as the only reason we are left behind in society, but leave 67% of black children to be raised by single mothers. As a police officer, it's offensive to me that we continue to crucify officers, who in some cases are doing their job, but won't have a meeting with our young black men to encourage them to stop violence against each other. While there are some external factors, which must be addressed, such as: systemic racism, an uneven “playing field”, and historical inequalities, which left us in the starting blocks, while others progressed ahead, that cannot and does not relieve each person of individual responsibility.

White People: You have enjoyed advantage for so long that you don't even realize how advantaged you are. Slavery stifled the progress of the Black Race, and we are still recovering. It shaped our ancestry for centuries, and the effect is still present today. YOU CANNOT SIMPLY PUSH ASIDE A FEW HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORY without acknowledging its effects. To Whites in America, history gave you a running start. For Blacks, it placed a mental, emotional, and social bondage upon us, a bondage that in many ways still exists. What you view elementary such as: reading, writing, financial management, and basic business acumen, we perceive as advanced and in the eyes of some, unattainable. If you think we are unreasonable for believing that the odds of success are against us consider which neighborhoods have the lion's share of liquor stores, abortion clinics, and planned parenthood facilities. I also wonder, have you ever shopped at a grocery store in a black neighborhood and witnessed how little fresh fruit, organic products, and healthy options are offered. Is this purely an accident, or the results of a business decision, which 'just happens' to continue to put the odds of success in your favor, and the chances of failure in mine.

My thoughts on this subject are many, but the space to express them is little. I hope you hear my heart. In the wake of the decision of our Seminary Presidents to disallow the study of Critical Race Theory in Southern Baptist Seminaries, I was deeply troubled. I found myself wondering: Do I fit? Do I matter? Do they hear me, see me, and care about me...all of me? Do they accept me? And not just the parts of me that have assimilated into majority culture, but the parts that haven't?

I hope so...

John A. Moreland
President, Colorado Baptists
seniorpastor@denverbible.org



INVITING COLORADO CHURCHES INTO A

Next Step Journey

TO ACCELERATE GOSPEL IMPACT.

"The Next Step process helped our church to establish laser focused clarity about what we are doing and where we are going. We went into it having many of the right pieces, but the Next Step process guided us in developing the ones we were missing. It also brought a lot of clarity for our leadership and our church into how all the pieces of who we are and what we do, fit together."

—ADAM YOUNG, LEAD PASTOR • ELEMENT CHURCH

"The Next Step Journey is an incredible process for staff and key lay leaders to be a part of. Taking the time to do the work, learn from one another, and really consider what God is doing in our midst and what He desires for us to be doing in the future has been time well spent."

—SANDY BLAYLOCK, FAMILY MINISTRIES DIRECTOR • KEN CARYL CHURCH

"We have more clarity on who we are and where we are going now than ever before. Being a church just under 2 years old, we felt like we were still figuring that out in many ways, but with this process, we are seeing our identity and future come into focus!"

—CJ COUNTS, LEAD PASTOR • GRACE OF THE LORD CHURCH

"It was a light bulb moment for me to recognize that every church has got a next step. Every church has got something that we can go from and toward."

—STEVE VETETO, ELDER • COMMUNITY OF GRACE

"Our church gained clarity of vision through the Next Step process. We now know how to focus on the mission Jesus entrusted to us to reach our community."

—MARK SPENCE, LEAD PASTOR • MISSISSIPPI AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH



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Find more at
coloradobaptists.org/strategy



New Colorado Church Planters

Colorado Baptists is happy to welcome these new church planters to the field who have a deep passion to reach people in our state with the love of Christ! Take a moment to pray for them as they fulfill their residencies with partner churches that will further equip them to be sent out!



Blake Burget, along with his wife Kristen and their children are planting Calvary, West Littleton. They are in residency with Calvary Englewood in 2021.



Justin McCay, his wife Lacy, and infant daughter are planting The Local Church in Arvada. They are in residency with Journey Point Church in 2021.



Michael Van Waardhuizen, together with his wife Ally and their children are planting Capitol City Church, Denver. They are in residency with The Oaks Church in 2021!



Johnny and April Upchurch and family are replanting One Hope Church at Hillside in Greeley. Their sending church is Windsor Cornerstone Baptist Church.

Stonebridge Church in Wellington launched in January

Stonebridge Church in Wellington, CO, led by Pastor Jon Willhite, officially launched in January with a great turnout. Join us in praying for them and their mission to connect people to life found in Jesus Christ!



Churches meet needs in Denver with food drive



North Metro Church led by Pastor James Wagstaff teamed up with Grace Fellowship of Thornton led by Pastor Cholo Khongrath to help distribute boxes of food for the Metro Denver community for four weekends over January-February. Their partnership with DFW Lao Heritage and the USDA made it possible to bless the community and provide 30 pounds of food in each box!

Overland Celebrates Two Years

Overland Church in Fort Collins, led by Pastor Zack Thurman, celebrated two years at the end of January by having a Sunday filled with worship, baptism, communion, and fun! Dozens of lives have been changed for Christ, generosity towards missions has been a priority, and we can't wait to see all that God continues to do in and through this church!



Lives Changed in Broomfield

Since launching The Living Stone Church in Broomfield, Colorado, 4 years ago, church planters Keith and Sherri Baldrige have seen over 200 people pray to receive Christ. What an incredible testimony of lives being changed by the gospel!



REMEMBERING OUR ROOTS

"REMEMBER THE WONDERS HE HAS DONE." | CHRONICLES 16:9

LUANN TURNER
Mission 98 Executive Director

DURING ONE OF MISSION 98'S SOCIALLY DISTANCED SUMMER KIDS' CLUBS, five-year-old Riley sat on the sidewalk coloring with Anna, a staff member. Anna sparked Riley's interest when she began to share about the truth of Jesus, and the little girl decided she wanted to ask Him into her life. However, she was distracted by the ants crawling around her feet and began shrieking, "They're going to get me!" Anna reminded Riley that she could pray and ask Jesus for help, so the five-year-old immediately asked God to make her brave with the bugs. After a few minutes, Riley realized that she wasn't afraid anymore. She put her hands on her heart, looked up at the sky, and exclaimed, "He hears me!"

Looking forward in faith always seems to be rooted in how well we remember the past. Today, it is good to remember Riley and the wonder that she discovered one summer afternoon. We share a similar sense of wonder at Mission 98 as we reflect on the faithfulness of God—the faithfulness that was, is, and will be.



God was faithful 19 years ago, when Mission 98 was birthed at Bear Valley Baptist Church as a multi-housing ministry. It was nurtured and grown there until it launched as a nonprofit organization in 2017, with the intent of bringing the kindness of Jesus and the truth of His gospel to the approximately 98 percent of apartment residents without a church home.

God was and is working faithfully in other ministries across the metro area—many of which, like Mission 98, developed out of Bear Valley. Frank Tillapaugh, who pastored there for many years, wrote:

"A while back, I talked with Dave Runyan, leader of Denver Unite. Dave thinks that currently 75–80% of Christian ministry in education, medicine,

legal services, and housing in Denver has roots in Bear Valley. Today, the Denver Street School, Open Door, Inner City Health, and Mile High Ministries touch thousands of lives each year.”

Remembering our roots is important for all of us, especially in seasons of uncertainty or change, and Mission 98 has deep roots.

Our roots have allowed us to thrive in our three years as a nonprofit. Mission 98 has impacted more than 20 apartment, mobile home, and motel communities, built partnerships with a dozen churches, and laid the foundation for future growth with the addition of two full-time staff members.

God is faithful, and His work will not be stopped. Even COVID-19 couldn't hinder His plans for Mission 98. Although the pandemic shuttered most of our normal ministries and routines, it also opened doors for relationships beyond what we could have imagined. In mid-March, we began delivering bags of groceries door to door in eight communities. Included in each bag are devotionals or Gospels of John. Residents receive a knock on the door, a smile, and an offer of prayer with each gift bag. At this writing, our team has delivered over 2,000 bags, one door at a time. In addition to this, children have received 1,225 activity bags and over 3,000 meals this year. We cannot measure the gratitude with which this kindness is received. We cannot count the tears that have been shed in surprised appreciation. We cannot know the encouragement that these gifts have brought, each pointing to the kindness, care, and salvation of Jesus.

Lives are also being touched through our blossoming clothing ministry, as Mission 98 now has a van with which to distribute free clothing to various communities. Residents are experiencing

Today we are remembering all that He has done, seeing all that He is doing, and looking forward to all the surprises and miracles that He has ahead. The adventure continues, forging more memories for us to look back on next year and giving us more reasons to be startled by His wonders.



God's love through simple miracles, like finding a jacket in the perfect size, having a meaningful conversation, or receiving prayer.

We are also grateful for the miracles that took place during the holiday season. Between our partnerships and our direct ministry, 800 bags of groceries were sent out as Thanksgiving gifts, followed by the delivery of Christmas presents to children.

As we reflect on God's faithful work both today and throughout our history, Mission 98 now looks forward to what God will do. With my retirement pending, we have hired Fred Elliott-Hart to take Mission 98 into more apartments, to encourage and support more churches, and to develop an intern program that will train a new generation of city missionaries.

Even as we anticipate what is ahead for Mission 98, we understand that we cannot know the future—as 2020 has clearly shown. However, as the old song reminds us, we know who holds the future in His hand. Today we are remembering all that He has done, seeing all that He is doing, and looking forward to all the surprises and miracles that He has ahead. The adventure continues, forging more memories for us to look back on next year and giving us more reasons to be startled by His wonders.

To hear more stories, go to www.mission98.org.

THE GOSPEL IN SHADES OF PINK

BY DUSTIN WAGLEY
Fraser Valley Baptist Church

I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I LISTENED TO A SONG BY THE ARTIST, PINK.

At least not intentionally. My Pandora app was shuffling songs that she thought I would like, and she made a bad choice. She does that on occasion. How she could make the jump from Drew Holcomb to Pink, I'm still not sure. Here I was en route to preach at a High-Country church replant, being serenaded by Pink. Just a typical day, right? I let the song continue to play. The words were honest and coming from a deep place, but a little disturbing. As I listened to her lyrical pondering, I couldn't help but wonder if true, soul-level honesty should be a little disturbing.

Pink repeatedly asks if the one she's in relationship with will continue to love her anyway, even when she's not the spouse she should be, or even if there is borderline unfaithfulness on her part. She asks:

*Even if you see my scars
Even if I break your heart
Do you think you'd walk away?
If I get lost in all the noise
Flirt with all the other boys
What would you say?
Could you love me anyway?*

*Is it for better or worse
Can you still hold me when it hurts
Or would you walk away?
Even if I scandalize you
Cut you down and criticize you
What would you say?
Could you love me anyway?*

And with a haunted tone, she repeats the simple question over and over, "Could you?"

I could hear her pain as she honestly questioned and pondered the security of this relationship or the lack thereof, based on her own failures, shortcomings, and unfaithfulness. And right there on Berthoud Pass, the gospel shone through like the beams of blinding sunlight streaming through my windshield. As I navigated the switchbacks, the Lord was preaching His gospel to me through Pink, of all places. He's good at surprising us with the truth of the gospel when we're not necessarily looking for it. Maybe Pink's questions are really ours as well. Is His grace enough? Will His love for us continue? Is it secure?

*When we find ourselves in sin,
and when we realize he does see our scars,
will He walk away?
When we get lost in all the noise,
and when we've flirted with the things of this world,
could He still love us?
Could He?
How could He?*

Like Pink, when we're honest about the darkness of our own hearts, it's a little disturbing. And in that moment of questioning and pondering the security of our relationship with Him, we hear His beautiful word and feel it washing over us ... grace.

Like Pink, when we're honest about the darkness of our own hearts, it's a little disturbing. And in that moment of questioning and pondering the security of our relationship with Him, we hear His beautiful word and feel it washing over us ... grace. I wish there was a way to animate a word like grace in an article like this. If there was, you'd see a slow-motion clip of a mountain stream, slowly washing over the rocks and debris of our lives. His grace—His continual unmerited and unearned favor washing over us, even in our worst moments.

When we find ourselves asking the above questions, may we see and hear the truth of the gospel shining forth...

*No, He won't walk away.
Yes, He loves you.
Yes, His grace is sufficient for you in
your time of need.*

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:16

GUARDING THE GOSPEL

BY CHRIS MOORE

Vista Grande Baptist Church, Colorado Springs, CO

MY DAUGHTER PLAYED SOCCER when she was younger. I know very little about soccer, but no one else was stepping up to coach. I found myself in this role that involves more childcare than coaching. At the first practice I figured it would be good to teach the basics, which is all I knew. I asked if anyone could explain offense. One of the kids raised her hand and said, “it’s when we try to score.” I then asked if someone could explain defense. Another player enthusiastically said, “that’s when we let the other team score.” I had a perfect teaching opportunity to explain that defense is when we try to prevent the other team from scoring. I am not a soccer expert, but I know that!

Playing defense is important in almost every sport, but we often get more excited about high scoring offenses. However, if you score many points but can’t defend, your team will lose. Just ask the football

teams from the Big 12 Conference! Interestingly, Christian ministry involves both playing offense and defense. Just like in sports, we often get more excited and talk more about the offensive aspects. The Bible certainly emphasizes our call to go on offense and make an impact. But we are equally called to prioritize defense. In both his letters to Timothy, Paul urges him to guard the deposit entrusted to him (1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14).

Jesus warns us there will be people who will say, “did we not ... do many mighty works in your name?” He will reply, “I never knew you; depart from me” (Matt 7:22-23). In other words, there is a real category of actual people who will think they have scored, but they will come to realize they have not. If we get to the end zone but don’t retain the ball, we lose!

I want to be a part of a church that is willing to take great risks for the gospel and advance the gospel in as many ways as we can to as many people as we can. I also want to be a part of a church that is equally passionate about making

sure we have guarded and contended for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

Christian ministry is about faithfully transmitting the message that has been handed down to us. Our task is not to “clean it up” so that a new generation will more readily receive it. We will be held accountable if we sit idly and do nothing. But we will also be held accountable if, in our attempt to do something, we fumble. One of the keys for advancing the faith is to guard it.

Guarding the gospel begins with faithful preaching. One of the primary roles of the pastor is to explain regularly what the gospel is and what the gospel is not. I think this is most effective

Christian ministry is about faithfully transmitting the message that has been handed down to us. One of the keys for advancing the faith is to guard it.

when the pastor shows how the good news organically flows from the text. I try to avoid “tacking on” on the gospel to the end of a sermon. I look to find ways a text naturally leads us to see our desperate need and His gracious provision through Christ and the cross. If a pastor is not regularly coming back to the themes of sin and salvation, he is not advancing or defending the faith.

I want to score so much the opposing team gives up! I want to score in so many ways the only possible explanation is a supernatural work of God. I believe the only way this happens is when we become passionate about guarding the gospel entrusted to us even as we seek to advance this great news.

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Reflecting on Accomplishments in 2020, and Moving Forward in 2021

BY DENNIS BELZ
CBDR State Director

A S I REFLECT ON THE YEAR 2020 in Colorado Baptist Disaster Relief, I see our many dedicated and hardworking volunteers that have served through unprecedented times that included everything from distributing N-95 mask to first responders, hospitals, and nursing homes, a mass feeding deployment for Covid-19, conducting clean-up efforts from domestic unrest in Denver, a mass feeding deployment for evacuees from the Fenix apartment fire in Pueblo, Hurricane Laura clean-up in DeRidder, LA, and a mass feeding and clean-up from three of the wildfires in Colorado. This was another non-stop year as we ministered locally and in other states.

Due to Covid-19 we were unable to provide CBDR training for volunteers, but we were able to provide hands-on training with new volunteers in the field helping for the first time in these disasters.

During the mass feedings related to Covid-19 and the Cameron Peak fire in Larimer County, we had three of our feeding tents and some serving tables destroyed by high winds! This made it difficult to continue our ministry, but we persevered. The need for replacing the three tents and tables is a priority in 2021 so that we are prepared for future mass feeding events.

In October and November, we had teams come from Arizona, Hawaii, Missouri, Wyoming, and Nebraska to assist us with the needs of feeding evacuees and the clean-up/recovery from the three wildfires. It was exciting to see one of the volunteers from Hawaii who had never actually seen snow, get to enjoy a fresh snowfall! During these two months all of our vehicles, with the exception



TOTAL STATS FOR 2020 DEPLOYMENTS

- ▶ **1,420**
VOLUNTEER DAYS
- ▶ **10,326**
VOLUNTEER WORK HOURS
- ▶ **29,156**
MEALS PREPARED
- ▶ **353**
MINISTRY CONTACTS
- ▶ **197**
BIBLES DISTRIBUTED





of a small trailer, were deployed and put to use in Larimer County and Grand County. It was not an easy task getting all of these resources to sites on such a short notice, as one broke down twice while being deployed to Grand County. Our Colorado volunteers worked very long and hard hours to make sure we could feed the large groups of evacuees and have enough food supplies ready each day. If you notice in the pictures, nothing stopped us from this ministry, not even the snow or the frozen water hoses! I am thankful for our faithful volunteers that give up so much to

help those in need.

What will 2021 bring for ministry work for CBDR? We never know what will happen and when! In January I returned to Grand County in Fraser, to meet with their Emergency Manager and other officials to begin making our return plans for spring to complete at least 50 jobs that we were not able to complete once the winter snow and cold temps arrived. We still have work in Larimer County and Boulder to also complete. The Lord continues to provide opportunities for us to serve!

2021 GOALS:

- ▶ Equip our Communications Vehicle with updated radio equipment so we can ensure vital communication with our teams while out on the jobs, especially in the mountains of Colorado.
- ▶ Train volunteers to operate our new Mobile Command Unit
- ▶ Additional training for Team Leads (Blue Hats)
- ▶ Conduct at least 1 Regional Training for Volunteers
- ▶ Restructure Feeding Teams to have area/regional teams ready to deploy in their areas of the state.
- ▶ Enlist a team photographer to be able to take photos during deployments
- ▶ Train and develop volunteers for our Chaplain Ministry
- ▶ Enlist drivers to pull our units to and from deployments
- ▶ Replace our 3 destroyed Feeding Tents and prep tables

If your church would like to have Colorado Baptists Disaster Relief come and share about this exciting ministry, please contact Dennis Belz or the Colorado Baptists General Convention office. You can also visit our website www.ColoradoDR.org for updates and training opportunities.



WOMEN OF PRAYER

BY CLAUDEAN BOATMAN

Colorado Baptists WMU Executive Director

WOMEN INTERCEDING FOR COLORADO BAPTISTS' church planters, pastors, and churches is a vision that has captured my heart.

We know God uses prayer to advance the Great Commission. Prayer makes us partners with God and partners with those for whom we pray. Prayer opens our eyes to possibilities and people we have never noticed. For all that prayer does, it is time for women to join in targeted prayer for our beautiful state.

Colorado Baptist women are invited to take part in a multi-faceted approach to prayer in our state. First, women can pray by name for church planters working in Colorado. Church planters in Colorado work in diverse settings. Some of these settings are in such rural locations that monthly grocery shopping means an all-day trip. In those places, long drives to meet with people in the community and isolation from other pastors and Christian friends are common. These church planters know their independent, hardworking neighbors need Jesus, but showing their neighbors the need is challenging. In urban settings, church planters find Jesus' message competes with the lure of recreation and worship of nature. Distractions of all kinds draw people away from the message of the gospel. Church planters need our prayers for perseverance (Luke 18:1).

Another facet of our prayer approach is praying for our pastors and churches by name. Many women faithfully pray for their own pastors. What would God do if we lifted up the needs of each other's pastors and churches? God answers such prayers by transforming our communities and calling out Harvest Workers who boldly share Jesus.

Praying for missionaries in the United States and around the world is the third facet of this prayer strategy. We have heard the saying that praying for missionaries is holding the rope for them as they share the gospel. I have heard missionaries tell of being saved from great danger at the moment someone was praying for them. Many missionaries are serving in places that are so dangerous that sharing Jesus puts them and national believers in harm's way. Praying for workers and believers in these areas cannot be overdone, nor the importance of prayer understated. Missionaries serving in open countries and in North America are not exempt from danger, either. Health, family, travel safety, and refreshment are prayer needs of every missionary. Praying for missionaries allows them to work under God's protection and guidance.

"God wants to answer prayers for Colorado. He wants to advance the gospel in Colorado. He wants to use us."

Fourth, praying women impact the future of church planting and missions by praying for children and youth. When I joined my local church, I chose one child and youth to pray for each day. One of those became a believer and the other has committed to being a missionary. God used those experiences to convince me that a woman's fervent prayers for the generations coming after her make a difference. Prayer gives us the opportunity to intervene in the lives of children and youth that God wants to use to change eternity.

Women praying for each other's spiritual lives is the last facet of the prayer vision. We are more sensitive to God when we pray for others and when others pray for us. Our targeted prayers for each other make us aware of the lost around us. God uses those prayers to empower us to share Jesus and walk closely with Him. Prayer binds us together more tightly than crafts, music, or travel ever could.

In literacy ministries, we remind our workers, "The effectiveness of your ministry is directly tied to your prayer for the ministry." It is

the same for our churches, church plants, missionaries, and each other. God wants to answer prayers for Colorado. He wants to advance the gospel in Colorado. He wants to use us.

If you are a woman who wants to be part of an effective prayer ministry for Colorado Baptists, please contact me at ColoradoWMU@coloradobaptists.org. If you are a pastor, planter, or church leader, please talk to the praying women of your church and invite them to join this prayer movement. We want to pray for you!

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SHORE TO SHORE

BY WESLEY GOLD

IMB Missionary to South Asia

(Names have been changed for security purposes)

I CAN VIVIDLY REMEMBER THE MOMENT. My now wife, Emma, and I were on our very first date in West Palm Beach, sharing our stories underneath a Banyan tree overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Little did I know, this conversation between two naive college students would become a catalyst for us to eventually uproot everything and cross that very same ocean with the gospel a decade later.

It's funny, as we were sharing our stories, it quickly became clear that we were not on the exact same page. I had a deeply burdened heart and vividly clear call to my native context of America, particularly for the unadulterated gospel to take root in an increasingly complacent church culture in the midst of an increasingly post-Christian secular culture in the United States. I wanted to see gospel-centered, Spirit empowered, biblically saturated church communities planted in their localized contexts, especially in the more secularized and influential urban environments of the US.

I was a fiery young whipper snapper who had radically encountered Jesus just a couple of years earlier, and I wanted everyone to know! You see, though I had grown up in an amazing, biblically literate, theologically rich, reformed church, I was the rebel of my family. I suppose as the youngest of six boys who all followed Jesus faithfully, I was able to get away with more. Or I was just so self-focused that I didn't grasp my desperate need nor the beauty of our distinctly Christian household. Who knows.

But I lived like your classic younger brother, prodigal son—an utterly dual life in which, on one hand, I could talk circles around anyone wanting to debate Arminianism vs. Calvinism, or Dispensationalism vs. Covenant theology. Yet, on the other hand, I could also walk circles around anyone who wanted a challenge in beer pong.



I was your quintessential hypocrite.

Leading the youth group in memory verses and the mission's team on overseas trips, while simultaneously sneaking out with girls, getting drunk every weekend and cheating my way through AP Calculus.

It was in college that I truly encountered Jesus. I was reading through the Gospels for the first time of my own accord, and Jesus' words haunted me with piercing conviction: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate even their own life, they cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear their own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple... Yes, any one of you who does not renounce all that they have cannot be my disciple... He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Luke 14:26-35) The Holy Spirit finally tore through my hardened, egotistical heart to convict me of my sin and show me my dire need for a Savior.

He gave me ears to hear.

And as soon as I repented of my hypocrisy & rebellion, and believed Jesus as my rescuer & righteousness, a complete one-eighty occurred. All of the sudden, the knowledge I grew up around took root in the soil of my heart and was put into high gear. I wanted everyone to know the beauty of this most gloriously wonderful news! God rescues sinners for relationship with Himself! God actually forgives me—forgives you, forgives us—of sin so that "He might be our God, and we might be His people. Behold! The dwelling place of God is with people."

This is what fueled my passion for American urban church planting. I couldn't let others miss out on any of this gospel glory due to complacent cultural "churchianity" or to cultural idols of a progressive secular age.

So, back to that date with Emma in West Palm Beach. A girl I really like. I have this fiery burden for my American people; she has this beautiful burden for the least reached peoples of the earth. I vividly remember her asking me, “So what do you think about missions?” Mind you—this is our FIRST DATE!

“Uhhhhh... missions?” I asked, puzzled. I had just shared my burning heart for America, and all she has in response is international missions?

Somehow, I convinced her that I would go anywhere as long as “God called me.” But secretly I wanted to stay. And not-so-secretly she wanted to go. This led us on a long-yet-wild-yet-unbelievable adventure to move overseas. A dream that in God’s good providence and kind leadership has been over a decade in the making. We started having conversations about topics unfamiliar to me at the time: unreached and unengaged peoples, the 10-40 window, what it means to be a “missionary.” I started reading books on mission—not least of which was Piper’s *Let the Nations Be Glad* (if you haven’t read it, you’re welcome. But also, be prepared to pack your bags).

I studied the library of Scripture through the lens of the *missio dei* (a fancy theological term for “the mission of God”), and I had my eyes opened and heart captivated by God’s desire to be worshipped and glorified throughout the entirety of the globe! Beginning in Genesis, where Abraham is blessed in order to be a blessing to all the nations. To Habakkuk declaring, “The glory of YHWH will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.” To the Psalmist worshipping, “Let the peoples (Hebrew: *ethne*) praise you, let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad in You and sing for joy!” To Jesus

commissioning, “You will be my witnesses and make disciples to the ends of the earth.” To John’s revelation of “multitudes from every nation, tribe, people and language” worshipping the Lamb!

This vision has captured my attention and affection. So, for the past decade, my wife and I have been engaging in gospel-centered, mission-oriented ministry in post-Christian, urban contexts. We have engaged upper-class elites in Palm Beach, Nepalese, and Karen refugees in Aurora, and lower income black and Hispanic communities in Denver. We have also been a key part of planting churches in other parts of urban Denver. Yet, despite the tangible needs surrounding us, we cannot shake God’s burden for the least reached globally.

While local ministry in America is absolutely necessary, global missions is tragically neglected.

This propelled us to lead short-term trips to engage Albanian Muslims in Eastern Europe and Buddhists in Thailand. Now, we have become convinced that it is time for our family to join long term cross-cultural ministry. We have become utterly burdened by the concentrated lostness of 1.5 billion souls who are not connected to Jesus across South Asia.

So, with a God-seized dream that has been over a decade in the making, our church in the heart of 5 points Denver, the Summit, is not only sending us but providing ongoing support for our little family that longs to be a small part of the cosmic movement of God to see the gospel flourish as churches are planted among South Asians.

Except this time, it’s not just with that girl I chatted with on the shores of the Atlantic, whom I eventually married. It’s also alongside our three kiddos with the backing of an entire church family.

We couldn’t do this without you. May God receive all the glory He rightly deserves!



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

—MATTHEW 28:19

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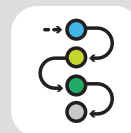
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