

connect

Meeting America's
Greatest Need

BCP
A PUBLICATION OF
BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTERS

Fall 2016



Enriching the Lives of Missionaries

Stephen Little, President

When I was a church planter, there were three things that I was constantly working toward:

- **maintaining an active prayer and financial support team,**
- **continuing education/training in church planting to increase our impact on an ever-changing culture, and**
- **leadership development in my life as well as the lives of those in the church plant.**

As president of Baptist Church Planters, these three areas are still on my mind and heart when I think about our church planters. The need for support and training are continually present; therefore, the Administration of BCP is working to address each of these areas to help our missionaries and their ministries.

To address the first need, we sent one of our Regional Field Directors, **Tim and Marsha Weeks**, to a training center which trains missionaries in developing local church and individual ministry partners for prayer and financial needs. It is proving to be a valuable training.

We addressed the second need by sending one of our seasoned missionaries, **Paul and Janet Robinson**, to attend Baptist Mid-Missions' School of Church Planting. Our missionary came away from the schooling with this statement, "*I would recommend that the School of Church Planting be attended by anyone who is planning to plant or is presently planting a church...*"

Last, we sent one of our Regional Field Directors, **Bob Sauser**, with one of our seasoned missionaries, **Pastor Peter Jenks**, and men from his church plant for Leadership Training with Pastor Jon Jenks at Calvary Baptist Church in Wisconsin Rapids. Pastor Jon Jenks leads a program with weekly sessions designed to build spiritual leadership into the lives of missionaries and pastors. Pastor Peter Jenks has seen excellent spiritual growth in the men who are participating in this program.



Tim and Marsha Weeks



**Paul and Janet Robinson (center)
with instructors**

Sending administration and missionaries to training events is costly but necessary. In 2017 I would like each missionary to add at least one of the above training opportunities to their schedules, but it will take resources to make this a reality. Most U.S. missionaries are underfunded which makes it difficult to engage in vital continuing education. Most sending churches in America are doing all they can to help their missionaries, but their support does not generally go toward these kinds of training opportunities.

So how can you help enrich the lives of missionaries with this type of training?

We have set up a fund at BCP called **The Missionary Enrichment Fund**

to help meet these needs for missionaries. This *Connect* goes out to about 5000 homes. If only 20% of these homes gave \$25.00 before the end of the year, we could fund this project with \$25,000! Will you help our U.S. missionaries get this needed training? Please visit bcpusa.org/mef to provide a secure donation to this fund.



ChurchCare CONSTRUCTION

What is a Missionary Builder Worth?

Back in September I had to call a serviceman for our HVAC unit at the service center. The system was not cooling correctly. I knew enough to check the obvious: filters, drain lines, and if the power was on. It appeared to be something more. The serviceman came, and in literally minutes had diagnosed and fixed the problem. No parts were required, and he apologized for charging me \$155. That was the policy and the minimum cost.

ChurchCare missionary builders prove their worth every day. We may not think about their value until we need to call a plumber or electrician. Then we are reminded of the value these skilled servants are to the cause of Christ. Missionary builders don't charge the going rates for skilled tradesman. They serve day after day, building facilities for churches and ministries, and trusting God to provide their needs.

Exercise your math skills. Consider a recent church building that was completed in 2015. Just for the sake of example, let's say that the building project lasted 12 months. There were three builders assigned to the project. A recent report shows that our builders work an average of 42 hours per week. If we allow for down time and calculate that the builders are productive on the job for 48 weeks of the year, that would total over 2000 hours per man per year. Skilled tradesmen in today's economy would command \$25 - \$30 per hour. That is not what you and I would pay for a serviceman; that is what the businessman would pay his



employee by the hour plus benefits. You and I pay the service call at \$155. We could easily value our builders worth at the service call rate, but even if we only take an average of \$25 for those 2000

hours and multiple by three, the value is at least \$150,000. ChurchCare Construction estimates that the cost of building can be reduced by 50% when missionary builders are used.

So the next time you have to call the electrician, remember our Missionary Builders. Thank God for their commitment and sacrifice. Pray for their safety and support. Pray for their children. Not one of our builders thinks they are sacrificing. They will tell you that it is a privilege to serve God with their skills to see buildings completed for the cause of Christ.

“What’s it like to be a missionary builder’s kid?”

We asked this question to Ryanne and Riley Howard, son and daughter of missionary builders **Brent and Michele Howard**. We shared Ryanne's thoughts in the last *Connect*. Here is Riley's response:

Hi, my name is Riley. I am fourteen years old. I can remember when I was four years old that we first started talking about being missionary builders. I was very concerned about leaving the things that I knew, like my bedroom, my family, and my church. It helped a lot when we got our fifth-wheel trailer, and I could see what my bedroom was going to look like and where my toys were going to go. I still don't like to move as much as we do, but I do like to be able to see a lot of the U.S.

I also like being in all the different churches and finding things that I can do to help in each church, like mowing lawns for the pastor and people in the church, shoveling the sidewalk in the winter, making friends with the church kids, and gaining new (adopted) grandpas and grandmas. Some of the things that I like to do are riding four-wheelers, throwing

hatchets and knives, hunting, and working with my dad on the job.

One of my good friends is Jake Hopkins. We first met at his church, Fellowship Baptist Church, in Watertown, NY, where my family was working on building a new sanctuary. He would often come with his dad to Tuesday night work night, and we would work on our fort outside using scrap lumber and nails. When we moved to the next job, he and his dad came and helped, and we again made a fort inside and outside. We made the one inside a “snack shack” and started to serve drinks and candy to the helpers. These are some of my favorite memories so far of being a missionary builder's kid.



Will my church survive?



Not every church will survive the changes in culture or community! Research indicates that Sunday school attendance is down 50% and that only 21% of Americans attend weekly religious services. Three to four thousand churches are closing each year. Solomon reminds us in Ecclesiastes 2:1 that “to everything there is a season.” Where does a church turn when closure seems imminent? ChurchCare counselors are prepared to help navigate the difficult decisions: legal procedures, maintenance of the property, preservation of testimony and assets. If you would like to speak to one



of our counselors, please give us a call. Sometimes the closure of one church can be the beginning of many others!



ChurchCare
a subsidiary of Baptist Church Planters

Construction of a building in Buckeye, Arizona, is nearing completion!

Jesus said He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Desert Hills Baptist Church and Baptist Church Planters' missionary, Pastor Adam Zamora, have been stretched to the breaking point, but God is prevailing! Over the past year the question has been asked over and over, “What else could the local building authorities ask for?” The full story would take volumes to document the details of the delays and additional time requirements. Even the total dollar costs, though extremely high, don't tell the whole story. All of these challenges can only be explained by the fact that we are living in a world that is controlled by the prince and power of the air. The only explanation for overcoming those issues and for the construction being started is God. By the grace of God we will see the completion of a permanent building for Desert Hills Baptist Church in the next two months! It will be a 15,500 square foot building that will seat 392 in the auditorium. Many of God's people were involved in bringing us to this point, but only God gets the glory for making it happen. Here are some highlights from the building process:

- Completion of 24 months of application, review, and approvals from many different agencies;

- \$ 590,000 given to Desert Hills by the church family, other churches, and individuals for down payment and start-up fees; and
- \$ 2.5 million total cost for the project, including land, with an appraised value of \$3.5 million upon completion.

Desert Hills Baptist Church is a church plant being pastored by **Adam and Elizabeth Zamora** and assisted by **Wayne and Shanna Dale**. The Zamoras have been working in Buckeye, Arizona, for 8 ½ years. Friends and family with businesses and resources have stepped up to help finance the building. A first mortgage in the amount of \$1.7 million was obtained, and ChurchCare was vital to the process by providing secondary financing that was required by the main lender to meet their requirements for acceptance. ChurchCare also provided financial support to the ChurchCare missionary builders, **Larry and Lillian French**, who are on site coordinating the construction.

God's grace has continued to sustain the efforts, and that unending grace will see the project through to completion. You can have a part. Here are specific ways that God's grace can shine through you. 1) Please pray that they



will be able to get a Certificate of Occupancy by mid-December. 2) Please pray that God will supply the budget deficit of \$350,000 due to the rescinding of tax exemption, having to hire a general contractor, and delays caused by weather challenges and slower bank approval. 3) Please pray that God would send people to help finish construction. Skilled carpenters, finish electricians, and people who are willing to work are needed. Paul told the Philippian believers that he didn't desire a gift; he desired the opportunity for fruit to abound to their account. As you pray, would you also consider investing in eternity by giving or going to help?

This has been a huge undertaking, but Desert Hills also has a huge God. The opportunity to reach Buckeye with the gospel is wide open. Desert Hills will be the first church plant in ten years with a building in the city of Buckeye. The testimony of what God can and is doing will be exciting. If you can help, contact Pastor Adam Zamora at 623-698-7177.

The Purpose of Partnership

Tim Weeks, Eastern Regional Field Director



Those of you who regularly read the *Connect* publication may have recently seen this umbrella which gives a visual representation of how missiology fits under ecclesiology. In the following paragraphs I would like to flesh out what that looks like in real life as BCP, a mission agency, assists churches in fulfilling the Great Commission. How that commission is fulfilled by churches is rooted in the biblical principles governing the basic practices of the early church as seen in Acts 2:42 – continuing in the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers. Paul serves as an example to us in the relationships he nurtured for partners in ministry. The church at Philippi is an example of a partnering church. The churches in Galatia are an example of a fellowship of partnering churches. The ramifications of the meaning of this concept provide us with the motivation and methodology for our model of ministry.

After hinting at his relationship with his coworkers in previous epistles (“companion”, “fellow workers”, “co-laborers”), Paul made a startling statement in his epistle to the Philippian church (1:5) when he said, “Because of your **partnership** in the Gospel.” I have recently wondered why sometimes the word “partnership” is translated as “fellowship.” This word is used frequently in the NT, and this gives reason to pause and consider its importance. It is actually a very familiar term; we are most familiar with the Greek term “*koinonia*,” which means communion or joint participation. “Fellowship” conjures up many emotions and images when it is mentioned, but what did that word bring to mind in the

thoughts of the original readers of the NT? Perhaps D.A. Carson can help us better understand. In his comments on Philippians 1:5 he writes:

“In common use ‘fellowship’ has become somewhat debased. If you invite a pagan neighbor to your home for a cup of tea, it is friendship; if you invite a Christian neighbor, it is fellowship. If you attend a meeting at church and leave as soon as it is over, you have participated in a service; if you stay for coffee afterward, you have enjoyed some fellowship. In modern use then, fellowship has come to mean something like warm friendship with believers.”

In the first century, however, the word commonly had commercial overtones. If John and Harry buy a boat and start a fishing business, they have entered into a fellowship, a partnership. Intriguingly, even in the New Testament the word is often tied to financial matters. Thus, when the Macedonian Christians send money to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem, they are entering into fellowship with them (Rom. 15:26).”

D. A. Carson, Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 16.

If we follow Carson’s reasoning, we discover that the New Testament concept of fellowship is a self-sacrificing partnership. He states further on that *“the heart of true fellowship is self-sacrificing conformity to a shared vision. Both John and Harry put their savings into the fishing boat. Now they share the vision that will put the fledgling company on its feet. Christian fellowship, then, is self-sacrificing conformity to the gospel. There may be overtones of warmth and intimacy, but the heart of the matter is this shared vision of what is of transcendent importance, a vision that calls forth our commitment.”* Notice how those in partnership are linked by their **‘shared vision.’**

As we consider BCP’s philosophy of ministry, we first must consider this biblical basis. We seek partnerships because of the Gospel and for the Gospel. Indeed, this philosophical foundation has shaped our purpose and practice:

1. BCP emphasizes the importance of the local church in the placement of church plants.
2. BCP encourages connections between churches (in local, state and national fellowships) and church plants and missionaries.



3. BCP encourages its missionaries to foster individual and church partnerships for the purpose of prayer and funding through the sharing of resources.

Partnership is multifaceted. We want to further explore these truths of God’s Word and how they impact the why and how of what BCP does. Our series on partnership continues in our next *Connect* as we look at what having a consistent emphasis on partnership provides in the lives and ministries of those involved.

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Welcome!



We are happy to welcome **Eric Wilmeth** to our office staff. He and his wife, Amy, have served with BCP for twelve years, most recently in Bennington, Nebraska, as the lead church planter working alongside Peter and Mary Lou Jenks. God has developed a variety of skill sets in Eric that have equipped him for the ministry needs of this mission agency.

a few small technology companies for over a decade providing training development and delivery, sales support, and more. All of these education, work, and ministry experiences have served as preparation for his new role here at the service center. One of Eric's favorite verses is Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." That verse describes how the Lord has led in his life - illuminating the next step on the path which God directs.



Eric's educational pursuits led him to receive a B.S. in adult education from Iowa State University and a M.A. in Religion from Faith Baptist Theological Seminary. Eric worked with

Eric and Amy are the proud parents of four wonderful children: Faith (13) in 8th grade, Adam (9) in 4th grade, Ethan (8) in 3rd grade, and Asher (3). The kids are adjusting to the new surroundings, making new friends, and eagerly awaiting the snow to fly so they can try out a sledding hill in their back yard!

Eric joins us as the Operations Manager and will oversee the various projects and activities that go on in the service center.



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Dr. Michael Peck,
 BCP Family Author
 and Counselor

“Life can change very quickly.” Having experienced this directly in his life, Dr. Peck has written a short booklet in which he shares the thoughts of a husband who suddenly has gone from the role of being the protector to being the caregiver. He understands the feelings of bewilderment, confusion, fear, sorrow, or even anger that protectors are apt to experience when

some intruder disrupts that role. He invites the reader to join him as he describes what the Lord is teaching his wife and him on their journey with their invader, cancer. In this booklet Mike shares several biblical truths that will encourage the reader, whether husband, wife or parent, to identify with the sure Help of the all-powerful God Who makes it possible to “rejoice and be glad” in each day.

We will send this booklet free of charge to all who give a gift to BCP during our end-of-year campaign (www.bcpusa.org/giving).

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Frances Davenport

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