

# connect

Meeting America's  
Greatest Need

BCP  
A PUBLICATION OF  
BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTERS

Fall 2019

## Transitions

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." Solomon goes on to list all the possible comparisons in life – a time to be born, a time to die; a time to plant, a time to harvest... and so on. I have been reading the book of Ecclesiastes over the last year along with the New Testament. It has been good to take a step back and consider the various seasons of life and to see the New Testament, especially the Acts of the Apostles, as stages and transitions in ministry life. I have come to one of those transitions in my own ministry life!

My dad, Chuck Little, said this to his sons before he passed into heaven, "*When you begin to lose your strength, you start to lose your ability to envision big things to accomplish.*" I am not totally out of strength, but my dad's words are ringing true regarding my ability to envision the next big thing to work on at Baptist Church Planters. Since coming to serve as president of BCP, I have always been able to know exactly what to work on and develop. The path ahead was clear to me! However, for the past year the only thing that has made any sense to me has been the development of a Succession Plan. This comes from doing an internal assessment of my giftedness, strengths and abilities to perform as a leader. After much prayer, I set my mind to work on this process, and I took counsel from trusted advisors.

May I take this opportunity to speak to my co-laborers in pastoral or organizational ministry? Internal assessment is not about what you as leader have already done nor what is being done; it is more about your vision for the future. Internal assessment reveals whether or not you are the best-equipped leader for the direction the church or organization is headed. When a leader realizes he is not, it is time to get out of the way and let someone else take the helm. I have watched many stay longer than they should have, usually to the detriment of the church or organization. We think of transitions as a difficult process, but when the time is right, God will smooth the way.

*Stephen P. Little, President*



Early in 2019 I met with the Executive Administration and Council Officers to discuss what God was doing in my heart. At the March 2019 Council meeting I presented an 18-month Succession Plan. The Council had many questions but, in the end, decided to begin implementation of that plan. The Council organized an Exploratory Committee to write a Leadership Profile and subsequent documents to guide a Search Committee to look for the next president of BCP. At the 2019 September Council meeting, the Council organized the Search Committee. I was invited to serve as an advisory member to the Committee. This means that I will be in the saddle as President of Baptist Church Planters until September of 2020 with a flex time until March 2021, if a new president is not found by September 2020.

Transitions are always expensive and create a lot of uncertainty, but throughout church history our Lord has directed His servants and His church through transitions.

Would you do a few very important things?

1. Would you **pray** for the BCP Presidential Search Committee?
2. Would you pray for the next President of BCP? He will need wisdom to know the will of the Lord!
3. Transitions are expensive – would you give to help the transition team cover expenses?
4. Once the new president is installed, would you pray for him daily for one year? It will be a critical year for him! For the first year he will feel like he is drinking out of a fire hose!

A final thought. Jesus is still building His Church both quantitatively and qualitatively. Let's continue to follow His lead!

# Assessment:

## Measuring Progress toward a Goal

Merriam Webster defines assessment as “the act of making a judgment about something.” What that “something” is determines the information needed to “make a judgment.”

Several years ago Baptist Church Planters and ChurchCare decided that we needed to do some assessment. The administration spent two days answering questions such as ‘what is important to God’ and ‘what is the end product that we expect from all the ministries of this Mission.’ All the questions led to one answer: the Church, the Body of Christ, is important to God; therefore, we expect all the Baptist Church Planters’ ministries to focus on serving the Church. The reason for our existence is to facilitate that never-ending cycle of planting, strengthening and reproducing local churches. We arrived at our judgment through honest discussion, some very objective measurements and helpful counsel from outside our organization. Those two days of assessment guide our ongoing evaluation and measurement of our policies and processes to ensure we continue on the path of improvement.

Churches also need to assess, evaluate, measure and pass judgment on themselves to determine whether they are fulfilling their God-given purpose. Every believer is to be engaged in living out the Great Commandment and carrying out the Great Commission. Making disciples leads to teaching and training disciples to become disciple-makers. As disciples

are trained and more disciples are made, the church has the resources and the personnel to reproduce themselves by planting or revitalizing another church. The cycle of the Great Commission continues as churches reproduce themselves.

A healthy church will constantly assess their focus and the results of their efforts. A recent article I read stated that more than 3500 churches close each year and that 85% of churches are plateaued or in decline. “That which is measured . . . improves” (Peter Drucker). Does your church have a method to measure and ensure improvement?

The information needed to make a judgment or to assess whether a church is moving toward the goal of carrying out the Great Commission requires taking inventory and asking hard questions. Spending time as leaders and then as a church family to consider what is important to God, to evaluate current ministries, and to determine where the church is investing its resources are critical methods of measurement. Examining the fruit from those efforts will then reveal the “gaps” or areas that need attention. Once the church identifies the “gaps,” a judgment, a Biblical process or plan, can be set in motion under the direction of the pastor and leadership team. This plan may require changes in ministry and may include some form of revitalization



David Whipple,  
Executive Vice President

process. Change will not come easily and will include an element of risk. If you truly want what is important to God, you must submit your desires to conform to His desires.

Baptist Church Planters and ChurchCare have several ministries that are designed to evaluate and assess church ministries and help identify areas needing attention. We can also provide counseling, guidance or leadership based upon the need and the request from the church. These ministries are:

- Intentional Discipleship Ministry
- Leadership Training
- Intentional Transitional Ministry
- BCP Youth Ministry
- Church Revitalization Process
- Facility Assessment
- Building Ministry
- Financial Services

We exist to facilitate churches to stay on course to becoming healthy, reproducing churches. Check out our websites [www.bcpusa.org](http://www.bcpusa.org) and [www.churchcare.org](http://www.churchcare.org) where you will find resources and information designed to encourage and facilitate church ministry. We stand at the ready to assist churches to become more healthy and reproduce (plant) healthy churches.

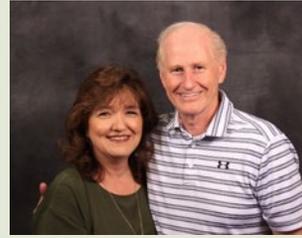


Go to [bcpusa.org](http://bcpusa.org) and click on Church Health Check for more!

# FROM THE FIELD

## Announcing the retirement of Walter and Beverly McDonald

Prior to their marriage in 2006, Walter and Beverly had each been married and in full-time ministry before their spouses were taken Home. After their marriage, Walter and Beverly joined the BCP Family as church planters in 2011. They have faithfully served the Lord at Providence Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida. Walter and Beverly have been passionate about encouraging outreach, and it is evidenced through the church's efforts in VBS, their Annual Harvest Fest and their weekly Bread Ministry. On any given Saturday morning you will find a dedicated group of members gearing up to distribute perishable and non-perishable foods to needy families. Around 80 families benefit from the food kitchen at Providence where they are provided meals. Names and addresses are collected for the purpose of follow-up. After the food kitchen is cleaned up, Walter and a couple of the men have gone and made visits where they seek opportunities to share the Gospel. Please pray for the McDonalds as they transition into retirement, and please pray that the Lord will direct Providence in their search for a pastor and as they recover from a recent fire set by an arsonist.



## Welcome to our new missionaries Marty and Susan Basinger

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basinger2@yahoo.com

Marty joined the Air Force believing that he had been saved at age 11.

The Lord used Chick tracts that he was given to open his eyes to his need for a Savior. In December of 1975 Marty accepted Christ on his knees beside his bunk. As a child, Susan had a desire to go to church and be a good Christian. In the fall of 1972 teenage Susan received a long-awaited invitation to go to church. There she heard and responded to the Gospel. Marty and Susan met during college and married in 1980. The Lord gave them three sons, and now Marty and Susan have eight grandchildren. They have served as church planters in Japan where they successfully began two churches. Marty served as dean and teacher at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, and as senior pastor in churches in MN, GA, and FL. The Council approved Marty to serve as ITM Pastor (Intentional Transitional Ministry), and they are currently serving a church in CO. Marty and Susan desire to help local churches during their times of transition.

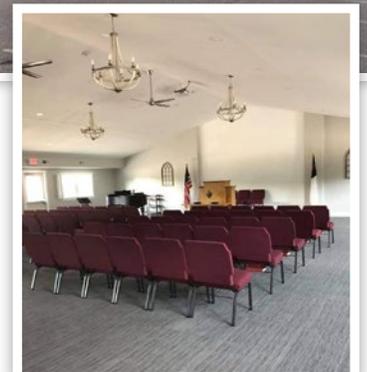


**Congratulations extended to Wayne Dale for completion of his ordination on October 12.**



## ChurchCare Construction builders complete building project in Millbury, MA

ChurchCare missionary builders Brent and Michele Howard and Jimmy Stevenson completed the building renovation at Pinecrest Baptist Church in Millbury, MA, in July. The ceiling pitch was raised over the sanctuary and a new roof added, a new gable added over the main entrance, exterior doors replaced, and some painting done. As you pray for our builders, please pray that God will give them opportunities to Build Lives as they Build Churches.



# Teacher Journey Training



## INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

This journey leads a teacher up a path that will guide him/her closer to God, advance essential skills, and forward intentional and relational discipleship.

Journey with me up a mountain, a spiritual mountain. This journey is hard by nature but is life-altering, extremely satisfying, and leads to life. A.W. Tozer spoke of this mountain as the mount of God:

***“Our Lord said to His disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.’ Let me exhort you to take this seriously. It is not to be understood as mere Bible teaching to be stored away in the mind along with an inert mass of other doctrines. It is a marker on the road to greener pastures, a path chiseled against the steep sides of the mount of God. We dare not try to by-pass it if we would follow on in this holy pursuit. We must ascend a step at a time. If we refuse one step, we bring our progress to an end.”***

This mountain is climbed by every believer as they mature in the faith. In this climb, they all come to the step in the journey of obedience labeled “make disciples.” This is the direct command of Jesus given before He ascended into heaven. There seem to be many people who stop short of taking this step. This begs the question, “Why?” Why would any believer stop short of discipleship?

The Church in the past several years has relied heavily on its society, parents and teachers to accomplish the task of discipleship. Each has been prominent in history, but our current difficulty with the classroom involves our techniques and structure where we are mostly centered on information about the Bible with an assumption that the student will have plenty of examples to follow in their lives for application of that knowledge to take place. Unfortunately, in the post-Christian era full of broken family structures, we no longer live in a society that shares our Biblical worldview. Our culture is segmented and leans toward a private faith experience which leaves infant believers wandering

around the base of the spiritual mountain without direction on how to grow. Today, four out of five teens who grow up in the Church leave their home for college or the work force and fail to seek out a church. To stop this trend, it is paramount that these young believers are shown how to take ownership in their own spiritual journey up the mountain. We not only find ourselves in great need to disciple our youth but our adults as well. Discipleship is totally reliant on intentional relationships initiated by mature Christians, and those relationships can be wonderfully fostered in the classroom. Eighty percent of churches in America today have plateaued or are in decline. Intentional Discipleship Ministries, under the leadership of Jon Jenks, has been pro-active in helping church leadership to revive the momentum and culture of discipleship in the church where people disciple people (2 Timothy 2:2). Now IDM is launching a parallel track designed for teachers, guiding the way they educate “to equip them for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).

Teacher Journey Training is designed to help teachers master the art of equipping. This course begins with an in-depth weekend retreat and continues with weekly online meetings for six months to help guide their preparation and creative design of a discipleship-driven classroom experience. Learning to teach for discipleship will help teachers take another step on their own personal ascent of the mount of God, and it will enable them to equip students on their journey as well. Upon completion of this course there is continued help as we facilitate the discipleship process to continue.

Please contact me at [cwood@bcpusa.org](mailto:cwood@bcpusa.org) to inquire more about the Teacher Journey Training. Teaching is a spiritual activity that demands us taking every step up the mountain for full obedience to God, and it is my heart’s desire to see that momentum and culture of discipleship reach into the instructional settings of our churches.



**Chip Wood**  
Director of BCP  
Youth Ministry

# Calling all Tentmakers



Eric Wilmeth  
Vice President of Operations



You may not be good at working with canvas or those pesky little fiberglass poles that make more of a tangle than a tent, or you may avoid camping altogether because of the fear-inducing trauma caused by the mere thought of having to construct a tent. Perhaps you find yourself on the other end of the spectrum and think of yourself as the Davinci of canvas. Regardless of your abilities with an actual tent, I am talking to you as a potential tentmaker. Although Paul took the idea of being a tentmaker very literally, we use the term a little more generally around here.

To us, a Tentmaker is a spiritually mature layperson who is financially self-supported and led of the Lord to serve with BCP in aiding missionaries and church plants. These are individuals who are already active servants being used in their

local church, often serving in multiple capacities. Tentmakers are ones who are busy about the work to which God has called them, understanding that the life of a Christ-follower is a life fully lived for Him. There isn't home life, work life, and church life; there is life bought by Christ's blood and lived for Him.

I wonder how many of us have sat in church and listened to a missionary report and felt the urge to do something. It may not be to sell everything and become a full-time vocational missionary, but we have felt the tug of the Holy Spirit to do more. If that has happened to you, perhaps you are being led to be a Tentmaker. Perhaps the Lord is leading you to a change of scenery, another spot to plant your life. Would you consider moving across the country (or maybe just to the

other side of town), taking a job transfer or finding new work in a specific location all to become a part of a church planting team? Perhaps to join a missionary who is fighting to revitalize a struggling church and is in desperate need of spiritually mature servants? Tentmaking doesn't have to be a long-term commitment. Consider using your next vacation as a short-term missions' trip to support a church plant or a church revitalization.

God's family is full and robust with all sorts of folks with all sorts of skills. Every missionary pastor needs Tentmakers who will join in the work. Tentmakers offer a valuable service to the church planting team.

## Introducing:

# Intentional Transitional Ministries



Baptist Church Planters knows that healthy churches plant churches. Church analyst and consultant Thom Rainer considers years six through ten of a pastor's ministry to be the time of "fruit and harvest." Sadly, many churches do not experience this since they have, on average, a pastoral change every six years. Not only does the church not hit full stride, they often find themselves in a holding pattern for 12 to 24 months while looking for a new pastor. Some churches experience substantial decline during this time due to unresolved conflict or lack of unified leadership in the interim.

Baptist Church Planters, in response to multiple calls for help, developed the Intentional Transitional Ministry. Director Scott Owen, a graduate of the Intentional Pastor University, is responsible for recruiting, training and coaching ITM Pastors to serve as interims in Baptist churches. These interims are accountable to Baptist Church Planters and will be equipped to help churches remove obstacles, experience hope and healing, and develop clarity of purpose as they maintain a clear path

to their next pastor. The Intentional Transitional Ministries Director is available to serve churches in transition by offering assessments and onsite evaluation so that the church can determine if an ITM pastor is their next step.

ITM also seeks to address the importance of succession plans for churches. Too often churches with a long-term pastorate lose momentum after the pastor leaves. It is not uncommon for the next pastor to leave in just a couple of years. We want to encourage churches to develop a succession plan while the long-term pastor can lovingly contribute to the process.

Because conflict is a key contributor to shortened pastorates, peacemaking is another service offered through ITM. Scott is a certified Christian Conciliator and is equipped to help church leaders work through conflicts. Church leadership teams will have greater success and retention if they are able to work together. ITM can offer tools and services to help churches develop a peacemaking culture.

It is important to us at BCP to assist churches in the interim times of ministry to get back on mission, be healthy, and plant new churches.

Please contact Scott Owen, ITM Director, for more information.



Scott Owen  
Director of Intentional  
Transitional Ministries



## A Tribute to *Pastor David C. Dunkin*



My first contact with Pastor David Dunkin (1923-2019) was as a young assistant pastor in 1976. He, with other men of 'The Greatest Generation,' was a leader in the Ohio Association of Regular Baptist Churches. They were great at their calling and the work of planting and building churches.

Canadian-born, David came to the USA to serve as a pastor and missionary. A graduate of



**Paul Reimer,**  
Retiree  
Coordinator

Wheaton College, he married his sweetheart, Verna, raised four children, and served the Lord in eighteen churches – faithful to the One Who saved him at nine and called him into the ministry. When most are ready to retire and spend their Golden Years camping, fishing, or traveling, the Dunkins made plenty of room to serve the Lord. In November of 1990 at the age of 67, they joined the Baptist Church Planters' family. They worked hard and helped establish this agency as a mission dedicated to planting and revitalizing churches. In his first annual report, he apologized for not getting more done than the fourteen projects he completed for BCP while also serving as the pastor of Abbe Road Baptist Church in Elyria, OH. Later when David and Verna reached their eighties and nineties, they continued to volunteer weekly at the Service Center. A prayer from David to which we all could Amen is, "May the Lord continue to bless all those whose zeal for home missions with Baptist Church Planters will make it a great and effectual ministry until Jesus comes." Well said and well done, Pastor David C. Dunkin.



Annual Christmas party for volunteers

# BCP

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### MEMORIAL GIFTS

*Since our last publication, gifts were given in loving memory of:*

**Inez Swartz Allegra Whipple**

If you would like to give a gift in memory of someone, we will list the name in the *Connect*.

If you would like to receive the *Connect*, visit [bcpusa.org/Connect](http://bcpusa.org/Connect). Sign-up where you can designate receiving it by mail or email.

We'd love to hear your feedback and thoughts from our *Connect*. Contact us at [bcp@bcpusa.org](mailto:bcp@bcpusa.org).

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