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# Ohio Baptist MESSENGER

THE STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO



**Messengers Celebrate God's Work  
during SCBO Annual Celebration**

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### *-- Tell us your story --*

*The Ohio Baptist Messenger* is a monthly publication highlighting what the Lord is doing in SCBO churches or ministries, and we need your help! Tell us your story and we could feature it in an upcoming issue of *The Messenger*.

Please submit your stories to [messenger@scbo.org](mailto:messenger@scbo.org).

For more information, please contact Stephanie Heading at [messenger@scbo.org](mailto:messenger@scbo.org).

# Unity Marks 71st SCBO Annual Celebration

“Unity” is the word that best describes how I felt as I walked away from the 71st Annual Celebration of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, November 11-12, at Jersey Church, New Albany. I want to personally thank Pastor Matt Read and the entire staff team at Jersey Church for opening their doors and being such gracious hosts to all of us

There are many reasons why I sensed unity among Ohio Baptists. Here are just a few:

**Unity in Cooperative Program Giving** – Through the first eleven months of the 2024 budget, SCBO churches have given more to the CP than during the same time in 2023 by nearly \$100,000.

The Cooperative Program is the financial fuel that helps plant churches, send missionaries, and train the next generation theologically at one of our six seminaries here in the United States. While giving to CP is down nationally, giving continues to be up here in the Buckeye State...thank you!

**Unity in the Pastor’s Conference** – All of our speakers at the 2024 Pastor’s Conference were planters and replanters from around Ohio! Not only did all of them preach powerful and spirit-filled messages, but the interaction among participants was palpable.

SCBO President Adam Pursel led a group exercise that encouraged pastors and leaders to break into small groups so they could get to know one another through prayer and shared ministry experiences. What a joy to see a diverse group of Ohio Baptists not just sit with one another, but fellowship with one another!

**Unity in the Business Session** – There was a unified spirit across the board when it came time for the election of officers, voting on the budget, and even the Resolutions Committee report.

Ohio Baptists, we have so much to be thankful for and encouraged about in the Buckeye State. It is such a joy to serve the Lord and you. If I can come in 2025 to serve you or your church in any way, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me at [jwestbrook@scbo.org](mailto:jwestbrook@scbo.org).

Encouraged,



Dr. Jeremy Westbrook  
Executive Director-Treasurer, SCBO



## ATTEND URBANCREST’S ANNUAL MEN’S CONFERENCE!



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**Ted DiBiase**  
Retired Pro-Wrestler,  
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NAMB Director of Pastoral Leadership



**Brent Snook**  
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# President's Pen

## *Jesus Gives Rivers of Living Water*

*37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Jn 7:37–39). (2016). Crossway Bibles.*

What an incredible promise!

Everyone is in desperate need of salvation and satisfaction. Outside of Christ, people wear themselves out seeking satisfaction in empty cisterns.

But Jesus offers rivers of living water!

As believers in His Name, we have received a down payment on this promise. We currently enjoy the indwelling, life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit! He produces in us wonderful gifts like love and joy and self-control.

The question we must answer is this: Does God desire more people in our community to receive this same gift?

And, if so, does God desire that we fervently, faithfully proclaim Christ in our community?

I know that you know the answers to these questions.

God desires all people to repent and come to a knowledge of the truth! And God has commanded His people to go! He has commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations - proclaiming that Jesus is offering living water to anyone who thirsts!

Not just a cup-full...

**RIVERS OF LIVING WATER!!!**

So let's be faithful to enjoy and invite. Let's enjoy the amazing gift that Jesus has won for His people, and let's invite others to know Christ as well!

One of the great things about being an Ohio Baptist is the support. Help is just an email or phone call away. There are amazing resources in our state to help church leaders. We can help you proclaim the Word of Christ in your community so that lost people can hear and respond to the Gospel! You can always reach me at [president@scbo.org](mailto:president@scbo.org).

Grace and Peace,

Adam Pursel  
SCBO President





# REVITALIZE

*assisting declining churches back to health*

## Seeking Struggling Churches, Healthy Churches for Revitalization Partnerships

By Mark Jones, SCBO revitalization consultant

I am praying for you. Our SCBO revitalization team is praying for you.

We are seeking struggling congregations that are willing to honestly assess themselves so that we can help develop a path to revitalization.

Some of our Ohio congregations have decided to replant, others have decided to merge, and a few have chosen to repurpose their property, but most have begun a pathway to revitalization.

We are seeking healthy congregations in every region that are willing to foster struggling congregations. Healthy churches who desire to foster are also determined through an assessment. The beauty of fostering a church is that each congregation maintains autonomy, but the struggling church covenants to be cared for and led by the healthier congregation for a period. This is cooperation at its finest. We are seeking prayer for the coming years in the SCBO.

This past month, we celebrated all that God has done and is doing in our state among our churches. We are entering into a partnership with Corpus Vitae. Recognizing that more than 70% of our SCBO congregations have plateaued or are in decline, Corpus Vitae provides a proven revitalization pathway entitled ReFocus.

Congregations are led by a certified pathfinder coach to help discover and determine the direction God is leading them. This will be a major tool in the realm of church revitalization. In August, ten pathfinders representing every region in the SCBO were certified and half of our pathfinders are currently taking their own congregations through the ReFocus process.

For more information on the ReFocus process, go to [www.corpusvitae.org](http://www.corpusvitae.org).

Mark your calendars now for Friday, March 7, and Saturday, March 8, as Dr. Richard Blackaby, president of Blackaby Ministries International, comes to Cuyahoga Falls for "The Ways of God." This event is for pastors, spouses, and church leaders. More information will follow.

Plan now to join us September 19-20, 2025 and spend an evening in Lancaster with Mark Clifton, NAMB executive director of replant.

Will you commit to praying for the churches in your association, region, and state to seek revival and a kingdom focus in everything they do? If I can be of any assistance to you or your congregation, please email me at [mjones@scbo.org](mailto:mjones@scbo.org) or check out [www.scbo.org/revitalize](http://www.scbo.org/revitalize).

## SCBO» 2024 Annual Celebration

Messengers reelected SCBO President Adam Pursel; First Vice President, Pastor Dave Welsch, and Pastor Karlie Hale. Mary Leigh Snowden retired from the office of Recording Secretary and Charity Betts was elected to her first term as Recording Secretary. Kay Arnold, First Baptist Church, Lancaster, (not pictured) was elected to her first term as Assistant Recording Secretary. Photo by AJ Frasure.



## Messengers Celebrate God's Work During SCBO Annual Celebration

By Stephanie Heading, Ohio Baptist Messenger, managing editor

Over 330 messengers, guests, and exhibitors from across Ohio gathered at Jersey Church in New Albany, Ohio for the 2024 State Convention of Baptists in Ohio (SCBO) Annual Celebration, November 11-12.

The Annual Meeting celebrated God's work in Ohio and cast vision for the future as SCBO Executive Director-Treasurer Dr. Jeremy Westbrook and the SCBO staff recounted multiple ways the Lord is blessing his work throughout the state.

### Abundant Blessings

"The highlight of our Annual Meeting was hearing reports of increased giving to the Cooperative Program, a 96% increase in baptisms over the past two years, and 41 new churches in the state convention this year—28 plants, five replants, and eight new affiliations through our SEND Ohio partnership," Dr. Westbrook said.

As messengers celebrated God's work in Ohio, the Worship Team from Lifepoint Church, Mount Vernon, led attendees in praise and worship.

Dr. Westbrook delivered his fourth Executive Director's Report since assuming the position in August 2021.

"God is at work in our state. He's at work in our midst," Westbrook shared. "This is a time to praise the Lord."

He also urged Ohio Baptists to catch the vision for Ohio through the local church. "I want to see an awakening

in the Buckeye State. We serve faithfully and best when we serve the local church. How are you leading your local church? What's your vision?"

Dr. Westbrook also highlighted Worship 4:24. "This year was the highest year in attendance. God is moving and he is working in our midst."

God is also moving in Next Generation ministry through events like Super Summer Ohio. "There's a spark among the next generation," Dr. Westbrook said. "We must be a part of that."

Ryan Jones, Send Network Ohio, celebrated the growth of church planting and replanting throughout Ohio this year. "We are very thankful for our partnership with SCBO," Jones said.

He rejoiced at the wide range of churches being planted across the Buckeye State. "When you look at the list of the churches we've planted in Ohio this year, you see the kingdom." Send Ohio has planted ethnic churches, African-American churches, as well as multiplying churches in 2024.

SCBO Revitalization Catalyst Mark Jones explained the need for healthy churches to come alongside struggling churches and foster the weaker back to health. "If we work together, stronger churches with struggling churches, we are going to see a move of God."

*Story continues on the next page...*



## SCBO» 2024 Annual Celebration

Reggie Hayes, SCBO senior staff, celebrated the fifth anniversary of CampUCAN and the Lord's work among urban young men in Ohio. In 2024, 95 young men attended CampUCAN and 65 of them accepted Christ as their Savior. In addition, 28 were baptized at camp.

"Mentors preach the gospel and when we see a movement of God happen and see young men give their lives to Jesus, we know God is in the blessing business," Hayes proclaimed.

In the past five years, 190 CampUCAN attendees have accepted Jesus.

Dr. John Heading, director, Ohio Disaster Relief, reported a record year for disaster deployments. "Ohio DR deployed 31 times this year with 12 deployments just in the month of October," he said.

### Powerful Preaching

SCBO President Adam Pursel, pastor of Lifepoint Church, Mount Vernon, delivered the President's Address from John 7:37-39, reminding messengers that God is not done saving the lost.

"Is God done saving sinners in your city? Some of you, if we were to observe your church, would say the answer is yes."

Pastor Frederick Clement, One Love Community Church, Dayton, brought the Annual Sermon. He urged pastors to focus on "The Most Important Task," preaching the word of God. Using 2 Timothy 4:1-5, he challenged them to preach the word with consistency, with conviction, with patience and with conscientiousness.



Attendees at the Annual Celebration enjoyed worship led by The Worship Team from Lifepoint Church, Mount Vernon. Photo by AJ Frasure.



Over 300 messengers, guests and exhibitors attended the 2024 SCBO Annual Meeting. Photo by AJ Frasure.

"Be sober minded," Clement said. "Stay focused on the great call of the word of God. Feed God's sheep. Endure suffering. Endure in the call to pastor a church. Take comfort in knowing it's hard for all of us."

### Orderly Business

Messengers approved a Cooperative Program Budget of \$4,848,000 and continued a 50/50 split between SCBO and the SBC. The budget was increased one percent from last year.

"Since our beginning in 1954, Ohio Baptists have given over \$183,000,000 to missions through the Cooperative Program to not only reach the neighborhoods around Ohio, but the nations around the world," Dr. Westbrook said.

In addition, messengers unanimously approved a resolution "On the Lordship of Christ Over All Political Powers" as well as a constitution and by-law amendment that removed the position of Historical Secretary from the officers of SCBO.

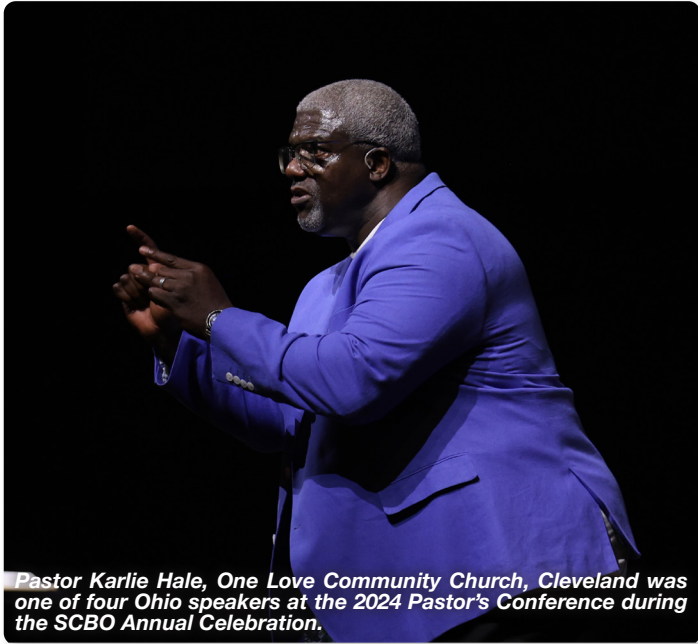
Messengers reelected SCBO President Adam Pursel, Lifepoint Church, Mount Vernon; First Vice President, Pastor Dave Welsch, First Baptist Church, Heath, and Pastor Karlie Hale, One Love Community Church, Cleveland, to their positions for a second year without objection.

Messengers also elected Charity Betts, First Baptist Church, New Lebanon, to her first term as Recording Secretary, replacing Mary Leigh Snowden who retired. Kay Arnold, First Baptist Church, Lancaster, was elected to her first term as Assistant Recording Secretary.

The 2025 SCBO Annual Celebration will be held at Lifepoint Church, Mt. Vernon, November 10-11, 2025.

**SCBO** 2024 Annual Celebration**SCBO Pastor's Conference Features Ohio Speakers**

By Stephanie Heading, managing editor



Pastor Karlie Hale, One Love Community Church, Cleveland was one of four Ohio speakers at the 2024 Pastor's Conference during the SCBO Annual Celebration.

The Pastor's Conference kicked off the 2024 SCBO Annual Celebration at Jersey Church, New Albany, on Monday, November 11, featuring messages from four Ohio pastors.

SCBO President Adam Pursel invited the pastors to challenge and encourage their counterparts from across the state. The Worship Team from Lifepoint Church, Mount Vernon, led vibrant praise and worship throughout the conference.

Pastors Karlie Hale and Mark Glenn urged pastors to lead when called while holding on to their first love.

Pastor Karlie Hale, One Love Community Church, Cleveland, preached from Joshua 1:1-11 focusing on Joshua's call to lead. "There's no mistake when God calls you in His timing. Say yes!" Hale proclaimed. He called leaders to practice immediate obedience to the Lord. "No excuses! Always be ready to go when He calls you. When God calls you to lead—Go!"

Pastor Mark Glenn, Summit Baptist Church, Pataskala, challenged pastors to reclaim their first love using Revelation 2:1-7. "Doing all the right things in ministry didn't impress Jesus," Glenn said. "According to this text, the measure of the success of one's ministry is found in his affections for Christ. The church at Ephesus apparently abandoned their affections."

Following Glenn's message, Pursel had the crowd out of their seats during a group project designed to give pastors time to engage with each other.

"My primary hope was that it would deepen existing relationships among Ohio pastors and even create new friendships among our leaders," Pursel said. "Ohio has amazing leaders and we all benefit when we actually know each other!"

Participants enjoyed the interactive experience.

"The feedback I received was incredibly positive," Pursel noted. "Many asked for the document we used to run it. Even more said it was a refreshing break from three hours of sitting in a chair and listening. It allowed them to stand up and enjoy engaging with friends and meeting leaders from around the state."

After the group project, Pastors Aaron Taylor and Kirk Kirkland exhorted their fellow pastors to persist in ministry and remember the mission.

Pastor Aaron Taylor, Living Hope Church, Columbus, encouraged pastors to endure during the ups and downs of ministry from I Corinthians 1:26-31; 2:1-5. "When ministry is good, stay humble," Taylor noted. "When ministry is challenging, stay humble and depend on Jesus. We get to devote our lives to serving King Jesus. We have nothing to boast about except Jesus. Without Jesus we are nothing."

Pastor Kirk Kirkland, Revive City Church, Cincinnati, reminded pastors of the mission—bringing the lost home to Jesus. Using Luke 15, Kirkland said, "Jesus is eating with the tax collectors and sinners. Some in the crowd didn't understand what Jesus was doing with 'those people,'"

Recalling the moment he truly understood the call to share the gospel with all people, Kirkland said, "Every person in Cincinnati, Ohio, is someone's son and someone's daughter and God has called me to care about them. It's right that lost people come home to the Father and we celebrate their arrival. Pastors are being called home to have the heart of the Father."

SCBO President Pursel was pleased with the 2024 Pastor's Conference. "I thought the Pastors Conference was a homerun! Our four Ohio speakers knocked it out of the park. The musical worship was fantastic," he said. "The goal was to worship Christ and to encourage and edify those who came, and I think we did both well!"

The Pastor's Conference will kick off the 2025 Annual Celebration, November 10-11, at Lifepoint Church, Mount Vernon.



## SCBO 2024 Annual Celebration

# Stowe Award Presented to Pastor Stephen Spurgin

By Steve Hopkins, SCBO senior staff

Stephen Spurgin is the 2024 recipient of the Darty and Dot Stowe Award which was presented on November 12, during the SCBO Annual Celebration at Jersey Church, New Albany. Spurgin is the 30th recipient of the award.

Each year, the award is given in memory of Darty and Dot Stowe who served Ohio Baptists from 1954 to 1981. It is presented to a pastor or minister who has served faithfully, never recognized like those in the larger, more visible churches but leaving a legacy and serving in the spirit of 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12. Annual gifts to Georgetown College from the Stowe family provide the Darty and Dot Stowe Award.

Spurgin started his ministry in music, singing in revival meetings, being a regular guest soloist on the radio, and serving churches in Missouri. At one point, he directed the worship and children's ministry at a church plant.

In June 1973 he married his sweetheart, Carla. Six months later, in January 1974, Spurgin underwent two surgeries for cancer and doctors told his family he had six months, maybe a year, to live and would never sing, speak, or smile again.

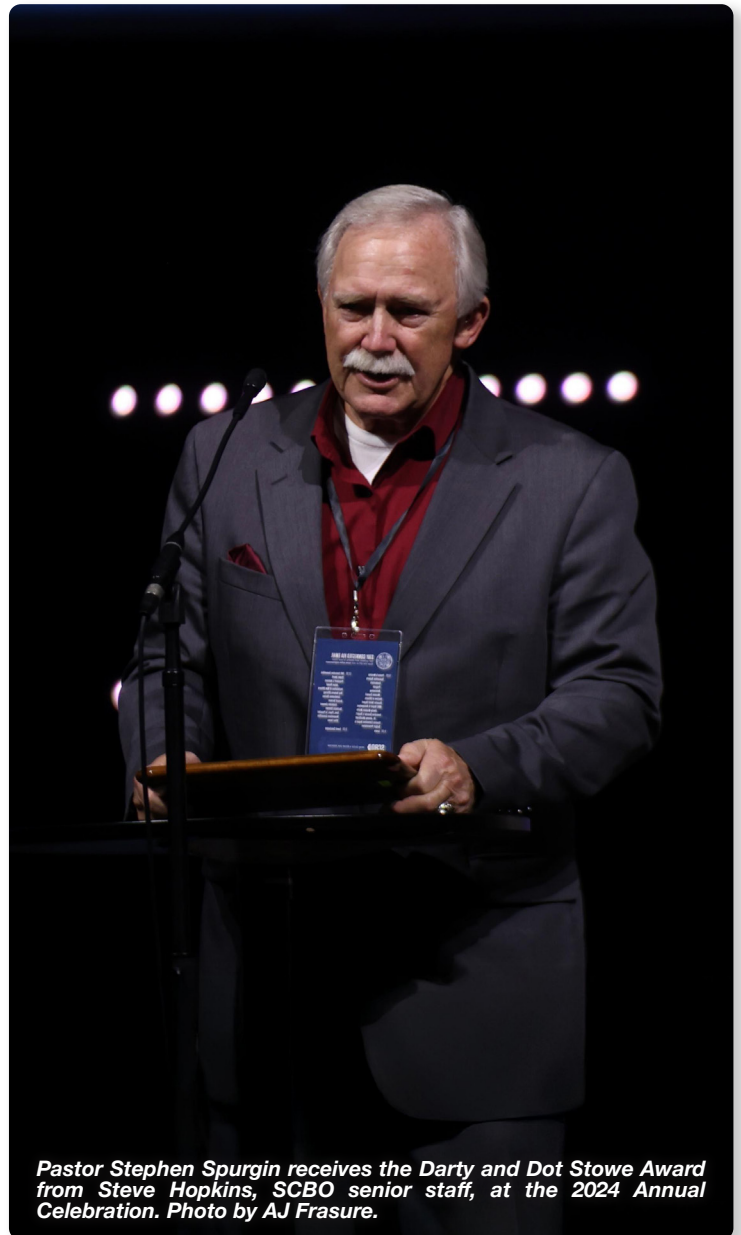
After six-and-a-half hours of surgery, the doctor said medically he should be dying but God had chosen to spare his life and his voice.

Spurgin's ministry in Ohio began when he was called to serve as the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Cambridge, where he served for over eight years. During his tenure the building was expanded, new churches were planted, mission trips were fruitful, and the church doubled in attendance from the 70 when Spurgin arrived.

The Spurgins spent a few years back in Batesville, Arkansas. Then, they returned to Ohio, serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Miamisburg. He retired in 2018, and spent a year filling the pulpit for other pastors and attending church with his family.

Spurgin trained for the Transitional Pastor Ministry through the Greater Dayton Association and SCBO. He has served as Transitional Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Wilmington, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Vincent, and Moraine City Baptist Church, Dayton.

He served two terms as Ohio's trustee for the North American Mission Board where he had the opportunity



*Pastor Stephen Spurgin receives the Darty and Dot Stowe Award from Steve Hopkins, SCBO senior staff, at the 2024 Annual Celebration. Photo by AJ Frasure.*

to meet and encourage church planters. He was impressed with God calling out and raising an army of church planters to preach the gospel and impact lostness.

Spurgin also served on the SCBO Mission Council, as Vice President of SCBO, and on the Finance Committee.

He and his wife Carla have been married for 51 years. They have two daughters, Stephanie and Sarah, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

## Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

### Never Too Young to Share God's Word By Sue Sprenkle, IMB writer



Kevin Singerman, International Mission Board missionary, and his son, Micah, wait for the friend's baptism in the pond. Micah shared a chronological Bible story in the village and their friend came to faith in Jesus through it. IMB Photo

Every Sunday, 8-year-old Micah Singerman heard his parents, International Mission Board missionaries Kevin and Victoria Singerman, tell chronological Bible stories in Kampala, Uganda. He then watched the Ugandan believers go out and share the same story with people in their community.

One Sunday, Micah eagerly announced to the church that it was his turn to share just like they did. He planned to tell a Bible story to children on the family trip to rural Ugandan villages.

He practiced all week to tell the story of David and Goliath.

"I like that story," Micah admitted about the 1 Samuel 17 passage where a young David fights the giant with a sling and three stones. "I've known it my whole life, so I thought the other kids might like it too."



Micah Singerman, IMB missionary kid, tells the story of David and Goliath to children in a Ugandan village. The 8-year-old volunteered to tell the story after watching members of his Ugandan church share chronological Bible stories each week. IMB Photo

The hardest part about preparing was remembering the six questions asked after the story to make sure everyone understood. These ranged from, "What does this story tell you about God?" to "Who are you going to tell?"

He had to be prepared for any kind of response.

The weekend finally arrived and the family drove hours over rough roads to the village.

As they got ready for bed that night, Micah approached his dad. His nerves were getting the best of him. He wasn't sure if he really wanted to share a story in front of a bunch of people. Kevin reassured the 8-year-old that he didn't have to tell the story, but suggested he talk to God about it first. Micah nodded and they bowed their heads in prayer.



A Ugandan girl raises her hand to answer a question. After the story was told, Micah Singerman asked questions to make sure everyone understood. IMB Photo

The next morning, Micah awoke with an answer. He told his dad without a doubt, "God said to tell it!"

More children than chairs squeezed into the small, mud and thatch structure. Micah looked around the room to make sure everyone was ready, then launched into the story of David placing his faith entirely in God to defeat Goliath. When he asked the follow-up question, "What about this story applies to your life?" hands shot straight up.

"Be courageous."

"Stand up for God."

One answer, though, stood out. John wanted to put his faith in God. His older brother is a local ministry



# Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

partner with Kevin and Victoria’s Kampala team. When John saw the younger Micah stand up to boldly share a Bible story, he knew God could use him in the same way. He didn’t have to wait until he grew up, he could follow Jesus now.

“It’s amazing to see God doing His work in and through your kids,” Kevin said. “When Micah struggled, he encountered God and was obedient. Now we welcome John into the family of God.”

The new believer waded into a nearby pond. John turned to the gathered crowd and shared his testimony. Then, the local pastor baptized him. When he came out of the water, Micah cheered and sang praises to God along with the rest of the village.

“If God tells me to share another Bible story, I’ll definitely do it again,” the 8-year-old said with a beaming smile.

Editor’s note: Micah Singerman is the grandson of retired IMB missionaries Jeff and Barbara Singerman of Ohio.



Micah Singerman, IMB missionary kid, tells the story of David and Goliath to children in a Ugandan village. The 8-year-old volunteered to tell the story after watching members of his Ugandan church share chronological Bible stories each week. IMB Photo



## INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

 <p><b>67</b></p> <p>PEOPLE GROUPS AND PLACES WERE ENGAGED</p>	 <p><b>728,589</b></p> <p>PEOPLE HEARD THE GOSPEL</p>	 <p><b>178,177</b></p> <p>PEOPLE BECAME NEW BELIEVERS</p>
 <p><b>102,417</b></p> <p>PEOPLE WERE BAPTIZED</p>	 <p><b>21,231</b></p> <p>NEW CHURCHES WERE STARTED</p>	 <p><b>146,026</b></p> <p>PEOPLE RECEIVED LEADERSHIP TRAINING</p>

[WWW.IMB.ORG](http://WWW.IMB.ORG)

\*Statistics collected in 2023

## Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

# Lottie Moon Offering Blesses Ohio Missionaries, Spreads the Gospel

By Jeff Singerman, retired IMB missionary



Jeff and Barbara Singerman. Photo courtesy of Jeff Singerman.

My wife Barbara and I became missionaries with the International Mission Board (IMB) over 34 years ago in Benin, a French-speaking West African country. Benin is known as the birthplace of voodoo and its 54 people groups desperately need to know the Creator God, Jesus Christ. We were privileged to see scores of churches planted and thousands come to Christ once they heard and embraced the gospel.

During the first five years of our ministry in Benin we were working with a handful of Baptist churches helping them establish a student ministry because over 50% of the country was under the age of 25.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) helped us provide student retreats and camps which resulted in churches being planted. National partner leaders were mentored and disciplined to lead that work which allowed us to see where we should serve the Lord next in Benin.

My family and I began praying about which unengaged and unreached people group we should target for church planting. The Ayizo people, numbering about 400,000 with little to no evangelical churches, were where we sensed the Lord's direction to go.

On a vision trip among the Ayizo, I encountered a man who stepped out of his mud hut, thatched-roof dwelling. I told him we were there to tell him about the Creator God. His response stunned me. He said, "We know there is a God, we know that he has a plan for our lives, but we just don't know who he is."

That was the invitation I was looking for. Who else would go and tell these people that there is a God that loves them, a God of whom they had never heard? Many were won to Christ and churches were planted but still there were scores of other people groups that needed the gospel.

We received an invitation to travel several hours north of where we lived to work with our partners to reach another people group. One day we had our LMCO vehicle loaded with volunteers and local Baptist partners as we sought to reach a remote village and another unreached people group. As we traveled down the red clay, dusty road we saw a man with a machete in his hand running towards us through the tall corn fields. When I saw him chasing us, I was a little anxious, but Barbara said, "No, we need to stop and see what he wants."

He had seen the "Baptist Mission" sign on the side of the truck and asked if we could come to his village to start a church. We found out that he was not a believer.

One of our partners accepted the challenge to return with him to his village and led him and seven family members to Christ. Once again God was gracious, and a church was planted. That happened simply because we had been provided with a vehicle through LMCO and were in a place where God had prepared someone to hear the gospel.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering continues to have a huge impact on missionaries serving with the IMB and on me and my family personally. Your giving allows us to serve the Lord without wondering how we can carry out the ministry that the Lord has given us.

There are still people groups, villages, and countries with little or no access to the gospel and your giving provides Southern Baptist missionaries with all the resources required to learn a language, have a home, use transportation, and share the good news with people who have never heard. Please continue to give so that others may hear.

Editor's Note: - IMB Missionaries Jeff and Barbara Singerman call Ohio home. They recently retired from the IMB after more than thirty years on the field. They are members of First Baptist Church, Kettering.

Learn more about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering by visiting [imb.org/LMCO](http://imb.org/LMCO)



# Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

UNTIL THE GOSPEL HAS REACHED  
EVERY PEOPLE, IN EVERY PLACE  
AND EVERY LANGUAGE —  
**WE HAVE WORK TO DO.**

# THIS IS THE GREAT PURSUIT



Your generosity through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® helps make Jesus known among the nations. Give today and be part of the Revelation 7:9 vision.



**INTERNATIONAL  
MISSION BOARD**

**GIVE TODAY**



**LOTTIEMOON.COM**

# The Fastest Way to Get People Praying

By Pastor Dave Early, First Baptist Church, Grove City



My publisher, Jon Graf, recently studied prayer mobilization in the Bible. He discovered that prayer was usually mobilized by a leader challenging the people.

In the Old Testament, Nehemiah, Ezra, and Jehoshaphat challenged people to seek God and provided a venue for them to do so.

Some of you would say, “That isn’t the case in the New Testament.” Perhaps for the first months and a few years in the early church’s life, people prayed without much encouragement from leaders.

But by the time the epistles were written, we see Paul and James again challenging those under their care to pray. James’s passage in chapter 5 goes through a lengthy encouragement for people to pray more often. Paul asked people to join his missionary endeavors by praying (Romans and 2 Corinthians).

He also challenged people to “pray without ceasing,” to pray when they had anxiety, and to pray for those in authority. I suspect all these challenges were caused by James and Paul seeing the people slacking off where prayer was concerned.

What’s the answer? As leaders—pastors, elders, small group leaders, prayer leaders—we must challenge people to pray. Your people will not likely pray a lot without your encouragement and challenge. In light of that, I asked, “What prayer opportunities are the most effective in mobilizing a congregation to pray?” Here is what I consider to be the very best idea.

## Engage Your Congregation with a Prayer Initiative or Emphasis

A prayer initiative is where everyone prays on a theme for a set period. The most popular is 24 hours, a week, two weeks, a month, and 40 days. If done well, a prayer initiative cannot be matched for pulling the most people into prayer. Every time you engage in one, a number will have such a good experience that they will catch the importance of prayer and be better at it for the rest of their lives.

Why is a prayer initiative so good?

**A.** Most use scripture-based prayer guides, which teach people to pray God’s Word and move people to pray a more kingdom agenda than their own.

**B.** Because the entire church is involved, people are reminded week after week to participate. There is built-in accountability as people hear others talking about their experiences. That builds a desire to participate more.

**C.** Prayer initiatives have a manageable time commitment. First, people are not committing to pray every day for the rest of their lives. Instead, they know they are committing to 30 days or two weeks. Second, most prayer initiative guides ask for no more than a five to ten minute commitment each day which is not intimidating to people.

January is the best time of year for an emphasis on prayer. Make plans now to join with hundreds of churches around the world who will be using [21 Keys to Answered Prayer](#) in the [21-Day Global Prayer Event January 6-26](#).

Links in the article: <https://prayershop.org/21-keys-to-answered-prayer> <https://21daysprayer.org>



# Pastors Encouraged to Complete Worship Ministry Survey

By Zac James, Worship Consultant

Worship is connected to the Great Commission. Jesus himself said, “The hour...is now here, when the true worshipers who will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him.” (John 4:23 CSB)

God wants true worshipers! It’s part of healthy discipleship. And churches full of true worshipers are a vital gospel witness to an unbelieving world. That’s why it’s important that we do it well! My fellow pastors, may we all be lead worshipers in our congregations.

One day, we’ll be worshipping the Father with all the saints forever and ever. We do missions now so heaven will be overflowing with worshippers. In other words, worship is the endgame of missions.

To be transparent, we don’t have a lot of data on our SCBO churches in the area of worship. However, we know from speaking with you that many churches are struggling in the area of worship. I know that many of you have given up on hiring a part-time worship leader. I’m trying to get an accurate picture of where worship ministry stands in our state and what the most critical needs are.

One of the best ways you can help us serve you is to fill out this five-minute survey at <https://wkf.ms/3YHZCe8> or scan the QR code. This survey will ask for contact info for your worship leaders so I can begin building a relationship with them. It will also ask for details about what your worship ministry looks like and what pain points you are experiencing. This is critical information to serve you and your worship leader well in the future, so please take five minutes to complete the survey.

As the SCBO Worship Consultant, my role boils down to being the person you can call, email or text when you have worship-related needs. My email is [zjames@scbo.org](mailto:zjames@scbo.org). Whether it’s finding a full-time worship pastor, a guest worship leader, advice on tech issues, or training resources for your leaders, I’ll do my best to help you make connections and solve the problems your worship ministry is facing.



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# Influx of Younger DR Volunteers Provides Multiple Opportunities for Growth

By Scott Barkley, chief national correspondent, Baptist Press.



Matt Deavers helps clear out a home in Clearwater, Fla., as part of Ohio Baptist Disaster Relief. Photo from Matt Deavers

NEW LEXINGTON, Ohio (BP) — When it comes to Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, the physical nature of the work calls for strong bodies. However, it also calls for experience and maturity useful in ministering to those days or even hours removed from a natural disaster. And as said natural disasters don't schedule their arrival, you need volunteers with at least some flexibility in their schedule.

In other words, the ideal volunteer is a 29-year-old with 30 years of experience whose work schedule allows him or her to deploy soon after a tornado, flood or hurricane has upended an area.

As no such volunteer exists, the next best thing is having an assortment of those who fill in the gaps on availability, experience, vitality and Christian maturity. Recent developments such as working from home and companies' desire to contribute in some way to disaster response has helped provide flexibility for younger workers joining the field.

Matt Deavers, 28, works from home as a software engineer. His boss was supportive of a recent weeklong deployment with Ohio Baptist Disaster Relief to Clearwater, Fla., in the effort to clean up from Hurricane Milton.

"It was kind of surreal," said Deavers of his first DR experience. "We cleaned out local homes and every day there were piles of debris up to 10 feet high in the street that would be hauled away and replaced by another pile."

As someone with a desk job, he wondered how he would acclimate to the physical requirements of the work.

"God gives you strength when you need it," he said. "Lighter work at home wears me out, but I had more energy working with others."

He also slept better than he expected. That may have something to do with Deavers and his wife having a newborn at home, though.

John Heading, state director for Ohio Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, said a renewed effort to bring younger volunteers on board is getting results.

"It's been a concerted effort over the last two years," he told BP.

Training has been streamlined so that credentials can be earned online. In-person training is available too, of course, as well as on the field. Volunteers are also asked to set aside a week of their vacation leave for DR deployment.

Working as a part of Ohio Disaster Relief means on-the-field training and response takes place with DR equipment, when used. It begins under the watchful eye of a DR "blue hat."

College student training has started with Bowling Green State University, the University of Cincinnati and Cedarville University.

"In the last two years there have been times when we went on a deployment and we're the youngest team by a lot," Heading said.

Georgia Baptist Disaster Relief director Dwain Carter said ages range from 18 to 93 of those serving in his state. A team of two dozen volunteers 30-45 years old from Louisiana served in Swainsboro, GA.

The close quarters and time away from home of Disaster Relief volunteers also serves as an opportunity to learn from older Christians.

"The future for SBDR is very bright because this is a ministry that is always getting older and younger at the same time," Carter said. "The older volunteers encourage the younger ones to join up and serve. It is a family of many thousands of people from all over the USA."



Deavers cited highlights from his trip like working arm in arm with older volunteers to rip out drywall, scrape floors, pressure wash homes and sledgehammer apart a granite countertop for removal.

“Mudout is totally foreign to me, and I’m not that handy,” he said. “I used tools I didn’t even know the name for. But my time there strengthened my faith.

“I received an amount of advice and encouragement that was immensely helpful. As a younger guy with a bunch of people further along in the faith than me, I learned something every time they opened their mouths. The faith they have has given me the confidence to talk more about my own faith.”

Deavers had planned to use his personal vacation time to cover the trip, but his bosses decided to grant him extra paid time off instead.

Ohio Baptist Disaster Relief has been historically busy. Twelve responses came earlier this year to a record number of 70 tornadoes in the state, said Heading. Other teams went to flooding in Vermont before Hurricanes Helene and Milton struck the Southeast, making it 27 team deployments this year.

“To my knowledge, that hasn’t happened since Ohio DR started in 1986,” Heading said.

His volunteers include an older gentleman who tried to retire from his day job but was seen as too valuable by his employers to do so. They told him he could deploy with DR anytime he wanted. It also includes the younger guy who is three months sober and really wanted to invest his life in something else.

“His family thought it would be good for him,” Heading said. “He deployed for the first time recently, and I’m looking forward to hearing how it went.”

If it went bad, Heading would know by now.

With a fewer number of available volunteers, Ohio has worked from a statewide pool to form teams. Only recently have Disaster Relief teams begun forming at individual churches and associations.

That builds unity in a church while establishing a team that is on-call in the neighborhood and region.

“When they go, it’s a mission trip,” Heading said, “and Ohio DR covers the expenses.”

And there is the added benefit of helping people recover from a disaster.

“It’s not just about the physical labor, but sharing the gospel,” he said. “Spiritual growth comes every day. You’re surrounded by Christian men and women and lean into those Christian conversations.”

## NEW PASTORS & STAFF ORIENTATION

**January 14th, 2025**  
**10:00 am - 2:00 pm**  
**Lunch Provided**

Are you a new pastor or church staff member in 2024? Join us for an informative and engaging orientation

to help you start strong! This special event offers you the opportunity to hear from SCBO Executive Director Dr. Jeremy Westbrook and other key leaders about the many ways our state convention can support you and your church’s mission. You’ll gain insights into resources, programs, and partnerships available to enhance your ministry.

### WHY ATTEND?

**In-Depth Orientation:** Learn about SCBO’s mission, resources, and programs that can support you and your congregation.

**Networking Opportunities:** Connect with other new pastors and church staff, building valuable relationships and community ties.

**Interactive Q&A Sessions:** Bring your questions! Our leaders are here to help you navigate your role and make the most of our shared resources.

Pastors are encouraged to bring their staff for a collaborative experience as we embark on this journey together. Don’t miss this chance to connect, learn, and grow with SCBO!

**RSVP Today** at [sco.org](http://sco.org) and set the stage for an impactful year ahead!



# Job Postings

## SENIOR PASTOR

### Wapakoneta Baptist Church, Wapakoneta

Wapakoneta Baptist Church, Wapakoneta, OH is seeking a senior pastor for a small, but well-established congregation. This is a bi-vocational position. The prospective candidate must agree with and support the Baptist Faith and Message as we are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. It is preferred that the prospective candidate have some ministerial education and five or more years of experience in a senior pastor role. Please send resumes and/or inquiries to: Donald W. Jump, [djump@bright.net](mailto:djump@bright.net), or call 567-356-0326

## PASTOR

### Margaret Wynn Memorial Baptist Church, Poland, Ohio

Margaret Wynn Memorial Baptist Church, Poland is seeking a pastor to lead a church that is small in number, but not small in faith and love.

We are seeking a candidate for pastor who will lead the church to function as a New Testament church, work with the Church Council, committees, and volunteer church staff to lead the church to achieve its mission; proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers; and care for church members and other people in the community.

We also prefer a candidate with pastoral experience and a degree from an SBC seminary.

To apply, please submit the following information: cover letter introducing yourself and your interest in this position; salvation testimony; resume with ministry experience; educational background and at least 3 references; doctrinal statement of theological view on core doctrines; and a link to your sermons.

To submit your completed information or request a complete job description please e-mail Debbie Hunt, Pastor Search chairman, [mbcpastorsearch56@gmail.com](mailto:mbcpastorsearch56@gmail.com) or Jerry Stare, church moderator, at [soccerdad24@zoominternet.net](mailto:soccerdad24@zoominternet.net) or by mail to Memorial Baptist Pastor Search Committee, 56 Water Street, Poland OH 44514.

## SENIOR PASTOR

### Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Wilmont

Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Wilmont, is seeking a bi-vocational pastor to lead our congregation. Wilmont is in Stark County near Canton. We are part of the SBC, SCBO, and the Buckeye Central-Erie Association. We hold firmly to salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. We are a down-to-earth congregation striving to become increasingly faithful to scripture in all matters of faith and practice.

Qualifications:

- Meet biblical qualifications as required in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
- Devote 15-20 hours per week to the work of ministry.
- Deep commitment to Christ and a passion for God's glory and the gospel.
- Fully Agree with the Baptist Faith and Message (2000)

Fluency in Spanish is a plus, but not required.

Please send questions and résumés to: Pastor Search Committee, Faith Missionary Baptist Church P.O. Box 3 Wilmot, OH 44689-0003, or email to [bcedom@gmail.com](mailto:bcedom@gmail.com)

## PASTOR

### Woodsfield First Baptist Church, Woodsfield

Woodsfield First Baptist Church is seeking a pastor. We are a conservative Southern Baptist Church with a blended style of worship, located in the small southeastern Ohio community of Woodsfield. Our church has the desire to grow and we seek a pastor who has the same desire, as well as the ability to work with compassion and love with all types of people.

The church is seeking a man called to be a Southern Baptist pastor who agrees with the Baptist Faith and Message. He should also meet the biblical requirements listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Pastoral experience and pastoral education are preferred.

Send resume to: Pastor Church Committee Chairperson, Woodsfield First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 604, Woodsfield, OH 43793, or Email to: [fbcwoodsfield@gmail.com](mailto:fbcwoodsfield@gmail.com). The church Facebook page is 1bcwoodsfield.

*Let the Ohio Baptist Messenger help your church find a new pastor or staff member!*

*The Messenger is offering classified ads free of charge for Ohio churches searching for new pastors and staff members. The Messenger is read by churches and individuals in Ohio and across the country.*

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[classifieds@scbo.org](mailto:classifieds@scbo.org)