

# THE Contact

CONTINENTAL BAPTIST MISSIONS • VOLUME 31 ISSUE 1 • SPRING 2023

## Shining His Light ...IN THE CITY OF LIGHT: BUFFALO, NEW YORK!

There is a tall house on the upper west side of Buffalo, New York, less than a half mile from the Canadian border that splits the Niagara River. This is where **Nathan & Christie Robbins** and their children Amelia, Margaret, and Haddon have made their new home. They have intentionally grafted themselves into this diverse neighborhood, including Italian, Puerto Rican, Burmese, Syrian, and Middle Eastern families. They are committed to building a local church rooted in evangelism and discipleship. Willing to go wherever the Lord sent them, they prayed for direction, and the Lord began to clear the way to Buffalo.

The seeds of City of Light Baptist Church have been planted with a focus on being neighborhood-centered. Two local families have agreed to partner with the Robbinses with a united passion for building more relationships with folks from the community. Nathan and Christie have already hosted several local families in their home, and God continues to open doors—literally! With open doors come more opportunities to minister and further develop church outreach.

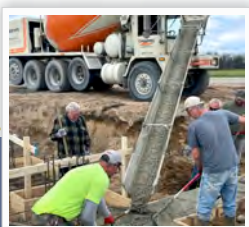
Nathan's 'street portrait' photography paves the way for conversation



Core group Bible study

The potential in this area is excellent, and the Robbinses are asking the Lord for wisdom in prioritizing these opportunities. They have also taken the first steps in incorporating City of Light Baptist Church. Thanks to electric power sourced from nearby Niagara Falls, Buffalo earned its nickname, 'City of Light', when it became the first city to have widespread streetlights in the late 19th Century. Please pray for Nathan and Christie and their core group as they strive to bring the light of the gospel to the City of Light!

What's  
Inside:



GOD'S PERFECT TIMING



A LABOR OF LOVE...



WE NEED YOU!



A church planting missionary typically begins his work where there is no group of people meeting together and no building dedicated to local church ministry. By establishing redemptive relationships with individuals in the community and making disciples, the church planter gathers a core group of people that becomes the nucleus of a local church.

For a **Church Revitalization** effort, the starting point is different. The missionary begins to shepherd the remnant of what was once an established church. The church has been a fixture in the community, though its influence has dwindled along with attendance and giving, and the church family is facing the very real possibility of closing the doors. These groups often own a building that sometimes is as much a burden as a blessing.

Throughout the 80-plus years of CBM's history, church "revitalization" efforts have been part of our ministry—one quarter of CBM mission works have been in this category. This issue of the *Contact* introduces two such ministries led by CBM missionaries.

# A Lab Church Rev

CBM Church Planters **Ed & Cheryl Bunt** are greatly encouraged by "the sweet spirit of family" evidenced at **Calvary Baptist Church**, a CBM revitalization ministry in Chatsworth, Illinois. The following highlights are just a sampling of the reasons for Ed and Cheryl's uplifted hearts—

The return of a couple who had not attended for many months due to physical challenges was a glad occasion, and a neighbor family has begun attending faithfully. The church family is praying for this neighbor's husband, and God is working. Just recently he came for Sunday School; although he did not stay for the worship service, he came! Continue to pray for the Bunts and others in the CBC family as they minister to these neighbors.

A good turnout of volunteers for Spring Cleaning Saturday left the church building looking fresh and welcoming for ministry. While cleaning the building, Cheryl helped one of the boys from Sunday School with his weekly memory verse: John 3:16. In just a short time, the boy could quote it from memory—a rare thing for him due to learning disabilities. He was so very proud and wanted to share the verse with everyone while they ate lunch together. Earning a "prize" from the treasure chest that Sunday was something special for this young man and exciting for everyone!

After the workday lunch, the church family surprised Ed with cake and ice cream to celebrate his birthday. The Bunts rejoice in another year ahead and all of its opportunities!

A recent gift helped cover the cost of a website for Calvary Baptist Church, and the church family is enthusiastic about the possibilities. ([www.calvarybaptist.life](http://www.calvarybaptist.life))



Calvary Baptist Church





# Door of Love!

## Revitalization Ministry

Ed has continued to forge a relationship with the local fire and rescue crew where he serves as chaplain. Shortly before Easter, Ed distributed booklets to the crew explaining the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, with the hope that these men and women would consider eternal truths and not simply be caught up in secular festivities. Pray for fruit to result from these ongoing efforts.

Ed and Cheryl and the Calvary Baptist Church family are waiting with great expectation to see what the Lord will do in the coming months. May you be as encouraged as they are by God's good work in Chatsworth, Illinois.

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In January of 1838, 29-year-old Abraham Lincoln began to speak publicly in Springfield, Illinois. Three months later, his assassin John Wilkes Booth would be born. The telegraph was born that year and so was hymn composer, Philip Bliss. A Baptist church was also born in a little village in Michigan called Colon. One hundred eighty-five years later, this church continues to shine the gospel light.

**Colon Baptist Church** has seen years of abundance and decline. The fruits of ministry have been both bountiful and lean, but the one constant has been the sustaining power of the Lord and the ardent faithfulness of a small body of believers.

Though shepherds and flocks have changed, this church strives to impact its small community for Christ. Today Colon Baptist is challenged. Although changing economies and demographics have led to dwindling numbers, a spark of faith and spiritual vitality remains, and revitalization has begun. CBM missionary Pastor **Jeff & Deb Minniear** have taken up the task of

leading Colon Baptist Church to a viable, impactful ministry. The Lord blessed CBC with remarkable facilities and a history of vibrant outreach. At one point, over 100 children were involved in AWANA, taking full advantage of their beautiful gymnasium. The potential here is palpable.

Jeff & Deb have adopted three strategies to breathe new life into this little church with a big heritage—first, a solid and sustained effort to evangelize the community. The early church was built on new believers, and this is the pattern they're striving to follow. To do this, their second strategy is to improve and expand the church's testimony throughout Colon by being involved in every aspect of the community. Utilizing their excellent facilities as a prime gathering spot for appropriate community activities is good stewardship of God's provision. The need for exposure of the church to the community is critical to building new relationships and introducing them to Christ. Historically, getting people to visit has been relatively easy. Jeff's third strategy is to intentionally meet with every person who visits the church, gym, or community event that the church is involved in. When someone steps into their ministry, no matter how small a step, it is an opportunity to share and connect.

Big or small, wealthy or poor, the Lord uses faithful churches to spread the gospel through intentionally-built relationships, one at a time. Please pray for the Minniears as they labor to open more doors in Colon for the sake of the gospel.







Colon Baptist Church

contacts

## Memorial Giving

*The following gifts were given to CBM  
in remembrance of loved ones now with the Lord—*

### IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM "BILL" EWALD

Craig Helwig • Robin Bullis  
Mr & Mrs Jeff Nitengale • Harris & Co.

### IN MEMORY OF ROY & OPAL BATSON

The Batson Family

### IN MEMORY OF PEARL FOUST, CBM CHURCH PLANTER

Mr & Mrs David Bryant • Miss Mary Lou Heyboer

### IN MEMORY OF VIRGIL BOPP

Mr & Mrs John George • Karen Jones  
Donna Murray

### IN MEMORY OF JANET NORCZYK

Mrs Winifred Lake

### IN MEMORY OF ROGER FOUST JR, CBM CHURCH PLANTER

Rev & Mrs Kurt Schroder

### IN MEMORY OF LOIS BAKER

Mr & Mrs Pete Ringelberg

### IN MEMORY OF DAWN HOWE

Mr & Mrs Don Flory

### IN MEMORY OF PHINEAS ARMS

The Arms Family

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*Connect with  
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# God's Perfect Timing!

## PROJECT DELAYS & DIVINE OPPORTUNITIES...

Baptist Bible Church in Sparta, Michigan, had rented a small facility as their place of worship until the Lord provided for them to purchase a 7-acre section of what was once a public golf course along with the clubhouse. Worship services and ministry activities shifted from the rented hall to the clubhouse, with plans for the CBM missionary builders to assist with an addition housing an auditorium, nursery, restrooms, and office space.

Construction was set to begin in the spring of 2022, but problems with relocating some of the utilities pushed the start of construction out to the spring of 2023. The shifted timeline enabled missionary builders to focus attention on much-needed improvements to the existing structure. The builders re-shingled the clubhouse roof, installed new soffit and fascia, insulated the exterior walls, and installed new siding. The beams in the ceiling were reinforced according to engineering specs, and electricians upgraded services in preparation for the addition.

Throughout the remainder of 2022, God continued to present opportunities for the CBM missionary builders to assist other churches with smaller projects—

- Green Corners Baptist Church in Belding, Michigan, received help from CBM builders **Mike Carr**, **Jeremy Smith**, and **Brian Krueger**, who were joined by CBM volunteer, Steve Meyers. This crew remodeled the church's warming pantry and fellowship hall.

- CBM builders **Ted Lozier** and **Ben Wooster**, with periodic help from other CBM builders, tackled an extensive roofing project and auditorium remodel at Gibraltar Bible Baptist Church in Gibraltar, Michigan.
- A renovation project at Oakfield Baptist Church in Rockford, Michigan, led by CBM builder **Pete Ringelberg**, resulted in new office space for the church's new youth pastor. Fellow missionary builders lent a hand with installing and finishing drywall on the office remodel.
- The final project of 2022 stretched into the early months of 2023, with the missionary build team along with Director of CBM Building Ministries, **Dallas Putnam**, assisting First Baptist Church in Howard City, Michigan with a major interior remodel project (auditorium, restrooms, nursery and toddler rooms, and offices).

On Sunday, March 23, having come full-circle on a year-long wait, the BBC family gathered to celebrate the Lord's goodness as they officially broke ground on the new addition for their ministry facility. As we look back, we are reminded there are no delays on God's timeline—only divinely-appointed opportunities to serve our great and omniscient God!



Groundbreaking Sunday at  
Baptist Bible Church, Sparta MI





# We Need You!

Did you know...

- **18 CBM missionary families** are actively planting or revitalizing **17 mission churches** in the United States and Puerto Rico
- **6 missionary families** are engaged in the CBM building ministry
- **3 missionary families** are serving in special ministries
- **2 missionary families** are serving in administrative roles

Every year the CBM office processes \$1.9 million sent by **700 churches and individuals** to support these 29 active missionary families as well as 22 retired missionaries. The tasks involved in processing and distributing these funds, as well as providing other vital support services for our missionaries, are accomplished by the CBM office team, which is currently made up of:

- **4 salaried employees** (1 full-time, 3 part-time)
- **3 supported missionaries**
- **2 volunteers** (part-time)

The funds which pay staff salaries, keep the lights on, and provide the tools necessary to serve our missionaries (such as computer hardware, software, office supplies, etc.) come largely from churches and individuals whom we call "Planting Partners"—those who specifically support the **CBM general fund**.

For more than eight decades, God has blessed CBM with faithful Planting Partners who give generously and sacrificially on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. Some of our Planting Partners have supported CBM for many years. To each of these we say, **"Thank you!"** with grateful and humble hearts. You are a vital part of this ministry, and we need more like you!

Every year God promotes some of our Planting Partners into the presence of Christ. We rejoice for their gain, but we also wonder who will fill their shoes. In addition, occasionally local churches find it necessary to discontinue financially supporting CBM. At the outset of 2023, we began asking God to raise up 125 new Planting Partners. As of this writing, five have responded to the challenge and are now supporting the CBM general fund on a regular basis.

**Will you become one of the remaining 120? We need you!**

If God is leading you to partner in the ministry of CBM, please use the enclosed envelope to send your gift. Make checks payable to CBM and indicate "Planting Partner" in the memo line. If you prefer to give online, visit our website—[www.GoCBM.org](http://www.GoCBM.org)—and click "Give Online". On the Donate page, choose the "Set up recurring" tab, indicate the frequency and amount of your gift, and select "Planting Partner" from the drop-down menu on the fund line. If we can help in any way, please reach out to the home office at (616) 863-2226. Thank you!

