



LIVING ON MISSION

Stories from Bell Shoals Members



Bell Shoals
BAPTIST CHURCH
real hope. new life.

From Pastor Bobby . . .



Pastor of Missions
and Education

As I was thinking about what to say for this “Living on Mission” storybook, the Lord led me to paint a picture of His working in and through my life in the area of missional living and short term missions.

I went on my first mission trips in my early 20’s as a lay person helping to lead teams of students to South Texas where we ran VBS’s in a tent style setting out in open fields. I can still see the faces of some of those teens who went with us, and I know God used those trips to reach children at the VBS and to transform young people to more closely follow him. There were two young men who I was particularly connected with. Both came from unchurched backgrounds, but God used the basketball goal in my driveway to allow me to spend time with them and to share Christ relationally. Then God used short term missions to grow their faith. One is now a pastor/mission leader who helps lead student events in Cuba, and the other is an active deacon serving God faithfully. God used short term missions and missional living to transform all three of us to be more like Him.

Fast forward to a new church and my first mission trip as a lay leader on a youth trip to Mexico. On that trip, I met two amazing young men. They had been discipled by Godly men in the youth ministry, and their missions-minded church sponsored mission trips where they could see first-hand the power of God at work. They are now pastors at that church, and between them they have led over 40 trips discipling others who in turn have become leaders. I had the privilege of serving on several more trips with them while they were students and after they became pastors. God used those trips to mold them into the great leaders they are today and to continue to transform me to be more like Him.

Those young men who became pastors led my three daughters who grew up going on short term trips, most of which my wife and I were also on. Between the three girls, our daughters have served in NYC, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Chicago, Nicaragua, England, San Francisco, South Africa, Kenya, and more. God used those trips, and many local mission activities we did as a family in the Houston area, to develop them into young women who today are always looking for what God has for them to do in whatever job or circumstance He places them.

Lastly, I can see the face of a young lady from an unchurched background who came to know the Lord because a friend invited her to church. One summer she wanted to go on mission but didn’t have the resources. God gave us the joy of helping her go and that trip changed her life. She is now living in NYC where she and her husband are on staff with a ministry organization ministering to college students in the city.

My journey started with that first mission trip to South Texas, and God has truly changed my life and the life of my family as we have had the joy of living on mission for Him. I encourage you to answer God’s call to go with Him on mission and see what He will do in you and through you.

Global Missions Fund

Do you know what these ministries listed on this page have in common? Each one receives monthly financial support from the gifts given to the Global Missions Fund.

Your financial gifts are making a difference! Please plan how to give generously to the Global Missions Fund.

Global Missions Fund Projected Income (2019/2020 Missions Year) \$330,000

Please refer to the graphic below to see how the Global Missions Fund resources are allocated.

For the coming missions year beginning November 1, we are asking each member of our church to participate in our 10/40 Giving Faith Commitment Offering. Using the Faith Commitment card, indicate your pledge to give \$10/week for a period of 40 weeks (10/40 Giving) or another amount as directed by the Lord through prayer.

Your personal commitment to give to the Global Missions Fund will help your church continue to impact the world for Christ, both directly (missions or ministry involvement) and indirectly (support for partner ministries).

Your contribution makes a difference! It impacts our community, state, nation and world, along with missionary families and the mission agencies.

Thank you for giving to Global Missions!



Faith Based Ministries Receiving Financial Support from the Global Missions Fund

- Alpha Int'l Ministries – Finny Mathews
 - Baptist Mid Mission – Jim and Hope Smith
 - CRU/Athletes in Action – Doug Gilcrease
 - CRU Women's Resources – Sarah Kunze
 - Community Issues Council – Terry Kemple*
 - Connect Global – Rafael Canada
 - ELIC – Kelley*
 - Face of Justice Ministries – Steve and Beth Gilroy
 - First Priority of Tampa Bay
 - Friends of Internationals – Mark Schaffer
 - Give 'em Heaven Ministries – Joe and Robin Pottle*
 - Good News in Action, Inc. – Steve Kern
 - Good Samaritan Ministries
 - Inter Sports Consultation – Don Peek
 - LifeCare Network
 - Lighthouse Ministries
 - Manna on Wheels – Buddy Bass
 - Mavuno Ministries – Bobbi Brown*
 - New Life Baptist Seminary – David and Estefania Essex
 - North Africa Connection – Jim and Sharon*
 - Partners in Development – MZ
 - Pioneers – Nathan Fosdahl
 - Pioneers – Ron and Debbie Stafford*
 - Projeto Vida
 - RTS Missions – Greg Shepherd
 - Refuge Church – Peter Fullerton
 - Third Wave Outreach – David and Diana Bailey*
 - Third Wave Outreach – Denis Bailey
 - Women's Resource Center
 - Workplace Paracletes – Charles Young*
 - Youth with a Mission – Rebekah Reysen*
 - Youth with a Mission – Rachel Kett*
- * A member of Bell Shoals Baptist Church

Fighting the Battle On Your Knees

– Betty Gammill

Some people may think that praying for missions isn't as important as actually traveling. In truth, those who pray are an integral, necessary part of God's mission. God's ear is attentive to the prayers of His people. He listens. He prepares the way. He answers.

The Bible relates the story in 1 Samuel 30 of a battle David had with the Amalekites. As the battle progressed, two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine and pursue the enemy. After the battle, some among David's followers said that they should not receive a share of the plunder. David replied, "... For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike."

This story teaches us that everyone's role in the battle is relevant and everyone shares the reward. Therefore, a person who commits to pray is part of the team just like those who go. Because of your prayers, one day in heaven, you will meet many brothers and sisters in Christ from all over the world, and you will see Jesus' smile and hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

If you are not called to go, will you consider being one who "stays by the baggage?" Please consider becoming a prayer warrior on behalf of those who are called to go.

From Bible Reader to Bible Teacher

– Bob Cochell

When I was in college, I had a life-changing salvation experience while watching a Billy Graham crusade in the basement of my parents' home. I began reading God's Word and even considered going into full time Christian service. Through the Holy Spirit's work in my life and people that God put in my path, I moved from being a reader of the Scriptures to becoming a diligent student of the Scriptures and have had the opportunity to teach at this church for many years.

In 1982 the church was sponsoring a mission trip to Jamaica and after some initial indecisiveness, I decided to obey the Lord and go. It was absolutely extraordinary what the Lord did on that trip and it gave me a taste for missions and what goes on overseas.

Several years later I was invited to go on a mission trip to Africa. I had some doubts because I didn't know anyone in Africa and it had been a long time since I had taken a mission trip, but once again I felt the Lord was telling me to go. So, I eventually agreed to go.

The trip was to Uganda, where Idi Amin had become the dictator in the 1970's and had slaughtered tens of thousands of Christians. The Christian faith is now on the rebound but most believers are new in the faith and don't have much opportunity for biblical and theological training so we bring the training to them. I taught two separate pastor's conferences for young pastors hungry for the Word. That first trip launched a ministry for me that has continued for at least sixteen years and so many trips I have lost count. In addition to Uganda, I have also been to Botswana, Kenya and Zambia. I plan on going as long as I am able.

If someone were to ask me why they should be involved in missions, I would tell them that it's all about the reward the Lord gives you. On my first trip to Africa, at one point I asked myself, "What am I doing here?" But the blessing I received by being obedient far outweighed any inconvenience. When the Lord impressed on my heart to study the scriptures over thirty years ago, it ignited within me a dream to teach in a formal setting and this ministry has fulfilled that dream.

Should you go? Should you get involved? The choice is yours. If you feel it in your heart, and the Holy Spirit is tugging on you, are you going to get up and go or are you not? I will tell you from personal experience, the only place where you will be truly fulfilled is the place where God wants you to be.

*Is the Holy Spirit tugging on you?
Will you heed his prompting and
go to the place He wants you to
be?*



Hooked on Going

– Chester Gunn

Many years ago, the Lord taught me a lesson about tithing. I decided if God said I should do it, I should do it. I wrote my tithe check first, then paid the rest of my bills and had money left over. That had never happened before. That made a connection for me – when God says you should do something, just do it and He'll take care of the rest. You don't have to worry about it.

On June 21, 2001, I was asked if I could go to West Virginia and do recovery work after a flood. I felt God impressing on me that I should go, so I packed up and headed to Mullins, WV. As I was going up the road, I was thinking, "I'm going to a place I've never been, to do something I've never done, with people I don't know." This sounds like missionary work to me. I've always believed in missions, you know like Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong, but now I'm in the middle of it personally.

I was assigned to kitchen duty. The second day I was there, one of the women I was working with pointed out a man who was sitting outside. She told me a little bit of his story; his wife had died six months earlier of cancer and his house had been swept away by the flood. I was wondering what I was going to say to him; I said a quick prayer and went up to him. I introduced myself and told him, "God sent me up here to tell you that He loves you and I love you." He had nothing left but the overalls he was wearing. I said, "I cannot comprehend what you have been through, but my God does. He can part waters and move mountains and He can make something good out of something bad. He said, 'I'm not a Christian.'" I said, "We can fix that if you want to. I'll help you ask Jesus into your heart, and if you ask God to take over your life, instantly your life will change." I led him through the sinner's prayer and he accepted Christ.

If you've never been fishing before, and then you go fishing and catch a big one, you're hooked on fishing for the rest of your life. That was my fish and I'm hooked. I now totally understand how someone can go to the uttermost parts of the world. Why? Because God said go. When God says go, it's not a suggestion, it's a commandment.

I have now done disaster relief for 18 years now and I'll be doing it until God calls me home. I remember the lesson the Lord taught me about tithing; He will take care of everything as long as I am doing what God wants me to do.

Will you heed God's call on your life? Where is He telling you to go, and are you willing to go?



From Bell Shoals to the World

– Jeff and Cindy

Our call to missions came while we were attending Bell Shoals Baptist Church. I, Jeff, joined Bell Shoals in 1983 by believer's baptism when I was 20 years old. I asked the Pastor how I could be discipled and he introduced me to some young guys who were forming a new group to help each other with a deeper walk with God. I started volunteering to serve in the church's ministries and got involved in the College and Career Bible Fellowship. I also participated in CWT and EE evangelism courses.

Later, I felt the Lord calling me to the ministry and shared this with the Pastor. He suggested going to Bible College. I was blessed to be able to go to Clearwater Christian College which enabled me to stay involved at Bell Shoals. I loved it. I grew in knowledge and spiritual depth through our amazing chapel times at college.

While at Clearwater Christian College, I fasted, prayed, memorized Scripture and tried to consistently obey the Spirit and the Word of God. One week at the Bible College they had a week of missions emphasis. The first day in Chapel the speaker said, "Where are the men in missions?" I simply said, "God, I'll go!" To help me get ready for this further calling, I joined another discipleship group led by a minister at BSBC that was for those who were preparing for ministry in the church or in community.

Cindy and I met at Bell Shoals and were married there in 1988. We were both called to missions. We taught 7th grade Sunday School and were involved in discipling the youth which led us to accept a Youth Pastor position in Port Tampa while I finished my degree at Clearwater. After graduation we moved to Mid-America Baptist Seminary to prepare for the mission field.

We are both very grateful for BSBC and the role it has played in our lives!

Do you feel something in your heart telling that God wants more of you? Could it be that the Lord is calling you to a full time commitment? Contact one of the pastors here to help get started in your mission.



No Fear!

– Gary Payne

I received Christ when I was about eight years old, but when I was in the tenth grade I came to understand that God really loved me in a personal way. That discovery changed my life and brought me into places of success because I wasn't afraid of failing. I knew that no matter what, God really did love me. I couldn't make Him love me more, and I couldn't make Him love me less. I started really trusting Him about missions.

I was a youth minister when I took my first mission trip. We went to the border towns of Mexico and Texas doing VBS for the children, and that first trip opened the door for a love for missions. Since then God has used me in mission trips around the US and the world. I have been involved in basketball camps in New York City, Alaska, Texas, Arizona and Montana. We did basketball camps in Morocco for several years, and I have done baseball camps in Israel. I learned that I had to serve the people to earn the right to share with them. People would ask why we were there and we would tell them because of Jesus. I've also been to Kazakhstan, Kenya and Madagascar and Peru; places I never thought I would see. God opened the door – I wasn't pushing the door – but God let me know that it is what He wanted me to do.

I'm not afraid. Sometimes I still get nervous but I've learned that if God leads me to go and I go, He will provide the words I need to say, the love I need to have, and the wisdom I need to deal with the culture. I have learned that God uses me – in spite of me.

Every mission trip I've ever been on, after it was over, I have said, "I'm so glad I went." God is faithful to reward our obedience. Not always financially, but most of the time it's a peace, it's a purpose, it's a joy, and a rearrangement of priorities in my life that make my life better. When God uses you to make a difference in someone's life and to glorify his name, there is no joy like that joy.

If you are undecided about going on mission, and you really, honestly pray about it and God does not say no, you are to go. You may have fear, but God will grow you through the experience. Being involved in missions outside your comfort zone will increase your faith because you will have to depend on the Lord, and that's exactly where He wants us to be. The more we realize our need for Him, the more we practice his presence in our life, the more He will use us and make life really worth living.

Are you trying to decide whether to go on a mission trip or not? Ask the Lord to take away your doubts and fear and commit to obeying his call.



The Great Commitment to the Great Commission

— Howard Bryant

In 2012, I took my first mission journey to Cuba with a team of five individuals from our church. What I saw can only be described as the hand of God. Entire families gave their hearts to Christ. A woman, who had been enslaved by voodoo for years, came to Christ one morning and then joyfully found me in the afternoon to tell me she had led two others to Christ using the tract I left. The power of Satan had been broken in her life!

Since 2012, the Lord has given me the opportunity to travel to Cuba ten times. On one occasion, I saw the Lord bring 26 people into a small home and lead 21 to make professions of faith in Christ. I have seen families steeped in witchcraft come to faith in Christ and immediately burn all vestiges of idols in their backyards.

However, I can also share how God transformed people in our church from inwardly focused, timid individuals fearful of sharing their faith into people who became bold and unashamed to witness in various situations. They now have a desire to fulfill the Great Commission and give testimony of the hope that lies within them and to do it with gentleness and respect. These folks simply followed God's prompting and allowed Him to use them in His work for His glory.

Has God been stirring in your heart the need to leave your comfort zone and become part of a short-term mission trip? If your answer is "YES," you will be changed forever. Will you answer the call?

MISSION



Loving the Outcasts

– Katie Green

In March 2019, I went to Costa Rica to work with Face of Justice Ministries. One facet of their ministry in San Jose is Encuentro; where they go out during the night to minister to prostitutes on the street corners. This team of faithful missionaries goes out on a regular basis to serve these people coffee, cookies and prayer.

The individuals who were working in the streets were transvestites. They are not welcome to work in the brothel, so they stand on the street corners for clients.

After a short bus ride, we came to our first stop. As we rounded a corner, we met Jessie. He spoke a lot and very quickly, and with my limited grasp of the Spanish language it was difficult to follow along. The cool thing, though, is that I went back out on Friday night with Encuentro and we met Jessie once again. This time, he told us that he was looking for work off the streets because he couldn't make ends meet. This is a praise, for even though he wasn't necessarily getting off the streets for Jesus, his getting off the streets in general was an answer to prayer. Continue to pray for Jessie, that he comes to know the God of the Universe on a deep, personal level.

This was just one of the many experiences in Costa Rica, where God spoke to my heart. The opportunity to serve these people stirred something in me; I have always thought and prayed about serving the very people the world would see as difficult or too far gone. I was moved by the work of the Holy Spirit that I saw in just a few days, not only in the life of Jessie but in many others. As Jesus said in Matthew 9:37, the harvest is ripe but the laborers are few. This is why, after much prayer, I have decided to spend a few months in Costa Rica, working with Face of Justice. My prayer is that through my time there, the Lord will become King in the lives of those prostitutes as they realize his love for them.

Has the Lord laid a burden on your heart for society's outcasts? Will you be willing to go to them and share God's love and grace?

Family Tradition

– Jeff Beriswill

When I was a new believer, I prayed that the Lord would allow me just once in this life to experience leading a person to faith in Christ. I never considered at the time that the Lord would have plans for me to share the Good News across the world.

After attending Bell Shoals for several years, I was challenged by my Life Group teacher to go with him and his wife on a mission trip to Kenya. The physical and spiritual needs of the Kenyan people were almost overwhelming to me, but their kindness, hospitality, and willingness to hear the simple gospel amazed me. During that trip, hundreds of people made professions of faith and several new churches were started. At that point, the Lord gave me a burden for the Kenyan people. Since then, I have gone on six more trips to Kenya and one trip to Guatemala City through the support of Bell Shoals. Our work has involved evangelism, church planting, holding seminars for church leaders, supporting the local seminary, women's conferences, and teaching HIV/AIDS awareness in schools.

Realizing the importance of teaching our children to follow Christ on mission, Janet and I committed to having each of our children go on a mission trip with me while they were in high school; and Janet went on two trips with me. One of our greatest joys has been seeing our daughter, Beth, go on a mission trip to Kazakhstan on her own. Also, Christa has a heart for those living in a post-modern society, and is currently spending a year in a rural part of Northern England working with local churches.

Through obedience to His call to go with Him on mission, the Lord has stretched my faith and enabled me to grow closer to Him. He took my prayer as a new believer and increased it many hundred-fold. To Him be the honor and praise and glory!

A popular church worship leader recently announced that he was walking away from the Christian faith. One of his quotes struck me, "How many miracles happen? Not many. No one talks about it." On our mission trip in July we saw people healed by prayer, demons cast out of a possessed girl during a Sunday service, a young man radically transformed by the saving power of the Gospel over the past year, and a woman bound by sin burst into tears upon hearing that Christ died for every sin she ever committed. People who do not see God's miracles may not be living on the front lines of a battle that cannot be won unless God shows up.

Is the Lord calling you to join Him in the battle against spiritual darkness? Will you consider joining Him?





From Serving Brandon to Serving the World

– Kristin F.

The desire to serve the world developed over time as I had the honor of encountering many field workers who would visit and speak in service and small groups. Through Global Outreach Celebrations (GOC), I felt like I was able to partner with others around the globe and learn about what opportunities I could take part in.

During my late teenage and college years, BSBC sent teams to all different areas of the community and the globe to serve. There were weekends when our family would gather to help roof a house, clean up leaves, hang invites to BSBC on doors, and stock shelves with food.

Then my desire to serve expanded from my community to the world through opportunities to join short-term trips, which provided me a glimpse into what it would be like to serve overseas long-term. Beyond seeing new locations, I enjoyed working and serving among people who had different foods, culture, and language.

Even though the idea of living overseas intrigued me, I decided to start a career first. God had other plans. My parents came across a Facebook post of an immediate need for an elementary teacher in Central Asia. God used my parents to call me out of my own path and put me into His path.

Three weeks later, I was boarding a plane to begin my first teaching position in a country that took a lot of faith to step foot in. It was not easy. There were many tears and moments where I asked God why He brought me here suffer, but each time God reminded me that He had equipped me with all I need and that my reason is to serve and share light in a place of darkness.

It was at the school in Central Asia that I met my husband who grew up living overseas. It was his desire to return to the people his family served that led us to South East Asia. We continue to serve here through our gifting in education and bring light and hope to hearts that are hurting or are in darkness.

What is God calling you to do? Look for opportunities to use your gifts for the Lord during this year's GOC.

The Impossible Call

– Steve and Pam Kern

When Pam and I first met, we never imagined that we would end up on the mission field. Pam was majoring in Biology and preparing to go to Dental School and I was getting my degree in Chemical Engineering. After we were married, we moved to Louisiana for my first job as a chemical engineer, and became involved in First Baptist Church of Kenner. We had never shared our faith very effectively with others, but God used our pastor to challenge us in that area and we participated in just about every evangelistic ministry the church offered.

During that time, we heard about Leo Humphrey, the Director of Good News in Action, who went to the projects of New Orleans to share the Gospel. From the first time I went out with Leo and evangelized in the projects, I felt at home. After six months, he invited me to go to El Salvador. I couldn't believe the receptivity of the Salvadorians to the Gospel. It seemed like almost everyone I shared with wanted to receive Christ. I made another trip in March of 1984 and that is when God first called me to move there.

At first, I thought it was me talking to myself since I thought that it was impossible that God would call me. After all, I grew up in an atheist home, couldn't speak publicly, was an engineer (not a preacher), El Salvador was in the middle of a civil war and my wife would never move down to El Salvador. Nevertheless, God wouldn't leave us alone. Finally, after wrestling with the decision for 5 months, we surrendered to the Lord.

Thirty-two years later, I am now the Director of Good News in Action and one of the two Senior Pastors of Iglesias Bautista Vida Nueva, which has an average Sunday attendance of about 2,000 people. Pam is the administrator for Good News In Action and an intricate part of our Discipleship program and outreach. It's amazing that we have seen over 350,000 people make professions of faith in our outreaches and helped start 62 churches.

We want to personally invite you to join one of the teams from Bell Shoals. The people in Latin America love to hear the message of salvation interpreted from English to Spanish; it is impressive how attentive they are when they hear it in both languages. God uses the teams in a powerful way as the people see their love for God, His Word, and souls.

How is God working in your life? Is He speaking to you about serving Him on a mission trip or even full time? Our encouragement to you is to listen and obey Him. Your life will never be the same!



To Cuba with Love

– Scotty Barrett

My missions story began almost 25 years ago. My teenage sons helped me on my journey to understanding, appreciating and championing vocational missionaries and our command to be on mission. I did not see myself as one to GO but rather one to support others, which we were doing faithfully. I became involved with an accountability group of Godly men whose impact on my life was life-changing. Challenged on every level, soon I started to realize that my willingness to obedience and service might just include going on a mission trip.

God had a plan! As only God can orchestrate, my oldest son invited me to join him on a trip to New York City where he had a seminary friend who was pastoring a church in midtown Manhattan. We did prayer walking and passed out flyers in the area around his friend's church. It was a great week and a great blessing to join my son in sharing Jesus in a section of one of the largest and most diverse cities in the world.

My personal mission story was about to soar! After much prayer and encouragement from my accountability group, I felt a call in 2017 to serve on a team going to Camaguey, Cuba. It was during this trip I realized that God was challenging me to grow as a Christian, to step up and step out in obedience to serve His people in Cuba.

The following year my excitement and love for the Cuban people grew even more as I served on another team to Holguin, Cuba. I begin to realize that God had burdened my heart for these people and I now felt prepared to lead a team. In 2019, through God's grace, I was blessed to lead a team of 10 strong Christian men and women to share the Gospel with the people of Holguin, Cuba, in the same church where God had done such a mighty work there and in me the year before. God willing, I will return to Cuba for the rest of my life.

To God be the GLORY!!

Have you been faithful to support missions efforts with your finances but find yourself wanting more? Is God calling you to move from a giver to a goer? Will you heed His call?

Keepin' 'Em in Stitches

– *Stitching Sisters*

If you have a knack for sewing, Stitching Sisters is a ministry in which you can participate to show others the love of God.

Stitching Sisters contribute their time and handiwork to many organizations. They have made quilts for the Fisher House at the VA hospital, the Baptist Children's Home and Lifecare Network. They have sewn pillowcases for Give 'em Heaven ministry, which works with young men in two detention centers. They have made bags for Project Not for Sale (girls taken from trafficking). The greatest joy of this ministry is seeing the joy in the faces of the recipients.

You don't have to be super talented, any amount of experience will do. Come and enjoy the love, friendship and fellowship with other women who have a desire for God to use them through their sewing talents.



*Do you have a love for needlework but never thought there was a way you could use it in service to God and others?
Would you consider giving your time and talents to the Lord?*

I CAN'T

