

# CBA MISSIONAL INSIGHTS

Missional Insights from the Cumberland Baptist Association

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## Missions Focus: Annie Armstrong

With the holidays just behind us and 2017 getting under way, it is easy to miss the fact that now is the time to be preparing to promote the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Although Easter is April 16, the week of prayer is set for March 5-12. The theme this year is Together for His Kingdom. You should have already received a small resource kit in the mail. There is a mission study on the DVD for adults, youth, and for children. There is a sample message that can be preached and some great video pieces for use in small or large group settings. Let me also mention that our Association has a special connection with the SEND church planting efforts of the North American Mission Board in Denver. The Annie Armstrong Offering and our Cooperative Program gifts support this kind of work. Give me a call if you have questions about how to promote this in your church.

## Sermon Ideas

He was intentional. Last month, this column referenced the I AM series of Jesus in John. Another organizing feature of the Gospel of John is the series of 7 Signs. The first is the wedding at Cana in Galilee. The 7th of the signs is the raising of Lazarus in 11:33-44. Each of these miracles is a sign that indicates the power and significance of the Savior. Any good commentary on John should deal with these 7 signs. They helped John organize the gospel he wrote, but they also speak to the present. In the Wedding at Cana, there are implications of Jesus caring about marriage and everyday life issues by his presence. There is a great picture of new wine that transforms stale religious/church activity. There is a powerful portrait of the supernatural power of Jesus in an insignificant place or event that surprises people. Don't overlook that Jesus attended because he was invited. The 7 passages are rich and begin at a wedding, while concluding with Jesus showing power over death. These will preach!

New Wine 2:1-12, 2) New Life 4:46-53, 3) New Outlook 5:1-9, 4) New Bread 6:1-15, 5) New Steps 6:16-24, 6) New Sight 9:1-7, 7) New Life 11:33-44.

## Servant Evangelism Ideas

This month's idea for servanthood evangelism is something that a couple of our churches have already done. Many school teams, sports leagues, and ballparks have concession stands and need volunteers for those stands and other roles. Some of our churches have approached a school or event in the ministry field of their church and volunteered to help by working at some of these roles and serving that school or athletic event. The work is of course "work." However, the goal is to build bridges to share the gospel and build relationships. What if our churches were so connected to their communities in service that if they disappeared, everyone would notice? Think about where you could make a difference.

## Children's Connection

When we are teaching missions and ministry, sometimes the basics can be overlooked. One of the traditions of the WMU has been to set a day or more aside on the calendar for children to do some hands on ministry. How great would it be to gather some of the children of your church together to have them visit shut-ins, make cards for missionaries, help in feeding the homeless, or do a project for a nursing or assisted living facility? Perhaps there are some widows in your church. They could do something to reach out to them. By the way, it would be great to include some unchurched widows in this project as well. WMU has some resources for Love Your Neighbor Children's Ministry Day (February 18, 2017). You can see those on the web site for WMU. The day and the project can be adjusted for your church, but what a great way to reach out and teach ministry. By the way, there are some of these things done at Christmas time. How great to do them at another time? You don't need a large group to make a big difference. Don't forget to take some pictures. If you need further ideas, give us a call.

## Book Nook

**The Church Revitalizer as Change Agent**, by Tom Cheyney, is the book that distills many of the characteristics needed for pastors and churches that are willing to change and move toward renewal. In this approximately 230 page book, Cheyney packs the chapters with practical ideas and concepts that come from real experience, rather than ivory tower thinking. He discusses personal traits and disciplines that are necessary for a revitalizing pastor. For example, he mentions the need for a servant's heart and on the other hand the need for a leader who has diagnostic skills to assess the situation. He gives practical advice on how to stay the course, since revitalization is not a short work, but an extended process. He addresses barriers, such as why churches fear change. Cheyney gives clear encouragement of the Lord's work in the process, while showing leaders practical steps and processes. When looking at many churches today, this is a needed and helpful breath of fresh air.