



Dakota Happenings

June 2020

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Dr. Mac's Minute

Praying When You Don't Know How to Pray

Have you ever been awakened in the middle of the night with a sense of dread or concern for someone you love? You see their face in your mind's eye. You are haunted by an overwhelming sense that something is wrong, but you don't know what it is. You know you need to pray, but you are not even sure what to cry out to God about. How do you pray for someone when you don't know how to pray for someone? Now, multiply that feeling by 328.2 million. How do you pray for a nation when you don't know how to pray for a nation?

I confess I am overwhelmed with that question as I think about our country this morning. Just as we were finally beginning to see light at the end of the dark coronavirus crisis tunnel, we were shaken by the horrifying images of a man pleading for air as a police officer knelt several minutes on his throat. Pleas became gasps, gasps became final halting breaths . . . and George Floyd died.

For a brief moment when this stunning event hit the news cycle, our nation was uncharacteristically united. Condemnation of the abuse that led to Floyd's death was immediate, universal, and unequivocal. Political leaders from local officials all the way to the White House called for swift justice. Police officers stood

shoulder-to-shoulder with peaceful protesters holding signs calling for an end to abusive behavior by those who exist to protect us from abusive behavior. Spiritual leaders across the spectrum called for a recognition and healing of racial wounds that still plague our land. Even some of my Facebook friends that would normally run to opposite ends of any issue were cut in their souls on a deeply emotional level.

Then . . . instinct seemed to kick in.

Incendiary remarks led to incendiary retorts, which led to incendiary accusations of who was first and who was most responsible for creating an incendiary atmosphere. Within 24 hours incendiary words had become incendiary activity and we were back where we always wind up as a country . . . divided, bitter, and in many places, literally burning with hatred. And (once again) forgotten in the reactions of our own polarized worlds was a grieving family.

Which brings me back to my question . . . how do you pray for a nation when you don't know how to pray for a nation? A prayer from a jailed servant of God may offer some help.

In Ephesians 3:14-21, Paul cried out from his Roman imprisonment on behalf of his friends in Ephesus. He could have been excused if his focus was on his own situation, but the needs of others were more pressing on his mind. The context of his prayer is chapter two. The apostle had reminded them that Jesus was the source of their peace, that they were stronger when they served together, and that Christ was their cornerstone.

In light of these realities he wrote, *“I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name”* (vv. 14-15). Paul carried them before the Father's throne and made three requests, that they: 1) *“be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man ,”* 2) *“being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ,”* and 3) *“be filled to all the fulness of God .”*

In other words, Paul prayed that they would be strengthened from the inside out, so that they would comprehend the incomprehensible love of God, so that they could be filled with God's fulness (Paul explains this in Eph. 1:22-23 as living in total surrender to Jesus). And don't miss the progression. It was essential that they experience these three things in that specific order. God would first need to do a work deep in their soul. This would enable them to begin to understand the depths of His love. Only then could they act more like Jesus.

There is much that needs to be done as a society regarding the implications and issues raised by the events of this past weekend in terms of racial healing, recognition of and breaking down of remaining barriers that many in our land experience, and the rightful respect and appreciation for the legions of honorable men and women in blue that put their lives on the line for us every day. I joined my name with other state executive directors and SBC leaders in a call for these

(Baptist Press, May 30, 2020) and we will continue to make the case for and seek the realization of these goals in the weeks and months to come. For the moment, however, my heart is overwhelmed for America. How do we pray for our nation?

It occurs to me that not much has changed in the two millennia since Paul was imprisoned for declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ. The circumstances were different, but what the Ephesians needed then is what we need today. Jesus is still the source of our peace, we are still stronger when we serve together, and Christ is still the cornerstone.

In light of these realities, will you join me in bowing your knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name? Will you plead with the Father that we be strengthened from the inside out, so that we can comprehend the incomprehensible love of God, so that we can be more like Jesus?

Father, dig deep into the soul of our nation. Root out the hatred, bitterness, and strife that divides us so that we can once again see clearly the sweet face of Jesus and understand the transforming power of His love, so that we can experience and model His character and grace in our homes, on our streets, and around the world.

Dr. MacDonald's Tentative June & July Schedule:

June 7 - OPEN
14 - OPEN
21 - OPEN
28 - Sioux Falls

July 5 - Calvary - Blunt, SD
12 - OPEN
18 - Living Hope - West Fargo, ND (Ordination Council)
19 - OPEN
26 - OPEN

From Denise MacDonald to DBC Ladies

I would like to take this opportunity to greet the ladies of the Dakota Baptist churches. As you know, Fred and I are new to the area. Although we both grew up here and have lived here in the past, there are many new faces in the DBC. I am looking forward to spending time getting to know each of you. I am humbled that God has put us here again and hope in some way that I can make a difference.

My past experience has included:

*Praying for needs

*Teaching on prayer and prayerwalking

- *Personal Encouragement
- *Resources for ministry wives
- *Fellowship and participation in church and associational events
- *Training and Bible study for ministry wives

If I can be a help to you in any of these or other areas, please don't hesitate to contact me at denisemission1@gmail.com.

Finally, I know all of you are dealing with the virus in your area, just as we are. I hope to encourage you with this from God's Word. "For the Lord is righteous; He loves righteous deeds. The upright will see His face" (Psalm 11:7). Be encouraged as you live for the Lord in the Dakotas.

- Denise MacDonald

Schedule

Monday:

10am: Checkin/House this gonna work
 1pm: Team Scavenger Hunt
 4pm: Missionary Time
 7pm: Worship Service

Tues-Thur:

10am: Team Activity
 1pm: Bible Study
 4pm: Missionary Time
 7pm: Worship Time

Friday:

10am: Wrap It Up
 1pm:Worship Service/Goodbye

DBC Youth Camp is Happening NOW!

Camp is virtual this year and is happening June 1-5, which is right now! If your students haven't signed up yet, it is not too late. Once they register, we will send them the links so they can participate in this year's activities.



As you can see, the schedule is spread out enough to allow students to participate without spending all day in front of a screen (times are Central Time Zone). Even if they can make only some of the events, we'd still love to have them join us. The best part - **there's no cost this year to participate!** They can, however, purchase a camp shirt if they want (\$15 + shipping and tax).

Register or Learn More

Updates from Jeff

I just wanted to give a quick word of encouragement to all of you as we head into summer. I know many of you have been finding new and creative ways to minister to your community and beyond during the last couple of months. We have found new virtual methods to supplement the things we are used to doing in person. As I compose this article, we are beginning our virtual youth camp week and it has been going well so far. We are learning lots of new things and I hope we can keep the best of them in our toolkit for future ministry opportunities.

I would like to share a couple of things with you this month. There are several resources available to help your church as you navigate these waters. Lifeway has created some church assistance programs that may be of help to you. They include credits for materials, free resources for digital Bible studies, and other offers. There is also free training available on Ministry Grid.

[Visit Ministry Grid](#)

Also, we just completed our second class in the Dakota Baptist Ministry Training Institute. We will be off this summer before resuming classes in the fall. Look for more information about registering for the fall by the beginning of August.

With travel getting back to normal, I am looking forward to seeing many of you in person again soon. If your church would like to do a weekend training for small groups or discipleship or some other resource we can assist with, please let me know.

I also want to pass along a personal note of thanks to all who reached out and offered their condolences and prayers on my dad's passing a couple of months ago. It happened right at the beginnings of the lockdowns and disruptions that quickly took over everyone else's lives and we were touched by your love and thoughtfulness for us during that time.

Jeff Musgrave
Church Health and Leadership

A Personal Request from Fred

At one of our May pastor get-togethers, a pastor shared something they developed to help their members continue to grow in Christ while they were not able to meet in person. He said it was so helpful they were going to continue using it.

That got me thinking. I'm guessing that there are several new tools our churches have discovered for use during the pandemic. Some will never be used again when things return to "normal." There are probably a few, however, that will

continue to help accomplish the mission for months and years to come.

In a future article I would like to share some of these new ideas that you will continue to use when the pandemic is past. Please send me a note about one or two of these tools that God added to your toolbox, so I can share them with the rest of our DBC churches.



Church Replanting

"Is your church struggling to embrace a changing culture & community? Is your membership dwindling because of frustration, confusion & exhaustion? Do you feel called to serve churches like these? You are not alone. There is hope."

[Visit NAMB Website](#)



Did you know?

Royal Ambassadors, an SBC missions organization for boys, has a Facebook page? It has resources for leaders including RA lessons and Campcraft lessons (such as tying three basic knots). This is a great way for groups to learn about missions!

[Visit RA Facebook Page](#)



DBC Church News

Foothills Community Baptist Church, Piedmont, SD - Pastor Bob Hower and his wife Cindi have been encouraging members and regular attenders by dropping off balloons and painted rocks. Cindi also "invited" a group of paper people to our church - and they all came! It is a light-hearted way to encourage the Praise Team and remind everyone that they will meet again!



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dakota Baptist Convention and Blackaby Ministries had to postpone the Spiritual Leadership Coaching Workshop that was to originally be held April 6-8. We are pleased to announce that the new dates for the workshop are September 14-16 (Monday - Wednesday). It is still going to be held at the Cambria Inn & Suites in Rapid City.

As before, the cost of the workshop for DBC churches is free! We can also provide lodging for those who could not otherwise afford it.

[Learn More](#)

DBC CP Giving Exceeding 2019 Pace

In last week's Dakota Connections video, I promised some exciting news in the June newsletter. Well, here it is! Cooperative Program giving of the churches of the Dakota Baptist Convention is defying the trends of other SBC state conventions and agencies in the face of the coronavirus crisis. Even though most North and South Dakota churches stopped in-person worship services in March and April in an effort to help flatten the curve of the virus, as of the end of May 2020, CP giving in the DBC is more than \$20,000 above 2019 giving. **That is 12.7% higher than at this time last year!**

Multiple pastors have told me that they experienced record giving during the pandemic. And, now that churches are beginning to regather, they are seeing that trend continue.

The implication of this news is that, at this point, we will only need to implement the first of the three-step short-term response plan adopted in April by the DBC Executive Board. This step was designed to replace funds frozen for the remainder of 2019 by our mission partners from the SBC early on in the crisis. It involves using up to \$50,000 from a fund made up of CP giving from previous years that exceeded the needs of those years. Assuming that 2020 CP giving continues to match or exceed 2019 levels, we will not need to tap into our strategic impact and/or reserve “rainy day” funds. I am excited that it appears that we will be able weather this storm through the faithful partnership of our churches.

While I am excited about what God is doing through His people in the Dakotas, I am concerned for other state conventions and SBC agencies that are experiencing financial hardship. On a recent Zoom meeting of eleven state executive directors, nine reported that they have seen a decline in CP giving. Two of them said their declines were in the range of 30 to 40%. The declines have forced some state conventions and other SBC entities to layoff longtime personnel. As we express gratitude and praise to God for His graciousness to the Dakotas, please pray for our brothers and sisters around the SBC who are struggling at this time.

As a final word, I want to personally thank each of you for demonstrating once again that, *“two are better than one for they have a good return for their labor ”* (Eccl. 4:9). What a blessing it is to serve with the churches of the Dakota Baptist Convention.

Open May 2020 CP Giving
Report

Pew Giveaway

Berean Baptist Fellowship in Nicholson, Pennsylvania, is donating pews to churches or ministries that can use them. The pews are 9 feet long (includes the side rails) and the backs are about 3 feet high. If you are interested, please contact Kevin Miller at kevin.miller3@verizonwireless.com.

