

IT'S 'WHAT WE DO BEST'

Idaho pastor says church focuses on missions, outreach

MERIDIAN, Idaho – Central Valley Baptist Church didn't wait for the National Day of Prayer on May 6 to start praying.

The church began its Prayer for America last July, and a list of 10 specific prayer requests has been posted to its website since then.

Central Valley Baptist believes in the power of prayer and in the power of hands-on and financial support of God's kingdom work, Pastor Clint Henry said as he described various ways the congregation reaches out locally, throughout its state convention, nationally and globally.

Henry uses the analogy of a braided rope to show the congregation the importance of the Cooperative Program. People in the rural West understand the value of a rope. It connects a rider on horseback to the calf he's after, secures hay bales to a wagon, serves as a temporary fix until a sturdier option is available. A braided rope is one of many strands of fibers twisted together for compound strength.

"We talk about holding the rope," Henry said. "Missionaries are counting on us to hold the rope, the Cooperative Program rope. If that was gone, it would be pretty tough to do the work on their own."

"The Cooperative Program is a lifeline. We talk about that around here all the time. The Cooperative Program is a unique way to unite churches of any size in an incredible missions plan where even the smallest church can take as much credit as the biggest church."

About 430 people attend Sunday morning worship at Central Valley Baptist. Almost every year since it was started in 1982 – Henry was called as pastor in 1995 – the church has given at least 10 percent of undesignated offerings to missions through CP.

It's been as high as 13 percent, but as more church members are called into fulltime missions, the church has settled on its CP giving being the church's tithe, with another 14 percent going to other missions endeavors.

"We support the Cooperative Program first because of the Great Commission. We want to be obedient to Jesus' command," Henry said. "Secondly I see the impact it has on the local church. There's an increased desire to share the Gospel, and more people wanting to participate in overseas projects. We've gone on 32 overseas trips in the last five years, and that certainly impacts the church's decision to support the Cooperative Program."

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has a multi-year interest. A member who is from Mexico and his wife returned there to start a church and related ministries. Another member who is from Thailand and her husband also felt called to go there for missionary work.

In addition to its global missions work, hands-on and through the Cooperative Program, Central Valley Baptist is an active partner in its local association and two-state convention. Henry has served in elected positions at the Treasure Valley Southern Baptist Association, the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board.

"Central Valley is our largest SBC church," Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention Executive Director Rob Lee said. "They are our leading church in missions engagement locally and internationally. The church staff have a passion for the nations coming to Christ, and church membership follow their example."

"Central Valley has been the leading church in their gifts through the Cooperative Program for our state

convention. They have broken records the past two years in gifts through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for the 'most-ever giving' by one of our state convention's churches."

Central Valley has planted or partnered to plant 11 church type missions and provides ongoing support to nine other ministries both local and abroad.

Members are encouraged to think creatively about how God could use them, which leads to a continually expanding list of ministries backed by the church.

"We encourage people to pray as we look to see where God is at work and prepare to join Him," Henry said.

In addition to hands-on involvement in the local ministries the church financially supports, there's a community garden

on the church property, Providence High School for students looking for a biblically based education, divorce care specifically for women and Launch Pad Ministries for public high school students, and this year, the church began participating in Saturate USA.

In addition to providing produce

for the community and church members, the garden attracts neighborhood youngsters who learn how to garden even as they make friends with church members.

"We try to use it to help meet needs we're aware of," Henry said. "We've always used it as more of a blessing ministry than a church growth ministry."

The church started Providence High School two years ago because, "We've been very concerned about providing a quality biblical-based education," the pastor continued. "It [the 45-person student body] would be bigger if we had more space."

For students in public high schools, Central Valley Baptist participates in Launch Pad Ministries to provide biblical teaching that guides teens toward Jesus, equips them with biblical convictions, and launches students to make a difference for the kingdom of God. This ministry takes place during the school system's weekly "release time."

Saturate USA is a gospel-outreach ministry that provides, at no cost, materials including a Gospel tract, a DVD of the Jesus film, information about the participating church, and the bag to put the items in that members hang on the front doors of homes in a given zip code. By church members going out one Saturday a month, the entire 83646 area – 23,000 homes – will be saturated with the Gospel within three months, Henry said.

"This is important to me," the pastor said. "While we may be a great giving and going church, the only thing we really have to brag on is Jesus Christ. We want Him to get all the credit for what we do."



Central Valley Baptist Church Pastor Clint Henry on a trip to Argentina.