

by Brad McBrayer

“The pastor’s not in,” replied the receptionist.

This is probably a familiar response at the front desk of Cross Lanes Baptist Church in Cross Lanes, West Virginia. It’s not that Pastor Seth Polk doesn’t care about his duties. It’s because Pastor Seth *does* care about his duties.

Pastor Seth and a team of 15 others were on mission in St. Ann’s Parish, Jamaica, carrying out the Great Commission. They were partnering with a group of churches on the island to conduct Vacation Bible Schools during the day and evangelistic worship services at night. This trip and at least eight others planned by Cross Lanes Baptist Church are clear indications of a church that is experiencing a revival in the urgency to share the Good News of Jesus Christ outside the walls of their church.

“Our focus as a church is ‘Growing God’s Forever Family,’ based on John 15:5,” says Pastor Seth. “With that, we filter our entire church ministry through a process we call ‘Know, Grow, Go.’ It is a biblical model of making disciples by leading people to know Jesus, growing in their faith, and then leading others to know Jesus in a continual process that will only end when Jesus returns.”



Cross Lanes Baptist Church’s commitment to spreading the gospel is a direct result of the Acts 1:8 Challenge, a cooperative missions program issued by the North American Mission Board.

Acts 1:8 is Luke’s account of Jesus’ final words to the apostles before Christ’s ascension. Jesus tells them, “you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This doctrine—to witness within our communities, among our states, throughout our country, and around the world—is a great entry toward revival among churches. Putting this doctrine into practice exemplifies God’s desire becoming our desire—a reflection of obedience moving towards holiness.

“When people are passionately pursuing God, their lives will be impacted significantly,” says Pastor Seth. “As they come closer to God they have a desire to lead more holy lives because they understand just how holy God is.”

This holiness manifests itself in several ways.

“We have seen a significant increase in prayer for missions,” says Pastor Seth.

Lee Weeks, Associate Pastor of Evangelism and Missions at First Baptist Cumming, Georgia, has seen similar evidence following his congregation’s answer to the Acts 1:8 Challenge.

“The evangelistic fervor has increased,” Weeks says. “Seeing people as God sees them and ministering to them has a profound impact on our own spiritual walk and maturity. Our church has become more outwardly focused, but not just toward overseas. Our people have become more missional in their individual lives at home and in their workplaces.”

Pastor Seth concludes, “All of this leads to one question. ‘What does God expect of me?’ It’s not ‘how can I be most comfortable?’ or ‘how little can I get by with doing and still be considered a good church member?’ The question is, ‘once I embrace Jesus by faith and my life is radically changed, what does God expect of me?’”

Wouldn't it be great if we could expect to hear "the pastor's not in, the choir's not practicing, and there's no membership dinner tonight" followed by "because they're all out telling people about Jesus"? Imagine the revival that would come to *that* church! Imagine the feeling of closeness to God. Imagine the holiness.

### Links to Learn

- For more information on the Acts 1:8 Challenge, visit [www.actstone8.com](http://www.actstone8.com).

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Brad McBrayer attends Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia where he is involved in Sunday Bible Study leadership, the recreation ministry, and sports missions. He has also directed an annual 3-on-3 basketball tournament called Share the Rock to help raise money for missions throughout the church. Brad works for NBA tv.

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