

PRESBYTERY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MISSION TO NORTH AMERICA COMMITTEE REPORT SEPTEMBER 13, 2014

INFORMATION:

1. Committee Roster

The MNA committee is looking for both TEs and REs to fill out its committee roster.

2. SWFL church planting projects (see reports below)

3. SWFL potential church planting projects

Westtown PCA has issued a call to Justin Woodall as an Assistant Pastor for Evangelism with plans to plant a church in downtown St. Petersburg.

REPORTS FROM CHURCH PLANTERS:

Steve Light (Sojourner- Tampa)

1. Moved Into our new space in June

What a blessing to be here at 10915 N 56th St. We have two storefronts - one for classes and offices, the other for worship space - a tidy facility at a visible location on a well traveled road. A stone's-throw away from USF, it is not fancy, but it is truly ideal for our needs. Sunday night Bible study is held here along with Wednesday night *Christianity Explored* for new Christians or those exploring the claims of Christ. This is where our morning worship will be held starting October 5.

2. Saturdays full of outreach

We have had an army of Campus Outreach students here in Tampa on Summer project. For six Saturdays during June and July, these students have been out in the neighborhoods (30 or more on any given Saturday) sharing the love of Christ and inviting people to Sojourner events. What an answer to prayer these laborers have been! Would you pray for conversions to Christ and our faithful discipling of new believers?

3. Putting together teams, preparing the space, and more

As we approach public worship starting in October, we have spent much time and energy making schedules for nursery, children's worship, ushering, greeting, etc, holding donation drives for items for the nursery; preparing the worship space, moving things in storage to the new space...and on and on. We also are hosting a Vacation Bible School August 11-14. Would you please pray that everything would come together?

Ben Turner (Strong Tower- Lakeland)

Strong Tower Church has been officially up and running since April 9, 2014! We made it and it hasn't shut down yet! But honestly, our team has truly enjoyed the privilege of seeing this church come to be. Many people in our city and county have prayed for this church for over 15 years and now God has brought it about in his grace. We launched with 109 people in attendance and have maintained around that size since with peaks of 120's and lows of 70's. We've been very grateful for the steady stream of visitors we have seen coming from our target area. We continue to pray that these new people get connected to our church and see the gospel transform their lives.

What's ahead for us? It's still very early, so we are trying to take it slow and see how all of the dust settles before making too many major decisions. We just started our version of small groups and have seen some good fellowship come out of them. Our church has many children coming with and without their parents so we are

talking through possibly hiring a part-time children's ministry director next year. We also plan to begin our first membership classes in the Fall so we're looking forward to seeing people commit to the church and others come to faith as we further discuss the gospel.

Please pray for us:

1. Pray for the unbelievers coming to our church to hear and believe the gospel.
2. Pray that the marriages in our church would grow in health as many are struggling.
3. Pray for me as I learn how to preach and adjust to the weekly preaching schedule.
4. Pray for our leadership to have wisdom and guidance on vision and hiring for the coming year.
5. Pray for my wife and I as we purchase a new house in our neighborhood this month.

Geoff Henderson (Harbor-West Bradenton)

We have completed our preview worship services. We began with our core group in the backyard of a member, branched off to worshipping at several parks and have finally made our to the YMCA. Our first official worship service took place at the Bradenton Branch YMCA at 10 am on Easter Sunday. We had a good turnout as we were praying for a 100 but ended up not too far short of that. Of course we did experience, as most churches did, the post-Easter hangover. Still, we had new faces show, and a few couples return from the previous service. The gym is turning out to be a great worship space for us.

We've split into two fairly large community groups, with the hopes of multiplying them before too long. In addition to building relationships and looking into God's Word, we spend time praying by name for our friends and contacts who don't know Christ or who aren't connected to His church. Both of our groups are going through the Gospel Centered Life study. There are a number of YMCA workers who seem amenable to us having a church there, yet don't know Christ or have no connection with any church. Since there are now 3 of us from Harbor who are part of the advisory board at the branch, I'm hoping to reach a number of those employees, as well as members who frequent the YMCA.

Prayer Requests:

- **Music Leader:** Pray the Lord would send us a music leader within our congregation. We've been having different people fill in, but I would love to see a guitarist of our own skilled enough to lead. Or that I would have wisdom in hiring one who would desire to be part of our church.
- **Multiplying:** So far people are really enjoying our community groups. But they know our vision is to multiply. Pray that the Lord would allow us to multiply these groups before too long. We're only a few people east of us away from starting a new group in Palmetto.
- **Mass:** Our people have been incredibly encouraged and excited about the church. They are loving each other as well as reaching out. But we do need to grow to reach a more sustainable mass, particularly as summer approaches and the vacations hit. Obviously we desire to see conversions comprise this critical mass. That's who we are trying to reach. Pray we see fruit from our prayers, invitations, and parties of people who will one day believe.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE- M/S/P:

1. **The MNA committee recommends the presbytery approve \$6000 to be paid to Strong Tower Church immediately from 2013 surplus funds to make good on pledge made to Ben Turner and Strong Tower in April 2013.**
2. **The MNA committee recommends that the presbytery approve \$5000 to be paid to each of the following mission churches: Strong Tower Lakeland, Sojourner Tampa, and Harbor Bradenton. One-half to be paid immediately and one-half to be paid in December 2014.**

Respectfully submitted,



Barry A. "Drew" Bennett, Chairman