

Mississippi Baptist Convention Board pledges \$1 million to international missions

RICHMOND, Va. (IMB and local reports) – The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) has committed one million dollars to the 2020 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® (LMCO) for international missions.



Parker

MBCB executive director-treasurer Shawn Parker said the convention board has underspent its budget so far this year due to cancellations of events and meetings brought on by the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, as well as travel restrictions for MBCB employees that were put into place earlier this year in response to the pandemic.

The MBCB Budget Committee identified the surplus in the board's operating budget during their August meeting, Parker said. "Our financial officers took a look at the numbers and decided that we could give a million dollars, and we felt like there was no better cause than international missions."

The LMCO gift proposal was presented to the convention board's executive committee and finally to the full board during their August 25 meetings, and both bodies agreed.

“This gift to world missions is a tribute to the faithful generosity of Mississippi Baptists during this time of great financial difficulty in our country,” Parker said. “While I’m glad the Lord has provided for our needs, I don’t want to see our bank account become inflated when so many people around the world need to hear the message of God’s love.”



Hester

Ken Hester, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and senior pastor of First Church, Pontotoc, said: “The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is really empowering the people on mission fields – the boots on the ground – to do the work of the Kingdom. Though we had to shut a lot of things down here due to COVID-19, the faithfulness of Mississippi Baptists continued on and allowed us to be in a position to help those all over the world. It is also so encouraging for we who have been stifled during this pandemic to send our missionaries not only our prayers, but also a million dollars to proclaim to the nations that Jesus is Lord.”



Chitwood

The gift was transferred electronically on Oct. 11 to the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va., which administers LMC0. IMB president Paul Chitwood expressed his appreciation for

Mississippi Baptists: “We are so thankful for Dr. Parker and the Mississippi Baptist Convention of churches. Their substantial gift to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will be a great jumpstart toward the \$175 million goal for 2020. Mississippi Baptists continue to keep their focus on the lost among the nations.”



Floyd

Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in Nashville, said: “I am very excited and grateful for the special gift the Mississippi Baptist Convention [Board] has given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. This is a great kick-off to us reaching this year’s goal of \$175 million. We must do all we can to mobilize as many missionaries as possible across the world. Thank you Mississippi Baptists and all Southern Baptists for what you will do to achieve this goal.”

Parker said over the past few weeks, he has shared the news of the gift when visiting in Mississippi Baptist churches and the response has been overwhelming. “It has created a great buzz across the state. I share the news, and there’s spontaneous applause. That’s just an affirmation to me of the love for the Lord, the love for the world, that Mississippi Baptists have.



“Mississippi Baptists of all ages, from our senior adults to our young adults, understand that the Great Commission [Matthew 28:18-20] is our objective, and the best way to achieve the Great Commission collectively is through cooperation, and so that’s what the Cooperative Program is about. That’s what the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is about.”

Giving to the Cooperative Program covers IMB office and administrative expenses, enabling 100% of LMC0 gifts to be used in support of missionaries. LMC0 gifts like those of Mississippi Baptists enable more than 3,500 IMB missionaries to continue serving on international mission fields and provides funding to send new missionaries.

Seven Southern Baptist workers from four churches in Mississippi will be commissioned during IMB’s next Sending Celebration in November. Due to security concerns, only one family and their home church can be disclosed.



Tuminello family

Scott and Casey Tuminello will serve in Denmark. Their home church is First Church, Jackson. “Denmark is around one percent evangelical and is very much a post-Christian nation,

so our main ministry focus is evangelism to a people group who doesn't care about the Gospel but has a great need for it," Casey said.

"We consider it a great honor to be sent out by Mississippi Baptists and, year after year, we are so proud of the way that Mississippi supports those that it sends through the sacrificial and significant giving that they do through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon. We strive daily to represent those supporting us in Mississippi as well as they represent us."

Parker said one of the most meaningful opportunities he's had while in his role has been Zoom teleconferencing calls with IMB missionaries who are from or have roots in the state. "Under the current circumstances, two things that we need to do as fervently as we've ever done are: No. 1, to pray for the missionaries that are on the field and those who have been reassigned temporarily because of what's happening. Secondly, we need to give because the needs of the world are as great now as they've ever been before, so there should be no reason for us to let up in any way."

The IMB reported a total of \$159.5 million was given to the 2019-20 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, which exceeded the offering's goal and was the second-highest offering in history. The highest offering total ever was \$165.8 million achieved in 2015. The 2020-21 LMC0 goal is \$175 million. For more LMC0 information, visit imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering.

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Editor's note: William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record, contributed to this article. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® is a registered trademark of Woman's Missionary Union

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