

Faithful and Sacrificial NO MATTER WHAT



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Churches today face many challenges as they seek to remain healthy and growing. For those in leadership, there is an endless list of obstacles to navigate while keeping both the organization and the church's ministry operating smoothly. It is nearly impossible not to get swept up in the tidal wave of opportunities to join where God is doing great work while also meeting the expectations and needs of the congregation. That tension often centers on finding the right balance between outward-focused missions and the inward

focus on the church's congregational needs.

For Pastor Wendell Horton, these were some of the familiar challenges he faced while pastoring **Sky View Missionary Baptist Church** for more than three decades. Sky View is located in Fancy Gap in rural Southwest Virginia, where I-77 tops the mountain and crosses over into North Carolina.

Leading with Commitment

As his mentor and beloved pastor before him, Pastor Wendell has led with a commitment to pastoral care and missions, fully believing that they were

part of the greatest missions work in the world through the SBC and the Cooperative Program. In fact, he said, “It's impossible to be a serious Southern Baptist and not fully support the Cooperative Program.” With that kind of commitment and the Lord's help, the church continued to grow.

Balancing Outreach and Inward Focus

As the Lord continued to grow the church beyond the building's capacity, a new challenge emerged: balancing outreach and inward focus. Simply put, if people do not have

room to sit, they often do not stay. The church began discussing and praying about building a new worship center. Plans were drawn, and costs were calculated. It soon became clear that constructing a new facility would require a significant reduction in missions giving.

Remaining Faithful in Sacrificial Giving

Pastor Wendell realized God had blessed the numeric growth because of their generosity in missions giving, and if they cut what God had blessed, then they may no longer need what they were planning to build. Ultimately, the church chose to remain faithful to sacrificial giving, ensuring that Southern Baptist missionaries would be able to stay on

the field and that the Gospel would continue to go forth.

Today, Sky View Missionary Baptist Church still meets in its original sanctuary, built in 1956 and expanded in 1996. The church now holds two worship services each Sunday morning to accommodate a congregation of more than 400. Reflecting on that decision, Pastor Wendell said, “I’m sure that if we were to build a new worship center, the quality of our worship service would be better and more comfortable, but I just don’t believe it would have the same favor of God.”

According to Annual Church Profile (ACP) records, since 1980, Sky View has sacrificially given \$1,152,176.64 to the Cooperative Program,

\$1,140,072.91 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, \$494,572.02 to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, and \$297,670.45 to Vision Virginia. That represents a total of \$3,087,230.02 invested in reaching their neighbors and the nations with the Good News of Jesus. Executive Pastor, Gary Horton, says that this is not about anything they’ve done in their own strength. He stresses, “God gets all the glory for our ability to give generously to missions.”

The Power of Cooperative Partnership

Sometimes, we find that the greatest balance comes from making great sacrifices. That is the power of cooperative partnership. ●

