

THIS IS ONEIDA ENCOURAGING PASTORS

Years ago, the Kentucky Baptist Convention put on The Mountain Mission Conference, hosted by Oneida Baptist Institute. When I was a youngster, it always seemed as if there were wall-to-wall people on the Oneida campus during that week. After fielding many questions the past several years about that conference, we decided to host an Oneida Pastors' Conference and Retreat. So many pastors and their churches do so much for the Oneida ministry, and we wanted to simply give back to them and say thank you. For the better part of a year, we planned and advertised this new but not-so-new event.

In late July, we held the event here on our campus. The theme of the conference was "How to be Fruitful and Faithful in Ministry Even When You're not Charles Spurgeon." Attendance was small, but we had a fantastic few days of preaching, worship, and fellowship. The small size contributed to the event's being intimate and conducted on a very personal level. There were multiple pastors in attendance who had recently experienced difficult departures from churches, and those pastors were able to minister to one another. Sometimes the Lord may allow us to experience trials so we can not only sympathize, but actually empathize with another brother or sister in Christ.

Dr. Chitwood and representatives from both Clear Creek and University of the Cumberland attended. Jason "Bubba" Stewart of the KBC led in worship. Ken Pierpont, an evangelist from Michigan, was our main speaker and brought three tremendous messages and challenges that included treasures from his heart and years in the ministry. Our campus minister, Dr. David Price, conducted two of the six sessions and brought two fantastic messages, including one on "compassion fatigue." Each and every message and testimony challenged and inspired me personally. Although I am not currently a pastor, the messages for the pastors certainly touched home with me.

While the food, music, and preaching were great, the best thing about the event was the fellowship and camaraderie. At the dinner tables and before and after the worship sessions, the men shared, laughed, and cried together. Sometimes it helps to simply know someone else is walking in your shoes.

We should all take the opportunity -- not only in the month of October, which is the designated time for pastor appreciation, but as often as possible -- to love on, bless, encourage, and show our appreciation for our pastors. Perhaps one of the ways to do this is to encourage your pastor to attend the Oneida Pastors' Conference and Retreat in July 2018. It's free, and I promise neither you nor they will regret attending.



Larry A. Gritton, Jr.
OBI President

*First printed in the Western Recorder August 22, 2017.
Reprinted with the permission of the Western Recorder.*

*Follow us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/OBI.KY>
Track us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Oneida_Baptist
Connect with Mr. Gritton: <https://twitter.com/lgritton>*