

# Baptistries Around the World

Dr. Dale Underwood, Director

“Eliminating delays and excuses for immersing taught believers”

## OUR FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT

Baptistries Around the World is thirty-two years (1991) but this is our *first* quarterly report. Our aim is to make everyone aware of progress, developments, and needs. Occasional newsletter articles have reported a few exciting events. We have also mentioned some in letters of acknowledgment for donations, but that space is limited. We want you to know more and share in the enthusiasm.

Due to the expanding interest of this phase of the ministry, too many stories get buried. So, we decided to provide this *quarterly* bulletin of ***Baptistries Around the World***. It will not prevent us from sharing compelling accounts sooner.

The First Quarter of 2023 has focused on securing parts to assemble the next 25 portable baptistries. The “pieces” come from different sources. Since Covid-19, all industries have a shortage of materials/supplies, slow delivery, and significant price increases. In this issue, we will explain in greater detail how it is impacting this important work and steps we have chosen to take to remedy the situation for 2023.



## “Patiently Waiting to Obey”

When a taught believer seeks to put Christ on in baptism behind bars, it is a different experience than in a local congregation.

We are blessed in our local Nueces County Jail *today*. Arrangements are usually made in 7 days or less. It has not always been this way and it could change overnight.

Baptisms are less frequent in most places. Some facilities lack a baptistry which is why **Baptistries Around the World** exists.

Even in facilities where we have placed one, some authorities refuse to allow baptisms. It is a unit-by-unit decision. Any activity can be disallowed if it is thought to be a threat to security. A taught believer in such instances is a living example. Anger gets nowhere.

The tract, *Patiently Waiting to Obey*, offers encouragement to one in a predicament like this (copy enclosed). You may find it useful in rare circumstances even in this so-called “free” world. If more copies are needed, tell us. This is an imperfect world. Heaven must be patiently waited on, too.

## BRIEF HISTORY

### Part One:

***Baptistries Around the World*** began as “Baptistries Across America” in mid-1991 at Windsor Park (Kings Crossing) Church of Christ in Corpus Christi, Texas. Buck Griffith arrived as “Pulpit Minister” in June 1977. Buck first taught in Dallas County Jail in 1971. Thousands of immersions took place between 1971-77 in either an upright one-man whirlpool in the infirmary or in old cast-iron bathtubs.

In Nueces County Jail, a roadblock to immersion developed due to what county authorities called a *lack of facilities*. Numerous options were offered but denied. In an act of desperation, Buck asked permission to bring in a “portable” baptistry that could be brought in and removed until there was another need. After considerable discussion, Sheriff Solomon Ortiz Sr. approved it.

Then, Buck had to figure out a way to invent one. Trips were made to stores selling full-length lawn furniture with aluminum frames. The one selected was tallest from the ground up. The cost was \$30. The guts were stripped, leaving a bare frame. The Army-Navy Surplus store sold 16 X 20-foot waterproof tarps for \$25. Next, an \$8 water hose was purchased from a lumber yard. Bob Wachtel (an elder) and Buck set it up in the alley behind the church. The tarp was draped across the top of the frame, poked down in the middle, and the leftover was tucked under the legs. When the water was poured, Bob immersed Buck to guarantee it would accommodate large bodies. It worked like a charm. Buck went home, confiscated a worn-out suitcase, stuffed the hose in with a few towels and... ***the portable baptistry was born!***

(Part Two: second quarter)



# WHY “BAPTISTRIES AROUND THE WORLD” IS NOT A BUSINESS



From our start in 1991, we realized most prison ministries operate on a *shoe-string* budget like us. Still, certain tools are necessities, *including a baptistry*. After meeting *our* need, sights were set on helping others. If and when a need arose, we found kind donors to cover the cost. As the needs increased, we expanded our efforts to seek willing contributors. When possible, those in need have donated *more* than the cost. We consider any amount a donation. For years, we have managed to hold the cost at \$400 per unit *plus shipping*. But the latest figure is **\$450** and the shipping has gone up significantly. We insure the unit for \$499. Many cannot even help defray the *shipping*.

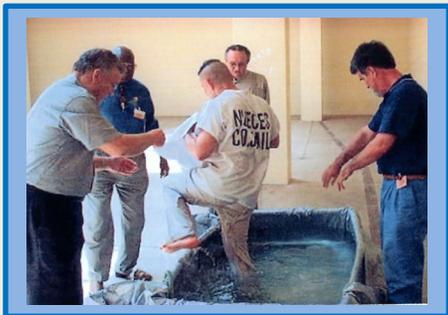
Rather than ask strapped prison ministries for more, we are searching for more congregations and individuals to help. We ask Christians everywhere to pray for this fruitful work.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Our friends at American Rehabilitation Ministries (ARM) have calculated over the years that one baptistry averages being used **37** times per year. We know a few ministries that use them **1000+** times *every* year!

To date, we have supplied 463 portable and/or permanent baptistries to 40 states, including 135 that went to 41 foreign countries. This multiplies out to **17,131** baptisms *each* year. Can you imagine the scene on Pentecost in Acts 2 with about **3000** baptisms on one day?

One prison had anxiously waited nearly a year to receive their baptistry. Over 100 were immersed the first day after its arrival. They were blessed to have more than one to baptize because it would wear one man out.

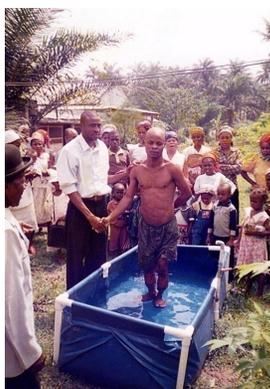


## STATES TARGETED

There are **ten** states to which we have *not* yet placed a baptistry. Please help:  
**Connecticut Iowa Hawaii**  
**Delaware Vermont Utah**  
**North Dakota Rhode Island Idaho**  
**South Dakota**

## THE “FOREIGN” ANGLE

This ministry began as “Baptistries Across America” but there was clearly a tremendous need in foreign mission fields. Thus far, 135 have been sent to 41 countries outside the USA. This called for a name change: ***Baptistries Around the World***.



Nine have gone to Mexico and Canada followed by seven to Costa Rica, Peru, and the Philippines. Six have been sent to Russia, Cuba, and Tanzania. Several have gone to Viet Nam, Hong Kong, India, South & West Africa, Zambia, Nigeria, Chili, Ghana, etc. Accounts have come to us of countries where with water sources contaminated or inhabited by poisonous snakes, alligators, crocodiles, etc. In most cases, a baptistry is sent to a U.S. congregation taking it in with their representatives going to visit a missionary they support or sponsor. A complete list of the foreign countries will be shared soon.

## PERMANENT TABLE-TOP UNITS

American Rehabilitation Ministries (ARM) provides these baptistries for jails and prisons. Depending on choices, the cost may be \$1800-\$2000 (including freight from Joplin, Missouri to the facility). If ***Baptistries Around the World*** assists, delivery may be 6-8 weeks. But we play a role strictly on behalf of jails and prisons.

The cost to a **congregation** in the *free world* is considerably higher. We are not involved in these but refer interested parties directly to ARM at P. O. Box 1490, Joplin, Missouri 64802. Or you may call (417) 781-9100. Much more can be seen and learned from the ARM website at [www.arm.org](http://www.arm.org).



***Baptistries Around the World*** is overseen by the shepherds, Kings Crossing Church of Christ, 5901 Yorktown Boulevard, Corpus Christi, Texas 78414 (Ron Cardwell, Kyde Eddleman, Robert Illgen, Stephen Johnston, Jack North, and Richard Scanio).

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