

# Rural East Texas church has global missions vision

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BOIS D'ARC—A heart for people near and far keeps the century-old [Bois D'Arc Baptist Church](#) connected to missions and active as ever.

Pastor Mike Drinkard leads a stable congregation, halfway between Athens and Palestine. All the members of the pulpit committee who recommended the church to call him as pastor in 1978 still attend.

✘ Bois D'Arc Baptist Church members renovated homes as part of a World Changers project in 2011 in West Memphis, Ark. “The church’s strongest characteristic is that it is a missions-minded church—of course on a small scale, since we’re a small, rural church,” he said. “We give 25 percent of our offerings and tithes to various missions causes.”

About half of the church’s missions gifts are directed through Baptists’ Cooperative Program unified budget, and the remainder support ministries to which the congregation has a personal connection.

The church is not afraid to give sacrificially. When Drinkard took a trip to Peru to visit his sister who is a missionary there, the poverty he saw burdened him.

“When I came back, I told the church: ‘We’ve got to help those people. They are so poor. They don’t even have shoes, Bibles or anything.’ We had started a fund to build a multipurpose building with several thousand dollars in it, and I said, ‘As far as I’m concerned, we ought to empty that fund out and send all that money to Peru.’ And they voted to do it,” he recalled.

That devotion to missions keeps the congregation from becoming too inwardly focused, Drinkard said.

“They just want to concentrate on the Great Commission,” he said.

*The church members emptied a fund they had established to build a multipurpose building and, instead, sent the money to Peru.*

But missions means more than writing a check for the Bois D’Arc congregation. The East Texas church that draws about 100 in attendance each week has sent teams to 18 countries, from Peru to the Ukraine.

“Those mission trips open their eyes. They come back, and they want to do more. They realize how blessed we are. They want to do more; they want to give more,” he said.

Mission trips not only involve the church’s youth group. Senior adults participate in mission trips, as well, particularly focusing on [Operation Christmas Child](#). The ministry of Samaritan’s Purse collects shoeboxes filled with toys, other small gifts and a gospel presentation and delivers them to children in developing nations.

Now Operation Christmas Child has a processing center in the Dallas-Fort Worth area where the senior adults have volunteered, but for years, the group spent a week at a processing center in North Carolina, making sure children around the world learned of God’s love for them.

In addition, the congregation fills 600 shoeboxes of its own to aid the ministry, collecting items for the boxes all year and culminating in a churchwide packing party the first Wednesday night each November. The children who attend Vacation Bible School pay the shipping charges—usually about \$4,500—for the boxes with their offerings each year.

“It’s amazing what 100 kids can do, because every year, they raise that money during Bible school,” Drinkard said. “We try to teach our children—our RAs and GAs—about missions, and about how children around the world need Jesus.”