

**“Churches Linked Together  
to Communicate Christ!”**



**Bobby Gilstrap**  
Director of Missions

**Huron Baptist Association  
Southeastern Baptist Association**

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December 16, 2008

*Dear Ministry Partner,*

Oakwood Church is a Southern Baptist congregation in Saline, Michigan that is committed to reaching people with the message of Jesus Christ. Growing from 26 charter members to an average of around 250 now, they continue to see more than 25 persons baptized annually. For eleven years, this growing church has rented facilities for their worship services and most every other activity they conduct. They have desperately needed a permanent place to meet but were convinced that they should not purchase less than 40-acres of property. That much property has been financially unattainable due to the high cost of living in their community.

An unusual opportunity has presented itself within the past few weeks. Oakwood Church has discovered a person in the community who desires to sell 40-acres of prime property in the center of the church's ministry area. As you will read in the attached proposal, the seller wishes to sell the property to the church at 54% of market value by the end of 2008 to avoid losing money due to changes in the capital gains tax laws.

The one thing missing for the church to purchase this property immediately is adequate financial support. They presently have \$40,000 in their building and land fund, which is only enough make necessary improvements to the property and not for the purchase. The church needs one or more partners who are willing to make a tax-deductible charitable contribution to the church for the purchase of this property.

You can be a part of the ongoing and growing ministry of this congregation by helping this church in three ways.

1. Pray that God provide the funds needed to purchase this property by the end of 2008,
2. Contribute financially toward the purchase of this property,
3. Pass the attached proposal on to other individuals or churches that may have the financial ability to assist in the purchase of this property.

I want to encourage you to partner with Oakwood Church by contributing to help them purchase this property. I would further request that you read the attached proposal and the passionate letter from the heart of Oakwood Church's founding pastor, Frank Radcliff.

When you are ready to make your end-of-year tax-deductible gift, send it directly to Oakwood Church at the address on the proposal. You will be a blessing to the ongoing ministry of this congregation and the Kingdom of God.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me on my cellular phone (734.417.3990) or contact Pastor Radcliff directly at 734.944.1215 or 734. 474.6219.

*Partners in God's Harvest.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Gilstrap".

Bobby Gilstrap  
Director of Missions



**Oakwood Baptist Church**  
**200 W. Bennett**  
**Saline, MI 48176**  
**[www.OakwoodChurch.org](http://www.OakwoodChurch.org)**  
**734.944.1215**

## **Land Purchase Proposal Summary Page Outline**

### **Primary Contact**

Frank Radcliff, Jr., Senior Pastor  
Oakwood Church, SBC  
200 W. Bennett Rd.  
Saline, MI 48176

734-474-6219 (Cell)  
734-944-1215 (Office)  
E-mail: [frank@oakwoodchurch.org](mailto:frank@oakwoodchurch.org)  
Website: [www.oakwoodchurch.org](http://www.oakwoodchurch.org)

**Affiliations:** the Huron Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

### **Ministry Focus**

Oakwood Church, SBC is in Washtenaw County with a population of 350,000 people. More than eighty percent of residents are not believers and most are not affiliated with any religious organization. The average resident is a white-collar, upper middle class, young professional. About 9,400 people live within Saline's city limits with another 20,000+ living in the Saline Area Schools district. Saline is just minutes away from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti). CNN/Money Magazine once again named Saline, Michigan as one of the country's top 100 "Best Places to Live".

### **Organizational Description and Mission**

The leadership of Oakwood Church dream of building a church that teaches the literal and inerrant Word of God, salvation through Christ alone, and that Jesus is coming back soon. The church seeks to grow a people that love sharing their faith, worshipping God, spending time together, and using their gifts for Him.

### **Vision**

The vision of Oakwood Church is to build a strong Southern Baptist church that is relevant to people's lives and will push back the lostness in this community. Oakwood Church has been doing this with success for over eleven years. Few in the Saline area claim any religious affiliation. Of those involved in religious practice, they are predominately Catholic and Lutheran. Oakwood Church dreams of being used by God to build a local congregation where people can meet and grow in Jesus. The church is committed to helping people develop a personal relationship with Him baptizing 25-30 persons annually.

### **Financial Request and Purpose**

After eleven years of ministry in Saline, God has opened an unprecedented door of opportunity at the end of this year, 2008. Oakwood Church is growing and functioning in ministry quite well, in spite of owning no property or facilities. However, the hardships of renting facilities can be very difficult. Due to the severely depressed economy, we began searching for property in August of 2008. We discovered a 40-acre parcel that is appraised at a market value of \$1,400,000.00, but the owner is willing to sell it to the church for \$750,000.00. On the 40-acres of land are four buildings including a 2,158 sq ft home, a 3,500 sq ft barn, a 2,000 sq ft barn, and a 1,000 sq ft workshop. With the purchase of this property, these buildings could immediately be utilized for offices, band and choir practice space, storage, and discipleship training classes. The primary reasons for the owner offering such a discounted price are:

1. A depressed economy.
2. Potential changes in the capital gains tax structure with a new federal administration in 2009.
3. The seller is 80 years old and wants to move to Texas to be close to his children.
4. The seller would really love to see a church get his land. The seller has owned the land for over 50 years and does not want to see developers break it up and sell it.

**Total Amount Requested: \$750,000.00**

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**Rev. Frank Radcliff**  
**Senior Pastor**

**Rev. Ron Woody**  
**Associate Pastor**

**Rev. John Coleman**  
**Associate Pastor**



**Oakwood Baptist Church**  
**200 W. Bennett**  
**Saline, MI 48176**  
**www.OakwoodChurch.org**  
**734.944.1215**

## Land Purchase Proposal

### The Need

For eleven years now, Oakwood Church has met in school buildings. The church has grown from an average of 26 persons the first month of existence to an average of over 250 persons in weekly worship in 2008. Although Oakwood has been highly effective in many ways, it has been hindered from expanding ministries in the community due to not having permanent facilities. The church has consistently rented and borrowed space to accommodate church fellowship times, Bible studies, youth activities, band practices, and storage space. Most of the church's sound equipment, chairs, and stage equipment have spent many years in trailers stored outside.

When the church owns its own property and facilities, they can apply the \$70,000 per year currently spent in rental fees toward building expenses and property development. As a portable church, Oakwood Church accommodates the school's schedule, hindering the church from doing some of the things that they desire to accomplish to fulfill God's vision for their ministry. For example, the church has evaluated starting a Saturday night worship service since twenty-five percent of the community cannot attend Sunday morning services because of work schedules. Rental costs have deterred the church from providing such a ministry.

### The Solution

The vision that God laid on the hearts of the leadership from the beginning of Oakwood Church was to wait for Him to provide at least 40-acres, allowing the church to have enough property to significantly minister to the community. Everything has its perfect timetable and Oakwood Church has discussed the increased need for property for several years. The problem has always been finding the right land for the right price. The piece of property under consideration can be used immediately for church offices in addition to storage and teaching space since there are four buildings on the land. This prevents the church from having to pay property tax on open land.

The Oakwood Church family has talked and prayed about the purchase of this land and there has been a consensus. The church and its staff leadership feel that now is the time to move on this purchase before the economy changes and prices go back to where they were four years ago.

### The Strategic Plan to Meet the Need

Due to the declining economic condition of Michigan, we sensed God's direction to begin looking for property for our church. As a result, we contacted the owner of a 40-acre parcel in the center of our ministry focus area. Our plan to purchase this property is as follows:

- **June 2008** – Began search for property
- **August 2008** – Located 40-acre parcel, with 4 small buildings
- **September 2008** – Requested sale proposal.
- **November 2008** – Seller proposed sale price at 54% of current market value if purchase in 2008. Market price is \$1,400,000.00. Sale price is \$750,000.00.
- **November/December 2008** – Met with church leadership to discuss availability of church funds and/or soliciting outside funding sources.
- **November/December 2008** – Began searching for additional funding sources outside of congregation.
- **December 2008** - Consulted with our Director of Missions regarding writing a grant proposal to present to partnership organizations.

### The Needed Outcome

Oakwood Church is seeking to secure outside funding from one or more ministry partners (*i.e. churches, individuals, or other partners*) that can assist in the purchase of this 40-acre parcel. All contributions would need to be given by the end of 2008 for the church to receive the property at the offered price and for the donor to receive tax credit for a charitable gift in 2008.

- **December 2008** – The seller has expressed concern that capital gains tax laws may change in 2009, thus he desires to sell this property immediately to avoid additional taxation
- **December 2008** – Purchase of property
- **December 2008** – Move existing offices, storage, band equipment to facilities on new property

### Church's History

Oakwood Church started in 1997. The church has grown from a new work of 26 people to an established church of 250 to 300 people weekly. The church has led the association in baptisms for almost all of those eleven years, including the last five consecutive years. Oakwood Church has averaged baptizing 20 to 30 new converts annually. The small group ministry of Oakwood has one or two groups meeting every night of the week and almost every morning of the week. Oakwood Church has also started the Awana Bible Teaching program this year.

### Future Opportunities

1. Oakwood Church is excited about two future opportunities after the purchase this land. One of Oakwood Church's members is involved in wind farming. The company he works with would like to put wind turbines on a small portion of the property. This would keep the church from having an electrical bill, having heating expenses, and would provide ongoing monthly residual income. Since a large portion of the community is interested and excited about energy conservation, wind turbines on the property would be an asset that would attract many in the community.
2. Another interested party has informed the church's leadership that he is interested in making a substantial contribution to building a permanent facility on the property, once the church owns that land completely free and clear.

### Budget Summary and Plan

Oakwood Church has had a building and land fund for the last few years that has a balance of \$40,000.00. That small amount of money will be needed for preparing the buildings on the property for immediate use and for road preparation. Therefore, the money for purchasing this property will need to come from partners in ministry as God leads them to commit to this local church ministry.

### Timing

The ministries of Oakwood Church are healthy and expanding at this time. The primary barrier to continued growth to full potential is financial. Ideally, the church would have desired to have an extended time to walk through this process of purchasing property. However, due to the potential changes in the capital gains tax laws and the personal desires of the seller, this sale must be finalized by the end of the 2008 year.



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December 16, 2008

Dear Ministry Partner,

I am so excited about the work that God has called us to in Saline, Michigan. When we started **Oakwood Church**, we dreamed of an exciting church that would have deep roots into our community. A ministry that would be imbedded in the community so we could make a significant impact on our neighbors for Jesus Christ. I cannot believe that eleven years have already passed. We have seen how some of our earliest dreams have now come to fruition. I want desperately to take the next step in our ministry in this community.

We are asking for assistance from ministry partners to buy land. We realize that land and buildings would not change our approach to ministry, but we firmly believe owning property would enhance and expand it. We would have more of an opportunity for reaching people. Since we have been meeting in rented facilities for eleven year, our own property would give us greater flexibility in meeting times, fewer set-up and tear down issues, and more security. The negative impact of rental space on our youth and children's ministries would be eradicated. Puppets, stages, and props would be stationary and last longer. We could determine our own schedule and not have to plan around the school's use of their facilities.

This land purchase would help bring about a more permanent feeling in our community. Having your own land and buildings always helps in this area. Oakwood Church has been able to combat this because of the length of time we have been in existence. However, we still run into those families who wonder how we do what we do in a gym.

Oakwood's members have been patient and worked so hard. I have never heard one of them complain about our situation. They stand there praising the Lord when another person is saved; help tear down all of our equipment after the service, and then drive over to another building to see that person baptized. I am very proud of them. I would love to see them put down roots that are more permanent and bond with church life in a more committed way. There is something about buying land and buildings that just grabs you.

My dream and prayer is for the lost in this community. I pray that God would open their hearts and minds and use us to do that. I want to see them come to Him. I want to see their world change. I feel that this land could be used to help accomplish this task. It could take us into the next phase of this ministry. It would give us an opportunity to see more lives changed, more lives repaired, and more people finding their purpose in life. Would you please pray about being a Partner in Ministry with us and assist us through a financial gift to purchase this 40-acre parcel of property?

Thank you for your time and your prayerful consideration of our request. If you have additional questions regarding how you, or someone you know, can assist us with this land purchase, please contact me. I'd love to talk with you about what God is doing through Oakwood Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Frank Radcliff Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. Frank Radcliff Jr.  
Senior Pastor

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**Rev. Frank Radcliff**  
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