

Eternal impact, starting
at the bend of the bayou
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ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM)--The story has been told numerous times already, but it is worth telling again.

The boat ride began on a beautiful summer day under the cool shade of live oak trees that spread across the bayou with the sunshine glistening on the water. Pushing the boat to its limits in the small confines of a curvy narrow waterway was both thrilling and fun.

And then it happened...

There was no warning ... no "check engine" light or bells or chimes. One minute the boat owner was cruising along and the next minute he was adrift, drifting in the bend of the bayou where his boat broke down.

St. Clair Bower was the boat operator on that glorious day in the early 1930's. It was supposed to be a day off from his pastoral duties in the communities of Maragouin and Krotz Springs and points all along the bayou in between.

As he went ashore to find help, he encountered a mother and her son and began to share Jesus with them. Right there near the bend of the bayou, close to where the boat lost power, this mother and son, who had not heard the Gospel before, accepted Christ as their Savior.

Two new souls won to the Lord turned into many days of Gospel meetings, and, not long after, a church was built ... all near the bend of the bayou where the boat broke down.

This was the life St. Clair Bower and his young wife Annie came to love so much.

They spent a lifetime together sharing Christ in an area almost untouched by the Gospel in those days.

The Bowers served at least eleven different churches officially through the years but helped plant many others across South Louisiana. He also spent four years as an Air Force Chaplain and 10 years in the field working for the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Although his early desire was to pastor a "large, growing church" in his home state of Alabama, God revealed his life work was to be among the people and places of Acadiana.

The Bowers went on to Heaven, he in 1996 and she in 2004. But their story continues beyond their lifetime because of their planning to support ministry even after their deaths.

In 1985 Bro. and Mrs. Bower established a Charitable Gift Annuity with the Louisiana Baptist Foundation. Their modest gift into the annuity provided them with additional income as long as they were living. In fact, over the next 19 years the Bowers received more in cumulative income from the Gift Annuity than the amount initially given.

Now, here is the "rest of the story."

Today in the area they loved so much, St. Clair and Mrs. Annie still are ministering.

When they established their Gift Annuity, they designated any remaining funds would be used for specific ministry purposes. Each year, the endowment that bears the Bowers' name pays income to their church in Lafayette for two purposes: 1) to provide Bibles to the community through the outreach efforts of the church; and 2) to provide scholarships for students pursuing Christian ministry as a vocation.

After all these years, the Bowers still are providing the Word of God and supporting Ministers of the Gospel, not too far from the bend of the bayou where the boat broke down.

The Louisiana Baptist Foundation can assist with Charitable Gift Annuities, Charitable Remainder Trusts, Donor Advised Funds and other gifts that support Baptist churches and ministries. Call our office at 877.523.4636 or go to www.LBInfo.org to learn more about gift opportunities.