



## A travel directory booking platform aimed at reducing clergy burnout through a radically expanded global offering of FREE respite locations for Christian clergy and missionaries.

Executive Summary Prepared by: Jesse Urban  
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### Founding of Be Still, Inc.

Sitting in a pew in 2014, Jesse and Lindsay Urban observed a pastor deliver a parting message to his congregation before going on sabbatical. The Urbans questioned if this man would return from his sabbatical leave at all. The discussions and research that followed helped the Urbans better understand the toll of ministry demands and the very real risk of clergy burnout, leading them to discover their purpose in life.

Be Still, Inc., a Wisconsin 501(c)3, was founded by Jesse and Lindsay Urban in 2015. The vision for Be Still: "A world without clergy burnout."

### Fully Committed

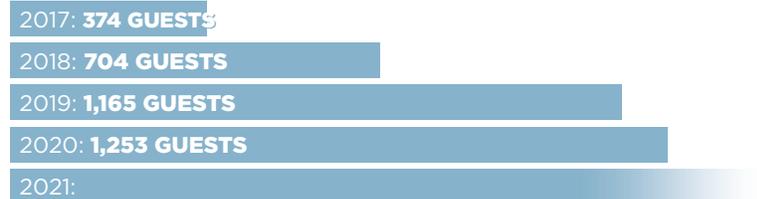
Leaving behind a successful career in the cranberry industry and selling everything they had, Jesse and Lindsay were able to self-fund the first phase of Be Still Retreats in November of 2016 with 5 overnight cottages. Jesse's parents donated the use of their beautifully renovated barn for meetings. Be Still Retreats utilizes 170 acres of the Urban Family's 580-acre hunting sanctuary with 3 miles of nature trails cut throughout the area. Guests are encouraged to leave their distractions behind and get alone with God in nature. Christian clergy who become members of Be Still Retreats can book up to a 7-night stay and use as many of the cottages as they need—all for FREE.

### Continuous Improvement

Be Still, Inc. values continuous improvement. In 2019, we added a day cabin and have plans for an outdoor terrace and trail renovations to be presented in future capital fundraising campaigns. Improvements always focus on enriching guest's personal relationship with God, their spouse, and support staff.

### Performance

Be Still Retreats is 100% publicly supported, having served:



Today, Be Still Retreats has over 1,000 members from 500 different Christian churches and ministries.

### THE PATH TO ENDING CLERGY BURNOUT

#### Respite Need Exceeds Current Capacity

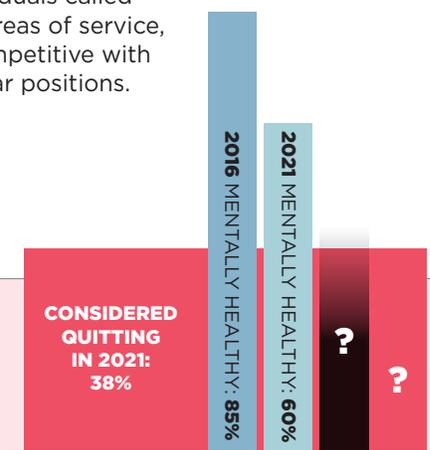
Be Still Retreats is consistently fully booked 3 months out. This would be a great thing if the goal was to be booked to capacity, but our goal is to meet the respite needs of clergy to prevent burnout—the need exceeds the capacity. This problem isn't unique to free retreat facilities. We're finding that even retreat facilities that charge are booked to capacity nationwide.

#### Building More Facilities Is Not the Answer

The time and expense to build more retreat facilities across the country is too great to meet the immediate demand. Hospitality and property management positions are hard to fill even in for-profit businesses. Most retreat facilities are operated by individuals called by God to these areas of service, and pay is not competitive with comparable secular positions.

### Recent Burnout Stats

Data from Barna Research Group (Oct. 2021) indicates that 38% of clergy have "given real, serious, consideration to quitting being in full-time ministry within the last year," and only 60% rate their mental wellbeing as "good" or "excellent", down significantly from 85% in 2016.



## Need to List and Promote Existing Facilities

There are a variety of respite and retreat facilities offering a vast range of services around the world, but there is not a common directory hub, listing and promoting every facility. Unfortunately, not all existing facilities hold equal standards to hosting clergy. There are numerous “horror stories” of guests being unpleasantly surprised upon arrival at a respite or retreat facility. There is no interactive online rating and review system for facilities nationwide, let alone globally.

## Airbnb and VRBO, Proven Platforms for Connecting Travelers with Hosts

Travel directory booking sites have quickly grown in popularity to where 50% of travelers prefer staying at a host property listed on one of these sites versus staying at a hotel. This platform has attracted hosts from around the globe to list their properties for short-term stays, but there is a 48% average occupancy rate and Airbnb (for example) takes 15% of the income from hosts in “service fees.” A platform like this has kingdom-building potential if the focus shifts from profit to purpose.



## Refocusing Travel Booking from Profit to Purpose

BE STILL bnb aims to be a software platform as robust and easy to use as Airbnb, but without the service fees to hosts. In exchange for service fees, we will require hosts to donate an annual minimum of 28 nights at their property to clergy for free. We will use a third-party payment processor such as PayPal to process host transactions with travelers. This cost structure results in a 69% savings to hosts compared to competitors like Airbnb. We believe this savings will draw a large volume of hosts from other platforms as well as new hosts.

## Drawing New Hosts to the Platform

Individuals with vacation property that do not wish to open to the public, but would love to host clergy, will be able to list their property to be used exclusively by clergy.

## Raising the Bar

Existing retreat facilities across the country can use BE STILL bnb as a directory hub to route clergy to their website or utilize BE STILL bnb as their booking engine. We aim to be the trusted directory for clergy to find respite. Our software will feature an interactive rating and review system. Clergy can rest assured

they will not be blind-sided with poor conditions upon arriving at a property.

## Affordable to the Public, Free to Clergy

BE STILL bnb will be monetized solely off an annual membership fee paid by anyone in the general public who chooses to use the platform for booking, this will provide the funds necessary to staff BE STILL bnb and cover the operating costs of both BE STILL bnb and Be Still Retreats. Christian clergy will not be charged for any of the services provided.

## 5-Year Goals

This project will include:

- Listing every existing retreat facility in the United States on BE STILL bnb.
- Onboarding 450,000 clergy members.
- Developing and launching global coverage.
- Securing 10% of current vacation property listings in the United States.
- Partnering with mission organizations to provide missionary respite locations for extended stay—all around the globe.

## TEAM

### President - Jesse Urban

Jesse is a faith-driven visionary, valuing integrity and legacy. He developed his work ethic growing up on a cranberry farm, gleaning everything he could from his father. At 18-years-old, Jesse partnered with his parents to start Urban Processing, LLC, a cranberry processing company. Jesse graduated high school and immediately jumped into the COO position. From 2001 to 2011, Urban Processing grew from a “mom and pop” operation to the second largest cranberry processor in the world behind Ocean Spray Cranberries. The Urbans sold the business to Mariani Packing Co. of California in 2011 with Jesse assuming the role of Director of Operations and Capital Expansions in Wisconsin. Jesse developed and managed a \$10M capital expansion project in his first year with the company, tripling the capacity of the operations; coming in on-time and under-budget. Jesse made the best decision of his life in 2005 when he married his best friend, Lindsay. God has blessed them with three children, Ruby (14), Breckin (12), and Archer (9). Jesse and Lindsay moved their family to Plainfield, WI, in 2015 when they founded Be Still, Inc. and have operated it full-time ever since.



### **General Manager – Jill Kurszewski**

Jill has over 10 years of experience working with nonprofits - building and growing fundraising programs, communication platforms, and special events. Jill is a strong communicator, having begun her career as a newspaper journalist. Her passion to give back to others took her into the nonprofit sector, working first in healthcare and then moving to the Boys & Girls Club. She has experience leading giving programs and supporting a successful \$27 million capital campaign to build a joint facility for the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, and VA Clinic. In her most recent work, she served as the president of the board of directors for the Boys & Girls Club in addition to her full-time role as the executive director of a hospital foundation.

### **Software Application Manager – (TBD)**

Our Software Application Manager will handle website and software maintenance as well as future integration and development.

### **Onboarding Specialist – (TBD)**

Our Onboarding Specialist will help develop standard operating procedures for onboarding of members and hosts and train an onboarding team as needed. The onboarding team will be web-trained individuals who can approve memberships, assist with host onboarding questions, and eventually investigate and handle any traveler/host disputes.

## **NEEDS**

### **Launch Cost for BE STILL bnb:**

Be Still, Inc. launched a funding campaign in September of 2021 with a goal of raising \$250,000 by December 31, 2021, to start development of the BE STILL bnb platform. We have reached 35% of our goal to date, \$88,000 raised so far.

We are actively seeking partnership with like-hearted foundations to underwrite our first year's operational costs, which would fast-track the staffing and programs needed to provide free, accessible respite to Christian clergy and missionaries globally.

Visit [BESTILLbnb.org](https://BESTILLbnb.org) to donate toward this project today. If you represent a foundation that may be a good fit for partnering with us, please contact Jesse Urban ([jesse@bestillretreats.org](mailto:jesse@bestillretreats.org)).



### **Marketing for Onboarding Hosts and Members:**

Be Still, Inc. aims to partner with Christian Business Leader networks to spread the word about what we are doing. We will also work with our networks of denomination district offices to spread the word to churches nationwide about what we are doing and who we aim to onboard as hosts. Along with that, we are considering using addressable geofencing, targeting multiple property owners and vacation homeowners, along with search retargeting and site retargeting online; podcast, radio, and social media advertising as well. Based on our largest onboarded regions of hosts, we will prioritize targeting clergy in those areas for potential membership and broaden out to cover the nation.