

Allens Return To States Following Typhoon Durian

from the Baptist Trumpet

Although their travel plans had to be altered at the last minute because of another approaching typhoon, Wade & Joanna (Reddin) Allen, BMA missionaries to the Philippines, and their two children are safe in Conway at the home of her parents, Lifeword Executive Director George Reddin and his wife, Jerene. The family, along with thousands of others, was devastated by Typhoon Durian, which hit the Philippines December 3.

The family plans to stay in Arkansas until returning to the Philippines January 20. By that time the typhoon season, which runs from September to December, should be over.

The time spent in the States will allow them



Allen Family
Missionaries to the Philippines

to "assess the situation, figure out where we need to go from here and how we can best help the Filipino people," said Bro. Allen. Although they do not plan to schedule any church appointments, they will attend the Missions Symposium, January 8-9 at Temple Baptist Church in Little Rock.

Bro. Allen will be giving information later on the situation and needs of the Filipino people and says he "sincerely thank everyone for their prayers and concern."

The Allens will also be updating their website (www.filipinomissions.org) and web log (<http://allenuupdate.blogspot.com/>) as time permits. He can be contacted on a limited basis by email at wade@filipinomissions.org, but the best way to contact them at this time is through the BMA of America Missions office at 501-455-4977.

Important Dates

BMA of Mississippi
2007 Pastor's Retreat
February 26 & 27, 2007

National Missions Symposium
Temple Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas
January 8-9, 2007

BMA of Mississippi
Missions & Evangelistic Conference
North - March 20, 2007
South - March 22, 2007

Senior Adult Conferences
South - March 29, 2007
Picayune, Mississippi
North - May 8, 2007
Fulton, Mississippi

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The Women in Jesus' Lineage: Bathsheba

by Dr. Tony Cleaver, Pastor
Tabernacle Baptist Church
Jacksonville, Texas

Matthew 1:6
(2 Samuel 11, 12, 23:39; 1 Kings 1)

We are gathered in worship for Advent, the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Matthew notes five women in Jesus' lineage in his opening chapter. The first Sunday we looked at Tamar and Rahab. Last Sunday we considered Ruth. Today the third Sunday of Advent, we will focus on Bathsheba. The fourth Sunday we will reflect on Mary.

We will read and refer to many verses from First Kings and Second Samuel. I will ask you to turn to other passages from the Old Testament as it relates to this story.

Life lessons from Bathsheba for us in this congregation today:

God has use for you even if your name is mentioned negatively in the press.

Bathsheba's name is not called in Matthew.

This is not unusual. The "Bathsheba incident" is not mentioned in Chronicles. Yes, it is spoken of in great detail in our text. Yes, it is a subject of some of David's greatest Psalms. Yet here in Matthew, a good Jewish person cannot bring himself to say the name of Bathsheba. Just like the writers of the books of Chronicles. This does not mean she never existed nor her significant acts are not a part of the history of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Dr. Tony Cleaver

This is the way the birth of Jesus came about - the woman Bathsheba. Have you ever "been caught" in some wrong doing; some embarrassing moment; some moral lapse; or some other event in life that you would soon like to forget and hope the people around you forget? This is the story of Bathsheba. It was a great moral lapse and her name was in the

headlines all over the country. Yet it was Bathsheba whose lineage is included in the line of Jesus the Messiah.

I am aware of many spiritual leaders today who have had moral lapses and have been "caught in scandal" at some point in their life. Yet the Lord God uses them in a way that He chooses for His kingdom's work. God can do this for you today. Your life is not over simply because of one great and memorable failure. I urge you to trust Christ in this service to let Him clean you up for the work in the Kingdom. He did this for Bathsheba and He is anxious to do it for you.

Bathsheba had an unusual background.

Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah (2 Samuel 11:3). Both of these men are mentioned in the list (1 Samuel 23) as being David's mighty men - both in the group of thirty. She was the daughter of Eliam who was one of the 30 mighty men and she was married to one of the 30 mighty men of David, Uriah. This is a woman of experience with men involved in war, military campaigns, death, separation, and other events that are too demanding for a normal woman and wife to bear. She had to be a special woman to have come from the stock of being a soldier's daughter then marrying into the same process of being a soldier's wife with Uriah.

God is aware of all our life processes.

God knew all about the sexual relationship Bathsheba had with the king. In fact God looked on this illicit connection in the same light He would look on any other association like this. God knew all the details of David calling in Abner to tell him to kill Uriah, Bathsheba's husband by placing him in the hot spot of battle then withdrawing to leave him to the enemy. God knew all about the plot to cover the pregnancy of this lewd liaison.

How can I hide my life of sinfulness from God? Shall I sneak around in the darkness? Shall I meet in another town? Shall I rent a special place that no one knows about? I don't think so. God sees and knows my every action. There is no place to turn from His presence. Day and night is alike to God. One of the great things about this Christian service is that we openly invite you to come to Christ. There is nothing hidden in our agenda or in our desires

A successful 'Children Helping Children' project

Students at the St. Joseph Mission School in San Fidel, New Mexico will have a happier Christmas this year because of the generosity and concern of churches, groups, and individuals of the Baptist Missionary Association of America who have again responded to a successful

"Children Helping Children" project sponsored by Baptist Medical Missions International (BMMI). The students range in age from pre-school through 8th grade and are from the Laguna/Acoma Indian Reservation and two Spanish land grant areas

Each of the shoe boxes, which contain small toys, books, clothing, or personal items, will also contain a Bible or New Testament. They will be distributed to the children by BMAA North American Missionary Merritt Youngdeer before their

Christmas break which begins December 21.

BMMI would like to thank each one who had a part in making this project a tremendous success! Please pray that this effort will build relationships with the children and their families and will result in a more effective ministry with the Native Americans in that area.



Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Izard of BMMI with Christmas presents given for mission outreach in New Mexico with Missionary Merritt Youngdeer.

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Creating Your Own Truth

The Roman Procurator, Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" The average, sane, level headed common sense person of today should be able to answer this question, as well as give some qualities of truth. One of my college professors, Dr. Elmer Towns, said, "Truth is that which is consistent with itself and corresponds

to reality." Professor Webster gives these thoughts for a definition of truth: "The real state of things; the body of real events or facts; CORRECTNESS."

Since God is the first cause of all things, He sets the standard for truth. All truth ultimately comes from Him. If God says something is right, it is. If He says it is wrong, it is. But man does not always agree with God. Truth stands on its own, but never apart from God. Truth is that which is verifiable by facts. Notice also truth is absolute, not relative. The presence of truth demands the existence of that which is false. If one thing is true, then the opposite of that truth is a lie. One of the first truths uttered by God to man was absolute, concerning death by disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit. Satan tried to counter the truth of God with his "yea hath God said...?" statement, which has been repackaged and used on man millions of times since Eden.

Truth is absolute, else it cannot be truth. Truth cannot be conditional. When truth becomes relevant because of time, culture or situation, it loses authority and becomes a servant, not a master. When any act can be wrong for me, but right for you, there can be no order or structure in society. Mur-

der, theft, adultery, etc. can be justified. How can we know the truth of what is right or wrong for a society? What sets the standard for that which is considered legal or illegal, and what

is the standard for punishment? If emotion or outcome determines right or wrong, then nothing can be ultimately right or wrong, anarchy is the result and no one has to adhere to any laws or principles, since no act can be said to be wrong, malicious, immoral, degrading, sinful or illegal.

Every time a law is broken or enforced, it is a statement of absolute truth. The existence of moral law demands the existence of a lawgiver. Either man has given the law or it came from another source. If man gave it, then it is not absolute, for it can be changed by man. If the consciousness of right and wrong came from another source, then what, who or where is that source? If it came from a source higher than man, then the law transcends man, and man cannot alter it.

In almost all societies world wide, it is usually wrong to steal, kill, defraud, etc. In other words, every culture has standards of conduct considered to be good or bad. Where did these standards originate? Even atheistic humanists will usually admit it is

the heart of the king and that of his paramour Bathsheba.

The people of God can be counted trusted friends and allies once repentance is accomplished.

1 Kings 1:11 tells us Nathan and Bathsheba seemed to be civil, friendly, and concerned about the things of God. They wanted to ensure the royal line of David continuing after his death. Normally and spiritually the non-Christian have no interest for the things of Christ, neither His church, nor His people in their unregenerate state. In fact there is a normal animosity with these things while one is outside the grace of God. However, let the grace of God come into one's life and the things of God the people of God and Christ and His church have a special attraction of the one whom God has claimed! The unction of the Spirit of God moves in our lives to make them attractive, winsome, and appealing.

Is there animosity with your heart concerning the things of Christ and His church? Is there some hatred and secret vindictiveness toward the people of God? I ask you to examine your own life - not that of the man or woman seated next to you. Let the love of Christ become a reality in your life in this service today.

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Joseph Harris

AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE

Listing of names does not indicate endorsement. This column is for information purposes only.

Bro. Chris Freeman

Bro. Chris Freeman is available for pulpit supply or pastoral work wherever the Lord may lead. Bro. Chris most recently worked with the youth at Lebanon Baptist Church in Laurel, and before that he was the music minister at Pine Ridge, Laurel, where he was

licensed into the Gospel ministry in January, 2005. He is married to Megan (Jefcoat) Freeman and they have one son, Isaac Christopher, who is six months old.



Chris & Megan Freeman

Bro. Chris is 27 years old, honorably discharged from military service, and will be graduating from Southeastern Baptist College and Liberty University in May, 2007, with degrees in Bible and Religious Studies. He can be reached by phone at 601-319-4071 or by mail at 485 Lebanon Road, Laurel, MS 39443.

Alan Smith

Bro. Alan Smith of Laurel has recently surrendered to preach the gospel. He is a member of Fairview Baptist Church, Laurel, and was been

licensed by them on November 12, 2006. Bro. Smith is married to Crystal, and they have one son 15 years old. He may be contacted at 601-649-0507. Bro. Harry Burge is his pastor



Alan Smith

Kennith Lofton

Bro. Kennith Lofton is a member of Riverside Baptist Church, Ellisville, and is available for service wherever the Lord leads. Bro. Lofton may be reached at 610-319-7804. Dr. Medrick Savell is his pastor.

Jesus' Lineage

from page 1

for you. We openly want you to turn from yourself, your won devices and to Christ. We offer an invitation at the end of this service. It is for you to openly profess Christ or to join this church.

Repentance is possible for even the most dreadful person.

David wrote the unforgettable words of Psalm 51 after the prophet Nathan came to him with the stinging and extraordinary confrontation of his stealing Bathsheba. Nathan put it in terms of a man who owned many sheep and took the one little lamb from the poor man. This enraged the former shepherd. He remembered the days before his kingship of how he nursed the tender lambs in his own bosom.

The shepherd turned king vehemently responded that the man who stole this sheep should be put to death! Nathan's words are immortalized in our culture and in the culture of our world, "You are that man!" Bathsheba knew the sting of those convicting words. She was pregnant! The child came full term. The child lived a few days. The child died. No greater grief in life than the death of a child to its mother! The hot, salty tears of that grievous time worked repentance in

wrong to steal, kill, etc. Where did they get this awareness of right and wrong? What is their standard of measurement? This universal awareness came from God, who put his law in the heart of all men to give them a general revelation of the creator who is also the divine law giver.

If there is a law and it is broken, then what? Is there accountability and punishment? The accountability is to God first, then man. Notice what Joseph said in the book of Genesis when he refused to commit adultery with the wife of Potiphar: "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" If there is an absolute law higher than man, there must be a lawgiver higher than man and if man breaks His law, man is accountable to Him. And now we have the rest of the story. Man denies a higher law, thereby denying a higher power, resulting in denial of accountability to the divine judge of the universe. Conclusion? Man can now sin freely.

With the denial of a higher moral law, given by the divine law giver, the stage is set to create your own truth. Abortion is no longer seen as murder, but birth control or a woman's choice. Being male or female is no longer an absolute, determined by God at conception and validated at birth, but gender can now be chosen by the person. And since you are not necessarily male or female, you can now choose which gender you want to marry, that is, if the other person has determined their gender. Stealing is no longer wrong. Redistribution of goods is acceptable if one has more than another, especially if the one lacking was born into poverty, the wrong ethnic background, etc.

People in the media tell us what is truth what we should believe. Science creates truth and tells us the earth is billions of years old, that it came from nothing with no design, and is slowly getting better and better. And you should believe it, because it's in a textbook.

Before taking the stand of testimony in court, a witness has to swear to, "Tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God" which is revealing. Notice, this oath is a confession of man's depravity and his dependence upon God for help in telling the truth. And man certainly needs help in being truthful.

A good perspective on truth is found on the second page of our catalog for Southeastern Baptist College. Here is printed this old Hebrew prayer: "From the cowardice that shrinks from new truths; from the laziness that is content with half truths; and from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth; Oh, God of truth, deliver us."

Church Pews Available

Woodlawn Baptist Church, Pascagoula have 40 to 50 pews of various sizes available for free to any church that would need them. Anyone interested may call 228-762-4952 or 228-355-0242.

CHURCH NEWS

News articles should contain information that will be of interest to the general public who are not members of the church that is reporting.

Vardaman Street, Wiggins to Dedicate Life Center

Vardaman Street Baptist Church, Wiggins, will dedicate the LaVay Crawley Memorial Life Center Sunday, December 12, 2006, at 1:00 p.m. There will also be a bronze and concrete monument with a biographical sketch of the former pastor. Pastor J.D. Courtney and the members invite all who can to attend.

New Year's Eve Watch Night Service

Red Creek Baptist in Wiggins will have a New Year's Eve service on Sunday, December 31, starting at 6:00 p.m. There will be good singing, preaching and food. We are hoping that some of the area churches will dismiss their own services that night and join us as we start the New Year praising our Lord. For more information call Pastor Scotty Rayburn at 601-928-9886.

Harmony Association Report

The Harmony association met at Forked Oak on December 7, 2006. Bro. Ronnie McCombs led the singing and opening prayer.

Bro. Rickey Johnson preached from Luke 15. Motion to change the Harmony Association meeting back to Friday night. Next meeting will be with Grace, Guntown. There were 30 present, with 6 churches.

Frank Panzarino, Moderator
Geralene Phifer, Secretary

Corinth, Runnelstown

Corinth Baptist Church will host a Gospel sing Sunday, December 17, beginning at 2:00 p.m. Bring your tapes or CD's and be a part of the sing. Our Sunday School services will begin at 10:00 and worship service at 11:00 a.m.

We will have our annual Thanksgiving/Christmas dinner at 12:00 p.m. We invite everyone to come for good singing, good food, and good fellowship. May it all be to the glory of our almighty God.

Mrs. Marion Greene, Reporter

Church seeks staff member

Woodland Baptist Church, Columbus, Mississippi, is searching for a full time Youth/Associate Pastor. Complete job description is available at woodlondonline.org.

Resumes can be sent to jrcomer@bellsouth.net or call Randy Comer at 662-356-0637.

Dedicated to Discipline - Part Four

Teen Children - Ages 13 - 18

As your children become teenagers, parenting has to take a whole new approach. You can't discipline the same way you did when they were 4, even when they sometimes act like a four year old. The biggest mistake parents make at this point, is thinking their kid is old enough to know better, so they slack off on the discipline. This is why so many teenagers get into trouble. You must be vigilant and sober here with extreme attention to discipline for your teens or you will help set them up for failure.

Teenagers are responsible for the choices they make. But as long as they are living under your roof, you have the ability to impact what they can or cannot do. You can't say, "Well, they are 17 now, so I can't do much". Oh yes you can. You have to be a surrogate brain for them. While you don't treat them like a little kid, you still must help them make wise choices. Wisdom and responsibility is what you want them to learn here. You don't have to preach to them.

Teaching them that it is wrong to lie, cheat and steal occurred when they were little. They know what is right and wrong for the most part.

You are helping them learn to make holy choices now. You are not the bad guy. The discipline administered is because they made the wrong choice. Making the right choice,



Family Ark Ministries

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www.travisplumlee.com

means you get to continue with more privileges. Making the wrong choice, and you lose your privilege and are disciplined. An example, "You made the choice to come in late from curfew, not me. Now, you will not go out for two weeks as discipline for making that disobedient and dishonoring choice."

Removal of privileges is probably the main form of discipline with teens. Whatever they like, they lose when they don't obey or show you the proper respect. It is critical that you discipline a haughty, proud or rebellious

attitude here. Your teen should honor their mother and father. Talking back or using a surly tone of voice is dishonoring. So is slamming a bedroom door. Stomping off and pouting also will not be acceptable behavior. You can remove phone, TV, video games, trampoline, car or time with friends. Bikes and skates and MP3 players can all be put away for certain time periods.

You can replace time outs with time in the room and writing letters. Teens may hate this, but they learn from it. Have them go to their room and write down what they did wrong. They must ask for forgiveness in the letter. It helps if you have them come up with a scripture that describes their behavior. My son quickly learned that Ephesians 6:1-3 covered a multitude of sins when writing. That was okay. At least he learned that obedience and honoring are requirements from God in our home towards the parents.

Spankings should stop at about the onset of adolescence. My bottom line rule however, is if your teen is just asking for a spanking, never disap-

point them. I have seen some 15 year olds that could use a good whippin. Generally though, you can move away from whippins and go towards grounding and removal of privileges. It is more effective with this age group. Stay away from discipline that only serves to humiliate your teen. Most discipline at this point should be done privately. You may wait until you get home to exercise the discipline. You may want to send friends home first.

If you embarrass them in front of friends, they may not learn anything from your discipline. They may just be humiliated. Let the Holy Spirit guide your actions on this area however. Never rule out anything that can serve as a learning potential. Some teens require a greater lesson than others. Don't ever compare one of your teens to another sibling or cousin, etc. Deal with them and their behavior.

Watch for manipulation. This is especially evident in grounding. If they whine and say they are sorry and they really need to go to the important football game, but they are grounded, then they miss the football game. It is a sad thing. But tell them there will even be greater and more sad things if they continue this behavior into adulthood. You must learn that your be-

havior will cost you.

Never ground them from church. You can ground them from a fun activity with church, but not the instruction time of church. They need this more than anything. Be prudent in how long you ground them. You are also grounding yourself for this time period. You must be there to assure compliance.

If you have a teen that goes against your discipline or advice at school, then monitor their behavior at school and discipline them further when they deliberately go against what you have said. This may occur with hanging out with the wrong crowd after you have forbidden it. Monitor this intensely. Running with the wrong crowd is family enemy number one. Be sure you know what they are doing, where they are doing it and who they are doing it with no matter how old they are.

Your right to protect them and have them live a holy life is paramount. Don't snoop. Respect their privacy. But your right to protect overrides their right to privacy. If you suspect they are in trouble morally, intervene. Don't wait until it is too late. Teens must still be disciplined regardless of age.

Southeastern Baptist College

4229 Highway 15 North
Laurel, Mississippi 39440, (601) 426-6346



Dr. Medrick Savell
President

Merry Christmas

By the time you read this article, the college will be in the Christmas and New Year break. We pray that all of you have a good Christmas in every way and are enjoying God's blessings. May the new year be a time of drawing closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are anxious to see the many ways God is going to bless and use us in His service.

Thanks

We appreciate the cards, prayers, financial support, and all you have done for your college this year. I continue to enjoy my work. It is a blessing to see what God is doing, but we see the need of much more being done. Pray that we will understand what the Lord is leading us to do, and that we would be ready to follow.

Memorial Gift

A matching gift has been received recently for the college Foundation. This family has been contributing to the college for several years, and his employer matches it. We appreciate those who take advantage of this opportunity. May the Lord bless you. Thanks

Note to Clerks of Local Associations

I look forward to the new year as I attend each of the associations as possible. It would be a great help to me if the clerk of each local association would send me a list of date, place, and time that each association will be meeting.

Spring Semester

Registration for the Spring semester will be January 4 and 5. Pray with us for an increase in the enrollment.

Jesus' Lineage

from page 2

A life of good can be established after one comes face to face with self, sin, and the grace of God.

Bathsheba continued as David's wife. God blessed their marriage with a child at a later time and his name was Solomon. Solomon was king during the zenith of the political kingdom of united Israel. It was through this mother that this influence came. He never forgot what his mother did for him as she ensured his being set on the throne of his father, David.

Solomon wrote of his mother the famous words of Ecclesiastes 31:10-31. Solomon saw how his mother had helped and assisted his father David to have a dynasty of great worth. She had been the one to assist her son Solomon to come to the throne. Her remembered her life and wrote this great piece of beautiful womanhood we all recite each year at Mother's Day.

Jesus is in the business of taking bad men, women, boys, and girls to make them good men, women, boys, and girls. Jesus is in the business of taking a terribly distraught life to turn it into a life of hope and bright possibilities. Jesus is in the business of taking a life that is going down to

make it a life of upward focus and optimistic outlook. Are you at the end of your resources? Good - then God can best come to your life today to fill it with His unlimited resources!

God can overturn our scheming to utilize us in His divine plan for good.

The brothers of Joseph intended to harm the life and end the career of their dreamer brother. Their evil scheme not only placed him in a pit, they also lied to daddy about his being killed, and then sold him as a slave to strangers! God worked it out for good in spite of their schemes. He became the prime minister of Egypt and preserved their lives and the life of the Hebrew nation (Genesis 50:20).

We may not be aware of it, but the things we set in motion have eternal consequences. Bathsheba may or may not be the innocent little girl seduced by the great king. She may have known the king walked on the flat roof of his palace each day at a certain time. She certainly would have known the king was not in the field with this troops being raised in the home of her father the mighty man and married to one of the mighty men. She could read the troop movements and understand the king was not in the field with the troops. Possibly she could have had her eye of the king for some time and tried for this liaison in this way of taking a bath in plain sight of

the king.

Whatever the facts, whatever the fault of this illicit liaison, whatever the reasoning of this event, and considering all the process of this low time in the life of Israel, God used this event for the good of His Kingdom.

Conclusion

This is the way the birth of Jesus came about! It was through the life of Bathsheba. Jesus came through a woman so horrific in Hebrew history that her name could not be mentioned in Chronicles. Matthew, following that tradition, does not call her name in his account in our text today. He simply refers to her as the mother of Solomon, who had been Uriah's wife.

Is there something in your past that makes you ashamed of your life and the way you have lived? Confess it here to God in this service and turn from it. More than one person here has had an experience like the one described of Bathsheba. Some children are still born out of wedlock. Some men and women, boys and girls, still have illicit sexual relationships. Some are adulterous and some are those events of youthful fornication. Does it mean your life is forever beyond the reach of God and His forgiveness? No, and a thousand times no! God can reclaim your life today. Let His do just that right now.

God is in the life reclamation business. Through the death of Christ on the cross, God can redeem your life. You must come to realization that salvation is beyond your ability. I urge you to rely upon the provision of God's grace in Christ. Ask Him to redeem you. Say the words of repentance in this service. Walk the life of repentance as you leave this service.

January 2007

Special Emphasis

Our Need - \$10,000

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Don J. Brown, Editor
E-Mail - editor@msbaptist.org
Web site www.msbaptist.org

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Editorial



Don Brown
Editor

January 2007

It seems like yesterday that we were all talking about January 2000 - the new millennium and all the exciting challenges that lay ahead. The new millennium has come and the challenges are still before us as another year approaches.

The work of the Lord is ongoing and will not be done until He comes to take His people home. Until then we must continue our work and strive to be all that He commands.

January of each year is designated as a time of **Special Emphasis** for your Publications Department. You will see our ad on the next page and see our need. Material is being prepared and will be sent to each of our churches in a few days to help convey our needs.

Please give this effort your prayerful consideration and help us to raise the necessary funds. \$10,000 is needed and can easily be raised if each of our churches and members get involved. Does your church support the **Special Emphasis** drives of our departments? The needs are real and the work is important.

God bless and may each of you have a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous 2007.

PJI Defends Pastor Accused of 'Hate Crime' for Distributing Tracts

(AgapePress) - A California pastor has won a major victory for free speech after being accused of a hate crime by a Muslim individual who objected to the tracts the minister was distributing.

Pastor Audie Yancey is a retired U.S. Marine Corps veteran with 20 years of service. Recently, he appeared at the Palmdale City Council meeting holding a copy of the Qur'an and handing out a Christian tract that illustrated the link between Islam and the terror attacks of September 11, 2001.

The tract featured a picture of an American flag and beneath it the words, "Remember 9/11: In the name of Allah they brought destruction and death to thousands. In the name of Jesus Christ you can have eternal life."

A Muslim cleric who saw what Yancey was handing out contacted the Antelope Valley Human Relations Task Force and filed a grievance. In his complaint, he accused Yancey of committing a hate crime by distributing 200 of the gospel tracts.

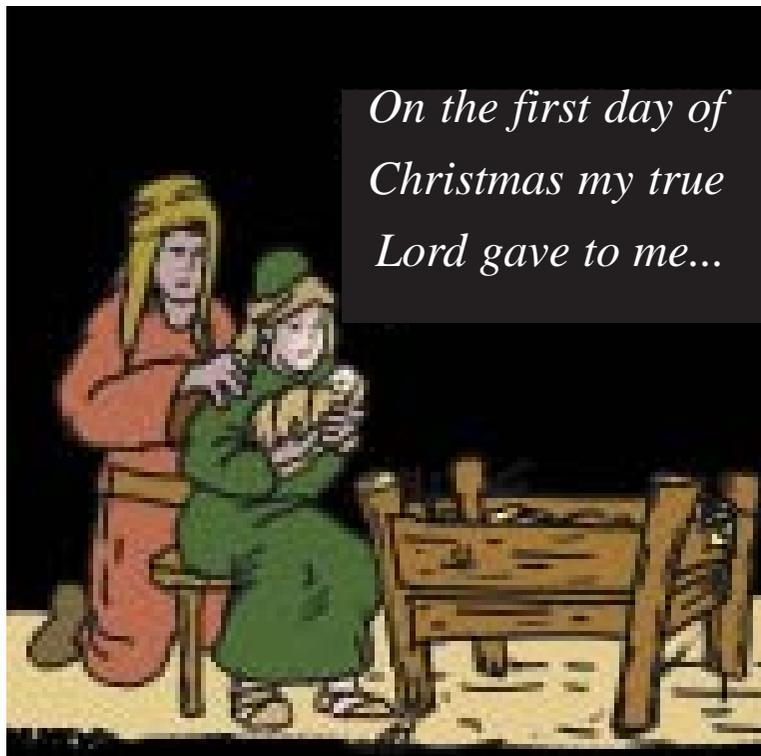
Attorney Karen Milam, senior counsel for the Southern California office of the Pacific Justice Institute (PJI), represented the pastor before the task force, arguing that the "hate crime" allegations were completely unfounded.

PJI president Brad Dacus says the case has now been resolved. "The good news is that the charges were completely dropped, and a message was clearly [sent] that religious freedom in this country is still protected," he says.

The Antelope Valley Human Relations Task Force's legal counsel, Superior Court Judge Stella Owens Murrell, agreed with PJI that no hate crime had been committed, and the matter was dismissed. But Dacus says while he and PJI "are pleased that freedom prevailed in this case," that organization and others must press forward to protect Christians' religious liberty and free speech rights.

PJI will continue to work hard to ensure that pastors like Audie Yancey are not muzzled by intolerance, Dacus insists. "If we allow Islamic clerics to silence pastors and Christians in this country," he adds, "then we have lost, without question, not only the war against terrorism but, even more importantly, the war against Christianity and religious freedom."

Church of the Covered Dish BY THOMAS TAPP



PTC Applauds NBC's Airing of VeggieTales, Religious Content Intact

(AgapePress) - A pro-family media watchdog group is commending NBC for its apparent decision to put God and the Bible back into the network's Saturday morning television broadcasts of the popular animated series VeggieTales.

Some critics in the Christian community had denounced NBC for its initial insistence on editing out references to God and the Bible in the scripture-based cartoons before airing them. However, VeggieTales creator Phil Vischer recently reported on his website that the last few episodes of the animated show have not been edited by the network.

Vischer says most of the last four or five VeggieTales episodes have had "at least as much 'theistic' content as the earlier ones, if not more." Nevertheless, the shows "came back from NBC standards and practices department with no requested edits," he says. "So they're going to air just the way they were originally written."

Musing over what brought about the network's seeming change of heart, the animator observes, "Rumor has it NBC received in the neighborhood of 600,000 e-mails about the Veggie Tales edits (a rumor I can't confirm or deny)." In any event, he says, "It's worth a little celebration ... don't you think?"

And, as for any viewers who may have stopped watching their "veggies" in protest over the edits, Vischer points out, their actions may well have helped

to bring "a little more light to TV's 'vast wasteland.'" He urges fans of the cartoon to let NBC know they are thrilled with the network's recent choices by tuning in to watch the show.

In response to the animator's report, Parents Television Council (PTC) president L. Brent Bozell said his organization applauds NBC for apparently reversing its decision to cut the biblical and theistic content from the cartoon. He also commented that it is important for the entertainment industry to realize that "Ameri-

cans are more willing to watch programming that reflects their values, with VeggieTales being one of those examples."

Bozell feels NBC should be commended for leaving recent installments of VeggieTales unedited and airing the programs as they were originally written. Now, the parents media advocacy group spokesman adds, he and the PTC hope the national network will "continue this upward trend towards including more programming that the entire family can enthusiastically watch and support."



...and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

BMA of Mississippi

**2007
Pastor's Retreat
February 26 & 27, 2007**

**Skyway Hills
Baptist Church
Pearl, Mississippi**

**Theme
Standing Strong . . .
...Pleasing Him
II Timothy 2:1-4**

Cost \$25.00

**Make Plans Now
To Attend!**

Life is the Coffee

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. The conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain-looking, some expensive, and some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

After all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is but normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress."



"Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases, it's just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink.

What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups and then began eyeing each other's cups." "Now consider this: Life is the coffee, and the jobs, houses, cars, things, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define nor change the quality of life we live.

Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us."

-passed on by Tony Cleaver

Ministers Resource Services
Retirement Agency of the BMA of America
Ron Chesser, Executive Director

BMA Retirement outperforms the market - Again!

Ministers Resource Services (MRS), the retirement agency of the Baptist Missionary Association of America, continues the trend from last year in retirement returns by outperforming the stock market. On October 31st, the BMA Long Term Growth retirement at MRS was up 13.2% for the first ten months of 2006 which reflects a return of almost 13% each year for the past four years.



Ron Chesser

Executive Director, Ron Chesser says, "It is exciting to see the BMA Long Term Growth retirement portfolio continue its growth at a phenomenal rate. Without question God has His hand upon Ministers Resource Services and the BMA Retirement accounts of our pastors, church staff and employees. We are trusting God's blessings to continue throughout the years ahead upon the BMA Retirement at MRS."

He continued, "On November 21st, the Ministers Resource Services BMA Retirement portfolio total assets passed 7 million for the first time at \$7,008,080.22 which reflects a growth in assets of \$1,213,453.40 thus far this year. Retirement assets in January 2003 totaled only 3.8 million. To God be the glory."

To enroll or for information regarding BMA Retirement at MRS, contact them for a retirement packet at 870-774-2654 or RChesser6365@aol.com. Executive Director, Ron Chesser, would be happy to schedule a visit with your church to discuss the Ministers Resource Services IRS approved tax deferred retirement plan for BMA pastors, church staff, and employees.

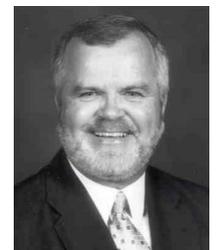


On The Web at www.msbbaptist.org

Extra, Extra READ ALL ABOUT IT

Strong Effort Needed !!

LAUREL, MS - Editor Don Brown urges all of the supporting churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi to make a special effort to help raise additional operating funds for the Publication's Department *Special Emphasis Drive* during **January 2007**.



Don Brown
Editor

Brown stated that the January Emphasis offering each year needs to raise about 10% of the department's annual operating income. "Our goal for this year is to raise at least \$10,000," Brown said. He continued, "We are asking each church to give a generous offering to help us maintain a good fiscal operation."

January 2007 - Special Emphasis

Our Need - \$10,000

That I may publish ... and tell of all thy wondrous works.

Pslam 26:7

Facing the Giants Actor: Film's True Success Is Its Spiritual Impact

(AgapePress) - A cast member of the independent Christian film Facing the Giants says he has been overwhelmed by the runaway success of the movie. Since its release in hundreds of theaters across the U.S. more than two months ago, the church-produced, faith-and-football-themed movie has grossed more than \$9.5 million.

Facing the Giants was made by the media ministry of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, for \$100,000. Tracy Goode, the church's associate director for media, appeared in the film, portraying an assistant coach for a fictitious Christian high school football team whose players struggle, as does their head coach, with issues of fear, failure and apathy, until they discover the spiritual secret of success both in life and on the football field.

Many in the Christian community and beyond have been caught off guard by the real-life success story that is Facing the Giants' box-office performance as well as its spreading popularity and influence as word of mouth has sustained it for a long theatrical run. Goode himself admits he was surprised by the success of the film; however, he says true success is measured in eternal treasures.

Sherwood Baptist's media associate director notes that many new believers have come to Christ as a result of the message in the church's film. "We've seen over 800 salvations; and

that to me is just a staggering number," he observes. "And those 800 salvations are the people that we know about."

While critical acclaim and box office receipts are nice, those souls won for Christ "are the only things that you can lay at the feet of Jesus," Goode asserts. "We want God to be glorified first and foremost with Facing the Giants," he says.

The Georgia Christian believes churches can utilize advances in media and technology to reach the world for Jesus Christ. He encourages congregations with that aim to seek God before embarking on a media ministry and to "pray, every step of the way," making discernment of God's

will a top priority.

"Get on your face before God, seek godly counsel, and look at everything through the grid of scripture," Goode advises. "And make sure," he adds, "that your idea is a God idea and not [just] a 'good idea,' because good ideas are not necessarily God ideas. The plans of men will not succeed unless God is behind them."

Prior to making its first theatrically-released film, Sherwood Baptist Church completed another feature for DVD distribution -- a family film called Flywheel. Goode says the church is now exploring the possibility of making another movie next year.

Florida Woman Demands Equal Treatment for Public Nativity Display

(AgapePress) - A Christian activist says officials in one Florida town are favoring Judaism and the Jewish Menorah over her Christian Nativity display, and she wants the preferential treatment to stop.

Last month, in the latest chapter of a three-year battle between Christian activist Sondra Snowdon and city officials in the town of Bay Harbor Islands, the Town Council placed a Menorah in the center position at a

designated public forum and relegated a Christmas crèche to a side location.

"When I went to find where the Nativity would be displayed," Snowdon recalls, "I was told the Menorah would be front and center and that the Nativity would have to be put off somewhere to the side." However, this did not sit well with the Christian woman, who says she "at that particular time, told the Town Council and the town that my Jesus would not take a second place."

Snowdon notes that the city officials also passed an ordinance forbidding any ceremonies affiliated with the Nativity display. However, she points out, individuals of the Jewish faith often visit the Menorah display and pray with a rabbi during Hanukkah.

"The town, in the placement of the Menorah, has decided that the Menorah is even taking over that position of my Jesus," the Christian activist contends. "And all I'm asking for," she insists, "is equality here in Bay Harbor Islands."

The Nativity scene displayed in the public forum is one paid for by Snowdon herself. However, she notes, the town of Bay Harbor Islands paid for the Menorah with taxpayer dollars.

Big Creek District WMA

The Big Creek WMA met at Lebanon Baptist Church in Calhoun on Monday, October 2nd. Mrs. Shirlene Smith, President, called meeting to order. Mrs. Barbara White led in two songs. Janelle Hammond from Hopewell led in prayer. WMA motto was led by Kay Chisholm of First Baptist of Louin. Welcome was given by Betty Lofton of Lebanon and response given by Mrs. Ruby Bynum from Calhoun. Bro. James Brown was a special guest at the meeting.

Kay Chisholm gave a delightful devotion entitled "Going Back to



ABS * Camp Ministry



LATRELLE WINDHAM
DIRECTOR

P.O. Box 4247, Laurel, Mississippi 39441 • (601) 649-0502
Email - youthdept@bmaofmsyouth.org

"Ought - Something Morally Imperative"

"We have left undone those things which we ought to have done. And we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

There are some things we ought to teach, lead and encourage our kids to do with their time. In our society we major on the minor details and ignore the great principles of the Word.

We ought to encourage our kids to use their time to perform in ministries that we as adults might think are insignificant, but Christ will reward.

We ought to let our kids know when their enemies use flattery and slander against them that they have a threefold defense - his life, his faith and his service to God.

We ought to commend our kids for jobs well done in God's service and other areas of life.

We ought to teach our kids the Word of God, feed them on the milk of the Word on a daily basis. As a former school teacher in a secular occupation, the best way to teach a child to read is to read with him. We ought to have a schedule to read with our kids the Word of God.

We ought to teach our kids to worship in spirit and truth. Again, worship with your kids. It is God's Will for us to worship together.

Our kids ought to know about

death, murder, eternal death and eternal life.

We ought to teach our kids how not to persecute other people with our speech and other actions, but use their learning and zeal to teach others about Christ.

We ought to teach our kids about wrong behavior, false speaking and inconsistent speaking. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalms 34:13, 14).

What are some duties that we ought to teach our kids among Christians? How to witness to other kids. The power of prayer each of us should have in our lives. The joy in service instead of half-heartedness should be exemplified in our lives. Obedience to God, family and our nation should be taught and encouraged. Helping the weak and those in need is our duty. Adults should set examples for loving family and others. Proper manners should be taught in our homes and exemplified in our lives. Holy living is a must! A willingness to offer sacrifice, praise, honor and glory to God is another important area. Love is a must for each of us.

These things are imperative in our lives as we teach our kids.

School for a Christian" that instructed us to rest in the Lord, have daily prayer & Bible study, follow the rules, develop good study and work habits, do your best, get along with fellow Christians, get to know your teacher-Christ. She pointed out that Christians have the best rule book - the Bible with the 10 Commandments. A Great Big Thanks to Regina Chisholm for making the very nice WMA booklets for 2006-2007.

Janelle Burks read our minutes and gave the treasurer's report. Nita Jefcoat encouraged everyone to keep studying the WMA study book "A Work In Progress." Linda Dertinger gave Sunbeam/GMA report. Barbara White promoted the National WMA project "Fund Creative Access to Nations Work", stressing the need is urgent and the time is now! Do Missions! Shirlene Smith gave report on State WMA.

Lebanon presented the program "God's Faithfulness. He is an Extraordinary God for Ordinary Days." There were 12 churches represented

and a total of 49 present. Sherry Shows gave right hand of appreciation for program and devotion. A resolution was given by Hopewell and read by Linda Smith: "Be it resolved that we be in prayer for our WMA, GMA, and Sunbeams, and their counselors and sponsors. That we pledge our prayerful and financial support for our mission projects on the local, state, and national levels. That we dedicate a part of each day to Bible study and prayer. That we pray daily for our churches, pastors, and missionaries. That we pray for revival in our country, for Godly wisdom for our President, and protection and salvation for our military. That we give a rising vote of thanks to Lebanon Baptist Church for their Christian fellowship and hospitality."

The next Big Creek District WMA meeting will be held on January 15, 2007, at Hopewell at Soso. Let's all try to attend and encourage other ladies to attend. May God bless you all 'til we meet again.

Sherry Shows, Reporter

Mississippi State W.M.A.

Mrs. Jean Knight, President
27 Paramount Church Rd.
Perkinston, MS 39573
601-928-3764

Corresponding Secretary
Mrs. Shirlene Smith
730 Hwy 533
Laurel, MS 39443

Hopewell WMA lends helping hand



The fall project for the Hopewell WMA was to fill 100 Shepherd's bags and send them to children in foreign countries. As usual they exceeded their goal. Pictured are Linda Smith, Janelle Hammond, Donna Pugh, Rachel Lester, Alice Kitchens, Judy Welch, Megan Smith and Shirlene Smith. One member of the WMA was behind the camera and others were fulfilling their duties elsewhere at bag packing time. Many in the community helped gather supplies and made financial contributions to sustain this project for which we and the recipients are grateful.

FEMA Halts Censorship of Louisiana Church's Hurricane Victim Outreach

(AgapePress) - Government officials have told a Louisiana church that its members can go back to sharing the gospel after providing free barbecues for residents of several post-Hurricane Katrina trailer communities.

Earlier this year, representatives with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, reportedly told members of Calvary Baton Rouge Church that it could no longer follow the free meals it served to hurricane victims with voluntary gospel messages and Bible studies.

Representatives of the Keta Group, a company that manages five separate trailer communities near the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport, originally told the church that FEMA had decided to put an end to the Christian messages and Bible studies; however, the Keta Group officials were unable to name any FEMA officials responsible for the order.

Feeling their rights were being violated, Calvary Baton Rouge's pastor and members sought legal assistance from the Alliance Defense Fund

(ADF), a legal organization that defends religious freedom and other constitutional rights. Jeremy Tedesco, a litigation counsel with ADF, sent a letter to the Keta Group explaining the First Amendment rights of the church and its pastor.

Second-class treatment of Christians who wish to help people in need is "simply not tolerable, and in this case, it was not legal either," Tedesco insists. "It was a First Amendment rights violation, as clear-cut as they come," he says. He points out that no one is ever forced to listen to the church's evangelical messages or to attend its Bible studies; these were offered to hurricane victims on a voluntary basis.

Not long after KETA received the letter outlining the church members' rights, FEMA responded by saying the Calvary Baton Rouge could continue its activities at the trailer communities as before. The government officials told the congregation it was free to resume its Christian outreach activities.

FEMA clearly did the right thing in clarifying its policies and allowing the church to "once again offer food and hope to people still in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," Tedesco asserts. He says the federal agency "looked at the law and understood that they couldn't censor religious speech from a forum that's wide open to, basically, all comers."

The ADF attorney says all government agencies should be as responsive as FEMA was in this situation and as quick to address the problem with respect for Americans' constitutional rights. Meanwhile, he encourages other churches and individual Christians to be as zealous as Calvary Baton Rouge was in standing up for their religious freedom.

"We have to be vigilant to protect our rights," Tedesco emphasizes. "As many cases as we win," he explains, "there are hundreds and thousands of government officials who still don't understand the law and who will, out of what they believe to be a requirement of separation of church and state - which, of course, is nowhere in our Constitution - censor religious speech wherever they see it."

Calvary Baton Rouge Church has already begun to hold Bible studies for the hurricane survivors once again, ADF notes. The voluntary, church-led, group scripture explorations take place every Monday in a "community events trailer."

CHILDREN'S HOME

118 LOWE ROAD, LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI 39443 - (601) 426-3928

Recent Church Visits

We were with the Magnolia Baptist Church in Hattiesburg and Pastor Greg Medenwald on Sunday, December 3, during their evening service for their annual "Christmas with the Children's Home". The children at the Home rendered special music and I brought a message from God's Word. Afterwards we had a time of fellowship as we shared a meal together, and the children were presented Christmas gifts.



SIDNEY DAVIS
DIRECTOR

Then on Sunday, December 10, we were with the Lee's Chapel #1 Baptist Church near Carriere and Pastor Donnie Boutwell for their morning service. The children at the Home rendered special music and I shared a message from God's Word. Afterwards we enjoyed a meal together and a time of fellowship. The afternoon service consisted of the presentation of a special offering for the Home by Pastor Boutwell, more special music and the reading of selected passages from the Word of God.

At this time of the year many of you share with the children that they may have a joyous and Merry Christmas. We are grateful for the gifts and monetary offerings that are given. They are appreciated and we thank you.

Recent Visit to Home

On December 8, we had the youth from Mt. Carmel Baptist Church near Carriere and youth leader Josh Spears, along with other youth workers, to visit the Home. We enjoyed a time of singing songs and just renewing acquaintance with each other in Christian fellowship.

Food and Miscellaneous Rally

The Big Creek Association had their annual rally for the Home on December 7. The meeting was held with the Pine Ridge Baptist Church near Laurel and Pastor Bob Burch. After giving a report on the ministry of the home the children rendered special music and I preached a message from God's Word. Our appreciation is extended to each church and individual who gave to this rally.

The Flu Bug

A few of the children are presently sick and are apparently down with the

flu. Pray that God's protective care might be with the children and workers during the flu season.

Special Emphasis

Funds continue to come in toward Special Emphasis. Once again, to each church, Sunday School class, auxiliary, and individual we say "thank you" for your participation in this year's emphasis.

The Good News of His Birth

The birth of all births occurred when Jesus was born in Bethlehem's manger. As a result literally millions have been touched by the life of Christ. John 14:6.

During this Christmas season, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us be reminded that we can have an influence upon this world of ours by sharing the good news with others. Merry Christmas from the children and staff!

Special Offerings

Special offerings are as follow: Lee's Chapel #2, Picayune, \$68.75; Paramount, Perkinston, \$234.10; Parkview, Laurel, \$70; Pilgrim Rest, Leakesville, \$346; Timothy & Anna Martin, Buckatunna, \$25; Sherra T. Kimble, Leakesville, \$300; James & Janelle Walley, Vinegar Bend, AL, \$45; Westover, Hattiesburg, \$170; F. B. Bay Springs, \$435.95; Good Hope, Yazoo City, \$200; Lebanon, Laurel, \$2,129; Movella, Lucedale, \$215; Ten Mile Ladies S. S. Class, Perkinston, \$65; Betty M. Turner, Leakesville, \$1,000; Antioch, Soso, \$50; Grace, Saucier, \$80; Canaan, Richton, \$500; Forked Oak, Booneville, \$537; Shiloh, Perkinston, \$80; Zion, Anguilla, \$400; Mt. Moriah WMA, Ellisville, \$100; Lone Oak, West Point, \$100; Magnolia, Hattiesburg, \$1,075; Oak Grove, Mantachie, \$150; F. B. Henleyfield Adult Ladies S. S. Class, Carriere, \$50; F. B. Shady Grove, Laurel, \$100; Little Creek, Perkinston, \$1,330.80; Temple, Biloxi, \$143; F. B. Calhoun, Laurel, \$500; Rocky Branch, Sumrall, \$600; Bethel, Bassfield, \$150; Bethel, Seminary, \$159.38; Big Oak, Fulton, \$388; Hopewell, Fulton, \$168; Boguefala, Mooreville, \$100; Edd & Louise James, State Line, \$120; Friendship, Baldwyn, \$300; Mr. & Mrs. Lynwood D. Davis, Picayune, \$160; Keith & Sarah Gatlin, Heidelberg, \$200; Corinth Brotherhood, Petal, \$50; Corinth Ladies Auxiliary, Petal, \$50; Harmony, Hurlley, \$75; Lee's Chapel #1, Carriere, \$705; Mt. Gilead, Columbia, \$1,000; New Bethany, Ellisville, \$44; New Bethany Brotherhood, Ellisville, \$30; Washington, Neely, \$42.75; Buffalo, McLain, \$200; Buffalo Children, McLain, \$42.24; Spring Hill, Laurel, \$125; Mr. & Mrs. C. E. Holifield, Laurel, \$100; Mt. Moriah, Ellisville, \$1,000.00. We appreciate each of these special gifts.

Ministry Leader: DOJ Findings Show Need for Faith-Based Prison Programs

(AgapePress) - Mark Earley, president of Prison Fellowship, calls the U.S. Department of Justice's accounting of a record seven-million people either behind bars or on probation or parole at the end of 2005 "staggering" - but he also sees it as a prime opportunity for the Church to demonstrate the gospel's advantage over the American penal system.

The DOJ's seven-million count represents one in every 32 American adults and breaks down to just over two million individuals in jail in the U.S., 4.1 million on probation, and more than 784,000 on parole, Earley notes. He says there has been a nearly tenfold increase of participants in the justice system, up to 2.3 million, since Charles W. Colson founded Prison Fellowship 30 years ago.

"People who are getting out [of prison] are coming back in at a rate of 50 percent after three years," the prison ministry's current president points out. "And yet," he says, "in many cases the courts and the more liberal elements in our nation don't want to allow faith-based rehabilitation programs that are entirely voluntary to occur behind prison walls because [those

programs] are based on the teachings of Christ and might offend someone else."

But as far as Earley is concerned, the latest Justice Department annual report, with its dire statistics -- like the 50 percent recidivism (prisoner return) rate within three years of release -- only confirms the dire need for a spiritually-based approach to inmate rehabilitation.

"It's a huge opportunity for the Church to demonstrate the transforming power of the gospel," the Prison Fellowship spokesman says. "And it's really a huge testimony as well," he adds, "of the current government policies we have around the nation being a real failure -- not only to stem crime but to transform those who have run afoul of the criminal justice system."

Prison Fellowship is currently appealing an Iowa federal judge's order to shut down its InnerChange Freedom Initiative prison program and to reimburse the state for running it. Earley feels the judge's ruling is bewildering, especially since the voluntary, faith-based program was a success, charting a three-year prisoner return rate of only eight percent.

GMA Girls

GMA Promoter Beth Caldwell
166 Twin Creek Rd,
Lucedale, MS 39452
601-947-6011

Sunbeam Prom. Linda Dertinger
132 Howard Hill Road
Soso, MS 39480
601-729-2908

Sunbeam Report

Hi everyone, I am Crystal Brewer. I am currently serving as your Miss Mississippi State Sunbeam and State President.

I am very excited about camp coming up in May 4-5, 2007. This year camp will be at Camp Garawya, Clinton, Mississippi. I would like to remind you all that we will be creating kites instead of posters this year. We will be flying our kites at some point during camp.

Also, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Remember to thank God for giving us the most precious gift, His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.



Crystal Brewer

When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy

Hallelujah Highway

The other night some friends and I were discussing some all the cars we've called our own since the time we learned to drive. There were a few lists longer than the one I had, but, in my opinion, there were none better. All the cars I was privileged to use hold great memories and one in particular, as I thought about it that night, taught be a good lesson.

As we share this together today think back over the cars you've owned and see what they've taught you. My list: 1974 Dodge Adventurer pick-up. Learned to drive in this thing which may explain a lot since it was so out of line a quick bump would throw you out the door, through the roof, or in the ditch. 1977 Ford LTD II. Nothing like cruising on a Saturday night with 25 of your closest friends all in one car. One fast, but gas-guzzling car (\$3 a gallon - glad this special is gone). 1986 Trans-Am (remember those). A great car with those 'hideaway' headlights that would get stuck and look like it was winking. Still, this car was cooler (at the time) than I was (at the time) and I didn't need any more hindrances in that department (still don't).

1988 Toyota pick-up. Oak tree stump-1; Toyota pick-up-0. But the great thing is through the after-effects of that incident, my wife Ginny and I started dating (another story for another time). And I got my favorite car of all time that was actually in my possession. 1988 Nissan Sentra All Terrain Vehicle. OK, I made that last part up; they didn't really build those, but I drove it that way and it stood up to every thing I ran into, over, and through. By the time I finally had to let it go, it was three shades of red, had a 'trick' driver's seat, a busted taillight lens, a bad starter, and broken timing chain (that list is not complete and all those things weren't happening at the same time). Plus, it had a carload of memories - I drove to college in it with my friends; it was the car I packed my



stuff in when I moved away from home; it was the 'getaway' car when I got married; and it was the only car I pushed through downtown Selma, Alabama (again, another story for another time). And it was the car that brought this thought to my mind. Could you imagine if I pulled that rough ridden, beat up, junk heap on wheels into one of the few 'full service' stations left and said 'Fill her up'. That attendant would look at me and look at that car and say "What for?" And rightly so.

Now how about when we bring our lives before the Lord asking to be filled with the Spirit? There's nothing wrong with desiring to be Spirit-filled, but you have to wonder if the Lord doesn't look at us and think "What for". All the rough riding, battering, and junking of our lives that we do as we go through our day by day living. That old car looked that way because of the way I drove (my brother, Joey, says it's like a ride at the fair to ride with me).

Our lives look that way because of the way we 'drive' them. If we would be filled with the Spirit - truly filled - we have to hand the keys over to the Lord. We have to change our requests from "Lord, will you do this for me" to "Lord, what would you have me do". We can be battered and still be blessed, but we cannot be filled until we're committed to follow. Blessed to bless others and to glorify God - that's the purpose. And we all want that 'purpose driven life' - but we need to learn that the joy comes - not through the purpose - but in Whose driving. Turn it all over to God...and let's hit the highway together.

Singleton is pastor of Parkview Baptist Church, Laurel, Mississippi.



Sofilthy's Attic

by Barbara White

"You Know Who"

There seems to be a lot of time, energy and means expended during a Christmas Season. Wouldn't it be nice if we received (and gave) as much all during the year!

One of the best parts of the season is remembering past Christmases. One that I was thinking about the other day was when I was very young. I had two older brothers who loved me enough that they put a boot print in the ashes of the fireplace to convince me that "you know who" is really real! If I saw his boot tracks in the ashes, he must be real - and so I still believe in "you know who"!

They, my brothers, also did their share in helping me believe that Jesus Christ is real. I'm thankful for all of their efforts!

Open House held at Missions Office



Bro. Vern Holifield, former state missions director, leads in a devotional thought at the open house held at the Missions Complex on Monday, December 11. A number of individuals attended and enjoyed a time of song, prayer, fellowship, and food. The event was sponsored by the State Missions Department, Director Ray Freeman and staff.

Short Message Series by Rev. Grover Laird

Prayer, A Ministry

"Ye also helping together by prayer for us...."
II Corinthians 1:11

Ministry is "an act of serving." Since the Bible teaches that all who are saved have been "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," (Ephesians 2:10) every sincere Christian should therefore be concerned about a ministry; a place to serve.

While all are not called to a full-time ministry as a pastor or missionary, all are called to serve. God has a place for all to serve and He gives a gift and grace to do it - "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Ephesians 4:7) While our gifts of ministry differ, (Romans 12:6) there is a ministry that everyone should have. It can go along with whatever calling God has for us. I am referring to the ministry of prayer.

Prayer can be a ministry. We can serve the Lord and others through prayer. Paul tells the Corinthians, in our text, that they had helped him in his work by their prayers. No church would do much if someone did not pray. No missionary would accomplish much if someone wasn't praying. Some who make the greatest difference in a church's ministry are those who pray. This might explain why some pastors, or missionaries, or churches do better than others. There may be several who have a great ministry of prayer and have these workers upon their heart. Paul did well, but the prayers of the Corinthians was one of the reasons for it - "Ye also helping together by prayer..."

When Paul wrote to the Colossians he mentioned a man who had a ministry of Prayer - "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always

labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Colossians 4:12)

This verse tells us several things about the ministry of prayer. (1) The ministry of prayer has the needs of others in mind. Paul told the Colossians that Epaphras prayed "fervently for you." (2) The ministry of prayer is mainly concerned about the Spiritual needs of people. Epaphras prayed that the Colossians would

"stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (3) A ministry of prayer is work. Epaphras was always "labouring fervently" for them in prayer. (4) A ministry of prayer is not limited to certain times or places. Epaphras was "Always" labouring fervently in prayer. (5) As is true with all prayer, the ministry of prayers is to be done "fervently." Do not expect much if it is not. (6) A ministry of prayer does better when it involves a work of which we are a part - "Epaphras, who is one of you." (7) The ministry of prayer does better when it is carried on by those who have dedicated their lives to follow Jesus. Epaphras was "a servant of Christ," (See also Colossians 1:7) (8) The ministry of prayer is to be carried on regularly. Epaphras was "always" labouring fervently in prayer.

Paul prayed for the salvation of his people. (Romans 10:1) This surely helped. It was a ministry. Paul charged Timothy to pray for "Kings, and for all that are in authority." (I Timothy 2:1,2) This will surely help. It is a ministry. The Bible admonishes us to offer "supplication for all saints." (Ephesians 6:18) This will surely help. This is a ministry.

May the Lord help all of us to enlarge our usefulness in His kingdom work by carrying on a Ministry of Prayer.



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