

Mississippi Baptist

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Southeastern Baptist College President's Report

A Christmas Message for the People of America

Editor's Note - We encouraged each of the department workers to include a Christmas message in their reports for this issue. SBC President Scott Carson shares a unique experience he had in Germany while serving as a U.S. Army Chaplain. A good lesson is seen here in the perception others have on celebrating the Christmas season.

President's Perspective

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:13-14.

Merry Christmas! Linda and I were blessed with my being assigned to Europe for eight straight years. The histories

He explained that Christians should be allowed to proclaim the name of their Savior and their countrymen and government should not suppress their religious expression

and diverse cultures between nations were amazing! We experienced so many different languages and unique traditions. Some of our fondest memories come from the Christmas season while we were stationed in Germany. Let me tell you, the Germans know how to do Christmas right! Their



Dr. Scott Carson
President

Christkindlmarks are amazing fairy-tale like places where city main squares are transformed into beautiful outdoor Christmas markets.

It is interesting that the German culture is much more secular than that of the United States, yet they have no issues with the annual community celebrations of the birth of our Savior! Everyone acknowledges the name of these annual events as Christkindlmarks, which literally means, "Baby Jesus Markets." There is no problem with German people wishing



German Christmas Marketplace

others a Fröhliche Weihnachten, which means, Merry Christmas! In fact, it is expected as a deeply ingrained part of their culture.

I remember during a senior U.S. Army staff meeting on an American installation in Germany, a discussion began on the implications of the separation of church and state for the lighting of the "Holiday" tree on the base. The discussion went on and on and some were insistent that the name of Jesus and the word Christmas must be completely avoided! It was during this heated exchange that a German national who had worked for the U.S. Army for decades, raised his hand and expressed his opinion. His words were eye opening indeed! He began by declaring himself an avid atheist. He then proceeded to explain that in his country, there is no issue with the overt and public celebration of Christmas. It has always been a wonderful time of year and deeply ingrained into the German culture. He said that Americans were way too sensitive of other religions and especially during this time of year that is clearly a Chris-

report continues on page 3

A Legacy of Hope: World Missions Day 2019

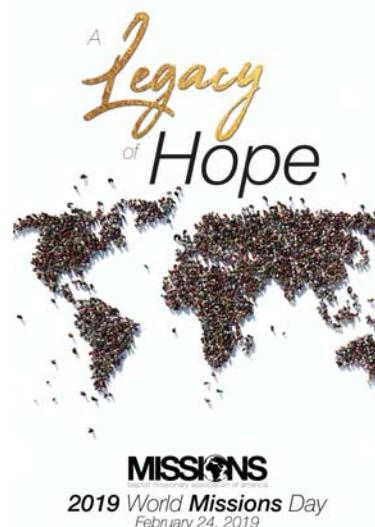
How will you outlive your life? We each want to leave a lasting legacy; one that impacts people in years to come. This World Missions Day, BMA Missions will focus on believers who leave a A Legacy of Hope. As an association, we will honor missionaries, pastors, and church members who have left a lasting legacy, while investing in future ministries so they, too, can leave a legacy for Christ.

2 Timothy 2:2 says, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This verse demonstrates that a lasting legacy requires a person to live for things that they are willing

to die for, "otherness," and that a person accepts the fact that they will probably not see the full effect of their efforts in their lifetime. Finally, a lasting legacy requires that the believer has been a faithful disciple for many years.

On February 24, 2019, we will celebrate those who began ministries long ago that continue in growth and maturity today. Many of those ministries seemed small and insignificant at their inception, yet today they have grown to include dozens of churches, countless disciples and leaders, and an impactful legacy.

Leaving a lasting legacy doesn't happen by accident, yet it is attainable for every believer. Every believer can out-



live their life. This World Missions Day, join us in honoring

believers in your life who have left a lasting legacy, while also investing in future ministries so that they can also leave A Legacy of Hope for future generations.

When you register your church for World Missions Day, your pastor will receive a complimentary BMA Missions fleece vest, and your congregation will receive free World Missions Day promotional resources such as A Legacy of Hope posters and bulletin inserts. Register your church online at bmamissions.org/worldmissionsday, by emailing Paige West at paige@bmamissions.org, or over the phone by calling the Missions office at 501-455-4977.

Mississippi Baptist

Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi



Don Brown
Editor

From The Mind of Chuck Lee

THAT I WOULD NOT, THAT I DO

It wasn't my most brilliant moment, although with so many to choose from, it wasn't my most, uh, not brilliant (?) moment either. In fact, with all my mishaps from not thinking things through to fruition, I could probably write a book rivaling Winston Churchill's *A History of the English-Speaking People*, at least in length anyway. But hey, I found a way to compare myself to Winston Churchill, so maybe not thinking about things is not too terribly bad.

The moment I am speaking of came from watching YouTube, a little hobby that has caused me all kind of ambitious thoughts. There was a video showing how to grow a garden without tilling the ground. As an avid believer in the work smarter, not harder, method of doing things, I was instantly interested.

The off the grid (other than millions of YouTube viewers), heavily bearded man from the video explained that all you

had to do was pile a thick layer of hay over the grass and let nature do her job. By the time planting time came along, all you would have to do is pull back the hay, plant your



Bro. Chuck Lee



seeds, and replace the hay. Sounded like my kind of farming. He even showed how he had done it with potatoes. There was no digging involved.

When it came time for harvest, he just raked back the hay and picked up his potatoes. I could do that.

Living out in the country provided me with several people that dealt in hay, so finding hay was no problem at all. In fact, one of my church members dropped off a few bales at the house one day when I was out of town. I was excited to get back and begin

my life of no-till gardening. The moment I got home, I dragged a bale of hay out to my garden spot and began to merrily distribute it over the ground. I noticed as I continued, that my eyes began to swell and my nose began to run. Not a flattering look for me. Air began to be harder to inhale into my lungs. Then it hit me. I'm allergic to hay!

One would think that I would have remembered that little tidbit of information, considering the misery I go through every time my neighbor starts cutting hay every year. I just got caught up in the moment. I went from being miserable when the wind would shift my direction from the hay field, to literally playing in a big pile of hay. I knew better, but I did it anyway. Guess that's what happens when you allow something to distract you from the truth.

Oh well, my dogs have a nice bed of hay to sleep on at night. I'm just not sure how long it will take for the straw to break down and lose its potency. I'm sure someone on the internet can tell me.

Lee serves as pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church, Purvis. He may be reached by email at leecharles47@yahoo.com

The stress of the season...

What a wonderful time of the year. It is a time of family, friends, food, shopping, giving, receiving, decorations, special church services, programs, seasonal music, spending too much, etc. Wow! With all of that going on and taking up so much of our time and attention, is it any wonder that STRESS is something that comes upon many this time of the year.

Many counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, pastors, and family members are busy helping others to cope... Maybe, just maybe, if we were to put the correct 'stress' on this time of the year there would be less financial, emotional, physical, and societal stress to deal with. Of course if we stressed the spiritual reality of Jesus and His work on the cross during the rest of the year, I suspect that 'bad' stress would be much less prevalent.

It is the Christmas season. It is called Christmas only because of Christ. It is not the holiday season. It is Christmas. We call it Christmas because of Jesus. We celebrate and commemorate His birth and His life and the reason for His appearing. Let us stress THAT this time of the year and let the world know that Jesus is Lord.

He takes away the sins of the world. Now that is true stress relief!

Merry Christmas from your Publications Department!

Southeastern College Seeking Academic Dean

Southeastern Baptist College is in search of qualified candidates to be considered for the position of Academic Dean. A candidate must possess at a minimum a doctorate degree from an accredited institution in an appropriate field of study, for overseeing Bible College degree programs in general education, Bible, business administration and church ministries. The ideal candidate should have experience in higher educational administration. A preferred candidate should have an affiliation with the Baptist Missionary Association of America; however, other qualified candidates will be considered. The candidate must possess a strong Christian character, with an excitement to join a rapidly-growing, Christ-centered educational institution. Interested candidates may send their résumé to Southeastern Baptist College, 4229 Hwy 15 N, Laurel, MS 39440. For more information, call 601-426-6346 or stop by the SBC campus during our Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday office hours.

Music Professor Position Open at Southeastern

Southeastern Baptist College is in need of a Professor of Music for the Spring 2019 semester. The candidate must possess at a minimum at Master's Degree in Music Education from an accredited institution. In addition, the candidate should have extensive practical musical experience, one who understands and is able to educate others in various musical genres with emphasis on sacred works. A preferred candidate should have a connection to the Baptist Missionary Association of America; however, other qualified candidates will be considered. The candidate must possess a strong Christian character, with an excitement to join a rapidly-growing, Christ-centered educational institution. Interested candidates may send their resume' to Southeastern Baptist College, 4229 Hwy 15 N, Laurel, MS 39440. For more information, call 601-426-6346 or stop by the SBC campus during our Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday office hours.

Church of the Covered Dish BY THOMAS TAPP



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*Serving Christ
With A Biblical World View
In A Christian Atmosphere*

continued from front page

tian celebration! He explained that Christians should be allowed to proclaim the name of their Savior and their countrymen and government should not suppress their religious expression, but rather encourage them to express their beliefs publically! This whole idea of trying to suppress Christians and Christmas was a ridiculous thought to the secular German. "After all," he said, "Isn't that what freedom of religion is all about?"

When he finished his lecture, those who were against using the name of Christ or the word Christmas went silent. The commander then instructed the staff that it was okay for everyone to refer to the "Holiday" tree as a Christmas tree. And that no person should attempt to suppress those who celebrated the birth of their Savior. Wow, it took a foreign atheist to set the staff straight!

Don't let anyone try to suppress your expression of faith in the birth of your

Lord during this wonderful season that is clearly Christian in nature. Neither the state, nor your neighbors should infringe on your First Amendment Rights of freedom of religion, and especially as we again remember the birth of our Great Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord!

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11.

Equipping the Saints!
Dr. Carson



Dr. Carson providing the prayer for the Laurel Homeschoolers Association Knight Hawks Basketball Team in the SBC gymnasium.

Spring Semester Pre-registration is Now!

If you want to get ahead of the administrative requirements for signing up for classes in the Spring Semester, you may do so now by going to the SBC Website and registering there or contacting Brad Phillips at 601-426-6346. On campus registration is January 8 through 11. Classes begin the week of January 14.

Donor and Volunteer Dinner

We recently honored our much appreciated individual supporters at a Donor and Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. We had a wonderful time of fellowship with a full concert by Andrew Ishee, a multitalented Christian entertainer. What a great night of celebration! See the related pictures of this great annual event.



Above: Mrs. Linda Carson draws names for door prize winners at recent Donor & Volunteer Dinner. Below: Ishees perform for attendees at dinner.



bus without air breaks. If you can help please contact Coach Phillips at 601-426-6346.

Carson's Army

At this week's Donor and Volunteer Dinner, Brother Chris Floyd reviewed the success of "enlistments" of financial support in the Carson's Army fund raising campaign. To date we have three general officers, two majors, and two captains. If you feel led of the Lord to enlist, call 601-426-6346 today! Please refer to the "Carson's Army" giving chart in this publication.

Thank You!

Praise God for 1st Baptist Church of Midway, Sumrall, Mississippi, for answering the call to help with food for our students! On November 29, these gracious people provided ministry in the Name of our Lord Jesus to our student body with a catered hot meal. See the adjacent photos of this event. If your church family is also lead to provide a one-time hot meal for 50 students, or on a routine basis, contact Coach Phillips at 601-426-6346 to coordinate.

Urgent Need CDL Drivers

We are in immediate need of volunteer or paid CDL drivers to drive our team bus. We have numerous away games both in state and outside of Mississippi. We have a 30 passenger

Seeking Volunteer Handyman

Having been blessed with 56 students living in our dormitories, and the infrastructure being old, we often have minor plumbing, electrical, window, door, and miscellaneous other items needing repairs. We are offering an opportunity for someone to bless us with their handyman skills to assist us with these needs. Please contact Dr. Carson at 601-426-6346 if you would like to help.

Available to Preach

Dr. Carson is available to fill the pulpit for preaching or to provide an update about the great things the Lord is doing at Southeastern Baptist College. You can reach him at 601-433-4736 or at scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu

The Chargers Basketball Schedule Changes!

Changes to the season schedules for the Men's and Women's Varsity Games and Men's Junior Varsity Games can

| UPCOMING GAMES | |
|--|----------|
| Nov 30th - Lady Chargers @ Tougaloo | 5pm |
| Nov 30th - Chargers @ Tougaloo | 7pm |
| Dec 1st - Chargers v Trinity Baptist | 2pm HOME |
| Dec 2nd - Lady Chargers @ Centenary | 2 pm |
| Dec 3rd - JV Men v Grace Baptist | 6pm HOME |
| Dec 4th - Lady Chargers @ Univ AR Monticello | 5:30p |
| Dec 4th - JV Men v Stillman | 6pm HOME |
| Dec 7th-8th - Chargers @ GA NW Tech Classic | |
| Dec 7th-8th - Lady Chargers @ Ga NW Tech Classic | |
| Dec 11th - Chargers v Webber | 6pm HOME |
| Dec 13th - Lady Chargers @ Hiwassee | 5pm |
| Dec 13th - Chargers @ Hiwassee | 7pm |
| Dec 14th - Lady Chargers @ Welch | 6pm |
| Dec 14th - Chargers @ Welch | 8pm |
| Dec 18th - Chargers @ SAGU | 3pm |

be found adjacent to this article and is also posted on our sports website: <http://athletics.southeasternbaptist.edu/> and on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SBCChargers>

VA Educational Benefits Accepted

SBC possesses the 2018 Gold Award level as a military friendly college. Have you served in America's armed forces? Then you probably have Veterans Administration tuition benefits that you can use toward a free education right here at SBC. I urge you to contact your local VA representative for an evaluation of your benefits. You earned them! And remember, many benefits are now fully transferable to family members. SBC has numerous students receiving VA assistance for both online and in-classroom tuition.



Recent Donor and Volunteer Dinner



Members of Midway First Baptist Church, Sumrall, Mississippi, on the campus of SBC providing a free fellowship meal for the students.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI

Missions Department & Revolving Loan Fund



Larry Geraldson
Director



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“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:11

The constellation of Christological titles given in this verse of scripture, sparkles like the best lit Christmas tree. Luke adorns the verse with the implicit reality that Jesus is David’s son. He shines truth brighter yet, when he proclaims that He is a Savior. As if to crown the verse with the best lit star, he says, this is, “Christ the Lord.” The prophetic expectation of the coming Messiah has been met. After more than 400 years of silence and darkness, He would come in the coldness of the Greco-Roman world that was oblivious to who He was. The brilliant supernatural fulfillment of God’s divine arrival would be rejected by those who knew His story best but knew Him not. His arrival threatened a King who tried to kill Him and who fulfilled prophesy in the process. As if to summons the rocks to cry out,

foreigners, Wise men from the east, would be the first to worship Him. A testament to his future, He spent His first days on earth, wrapped in grave clothes, the same type of linen cloth that He would wear again at His death. A man in the temple, named Simeon, would call Him the consolation of Israel and the light to lighten the Gentiles, before telling His mother that the child was set for the fall and rising of many and that she would feel, as it were, a sword pierce through her own soul. Oh, the depth of the Christmas story. This one verse burst on the world stage with such illumination, blinding the eyes of them that did not believe. So much is given in this one verse that we could burn the candle all night and only begin to scratch the surface. Unfortunately, it is often the case that we spend the entire season

focused on the sparkle and the gifts and we miss the most important simple message herein contained, “...unto you is born...a savior...” It’s the gospel! It’s the message of salvation, and yet it is so often overlooked. As we labor to enjoy all the sparkle of Christmas this year, I pray that we will not overlook this simple message; “unto you is born...a savior...” Go tell it on the mountain; Over the hills and everywhere; Go tell it on the mountain; Our Jesus Christ is born.

On behalf of all of us in the Missions and Revolving Loan Fund office, and all our missionary families across the State, I want to wish each of our Churches the very best Christmas time. We pray for you and consider it an honor to serve you on the field of missions.

There is much going on during the Christmas season.

Redemption Baptist Finds Building

By the time you read this, we will be headed to a Planning Committee meeting at Hancock County, hoping to receive a zoning variance which would be the last step in our Due Diligence before purchasing a building for Redemption Baptist at Diamondhead. I will share more about this story in upcoming issues, but suffice it to say, this is a God thing.

South Forrest and Redemption Working Together

What a blessing it is to see how Missionary Coach Sidney Farmer has led his folks to reach out and help the folks at Redemption at Diamondhead. Bro. Martin has led his people to get involved in discipleship training and recently folks from South Forrest traveled to Diamondhead to team up and hit the streets. They made 20 contacts and presented the gospel 10 times as a part of this day of hands-on evangelism training. Praise the Lord! #generationaldepth

Salt Light Baptist Mission Matching Funds Campaign

The Revolving Loan Fund Trustees have approved a matching funds campaign, from proceeds designated for missions, to help offset the debt of Salt Light Mission. From now until January 15, 2019, every dollar received at the Missions Office, earmarked for Salt Light’s Matching Fund Campaign, will be matched, up to \$50,000.00. Please prayerfully consider helping with this campaign.

Day Star Completes Building Project

The books have been closed and this project is paid for. Through the generous offerings and the help of the Revolving Loan Fund, the Day Star Baptist Mission facility is paid for. Again, we want to say, “Thank you,” to all those who helped. Bro. Burns has scheduled the organization service for Saturday, January 12, 2019 at 2pm. I hope you will mark your

calendar and plan to be there to encourage this new congregation.

2019 Missions & Evangelism Conference

The 2019 Missions & Evangelism Conference has been scheduled for March 29, 2019 beginning at 9:30am. Next year’s program will be somewhat abbreviated, allowing us to hear some good preaching before lunch and after lunch, we will dismiss. The Conference Theme is, “Missions 101” and our speakers are as follows:

- The Mission – Justin Cameron, Pastor at Good Hope, Columbia
- The Message of Missions – Vernon Watts, Pastor at First Baptist Henleyfield
- The Mandate for Missions - Brandon Burge, Pastor at College Heights, Poplarville
- The Missions Minded Church – Jason Howard, Pastor of Canaan, Richton
- The Call to Missions – Blake McCain, Pastor of First Baptist Midway

The Conference will be hosted by First Baptist Midway. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. More information will follow. Please keep checking back in future issues for details.

Two New Mission Opportunities on the Horizon

I have been contacted by two men who are preparing for church planting sometime after the first of the year. Please keep this in your prayers as God blesses us with more opportunity.

Starkville Missionary Needed

Missionary Coach Bob Burch and I are praying that God will raise up someone to go plant a church in Starkville, Mississippi, near Mississippi State University. Caledonia Baptist is ready to serve as the Mother Church for this mission project. We ask everyone to pray with us about this.

Revolving Loan Fund Update

At a recent Trustee meeting, our Board of Trustees voted to approve a 5-million-dollar loan request. The funds, to service this loan, will begin to go out in May 2019. We are grateful for this opportunity to serve one of our BMA of America churches, and we feel confident we can do so. However, we have other loan inquiries that we believe will develop into loan requests in early 2019. Therefore, I have given Bro. Newman the green light to solicit new deposit accounts. He will be working hard to promote our fund and increase our shareholder deposit accounts. Our fund is currently paying 2.25%. If you would like to have more information about how you can be a part of this ministry, please call Bro. Newman at 601-428-8616.



Missionary Coach Sidney Farmer leading in Evangelism Training at Redemption Baptist Mission in Diamondhead.



Merry Christmas from Waveland & the core group of Salt Light Baptist Mission please call Bro. Newman at 601-428-8616.

Holiday Schedule

We will be closed from Christmas Eve – New Years and will reopen on January 2nd.

Christmas Greetings From Your State Missions Staff



Merry Christmas from Day Star Baptist Mission



Feliz Navidad from the folks at El Camino, Hattiesburg



Merry Christmas from Redemption Baptist Mission



Feliz Navidad from the folks at El Camino, Biloxi



Feliz Navidad from the folks at El Camino, Laurel



Merry Christmas from some of the folks at Midway Baptist Mission at Batesville



Merry Christmas from the folks at Homestretch in Cleveland



Feliz Navidad from the folks at Way, Truth & Life, Oxford



Merry Christmas from the folks at Caledonia Baptist and Missionary Coach Bob Burch



Feliz Navidad from the folks at Way, Truth & Life, Tupelo



Feliz Navidad from the folks at Way, Truth & Life, Ripley

Pastor, leave sports out of the pulpit. Here's why...

by Joe McKeever
(printed with permission)

"Not everyone in the pews cares who won that game. They could care less who Mickey Mantle or Hank Aaron, Joe Namath or Drew Brees are (is?). Tell them a Yogi Berra story and while you stand there waiting on the laugh, they will say, 'Who is that?' An evening at a college football game with you is not a delight, but punishment." —The voice of sanity

Keep that in mind as you enter the pulpit area.

Dr. Cecil Randall pastored Tuscaloosa's First Baptist Church during the era of the famous Paul "Bear" Bryant when winning national championships became a matter of routine. Later, as a professor in New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, he told his students not a single time did he mention football from the pulpit.



Dr. Joe McKeever

"Not everyone in your congregation is local," Dr. Randall said. "Some are from those other states and they cheer for those other teams. Besides, you have bigger things to do today than talk about a football game."

Any pastor who questions that should go back and examine his calling.

There is an exception.

When the entire team comes to your church for a special service, you may talk football. All fifty-five athletes are sitting before you in the audience, along with six coaches and their families. Everyone in the building is fully expecting you to talk about them, what they're doing, the season before them, something. Try to inspire them, pastor, with what they are trying to achieve but without dumping on their opponents, some supporters of which are also sitting nearby and eavesdropping.

Pastors who have difficulty doing this—honoring a team and challenging them but without trivializing the gospel message—should seek advice and suggestions from their mentors.

Leave football out of it.

Or basketball if you're in Kentucky or North Carolina. Soccer if you live in Europe, South America, or Asia.

You are on a mission for the Lord Jesus Christ. You are not a lackey for the local chamber of commerce nor an agent of the community public relations campaign. You want this city to do well, but when you stand to bring Heaven's message, you have greater goals in mind.

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.

There is nothing wrong and everything right with supporting all that is good in your community. As a pastor, I once headed up the chamber of commerce's beautification committee for our town and often did 10-second

television spots promoting a clean and lovely community. And, as a member of the local symphony board, at the end of the worship service I might mention the concert Tuesday night with the hope more would support it. But our town was not large and no one was offended.

I was not slamming another team. God told the Israelites in Babylon to "work for the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray on its behalf; for as it prospers, you will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:7). Literally, "in its shalom, you will have shalom."

A few quick observations on this subject...

One. You're not going to stop people from discussing last night's game before Sunday School. So, don't even try, pastor. Actually, there's nothing wrong with it. They're fellowshiping, and anything is on the table for that.

Two. Personally, even if his preferences are well known, the pastor should wear his partisanship lightly. One church asked everyone to wear a t-

shirt for their favorite team the following Sunday. The pastor preached in one from his alma mater. My opinion

is he should have worn a plain white dress shirt that day. Or, he could have gotten really creative and had his wife make up a shirt with the logos of a dozen good teams. But if I'm an Alabama fan and the pastor is preaching in an Auburn t-shirt—or vice versa—this is probably not going to be well-received.

Three. This is not to say you cannot use sports analogies or stories in sermons. They're in Scripture. (I Corinthians 9:24-27; Hebrews 12:1; 2 Timothy 4:7)

Four. Never forget the words of the baseball catcher who watched as the batter approached the plate and made the sign of the cross. "Hey Buddy," he said, "Why don't we just let the Almighty enjoy the game?" It's a good reminder. (Was it Yogi Berra? Not sure.)

Five. If you know for a fact that some members of your congregation support



MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME

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SIDNEY DAVIS - DIRECTOR



SIDNEY DAVIS

The Excitement of Christmas

The joy and excitement of Christmas has arrived once again. As the holiday season approaches, our thoughts should certainly be focused upon the ONE for which the season truly represents, JESUS!!!

It is always good at this time of the year as children get involved putting up the Christmas tree and placing decorations on it to experience seeing the joy and the excitement that Christmas brings to their hearts.

This Christmas as we gather around the guitar or piano and sing the songs of Christmas may we allow the radiance and gladness and joy fill our lives as the true meaning of Christmas is expressed through these songs and carols that speak of the real significance of Christmas. The birth of Jesus Christ!

The Savior of the world! The excitement of Christmas!

Christmas with the Children's Home

We were with the Magnolia Baptist Church in Hattiesburg and Pastor Greg Medenwald on Sunday evening December 2nd, for their annual "Christmas with the Children's Home service." As always they were gracious hosts and made this service special once again. Magnolia, thank you for your prayerful and financial support of the ministry of the Home. Thank you for the gifts. We enjoyed the fellowship and meal very much.

Expression of Sympathy

We would like to express our sympathy to the family of Bro. Latrelle Windham. Our prayers continue to be with his wife Linda, his two daughters, Jennifer and Becky and the Windham family.

Prayer and Focus Verse

Continue to remember the Home and its ministry in your prayers. "And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

"that other team," ask them to let you know if they ever feel you have crossed the line. Assure them of your love for them and respect for their loyalties. If your partisanship is extreme and deep, enlist their help in seeing that you toe the line.

Six. Pastor, leave the pennants and wall hangings from your team out of your office. For all the obvious reasons.

Seven. I'll make a prediction. One of these days you will have in your congregation a professional athlete, someone well known to the sports world, someone who pulls down a zillion bucks a year, someone whose image has graced Sports Illustrated numerous times. And he/she will be impressed that you do not swoon, that you stay on course in preaching the gospel message. Because in 99.99 percent of the time, the famous athlete knows better than anyone how ephemeral and shallow are the accolades of his/her profession.

Someone told Bob Devaney, the old coach of the Nebraska Cornhuskers, of a die-hard fan who had ordered his casket in fire-engine red with "Nebraska" all over it. As I recall, he had the name of the team cut into his teeth, even. "What do you think about that?" they asked. Coach Devaney said, "I think he ought to get a life."

Indeed. And that's where you and I come in, pastor. We know the One who is the Giver of Life and that more abundantly.

Tell them about Jesus.

Kosciusko Church Special Service

On December 16, Shiloh Baptist Church in Kosciusko, Mississippi, will host Musical Evangelist Ronnie Warren. A Christmas Fellowship meal will follow our services. The Church is providing the meal, but feel free to bring a dish. For more information contact Pastor Matt Steed. 662-582-6450.

According to Matthew

by Dr. Tony cleaver

Matthew 16.13 "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

That's a good question? Many people say many things about Jesus. Some might say He is a rock star able to put on a great show. Some might say He is a pronounced teacher who espoused some great ideas and philosophy. Others might include He was a great leader like Lincoln, King, or Gandhi. That is only what the flesh and blood of humanity is able to say of Him. The Father in Heaven reveals through the Holy Spirit that He is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Good Reader, who do you say He is? Is He a lecturer of good words, an historical figure who taught well, or perhaps just a "nice guy?" If that is all He is, then you must ask the Father to reveal to you that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God who is able to renew you in the image of God.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY AUXILIARY

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ARE YOU A MISSIONARY?

by Jackie Ricks, National WMA editor

Many times we focus on elected missionaries and miss seeing that ordinary people who seemingly never have a "call" to the mission field also play an important part in mission work. Let's look at one particular life that's a result of mission work. Just as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." Many believers who were saved and then discipled as a result of mission work in one form or another, can often look to several different missionaries who had a part along the way, but they know that ultimately, it was God who put those people in their paths and worked everything out in their lives.

Rose Ng is just such a person. This native of Vietnam became an adult without really knowing much about God or Jesus, other than through a friend as she grew up. Later, she felt the stress of life and decided to put an end to all of it. However, God intervened through a tree. Her clothes caught on a tree branch as she attempted to jump into the river. God

had a reason for stopping Rose and she realized that there was something, or Someone, greater than she.

Rose calls Genesis 1:1 her salvation verse. Through reading the Bible on her own, she was saved. However, a mission of another Baptist group helped



to disciple her. They also pointed her to a Christian institution where she could learn more. Although Rose didn't really intend to go to a Bible college, Bro. Doyle Moore convinced her that she needed to go there. That's how Rose became a student at the BMA Bible College in the Philippines when she had been a Christian only about three years. With only one month to prepare to go, Rose had to make many adjustments.

Doyle and Linda Moore took Rose under their wings and taught her

through example what true missionaries are. She considers them her spiritual "Mom and Dad." She spent four years at the Bible College on scholarship and received her BA in religious education in spite of the fact that she already had a degree from Vietnam and a career making good money.

The decision was not an easy one for Rose because her career was established and she had no intention of becoming anything different. However, God had other plans. She had heard a missionary talk about the children in Cambodia who needed so much, both regular education as well as spiritual. That became a burden on Rose's heart.

While in the Philippines, others also influenced Rose along the way. Pat Quesenbury arrived in the islands twice for women's conferences. As usual, her dynamic Christian presentation and charming personality fused with Rose's enthusiasm and they became instant friends. Rose now considers Mrs. Quesenbury a mentor in her life. However, there are probably many more because Rose never really meets a stranger and she seems to learn something from everyone she meets.

For years, Bro. James Speer traveled to the Philippines to help them with their youth camp. That's how he and Rose became acquainted. Now Rose lives in the United States and considers James and Barbara Speer her family. Although Rose is a student at the BMA Theological Seminary working

on her MA in ministry, she returns to Carthage to attend First Baptist Church with the Speers every chance she gets. In fact, the whole church has taken her in, as one member or another comes to pick her up and then returns her to Jacksonville when she goes, because Rose does not have a vehicle.

Stan and Donna Scroggins, also missionaries to the Philippines, helped Rose before she came to the United States. By that time, the Moores had retired and returned to the states. The Scroggins helped Rose get her visa. Then they helped raised the necessary funds that she would need in her endeavor.

Since Rose wants to return to Cambodia and began a K-12 school for the children of the boat people, she plans to remain in the United States to complete her PhD in education. As part of that, she wants to research how to set up a Christian school and how to be an administrator. While in Jacksonville, she has become friends with Stephanie Attebery, wife of the dean at BMATS. Because she teaches in a Christian school, Mrs. Attebery gives Rose insights into the world of educating students.

These are only a few of the Christians who have impacted Rose during her short life as a Christian. Notice that many of these were not what most of us would consider actual missionaries. Many more people have sent money and prayed for the work all over the world. You may think you don't have a part in anything like this; however, the Bible tells us all to go and teach. We can all disciple if we do what we should. Are you a missionary?

Rose loves to speak about her plans to become a missionary through education. She can be contacted through BMA Theological Seminary.

Rose wants to return to Cambodia and began a K-12 school for the children of the boat people

New Year's Eve Sing to be held at Southeastern Baptist College



Mark Lanier

A New Years Eve Sing will be held at Southeastern Baptist College in Laurel on December 31, 2018. The program will begin at 7:00 pm and feature the following groups: The Stephens from Northport, Alabama; The Bibletones Quartet from South Mississippi; Mark Lanier from Ball, Louisiana; and Bob Sellers from Gordo, Alabama.



The Bibletones



The Stephens



Bob Sellers

There will no admission charge, but a love offering will be taken. For more information call 601.323.4400.

Christian Couple Prevails Against Discrimination

A Christian couple from Idaho was handed a major victory after a four-year battle that came as a result of religious discrimination.

A jury in northern Idaho recently awarded the couple — Jeremy and Kristy Morris of Hayden — \$75,000 in their lawsuit against West Hayden States First Addition Homeowners Association, ruling the HOA illegally discriminated against the pair on religious grounds.

Every year, the Morrises are known for erecting elaborate Christmas decorations, com-

plete with twinkling lights, live music and a nativity scene with actors portraying the holy family.

The controversy first arose, Jeremy Morris told the Couer d'Alene Press, when they decided to move to a new home in 2015. The Christian couple had been transparent about their plans to continue their annual Christmas display, which they



called a "ministry," but were greeted with a letter from the HOA board, explaining why they could no longer set up their holiday decor.

It should be noted the family made an extra effort to ensure they were not in any way

violating the HOA's rules, even making special arrangements for parking for those who come to see the display every year.

One of the reasons included in the HOA's letter, though, was the Morrises' Christian faith, according to Premier.

"I am somewhat hesitant in bringing up the fact that some of our residents are non-Christians or of another faith," the letter read, in part. "And I don't even want to think of the problems that could bring up."

One neighbor, Angie Cox, claimed when she asked Jennifer Scott, chair of the HOA, whether the issue was really about the Morrises breaking

the rules or not really wanting the Christian family in the neighborhood, the HOA leader replied, "We just don't want him here."

After receiving the notice, the Morrises decided to proceed with a lawsuit, claiming they were discriminated against because of their Christian faith.

In response to the victory, Jeremy Morris said, "Our family will live wherever we want to live to spread the message of Jesus Christ and the birth of our savior. We're looking forward. We're positive. We're excited."

The Dying Church

by Michael Snyder
from *Prophecy News Watch Website*

November 30, 2018 - America is littered with thousands upon thousands of church buildings that aren't being used anymore. As you will see below, between 6,000 and 10,000 churches are dying in the United States every single year, and that means that more than 100 will die this week alone.

And of course thousands of others are on life support. All over the country this weekend,

small handfuls of people will gather in huge buildings which once boasted very large congregations. At one time, America was widely considered to be "a Christian nation", but that really isn't true anymore.

As an excellent article in *The Atlantic* has noted, even though most Americans still consider themselves to be "Christian", the numbers are telling us a very different story...

Many of our nation's churches can no longer afford to maintain their structures--6,000 to 10,000 churches die each year in America--and that number will likely grow. Though more than 70 percent of our citizens still claim to be Christian, congregational participation is less central to many Americans' faith than it once was.

Most denominations are declining as a share of the overall population, and donations to congregations have been falling for decades. Meanwhile, religiously unaffiliated Americans, nicknamed the "nones," are growing as a share of the U.S. population.

In fact, the "nones" have risen from just 6 percent of the population in 1991 to 25 percent today. That makes them the single largest "religious group" in the United States.



Today, less than 20 percent of all Americans attend church on a regular basis. As a result, churches are dying in very large numbers, and this is a trend that appears to be accelerating. According to Thom S. Rainer of *Lifeway*, when you break the numbers down it means that "around 100-200 churches will close this week"...

Between 6,000 and 10,000 churches in the U.S. are dying each year. That means around 100-200 churches will close this week. The pace will accelerate unless our congregations make some dramatic changes.

Any institution needs resources in order to survive, and churches are not any different.

As attendance has declined, so has giving, and at this point the percentage of charity donations going to religious institutions is at an all-time low...

Religious institutions are still the single biggest recipients of overall charity donations, according to the 2015 survey by

the Giving USA Foundation. About 32 percent -- \$119.3 billion -- of a total of \$373.25 billion Americans gave to charities went to churches, synagogues, mosques and temples.

But that is down from about 50 percent since 1990, according to Rick Dunham, vice chairman of Giving USA, and the percentage has been "in steady decline for some time."

So when churches die, what happens to their buildings?

Well, some are torn down, some are renovated for residential or business purposes, and some are being put to other uses...

A large number of abandoned churches have become wineries or breweries or bars. Others have been converted into hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, and Airbnbs. A few have been transformed into entertainment venues, such as an indoor playground for children, a laser-tag arena, or a skate park.

A similar thing is happening in Europe, only on a much greater scale. Over there, hundreds of churches have been transformed into Islamic mosques, and this has generated quite a bit of controversy.

We are witnessing societal change happen at a pace that would have been absolutely unthinkable a couple of generations ago.

BMA of Mississippi Pastor's Retreat January 21 - 22, 2019

Lake Tiak O'Khata — Louisville, Mississippi

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

"...exercise thyself rather unto godliness."

1 Timothy 4:7

The Registration Fee this year is \$65.00 if staying in the bunkhouse. This includes the retreat, one night in the bunkhouse, and your three meals.

If you choose to reserve a hotel room, then the Registration Fee will be \$45.00 which includes the retreat and three meals. You are individually responsible for reserving and paying for your hotel room. The number to Lake Tiak O'Khata for reservations is 662-773-7853.

Registration will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Monday afternoon and the retreat will conclude with lunch at 11:30 on Tuesday. More Info To Be Released Soon

B Mississippi
Baptist

January 2019

Publications Department Special Emphasis

The *Mississippi Baptist* continues to keep our churches informed about the work of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi and America

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