

# The Baptist

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## Ancient tablets reveal life of Jews in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon

**JERUSALEM (Reuters)** - A new exhibition of ancient clay tablets discovered in modern-day Iraq is shedding light for the first time on the daily life of Jews exiled to Babylon some 2,500 years ago.

The exhibition is based on more than 100 cuneiform tablets, each no bigger than an adult's palm, that detail transactions and contracts between Judeans driven from, or convinced to move from, Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar around 600 BC.

Archaeologists got their first chance to see the tablets -- acquired by a wealthy London-based Israeli collector -- barely two years ago. They were blown away.

"It was like hitting the jackpot," said Filip Vukosavovic, an expert in ancient Babylonia, Sumeria and Assyria who curated the exhibition at Jerusalem's Bible Lands Museum.

"We started reading the tablets and

within minutes we were absolutely stunned. It fills in a critical gap in understanding of what was going on in the life of Judeans in Babylonia more than 2,500 years ago."

Nebuchadnezzar, a powerful ruler famed for the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, came to Jerusalem several times as he sought to spread the reach of his kingdom.

Each time he came -- and one visit coincided with the destruction of Jerusalem's first temple in 586 BC -- he either forced or encouraged the exile of thousands of Judeans.

One exile in 587 BC saw around 1,500 people make the perilous journey via modern-day Lebanon and Syria to the fertile crescent of southern Iraq, where the Judeans traded, ran businesses and helped the administration of the kingdom.

"They were free to go about their lives,



they weren't slaves," Vukosavovic said. "Nebuchadnezzar wasn't a brutal ruler in that respect. He knew he needed the Judeans to help revive the struggling Babylonian economy."

The tablets, each inscribed in minute Akkadian script, detail trade in fruits and other commodities, taxes paid, debts owed and credits accumulated.

The exhibition details one Judean family over four generations, starting with

the father, Samak-Yama, his son, grandson and his grandson's five children, all with Biblical Hebrew names, many of them still in use today.

"We even know the details of the inheritance made to the five great-grandchildren," said Vukosavovic. "On the one hand it's boring details, but on the other you learn so much about who these exiled people were and how they lived."

Vukosavovic describes the tablets as completing a 2,500-year puzzle. While many Judeans returned to Jerusalem when the Babylonians allowed it after 539 BC, many others stayed and built up a vibrant Jewish community that lasted two millennia.

"The descendants of those Jews only returned to Israel in the 1950s," he said, a time when many in the diaspora moved from Iraq, Persia, Yemen and North Africa to the newly created state.

### Upcoming Events

**Missions & Evangelism Conference**  
Hillcrest Baptist Church, Yazoo City  
May 1, 2015

**Senior Adult Conferences**  
South - Big Creek Church, Soso  
March 24, 2015  
North - Unity Baptist Church, Guntown  
May 12, 2015

**BMAA Annual Meeting**  
April 20-22, 2015  
Springfield, Missouri

**State Mid-year Meeting**  
Campground Baptist Church, Gulfport  
Blake McCain, speaker

**GMA/Galilean Retreat**  
Camp Garaywa, Clinton  
March 20-21, 2015

**Junior Camp**  
Waukaway Springs  
June 1-3, 2015  
Speaker - Dr. John David Smith

## Protecting your church from the Gay Gestapo

by Bryan Fischer

**(OneNewsNow)** Your church may be the next one approached to host a gay wedding and your pastor asked to perform the ceremony. So what can you do to fend off the lawsuits that are certain to follow when you refuse?

Homosexual activists, called the "Gay Gestapo" by lesbian Tammy Bruce, are busily suing or harassing every Christian business owner and wedding vendor they can find. So far they have gone after wedding photographers, bakers, florists, wedding chapel operators, counselors and now even wedding planners.

Lana Rusev, who runs Simply Elegant Wedding Planning in Jacksonville, Florida, turned down a lesbian ceremony because of her deeply held conviction that marriage is exclusively a one-man, one-woman institution.

Rusev's family fled Ukraine 26 years ago just to find freedom from this kind of anti-Christian hatred and oppression.

Welcome to the land of the free, eh?

For taking a stand on biblical principle, she has been blistered, demonized and vilified on her company's Facebook page, and her business has been added to the LGBT no-go-zone directory.

Mean-spirited and bigoted members of

what Bill Maher calls the "gay mafia" won't rest until every Christian who supports natural marriage is under virtual house arrest, exiled from polite society and forbidden to engage in commerce

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## World Missions Day on February 22, 2015



Today 1,000 BMA Missionary families are faithfully proclaiming God's Word in 76 countries around the world. In 2015 BMA Missions plans to enter the countries of Estonia, Bangladesh, Singapore and Japan. Pray for World Missions Day

on February 22, 2015. Pray that God's people will share their prayers and resources so that we might send more missionaries to the nations to Declare His Glory!



**Larry Geraldson**  
Director



# Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi

Department of Missions and Revolving Loan Fund





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*"I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people; and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great above the heavens; and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds."* Ps 108:3-4

What an amazing God we serve! This past month has been packed full of events and activity that have made my cup overflow and have caused me to break out in praises unto my God.

I began the month with the Joshua Conference hosted by Campground Baptist Church in Gulfport, and ended it with the Pastor's Conference at Lake Tiak O'Khata. Both events were saturated with good preaching/teaching and testifying, as well as, fellowship among the brethren. In addition to attending a number of the local association meetings throughout the month, we hosted our annual gathering of State missionaries, in Laurel, and participated in scholarship awards ceremonies for the Arnold Knight Scholarship. I also had the privilege of participating in a Special Note Burning Service at Big Creek in Soso.

Since then, I've had the opportunity to visit with Missionary Bobby Elliott and the fine folks at Freedom Baptist Mission and preach in both Sunday services. Later, I had the opportunity to preach at Way, Truth & Life in

Ripley. Then, that same day, I preached at First Baptist Mantachie and at Way, Truth & Life in Tupelo. It has been a wonderful month. Let me share with you some of the things that have me praising God.

### South Forrest Baptist Mission

The construction of their new building continues to progress. These folks remind me of Nehemiah because they are carrying a hammer in one hand and



Baptistry in place at South Forrest

a Bible in the other. They have not slacked off a bit in their commitment to disciple and all of their ministry activities continue in force while the building is going up. They have two awaiting baptism.

### Day Star Baptist Mission

Bro. Phillip Burns recently experienced a record attendance with 31 in Sunday morning service. He continues to do evangelism each week and God is



New Additions at Day Star - Above Mrs. Beverly Shoemake. Below Bro. Ron Hamilton



adding to the church. He recently received two new additions.

### Grace Baptist Mission

We have good news and bad news from the mission in Clinton. The bad news is that the deal we were working on, to acquire a piece of land on Pinehaven



Building to be leased for Grace, Clinton

Drive has fallen through. We pulled the plug after our Geo-Technical survey



Ed & Lola Waddell-New Members at Grace Baptist in Clinton

revealed that the ground problems, isolated to this site, were too much for us to overcome. The good news is that we have found another site that may work for us and it is only a few miles away. In



John & Mary Beth Pearce and Jonas and Coralyn - New Members at Grace Baptist Mission in Clinton

the meantime, we have located a new facility for the Mission to rent until we get their building built. This facility will be available for them to use 24/7 giving them the much needed opportunity to enlarge their ministry footprint in Clinton. Grace also had two families join this past month.

## Arnold & Hazel Knight Memorial Missionary Cottage

The property owned by the Missions Department for quite some time, formerly known as the "Mize" property has been renovated and is now available for use. We have renamed the property the "Arnold & Hazel Knight Memorial Missionary Cottage." This property was in gross disrepair and had become unusable but we were still paying annual taxes of nearly \$3,000.00 per year. By placing it in service we were able to file for tax exemption and will save this money annually. The house is a three bedroom house with two baths. It is better equipped to accommodate visiting missionaries and evangelists, who stay for an extended time, than the apartments. If you need the Cottage please contact MS Kim at the Missions Office for details on how to reserve it.



Mrs. Hazel Knight was ask to tour the newly renovated "Arnold Knight Memorial Missionary Cottage"

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## MORAL ACTION

Baptist Missionary Association of America

Dr. John M. Adams, Director

P.O. Box 305, Mantachie, MS 38855 - 662-231-3863

On The Web at [www.macbma.net/](http://www.macbma.net/)

Email - [fbcdjmaj@yahoo.com](mailto:fbcdjmaj@yahoo.com)



John Adams

### Moral Action Booth in Springfield, Missouri

I would like to encourage all pastors, messengers, and church laity to visit the Moral Action Booth at the National Associational meeting, April 20-22, 2015, Springfield, Missouri. There will be plenty of materials available for you. Included will be pens, note pads, videos, and promotional literatures. Please stop by and visit. Remember, we represent you in this ministry

### “God and Country Rallies”

I have had the honor to participate in fourteen “God and Country” rallies across

the BMA. Feel free to contact me if your churches are interested in scheduling an area wide or associational event. These are one-night patriotic events. Plans are being made at this time in 2015 for rallies in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi.

### Moral Action Freedom Offerings

Please make plans to give financial gifts to this department for the July 4th Freedom Celebration. Since July 4th will be on a Saturday this year, we are suggesting that you consider giving your offerings on June 28 or July 5. We need your gift, whether large or small.

## DiscipleGuide

Scott Attebery, Executive Director

Email: [scott@discipleguide.org](mailto:scott@discipleguide.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/scott.attebery](https://www.facebook.com/scott.attebery)

Twitter: @scottattebery



Scott Attebery

## Stop Raising Mules

I'm not a country boy. There, I admitted it.

However, I do live in Arkansas, which means I get a few “country boy points” by default. For instance, I know that horses reproduce horses. I also know that donkeys reproduce donkeys. And, for bonus points, I know that a horse and a donkey together produce mules.

Mules are very patient, intelligent, and sure-footed. However, mules have a problem: they are sterile creatures. That means that every time you want to add a mule to your pack of mules, you have to mate a horse and donkey. That takes extra work on your part. However, if you own horses, they naturally reproduce on their own. To put it another way, you add mules to your pack by manual addition. Every new mule requires you to start from scratch.

However, you can add horses to your team by automatic multiplication. New horses can grow a family without necessarily needing a human matchmaker.

Today, the choice between a horse and mule may not seem like a big deal. They both can pull heavy loads and contribute to farm life.

But when it comes to long range planning, the differences between horses and mules are drastic. In ten years, you could own dozens of horses by investing in a relative few. On the other hand, to

have the same amount of mules would cost a much greater investment.

The choice is between addition and multiplication.

The same is true when it comes to the Great Commission of the church. Simply put, Christ did not call for the simple addition of believers. Rather, He calls us to exponential multiplication of disciples. That's the only way we will ever see disciples made of all nations.

Unfortunately, many churches still choose to work by addition. For many it is easier and takes less time and patience. For others it is the only method they have ever known. Admittedly, addition may look like a more fruitful approach today. And evangelism without discipleship may be a quick, easy way to fill seats right now. But what happens when these people (without a strong foundation of discipleship) leave the church? And what happens when the ones who stay for the long run never evangelize or disciple others because they've never been trained? The addition-based approach, like breeding mules, causes a church to continuously go back to “square one” and never is able to build a strong community of discipleship.

I know what you may be thinking. We all know people who have made disciples within a church of “addition-

### Moral Action on the Web

Visit our site at [www.macbma.net](http://www.macbma.net). You will find much information related to this ministry. Some of the topics included are our purpose, current trustees, and morality action alerts. You may visit the Moral Action archives for past and present articles of interest. There are links to the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives and the Supreme Court. You will find access to Focus on the Family, American Family Association and the Family Research Council. Contacts are also listed for myself and this ministry whether by email, telephone, or written communication. We would be honored to hear from each of you.

### National Day of Prayer (NDOP)

The National Day of prayer is fast approaching. The date is May 7, 2015. It is time for your church to select a leader/director who will lead out in the prayer efforts. We desperately need

intercessory prayer for our nation and its leaders. Suggested places of prayers are church auditoriums, flag poles, local courthouses, or town/city halls. It is vital that our BMA family actively participate in this yearly national event. If you need more info: go to [www.NDOP.org](http://www.NDOP.org) or use a computer search engine for National Day of Prayer. You may also telephone: 1-719-559-9560 for information.

### Recommended Readings

by Dr. Adams:

1. Personal Faith, Public Policy by Harry Jackson, Tony Perkins Front Line Publishers \$21.00
2. Saving Freedom by former Senator Jim DeMint Fidelis Books \$26.00
3. Indivisible by Jay Richards and J Robison Faith Words \$22.00
4. 41 – A Portrait of My Father George W. Bush Crown Publishers \$28.00
5. Unveiling Islam by Ergun Caner Kregel Publishers \$21.00

“minded” ministry. I totally agree. Just like Jesus said in Matthew 3:9, God can raise up sons of Abraham from stones; however, it isn't a frequent occurrence.

To be honest (Google it if you don't believe me) in a few rare cases, mules have actually reproduced. But it has only happened sixty times in the past 475 years, not exactly the odds upon which you want to build a multiplication strategy.

That's why intentional discipleship is key to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It may not always draw the biggest crowds at the beginning, but by investing in a few now, you are much more likely to reach masses in the future.

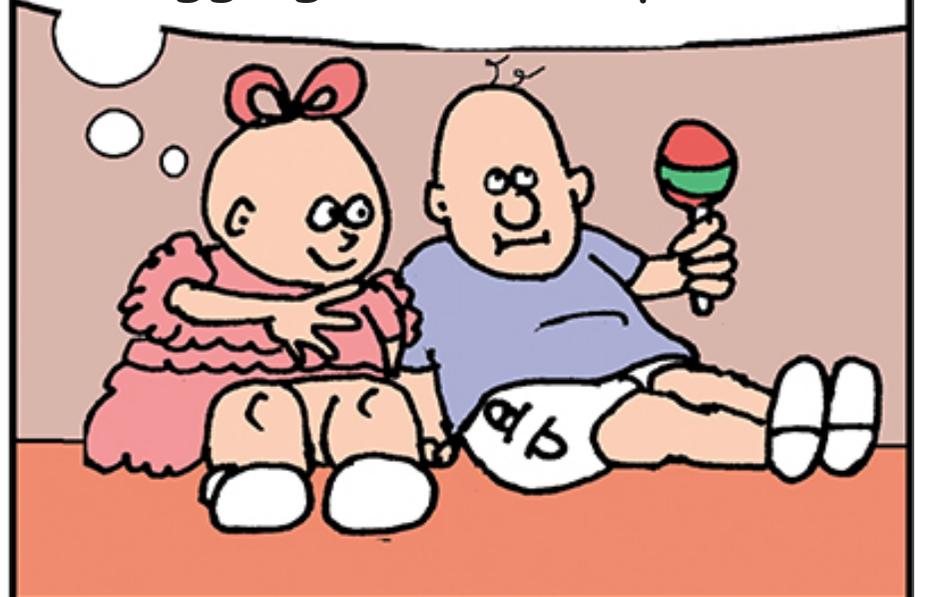
Questions to help determine whether your ministry is addition-based or multiplication-based include the following:

- Are you raising sterile Christians? (i.e. Do your members make disciples who make disciples?)
- Who are considered the ministers at your church? The staff only, or maturing “lay people” growing in discipleship?
- Is real life-investment taking place in people's lives after conversion?
- Are you seeing transformational change throughout the lifespan of believers?

Are you geehawing with that? (It's a country thing; look it up!)

### Church of the Covered Dish BY THOMAS TAPP

You must be the pastor's kid...you're already hogging the microphone!



**Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi**  
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**DEPARTMENTS & COMMISSIONS**

**Mississippi Baptist Paper**  
P.O. Box 8181, Laurel, MS 39441  
601-426-3293

**Southeastern Baptist College**  
4229 Highway 15 North  
Laurel, MS 39440  
601-426-6346

**State Youth Department**  
4226 Highway 15 North  
Laurel, MS 39440  
662-397-6832

**Baptist Children's Home**  
118 Lowe Rd., Laurel, MS 39443  
601-426-3928

**Missions & Revolving Loan Fund**  
4226 Highway 15 North  
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4226 Highway 15 North  
Laurel, MS 39440

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4229 Highway 15 North  
Laurel, MS 39440  
601-729-8098

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P.O. Box 88, Mantachie, MS 38855



Don Brown

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*Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi*

Don Brown - Editor

**What is Your Ministry?**

Recently I had a conversation with an individual who brought up the subject of "personal ministry". I think his point was that not enough saved, baptized, church members are involved in a personal ministry. You know, that thing that God has put on your heart or in your path that He expects you to be personally involved in.

Sad to say that the majority of modern day church members seem to think that their attendance, giving and participation in worship services, Bible study, etc., is their "personal service".

I don't think that is what our Father in Heaven expects and it is definitely not what the conversation with this individual was about. Now the person I was speaking to does have personal ministries that he is involved with. His concern is that not enough people are looking 'outside' their immediate sphere of church life and getting involved in serving and

ministering to others.

Time is a most important possession that God has given us. We should use it wisely. The Apostle Paul gives us some instructions concerning this matter in the book of Ephesians. In verses 11 & 12 of chapter 4 he lists some of the graces given to men and then the purpose of those. My interpretation is that the clergy's main job is to instruct and lead the laity to accomplish the goals set before us. The scripture says it best - *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

*...the perfecting  
of the saints,  
for the work  
of the ministry,  
for the edifying  
of the body  
of Christ:*

That "work of the ministry" section just seems to jump up and say that each of us should be actively and personally involved in ministry.

What is your ministry?

**Protecting your church**

from page 1

of any kind.

Your church may be next. Do not think for one minute that the First Amendment all by itself will guarantee your church's protection from rabid gay activists and their minions in the court system. The courts have already shredded the First Amendment virtually beyond recognition, and as far as protecting your church's religious liberty, it may be hardly worth the parchment it's printed on.

A church in Lakewood, Colorado, is under fire from the gay lobby for canceling a funeral for a lesbian when her family insisted on including in the service pictures of her kissing her lesbian lover. The family is considering a lawsuit against the church, and given the predilection of the courts and its "Gay Rights Uber Alles" mindset, we can expect such a lawsuit to find a sympathetic ear.

What can your church do to make its stance abundantly clear and head off possible lawsuits at the same time? The elders of my church have formally recommended to our church family an

amendment to the Constitution and bylaws that spell out in no uncertain terms the church's stance on homosexuality and gay marriage. (The elders have wisely provided church members with a 30-day comment period before the statement becomes official.)

In part, the intention here is to anticipate the possibility that the church will be approached to host a gay wedding and its pastor asked to perform a same-sex ceremony.

Here's how the addition reads:

*Proposed Change for Statement of Faith*

We believe that the term 'marriage' has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornica-

tion, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity.

Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-32; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9

To be forewarned is to be forearmed. It might be wise for every church in America to formally adopt this statement or one like it to prepare with prudence and foresight for a litigiously uncertain future.

Thomas Jefferson's famous wall of separation, as he articulated it, was designed to protect the church from the

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**Don J. Brown, Editor**

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## Nine Concerns about Church Members Who Withhold Their Financial Gifts

by Thom Rainer

The story is too common, but I hear such stories repeatedly. My most recent conversation was with a church leader where an affluent church member offered to make a large contribution to the renovation of the worship center. He had one stipulation: the worship center had to be named in memory of his late mother. The leader politely declined. The affluent member did not make the donation. To the contrary, he began withholding all of his gifts to the church.

## Philippine Missionaries on Furlough

Doug and Diane Lee have been serving as your BMA missionaries in the Philippines for the past three years. While they are home they are seeking



churches interested in partnering with their work in the Philippines. For the months of April, May & June, the Lee's are taking appointments to share their unique music ministry with your church or local association. To schedule them you may call 601-427-0128 or email them at [doug@musicservicesinc.com](mailto:doug@musicservicesinc.com).

## Protecting your church

from page 4

intrusion and interference of the state (not, you will note, to protect the state from the influence of the church). Jefferson's wall, erected by the Constitution itself, was intended to prevent the very thing we are witnessing: the state breaking down that protective barrier and barging into the affairs of Christians, Christian business owners and churches and telling them what they must believe and do.

It's time to rebuild Jefferson's wall, and this statement just might be the place to start.

Almost every pastor and church leader has some story about members withholding their financial gifts as an act of protest about the direction of the church and its leadership. I have never known such a situation that had any positive affect. Such is the reason I offer nine concerns about this practice.

1. It assumes that we are the actual owners of our finances. That is unbiblical thinking. God gives to us everything we have. We are the stewards of these gifts. Such is the reason we use the word "stewardship."

2. No church is perfect. If every member protested about an imperfection in a local congregation, no church would ever receive funds. This selfish act is not the way to resolve concerns.

3. This practice is divisive. One of the most precious resources of any congregation is unity. The withholding of financial gifts is an act of disunity and divisiveness.

4. It is controlling. The church member who withholds financial gifts seeks to get his or her way. Such is not the spirit of Paul's words in Philippians 2:3: "Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves."

5. It is self-serving. When Paul penned 1 Corinthians 12, he emphasized how we are to function in the body of Christ. Our motive for serving is for Christ and others before ourselves.

6. It is demoralizing. Paul wrote in Romans 14:19, "So we must pursue what promotes peace and builds up one another." This practice has the opposite effect.

### AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE

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

#### Kenny Mitchell

Bro. Kenny Mitchell is available for service. He has pastored three churches in Mississippi and one in Louisiana. He surrendered to the ministry in June of 1993 and was ordained to pastor Spencer Memorial Baptist Church in Pascagoula, by First Baptist Church of Henleyfield. Bro. Kenny and his wife Robin have been married for 38 years and have two children and 7 grandchildren. He is enrolled in the Slidell Baptist Theological Seminary in Slidell, Louisiana. He can be reached at 601-798-7273 or by cell phone at 601-347-6980.

## Southeastern Baptist College

Danny Pitts - Interim President

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



Danny Pitts

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

#### Change From Their Pockets

Annually, Big Creek Baptist Church of Soso receives a special offering in January. They call it Change for a Chance. Everyone is encouraged to save their change to contribute on Sundays. The kids who serve as ushers carry containers around to receive the coins. Of course, folding money is received as well. Pastor Justin Rhodes chose Southeastern Baptist College as this year's project, and \$705.40 was received. Thanks so much for the extra donation by a church which is already a good supporter of the college with their monthly giving. I hope others imitate this idea.

#### Memorial Offerings

Last month we mentioned some offerings in memory of Winnie McMahan. Since then, additional ones have been received from John and Jewel Riles as well as one from Louise and James McMahan, Sr.

Also another contribution to the Cochran Scholarship by his daughter

was given in December. This gave \$2,000 during the year to help with scholarships to ministers. Preston Cochran was President of Southeastern Baptist College twice. He was respected as a denominational leader, pastor, and scholar. His work lives on in many ways.

#### Personal

Some of you know that my brother, Ricky Pitts, died unexpectedly on Monday, February 2nd. I appreciate all the expressions of comfort and prayers for me and the family. "His grace is sufficient."

#### Prospects Needed

We are developing a list of prospects for the Fall Semester. If you know of those who will graduate from high school this year or others who would be interested in Southeastern, please send their names, phone numbers, and email addresses to [Interimpres@gmail.com](mailto:Interimpres@gmail.com).

Pray for all the students, teachers and staff at Southeastern.

7. It backs church leaders into a corner. Leaders have one of two options. They can yield to the church member and thus affirm a sinful practice. Or they can refuse to yield and continue the conflict that was started by the member. It is a lose-lose situation.

8. If the church member truly has serious disagreements with the direction of the church, he or she should pursue other paths. They can address their concerns with leaders in the church directly. If members still have serious concerns and no resolution seems possible, it may be best to go to another church. It is much healthier to give to another church than to withhold from your present church.

9. This practice never has a positive

outcome. Even if the member gets his or her way, unity and trust are broken at many levels. The body of Christ is always wounded by this practice.

#### Editor's Note:

I know of a couple who were at odds with their church. They did not stop giving, but they designated all of their gifts to the church's 'building fund'. The church had no plans to build or remodel so they thought their gifts would not be used against their wishes. As time passed the needs of an addition to and remodeling of the church facilities became evident. Although this couple was against this action, their gifts to the church helped finance the project.

I think the lesson here is that you cannot out give or withhold from God what is His.

## Cherry Hired as VP of Finance at Central Baptist College

(Conway, Arkansas) Mr. Paul Cherry has been hired and will begin duties as the



Paul Cherry

Vice President for Finance at Central Baptist College on February 18, 2015. The Vice President for Finance provides strategic leadership and oversight of the college's finance and accounting functions, business services and auxiliary enterprises, human resources, and physical plant operations.

Cherry previously worked at First National Bank in Hot Springs, Arkansas, for 22 years serving as CEO, CFO, and Legal Counsel. Cherry has also been employed by Lovett and Foster, Certified Public Accountants for three years and the Arkansas Attorney General's Office and Division of Legislative Audit for 15 years.

# Roadblocks and Obstacles

by Travis Plumlee

We all have them. Sometimes they are huge problems. Sometimes they are situations that present themselves to us that we must solve and work out. It could be what seems like insurmountable financial mountains. It might be a roadblock to enjoying life because of some health issue. There could be a family problem that just overwhelms us. It is like running into a brick wall. Obstacles and hurdles to jump over. Mountains and walls to climb. In this ole broken world, on earth all humans will have to face these from time to time. Some folks seem to move from one obstacle to the next. As Christians we know we have the power of God to see us through this. Yet, it is during these times that we truly see that none of us have the faith the size of a mustard seed.

We know God's promises. We have read them in the Bible so that our brain has learned these truths. But when you are overwhelmed by all you have to do in a certain time period in your life; we fail to live out the truths. We resort to worry. Mountains and roadblocks in life can also lead to a host of other feelings such as: frustration, stress, anxiety, depression, anger, or even bitterness. It may just be the inability to move ahead. We can get so overwhelmed by what lies before us, that we just sit there frozen and immobilized. The task before us seems daunting. I



can't do this. I don't have the time, the know-how, the energy or the money to do this.

Where you see roadblocks and mountains, I see a plan. God has a plan for every single human. Amazing isn't it! He has had this plan for you since before you had one day on earth. Psalm 139:16. Sin and humanity broke the world. That is why we have problems. Yet, God still has a plan for you. He always loves you when you are in Christ. Romans 8:38, 39. He will see you through this. He will deliver you. He is your helper and strength. Hebrews 13:5, 6.

This is not impossible with God. Philippians 4:13. This mountain you face is not insurmountable with God. He can handle it. He can take you over the mountain, remove it or blast right through it. Our Savior can move the mountains. He can remove that mountain of doubt, worry, family problems, health or financial issues. He can remove a mountain of stress so that you can get all that work done that has to be done, but right now is overwhelming you. He can not only remove it, but He can give you peace through it that you don't even know why you have the peace that you do. Philippians 4:7.

Read carefully now. God loves you. You are His child. He wants you to be successful for His glory. These troubles can bring Him glory and that is what we are created. Revelation 4:11. Your faith can be strengthened. You won't get a big faith, because none

of us have faith the size of a mustard seed. But our faith can become more pure - a purer faith to trust God in all things. A faith to let God have something and to leave it at the cross of Jesus. No, none of us like the hurdles of life. But God can use these times to show his love, mercy and devotion to us and that grows our faith. This is a good thing.

When you get to one of these times in your life, it is important to take a little time to assess the situation looking at it through the lens of scripture. I said to take a little time. That does not mean to withdraw into a shell and sit and obsess on something for days on end. I would suggest getting off by yourself for an hour or two, maybe an afternoon of fasting and praying. We all know the first place to start. Matthew 6:33, 34. Seek God first in prayer.

If you need direction in your life or wisdom on what to do, ask God for it and He will give it generously. James 1:5. Don't do what you think is best. Proverbs 3:5, 6. I always find it helpful to seek Godly advice. Proverbs 1:5. Don't ask someone who isn't close to God. Don't ask a friend or co-worker who offers a suggestion from some day time talk show host or ask someone who does not have an active prayer and

continued on page 7

## Women's Missionary Auxiliary

**President - Jessica Hayden**

3208 Hwy 29 North  
Soso, MS 39480  
662-251-0455  
Email: blhaden@gmail.com

**Corresponding Secretary**

Mrs. Shirlene Smith  
730 Hwy 533, Laurel, MS 39443  
601-729-5638



## Oak Grove District WMA

by Betty Kendrick, Reporter

The Oak Grove WMA held their quarterly meeting at Good Hope Baptist Church on January 9. Debbie Patterson of Good Hope Church led in prayer followed by an enjoyable meal of soup and sandwich choices and a table of delicious desserts.

The program included the Columbia Strummers. They played Christian hymns while the audience participated by singing songs along with the music. Different instruments were played such as the dulcimer, psaltery, autoharp, ukulele, guitar and penny whistle. It was noted that the psaltery, dulcimer, and autoharp date back to biblical times.

President, Tina Ross gave a timely devotional about renewing our yearly vows. Secretary, Fredia McNease read the minutes and gave the treasurer's report. It was announced that the E-Women's Conference is April 17-18, 2015 in Pensacola, Florida. Everyone is encouraged to attend. The project of continuing funding two of our missionaries, Alicia Ramshur in the Philippines and Dale Broom in Ghana, Africa will be continued.

Belinda Lee dismissed our meeting with prayer.

The next meeting will be held on Friday, April 3, 2015 at Pine Grove Baptist Church in Purvis.

## Brotherhood Project Needs Time Is Almost Up!

by Pat Spriggs

National Brotherhood Project Promoter

The books will close February 28 on the 2014-15 National Brotherhood Project — 65% Bolivian Riverboat, 25% National Galileans and 10% General Fund. Treasurer Robert Bynum reports that only \$2,320 has been collected for Bolivia's "River of Blessings," \$700 for Galileans and \$814.53 for the General Fund. Another on-going project, the Arthur Smith Scholarship Fund, has received \$1,658.83.

Offerings should be sent as soon as possible to Robert Bynum, 43 Bear Pen Creek Rd., Laurel, MS 39440.

**Come on, Men... we can do this!**

## Oak Grove Association

by Ed Steele, Reporter

The Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Association met with Good Hope Baptist Church in Columbia on Thursday evening, January 15. Bro. Sam Freeman was given time to share his plans on going to the Philippines as a missionary. In addition to church planting, he plans to work in the publishing ministry and the Oak Grove Association pledged \$2,500.00 to the cost of purchasing the printer when he arrives on the field.

Bro. Phillip Burns reported on his work in Sumrall and Bro. Esturado Marroquin gave a report on the Hispanic work in South Mississippi. Bro. Sidney Davis gave a report on the Mississippi Baptist Children's Home and brought the message. A bountiful meal was provided by Good Hope following the service.

The next meeting will be with Magnolia Baptist Church in Hattiesburg on March 12.

## GMA Girls

**State Youth Auxiliary Director**

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

**State GMA Promoter**

Becky Farmer  
464 Churchwell Road  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
601-596-1005  
becky@southforrest.org



## GMA Coronation at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Tupelo

Miss Analyse Kent was presented as a Maiden candidate. After much hard work, Analyse completed



her steps to become a Maiden. A devotion was given about Esther, preparing for the King. We are so proud of her and how much she loves the Lord.

## Do You Dare Audit Your Church's Communication Strategy?

### 33 Questions to Ask

by Brandon Cox  
Strategic Consultant for Social Media  
Lifeword Media Ministries

Everything your church does is communication, from the condition of the parking lot to the content in your bulletin to the tone of your sermon. Everything you do communicates something about what you really value, regardless of what you say you value.

I'm a church communications nut. I read dozens of blogs on design, branding, social media and marketing. I've designed logos, websites, and print pieces for dozens of churches. So I've perfected the art and science of church communications, right? Actually, in the last week, I received an email from someone who couldn't find a location for our services, another who had a hard time finding out how to get involved, and a third who couldn't find details on a couple of upcoming events. #humbled

But our bulletin does look kind of pretty...

Since the publishing and communication of the gospel is paramount, I've learned the value of doing some punch-

me-in-the-gut audits of our communication strategy. We're constantly tweaking and improving so that we can put our best foot forward and do the best possible job of getting the word out, connecting people to each other, plugging people in, and staying in touch.

To every Lead Pastor I would say, you need to perform an audit of your church's communication strategy to see if all those sermons you're studying so hard for will have maximum reach in your community. Here's a questionnaire, divided by areas of communication.

#### BRANDING

Phil Cooke defines a brand as "the story people tell about a person, product, or organization." Your church has a brand in your community whether you realize it or not. The key to understanding your brand is to find out what story people tell when your church gets brought up in conversation. That's your brand.

What story do we want people to associate with our church? How would we like people to feel when they think about us?

What story do people actually tell about us? And how do we know this?

Does the appearance of our building, landscaping, and outdoor signage communicate the feelings we want people to experience?

Do we have a church logo that communicates the feeling and the story we want people to experience?

Does our website, bulletin, and other printed materials such as brochures, business/invite cards, or postcards uniformly agree with the story we're telling across the board?

#### CHURCH WEBSITE

If you're not found in a Google search for churches in your area, you don't exist to people moving into town. A website is essential, even if it's a free or inexpensively made website. And while not every church can afford the fees charged by professional designers, we still ought to invest in our website with both energy and resources that honor the importance of this crucial area of communication.

Is our website responsive and mobile-friendly?

Is our most basic information easy to find on our main homepage (location, service times, etc.)?



Brandon Cox

## MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME

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



SIDNEY DAVIS

#### The Lord Is Still At Work

When God wants to do something special in the world He sometimes does it in a unique way. He usually sends a baby. When God wanted to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, what did God do? He sent a crying little baby, Moses. And that little baby's tears broke the heart of a princess and God used Moses to deliver the people of Israel. When God wanted to save lost sinners in this world, He sent a baby, the Lord Jesus Christ. "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.

When I look at a child, I often wonder, "What is this child going to become?" They said the same thing about John the Baptist when he was a baby. "What manner of child shall this be!" Luke 1:66. He is going to give his life for the ministry of the Word of God. What a blessing it was for John the Baptist to have been reared in a godly home, where they served the Lord in reverence and were good examples as they trained their child in the ways of the Lord. Parents, bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:5. It is the work of the Lord!

#### Oak Grove and Ten Mile Rallies

It was good to be with the Oak Grove

Do we use imagery that tells people that we're human, we're alive, and we're welcoming?

Are event listings available and up-to-date?

Can people easily know what we believe? what we value? and how we function?

Do we have links to our Facebook page and other social profiles on our website?

Is there a way for people to reach out and get in touch with us without leaving our website?

Can people easily know how to pursue next steps such as baptism, joining a small group, or volunteering in an area of ministry?

Do we have a page dedicated to our staff and/or key leaders so that potential visitors can know who we are?

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a weird phrase. Media is just information, and "social" simply refers to how information spreads - from person to person, socially. When we use the phrase "social media" we're gener-

Baptist Association, which met with the Good Hope Baptist Church near Columbia, for their annual rally for the Home on January 15. Also, it was a joy to be with the Ten Mile Baptist Association on February 2 for their annual rally for the Home, which met with the Bethel Baptist Church near Wiggins.

We would like to express our thanks to each church and individual who gave to these rallies.

#### Students Recognized on Awards Day

In January several of our students received awards and certificates on their



Two of our students who were recognized on Awards Day



school work for the first half or semester of this school year. We are rejoicing with them on the progress they are making in their studies.

#### Remember in Prayer and Focus Verse

Continue to remember the ministry of the Home in your daily prayers. "And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him." Luke 1:66

## Roadblocks

from page 6

church life. Seek Godly counsel. This helps you get out of the funk. It helps you with other possible ideas. Often times it can result in other people being enlisted to help you in your struggles.

One of the worst things to do when you face hurdles and roadblocks is to just sit. You are frozen in fear and spend all your time complaining how you don't have time to do something instead of moving ahead with what you can do. Don't eat the whole cow at once. Start small. Eat one bite at a time. Take on small chunks of the issue and have a gradual and steady accomplishment. Rome was not built in a day and God is not always a microwave of miracles. Sometimes He chooses to go slow to build something in us He desires. Come on now. Don't give up. God has never left your side. He never will. He will see you through this. It is not a mountain that can't be conquered. It is part of a plan that is coming together for God's glory!

### Family Ark Ministries

Dr. Travis Plumlee is a full-time professional speaker and leads Family Ark Ministries. For more information or to contact him, visit [www.travisplumlee.com](http://www.travisplumlee.com).



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## Your Church's Communication Strategy

from page 7

ally referring to the websites or web-based platforms used for social networking. While a previous generation got to know social media as an optional activity, an up-and-coming generation sees social media the way we see oxygen - it's just part of the air people are breathing.

Do we have a main church Facebook page?

Do the header and profile images represent us well? Are they consistent with the branding on our website and print pieces?

Are we a location that people can check into when they visit on Sunday?

Is our address, phone number, and website address displayed in the 'about' area?

Are we posting regularly? At least weekly if not several times per week?

Are we posting a variety of content such as pictures, text, and links?

Are we offering more than just announcements? Are we also telling stories, giving valuable content, and extending the preaching of our church in a positive way?

Do we engage our fans and followers by responding to comments?

Are our key leaders using social media? Are they on Facebook and Twitter? And do they promote the ministry of the church through those platforms?

### PRINT DESIGN

Many experts claim that "print is dying" but most people walking through the doors of a church building on Sun-

day still expect some kind of bulletin to know what's going on.

Does our bulletin look nice and clean? Does it match the look of our website and other communication mediums?

Have we put guests first, using bulletin space to explain what to expect during their visit?

Have we made it clear what announcements are really the most important?

Do we use valuable space to communicate church-wide what could be communicated via a different means to only a few people?

Have we offered clear "next steps" such as were to go online to get more information, how to sign up for events, and who to talk to about knowing Jesus, baptism, or church membership?

Are we using readable typefaces?

### COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

A lot of work goes into planning spe-

cial events and ministries. It's a shame for that work to go to waste when the right people don't know about the event or service we're working toward. Systems are imperative if we're going to communicate effectively.

Do we have a process to follow when an event is planned?

Do we have a calendar that can be seen and shared by all leaders to avoid scheduling conflicts?

Do we have a checklist to glance at to be sure we've communicated events using every necessary means?

Have we made it clear that only major, church-wide announcements need to be communicated from the stage or pulpit?

Do we have any kind of content calendar or plan for what updates get posted on our website and social profiles and what times they should be posted?

There is more. Much more, in fact. But these 33 questions offer a great starting place for the leadership team of any small to medium-sized church. Knowing where we are and how we're doing is half the battle!

*Cox is also Pastor and Church Planter at Grace Hills Church and Author of Rewired: Using Today's Technology to Share the Gospel.*

## Missions Report

from page 2

### Freedom Baptist Mission

Bro. Elliott has developed a solid group of folks who are participating in every facet of the services and are involved in ministry activity. He continues to develop leaders and has two awaiting baptism.

### Caledonia Baptist Mission

Bro. Bob Burch is running out of space for his Sunday School classes, which is a good problem to have in mission work. He is working to organize ministry and delegate responsibilities to others. He has four waiting for baptism.

### Redemption Baptist Mission

Bro. Wesley Martin has begun his work in Diamondhead. We were able to lease a meeting facility for this new mission of approximately 3500 sq ft.



Building leased for Redemption Church at Diamondhead

This will provide ample space for their initial gatherings with room for growth. He has planned an outreach campaign for February 14 at Diamondhead and hopes to have his first meeting in Diamondhead the first Sunday of March. If you can help with the needs of this new mission project we would encourage you to help. The facility will cost \$1,500.00 per month for rent plus utilities and he will need chairs (est. cost of \$4,000.00), and other equipment and furnishings to get going. If your church

is looking for a mission project to support, or if you can give a onetime gift it would be appreciated.

### Way, Truth & Life (Oxford)

The Hispanic mission that meets at Westview Baptist Church in Oxford, under the leadership of Bro. Erlin Pech, celebrated their one year anniversary



One Year Anniversary Service of Way, Truth & Life meeting at Westview, Oxford.

this past month. Bro. Elvis Garcia joined them for the service and one of the highlights was the baptismal service. They baptized two on that day.

### Way, Truth & Life (Tupelo)

Enjoyed visiting with and speaking to the Hispanic Mission that meets in



Bro. Elvis Garcia baptizing in Tupelo

the fellowship hall of South Green Baptist Church in Tupelo. Bro. Humberto Navarro is doing a great job leading this Mission. They baptized two in the baptistry of South Green on February 8.

### El Camino, Laurel

Bro. Marroquin continues to develop the church which averages over 100 in attendance each week. He and some of the folks from El Camino in Laurel travel to Hattiesburg and Biloxi routinely to help Bro. Rivera and Bro. Galicia with the church planting efforts. He reports that the Bible Institute training continues to be a strong source of discipleship training for his people. El Camino has two awaiting baptism.

### Evangelism Explosion Training

Every year, we sponsor professional development for our missionaries and we encourage our churches to participate. This year we will be sponsoring Evangelism Explosion Training which will be conducted by the BMAA Theological Seminary. The field work will be done on site in Clinton, Mississippi, with the intent of helping Grace Baptist Mission. We are hoping that a number of folks will take advantage of this opportunity and join us on March 5-7. The training will finish by noon on the 7th. If you would like more information about how to sign-up, please call MS Kim Parker at 601-428-8616.

### Missions and Evangelism Conference (May 1, 2015)

This year's Missions and Evangelism Conference will be hosted by Hillcrest Baptist Church in Yazoo City. The event will begin at 10:30am and will be done at 4:30pm. We are coordinating with different churches in each of our local associations to provide church van/bus transportation. So far, we have commitments from: North Gauthier, Gulf Assoc.; Paramount & Campground, Ten Mile Assoc.; Midway, Washington Assoc.; Big Creek, Big Creek Assoc.; First Midway, Oak Grove Assoc.; East Fulton, Tombigbee Assoc. Our hope is that people will carpool and enjoy the fellowship to and from the meeting.

## Time to Order Spring Literature!

DiscipleGuide has now begun taking Spring literature orders. Ordering early ensures that your literature will arrive in plenty of time for the upcoming quarter.

DiscipleGuide offers a full line of literature including Compass for adults, SOAR:lit for youth, and DiscipleKids for children. Other books, studies, and auxiliary materials are available as well. To order or to learn more about DiscipleGuide products, go to [discipleguide.org](http://discipleguide.org) or call 1-800-333-1442.

Reports for Jan 2014			
	High Attendance	Membership	Total Offerings
<b>Church Planters</b>			
Bob Burch	69	33	\$2,900.00
Bobby Elliott	49	47	\$2,293.00
Sidney Farmer	50	30	\$4,409.00
Danny Bartlett	14	10	\$2,608.00
Phillip Burns	31	8	\$1,493.00
Wesley Martin	n/a	3	\$300.00
<b>Hispanic Missions - South (Estuardo Marroquin - Coordinator)</b>			
Hattiesburg	26	11	\$930.00
Biloxi	6	2	n/a
Laurel	122	107	\$4,323.00
<b>Hispanic Missions - North (Elvis Garcia - Coordinator)</b>			
Tupelo	22	17	\$506.00
Oxford	95	5	\$808.00
Ripley	89	77	\$4,596.00
<b>African American Missions - (Ed DuVall - Coordinator)</b>			
Olive Branch	15	13	\$1,600.00
Cleveland	22	50	\$2,813.00
Collectively, our missionaries reported 212 new contacts, shared the gospel 141 times, and had 15 professions of faiths 2 baptisms and 5 join by letter.			