

# Baptist

## Mississippi

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## 500 ChangeMakers. 90 miles a day. One purpose.

By Holly Meriweather

Beginning in Bilbao, Spain, the Tour de France will take place this summer amid stunning views that include the Pyrenees mountains and the Alps. In 23 days, these first-class athletes will wind their way through the French countryside one hundred miles a day to the bikers' final goal: the Champs-Élysées and its victory laps. At the end, one man will hoist a trophy and be declared champion of the most famous bike ride in the world at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

It's estimated that twelve to fifteen million people will line the route to cheer them on.

On May 5th of this year, BMA Global President Dr. John David Smith began the first of five ninety-mile legs of a 444-mile bike ride beginning in his home state of Mississippi where the Natchez Trace Trail begins. At the end of the ride, he crossed the finish line to receive fist bumps from BMA Global VP John Meriweather and Lifeword Director of Digital Strategy Jon Dodson, who chronicled the sometimes-painful journey he had trained for.

There's no way Dr. Smith could have guessed that so many people would follow his journey that ended without ceremony in Nashville, Tennessee.

John Meriweather said, "Before the ride, we knew we wanted to create a mini-documentary, posting at checkpoints along the way and stopping at milestone markers. As we were loading up the van in the morning we noticed people engaging, and there were already 200 likes by the time we got to the hotel that night before the first leg. We could tell that people were engaging, then they began asking questions about his nutrition, the weather, their exact location, so we began taking questions and answering them to make it an interactive experience. People told us they were waiting on those posts.

"In every single video John David gave attention to the ride's purpose: raising funds for ChangeMakers around the world who work tirelessly for God's mission. It was his main message even though the physical challenge was what they were curious about. We intended to tell the story but weren't sure how people would react. The hundreds of interactions clarified what we needed to do: Bring people on the journey and let them follow along. Honestly,

John David would have done the ride even if no one was following."

According to Jon Dodson, "During the week of Changemaker Challenge, the videos, pictures and posts created a large amount of interest and engagement online for BMA Global.

The BMA Global web site realized a 502% increase in traffic with 3,407 visits. BMA Global's Facebook page reached 382,000 Facebook accounts (5900% increase in reach). There were 39,400 minutes of Changemaker Challenge videos posted on the BMA Global Facebook during the week of the ride, with 32,125 engagements on the BMA Global Facebook page during the ride."

As far as the funds raised, donations continue to come in, and there have been promises of matching funds and other commitments. On-line giving continues at <https://app.securegive.com/BMAMissions/main/donate/category>

Middle East Coordinator Charlie Costa says, "Recently we saw leadership at its finest from the president of BMA Global. It was not leading from behind or by proxy but from the front and by design. Weeks of preparations went into the lengthy bike ride Dr. John David Smith took along the Natchez Trail to raise funds and awareness for our work.

"I wonder how many will respond to such faithfulness and commitment. Never in the history of the BMA have we seen such selflessness. What I love about it is that the funds raised will go to an endowment that will fund church planters (ChangeMakers) for years to come. That's forward-thinking leadership. That's a leader I want to take our churches and pastors to."

Small but mighty. That's our association. ChangeMaker Challenge did not have millions of excited, fanatic people encouraging their favorite riders along the route. There was no fame or fortune for the winner. No declaration of victory over the other riders. Just one man's obedience to the cause of Christ.

What an honor for all of us to be part of a "family" that desires to give God the glory through both prayer and financial support.

More ChangeMakers Inside



# Mississippi Baptist

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Don Brown  
Editor

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## 2023 Christmas Shoebox Information

The Churches of Ukraine express sincere thanks for the gift boxes you sent for the children. They were delighted and had a wonderful evangelistic program with the gifts. The children are all from disadvantaged and low-income families. Classes are held for them each week at the church, but this time, thanks to the unexpected

gifts, they were very excited and many came to the church. We are also planning to take the boxes to children orphaned in the war in different parts of Ukraine. This is a great blessing and encouragement to us all during this difficult wartime. God bless you for thinking of us.

Pavlo Myronyuk,  
BMA Changemaker

## Friends, we need your help!

Your church is invited to partner with us to provide Everlasting Smile Christmas Shoeboxes to 3 locations.

by Angela Rice  
angela@bmamissions.org  
501-455-4977

This year, God has opened the door for us to send shoeboxes to Cape Verde and Honduras. After making that decision, I began to get stories of how our shoeboxes were a great tool to help our missionaries meet and build relationships with people from Ukraine. The Lord began dealing with me to add a 3rd container and send supplies again to Ukraine. I gave many excuses at first, but finally, we are stepping out on faith to provide shoeboxes to 3 countries.



This year more than ever, we are excited to send our Christmas Shoeboxes to 3 locations. But we need your help in doing that. We need to fill 4,000 more boxes than we did last year to reach this goal. Please consider stepping out on faith with me and set a faith sized goal for your church. I know that together, we can do this.

Everlasting Smiles Shoeboxes are packed with LOTS of love and many prayers are prayed over them. But the most important thing that we can give any child is the opportunity to know Jesus. Our prayer is that through the ministry of Everlasting Smiles, we will open doors for our missionaries to tell families about Jesus and that the Bible inside each box will bring them closer to Him.

Donations: Want to make a donation for us to pack boxes for you? We can do that! The cost of each box is \$25. This includes the box, wrapping, gifts, Bible, and shipping costs. You can send your donation to Everlasting Smiles, P.O. Box 878, Conway, AR 72033.

The smile that a child finds when opening a shoebox is often for a moment, but the love of Jesus that they find through this ministry is the Everlasting Smiles.

## Former Minister's Wife Passes Away

Wanda Sue Johnson Parmer died on May 31, 2023 at the North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo at the age of 79. She was born in of Mooreville, Mississippi, on August 16, 1943 and grew up in the Tupelo area. She married Wexford Parmer in August 1960 and they shared 60 years together, raising a family and serving the Lord until his passing in 2020. She embraced the role of a pastor's wife as she and Bro Wexford served the Lord in Missouri, Arkansas, and Mississippi.



A memorial service was held on June 3, 2023. She was preceded in death by her parents, John and Eulaly Johnson; her brother Kenneth Johnson, and husband of 60 years, Wexford Parmer.

## Church Seeks Pastor

Magnolia Heights Missionary Baptist Church in Forest, Mississippi, is seeking a bivocational pastor, fill in preacher, or interim pastor. For more information contact Jeremy Ezell at 601-900-5700.

## “Is There Any Word From The Lord?”

Jeremiah 37:14-17

by Anders Lee

Mississippi State Youth Director

Message at 2023 Midyear Meeting of BMA of Mississippi

Thank you for the opportunity to preach today. I pray the message is both challenging & encouraging! This is the 75<sup>th</sup> year of Southeastern Baptist College. I was here 6 of those years. Dr. Gerald Kellar, who was the President at the time, is one of my personal heroes and was a great mentor of mine. In 1985, Dr. Kellar preached the annual message at our national meeting in Biloxi. He titled his message “Is There Any Word From The Lord?” from Jeremiah 37. Bro. Kellar would later be a revival speaker at my home church, Lee’s Chapel in Picayune. He preached that same message. I remember how it greatly moved

my heart. I have always wanted to preach from that text. I recently found a copy of that message from the July 24, 1985, edition of the *Baptist Trumpet* with the help of Bro. Don Brown. His message blessed my heart again. It moved me to preach from that text. So, I title this message today; “Is There Any Word From The Lord?” No, I will not be preaching his message, no one can preach like him, certainly not me. Please turn



Anders Lee

to Jeremiah 37 and stand for the reading of God’s Word.

We will be reading vs. 11–17 of Jeremiah 37. “*And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh’s army, Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah (I – Ri- Jah), the son of Shelemiah (Shay-la-miah), the son of Hananiah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans. Then said Jeremiah, it is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans, but he harkened not to him: So, Irijah took Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the House of Jonathan the scribes; for they had made that the prison. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out; and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, there is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.*”

What was true in Jeremiah’s day? I believe the things we find to be true in his day are certainly applicable to us! So, let’s jump in to see principles for ourselves today.

### The Historical Circumstances

In Jer. 37:1 we read that Zedekiah was made king over Judah. How did this transpire? 11.5 years before this occurred was the death of King Josiah. Under King Josiah, who reigned for 31 years in Judah, a great revival occurred. With him as king, they returned to the scriptures, repented of sin, and revered their Sovereign God as He deserved once again! What

See Message on page 9

## Name Change for Ministries

Minister’s Resource Services’ (MRS) board of directors is pleased to announce its official name change to BMA Financial Services, which will do business as BMA Financial. The new organization comprises the merging of two national agencies—MRS and BMA Foundation—and combines existing financial services provided to the Association into one entity. While the Foundation will remain a separate legal entity, it will now be under the auspices and governance of BMA Financial.



This decision, recommended by both the MRS and BMA Foundation boards, was endorsed by the BMA Coordinating Council and approved by the churches at the 2023 national meeting held in April. The new agency, through its strategic partners, offers our churches financial services encompassing retirement and benefit programs for BMA ministers and employees, benevolent services, risk management insurance, payroll services, Foundation investment management, charitable gift annuities, and financial and estate planning assistance. The new name better reflects the array of services offered.

This change also eliminates the need for two executive directors and two separate boards, thus improving overall efficiency and resulting in better stewardship of the church’s resources. The measure should reduce costs while providing economies of scale for the management of the retirement and endowment funds.

“By incorporating these financial services under the BMA Financial umbrella, the organization aims to streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and reduce overhead expenses,” said Dr. Steve Crawley, the newly elected Executive Director of BMA Financial. “This consolidation of resources will allow us to better serve our constituents by doing more with less.”

The branding process of BMA Financial will come in stages. Plan participants will see gradual changes starting with digital materials including a new website. Until the revamping of the site is completed, www.ministersresourceservices.com will serve as the online access point for BMA Financial.

# In His Grip

By Carolyn Hagler

Carolyn Hagler is a retired educator and a member of Westover Baptist Church in Hattiesburg. You may contact her via email at cmhagler@bellsouth.net



## Let Freedom Ring

“I’m free” is the message that resounds, in hearts anyway, for school children, schoolteachers, and bus drivers at the beginning of summer. I still feel a sense of anticipation even though I retired years ago. That freedom is a small part of our freedom as Americans.

Most of us have never known life any other way. Maybe that’s why we have tended to ignore the changes in our country that seemed to start much like a high-level cloud, thin and whispery with no danger. Now those clouds of change are escalating to storm clouds that seem to warn of an impending hurricane.

Back in the day, when life seemed to be much simpler, we young people thought mainly about dating, studying, working, and selecting colleges. No drugs, no babies, no protesting, and—you fill in the rest. We seniors at Jefferson High thought more about raising money for a gift to the school and a senior trip.

I don’t remember what our gift to the school was, but our trip was to Washington, D.C., when patriotism was still a part of the American culture. How different senior trips were back then! Our trip combined fun and education to end our days at our consolidated high school with students from all over the county.

Being well chaperoned by my mother, some other mothers, and our high school coach, all of us had the freedom to do right. I can promise you no unacceptable behavior went on. I still remember the first night when Coach Kirkpatrick stayed up all night because the girls’ and the boys’ rooms were on the same floor. Haven’t times changed?

That same night my mother discovered that she could not open her suitcase. Coach had to break the lock; and for the rest of the trip, Mother’s suitcase was tied with a rope—just imagine the Beverly Hillbillies on a bus trip.

But we got practical lessons on that trip to reinforce our history classes on freedom. We had fun—all 30 of us plus sponsors—but the focus of our trip was educational.

We toured George Washington’s Mount Vernon and Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, along with the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, the Smithsonian, and the tomb of the unknown soldier, to name just a few of the sites we visited. I’ve always been grateful that we were exposed to the greatness of our country at that young age.

Comparing yesteryear with today as we celebrate America’s 247 years of freedom reminds me that we are free because others paid the price. We need to remember the soldiers and those men who paid dearly so that we can celebrate 2023 as a nation founded on the desire for freedom.

We seem to have forgotten the soldiers who have been and still are willing to



lay down their lives fighting for our liberties. This trend of moving, tearing down, or desecrating monuments and statues of those involved in unpopular wars and causes reveals a lack of respect for those we disagree with.

It seemed to start with the unpopularity of the Vietnam War, which quickly led to mistreatment of our returning soldiers. I’ve read about the fanfare and benefits that our World War II veterans received, but I remember how our Vietnam veterans were treated poorly by our citizens and our government. It took nearly 20 years after the end of the war for a shift in attitude. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982 began the process.

The disrespect afforded those who have fought for our country makes me wonder how much we value our freedom. Even the Tomb of the Unknown Revolutionary War Soldier was covered with graffiti in 2020. The inscription on that monument, behind the statue of George Washington, reads, “Freedom is a light for which many men have died in darkness in unmarked graves.”

Our cancel society of today seems to forget the imperfection of all of us including historical leaders like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt. Many people want to erase those parts of history that they don’t agree with or like; Edmund Burke reminded us that “those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it.”

Many of our heroes have been demonized because of their lack of perfection or maybe because many don’t know our history. Yet, Jesus, on the other hand, is ridiculed for

His perfection. Quite the paradox. I like that the Bible reveals the failures of our heroes, like Moses, Elijah, and David. Just think. If we erased those less-than-perfect people in Scripture, who would be left?

It did my heart good, on a recent trip to Houston, to see from Interstate 10 in Lake Charles, Louisiana, a bronze statue of Jesus, standing 23 feet tall over the resting places of Lake Charles’ earliest residents. I’m surprised it hasn’t offended some groups, but it has probably been forgotten.

I also saw the 170-foot cross at Sagemont Church (Sister No. 1’s church) near the intersection of the south Sam Houston Tollway near the Gulf Freeway. Sagemont was certainly criticized by many for the cross.



Carolyn Hagler

As our nation has increased in wealth and progress and knowledge, Jesus and His Church and His Word seem to be mostly forgotten. Some 23 years



ago, Bro. Ed Steele made the point in a sermon that “America is trying to forget God.” At our recent revival services, Bro. Chris Yager described the culture of the day along with the trend away from American Christianity. It seems that Bro. Steele warned us that the storm clouds were coming and Bro. Yager was warning us that they are here.

As Americans, we’ve had freedom since 1776. In my old yearbook, our Superintendent wrote, “We have the responsibility to exercise our freedoms, to cherish and protect them, to seek knowledge, and to act with wisdom.” Maybe, we’ve forgotten.

While our freedom as Americans is special though imperfect, our spiritual freedom as children of God is our greatest liberty. As our physical freedoms are eroding, our spiritual freedoms stand in sharp contrast—freedom found at the foot of the cross.

A special song reminds us:

“Some have walked through fire and flood to find a place of freedom

And some faced hell itself for freedom’s dream...

When my Lord bought freedom with the blood of His redemption

His cross stamped pardon on my very soul...

Let freedom ring down through the ages from a hill called Calvary”

(Let Freedom Ring by Bill and Gloria Gaither).

That’s freedom. In His grip, we are blessed by God to live in a country where we are free to worship and serve Him. We don’t want to lose that; let freedom ring!



## Windham Family Shares Appreciation



The family of Latrelle Windham would like to express their gratitude for the painting that was commissioned in honor of his service to the State Youth Department for 25 years. Thank you to the current Director Anders Lee and the Youth Department trustees for this kind gesture. May the Lord continue to bless the work of their hands.

Latrelle Windham Family  
Linda, Jennifer, & Becky



# SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST COLLEGE

Serving Christ With A Biblical World View In A Christian Atmosphere

4229 Highway 15 North, Laurel, Mississippi 39440 - 601.426.6346

## President's Perspective

On the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Southeastern Baptist College, I invite you to join us in commemorating our college's past, by investing in its bright future.

At the 1947 annual session of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi, the messengers unanimously approved the establishment of a church owned and operated college. The resolution of this committee to begin a junior college with a Bible department was adopted by the association on October 19, 1948.

The first junior college program was offered in 1955. Ten acres of land, located just north of the Laurel city limits on Highway 15, was purchased the same year. The liberal arts junior college was converted to a four-year Bible college in 1974.

The Association for Biblical Higher Education Commission on Accreditation has reaffirmed SBC every decade since first achieving its accreditation in 1979. The most recent review held in 2019, reaffirmed the accreditation standing for ten years extending it to the year 2029.

In our commitment to excellence, we invite you to celebrate with us and contribute to the college as we make plans to honor her legacy. The material and financial needs of the college continue to expand as we renovate older areas of the campus and expand our staffing requirements to meet the academic and spiritual needs of our students. Your support can make a difference through scholarships, grants, and resources to students. You can also help to advance our scholarship fund, which enables us to recruit competitively with other colleges in our area.

Southeastern Baptist College may be a small college, but its 75 year legacy is noteworthy both



Dr. Scott Carson  
President

locally and internationally. SBC is one of only two accredited Bible colleges in the state of Mississippi. Many pastors have chosen to receive a conservative biblical education in our classrooms and they now minister to thousands throughout Mississippi and beyond. Our school has provided business professionals a solid education with a Christian approach to their work ethos and SBC has produced several state representatives and a U.S. Congressman. Many missionaries received their biblical education here and are now dispatched to foreign lands spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As we look to the future, we know God's hand is on SBC. Step by step, the Lord is guiding us forward toward an expanding educational platform with a dedicated Christian vision. As our students successfully complete their educational goals, they take with them a lifelong biblical worldview.

Most recently, the Lord blessed us with the largest graduating class in the history of this institution, with 45 Chargers receiving their respective earned degrees. We are proud of their personal academic achievements as we look forward to this promising new school year.

We hope to see you in October at the annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi being held at Parkview Baptist Church of Laurel, the historic location of the first SBC classes 75 years ago. Please watch for forthcoming anniversary celebration plans. Remember, this is your college! Everyone in the BMA of Mississippi who may be seeking a college education ought to be coming to Southeastern Baptist College!

Whether online or in the classroom, we invite you to join us in your own academic journey here at Southeastern Baptist College and be a part of its grand legacy.

Equipping the Saints,  
Dr. Scott R. Carson

## Fall Semester Registration

The Fall Semester registration is open! You may sign up for classes online at [southeasternbaptist.edu/future-students/application/](https://southeasternbaptist.edu/future-students/application/) or by calling Admissions at 601-426-6346, or stop by our Admissions Office 8:30-3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Classes begin August 14, 2023.

## Now Hiring

We are in search of a qualified women's basketball coach. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please refer them to our website where they can upload their resume': <https://sbcchargers.com/employment-opportunities> or call 601-426-6346.

## Online Bible Degrees

Did you know you can earn your accredited Bible college degree in the comfort of your own home? You can take one class (3 hours) or up to 18 hours completely online each semester. And you need not be living in Mississippi to take classes at Southeastern! You may want to have a discussion with your children or grandchildren today about taking classes with SBC. Qualified students can take classes while still in high school and get a head start in their college studies with our dual enrollment program. We are conservative and Bible centered, and our credits are transferable to other accredited colleges. Go to our website at <https://southeasternbaptist.edu/future-students/application> to begin your college education journey today! Or call SBC at 601-426-6346.

## Available Scholarships

The Arnold Knight Memorial RLF Scholarship is available to Baptist Missionary Association ministers who take classes at Southeastern Baptist College. These funds are administered by the BMA of Mississippi Revolving Loan Fund. Contact our Financial Aid Officer for more information.

## Foundations in Ministry Certificate

SBC has fielded a certificate for new ministers who are interested in gaining knowledge in the basics of theology and church ministries. This is a 23-hour program and the student may take one class or a full load. Numerous ministers throughout Mississippi have already begun their studies and the classes can be completely online. Once the certificate is earned, all credits are transferable toward an Associate or Bachelor degree should the student desire to continue in their education with SBC. Contact our Admissions Officer today! 601-426-6346, or apply online at [www.southeasternbaptist.edu](http://www.southeasternbaptist.edu)

## Memorial Gifts

Thank you to the following additional donors to Southeastern Baptist College in memory of Dr. Melvin Savell:

- Larry and Marilyn Welborn
- Mount Olive Baptist Church of Union, Mississippi

## Estate Planning

Does your personal estate planning include a donation to Southeastern Baptist College? Praise the Lord for a recent donation of \$150,000 from the estate of Bobby and Dovey Thornton! Contact Rosemary Davis at 601-426-6346 discuss with her how you can bless SBC with your special gift.

## Need a Preacher?

Dr. Carson is available to fill the pulpit and, or to make a presentation about the work and vision of Southeastern Baptist College. Chaplain (Colonel) Carson can also provide an update on the BMAA Chaplaincy and deliver a related message. Thank you to First Baptist Church of Shady Grove, Little Creek Baptist Church of Perkinston, and the Big Creek Association for inviting Dr. Carson to preach. You can reach Dr. Carson at 601-433-4736 or [scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu](mailto:scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu)



**On the left**  
Eddie Walker removes  
damaged shrubs



**On the right**  
New emergency exit is  
installed in Hilbun Hall



# Southeastern Baptist College

## Special Emphasis



JULY/AUGUST  
2023



SERVING THE BMA OF MISSISSIPPI  
IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### SBC on the Move!



SBC sign being taken down to be refurbished

### Community Support



Congratulations to the Laurel Oaks Dental Care team for taking first place in the SBC golf tournament! (L-R Darrell Williams, Ernie Joiner, Fred Walters & Byron Jordan)

# BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION MISSIONS OF MISSISSIPPI

4226 Highway 15 North, Laurel, MS 39440  
Phone: 601-428-8616 Email: missions@bmams.org  
Chris Yager, Interim Director

## Missionary Reports

### Canaan Land Mission

by Scott Brocious

We have been very busy at Canaan Land throughout the month of June. We hosted our second VBS and with the help of the Lord it was a huge success. We had 25 kids each night, and are so thankful to have been able to minister to these kids! Our youth are getting ready



Scott Brocious

for a week of camp. They were able to put together a successful fundraiser to help offset the financial burden of camp. We are excited for the opportunity to spend several days away and grow closer together and closer to the Lord. Lastly, we have been honored to an increase of visitors throughout the month. God is faithful, concerning his church and promises! Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

The Lord is doing great things at Canaan Land.

### Hispanic Missions Report

by Estuardo Marroquin

Hispanic Missions Coordinator

We continue to advance Hispanic missions in Mississippi. In recent weeks, several activities have been reported in the different Hispanic fields that have brought joy and blessing from God to continue reaching the Hispanic community in our state. Jesus said: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples". (John 15:8). That is our purpose in Hispanic missions to bring honor and glory to God.



Estuardo Marroquin

Way Truth and Life church in Ripley reports good news, the entire congregation has come together to celebrate VBS. Every year they do this important activity at the beginning of the month of June. More than 85 children attended this activity for 3 days receiving Bible teaching, games, food, and lots of fun. It is

wonderful to see that year after year the Hispanic church in Ripley dedicates a good time to carry out this activity. Many people have been reached through VBS after following up with the children they have attended. We thank God for the life of Pastor Byron Morales and the ministry he has developed in recent years in this Hispanic church.

Similarly, the missions that are sponsored by the Hispanic Church in Ripley have the same activity. The Hispanic missions in Tupelo and Oxford joyfully celebrate VBS a week after with the participation and support of the mother church. We thank God for all the efforts they make to reach more Hispanics for Christ.

**El Camino Hispanic Church in Hattiesburg** continues to take strong steps in the mission field. In recent weeks they go out to the streets to share the gospel of salvation and more than 8 people have received Christ as a personal savior. This congregation has been developing a good evangelism team that has committed to taking to the streets twice a month to visit and speak to Hispanic people about salvation in Christ. We thank God for Pastor Leo Adan and the fire in his heart for lost souls motivating the congregation to join in this great commission to make disciples. Recently Pastor Leo Adan shared with us the desire to start a new mission field and we have begun to pray for the cities of Wiggins and Lucedale for God to guide them and there will be the way for this new Hispanic mission field.

**El Camino Hispanic Church in Laurel** it has made good progress in recent weeks. Like the church in Hattiesburg, they have developed a tremendous evangelism team where more than 20 people take to the streets of Laurel to share the gospel of Salvation. In recent weeks they have shared the gospel with more than 25 people and 9 have received Christ as Savior. They also report that 2 sisters were baptized. They also report that they are very excited since in the month of July they will start the GMA in the Hispanic church. El Camino Church in Laurel will be the first to develop the GMA

Mission Reports  
Continued on page 12

# ACTS 1:8 CONFERENCE REACHING YOUR JERUSALEM

**BE A PART OF OUR FIRST MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE!**

- **WHETHER YOU ARE A LAYMAN OR A PASTOR, ON STAFF OR IN LEADERSHIP, THIS CONFERENCE IS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE GROWTH IN YOUR PERSONAL MINISTRY AND AID IN THE OVERALL REVITALIZATION OF YOUR CHURCH.**

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:



**JOHN DAVID SMITH**

BMAA Executive Director of Missions



**LARRY BARKER**

BMAA Regional Coordinator for Europe; Serves in Church Health

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS:

- SIDNEY FARMER
- DEE DEE YAGER
- DAWN FREEMAN
- JARED MEYERS
- CHRIS YAGER
- PAUL SPURLIN

## SPECIAL MUSIC: THE ALLEN FAMILY



For More Information or to Register:

Contact: (601) 428-8616

### Acts 1:8 Missions Conference Schedule

Evening Messages: Beginning at 6:30

- Sun PM-Wed PM: Reaching Jerusalem
- Mon PM & Thurs PM: The Health of the Local Church
- Tues PM & Fri PM: Moving from Declining to Thriving (Re-establishing life into a dying Church)

### Breakout Sessions

Opening Session Each Morning at 9am  
Morning Sessions: 9:15 & 10:45  
Lunch  
Afternoon Sessions: 1:15 & 2:30

### Ladies Sessions:

Serving at Your Husbands Side  
Women Counseling Women  
Reaching Women in Your Community  
Organizing a Successful Church Office  
Successful Ladies Ministries Idea Forum

### Church Finances:

Church Budgets  
Protecting the Church Financially  
Principles of Investment  
Proper perspective of money in the church  
Technology and the Church

Biblical Principles of Technology and the Church  
The Church and Social Media  
Helpful programs for Worship and Ministry  
Forum on How To

Evangelism and Discipleship  
Evangelism Course: 1,2 & 3  
Discipleship: The Missing Ingredient in the Modern Church

Pastor's & Revitalization  
Personal Revitalization – The Man of Ministry Matters  
Leading Revitalization – From the Pastor's Perspective  
Asking the Right Questions – assessing the need for revitalization  
The Causes of Decline in a Local Church  
The Causes of Revitalization in a Local Church  
Idea Forum for Revitalization

The Successful Youth Pastor  
The Successful Assistant Pastor  
Creative Youth Ministry  
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**FIRST BAPTIST, MANTACHIE**



## A Look At BMA ChangeMakers

### World Missions Day Receipts

from BMA Global Relationship Manager Sidney Vines  
sidney@bmaam.com

The numbers are in! BMA churches gave close to \$400,000 to the Jerry Kidd Missions Fund during World Missions Day 2023. Your faithful giving is responsible for the ongoing partnership with ChangeMaker missionaries and the planting of churches around the globe.

Thank you for your continued commitment to God's global mission. As always, if there is any way that we can serve, please let us know.

## My Testimony and Call to Ministry

by Pastor Jarede Souza, ChangeMaker in Brazil

On July 23, 1966, in a missionary conference led by the late missionary Rufus Crawford in Várzea da Palma, Minas Gerais, the Holy Spirit acted in my heart after listening to the message he preached. Brother Rufus invited people to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, and I did not resist the invitation. Soon I was up front giving my life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was born in an evangelical home, and my parents attended the Baptist church in Várzea da Palma with the late Pastor John Elliott, a man of God who sacrificed his own life to do missions.

These two great missionaries never measured their efforts to do missions work. Pastor Rufus Crawford was a missionary in the city of Campinas, São Paulo. Once a year he made a point of traveling to the regions of the state of Minas, Gerais, to help other missionaries in the poorest and neediest regions of the gospel. The city of Campinas is 1,100 kilometers from Várzea da Palma, but it was worth it.

It was on one of these trips that Pastor Rufus came to preach at my church and on that day, July 23, 1966, I couldn't resist the invitation of salvation. I praise God for the missionary vision of the BMA (formerly NABA), which generously sent missionaries to introduce me to the gospel that saved me.

As you can see, I converted very early at just nine years old, but like the boy Samuel before the prophet Eli, I was raised in the church and followed in the footsteps of these missionaries because I admired them very much for their desire to win souls for Christ. Still very early I started studying the Bible with Pastor John Elliott and soon became a lay evangelist leading many souls to Christ. At the age of nineteen I went to the Baptist seminary and began to prepare myself to be a preacher and soul winner.

After finishing my studies, I was forced to divide my time to work in the secular area. I worked as a policeman for fourteen years but never stopped preaching the gospel; however, I was always uncomfortable, because my desire was to invest my life in missionary work. The Lord heard my prayer, and I pastored a church of our association for twenty years. During my ministry in this church the Lord enabled me and qualified me for his work. In the last ten years of my ministry in this church we organized three new churches in the cities of Porto Velho, Monte Sião, and Castelo Forte in São Paulo. In the last ten years, I prepared seven new leaders who went on to lead new churches of our association, some as missionaries and others as local pastors. In 2009 I accepted the challenge of the BMA to be its representative in our association

here in Brazil and develop and mentor new missionaries.

Currently, we have several missionaries working in national fields and others pastoring churches and making new leaders. I thank God for the generosity of our BMA and for the vision of its leaders, directors and all those who work at our



BMA Global office who never tire of seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit to broaden the missionary vision and not let the fire burn out. My desire and prayer are that we strengthen our Great Commission partnerships and take this gospel, which is the power of God for the salvation for all who believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.

I ask for prayers because last year, Brother Eliezer (Semedo) and I felt that God touched our hearts to start the new work of missions in Africa in the country of Guinea-Bissau. Currently, we are making connections with a brother who is a native of this country, Reinaldo Alfredo Natcha. He studied five years at the Baptist seminary here in Brazil and returned to Guinea-Bissau in 2021. After talks with his church, Reinaldo is considering a partnership with ABB and BMA. The leaders of our Brazilian Association (ABB) are excited about this idea.

Furthermore, myself, Brother Eliezer, and Brother John David Smith are praying on this matter and discussing ways to move forward. Particularly, I am very eager to start this work and look forward to visiting the brothers in Guinea-Bissau, get acquainted with their work, and learn of ways to establish our partnership. Will you join us in prayer?

#### Prayer Requests:

Pray that we are awakened as Brazilian Baptists for this great work of evangelization.

Pray that we will have churches, pastors, and leaders full of spiritual life and sincerely invested in soul winning.

Pray for my ministry and associational responsibilities with ABB.

Pray for the Castelo Forte Baptist Church, where I am currently serving as an interim pastor.

Pray for Brother Leonardo, my disciple, who will be reviewed by the ordination council this June. If approved, Leonardo will be the next pastor at Castelo Forte Church.



Anders Lee

Anders Lee - Director - 901-343-3293 - anders.lee571@gmail.com

#### CAMP TIME IS HERE!!!

It hardly seems like it, but indeed CAMP TIME IS HERE!!! It seems like only yesterday in late November that we confirmed our camp at Lake Tiak O'Khata in Louisville. I am so excited to see this come to fruition. Currently we have 307 pre-registered. We are packed to the max!!! God is going to do some great things! Of course, we know that some that are registered won't show up on July 17<sup>th</sup>, but we know God is up to something!

#### PRAY!!!!

I want to ask all of you to put this camp on YOUR PRAYER LIST. Please!!! Even if you are not participating, I need you to pray for our speaker, Jacob Guenrich, our worship leader Max Sullivan, all of our breakout session leaders, for all the workers, for all the sponsors and students coming, and for myself. Pray fervently and even daily for God to save souls and change lives!

#### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

I am so thankful for the individuals who will be leading in this area. They are as follows:

1. Dealing with Depression & Anxiety – Facilitated by Kelly Ross, Christian Counselor.
2. Music in Ministry – Facilitated by Worship Pastor Taylor Clayton.
3. Learn, Love, Live! Known as “LLL” – Facilitated by Pastor Arthur Lee.
4. Fighting Temptation to Sin – Facilitated by Pastor Cliff Jenkins.

5. Sexual Purity in a Corrupt World – Facilitated by Youth Pastor Sam Yager.

6. Called to Ministry/Missions – Facilitated by Dr. John David Smith.

7. Sharing Your Faith - The ROMAN ROAD – Facilitated by Youth Pastor Brody McCool.

8. A Social Media World – Facilitated by Pastor Justin Burdick.

9. BIG FACTS – 5 Great Doctrinal Truths – Facilitated by Pastor Jacob Guenrich.

10. Youth Ministry Think Tank – Facilitated by Youth Pastor Dan Carson.

#### WEBSITE

Everything you need to know about camp is on our website [www.bmamysouth.org](http://www.bmamysouth.org). Be sure to visit there for all the facts and get more information!

#### DONATE/GIVE

Also on our website is a new feature. Click the DONATE button on the top of the home page. You can give as an individual, family, churches or as an association through that link. It is a secure site and safe for transactions. Just as a reminder, we still have \$20,000 more to reach our goal of having raised \$75,000 by October 1, 2023. HELP! Your gift will make a huge difference in many lives in 2023 and 2024!!!

## Women's Missionary Auxiliary

WMAofMS20@gmail.com  
**President Dawn Freeman**  
 cdfreeman7327@gmail.com  
 601-325-7226

**Treasurer Mrs. Theresa Reus**  
 1264 Dean Nursery Rd.,  
 Lucedale, Mississippi 39452



Dawn Freeman  
 President

## State WMA Midyear Report

by Dawn Freeman

President of WMA of Mississippi

The WMA of Mississippi met on Monday evening in the administration building of Southeastern Baptist College. We appreciate the hospitality of the faculty of Southeastern, especially Ginny Singleton. You have been very helpful to get us set up for the meeting.

We had 26 ladies in attendance with 13 churches represented. We also had Mrs. Brenda Hornaday, the president of the national WMA, with us. She came to encourage us and enjoy the fellowship of the WMA of Mississippi.

Due to health reasons Mrs. Shirlene Smith had to step down as treasurer for our State WMA. Mrs. Theresa Reus was elected as our new treasurer. Please send in your funds for our WMA of Mississippi and for our State Project to Theresa at 1264 Dean Nursery Rd., Lucedale, Mississippi 39452. Donna DiSalvo as second vice-president.

Donna DiSalvo was our speaker and encouraged us to put on the whole armor of God and especially to take up our shield of faith.

Lakelan Flynt, our state GMA Director, has some T-shirts that were sold at GMA retreat for sale today. Ladies, please go buy yourself, your daughter, your niece, or just a girl in your church a T-shirt. We also sent in \$2,000 to the Changemaker bike ride.

Here's a save the date our ladies retreat is scheduled for September 8 and 9 at lake Tiak O'Khata. Please mark this date on your calendars and plan to come. We have some exciting new things to add this year. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Because Jesus lives!



## CLOSER

Drawing Closer to God (Part 1)  
 by Judy Wallace

Our purpose in life is to pursue a closer, more intimate relationship with Christ under the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit through the development of spiritual disciplines set forth in the acronym CLOSER.

It was a long engagement — one year and two months to be exact. Tommy was in Bald Knob farming, and I was finishing my senior year of college by student teaching in Fort Smith. It was hard to stay connected, but we certainly made the effort.

There were no cell phones, and to call long distance cost extra. So instead, we wrote letters. The letters were not just occasional, they were daily! We

“talked” on paper and shared our daily activities. I would often beat the mailman to the mailbox to receive the precious writing straight into my hand. Immediately, I opened each letter, knowing it was from the one who loved me deeply and wanted me to spend the rest of my life with him. It was how we stayed “CLOSER” while apart.

This year, the Inspirational Resource Committee wants to share this series of articles for the purpose of helping you draw CLOSER to our God. Our responsibility, as a group, is to recommend godly resources that help you grow, mature and continue to pursue a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. What better resource for this than the Bible! It is God's precious letter to us. It is from the One who loves us deeply and

wants us to spend the rest of our lives with Him! It is the source and foundation of many disciplines we need to pursue.

This year, we will be using the acronym CLOSER to guide our writings and more importantly, to encourage you in incorporating these spiritual endeavors into your daily lives. This is what the acronym reminds us to do:

- C — Communicate with God through prayer
- L — Learn to study and understand God's Word
- O — Obey
- S — Store God's Word in your heart through memorization and meditation
- E — Evangelize
- R — Renew daily

The writers for this series will be the Inspirational Resource Committee members — Valarie

## Empathy: Our Drive For Missions

by Jairo Bonilla, ChangeMaker in Costa Rica

Our Vision: *A church planted in every unreached field inside and outside Costa Rica, satisfying the spiritual need of families and committed to the Great Commission.*

Our Mission: *We will develop the planting of autonomous and reproducible churches through small groups in which the gospel is proclaimed, and disciples of Jesus Christ grow.*

What is the limit of the missionary call in making disciples? How far can we go when the nets of the gospel are spread?

To answer this question, pastors, and leaders of the association of churches in Costa Rica came to the conclusion through meetings, missionary activities, and conferences that the reach of the gospel in other nations compared to our country is very limited and, in some cases, people do not have any option to hear the gospel.

For example, some countries do not have the opportunities that exist in Costa Rica in terms of having the gospel at their disposal in areas such as freedom of worship, sound doctrinal churches, fellowship with and testimony of other believers, or by electronic means such as the internet, radio, or tv, and perhaps one of the most important limitations is lacking a Bible in their heart language.

Understanding all these limitations has made us question the scope of our responsibility in the missionary call and how far to extend the fishing nets of the gospel.

Our local churches have come together to respond to the cross-cultural missionary call, assuming the responsibility of sending and supporting missionaries in countries where throwing the net is a pressing need, regions where the gospel has not yet been preached or where the opportunities to make disciples are very limited.

### PERU

It was in Peru that the first missionary project was undertaken in conjunction with the BMA. In the community of Chupaca in the Peruvian Andean Highlands at an altitude of more than 3,300 meters, animistic worship of “Pachamama” or “mother earth” prevails, along with a strong religious syncretism with occult practices, so pastors and missionaries are not well received. It is in this community that, thanks to this missionary effort, a Baptist church planted in the community exists for the glory of God. Missionary Gerson Orellana and his family have returned to Costa Rica from Peru after twelve years of hard missionary work, and today they are preparing to start a new project in the neighboring country of Panama and thus continue spreading the gospel network.

### MOZAMBIQUE

When it seemed impossible to think of a country on the African continent, the opportunity opened to extend the gospel network in Mozambique, where the barriers of language, culture, and distance have been overcome. To date, new believers have been baptized in the Morrumbala district, 1,400 kilometers from the capital, where there are no roads, nor basic services such as drinking water, electricity, and internet. Bibles have also been delivered to the Tsonga and Lomwe ethnic groups on the border with Malawi, groups that testify to having the testimony of Jesus Christ through the

scriptures in their hands for the first time. The first Baptist church has been planted in the capital, Maputo, and a school has been developed where children learn about Jesus Christ.

### TURKEY

More than 84 million people live in Turkey, and of this population it is estimated that .5 percent are Christian, which includes Catholicism and other non-evangelical confessions. Reading this statistic and having empathy for the sad spiritual condition of millions of people in this Muslim country put Turkey on the missionary map of one of our local churches. Just two years ago this church sent the first missionary couple to this country. Although it is a long-term missionary project, a very difficult undertaking due to the required resources, and a risky task for safety, through perseverance, God's provision, and God's faithfulness, much progress has been seen both in learning the language and in establishing relations with Turks on the part of our missionaries.

### PANAMA

Our missionary past and present are in Costa Rica, Peru, Mozambique and Turkey; however, Panama is in sight this year as a field to continue extending the gospel network, a country where a new challenge will be undertaken in the missionary calling for the partner churches in Costa Rica in collaboration with the BMA.

Fish, Susie Edgar, Jackie Ricks and me.

Join us weekly. Pray for us daily. Incorporate these disciplines regularly. It is what He has called us to do!

Here are some scriptures to read to get started — James 4:8, Isaiah 26:3, Psalm 119:10 and Matt. 5:6.

Prayer — Father, You are our Rock, our Shield, our Redeemer, Savior and Friend. You are Lord of all, our Creator, our Shepherd and Your presence is always with us. Even Your names bring peace into our lives. Plus, there is the wonder that You loved us enough to send Your Son to die for us, as unworthy as we are. How is it that You invite us into Your presence? That You long to fellowship with us? That You want us close to Your heart and partakers of Your Spirit's

power? How is it that we would dare refuse Your invitation to draw closer; to take time to study Your word, hide it in our hearts and minds and seek Your face as a daily True North to follow? We cannot follow Your words unless we know them, so help us on this journey to draw CLOSER each day to You and Your path for our lives. Help us love You more so that we may obey You fully. In Christ's precious name, Amen.

Respond to God with your own prayer from what you have read today.

*Note: CLOSER was developed by Rob Gallaty in his discipleship series Growing Up, Firmly Planted, Bearing Fruit.*



## Mid Year Message

From page 2

happened following the death of Josiah, the righteous king, who wrought revival, was complete spiritual collapse. According to 2 Chron. 36, his son Jehoahaz began to reign. Necho the Pharaoh of Egypt seized him and put him in jail and taxed the Jews. Necho made his brother Eliakim king of Judah instead and renamed him Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim gave Pharaoh all the silver & gold, and then taxed the people to maintain his power and position. He was a corrupt man that made political maneuvers to keep his power.

After 11 years as king God sent Nebuchadnezzar who took him captive to Babylon and took all the valuable things from the temple. Later Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king in Judah. He was only serving as the vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. In these historical circumstances Judah has already been completely compromised. When a nation has a puppet for a king there really isn't a nation at all. Zedekiah was Vassal-King from 597 - 586 B.C. 2 Chron. 36:12&13 says he was an evil king. He ended up rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and made political maneuvers to maintain his power & position, showing his complete lack of wisdom. He thought Nebuchadnezzar would stay away with Egypt's army lingering

nearby and he hardened his heart to God. Yet when Egypt withdrew from Judah fearing Nebuchadnezzar, he was left to himself unprotected.

What **principle** do we see here? To be succinct, we see a national collapse because of leaders who were more about their own position & power. They

**When we see how they rejected God's Word and got into a sinful mess, that ought to cause us to fall on our knees in surrender saying Lord help me to pursue You, help me to keep my eyes on You, let me hear Your Word and fulfill Your wishes not mine!**

were more about their political maneuvers than they were about submitting to God & leading the people spiritually. Let's press on in this for more details.

### Their Horrible Condition

What became true because of these kings? Their political shenanigans led to poor

spirituality. Look what happened...

**A. Returned to Sin.** The 1<sup>st</sup> man, King Jehoaikim, 2 Chron. 36:8 says he committed abominations. 2 Kings 23:37 says "he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done." What were the abominations & what had his fathers done? Four things...

**First was Idolatry.** Because of these kings, they worshipped false gods in their midst. They honored & sacrificed to Baal, Chemosh, Molech and others. In the fabric of the nation, on the high places of Judah they set up the Asherah, the carved wooden images representing these false gods of course disobeying the clear Word of God.

**Second was Immorality.** Believing that the sexual union of Baal and Asherah produced blessings upon them, pagan worshippers engaged in immorality in the temples at the altars to these gods to entice the gods to bless them. It included sexual acts between priests and Baal worshippers according to 1 Kings 14:24 & 22:46.

**Third was Injustice.** The people were heavily taxed by the kings so that they could maintain their power. But the greater sin in their midst was the injustice against the innocent. Baal worshippers offered him sacrifices of course, animals of all kinds, but their very own children, usually their firstborn was slaughtered to appease & honor their gods. Under Zedekiah all this continued and got worse.

**Fourth were Inexcusable Leaders.** Look at 2 Chron. 36:14. "all the priests ... transgressed in all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem." Jeremiah said in Jer. 2:8 "The priests did not say "Where is the LORD?" (they didn't point the people to God); "and they that handle the law knew me not" (the priests of Judah had a head knowledge about the word but had no personal relationship with Him at all); "the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied for Baal, and walked in sin." Later in Jer. 32:32 he said "Because of all the evil of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the leading men of Judah & the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Their leaders had led them into the pagan sinful ways and had polluted the land & people!

### B. Rejected God's Word

Did you know that every King of the Jews according to Deut. 17:14 was supposed to have

## Mississippi GMAs

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### Girl's Discipleship Retreat sponsored by National Girls Missionary Auxiliary

by Lane Flynt

Director of National Youth Auxiliary

A wonderful time was had by all 184 folks in attendance at our 2023 retreat. As of the end of this year's retreat, we have raised approximately \$14,000 for the 2022 project. We also rejoice to share that 2 professions of faith were made. This year's retreat was open to all girls and not exclusive to GMA groups. Our camp pastor was Bro. Todd West and we had numerous breakout sessions for the girls and ladies. Our project for 2023-2024 will be the Pasley family in France with a goal of \$20,000. Our next Retreat will be June 11-14, 2024. Our attendance goal is 300 young ladies.

### 2023 National GMA Officers



### GMA Queens



## Scripture Thoughts by Cleaver

Dr. Tony Cleaver is a retired U.S. Army Chaplain and Director of Distance Learning for BMA Seminary. He may be contacted at [jstmcleaver@gmail.com](mailto:jstmcleaver@gmail.com)

### Where Do You Look?

Psalm 123 Verses 1 and 2 - *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*

A little while ago I visited one of the Presidential Libraries near me. In the museum was a replica of the oval office.

Everything was exactly as it was when the President sat there. I sat in the big chair behind the impressive desk to have my picture made for friends to see. I could only imagine the choices made in that Oval Office to direct the many moving parts of this country—even the world. It is certainly a place where powerful decisions are made, decisions which routinely affect the daily life of this planet's inhabitants.

There is One enthroned in heaven who exerts more power than the President who sits in the Oval Office behind the big desk, seated in the big chair. Good Reader, as we go to worship, even before we get to the church house, let us lift our eyes to this place – and especially to this One. The Lord is enthroned in heaven with powerful myriads and myriads of angelic hosts to do His bidding.

The true servant looks for direction from his master. The devoted servant is comfortable with the support her mistress provides. They know the nuances of the master as he directs them with a move of his hand or a nod of her head. May we be that kind of servant man or woman who looks to Him to give us favor as we come to His place to worship and serve Him.



Dr. Tony Cleaver

his own personal copy of the Word of God, to read it every day and to obey it and he was not supposed to turn from it, not to the left or the right for his own good and the good of the people? WOW! Did these men do this? NO! Specifically of Zedekiah we are told in 2 Chron. 36:12 that he did not humble himself before Jeremiah, God's prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord. Vs. 13 says he stiffened his neck & hardened his heart to God. Jer. 37:19 says he got his own prophets who would say what he wanted to hear. Jer. 37:2 says he would not give heed to the words of the Lord spoken by the prophet Jeremiah.

**The Principle** here is clear. What an incredible mess these people were in, one of their own doing. When the Lord's people do

not walk with & honor Him first, things go downhill fast, situations get worse, and the spiritual condition of the people deteriorates quickly! Adverse effects to the whole cannot be avoided! Sin & Selfishness has a severe cost! This brings us to the next point, their horrible condition led to a heavenly curse.

### The Heavenly Curse

What happened because of these things? Consider 3 things.

#### A. Prophetic Record

God told them this would happen. The record is clear! In that time frame, God had warned the Jews to repent of their sin and turn back to Him. Multiple prophets, not just Jeremiah, appealed to them, but they ignored them. Way before this He

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## Mid Year Message

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had told them in the Law in that famous chapter of blessings and cursing, Deut. 28, that there would be severe repercussions and even curses for the generation that would not obey Him! Deut. 28:36 & 37 God said, *“The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.* In vs. 63 & 64 God said *“And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other.*

They were warned that a curse would come, but they ignored Him! How did God carry this out?

### B. Personal Retribution

What happened to Jehoiakim? Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the throne and dishonored the temple. 2 Chron. 36:6 says that Nebuchadnezzar came and took his throne and bound him in bronze fetters and carried him off to Babylon then took many things from the temple of God, carried them to the temple in Babylon to be put on display. His power position was gone and there was no longer any nation, just a people in a land. Zedekiah had his prophets tell him Nebuchadnezzar would not take him down. Yet he sought out Jeremiah to hear the truth, and what Jeremiah told him was not what he wanted to hear, and no doubt it sent a shockwave to the very depth of his soul. Nevertheless, it was the word that the God of heaven had delivered to Jeremiah His prophet, and being God's spokesman of the hour Jeremiah could do no less than give the word to Zedekiah as it had been given to him.

What was that word? You will lose it ALL! Jer. 37:17 Jeremiah said to him, *“You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.”* It all unfolded folks in Jer. 39:1-10. Nebuchadnezzar and all his princes easily came into Jerusalem, Zedekiah saw it with his own eyes. He fled from them, but they pursued him, caught him, and brought him back, where he watched his own sons executed,

and then they gouged out his eyes and bound him and brought him to Babylon in bronze fetters.

These kings who brought on the horrible condition of the people, the nation, received personal retribution!

### C. Public Ruin

Jeremiah had prophesied in chapter 25 that the city of Jerusalem would be overtaken by Nebuchadnezzar, and it was. He said it would burn to the ground and the temple destroyed, and it happened. All the princes and officials and the young bright brilliant people in Jerusalem, like young Daniel were taken away to captivity in Babylon. 2 Kings 24:14 says that only the poor

**Lord help me to pursue You, help me to keep my eyes on You, let me hear Your Word and fulfill Your wishes not mine!**

remained behind. In Jer. 25:11 he said, *“this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and you will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”* Indeed, all his prophecies that were not heeded came to pass and we know that they stayed in Babylon 70 years.

Once again, we see **the principle** very clearly, Sin & selfishness has a severe cost! Using God's Kingdom to bring to yourself power, position and prominence has a cost, a personal cost! God stiff arms arrogance and he humbles those who fill themselves with pride. God disciplines His own when they corrupt themselves in sin! They could not get away with usurping God & His authority with their pitiful sinful selfish ways!

### A Hopeful Certainty

In scripture the connotation of hope is that of certainty, so I am being redundant with my point. God gives a guaranteed expectation. From the very beginning of Jeremiah, we see this hope mentioned. In Jer. 1:10, God said to Jeremiah; *“See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down to destroy, and to throw down...”* There God is speaking of His heavenly curse. But then he said I have set thee over the nations “to build, and to plant.” In this we see hope and certainty. God would use Jeremiah to pronounce judgment but also joy to come!

In the middle of Jeremiah's prophecies of doom & destruction for the Jews, in chapters 29-33, there is a section of prophecies that are filled with hope! A verse we often quote out of context begins that section. Jer. 29:11 he says after the 70 years of captivity I will visit you again, I know the plans that I have for you says the Lord, plans to prosper you and give you a future filled with hope! The younger generation would seek the Lord again, searching for Him with all their hearts. God says I will be found by them, and I will bring them the younger generation back to Jerusalem. The old generation would reap what they had sown, yet God would be faithful to His covenant with Israel and restore the younger generation back to Jerusalem in the Promised Land! As certain as was His retribution would be His restoration! It would happen! And bless your heart, when God says something, He does it! He used Cyrus to judge Babylon for what they did to the Jews. It was Cyrus, as Isaiah predicted that sent the Jews back, paid for their return, for the temple to be rebuilt. Jerusalem once again was the Citadel of David fully restored!

**The principle we see** is God is faithful to His purposes & promises and at times must do away with the older generation and bring on a new generation to continue His plan!

What does all this account in Jeremiah, Chronicles & Kings have to do with us? Its principles echo into our time to teach us. Romans 15:4 Paul said that the things written before time, that is the Old Testament, were written for our learning. So, what are some points of application to us? We echo the words of Zedekiah to see application by asking *“Is There Any Word From The Lord?”* There is... before I enumerate these things, let me say I'm just a nobody kid that grew up in the BMA. I've been BMA since the moment I took a breath. I say that to mean, and I want you to know, that I care about the BMA and I want to see God use us in incredible ways! Sometimes we need to be honest with ourselves. Now what is the Word from the Lord in our text?

1. Just as God observed the behavior of those leaders & people in that historical circumstance, His all-seeing eye knows about everything now. And if God knows, and He does, the number of hairs on the head of any given man on earth, then He certainly knows what's going on in the BMA of Mississippi. He knows and nothing is hidden from Him! That ought to cause us to act soberly.

Continued on page 11

## BMA OF AMERICA CHAPLAINCY

In coordination with BMA Missions, the Chaplaincy endorses and cares for chaplains, both civilian and military, as they carry the Gospel

Dr. Scott Carson, Director  
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Dr. Carson

### Retirement of Chaplain (Colonel) Kevin Guthrie

After serving 37 years in uniform, Chaplain (Colonel) Kevin Guthrie has retired from the U.S. Army. A ceremony was held at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama on May 5, 2023 (celebrating this milestone in Kevin and Karol's lives), Kevin served 16 years as a commissioned officer in the Arkansas and Louisiana Army National Guards, and while in the Guard, he earned his Master of Divinity degree at the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary. He then entered the active Army as a chaplain endorsed by the BMAA.

Kevin wrote about his military experience, *“I've witnessed amazing things in my journey. I traipsed in the tops of mountains with heroes, tread where my guardians had wings and weapons, ran with friends who are as close as family, and prayed with warriors whose ferocity in battle is unmatched. I've been immersed in a culture of loyalty and professionalism with companions whose courage is legendary, and whose commitment to freedom extends to all Americans. I've seen great heroes fall in combat like giant redwoods because they cared for a cause far greater than themselves, loving not for their lives as they spat in the very face of danger.”*

Kevin and Karol have served all over the world, and their children, Kaylee and Kimberlee grew up knowing only the Army family way of life. Kevin completed his ministry in the military serving at the highest levels of the Army. He worked for the Army's Chief of Chaplains in the Pentagon for seven years before finishing as the senior chaplain for the four-star headquarters of the U.S. Army Materiel Command located on Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama.

In the ceremony, Chaplain Guthrie received the Legion of Merit for his lifelong career and Karol receive the Distinguished Spouse Award for her civilian service in support of soldiers and their families throughout the years.

Kevin said, *“I'm proud to serve with the best this nation has to offer. .. amazing heroes, all of them. You're blessed beyond measure to have them at the ready. God bless America. Thanks be to Christ Jesus for the opportunity to serve.”*

Kevin and Karol are retiring to Royal, Arkansas, where they will be close to family and friends.

Thank you Kevin and Karol, for your “good and faithful” service to God and country!



Chaplain (Colonel) Kevin Guthrie; Spouse Karol; Daughters Kaylee and Kimberlee

### Chaplain (First Lieutenant) Ryan Burchett Completes Training Course

First Lieutenant Ryan Burchett, a chaplain in the Texas State Guard and the Pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Winnsboro, Texas, recently received an award of recognition for completing the Direct Commission Officer Orientation Course. This course spans a period of three months, with one month dedicated to online educational training, followed by in-person training at Camp Swift located in Bastrop, Texas. The course prepares all officers of a variety of specialties with the tools needed to lead their troops well. It is anticipated that Ryan will soon be promoted to the rank of Captain. Please keep Chaplain Burchett in your prayers as he prepares for a possible deployment to the Texas border soon.



Chaplain (First Lieutenant) Ryan Burchett and spouse, Lindsie.

# LIFE TRANSFORMATION GROUPS

by Larry Barker

Vice President Church Strategy and Training - BMA of America

There are three areas that need our continual focus for our individual lives and for our churches to be spiritually: upward/God-focus (Col. 2:9)

inward/personal growth-focus (2 Pet. 2:2)  
outward/others-focus (Matt. 22:39)

We have recently talked a lot about our upward/God-focus. Today let's talk about and look at the other two together. Growing and serving are essential ingredients if you desire to be spiritually healthy. What makes us think that we are growing if we are not serving? Following Christ requires our commitment to God, others, and the world around us.

Why are we placing them together? Because they are inseparable! You cannot grow without serving and you cannot serve without growing. Many have placed such a high premium on knowledge that it has come to mean that the accumulation of information is equal to spiritual maturity, but it is not. When growing and serving are both fully engaged, each one of them leads to the other. Jesus said that if you love Him, you would **OBEY** His commandments, not just **KNOW** them. Something is terribly wrong with our discipleship if information



transfer has occurred without life transformation. Is there a way to better hold one another accountable?

In the *Multiplication Workshop* Dave DeVries refers to this as the obedience mechanism that is needed in all discipleship. It is true that understanding can bring about action but sometimes understanding can only occur through action. There are three steps mentioned here, but numbers two and three should take place simultaneously. Have you, without realizing, built a culture into your church that is counterproductive to life transformation? New converts are told to wait until they are disciplined before they can serve. The desire is to watch and observe them to make sure they are legit and only then can they ease slowly into servicing.

Once you have grown, and only then, can you help those who know what they are doing. The second two are inseparable and the point is to not put someone into a key leadership role too soon but encourage the need to grow and serve in some capacity at the same time. The wrong system and process can promote passivity, lethargy, and disobedience. When someone receives Christ as their Savior, we scoop them out of the world, surround them with other Christians, and begin saturating them with everything they will ever need to know. That is good, but churches must create a strategy based more around missional activities.

John 17:15 says, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." It is not either/or but both/and. What you teach a follower of Christ is of utmost importance, and that is why when they get started you must help them to reach out to others, begin serving, experiment with different ministries, and discover their spiritual gifts. Spiritually healthy churches must be growing and serving as they remain dedicated to carrying out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. A church is a

group of baptized believers who have intentionally committed to die together so that others can find the kingdom of God.

Assign a mentor (Barnabas) to every new convert who will walk alongside of them and serve with them. Actually, every follower of Christ needs three people in their life for accountability and multiplication: A Paul – the one discipling you. A Timothy – the one you are discipling. And a Barnabas – the one who is your cheerleader and encourager. Meet weekly to hold them accountable and help them overcome any challenges they might have in their new walk. Don't be afraid to ask them what sinful habits they need help with. There are always three elements to your time together: Bible Study, Prayer, and Accountability.

These LTGs can be triads or maybe four and they should always be the same gender, male or female groups. Ask them to make a list of everyone in their circle of influence who does not know Christ. Who do they know that needs the transforming power of Jesus in their lives? Encourage them to share their testimony. They do not have to be trained to share their testimony, but you should train them in showing someone how to be born again. When someone else receives Christ, repeat the process. These groups are to produce even greater growth alongside the worship gathering and small groups they attend.

These groups can meet weekly or every other week, but they need to be scheduled and fit the rhythm of the group. It is best to pick a day of the week and a time that works best with everyone and stick to it. Make them aware of what growth, ministry, and service opportunities are available in your church. Churches have developed paths for those outside to come inside but churches need to work much harder at developing paths for those inside to get outside. The reality is that it is very easy to become inwardly focused. This is the idea of not getting people far from God to the "church" but instead getting the church to the people who are far from God.

There are many who would be interested in discussing spiritual things over a cup of coffee long before coming to hear a message about it. The idea is to begin groups where people are welcome no matter what they believe and begin the journey of answering their questions around the Word of God. Neil Cole describes Life Transformation Groups as, "a group of two or three who get together once a week for accountability and disciple making. Using a simple system of accountability, with intrinsic motivation, disciple making can be done by all who are in the church." It is not complicated but will require some planning and intentionality.

## Mid Year Message

From page 10

2. There is no room in God's kingdom, in His church, for leaders to seek power & position. We don't have time for games & glory! There is certainly no room for arrogant, selfish political maneuvering. Jehoiakim and Zedekiah learned this so well, and so did the sons of Thunder in Jesus ministry.

Their mother in Matthew 20 came asking Jesus if her sons could sit on the left & right side of him in an exalted position of honor. Jesus said you don't know what you are asking. The other disciples were angry that they would even ask and seek prominence & seek personal gain. Brothers, pastors, leaders here today, me included, there is only One King in Glory and His name is Jesus! It isn't about us! Let us not, like Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, get caught up in a narcissic mindset believing that it is. When men do that, it causes a collapse that we can't recover from! God's kingdom & His church is about Him, His purpose, and His glory

alone! That ought to cause us to be humble! We are His servants alone! We ought to say God how do you want to use me and then do it with all our might!

3. If we err and make ministry about us it will become our agenda not His. We see how that went in their day. When men get in positions of leadership and do not walk with God and submit to Him, they will lead their people into sin, and it will result in a colossal mess, and we will all be in a horrible condition. When we see how they rejected God's Word and got into a sinful mess, that ought to cause us to fall on our knees in surrender saying Lord help me to pursue You, help me to keep my eyes on You, let me hear Your Word and fulfill Your wishes not mine!

4. God took out those leaders personally and brought judgment on the people who went along with them. Just as much as God had warned them before time, God has warned us as men of God. The Apostle Peter said in

1 Peter 4:17; "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." God holds us accountable, pastors and leaders, personally accountable for who we are and what we do! That ought to make us sober minded and humble! God did not need that generation of people to fulfill His worldwide agenda. He did away with them and went around them. He doesn't need us either. We can either do it His way or He will do away with us! The BMA of Mississippi is but a spec on God's timeline. How can we expect to stay relevant in His kingdom if we don't do things His way. If He would discipline and do away with a generation of people, His chosen ones, the Jews - He will certainly do away with us if we don't heed His word and such warnings!

5. There is work to be done! There is a whole generation of kids and teens to be reached! God was faithful to His promise to Abraham and David. He preserved them and brought them back to Jerusalem to know and seek Him! As your youth director you know what I see... I see a generation of people, of youth people, of teenagers right now,

that we are responsible for, they should be our primary focus! Listen, if we don't make people here in Mississippi, and the kids and teens in our churches and cities our focus, if we are more about position and political power like the men we find in the storyline in Jeremiah's day, God will do away with us and raise up men & women who will make the Gospel and the redemption of this generation their priority, because it is His mission and priority! I believe He wants to reach the youth of our time, I believe He wants to raise up a new

generation of BMA people who will seek & love and serve Him!

So, are we more about His priority or our positions & power? Are we more about His mandate to win souls and disciple the youth in our midst or our motives & agendas! What do we learn from this old story in Jeremiah's day... "Is There is a word from the Lord? Oh yes... it is to get focused on Him, His word and His will and His work! We have a job to do! We must humble ourselves before the Lord and abandon ourselves to His work not our own agendas!

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## Mississippi Missions Reports

From page 6

within the Hispanic churches of our state and they are very encouraged to carry out this wonderful program for Hispanic girls.

**El Camino Hispanic Mission in Canton** continues with joy serving God and the Hispanic community in this city. In recent weeks they have had new visits in worship meetings and several new believers are being discipled. Attendance has remained stable and there are already several brothers who are ready to be baptized. Meetings continue to be held at the home of Bro. Lucas Gomez. His living room is filled every Sunday for the worship service. About 25 people congregate every Sunday and at the end of the service they happily share lunch and all return home full of joy with the desire to return the following week. We thank God for the life of missionary Lucas Gomez and his family and ask to help us continue praying to find a building soon so that they can have a larger place for their meetings and praise our God.

I thank God for the blessing He gives me to serve along with these men who continue to dedicate their lives to the enlarge of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and I ask for your prayers that we may continue to plant more Hispanic churches in our beautiful state of Mississippi, in Christ.

### Living Hope Baptist Mission Update by Sam Yager

#### Growing Relationships

While much has been going on at Living Hope recently, there has been one continual theme running through it all. That recurring theme has been God drawing people closer to Himself and to His church. Since the beginning of the mission, there have been several good connections with people whom we had not heard from in a while. Over the past few weeks, God has been restoring a number of these connections. In addition, we have been blessed to watch God deepen relationships both inside and outside of the church through outreaches, service projects, and special events. It truly is a joy to be a part of God's work and it is exciting to see people growing in their relationship with Him, even if it is a little bit at a time.



Sam Yager

These growing relationships are presenting numerous opportunities for discipleship. I do ask for your prayer as we seek to be good stewards of the relationships that God has blessed us with, endeavoring to make disciples as we have been commanded. We have also been met with the need for a van ministry to help with this endeavor. In this, I also ask for your prayer as we strive to obtain a van for this purpose.

I cannot thank you all enough for your continual prayer for us and support of us!

### Restoration Jail Ministry

by Paul Spurlin

Over the past 6 weeks, our jail ministry has traveled to visit a local man who is jailed in Rolla, Missouri. The trip gave us an opportunity to stop and visit the people of Fairview Baptist Church in Blytheville, Arkansas, who have financially supported our jail ministry. Additionally, Pastor Ken Riley of Lebanon Baptist Church, Laurel, has started helping us with services at Jones County jail and preached for us on June 16. Prisoners are responding to God's word with one recently asking us to provide him a study Bible.



Paul Spurlin

## Available For Service

Zechariah Rogers is available for pastoral ministry, interim pastorate, or fill-in preaching as the Lord leads. He is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist College, and a licensed and ordained minister. He has been in the ministry for 8 years is married and he and his wife have two children. He may be reached at 662-372-5730 .



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