

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God,
and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Baptist

Mississippi

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International Crisis Response by BMA Missions

*“Oh God, may you bring relief in a situation that could be catastrophic.
May we extend unbridled compassion with divine wisdom. Amen.”*

In BMA Missions leadership among eight key leaders and field coordinators, there is an average cross-cultural experience of 33.75 years. That calculates to 270 total years of experience living in other countries and/or working in cross-cultural situations.

All of these leaders lived full time for multiple years in their respective fields of service. This amount of time on the mission field and working with missionaries in dozens of countries has fostered a deep love for God’s mission, God’s people, and their plight as they seem to move from one calamity to the next.

One issue in missionary service that most all have to confront and none seem to come to grips with is abject poverty. In most places of the world you do not have to go looking for poverty, it will find you . . . Under “normal” circumstances many of these great people live a subsistence lifestyle where they do not dream about vacations, 401Ks, or retirement leisure; they think about what will be



Those in need around the world need our help

eaten for the next meal.

Since living on the edge of

survival is a daily reality, any kind of added pressure from

things like government oppression, natural disasters, war, drought, etc., can be the culprit that pushes them over the edge. Some of the most conservative estimations are that in the coming months, upwards of 130 million people in the world will be in danger of death by starvation as food chains are broken and unemployment rises as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

What are we doing? What can we do?

BMA Global Missions first of all cries out to God each day on behalf of people around the world who are most vulnerable. A quick glance at this potential situation can bring a sense of overwhelming helplessness. There is no way we can help all those who need help.

Therefore, we do not cry out to God as a last resort but as the first and best option. In the realm of the supernatural, we believe and trust in God and pray to him on behalf of the threatened masses.

And in the realm we are en-

trusted with leading, we act out of some very clear parameters and guidelines. In this area of discussion, we would like to recommend a useful resource, a book entitled *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert.

There are also two areas that we must be clear on before we proceed with simply throwing money at a situation:

First, the definition of poverty is not the lack of material things. In the U.S. we tend to measure everything in a monetary fashion. That simply cannot be the measure in every situation. Truly poverty is a broken relationship with God, self, others, and creation. Only God through the gospel of Jesus Christ and the effect of the gospel in our lives can truly bring a person out of poverty.

Second, we have to be able to evaluate the current situation for what it is. Corbett and Fikkert state in the book that most every situation fits into one of three categories: relief, rehabilitation, or development. The problem we have as Americans many times is the application of our affluent standard to

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The Financial Impact of COVID-19 on the Church

by Dr. Steve Crawley
BMA of America

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives in no small way. These changes are pervasively reaching into most every area of life, but the most quantifiable of the changes obviously relate to our fi-



Crawley

nances. As church members face financial challenges, churches will certainly be impacted.

How might leaders address these inherent financial challenges their congregations are and will be facing due to COVID-19?

Bill Wilson, director of Center for Healthy Churches, estimates that as many as one third of churches across the United States may close within the next five years and that there will be a 33% decline in giving this year.

Part of the reason for this drop is obviously related to a general prediction that post-pandemic church attendance is expected to drop, particularly among those who are occasional attendees.

While Wilson’s estimate is hopefully high, a decrease in giving is most likely, as we are experiencing first hand at BMA America’s national

level.

While the current worldwide pandemic presents a formidable financial challenge, it also presents an opportunity for churches to rethink their overall strategy for reaching and teaching people—financially and otherwise. To thrive and not merely survive in this environment will likely require we are intentional in our leadership approach. Here are four suggestions to consider in



response to the looming financial challenges we may face:

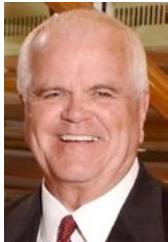
Preach and Teach Financial Stewardship

Empirical data provides a clear correlation between teaching about biblical finance and higher giving levels. David King, director of Lake Institute on Faith & Giving (part of the prestigious Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy), shares that churches that regularly discuss the theological importance of giving through

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Mississippi Baptist

Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi



Don Brown
Editor

Has Covid Got You Down?

So many of us have not had to alter our daily activities very much due to the 'stay at home' suggestions from the health community. Some of our 'seniors' are confined due to health limitations and since many seniors are retired, not very many adjustments were required. That does not mean that senior citizens were not inconvenienced as much as anyone else.

So many have been out of work, out of school, and just out of sorts. I do miss the perceived freedom to just go and do and not worry... Churches are starting to meet in person again and that is encouraging. What to do? Well, we adjust and then we just rely upon the Lord.

Ecc 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.



Submission Policies

Your Mississippi Baptist is the voice of the BMA of Mississippi, her churches, and her ministries. We are pleased to publish reports from all related entities, including the world-wide ministries of the BMA of America. We do not publish news or notices of secular or outside groups.

Article submissions should be sent by email to editor@msbaptist.org or in typed format by mail to P.O. Box 8181, Laurel, MS 39441.

Photos should be emailed in jpg format. Photos lose resolution when printed on newsprint, therefore the original quality is vital. Photos should be well lighted, in focus, clear and sharp. Photos should contain people if at all possible. There is no guarantee that all articles and/or photos will be published. Unsolicited items will be given consideration, but publication is not guaranteed. Date sensitive articles will take priority.

We publish on the 1st and 15th of each month with the exception of December. Articles announcing events should be in the issue that is published at least 2 weeks prior.

Crisis Response

from page 1

all peoples, but this, more often than not, leads to the determination that every situation is a relief situation.

Under "normal" circumstances around the world there is a great need for rehabilitation and development that demand great investments of time and energy, not just money (relief).

Our present worldwide pandemic is quickly moving to a full-blown relief situation. This simply means that if there is no intervention, people are going to die; that is a relief situation.

We understand that most people in the world are in somewhat of a survival mode. We are unsure of our futures and we turn inward to protect me and mine. That is normal. Let's not

be normal.

Here are some of our practices and guidelines we would like for you to be aware of:

1) BMA Missions is present in over 80 countries of the world.

2) During this pandemic we are speaking to our leaders in those countries at least once a week to get updates.

3) So far each leader who has expressed the knowledge of people or families on the brink of starvation has been helped by our churches with aid from our disaster relief fund.

4) We have been able to help thousands in multiple countries through the work of our churches and missionaries.

5) There is a very well identified system of implementing funds through missionaries, pastors, and churches who are all connected to our global network and accountable to someone beyond themselves.

6) No one should be soliciting

funds from BMA churches in the U.S. on behalf of BMA entities or churches around the world without hearing from our recognized leadership in those places.

7) We certainly do not have unlimited funds, but we will help all we can.

8) If you desire to help out in some of these countries around the world, we would be glad to speak with you, put you in contact with the leaders in those places, and help in any way. We must apply the measure of a true relief situation in order to make sure that we are helping those who are the most vulnerable right now.

Please join us in praying for those who are on the edge both here at home and abroad: "Oh God, may you bring relief in a situation that could be catastrophic. May we extend unbridled compassion with divine wisdom. Amen."

Financial Impact of COVID-19

from page 1

sermons, money management classes, and stewardship training have significantly higher levels of giving.

As an example, a recent research project revealed that just 12% of the 1,200 churches surveyed reported that they addressed

financial matters on a regular basis; yet of those that did, 73% reported increases in giving.

Implement Alternative Methods of Giving

When conducting my dissertation research in 2013-14, I found that just 6% of churches affiliated with Baptist Missionary Association of America offered electronic giving options. Yet much has changed over the past six years, particularly with the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Churches with electronic giving options in place when the pandemic hit were better poised to maintain cash flow. It might

be wise to consider an on-going option for such giving.

As a practical measure, Phillip Martin of The Church Network suggests that churches send out regular emails on Sat-

May God use the challenges of the current pandemic to lead us to become more effective

urday evenings or Sunday mornings to prompt and remind members to give. Further, to overcome the stigma of on-line giving and to aid in the act of worship when members do return, churches may consider providing giving cards to place in the offering plate for those with electronic drafts containing a simple statement: "I gave online."

Be Less Focused on Physical Assets

We know that the church is not a building, but our practices in the U.S. might suggest otherwise. Billions of dollars are tied up in physical assets that carry significant overhead costs. These costly assets are often used only a small portion of the week.

With tighter financial margins likely, churches will be forced to become better stewards of their brick and mortar. This may mean cooperating with another congregation in the use of the facilities, or possibly leasing a portion of the property to generate income.

Set Aside Sufficient Cash Reserves

Bill Wilson, director for Center for Healthy Churches, claims that based on his years of experiencing in working with churches, approximately 30% of congregations operate with little to no cash reserves. The past two months provide a good example of why it is important to set aside an emergency fund for lean times.

Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability suggests churches adopt policies requiring, at a minimum, reserves adequate to cover accrued designated gifts and debt service reserves.

Moreover, it is advisable to be intentional in building a cash reserve by incorporating a line item into the church's annual budget; otherwise, it is not likely to happen. A general rule of thumb is to aim for 90 days of cash on hand to cover your operating costs.

In conclusion, in the midst of the financial challenges facing churches across the world, we recognize God as our Sovereign Lord and know that he is in control. The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord, and his Word instructs us to be good stewards of his assets. May God use the challenges of the current pandemic to lead us to become more effective in the use of his resources, in the fulfillment of the Great Commandment, and in carrying out his Great Commission.

Mississippi Baptist

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Dwight Lindsey - Director



Home's garden planted and awaiting its fruit

Assured by the Harvest

I am not counting chickens before they hatch or peas before they are picked, but I am thankful of the reminders of God's faithfulness that He sends our way. Reminders are only useful when they are recognized. How many of us have a recurring alarm or event on the calendar? The more often they ding or ring the more chances we have to ignore or overlook them. It may be easy to think that during this current time of turmoil all believers would be fixed and attentive to the work of God in and around their life, but we also

know how imperfect we are.

The psalmist says in Psalm 147:7-9, "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; Sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, Who prepareth rain for the earth, Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. He giveth to the beast his food, And to the young ravens which cry." If our inclinations leaned toward praising God, naturally then He would have had no need to send us the words of this Psalm. God knows we need to be told and told and told, over and over and over again: LOOK AT MY

GREAT WORKS. So as I look out at our garden I don't beam with pride for my handiwork. I see a rows of corn, peas, and tomatoes and I think, "Man, God is good." No our budget isn't what it was a few months ago and no, we haven't picked the first fruits of our harvest yet, but we are still thankful to see God at work.

The first spiritual fruits we have witnessed came just before all the shutdowns that have affected our churches. We had our first profession of faith while

serving here at the Home. Just this past Sunday, with our church once again corporately meeting, Isaac came forward to make his profession known and to become a candidate for baptism. Pray for him and us during these first steps of his discipleship. Desi continues to do well while preparing to begin radiology school this summer. We are praying that things get back to normal soon for the teachers that will be helping Alexandra with her English as a Second Language course in

preparation for finishing her GED.

There is a lot of sprouting growth around here. Please pray for our potential cases that pre-date our Stay/Safer at Home orders, and pray for our first new potential case since this pandemic began. It was an exciting day last week to get a call again for how we could potentially help another young man. I pray this finds you all in good health and may God bless His Gospel wherever it is preached.

Aging: Rounding third and heading home

by Joe McKeever

She hath done what she could.
—Mark 14:8

The little girl was staring up at Bertha and saying nothing. Bertha and Gary were newlyweds, just beginning in ministry, and Gary accepted any invitations coming his way – sing, preach, teach, counsel, whatever. Today, he had sung in the worship service, and now stood near the piano talking to the accompanist. A few feet away, her little girl was staring up at Bertha.

Finally she spoke.

She said, "Do you sing?"

Bertha: "No. I don't sing."

Silence. The child is processing that. Finally, she speaks again.

"Do you play the piano?"

"No. I don't play the piano."

More silence. The child is thinking. Then, she speaks and gives this family a memorable line we've used ever since.

"Don't you do anything?!"

Those words, that question.

Don't. You. Do. Anything?

Ministers' wives are not the only ones who find themselves burdened with that expectation. Seniors in life's red zone (ask any football fan) will have an ever-decreasing list of things they can do. The hearing goes, along with the eyesight, the taste, the energy. It's called life,

and it's no fun. But it's simply a phase, a transition.

Seniors often ask themselves, "What can I do? Can't I do anything?"



Joe McKeever

"What can I do?" You can do whatever the Lord wants of you, nothing more and nothing less. And He will give you the strength to do it.

We know God is getting us ready to shed this earthly shell in order to don our heavenly body as we move into our permanent quarters. Scripture teaches that; we believe it.

Meanwhile, we who are in this earthly tent do groan. That's 2 Corinthians 5:2.

Do we ever!

Growing old is not for sissies, they keep saying. And they're right.

I heard an old fellow say he is "rounding third and heading home." Baseball fans understand the terminology. Seniors get the metaphor.

So, we are left with this question.

"What can I do?"

The disciples watched the woman worshiping Jesus in a most unusual way.

Being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at

the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. But there were some who

body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Do what you can. That's all He asks.

The woman did not do what others could have done; she did what she could.

She did not do as much as you could have done; she did what she could.

She did not do what others expected; she did what she could.

What can you do? That's all He expects.

Seniors vacillate between Caleb and Barzillai...

Two eighty-year-old men in the Old Testament pretty much sum up the two extremes.

Israel was taking Canaan and dividing up the land as they went. Old man Caleb had spotted a place he liked. He said to Joshua, "I was forty years old when Moses sent you and me with the others to spy out this land. I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. And now, behold, all these years later, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said. Here I am this day, eighty-five years old. And I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me. As my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now,

therefore, give me this land...." (Joshua 24:6-12).

That's how the octogenarian Caleb received Hebron for an inheritance and became a champion of old people ever since.

We all want to be like Caleb.

The problem is sometimes we're more like Barzillai.

Barzillai was the Ben Cartwright of his day – fans of the old Bonanza western will remember – wealthy and influential. When Absalom led an insurrection to dethrone his father David, the king fled Jerusalem with his wives and household and lived for several weeks across the Jordan as guests of Barzillai. Finally, Absalom was dead and the rebellion was put down and David's people were returning home.

As they approached the Jordan, David turned to Barzillai, and in the time-honored way of good people everywhere, said to him, "Now, come go home with me. I'd like to return your hospitality."

Barzillai's answer was classic.

How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? Let me



But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good, but Me you do not have always. She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My

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Southeastern Baptist College

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

Serving Christ With A Biblical World View In A Christian Atmosphere

President's Perspective

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:9

Southeastern Baptist College has successfully closed out the Spring 2020 Semester. We have eleven students who have completed their course work and are eligible for graduation. Because of COVID 19, graduation exercises have been moved to Saturday, August 1, at 11:00 a.m.

As we move into the summer months, we will be very busy with numerous projects. We have numerous students taking advantage of our Fast Track Summer Session. It is a full semester of courses that run from May 26 to June 30, 2020 and

tuition is half price for credit hours.

SBC is also relocating the library inventory of books. As you may be well aware of, students today rarely utilize hard copy books in their studies. Most do their research online and might never consider entering a library and this is typical in every college and university. Because we must make the best use of our available space at the college, the Board of Trustees approved a plan to change the nature of our library from a traditional "browsing" library, to one that is "on de-



Dr. Scott Carson
President

mand" nevertheless. The books will be relocated to the current office side of the A.R. Reddin library building where users may request their desired book(s), and the librarian will then retrieve the items for the patron. We will continue to acquire new and used books for our shelves. The space that is opened up by this move will be utilized for chapel, a high tech recording studio, and office space. The recording studio will be utilized to develop a new minor in Christian Recording and Production. We are hopeful that we can grow the minor into a full bachelor's degree in the future.

SBC will soon begin the renovation of the gymnasium floor. Because of intercollegiate bas-

ketball rule changes, the three-point line must be moved outward from its current location. This requires us to expand the court width an extra two and a half feet on each side. We anticipate this work completed before the end of summer.

Another major summer project is the renovation of the upstairs women's dormitory and this is a tremendous opportunity for your church, yourself, or an organization to adopt as their contribution to the growth of SBC. There are eight rooms and four bathrooms that must be completely refreshed before the beginning of the Fall 2020 Semester that begins the second week of August. For each full sponsor, the sponsor's name will be placed on a plaque on the door of the suite. Each suite will cost \$7,200 to renovate. Please refer to the adjacent flyer for more details.

The renovations include:

A. New wallboard, flooring, doors, ceiling, windows, lighting, and furniture for two stu-

dents per suite.

B. The removal of old air-conditioning window units.

C. The replacement of wallboard, flooring, doors, ceiling, vanity, shower unit, commode, and lighting in each bathroom.

D. New flooring throughout the main hallway.

E. Two new fire exit, "crash" doors.

For the coming Fall Semester, we fully anticipate filling to capacity all our dormitory rooms in both in the men's and women's dorms! Please pray that the Lord continues to bless our recruiting efforts.

The Lord is blessing us in so many ways even during these economically challenging times. We are moving forward with the plan to be fully functional again at the beginning the Fall Semester with students living and studying on campus.

The Lord continues to be on the move on the SBC campus and we must keep up with Him!

Equipping the Saints!
Dr. Carson

Stimulus Checks

Many in the BMA of Mississippi have already received or will soon receive their COVID 19 economic stimulus checks. If you have received your money and it isn't necessary for survival in this economic turndown, I encourage you to prayerfully consider donating it to Southeastern Baptist College. The school has been hit hard financially and I know the Lord will bless you for giving to this vital ministry of the BMA of Mississippi!

The Best Online 2-Year College

Southeastern Baptist College is designated by Intelligent.com as the "Best Two Year University" for Online Bible Colleges out of 201 institutions across the U.S. for 2020. That's twice in the last 4 years we have been ranked number one out of hun-

dreds of colleges and universities. And, we have consistently been in the top 25. SBC is also one of the top 10, least expensive schools among thousands of colleges in the country. Contact the SBC Admissions Officer today at 601-426-6346.

Available Scholarships

The Arnold Knight Memorial RLF Scholarship is available every semester 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, Ginny Singleton for more information.

SBC Choir

Do you want to sing for the Lord in our choir and receive college credit for it! Find out how by contacting Krista McKenzie at 601-426-6346.

Veterans Benefits

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

Amazon Smile

Anybody shopping on Amazon can select Southeastern Baptist College as your charity. When you do this, a portion of your purchase price will go directly to SBC as a donation from Amazon!

SBC Sports Gear

SBC Charger sports clothing and gear are available online and get 20% off when ordering more than \$80. Go to this website: <http://athletics.southeasternbaptist.edu/shop-southeastern-baptist-chargers>

Lighthouse Café

The SBC Lighthouse Café is closed until further notice. Nearly all of our students have chosen to study from home and the café was unable to find a reliable source of supplies. We plan to reopen the café at the Fall Semester.

Southeastern Baptist College



Best two-year online Bible college for 2020 in the country!

C-L-O-S-E-D



The Lighthouse Cafe
AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER



Contractors inspect gym floor in order to expand the width of the basketball court on both sides to accommodate the new college rules of moving the three-point line out 8 inches.



- Go here to see announcements for other sports tryouts - <http://athletics.southeasternbaptist.edu/>

Work on the SBC library has started



Dean Walker meets with Summer 2020 Bible professors.

Commencement Postponement

The 2020 Southeastern Baptist College graduation ceremony is postponed to Saturday, August 1, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. and will be held in the College gym. Dr. John Adams is our guest speaker. Dr. Adams is an alumnus, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Mantachie, Mississippi, and the Director of the Moral Action of Mississippi. Congratulations to our graduates!

Associate of Arts in Bible:

Jeffrey C. Jasper
Alvin Walker

Associate of Arts in Business:

Mae L. Evans

Associate of Arts in General Education:

Garin Arabia
Tyra J. Conerly
Temeshia R. Gray
MiKayla K. Laster
Deseree N. Moore

Bachelor of Science in Church Ministries:

Nathaniel J. Brown
David N. Ledlow

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration:

Hannah E. Mayerhoff

Spring 2020 Semester Honor Roll

Congratulations to our outstanding students who excelled in their studies and making the Honor Roll:

President's List

RANK	NAME	HOURS	GPA
1	Tyra Conerly, Columbia, MS	20	4.00
2	Maloree Lee, Purvis, MS	16	4.00
3	Thomas Jackson, Hattiesburg, MS	15	4.00
	Christopher Spence, Lake, MS	15	4.00
4	Patti Armour, Laurel, MS	13	4.00
5	Mae Evans, Louin, MS	12	4.00

Dean's List

1	Temeshia Gray, Sterlington, LA	17	3.82
2	Averii Cotton, Heidelberg, MS	16	3.81
	Daylyn Croom, Hattiesburg, MS	16	3.81
	Jacobi York, Philadelphia, MS	16	3.81
3	Nathaniel Brown, Lucedale, MS	12	3.75
4	Deseree Moore, Gulfport, MS	17	3.65

BMA Missions' Appeal For Disaster Relief Funds

by Eric Johnson
International Missions

Over the past several weeks, we have seen an unprecedented amount of instability related to food availability around the world. BMA churches, missionaries, and ministries have responded with great love while trying to meet the challenges that are being faced. BMMI, Water for Christ, EIM and others are doing what they can to help alleviate the need in many areas.

Through BMA Missions, we have been assisting missionaries, churches, and associations to help give food relief to people in need. The purpose and efforts of Missions is not one of humanitarian relief. We exist to fulfill the mission of God through the preaching of the gospel, making disciples, and planting churches; yet through the generosity of our churches we are able to help people in physical ways when unforeseen disas-



ters strike.

In the past, natural calamities such as tornadoes, typhoons, or earthquakes have necessitated the use of BMAA disaster relief funds. More recently, it has been hunger due to unemployment and food shortages related to COVID-19.

To date, since the pandemic began, countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East have received assistance through BMAA Missions. Everything possible has been done to make good use of these funds.

However, because of the global nature of this pandemic, we are quickly depleting the funds available for disaster relief. Missions giving is essential, and we trust the Lord that our churches

can continue to give for the gospel to be preached to the nations. We thank you for that.

Our request today is that if you are able to add an offering for disaster relief to your missions giving, it will be timely and used to help people in need.

Since the pandemic began, thousands of people in BMA churches around the globe would otherwise have gone hungry if not for God's grace shown in the generosity of BMA America churches.

Because of your gifts of love, people have had food to eat. This has also resulted in opportunities to share the love of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. May God continue to use BMA churches to share the gospel with the world.

(Go to bmamissions.org/donate, then choose "Disaster Relief Fund" or click on this link: <https://app.securegive.com/BMAMissions/main/donate/category>)

Be Not As Horses Or Mules

by Bro. Grover Laird

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." (Psalms 32:9)

Man is not just another animal. Unlike the beast of the field, man is "a living soul," (Genesis 2:7) "made after the similitude of God." (James 3:9) Yet to his disgrace, he often acts as a beast. (Psalms 32:9) Sometimes he doesn't show as much intelligence as one. (Isaiah 1:3; Jeremiah 8:7)

In the verse before us, man is asked not to act as an horse or as

a mule. Here the Psalmist is rebuking man for refusing to do what is right until he is pressured to do so. God wants us to live a holy, separated life. He wants us to faithfully serve Him through His church. He wants us to delight in Him, rejoice in Him, and walk with Him. Yet He wants us to do these things because we love Him and desire to please Him. He does not want us to serve Him just because we are under pressure, or because things work better for us when we do.

Because our Heavenly Father wants the wayward to get right without rebuke or pressure, He often gives man a grace period when he neglects to straighten

up his life. (11 Chronicles 11:17; 12:1,2) Some misunderstand this grace period and feel that they are getting by with their sinful, selfish living. (Ecclesiastes 8:11) Not so! Wrong will be suffered for. (Hebrews 12:6; Galatians 6:7,8) God just wants us to return on our own.

This does not mean, however, that it is wrong to pray for the Lord to keep us in His will less we forget or grow weak. The Psalmist prayed for this-- "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." (Psalms 119:35) The person that our text is rebuking is one who knows the will of God but makes no effort to do it until the Lord troubles his life.

What the Lord really wants is for us to stop and do some sober thinking on our own. He wants us to think about His goodness, mercy, and grace. Think about Calvary, a perishing world, material things, and eternal things. Then, by His grace, be faithful because we have a feeling for others and a love for Him.

It was Christ's love for Paul that seemed to keep him faithful, and it should be the same with us-- "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (2 Corinthians 5:14,15: Read also Romans 12:1; Acts 20:24; 21:13) *Taken from Sermons Devotionals Thoughts*

Basketball Recruits Sign with SBC



Left

Michael Fitzpatrick from St. Patrick Catholic High School in Biloxi, signs with the Chargers!

Right

Assistant Men's Basketball Coach, Geno White, signs Devonta Pittman from Wayne County Schools.



ADAPTING ON THE FIELD

The Poirier's Ministry Update

by Mike Poirier

BMA Missionary in Canada
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During this time of confinement it is I would say it as been profitable to us. Study, prayer, goal planning has been on the go since we are back home. I am not use to doing live video for church. It has been different standing in front a telephone and pretending that I am talking to a crowd. When you are use to hear AMEN, PRAISE THE LORD, GLORY, HALLELUJAHS, and now SILENCE, it is kind of different.

I like to be at church one hour early to welcome church people, new visitors, having a coffee and having fellowship and prayer before the service. Well,

it's not happening and we don't know when it will be. Every church establishment is closed and we cannot gather. I would say that this virus has changed the course of our ministry. I am working on a new type of evangelization to reach the people of Levis without having physical contact with them. That will be different.

Quebec

It is the 23rd of May and all non-essential stores or enterprises are still close and will be till the end of the month. As of the 18th of May the road block from municipality has been lifted. Our people are anxious to be in church and so am I. We pray that everything

we come to normal after this epidemic and people will seek Christ in their life.

Haiti

The country of Haiti has not been affected like ours with the virus, but the country is careful and not letting anyone in the country because of probable infection with the Covid-19. The life of the people has been under financial stress, everything has doubled in price except the wages. People are struggling to get food each day plus the insecurity with the attacks of gangs in the street growing to the point of causing fear to all the people of Haiti. There are no planes flying in our out of Haiti at this time. Our churches are doing good despite the situation. They ask your



We occupied ourselves while in confinement

prayers for supply of water and food. May God answer their plea as the need of his people is very real.

Africa

Cameroon Africa - the virus affected the attendance at church from regular attendance of 60 dropping to 25. People are carefully keeping distance. We have people that travel one hour to get to church and these are the one who fear to get sick and it is understandable.

The church received 15 water

filters from Water for Christ and are very thankful for that. They have 4 people who request baptism, Praise the Lord! Other countries in Africa have show interest to have a church in their area and we ask the Lord for leading in that area.

Thank you for your prayers and support to our ministry, we pray that our work has not been in vain even with this virus that affected the world. We pray that people will resume where they left and keep serving our Lord no matter where they are.

Pray for safety from Covid-19, supply of French bibles for our ministry and other French countries, for our evangelization program, and determination for our churches to seek to preach to the lost.

May God bless you and protect you in your ministry.

For the cause of Christ- Jer 33:3

Secrets to a long pastorate

by Dr. Allen Tilley

I just celebrated my twenty-first anniversary as pastor at my church. Although we've had lots of ups and downs over the years, I'm more in love with the church than when I first started. Pastors often ask me for the "secret" to a long-term pastorate. While no single formula exists, the following eight "secrets" have guided me along the way.

Secret #1

There is no secret. While there are lots of things that can shorten a ministry, no one answer fits every pastor or church because God created us uniquely different. The best advice I've received was from a Rick Warren conference years ago. He said, "Don't take my program back home and try to imple-

ment it without considering your personality and your church's identity. If you do, it's sure to fail." Being a pastor, I



Allen Tilley

love acronyms (if you don't believe me, ask my people). For me, the following seven remaining "secrets" can be best summarized with the word: G.L.O.W.I.N.G.

Secret #2

Grow spiritually. Being a pas-

tor means we are involved in the fiercest of spiritual battles. Satan is never happy with churches or pastors. As a result, an intimate walk with the Lord is not only preferred; it is mandatory. Although we never "arrive" spiritually, we must pas-

When you pray, ask God to let you grow old together with your people

sionately cling to Him, growing, developing, and maturing in our relationship with Him.

Secret #3

Love people. Let's face it men. We are in the people business. Yes, people can be messy creatures who seem broken continu-

ously. Our job isn't to fix people but to love them in Jesus' name. Being under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd, we must genuinely love all the sheep not just those who are loveable. Your people will be willing to overlook your faults if they know that you love them unconditionally.

Secret #4

Outwardly focused. Pastors and churches that emphasize fulfilling the Great Commission tend to have fewer problems whereas pastors and churches that treat the church like a country club for the saints become self-centered and critical. As pastors, we must teach our people that winning and discipling the lost must come before personal conveniences.

Secret #5

Weather Storms. No ideal jobs exist, even for pastors. By running at the first sign of trouble, we rob ourselves and our people of the insights that can only be learned by sticking together through tough times. My mentor, E.D. Sarratt, once said, "If the grass looks greener on the other side, it's probably because there is a septic tank over there." Instead of letting the naysayers get the best of you, give them over to the Lord, love on them, and keep pressing forward.

Secret #6

Inspire by example. I pastor with these three thoughts always in mind. First, my people would rather see a sermon instead of hearing a sermon. Second, a picture paints a thou-

sand words. Third, faith is more caught than it is taught. Therefore, I must live how I expect my people to live. To do differently is hypocritical.

Secret #7

Never abuse trust. Both our position and our tenure generate trust. It takes years to build but only seconds to destroy. Although we cannot live up to man's expectations, we must be men of integrity and faith at all times. We must also guard our people's confidentiality, even when we feel threatened by those same people. Once people know they can trust us, they will follow us.

Secret #8

God's grace. A long-tenured pastorate is the result of God's grace working on our behalf. In my ministry, God has blessed more in spite of me than because of me. When you pray, ask God to let you grow old together with your people. I believe that's the kind of prayer that God loves to answer.

Dr. Allen Tilley is pastor of First Baptist Church of Carthage, Texas. Contact him at allen@firstbaptistcarthage.com.

Darlene Carey Academy Construction Progress

Below is a short report from Doug Lee, president of BMA Bible College in the Philippines. The work in the Philippines is affected by the Covid-19 virus just as is our work here at home. They are making progress and we appreciate their dedication.

by Doug Lee

Quarantine Lockdown has had minimal effect on the construction of the Darlene Carey Christian Academy. We have been in quarantine for eight weeks, but the workers are living on the work site. We are

praying the first phase will be completed by August when school begins.

Phase One will accommodate Grades 1-6. We are still in need of funds. If you would like to be a part of this project, funds may be sent to BMA Missions office, Doug Lee or Jimmy Walker, P.O. Box 878, Conway, AR 72033. Please des-



ignate on your check: Darlene Carey Christian Academy.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Aging

from page 3

return home again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. (2 Samuel 19:31-39).

We know the feeling, don't we?

Food has lost its taste, he can't hear a thing, the pleasures he can enjoy are fewer and fewer all the time. One of his greatest pleasures is just staying home. Know that feeling too, do you?

Now, before we leave this old gentleman, notice what he did. He suddenly had a bright idea. Seeing the young man Chimham standing there—was he a son or grandson or servant? We have no way of knowing—he said to David, "But here is your servant Chimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king and do for him what seems good to you." David said, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you." (19:38-39)

For generations to come, descendants of Chimham lived in the Bethlehem region, doubtless on the estate David granted their ancestor. See Jeremiah 41:17.

Barzillai did what he could. Sometimes we seniors feel

energized, sometimes we feel like we're almost gone. But we do what we can.

We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

My grandmother was eighty-seven and fading fast. My mother called from the family farm to tell me Grandma had been taken to the hospital in Birmingham and the family was gathering.

Bessie Lowery McKeever may have been the godliest person I ever knew. Widowed at age 40 while carrying her twelfth child, she lived another forty-seven years. Her life was hard but she was faithful to her Lord Jesus Christ. I have her Bible. It's marked up and precious to me.

I entered the hospital room where some of her children had gathered. Two or three of her daughters were tending to her at the bed. When I entered, she recognized me and held up her hands. I walked to the bed, bent over to kiss her, and she kissed me. I said, "How are you, Grandma?" In a tiny voice, she said, "I'm almost gone."

I said, "Grandma, I know you have a scripture on your heart today. What is it?"

From that frail body, with a weak voice, she said, "I can do...all things...through Christ who strengthens me..."

I almost laughed. Here she is almost wasted away, confined to this bed, unable to do anything. But she can do all things through Christ! I wanted to shout, "Hallelujah! What a victory we have in Christ."

That promise from Philippians 4:13 does not mean we can do "anything." I cannot play in the NFL or NBA. I cannot be a rocket scientist and cannot be President of the United States. But what I can do is whatever my Lord asks of me today.

And what He was asking of my wonderful Grandmother Bessie was that she lie back in His arms and let Him take her to Heaven.

She did that so beautifully.

My brother Ron and I preached her funeral a few days later. She is with the Lord Jesus at this moment. I will see her again. I can't wait.

That's the answer to the question "what can I do?" You can do whatever the Lord wants of you, nothing more and nothing less. And He will give you the strength to do it.

What's keeping you from obeying?

Moral Action Emphasis

by Dr. John M. Adams

1. I wish to share our joy in the efforts to visit the State Capitol in Jackson and for the work of 19th District State Representative Randy Boyd. Randy is a Deacon at First Baptist Church, Mantachie. He has graciously over the years introduced me to State Representatives and Mississippi State Senators and Chairmen of the Committees that Moral Action ministries are interested in. Since 2008 we have made friends of our leading State Officers and have led in Senate and House prayers 14 times.

2. We continue to have our Capitol Prayer walks twice a year and I truly appreciate the pastor's

and laymen who have joined with us.

3. Our 2020 Moral Action Freedom offering will celebrate our July 4th Sundays of June 28th and July 5th. Please ask your pastor and classes to lead out in taking this once a year offering. Our Agency is small but oh, what a witness the BMA of Mississippi has for Moral Living and the desire to honor Jesus Christ.

Darla and I count it the highest honor to work for you and our great churches.



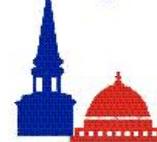
Dr. Adams

MORAL ACTION



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"Promoting Biblical Morality Across America"

Please pray for and give financially to help Moral Action expose the anti-Christian agenda of such groups as A.C.L.U., American Atheists, Freedom From Religion Foundation and the Gay Rights Movement.

Pray for us as we visit Washington, D.C.

-Dr. John M. Adams

2020 Freedom Offering June 28th & July 5th

Former BMA Pastor Freddy Mills Dies

Funeral services for Freddy Mills, Sr. were held May 16,

2020 at the Faithway Baptist Church. Bro. Mills, age 70, passed away on Saturday, May 9, 2020



Freddy Mills

at Marion General Hospital. Elder Dewitt Bain, Elder Brent Robbins and Elder David Moree officiated.

Freddy Mills, Sr. was born on December 19, 1949 in Laurel, Mississippi, to Lawrence Ray Mills and Edith Mae Holifield Mills. He attended Pearl River Community College and owned Mills Body Shop. He was a faithful preacher since 1985. His church affiliations include, Faithway Baptist Church, Shiloh Baptist in Kosciusko, French Road Baptist in Indianola, Southgate Baptist in Monticello, Grace Baptist in Columbia and Cooley Springs Baptist in Mt. Olive.

2020 National GMA Camp Cancelled

National GMA Covid-19 Update

by Laurie Hicks, National Director of Youth Auxiliaries

It was a hard decision for the National GMA Advisory Council, but we voted to cancel the 2020 National GMA Camp. There are so many uncertainties during this time, and we felt it was a decision that had to be made. We know God has a plan that is bigger than all of this, and we are praying for His direction in how to proceed with future plans for the National GMA.

Since National Camp has been canceled, the GMA Advisory Council has voted to allow all 2019-20 officers that are willing to serve to continue as officers for 2020-2021. We understand that some girls may not be able to continue to serve and some may have to be appointed to fill vacant positions. Therefore, we are asking girls that qualify and feel led to be a national officer for the 2020-2021

year to fill out the officer survey form. The National GMA Advisory Council will determine if the applicant is qualified to fill a needed position. Girls may also be chosen to work with some current officers in mentoring situations, and some may be selected to work as support officers for the next year.

The Advisory Council voted to keep the same theme and

project for 2020-2021 — 95% Freeman BMA Philippines



We know God has a plan that is bigger than all of this

building remodeling and 5% General Fund. Groups that have raised money for the project this

year are asked to go ahead and send it to Kristin Herring by Aug. 1, 2020. Bro. Freeman needs the funds to get started on the project. Next year's project money will be due Aug. 1, 2021. Awards will not be given for project money sent this year

but will be given for the total of funds sent this year and next year.

Some T-shirts were already printed for camp, and they are available in a limited supply. If anyone is interested, contact Mandy Townsend.

The Advisory Council is rec-

ommending that the National GMA give Daniel Springs a love offering of \$5,000 to help alleviate some of the financial burdens due to camps being cancelled because of Covid-19. The Council is asking for each church to cast a vote of approval for the love offering on the Google Docs Vote being disseminated by state and district promoters.

GMA Counselors should be watching their email because they will get all of this information with links to all forms, surveys and contact information in an email from their district promoters.

Scripture Thoughts by Cleaver

I John 1.5 - *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

What a contrast in darkness and light! It is so simple to see the difference in darkness and light. John is saying it is so simple not only to see the difference, but also to feel, know, and actually be in the light rather than the darkness. Jesus was revealed in the flesh by His Father. John saw Him, walked with Him, ate with Him, listened to Him, learned from Him, and now declares that revelatory experience to his readers. The Egyptians experienced a "darkness that can be felt (Exodus 10.21)."

Jude (13)

writes of a "blackness of darkness." Darkness disorients anyone who tries to navigate in it. Walking in darkness leads to an uncertain and questionable journey's end. Walking in the light of Christ leads one to the place God intended. Each human being is a unique and lovely creation of the Father. He wants His children to walk in light. He sent His Son, Jesus, to light that way.

Dear Reader, will you allow the light of the Lord to illuminate your path in life right now?



Tony Cleaver

1 John 2.1 - *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*

Because I live in a skin suit, I will sin. Even though I may be a committed Christian of many years' journey and dedication to His cause and to His Church, I will stumble and fall and sin - and sin significantly. What does one do when this happens? John is instructing us that Jesus is our advocate with the Father when this happens. We must call on our advocate to confess our sins. The Last Apostle says something similar regarding his

own life as he faced a daily battle with good and evil in his own actions (Romans 7.24-25). "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord".

Yes, Good Reader, when we sin, we have an advocate. An advocate is a supporter, a backer, a campaigner for our best interests and good. Jesus Christ is our advocate on high. Let us call on Him right now.

Dr. Tony Cleaver is a retired U.S. Army Chaplain and Director of Distance Learning for BMA Seminary.

You may contact him at jstmcleaver@embarqmail.com

He wants His children to walk in light.
He sent His Son, Jesus, to light that way.

History & Archives Commission

4229 Highway 15 North, Laurel, Mississippi 39440

If Walls Could Speak

Recently I was reading through a series of books titled "A Noble Company – Essays on Notable Particular/Regular Missionary Baptists in America," I came across a discourse delivered in the early 1700's by a Baptist minister named Samuel Caldwell, which I have provided. Reading this made me think of one of the many overzealous discussions between myself and some other ministers while attending Southeastern Baptist College. A statement was made by a preacher brother concerning the sanctuary in the church building where he pastored. It went something like this, "If I want to take all the pews out and have a football game in the sanctuary I will." That did not sit right with me then, and it still doesn't to this day. That sanctuary is a place dedicated

to the glory of God. Sadly, many things going on in sanctuaries today are far more injurious than they are glorious.

"A meeting-house comes to have a life, a biography, of its own. It enters so much into the life of successive generations of worshippers, it is so invested with their feeling, it so invests itself in their desire and reverence, Sabbaths have dropped into it such precious deposits, that its dead wood becomes vital and redolent with spiritual qualities. Its beginnings, its improvements, its decay, take all the interest of human history from the uses it serves, and the spiritual facts it represents, - from the purposes it embodies,



Jason Howard
Director

and the persons whose religious life it nourishes. Like a person, it gathers character, influence, associations, history, even love, as it does spiritual offspring, with years. It stands a venerable witness of the changes and fortunes of society, to whose stability and better life it has been a minister. It is born of the religious spirit of people, and lives out of their deepest life; it draws their frequent feet to its doors; it is the great minister to their moral wants and education; it becomes involved in their history, and is part even of the material civilization. It is the house of the soul, the meeting-place of the finite and infinite, "the gate of heaven." It is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. It is dedicated to Christ, and his holy, ever coming, everlasting kingdom. And so by all that goes into it, and all that comes out of it; by what we give it and what we take; because so much of our best affections are invested in it; because it is built

not in the earth, but really in the imperishable needs of our spiritual nature, in the eternal laws of our moral and immortal life; because it stands in the world for God, for his truth, for righteousness, for a world to come; because it has a voice and speaks from God to men, and back from men to God; by all the privilege and ministry it is; by the light and comfort and benefit there is in it; by all the part it has in our Christian faith, and through that in our better hours and our nobler life; by all it has cost from beginning to end, as well as by all it has accomplished; by all the influence it has had on the life going on around it, as well as by the life, the religion, the church which has grown up within it, - does the history of a meeting house take into itself an interest corresponding."

Amen

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