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Living in a (Nominal) Religious Context

by Ed Stetzer

The fastest shrinking category in American religion is still the largest category—people who self-identify as Christian, but whose religion is not a central part of their lives. We call these people nominal Christians.

However, this largest category is also the fastest shrinking.

To be blunt: nominalism is dying.

While this may not be good for a culture increasing in secularization, in some ways, it is a good thing for the church.

Churches will have more of an opportunity to distinguish themselves from the host culture. Lives empowered by Christ should look different and now they increasingly will.

In spite of the decline of nominalism, there are pockets throughout North America that still have a heavy presence of nominalism. The Bible Belt, pardon the bad metaphor,



Ed Stetzer

supports some of these pockets.

Here are some dangers, difficulties, and directives of living in a nominal religious context.

Many American Southerners still possess a religious terminology that expresses they were saved at the age of 8, baptized at the age of 10, and are on the membership roll at the Crooked Creek Pentecostal Church or the Sugar Creek Methodist Church. Many of these individuals based their salvation on being moral, decent, and upstanding citizens, who love their families, their country, and even their God.

Living in such a nominal religious context presents some dangers, difficulties, and directives for believers who are passionately committed to king Jesus.

Dangers of Living in a Nominal Religious Context

The dangers of living in a nominal religious context aren't the same as living in a zealous violent religious con-

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Senior Adult Conference March 19

by Kenneth Flynt, Director, Commission on Senior Adults



Senior Adults gather at Big Creek Baptist Church in 2018

The South Mississippi Senior Adult Conference time is as hand and seniors will be headed for Big Creek Baptist Church, Soso, for a day of inspiration, worship, laughter and a happy time together.

The oldest man present & the oldest woman present will be recognized in a special way for many years of service to the Lord. Plaques will be given to minister's completing 50 years of ministry. The Calm Assurance Quartet and Larry Lott are ready to provide an afternoon of joyful singing. You will not want to miss this event!

The host church is looking forward to your presence. Don't miss the 2019 senior conference, March 19, beginning at 9:30 am. Don't forget to register when you get there!



Kenneth Flynt
Director

BMA SHORT TERM MISSIONS

Church Mission Opportunity in Arkansas

Is your Sunday school class, church, or youth group looking for a week-long mission trip where you can learn skills that can be used in your own local church, all while helping a sister

church reach its community with the gospel? Then the Launchpad Community Mission Project in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, may be a great opportunity for you. Your group would lead backyard Bible clubs during the day and minister to those in need through service projects during the afternoon. You would encourage homeless families working to reset their lives and become self-sustainable as they work toward ending homelessness for their family.

Siloam Springs is located in the Northwest corner of Arkansas, which is one of the fastest growing areas in the United States and home to many corporate giants, including: Walmart, JB Hunt, Tyson, Simmons Foods, and the University of Arkansas. It's also home of East Kenwood Missionary Baptist Church; a small church in the middle of a church revitalization, being used of God in big way.

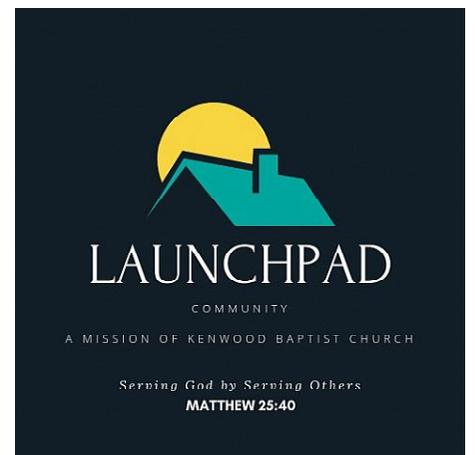
"When our church began praying for a vision to reach our community and serve them without expecting anything in return," said Pastor Jeremy Wiginton, "we never expected to end up building homes on our property to aid homeless families."

The Launchpad Community ministry includes four small homes on the church's property, ranging in size from 500-600 square feet. The homes are utilized in partnership with Genesis House, a local homeless day shelter, to provide emergency housing for 90 days while families work through a program to become self-sufficient.

The 2-year pilot program has resulted in a successful launch of 24 families, with a success rate greater than 95% to date. Over the next 10 years, 160 families and over 800 homeless individuals will pass through these homes, each being given an opportunity to establish new friendships with Christian families in the area and receive Jesus Christ as Savior!

East Kenwood MBC needs help this summer to expand their reach into the community as part of their revitalization. According to Pastor Jeremy, "This is a great opportunity for church

see Short Term Mission on page 3



Upcoming Events

2019 Missions & Evangelistic Conference
March 29, Midway Church, Sumrall

National BMA Meeting
May 6-8, Rogers, Arkansas

North Mississippi Senior Adult Conference
May 14, FBC Mantachie

BMA of Mississippi Midyear Meeting
May 21, East Amory Church

Southeastern Baptist College

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

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

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.” Hebrews 13:1-2

It has been another personally challenging week for me. One year ago, and on my birthday, my sweet mother-in-law passed away. We traveled from Mississippi to Oklahoma where we linked up with other family members. I handled most of the funeral financial arrangements while the family got reacquainted. The church that my sister-in-law attends took good care of us and blessed us with prayers and a reception after the funeral. The pastor did a wonderful job eulogizing my mother-in-law and the funeral home was very professional. The interment was complete and we all traveled back to our home across the United States.

Now, almost exactly a year later, here we are in Oklahoma again for my father-in-law's funeral. Again, I worked the finances for the event while family gathered together. The same believers wrapped their arms around us and treated us as their own church family. The good folks here in Oklahoma provided a wonderful church dinner, a short birthday event, and the pastor provided an impromptu and wonderful message on the life and ministry of my

father-in-law.

Sadly, in the last few years my father-in-law's mind was not what it had been decades past and he pretty much ostracized almost everyone he knew. We wondered if a viewing was even appropriate and thought few, if any would attend. We went ahead with the viewing and were amazed by the number of extended family and long ago friends who attended. It was a blessing to us as we listened to memories of Pablo and Ann's experiences that we previous had not known. What a wonderful time of remembrance it turned out to be.

I share all this because, though we struggled emotionally with the changes in Linda's parents' personalities and mental decline in their later years, the memories by friends and relatives of my in-laws' better years, far outweighed these last few. And, the experience of strangers, yet believers, reaching out to us as fellow believers in need of spiritual support, was an overwhelm-



Dr. Scott Carson
President

ing and beautiful experience. Their ministry to us during these difficult days was a tremendous blessing to us all.

As we have opportunity, we as believers are encouraged to lift others up around us. And though Linda and I and other family members who traveled to Oklahoma, thought we may not have needed the love of strangers, in hindsight, we really did. They freely, with great insight and compassion as fellow believers, blessed us with food,

fellowship and much prayers. They reached out to us and helped support us as we traversed the emotionally challenging events of the loss of a loved one, funeral plans, costs, and events.

I wish to thank again all who expressed their condolences to us on Facebook and in other ways. Your love and concern is truly appreciated. God bless each one of you!

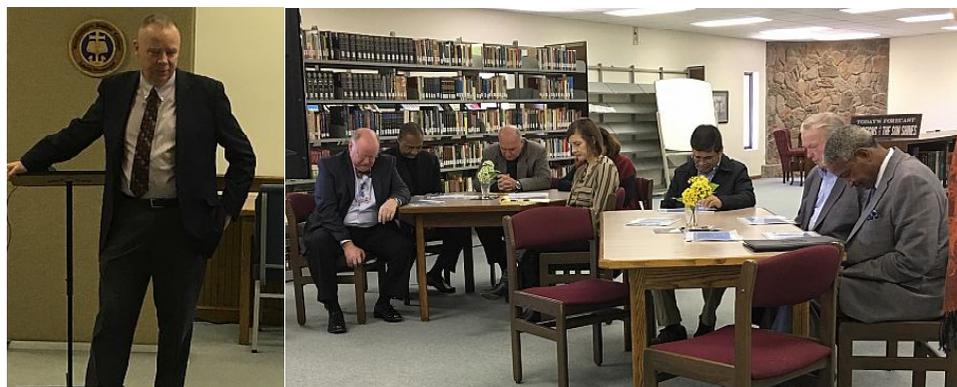
“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” Romans 15:1-3

- Dr. Scott Carson

Upgraded Lighting System



A very large project was completed this week. A LED lighting company replaced all conventional lighting on campus with LED lights. The estimated savings on energy costs will be above 70%!



Dr. Carson (left) presented a briefing to the members of the newly organized SBC Community Advisory Committee reviewing the SBC legacy story, current events, and strategic plans for the future.

Church Donor Dinner - Mark Your Calendar

We are planning a church donor dinner currently scheduled to be held on Monday evening, April 8, 2019. Invitations will be sent and the Laurel, Mississippi, location for the dinner announced as we get closer to the April event date. The invitations are in the mail. Please remember to R.S.V.P to this event as Instructed on the invitation. We are looking forward to this time of fellowship and celebration!

BMA of Mississippi Ministers' Scholarship

Thinking about taking courses at SBC? There are several scholarship opportunities available for our student body that supporters of the school have

graciously provided. In addition, if you are a BMA minister, there are scholarships specially set aside and available for you! Financial Aid Officer Ginny Singleton has all the information you need. She can be reached at 601-426-6346.

Southeastern Baptist College Needs Update

SBC has many infrastructure and equipment needs. This list is not exhaustive and we will be researching costs for each project. We will add the costs in future publications as bids are received. However, you as a church, an association or as a church ministry (Sunday school class, etc.) should look this list over and pray about which project the Lord wants you to choose.

Immediate Needs:

- Repaving the parking lot
- New Flooring in main building and library
- Remodel upstairs women's dormitory
- Refresh outside of both men's and women's dormitories
- Remodel bathrooms (main building and gym)
- Upgrade classroom electronic needs (computers, monitors, etc.)
- Professional weekly cleaning
- On call maintenance personnel
- Repairing or replacing the marquee sign
- Ice Machine for events and sports use

The VA WANTS YOU!... ...To Get a College Education

Have you served in America's armed forces? Then you probably have Veterans Administration tuition benefits that you can use toward a free education right here at SBC. I urge you to contact your local VA representative for an evaluation of your benefits. You earned them! And remember, many 'Post 9-11' benefits are now fully transferable to family members. SBC has numerous students receiving VA assistance for both online and in-classroom tuition.

Southeastern College Updates

Dr. Carson is available to fill the pulpit for preaching or to provide an

update about the great things the Lord is doing at Southeastern Baptist College. I will shortly be touring Mississippi churches and presenting opportunities for churches and groups to take on the challenge for prioritized projects for Southeastern Baptist College.

While much has been done, the college still stands in much disrepair and because of this, it does not honor God as an institution of higher learning as it should. These will be short presentations, but exciting as well, as I share how you can be used by God to advance His ministry. You can reach Dr. Carson at 601-433-4736 or at scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu.

Revivals

Riverside Baptist Church, Ellisville
March 17 - 20, Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. We will have a different speaker each day. Sunday Dr. Scott Carson (both services), Monday Bro. Greg Medenwald, Tuesday Bro. Ed Steele, and Wednesday Bro. Glenn Shoemake.

Walnut Grove Baptist Church in Fulton, Mississippi (across from The Meadows on Hwy 25) is having a Spring Revival April 8th - 10th at 6:30 p.m. Bro. Cory Flanagin from Tishomingo Chapel Baptist will be the speaker. Please come worship with us and reignite your life!

Three Philosophies Alive and Well in Our Day

by Dr. Tony Cleaver

From whatever source you get your news, there is a pattern of old philosophies encrypted in the behaviors of people making news. This is especially true with “the stars” held up as role models for us. Members of Christian churches must give attention to philosophies that have been around for some time. These three philosophies may not be called by their original names today, yet their main beliefs have tremendous influence in the work of the Church. These three philosophies are: Stoicism, Skepticism, and Cynicism.

Stoicism’s main point is fate. Stoics tell us the world and its events are controlled by some cosmic roll of dice. Individuals have no control over their lives. There is no good nor evil, only an impersonal “cosmic something” that is in charge. Stoics embrace the best thing for a person to do is have positive morality to bring one’s world into somewhat of order. Christianity is in stark contrast to Stoicism. God created this world and controls His creation. God is personal and is attuned to His people. He responds to them through His divine acts. Jesus was intentionally sent into the world to redeem all who will come to Him through the cross. The

Holy Spirit guides Christians in all their walk of faith.

Skepticism’s thrust is only personal experience brings knowledge. Skeptics tell us there is no truth that is binding on all people; it is all individual determination of what truth or moral right is to the person. Christianity radically departs to firmly embrace that truth does not lie in human experience alone. Christianity differs in that it insists truth is foundational in God’s creation and character, not in human understanding only. There are moral absolutes made known in the Scriptures and specifically in the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ.

Cynicism’s main emphasis is personal freedom. Cynics ridicule anyone



Cleaver

who conforms to any accepted social or moral standard. All ethics or moral standards are the object of Cynic’s ridicule. Christianity contrasts in that it offers a way of life shown by Scriptures and the lifestyle demonstrated especially by Jesus. When one receives a new heart through Christ, it enables one to walk in a path which is acceptable in moral, ethical, and spiritual behavior framed by the Lord Himself.

We in the Christian church do not minister in a vacuum. Look at the headlines, listen to the news. Do you see the results of the old three philosophies at work in our world? Look at your own life. It is no accident you are where you are today. There is no cosmic roll of dice that brought you to where you are. Look at any country today - almost all have moral boundaries that mirror the Ten Commandments. There is a moral order to this universe to which all humankind is

subject. We might scorn limits of what we can do, but we all have responsibility to respect human life and the dignity of each person. We are accountable to the One who breathed into us the breath of life.

Unlike Christianity, all philosophies have as their starting point the ability of imperfect human reasoning. On the other hand, Christianity makes room for the revelation God has given. The Bible tells us “the Word was made flesh.” The Bible tells us that “Christ died for our sins, was buried, and raised the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Stoicism, Skepticism, and Cynicism are alive in our world today. Christianity does not come from the limited mind of man. Christianity comes from the perfect, holy, and omnipotent Lord revealed in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, and Who is at work in His world today.

Let’s LGBT — Let’s Get Back to the Truth

by John Jones,
Pastor, Highland Park
Oklahoma City

(via Oklahoma Baptist) – Throughout America, there is an obvious movement led by Satan himself and being carried out by the powers of darkness pushing for acceptance and celebration of homosexuality and gay marriage. In 10 short years, this movement has gone from being accepted in just one state (Massachusetts in 2004) to all states being forced to accept it regardless of a state’s will in the matter per the United States Federal Courts.

The grave mistake of secular thinking is that marriage is from the mind of man, marriage is a result of social evolution and marriage is man’s to adjust as desired. Rather, the truth is quite the contrary drawn from the ultimate source, the Word of God. Marriage is not a product of man, but God; marriage is anchored in God not social change.

Some argue and think that “we need to get with the times” when (in actuality) we need to get right with God. I say, let’s LGBT! Not the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender LGBT; but Let’s Get Back to the Truth! Gay marriage and adultery are two examples of dangerously sinful behavior that are destroying the family unit and this nation.

One does not need to look at the Bible to see the error and sickness of homosexuality, but can simply look to the barnyard and nature. Homosexuality is not only unnatural it is sinful.

What Some are Doing

Some liberal churches and denominations have accepted this unbiblical lifestyle, which is clear indication that they are not following the Bible. Rather,

they are teaching that love will cover the sin of being gay, and their apostate church will love homosexuals into the fold.

These pastors and their churches are in error and have mistaken the commandment to love thy neighbor into allowing and accepting an obvious sinful lifestyle into a church body. With this flawed application of the commandment to love one another, we might as well let into our church memberships practicing strippers, drug peddlers, serial murderers, and the like by loving them into fellowship.

Where is the repentance?

It is not there, and with its absence is an absence of forgiveness which is a condemning spiritual problem.

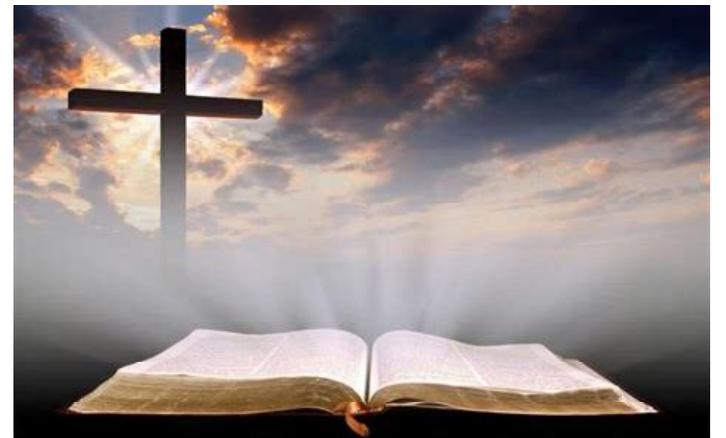
Repentance is an important aspect of our relationship with God. Christ Himself stated, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Some pastors are falsely teaching that love covers sin without repentance, and that is simply not in accordance with the Word of God; but it is in accordance with the plan of Satan. Remember, Satan wants man condemned to Hell like he is, and what better way to condemn man than to deceive with what sounds good on the surface but is in truth a lie; in fact, a lie from the pits of Hell?

Why So Popular?

First, rapid cultural shifts — secu-

larism is in, and Christ is out. The entertainment industry with its deep pockets (i.e. Hollywood) is a strong supporter of the gay agenda. Aspects of our public educational systems are growing into strong supporters of the gay agenda in various ways.

I am well acquainted with a profes-



sor for the University of Oklahoma’s Education Department who has indicated that most and nearly all his colleagues radically support the LGBTQ community and their horrible efforts. Think about it. The teachers who are teaching our children’s teachers in public school system are shaping and promoting their immoral world view.

A second reason for homosexuality gaining popularity is that gays had any ally in the nation’s White House (Obama). The biggest and most listened to voice in America embraced this unrighteous lifestyle in many ways; in fact, some have called him the first gay president.

The current administration ended the 17-year “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” military policy which was an appropriate policy. There is an aggressive push in

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SHORT TERM MISSIONS

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groups to have a mission field opportunity in the U.S., experience some on the field training that they can utilize at their home church, and help a small sister church revitalize in their home area.”

Church groups will live in and operate out of East Kenwood’s building during their mission trip. Students must have completed the 7th grade to attend, but there’s no age restriction beyond that.

Mission teams will arrive on Saturday evening at the church and be greeted by their church host for the week. They will worship with the church on Sunday, survey the area, and review the work sites for the week. Teams will conduct two backyard Bible clubs each morning, from Monday through Thursday, with work projects in the afternoon. There will be two team-building events during the week so that mission teams can experience the area and have fun together as well. The Launchpad Community Project will begin June 15 and run weekly through August 2.

BMA Short Term Missions is excited to partner with Launchpad to create more areas to serve. For more information contact Angela Rice by email at angela@bmamissions.org, or by phone at 501-455-4799.

Back to the Truth

continued from page 3

the homosexual community to “come out” to family and friends among other immoral trends. A question this author has is: why does sexuality need to be discussed in the workplace?

Moreover, under the previous administration (Obama) the Justice Department was instructed to no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act, and the Attorney General of the United States encouraged states to do the same. Again, you see Satan’s work through ignorant and spiritually blind who hold positions of power.

Another reason for popularity is the creation of a negative image of those who believe and vocalize support for traditional biblical marriage. This is the fulfillment of Isa. 5:20: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

The gays have likened their cause to the civil rights movement of the last century. Though there is a major difference between that movement and the gay movement in that racial equality was morally righteous and appropriate; whereas, the gay movement is unrighteous morally and inappropriate.

Rejection of same-sex marriage is equated to racism by those who support the cause, and you are hateful and bigoted if you are against it. Gay sympathizers assert that if you

do not agree with them, then you hate them, which is entirely unrighteous and not the appropriate Christian perspective. “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Rom. 1:26-28).

What are we to Do?

Are we to sit back and watch Satan work and destroy lives? This is a big problem; it’s a hill to die on for the child of God. We must defend true marriage, despite the fact that we live in a day when we will not be popular for defending this truth. A very telling passage of scripture involving marriage occurs in Matt. 19:3-6, where the Lord is presented a question concerning marriage:

“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which

made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” In these verses, Jesus confirmed what is stated in Gen. 2:24: “a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.”

A man cannot marry another man, neither can a woman marry another woman, and become one flesh through reproduction. So Christians, what are we to do? We must refuse to recognize a body as a New Testament church when it is in such disgusting error of tolerating gays into the body. They are defiled, unclean, and unworthy of such title as a New Testament church.

Staff Openings

Gulfport Church Seeks Pastor

Campground Missionary Baptist Church located in Harrison County, Mississippi, is seeking a full-time pastor. If you feel led to pursue this opportunity please Email resumes to southernirrigation@att.net or contact Alan Sullivan at 228-860-8740.

Church Seeking pastor

Greenwood Missionary Baptist Church located in Itawamba County, Mississippi, is seeking a full-time pastor. E-mail resumes to kelbycomer18@hotmail.com. or mail to 1400 Greenwood Church Rd. Fulton, Ms 38843.

Texas Church Seeking Youth Minister

Greenpond Baptist Church in Como, Texas, is seeking a bivocational youth minister. Housing is included. Resumes may be emailed to terrywbolton@yahoo.com or the mailed to Terry Bolton, 123 Charles St., Sulphur Springs, Texas 75482. Inquiries by phone should call 903-348-6479.

What Else Should We Do?

Praise God and be proud of what God ordained in marriage. Sadly, we live in a nation where traditional marriage between one man and one woman is falling by the wayside to sin and the system. For many, it’s become very convenient to live together in adultery and have children out of wedlock, taking advantage of social programs.

Moreover, our flawed system pays out more money to single parents versus married parents, so from an economical perspective it’s not irrational, but that doesn’t make it right. For those needing to make right what is wrong in their unmarried yet living together arrangement, I recommend marriage. A ministry for such who are seeking to marry

is the Adam & Eve Christian Marriage Institute’s free Pre-Marriage Education Program found at aaecmi.org.

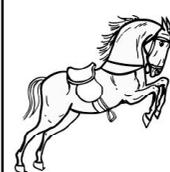
Lastly, Highland Park Baptist Church in Oklahoma City has an established church marriage policy that upholds our beliefs in Biblical marriage. It is recommended that other BMA churches consider a resolution fully explaining their position on marriage, as well.

If passed through a business meeting, this position would be etched into meeting minutes and considered the church’s position on this topic as a local New Testament Church. This would serve to bolster the church’s defense to this offense that the Lord’s churches are being challenged with in this evil age.

-via Baptist Trumpet

Wild Horse Ministries

Paul Daily Relates Horse Training with God based on Trust, Faith, Obedience, & Love



Shiloh Baptist Church

Invites you to join us for Wild Horse Ministries Presentation **On March 31st at 2:00pm** at **7219 HWY 35, Mize, MS 39116**

For more information contact Bryson Haden @ 601-797-4597 or 662-251-0443 or by email @ blhaden@gmail.com
Bring a Lawn Chair - Snacks & Drinks will be available for purchase from Our GMAs
A love offering will be taken for this Ministry



Contact BMA Foundation Executive Director **Charles Attebery** for more information. charles@bmaamerica.org or cell 501-472-2183

A Gift That Keeps Giving

Gifts to the BMA Foundation are never spent. They are invested and the earnings benefit BMA departments annually until the Lord returns.

Some Ways to Give
Cash - Stocks and bonds
Life insurance policies - IRA Rollovers
Bequests

Church of the Covered Dish BY THOMAS TAPP



One good sign you need more training in the area of visitation...



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Nominal Christians

from page 1

text like regions in the Middle East. Living in those areas can cost one their life. Living in a nominal religious context may not put one's life in danger, but if not careful it can endanger a believer in other ways that are just as costly—just on a different scale.

There's the danger of embracing a comfortable Christianity.

One thing about nominal "Christians" is that their faith doesn't cost them anything. Their faith or belief is like a trinket or badge they wear. It doesn't prompt them to give up guilty pleasures, to give generously of their time, talents, or treasures to the Lord or His church, or to vulnerably share their faith with someone else.

If not careful, passionate believers can allow such comfort to influence them so that they too become comfortable.

There's the danger of domesticating the gospel. Lesslie Newbigin was one who landed on this idea when he came home from forty years of faithful mission work in India. Upon his return, he saw that the church, and thus the gospel, had been imprisoned by the cultural milieu. As a result, the gospel had been domesticated, stripped of its transformational glory.

Today, in many nominal contexts, something similar has transpired. The Bible has been turned into a self-help informational book rather than the divinely inspired book written by God for our transformation and His glory. Jesus has been relegated to a Captain America type of savior who came and died to save us from hell rather than a King who came to save us in order to reign in and through us.

Difficulties of Living in a Nominal Religious Context

Beside dangers to sound Christian theology and practice in a nominal religious context, there are difficulties to living in such a context.

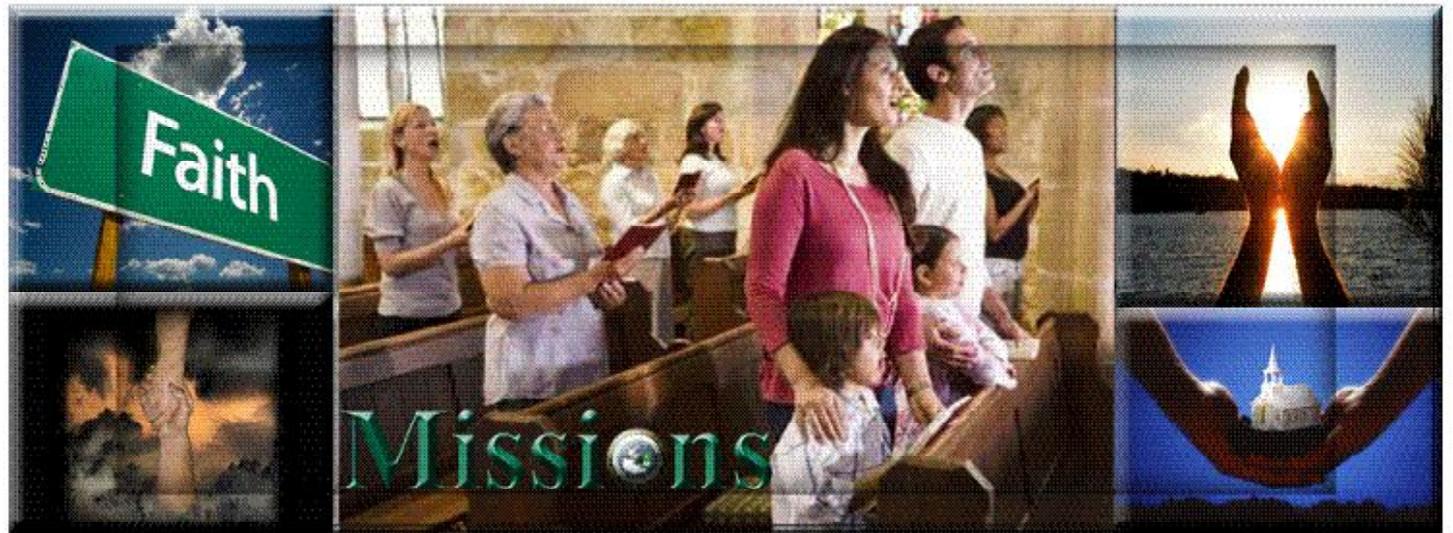
Evangelism

There will be an evangelistic difficulty.

Because nominals are moral, they think they behave rightly; because they are theistic and biblical, they think they believe rightly; because they are Christian by name, they think they belong rightly; and because their life is fairly simply, they feel as though they are blessed rightly.

In short, they base their salvation on what they do and experience, not what Christ did. Sharing the gospel with people who already think they "have it" will prove to be difficult.

continued on page 6



State Missionaries



Phillip Burns



Wesley Martin



Kenneth Pollock



Johnny Williams



Jason Howard

Missionary Coaches and Coordinators



Estuardo Marroquin
Hispanic Missions
Manager



Ed DuVall
Coordinator,
African American
Missions



Sidney Farmer
Missionary Coach/
Discipleship
Coordinator

61st Annual Missions & Evangelism Conference

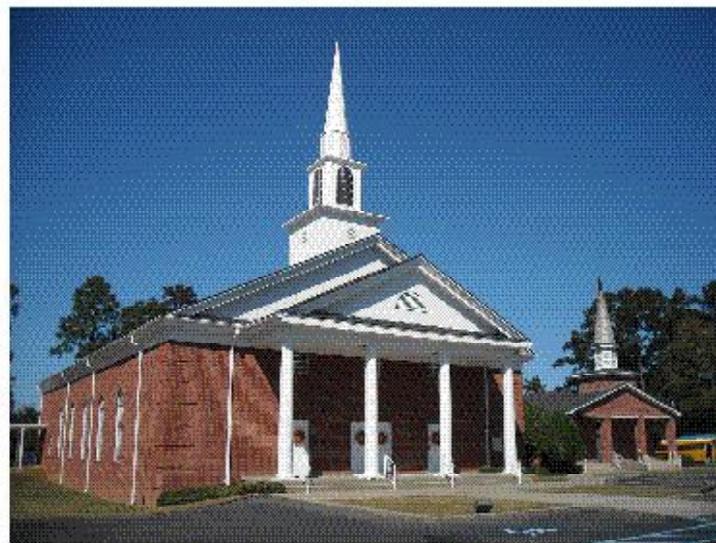
March 29, 2019
Starting at 9:30 am

Sponsored by: The Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi Missions Department



Hosted by: Midway First Baptist Church
77 Midway Church Rd, Sumrall, MS

(Lunch will be provided)



Conference Theme: Missions 101

Conference Music by:



Jeff & Rosalind Dixon

Introduction of the Theme



Larry Geraldson
Director of Missions,
BMA of MS

9:45 am
"The Mission"
Matt 9:35-38



Justin Cameron
Pastor of Good Hope
Baptist Church

10:15 am
"The Message of Missions"
Rom 4



Vernon Watts
Pastor of FB Church of
Henleyfield

10:45 am
"The Mandate of Missions"
Acts 1:8



Brandon Burge
Pastor of College Heights
Baptist Church

11:15 am
"The Mission Minded Church"
Phil 4



Jason Howard
Pastor of Canana
Baptist Church

11:45 pm
"The Call to Missions"
Acts 16:9



Blake McCain
Pastor of Midway
F. Baptist Church

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME

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



DWIGHT LINDSEY

Fostering Faith... ...in an attentive Father

As Christians, we believe the One, True, and Living God is all-knowing and ever-present. Elihu in Job 37:16 said God is, "...perfect in knowledge." John testified the same in his first epistle, 3:20 says God, "...know[s] all things." The Lord while speaking through the prophet in Jeremiah 23:24 declares with a question, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Paul joins the Old Testament writers in Act 17:27 to say, "...He [is] not far from every one of us." There should be no place for Christians to disagree on the knowledge and presence of God. Where our difficulty lies is

in our practice of Godly characteristics (all of them, not just these two).

Humanity, that is stained by sin, and can only be cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, is still commanded to strive for godliness. "Be holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16,

*Humanity, that is stained by sin, and can only
be cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ*

Leviticus 11:44). We cannot be all knowing or ever-present any more than we can save our own souls. These are all unobtainable goals, but as we reach for godliness the world around us gets to

witness glimpses of a good Father. Glimpses of a good heavenly Father are what see us through this life until we can see Him in His fullness.

One of the most beautiful pictures of our loving Father is seen in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. Luke 15:20 "...he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." The father in this parable is teaching us how attentive God is to us even when He seems to be out of sight. This is where humanity gets to see how to mimic the omniscient and omnipresent God. None of

us can be everywhere, even when we try so hard. None of us can know everything, no matter how high our own opinions of our own intellect. What we can do "like" God, is watch and wait.

We can be attentive to the lost soul coming around the bend answering the call of God's word. We can run to meet them in their need with gentleness and compassion.

I am not perfect in my attentiveness, but I am thankful God gets my attention when I need it most. I think these thoughts are on my heart with the upcoming revivals in our area. I pray we would all be attentive to our own hearts and the hearts of others as the Big Creek Association Revival approaches March 24th-27th to be held at Southeastern Baptist College. I also covet your prayers as I speak at the Temple Baptist Youth revival/rally March 21st-23rd. Continue to be attentive to the opportunities of service in the local church and here at the Children's Home. Remain diligent, your prayers are being answered. Continue to pray with us over potential children, priorities, and projects. Please contact us if you would like for us to come to your church in May, June, or beyond. Contact the office, our Facebook page, or my cell phone at 662-605-0996.

Nominal Christians

from page 5

Relational

There can be relational difficulty.

When trying to call nominals towards a deeper understanding of Scripture and the gospel, they may become easily offended and agitated. They may feel as though they are being judged or attacked. As a result, relational strain and marginalization occurs. More specifically, friendships can dissolve. People leave or becoming angrier at the church.

Revitalization

In some places there will be revitalization difficulty. In churches where

nominals may be present and in positions of leadership, there will be a stronghold of spiritual lethargy, gospel indifference, and missional paralysis. Leading and navigating change and transformation will be slow, methodical, intentional, messy, and possibly even intense.

Directives for Living in a Nominal Religious Context

The situation is not hopeless because there is power in the gospel. These directives, empowered by the gospel of Jesus Christ, will serve as antibodies that will ward off the virus of nominal, or weak, Christianity.

We must be gospel-centered. The gospel should be the sun around which the planets of our lives orbit. Everything we do—personally, emotionally, relationally, maritally, parentally, socially, culturally, vocationally, etc.—

should revolve around the good news that Jesus Christ has saved us, redeemed us, and made us a part of His glorious kingdom. Being gospel-centered means that we constantly ask ourselves the following question: Is my life bringing glory to King Jesus?

We must be mission-oriented. We are not only saved from our sin and ourselves, but are saved to and for a mission. Being in Christ means that we are His means of advancing His mission in the world. Thus, we enact a posture towards the world for the glory of God. As a result, we come to live a life on mission—intentionally using how we live, where we go, what we do, and what we say as a means to share and show the good news of Jesus with the world.

We must be church-minded. The church isn't a place we attend but a people we belong to. When Christ saved

us, He made us a part of His family. Christ cares about His family—their transformation into His image as well as their participation in His mission. If Christ cares for His family, we should too. If Jesus is committed to His family—in that He will never leave nor forsake them—we should be too.

Nominalism doesn't save. It's the equivalent of those in the New Testament who not only wouldn't enter the kingdom of God themselves, but got in the way of others who wanted to enter.

Nominalism can kill. But, Jesus, as Peter reminds us, "has the words of life," and He is the better way.

Ed Stetzer, Ph.D., holds the Billy Graham Chair of Church, Mission, and Evangelism at WHEATON COLLEGE and serves as Executive Director of the BILLY GRAHAM CENTER.

Observations of Our Day

by Bro. Rocky Goodwin
(from his Facebook page)

To my FaceBook friends. Please forgive the long article, but read it. We all need to read this and realize how close we are to the coming of Christ.

A full fifty percent of the nation's Southern Baptists did not attend church even one time last year. "Universal neglect of religion is a more dangerous symptom" of social decay!

Eighty-eight percent of the youth in evangelical churches leave their church, never to return, by the age of eighteen. "Universal neglect of religion is a more dangerous symptom" of social decay!

Conservative churches are dropping their Sunday evening services by the thousands. "Universal neglect of reli-



Rocky Goodwin

gion is a more dangerous symptom" of social decay!

Evangelistic preaching, with strong application, is virtually a thing of the past. Many preachers give little Bible expositions instead of strong evangelistic sermons designed to convert people. "Universal neglect of religion is a more dangerous symptom" of the decay of our civilization!

Cold churches, where there is no warmth and fellowship, are the result of closing the prayer meetings and Sunday evening services, and not making certain the people are converted. "Universal neglect of religion is a more

dangerous symptom" of the decay of our civilization than any of the hair-brained things that a small percentage of non-religious people indulge in today!

We must not think that the majority

*"Universal neglect of religion is a more
dangerous symptom" of social decay!*

of people in Noah's day were atheists. No - they believed in God intellectually - but their mental beliefs had no effect on their lives. People were calling on "the name of the Lord" (Genesis 4:26), but they failed to pay attention to the preaching of Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). "Universal

neglect of religion is a...dangerous symptom" of our time as well.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). These worldly people are described as "Having a form of

godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:5).

Goodwin is the founder of Evangelistic International Ministries -EIM- that is ministering to people groups around the world.

Fellowship Problems in the First Church

by Paul Gauntt

From the very first day the New Testament Church was imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit, church dissension quickly experienced its ugly start.

And that dissension grew amidst a congregation, which had: (a) personally witnessed the empowering of the Holy Spirit; (b) grew from a small band of 120 disciples to well over 10,000 voting members by the time we read in Acts 6; (c) had nearly 500 of its members who had personally seen Christ. (1 Cor. 15:4-6) and (d) contained no members who came from a falling out at another church.



Gauntt

There are some surprising factors that contribute to fellowship problems. So is it any wonder that the average attendance of an American congregation is 75? John Maxwell once stated in a conference that most churches feel comfortable with 75 in attendance and actually would rather not grow larger. It only takes 75 members to pay the bills, salaries and property upkeep. A church of 75 only needs one full-time staff member. Also, in a church of 75,

everyone knows everyone, and the membership is more manageable.

Just because a church experiences phenomenal growth does not make it immune to fellowship problems. In fact, the opposite is usually true. The church in Jerusalem was just one of such churches which grew quickly into a mega-church — and so did the fellowship problems.

1. The widows were neglected of food distribution. This was the fellowship problem in Jerusalem. There are countless other problems that threaten the unity of the body. Acts 6:1a. What really magnified the fellowship problem was the fact the Hellenistic widows (Greek-speaking proselytes) were being neglected in favor of the widows of the native Jews. Possibly some disgruntled Hellenistic Jews approached the disciples and said, “You’ve got to do something! You are the leaders!”

2. Church leaders were displaced. The definition of the word “displaced” is “to remove from the usual or proper specified place.” The apostles were expected to carry on the benevolent work at the expense of their primary calling — to pray and to prepare to preach the word to the flock. It was taking its toll on the spiritual welfare of the church.

I want to cite two incidents in

churches which well illustrate the pressure that was brought on the apostles of the Jerusalem church. If these incidents had been brought to fruition,

had not been with the church but a few months, was summoned by the deacons and was told that he needed to handle the situation. The pastor firmly told them, “This situation was going on long before I arrived, and furthermore, since the man is blood

If I do what you say, it will mean a U-haul bill for me, but if you guys do the job, and it blows up, all that will be required is a first-class postage stamp to send your letter to another church.

there is no question that the fellowship of the church and the ministry of the pastor would be destroyed.

In one such church two men approached the pastor with complaints about a woman in the church sending what appeared to be inappropriate letters of friendship to their wives. The pastor was summoned to go and speak to the woman’s husband about the problem. After wise counsel by a more seasoned pastor, he elected not to go because he was made to realize it would have thrown him into the middle of an issue in which he would have lost his ministry, and the results would have been spiritually catastrophic for the fellowship.

In another scenario, a long-time member of the church was suspected of behaving inappropriately to a young lady in the church. The pastor, who

kin to most of you, the responsibility is yours. If I do what you say, it will mean a U-haul bill for me, but if you guys do the job, and it blows up, all that will be required is a first-class postage stamp to send your letter to another church.”

The apostles wisely, and by the direction of the Holy Spirit, instructed the church to seek out men who could minister to the Hellenistic, as well as native widows. Simply put, they were to run interference for the Apostles, to be the remedy for fellowship problems so the Apostles could be free to pray and meditate on the word in order to feed the flock. I think it’s safe to say a spiritually “fed” flock will have a minimum of spiritual problems — but a flock not properly fed from the meat of the word, is a “sitting duck” for Satan.

continued on page 8

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Ladies on A Mission

by Beth Caldwell, State WMA President

The Ladies on a Mission (WMA) is a vital asset to any church. If you do not have an active ladies group please consider starting one and join us as we work on mission projects. The State WMA will sponsor a Ladies Retreat in September at Camp Garaywa.

The State WMA officers for 2018-2019 are: President Beth Caldwell, 1VP Theresa Reus, 2VP Elaine Smith, 3VP Jean Knight, Treasurer Shirlene Smith, Assistant Treasurer Barbara White, Recording Secretary Stacy Smith, Assistant Recording Secretary Bea Hudson, Historian/Media Ginny Singleton, Editor Rita Clark, Pianist Pat Davis, Song Director Sabrina Clayton, GMA/YLA Promoter Jessica Haden, Sunbeam Promoter Linda Dertinger, Project Promoters Dianne Rainey and Marilyn Welborn, Advisory Council Matt Hudson, Leon Carmical, Shane Singleton, and Retreat Committee - Chairman Jessica Haden, Co-Chairman Mary Sprayberry, Registration Beth Caldwell.

The theme for this year is “Lead Us, Guide Us,” taken from Psalms 31:3. The Project Promotion Committee is working on promotion of the 2019 Project, “Southeastern Baptist College.”

The Midyear meeting will be held on May 20 at 7:00 PM at East Amory Baptist Church. Anita Ackers will be our speaker. We invite all ladies to attend this meeting.

I hope each of you are making plans to attend the National Meeting. The Ladies Retreat will be held on Tuesday. The only cost is \$15.00 for the noon meal. Let Jodi Rhea, National WMA President know if you plan to eat lunch (501-472-9490). You will pay at the door. See you in May!

2019

National WMA Meeting & Ladies Conference Rogers, Arkansas

Monday, May 6 • Convention Center

1:30-2:30 National WMA Officers Meeting

3:00-5:00 National WMA Business Meeting

Tuesday, May 7 • Temple Baptist Church

Just 5 minutes from the Convention Center at 1812 S. Dixieland Road

Women's Conference

8:30 Registration

9:00 Program — “Catch the Vision”

Keynote Speaker — Judy Wallace

Special Music — Sabrina Clayton

There will be a special time of honoring
Pastor's wives and widows.

12:00 Lunch will be catered and you can pay at the door

1:15-3:00 Breakout Sessions — You may choose 2

1) Reaching out in Service through Missions - Belinda Caudle

2) Reaching out in Service through Benevolence - Robin Tyler

3) Reaching out in Service through Youth Auxiliaries - Valarie Fish

4) Reaching out in Service to Minister's Wives - T'Shana Everitt

All ladies are encouraged to attend! Be sure and check our website (nationalwma.org) and our Facebook page (National WMA of BMAA) for updates. If you have any questions you can email me at jodiegrea@live.com or call and leave a message at (501) 472-9490 and I will call you back. Hope to see you in May!

NATIONAL WMA 2019



I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners, and it came to me. - Acts 11:5

— Jodi Rhea, President

Fellowship Problems

from page 7

3. Remedy for fellowship problems.

The remedy was simple — seek out from among you seven men with impeccable character, filled with the Holy Spirit, and possessing divine wisdom, who can be “over this business.” Not business administrators, not a corporate board — but the business of serving — the business of quelling fellowship problems. (diakonos - a servant; waiter - minister - or messenger) One of these men, Stephen, was described as full of grace (spiritual strength who worked great wonders), and full of faith (a strong belief that Jesus is the Messiah)

4. Results of the remedy for fellowship problems:

Verses 5 and 7 of Acts 6 tell us that the fellowship was restored, the message was even more effectively spread, the number of disciples increased, and the people were happy with the arrangement. (“... and the saying pleased the whole multitude. . .”)

What really impressed me about the Apostles was the fact they delegated the responsibility to the church to seek out the seven men. They were secure enough in the church and the Lord’s direction, they did not have to pull strings to get their cronies in the office. Many times we pastors are so addicted to micro-management, we can’t relin-

quish control to the church.

Pastor, you must relinquish control, because Christ didn’t give you the Great Commission — He gave it to the Church. And as my dear friend, the late Lynn Stephens once told me, “The church is infinitely more important than (we) are.”

There is not a more powerful organism on the earth than Christ’s New Testament Church. She is the recipient to the blessed promises of God — She is built upon the Rock of Jesus Christ —and He promises that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. And one day He is returning to take her to His Father’s house for the wedding of the ages. Part of the interlude of the Gaither song, “The Church Triumphant” gives us such encouragement;

“Listen, child of God, it’s alive! Discouraged pastor, it’s his church and it’s still alive! Lonely missionary, sow that seed with confidence. The church is still alive. It’s alive my broken-hearted friend — busy mothers, just keep trusting in Jesus, the church is alive. . . faithful fathers, there’s rest in the Lord. God’s church is still alive. So family of God lift your hands, lift your hands and praise the Lord. The church, God’s church triumphant is alive, it’s alive my friends. Alive and well!”

Paul Gauntt is the pastor of First, Palmer. He served for a number of years as the BMA of Texas Department of Church Ministries director. He has served several churches as pastor, and is a correspondent and featured article writer for Baptist Progress. Contact him at pop.gauntt@gmail.com.

Scripture Thoughts by Tony Cleaver

Hosea 1.1 “The word of the Lord that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam son of Jehoash, king of Israel.”

All the world loves a lover and Hosea is certainly one of those. Hosea was a prophet in a certain period as indicated by his contemporary time line of kings in both Judah, the Southern Kingdom, and Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Sometimes we think of prophets as mystical babblers almost like a fortune teller or some religious fanatic. Nothing is further from the truth.



Cleaver

The prophets were chosen of God and they sensed that calling to be His messengers. They spoke forth the word of the Lord to their own generation. They were able to plainly speak of the

evils of the day and pleaded for the people to repent, to turn to God, to ask forgiveness. Their message has timeless meaning for us today.

A contemporary lesson from Hosea is: spiritual adultery is common in our “Christian culture.” We have privilege as Christians to be joined to Christ, but with that privilege come responsibilities. We have the responsibility to position our lives for faithfulness, holiness, and righteousness. We are the example to the world of what God calls all of his created beings to be.

Good Reader, as you recount your own life, what do you make of your living for Jesus Christ the Lord? Are you committing spiritual adultery? The word of the Lord calls us to be people who are particularly and peculiarly dedicated to Him in the way we behave. We behave outwardly because of His new life in us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Like Hosea, we have a certain time to be alive. We have the joy of living and working for Christ and His Church!

Missionary Needs Van

BMAA missionary-candidate Michael Strong, who is serving in Minnesota, is in need of a reliable, working 15-passenger van and/or enclosed trailer. Please prayerfully consider donating or providing one for the work of the ministry there. You can contact Bro. Mike at 501-838-9673 or brothermike@nearthcommunitychurch.com.

Jesus Is Precious

by Bro. Grover Laird
from *The Revivalist*

“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” (Psalms 73:25)

I want to feel that the Psalmist is including Jesus in our text. You see, Jesus was the Savior of Old Testament saints too. Job said that his Redeemer, or Savior, was living then and would come to earth one day. (Job 19:25) David considered Jesus his Lord, the same as we do. (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:41-45) We should therefore have the same feeling about Jesus our Savior as is expressed by the Psalmist in our text.

If we could look into Heaven we would see great saints of old such as Noah, Job, and Daniel. We could see Abraham, Moses, and David. But if we felt about Jesus as the Psalmist expresses in our text, we would feel that none of these are as precious as Jesus. Then, considering all the Greats of this world, he saw none so wonderful as his Lord.

Surely many of us have used our text to worship our wonderful Lord and Savior. But why would we be so full of admiration and love for Jesus?

Surely the greatest reason is, He atoned for our sins at Calvary. Having

no sins of His own, He was able to pay for ours. (I Peter 2:24) And the story of that suffering has never been fully been told.

His suffering for us has resulted in our being a child of God with Heaven as our home. But more than this, we are able to know Jesus now and have Him in our lives as our best friend.

It is normal for us as Christians to feel that Jesus is our best friend. When Jesus began to speak of leaving the Apostles and going back to Heaven, sorrow filled their heart. (John 16:6) Since “never man spake like this man,” (John 7:46) when He would teach out on a mountain somewhere, thousands would gather to hear Him. Not only these, but all that are truly saved feel that Jesus is precious to them. (I Peter 2:7) Though we have never seen Him, we can rejoice over Him with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” (I Peter 1:8) Indeed, Jesus is precious!

But there is a sad note here. Some who claim to love Jesus must not be sincere because Paul said, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.” (Ephesians 6:24)

There are ways a person can test himself to see if his love for Christ is

sincere. Consider a few of them. (1) Do we keep His commandments? Notice: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me....” (John 14:21) (2) Is it a real burden for us to keep His commandments? Notice: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:3) (3) Do we enjoy giving to the Cause of Christ? Speaking of giving to the Lord’s work, Paul said, “I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.” (2 Corinthians 8:8) (4) When we think about Jesus being our Savior, do we experience indescribable joy? Notice 1 Peter 1:8 again: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” (1 Peter 1:8)

There are many blessings that come to those who love Jesus in a special way. Consider some of them. The Father and Jesus will love us in a special way, and Jesus will manifest more of Himself to us. (See John 14:21) Another thing, the Father and the Son will live in our lives in a greater way. (See John 14:23)

It should lift the spirit of any Christian to be able to say in sincerity, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” (Psalms 73:25)

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