

# The Baptist

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## A Faithful Soldier Moves On

by Don Brown, editor

Rev. Vern D. Holifield, 85 of Laurel, Mississippi, died Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel. Funeral services were held Saturday, October 29, 2011 at Springhill Baptist Church in Laurel. Rev.'s Steve Clark, Jackie Gray and Sidney Davis officiated. Burial was in Springhill Baptist Church Cemetery.

Bro. Holifield was a U.S. Army veteran and was currently serving as Director of the BMA Commission on Senior Adults. He received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity in 2011 from BMA of America Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, Texas. He previously served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi and had served numerous churches as pastor in Texas and Mississippi during his 62 years in Ministry.

Bro. Holifield was instrumental in the organization of the Commission on Senior Adults and served as its first director. This ministry has been a great benefit to our churches and our senior adults. The conferences that have been held each year have been uplifting and spiritually beneficial to the senior adults of our churches.

### A Celebration

An overflow crowd of friends and fellow ministers filled Springhill Church for the memorial service. There were over 30 ministers present to express their love for Bro. Vern.

The service was highlighted by testimonials from friends and family alike about the in-



Vern D. Holifield

fluence Bro. Holifield had on so many. Funny stories and precious memories were shared by a number of individuals testifying to the dedication of Bro. Vern to his calling and his love for people. That love and dedication was shown in many ways by Bro. Holifield, and many times it was through his personality and his love for stories and practical jokes. God blessed so many of us to have known Bro. Vern D. Holifield. May God comfort his family and may the work of Bro. Holifield be a testimony to the goodness and graciousness of our God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Louise Holifield; a brother, Duane Holifield; and a sister, Inda Faye Holifield.

Survivors include his wife Dorothy Holifield, Soso; three Sons, Dale Holifield (Stacey), Ft. Worth, Texas; Lynn Holifield (Myrna), Guntersville, Alabama; Danny Holifield (Linda), Grapevine, Texas; two brothers, Donnie Holifield (Bell), Cross City, Florida and Jimmy Holifield (Gail), Laurel, Mississippi.

## Vote Yes On Proposition 26

### Opinion by the Editor

On Tuesday, November 8, the people of Mississippi will vote for a number of statewide offices and 3 three constitutional changes.

The candidates chosen by each individual voter and the voter's feelings on the constitutional proposals are certainly matters of personal privilege, except when it involves moral and biblical values.

Proposition 26 defines "personhood" in the Mississippi State Constitution. The language as it will appear on your ballot is listed to the right of this article.

Life is precious. Only God has the right to grant life and to take it. His authority should not be taken over for the con-

venience and profit of man.

Do doctors and parents have difficult decisions to make when something goes wrong and they struggle to save lives? Yes.

Are there some instances when it is not possible to medically prevent the death of an unborn child? Yes.

The willful and intentional killing of a baby in its mother's womb for the purpose of "birth control" and so-called "family planning" is not justified and is the taking of an innocent life. Under no circumstances should a child be purposefully killed, disposed of or eliminated. I urge you to vote YES for this initiative and help to prevent the willful killing of our children.

### Statewide Initiative Measure No. 26

Should the term 'person' be defined to include every human being from the moment of fertilization, cloning, or the equivalent thereof?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO

*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee,...*

Jeremiah 1:5

## 2,000-plus chaplains saying 'no' to Pentagon

**OneNewsNow** - Despite a recent Pentagon directive, a coalition of chaplain endorsers that represents more than 2,000 military ministers has pledged not to perform same-sex "wedding" ceremonies under any circumstances.

Members the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty are concerned about the memorandum issued by the Pentagon September 30 that authorizes military chaplains to perform same-sex "marriage" ceremonies and military chapel facilities to be used for "any private ceremony."

Col. Ron Crews (USA-Ret.), who served as a chaplain for

28 years, is executive director of the Alliance. He says his coalition is joining the Catholic Archdiocese for Military Services to say "no" to the directive.

"They made a very strong statement saying that no Catholic chaplains serving in the military will participate in any same-sex ceremonies at any chapels. We appreciate that strong stand," he shares. "So we just wanted to let the Department of Defense know that it's not only the Catholic chaplains, but that some 2,000 chaplains who come from evangelical backgrounds are saying our chaplains will not par-

ticipate in same-sex ceremonies in the military."

Crews says the Alliance is once again calling on Congress to enact a right of conscience clause in the revised code to ensure that no American service members are forced to deny what the Bible says about homosexuality.

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Vern Holifield Remembered

# Don't Mess With Our Marriage

## Part Two

This series of articles is written to help you become aware of the people and projects that may take away too much time from your marriage. By themselves, these things are not bad. These other relationships are good. But they must have their proper place in our lives. If other people and things consume all of our time so that we have no time to spend with our spouse, or to ever grow our marriage, then we need to re-evaluate the situation. It is so easy to let your marriage slide behind importance of what you consider at the time a more pressing issue. Marriage needs to be a priority however in the Christian's life.

Enjoy life. Work and play hard. Have lots of relationships. But do not ever let these things cause you to neglect your life mate. Do not ignore your marriage.

In the last article, I discussed in detail the great intruder to the marriage called electronic

media. This included cell phones, internet, computer, face book etc. These things are rapidly eroding the intimacy of marriage and family life. And I would like to add one last point to this. Put your cell phone away when you are eating. A meal together with friends or family is suppose to be a time devoted to fellowship with them. Have a rule: turn it off (not vibrate) while eating with others. You can do it. If you can't, you have an addiction problem. Now lets look at some other marriage intruders that mess with our marriages.

### Friends.

Friends are great. There is nothing better than having some good Christian friends. However, friends can also suck too much of our time away from our marriage. Friends can quickly become an intruder. The wrong type of friends can actually cause a divorce. You are who you hang with. You better reevaluate this.

Your spouse should always be ahead of your friends. Some spouses do need to realize that it is healthy to have outside friendships. This should not be



### Family Ark Ministries

Travis Plumlee

seen as a threat to you. If you are overly possessive of your spouse, and do not like them to have friends, then you have a problem that you need to work on. At the same time, if you like spending a great deal of your free time with friends, or you actually enjoy friend time more than spouse time, you have a problem also.

Friends should be a gift and not a boundary problem for the marriage. The ground rules for friends in a marriage are these:

a) all friends must be Christian. II Corinthians 6:14-17. This is not my opinion. This is the Word of God. I don't care how long you have known them, or how much you work with them - you witness to lost acquaintances, but hang out with Christians as friends.

b) all friends should be the same sex as you. You are not permitted to hang out with a friend who is the opposite sex. I don't care how long you have known them. Married people have couples as friends, or you have same sex friends. You never have opposite sex friends that you hang out with by yourselves.

c) all friends should be "for" your marriage. Stop hanging out with toxic people. Don't hang out with people that do not always try and encourage you to stay together no matter what the problems are. They support and pray for your marriage. They don't say, "I would just divorce them." Those people are not "for" your marriage.



know when your private family time is. After 8 pm and before 10 am we have as our family time. We appreciate calls before you just come over unannounced at any time day or night. Just because they are family and you love them, does not mean we should not respect other people's times and homes. And just because you set some "alone" days each week without extended family does not mean you don't love them. It is important to have immediate couple or immediate family time. If the parents don't understand this, then the parents have boundary and control issues. Stick to your guns. You are not being unreasonable. You are being "healthy" rather than dysfunctional. There are no boundaries set in a dysfunctional family. Make sure you have "couples only" time each week.

### Church

I almost hate to even write this. It is for a minority. Most people need to serve the church more. However, there are a few in the ministry, or lay people who have good intentions, but have a misplaced need for self-fulfillment by over doing it at the church. If you are constantly up there working on committees or doing some kind of work, and you ignore your family- that is wrong. Don't ever use church work as a masked excuse to hide behind ignoring your marriage.

We will finish up with the intruders that mess with our marriage in the next article. Work this week on your marriage!

### Extended Family

In-laws, cousins, grandparents etc. They are wonderful. Nothing better than relationships with Jesus and our families. But marriage is an exclusive club. You have to carve time out for you two as a couple. There may have to be some agreed upon boundaries. Sit down and talk. Be fair and split holiday times rather than exhausting yourself to try and hit every home. Let family



## National Senior Adult Conference

November 17-19, 2011

Hiltons of Branson, Missouri

\$125 Per Person by October 17, 2011. Register on-line at [www.DiscipleGuide.org/nsa](http://www.DiscipleGuide.org/nsa) or print the form and mail it with your check to the DCM office. Paid registration is non-refundable after the cut-off date.

Make your reservations at the Hilton Convention Center Hotel or the Hilton Promenade by calling 1-800-445-8667 or direct at 417-336-5400 by October 17. The parking garage is \$8 per day and there is limited free parking. Group rate is \$127 per night with up to four in the room.



David Watkins  
Speaker



Phillip Allison  
Worship



Aaron Wilburn  
Comedian



Burchfield Bros.  
Guest Artist



Gold City  
Guest Artist



Pierce Arrow Theater  
Branson Show



## Sofilthy's Attic

by Barbara White

### My Bubble

Sometime ago, I mentioned to someone that I thought God had put a "bubble" around me because it seemed that I was not adversely affected by things that happen to other people.

You remember that Satan accused God of building a hedge around Job to keep adversities away from him

I certainly can't be thought of as being in the same league with Job but I do feel God's protection.

BUT my "bubble" has been busted! Recently lightning struck a tree near my house and knocked out several electrical appliances and then I developed a series of very painful, but non-serious ailments.

Even as I write this, I'm thinking that my bubble may still be intact. Everything is back up and running (thanks to a man-child that I had 44 years ago) and I am almost completely over my ailments.

Ain't God good!

DiscipleGuide Conference Ministry Announces

# MERGE 2011

MERGE, DiscipleGuide Conference Ministry's annual mid-winter conference for High School and Junior High School students, is scheduled for December 27-29 at Daniel Springs Baptist Camp in Gary, Texas. MERGE is a fantastic conference designed to inspire students to live out their lives in Christ. This year's conference will launch DCM's 2012 student "Missions" emphasis. Scott Attebery will be the guest pastor for this event and Nathan Brewer will lead Worship.

MERGE is a great way for youth groups to start the New Year. MERGE takes the best of a high-energy camp ministry and combines it with a conference setting to give students a unique three-day event filled with worship, fun and fellowship. Groups will be given time to gather individually for share and community opportunities. Students will enjoy meeting new friends through outdoors games and activities. They will find MERGE worship times meaningful and challenging. Scott is the pastor of Wyatt Baptist Church in El Dorado, Arkansas. He has served in campus ministry at the University of Central Arkansas and coordinating student confer-

ences for DiscipleGuide Conference Ministry. In 2008, Scott's wife, Jill, passed away in an automobile accident. Now, Scott's most important ministry is to his son, Bryce. They love to play in the back yard and cheer for the Arkansas Razorbacks together. A graduate of Central Baptist College and the BMAA Theological Seminary, Scott is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Ministry from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

Nathan has a passion for God's Glory and worshipping Him. Nathan is currently a student at Central Baptist College where he is majoring in Bible. He has led worship at many camps and conferences over the last few years. Nathan recently married his college sweetheart Lynzie, and they live in Conway, Arkansas, where he serves with the worship/arts team at Antioch Baptist Church.

321 Improv Comedy will bring tears to your eyes, a pain to your side, and they'll make your face ache with laughter! An evening with 321 Improv is unlike any you've been a part of before. It is a unique interactive comedy experience. Each show, the three guys in 321 Improv instantly turn audience

suggestions into hilarious scenes. Since the group was formed in 2004, 321 Improv Comedy has been in high demand for events across the United States and Canada. They've performed in more than 40 states and 4 Canadian provinces for over a half million people. The entire three-day event includes: All sessions, 2-nights lodging, 5 meals, and a MERGE T-shirt for only \$100 per person by the December 13 early registration. Register online at [www.DiscipleGuide.org](http://www.DiscipleGuide.org) by going to Conferences/MERGE or download a registration form and mail it to DCM with your check. After December 13, registration is \$110 and does not include a T-shirt.

All in attendance must register and fees are non-refundable after the deadline. The camp must have a medical release form for each attendee as required by Daniel Springs Camp. Go to the DiscipleGuide web site and click on Camps where you can access all the camp information, rules, medical release form, and what to bring/leave at home. Call the DCM office with any questions at 501-513-3726 or e-mail [triciak@conwaycorp.net](mailto:triciak@conwaycorp.net).

## Digging Out Our Numbers?

Don Burke, Recording Secretary for the BMA of Missouri

**Editor's Note:** This article appeared in the September issue of *The Missouri Missionary Baptist*, the official newspaper of the BMA of Missouri. It is applicable to each of our state associations. We just recently completed our Mississippi Association. It seemed that more churches than normal were present both by messenger and by letter, but it could be better. If your church has not filled out your letter to the state work, please do so as soon as possible. And please take time to "put in the numbers".

"Well, Don," the doctor says as his eyes scan a page in my chart. "It looks like your blood pressure may be a smidgen high."

I sarcastically muttered to myself, "It couldn't be from being in the doctor's office could it – the place with needles, rubber gloves, and tests that come right out of the medieval inquisition?"

"I'll need you to check your blood pressure twice a day at home and keep a record of it. Do that for about a month, bring that information in, and we'll

see what it tells us."

So, being the responsible and conscientious guy that I am, I promptly went home and forgot. And now that I put this in print for my mother (who happens to be a nurse) and my wife to see, both will want to give me "what-for" for not doing what the doctor asked. Why? They care about me and my long-term health.

Most of us are now finishing

up our church year, and can see the annual BMA of Missouri meeting on the horizon.

It's time for our churches to do a little data collection. Yeah, like me keeping daily records of my blood pressure, this is a bit of a hassle for someone to dig through all the attendance and financial numbers, tabulate them, and put them in the right place on the annual church letter form. I'm guessing that many of our folks are like me and would just rather forget about it and put it off until later, or just not do it at all. And some may be like me in another way – a little apprehensive about what the numbers may show.

But you know what? The numbers themselves don't make me sick or well, they just indicate what is already there, and ignoring the numbers doesn't make any underlying



## Southeastern Baptist College

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



Dr. Medrick Savell  
President

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

### Bro. Vern D. Holifield

Bro. Vern D. Holifield will be missed. He was as personal friend to me since 1955 and was a former student and supporter of Southeastern Baptist College. He was a solid BMA supporter who was successful in whatever capacity he served. We will miss his pleasant personality and fellowship.

### Bro. Roger Akers

Thanks to Bro. Roger Akers for six years as trustee. Bro. Akers began his work as trustee of Southeastern Baptist College the same year I became

president. I appreciate his faithful service to the college and will miss him on the board.

### Memorial Gifts

A donation was made recently to the Southeastern Baptist College Foundation in memory of Mr. Dennis Lowe. Another contribution was made to purchase books for the A. R. Reddin Memorial Library at Southeastern Baptist College in Memory of Mr. C. J. Barnes. Thanks for remembering Southeastern Baptist College. May God comfort and bless these families.

## 10 x 10 Project

The 10 x 10 Project was presented at the BMA of Mississippi meeting in October. It is a fund raising project designed to strengthen the financial foundation of the college. It is asking individuals, churches, auxiliaries, and other friends of the college to build a 10 x 10 room in the "financial building" at Southeastern Baptist College which equals \$100.00 per room. Some may want to join with another person to build a room. Some will build one room; auxiliaries and churches can build several rooms. The goal is to build 1,000 rooms.

This fund raising project is needed because the economic condition in our nation has caused the expenses of the college to be more than income for some time. We have cut expenses, but must raise more income to meet the expenses. This is one of several actions taken by the college to meet the needs.

Because of the serious financial need, we ask all who can to participate in this project. It has great potential. Already, 28 rooms have been built. This could be a good way to give an end-of-the-year contribution to the college or a Christmas gift. If you need brochures describing the project, let us know.

**10 X 10  
Project**

problem disappear.

Did you know that we in the BMA of Missouri have a disappointing, even disturbing number of churches that either do not send in a church letter at all or send in one without the statistical data included? Thirty out of the sixty-three BMA of Missouri churches in the 2010 minute book were missing their statistical information. And you can imagine how hard it is to measure the impact the BMA of Missouri is

having for the kingdom of Christ when barely half of our churches report those figures.

For nearly two decades I worked in a national department of the BMAA, and in my job I used the data gathered from the church letters all the time. The national and state departments regularly use this data to see (among other things) how healthy the BMAA work is and to evaluate its impact.

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# Mississippi Baptist Opinion Page

Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi

## Vern Holifield - A Unique Individual & Friend

Bro. Vern Holifield left this life for his heavenly home on October 26. He and Mrs. Dot were planning a long trip together and planned to end up at the Senior Adult Conference in Branson, Missouri, later this month. God changed his plans and his destination. Praise the Lord for His providence!



Don Brown  
Editor

My earliest memory of Bro. Vern was in March 1978. He was the moderator of our state association and I was the nominee for editor of this publication. There was a lot of "discussion" at that meeting and seemingly the "discussion" could have gotten out of hand, but for the grace and ability of Bro. Holifield. I never knew of his personal opinion of the concept of a full-time editor or of his feelings toward the nominee. I did find out a few things about him on that day almost 34 years ago. He was fair in his handling of the proceedings and a gentleman throughout the day.

I always have that day and Bro. Holifield's handling

of that business stored in a special place over in the corner of my memory.

We had a good relationship throughout the years, but somewhat closer in recent years. Being editor, he always was talking to me about his articles for the Commission on Senior Adults. We joked and poked fun at each other each time we would talk or meet.

Being pastor of Big Creek Baptist Church, we worked closely with the South Mississippi Conference preparations. This conference

has met with our church the last 3 or 4 years and will once again be held at Big Creek in March 2012.

We look forward to hosting that meeting. I know it will be a good one - they always are. Bro. Vern will be looking down on this meeting and the North Mississippi meeting with fond affection for the ministry that he was instrumental in starting.

What a great work this is and what a tribute to the heart of Vern Holifield and his love and care for God's people.

He will be greatly missed. He already is.

### Commission on Senior Adults

Vern D. Holifield, Director  
4226 Highway 15 North  
Laurel, Mississippi 39440



The Trustees of the Commission on Senior Adults extend their condolences to the Holifield Family in the passing of Director Vern Holifield.

They ask for continued prayers for the Holifield family and continued support for this ministry.

The 2012 Conferences will be held as planned. We encourage our pastors, churches and seniors to support these events. The Trustees will have more detailed plans and information in the near future.



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### Preacher's Conference Set

The 4th Annual Reviving the Passion of Preaching Conference will be held on November 4 and 5 at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Saucier, Mississippi. For more details, you can check out the website at <http://revivingthepassionofpreaching.tpod.com> The Conference will be filmed live over the Internet at [stevebrownministries.com](http://stevebrownministries.com).

## Church of the Covered Dish BY THOMAS TAPP



"I prayed at a football game. It would be worse if I'd said in Jesus name!"

## Homestretch Baptist Church Celebrates Anniversary

### Church History

In 1998 Brother Ed Duvall moved his family to the Delta. After searching for a church that teaches sound Bible doctrine, and not finding one that met his family needs, God led him to start a new mission church here in Cleveland.

In 2000 Bro. Duvall moved his family to Tennessee to attend seminary. While in seminary Bro. Ed started a Bible study at the Camilia Apartments recreation center. He graduated from seminary in 2004 and moved back to Cleveland and started a mission church in 2005.

Homestretch Baptist Missions began in 2005 under the BMA of Mississippi with Brother Edward Duvall pastor/missionary. We started with 6 members and worship services were at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday and we also had Wednesday night Bible study.

Homestretch Baptist Church supports BMAA missions and missionaries and provides scholarship to African American high school students in the area. We have elected officers to serve in various ministry areas.

The summer of 2010 the Master Builders came to start work on our church building located at 4370 Hwy 8 East, Cleveland, Mississippi. Once the building was constructed, there was lots of work to be done on the interior to get the building ready for worship services. The facilities were completed in July 2010 and we moved into the building in August 2010.

Homestretch Baptist Missions was organized into a New Testament Church on September 25, 2010 with 22 members. In the organizational service Homestretch adopted the Church Covenant and Doctrinal Statement of The BMA of Mississippi and voted unanimously to petition the State Association for membership/fellowship. Brother Ed was voted in as Pastor. Brother Mike Lefler gave the message for the organizational service.

On March 19, 2011 an Ordination service was held and Brother Chris Hicks was ordained as a deacon. He met with the ordination council and was presented to the church for vote. Bro. Jimmie Parker presented the message at this service.

Brother Ed has baptized 20 converts and the membership has grown to 42 members.

Editor's Note: We congratulate Homestretch Church and Bro. Duvall on their anniversary and their progress as a New Testament Church. May God continue to bless their efforts to reach the people of Cleveland, Mississippi.

## MORAL ACTION COMMITTEE

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John Adams

stem cell harvesting, cloning, and human embryos.

4) The war still rages over Abortion/Pro-life and pro-choice since the Supreme Court ruling in Roe vs Wade.

5) States battle over the issues of Gambling, lotteries and casinos for funding.

6) Physician assisted suicide is making strides in the United States.

Moral Action is dedicated to keeping you informed. This is our obligation. You have an obligation to be "value" informed and to cast your votes for candidates that are aligned with platforms that are in agreement with God's Word. Our nation depends on you. Be vigilant in studying the candidates. Learn where they stand on political and religious issues. Abraham Lincoln states "Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, they will just have to sit on their blisters." You may find this quotation also on [www.ivotevalues.org](http://www.ivotevalues.org)

### II. Christians are obliged to do more than just vote

Author Wayne Grudem offers some insights into the Declaration of Independence and its signees. The signers knew the signing of the Declaration of Independence was more than a pen or paper issue. The last line in the Declaration states:

man."

### I. Christians are obliged to be informed and to vote

We, as Christians and Americans, must be studious when we vote. It is your obligation to study and learn what the issues are. How does the issues relate to your Christian faith, your family, and your nation? You must vote with Christian convictions and moral stamina. You must vote intelligently.

There are often radical differences in party candidates. Important issues to consider are life, family and freedom rights. The following are just a few of the critical areas that are facing our nation at this time:

1) There is an ongoing battle to remove the Ten Commandment displays, nativity scenes, voluntary prayer and religious classes from public areas.

2) Our nation is being bombarded with "Gay rights, same-sex marriages, same sex adoption rights, and the push to make homosexuality/lesbianism "normal."

3) Ongoing arguments continue over Bio-medical facts,

### WHY VOTE YOUR VALUES?

Romans 13:1 "let every soul (you) be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." God declared that there should be human government and human laws. There could be no order, no security, or even progress without these two valuable decrees. My point is this: YOUR VOTE CAN MAKE A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE. God established three (3) institutions: the family, the church, and civil government. WE, as Christians and Americans are responsible to uphold these divine institutions.

Christians have an obligation and right to vote and submit to the governing authorities. An exception to this rule applies when the government and its leaders are in direct conflict with the Bible and God's laws. Dr. Adrian Rogers, Pastor and Author, stated the following, "when the government condones what God condemns, we must obey God rather than

## AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE

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

### Walter Hickman

Walter Hickman, former Pastor of Belle Fontaine Baptist Church, Theodore, Alabama, is available for service as pastor, interm-pastor, or fill-in. A graduate of Southeastern Baptist College, William Carey University, Hickman has 44 years experience as a pastor. Contact him at 251-586-3297, e mail bighick44@yahoo.com or by writing to 2040 Forrest Lane Mobile, AL 36605.

### Larry Pierce

Larry Pierce available for service wherever the Lord leads. He may be contacted at 601-947-3531 or 601-770-0075.

### Dale Wirick

Dale Wirick is available for pulpit supply. He may be contacted at 228-623-5466 or 228-249-3731.

## Attack, vandalism won't silence God's truth

**OneNewsNow** - Pro-homosexual vandals recently attacked an Illinois Christian academy where Americans for Truth About Homosexuality (AFTAH) was holding a banquet to honor an evangelical Christian leader.

Anonymous activists have taken credit for throwing concrete bricks through windows and doors at Christian Liberty Academy in Arlington Heights to protest the banquet for the "homophobic hate group" and guest speaker Scott Lively, co-author of The Pink Swastika and founder of Watchmen on the Walls.

"I'm not surprised that they did this," admits Liberty Counsel Action vice president Matt Barber, who was at the event. "This really amounts to an act of terrorism in that they threatened more violence if Dr. Lively

and his speech went forward and if the Christian Liberty Academy did not disassociate from Americans for Truth About Homosexuality."

But in the face of all opposition, AFTAH has remained steadfast in exposing the homosexual agenda throughout the country. Barber contends the attack should trigger an investigation on the basis of hate crimes laws. He also points out that homosexuals who demand tolerance are not willing to repay the favor to opponents as they try to shut down the Christian message about their lifestyle.

"We are going to speak God's truth in love without fear of reprisal, or even in this case, without fear of violence," the attorney assures. "So I have a message to the gay terrorists that perpetrated this crime:

"And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

So what can you do? Many things! Here are a few suggestions:

1) Email candidates about the issues

2) write letters to candidates regarding critical decisions

3) support financially to just causes

4) Carry banners and signs in support of Biblical causes

5) Serve in political offices on the local and state levels

Moral Action encourages you and your family to VALUE VOTE. Dr. Richard Land, President of Faith and Family declares, "Don't get stuck on a politicians label. Look for candidates who promote decency, accountability, and responsibility framed within Biblical standards."

### YES, YOUR VOTE CAN MAKE A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE.

Don't decry if you fail to research or to vote.

#### Recommended Readings:

1. Pastors and Pulpits and Politics, Western Center for Law and Policy
2. Heritage Guide to the Constitution, Edward Meese

## Military homosexuals suing for marriage rights

**BOSTON** - A group of married "gay" current and former military personnel has sued the federal government, seeking equal recognition, benefits and the same support as married heterosexual couples.

The lawsuit filed Thursday in federal court in Boston says the government's Defense of Marriage Act violates their constitutional rights and asks the military to recognize their marriages. The suit was filed by the Service Members Legal Defense Network.

Executive director Aubrey Sarvis says homosexual service members deserve the same protections as heterosexual couples because they make the same sacrifices.

Opponents of President Obama's decision to over turn "don't ask, don't tell" policy warned that such a lawsuit would be coming once that restriction was removed.

Under current law, the Pentagon is required to ignore same-sex "marriages." However, the Obama administration has already stated publicly that it will not enforce the Defense of Marriage Act that restricts marriage to a man and a woman.

The lawsuit names as defendants the Secretary of Defense, the U.S. Attorney General and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

A Pentagon spokeswoman did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.



## Tupelo Church Seeks Pastor

Emmanual Baptist Church, Tupelo, Mississippi is searching for a pastor. Anyone feeling led should contact one of the individuals listed below.

Ricky Sandford at 662-213-1442, Eilliam Lucius at 662-842-0552, or DAvId Langford at 662-687-1610.

## Baptist pastor taken to task

**OneNewsNow** - Popular radio and television commentator Glenn Beck wrapped up the Values Voter Summit in Washington, DC, recently in a wave of anti-Mormonism comments lodged towards GOP presidential hopeful Mitt Romney.

The gathering of conservatives provided GOP presidential candidates a platform to present their ideas. Robert Jeffress, pastor of the First Baptist Church in downtown Dallas, was asked by Summit sponsor Family Research Council to introduce Texas Governor Rick Perry. But the Texas pastor captured more headlines than the candidates themselves when, during an interview after the introduction, described Mormonism as a "cult" and said presidential hopeful Mitt Romney is "not a Christian."

Beck, founder of Glenn Beck TV, delivered a 39-minute speech at the conclusion of the event. In a tearful moment, he defended his Mormon faith as he referred to Pastor Jeffress' remarks.

"People have come onto this stage and been for and against, I guess, members of my faith," Beck stated. "I celebrate their right to say those things in America. I am a proud member of the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior - he redeemed me."

In earlier remarks, William Bennett, who served as Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan, also responded to Jeffress' comments, saying the pastor had overshadowed the speeches of Rick Perry and all the GOP candidates who spoke at the conference.

"Do not give voice to bigotry," said Bennett. "And I would say to Pastor Jeffress, you stepped on and obscured the words of Perry and [Rick] Santorum and [Herman] Cain and [Michele] Bachmann and everyone else who has spoken here. You did Rick Perry no good, sir, in what you had to say."

Speaking (later) on the Fox News Channel, Jeffress did not back away from his comments over the weekend.

"It was John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who said, 'We have the duty and privilege as Christians to select and prefer Christians as our leaders,'" he said. "If I'm a bigot, then the first chief justice of the Supreme Court is also a bigot."

Presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Jon Huntsman are both members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Herman Cain and Michele Bachmann declined to answer questions about Jeffress' comment; Rick Santorum and Rick Perry both say they do not consider Mormonism a cult.

## Prayer at school portrayed as 'grossly inappropriate'

**OneNewsNow** - A legal group that defends religious liberty doesn't agree with the attorney for a Florida school district who says teachers who join in prayer at the campus flagpole before classes are violating the U.S. Constitution.

Pastor Ron Baker of Russell Baptist Church leads students, parents, and other community members in the 8:15 prayer every Monday morning at Clay Hill Elementary's flagpole. But when the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard about it, they called for it to be brought to an end, describing it as "grossly inappropriate" --not to mention, unconstitutional - for school officials and staffers to "actively participate in or promote student-run religious organizations and activities."

In response, Clay County

schools attorney J. Bruce Bickner has said teacher participation in morning prayer after teachers have begun work is an endorsement of religion and Christianity - an argument that Liberty Counsel attorney Steve Crampton does not endorse.

"What a tragedy that we've come to where it's basically labeled a shameful thing to engage in prayer for your school and your educational activities," he laments.

The attorney argues that the Establishment Clause principle of the U.S. Constitution has been misinterpreted and misapplied. "Groups like Freedom From Religion Foundation delight in using it in excess to try to cleanse every mention, every hint of religion from the public square," he notes.

## Blessed

I watched the old man as he was sitting in the surgery waiting room. Worry lined the features of his face. He was probably only in his early fifties, so my thoughts of him being old seemed unfounded. Yet something about the man seemed to characterize him as living many years beyond his age.

As he rubbed his hands together, I noticed that they were hard and calloused. On his left hand, his ring finger was missing from the knuckle up and he had a tendency to rub that finger as if from habit. If I had to guess, his work probably kept him out in the weather, and that hard, manual labor had been his way of life from his youth.

I was awakened from my thoughts when the volunteer at the desk called out someone's name. "Tanner?" Now where

had I heard that name? The man looked up in a manner that indicated that he had been in deep thought also.

"That's me. How is she?" The question was asked but in a manner that seemed to me was asked with little hope that the answer would be favorable.

"The doctor will be out in a minute to talk to you, Mr. Tanner. I just wanted you to know that your wife was out of surgery."

He sat back down and then got up and began pacing the room. His well worn boots sounded loudly every time he stepped off the carpet in the sitting area to the hall leading to the surgery room.

"John? Dr. Matthews." The doctor extended his hand and I thought he winced when the man grabbed it for a handshake.

"Mrs. Tanner had some minor swelling but I don't feel as if that will cause any problems with her brain. We will want to watch her for a day or two just to be sure. She's in recovery now, but you should be able to see her in thirty minutes or so."

"Thank you doctor. Thank the Lord." The man shook the doctor's hand again and this time the doctor was wise enough to get a better grip.

As the man sat back down, the name "Tanner" flashed in my memory and I knew why it seemed so familiar. This was

the Tanner I had read about in the newspaper over coffee this morning. She apparently had run off the road when a herd of cows that had torn down their fence had gotten out and onto the road.

The story in the newspaper had told of the accident along with some other information of the couple's life. They had endured so much, according to the article, over the past year; the loss of their son to cancer, a failed crop due to the drought, and now the accident that nearly took the woman's life.

I was trying to get my thoughts together to see if I could in some way help the man through these trying times, when I looked up to see the man kneeling beside his chair. Tears came involuntarily into my eyes when I heard his prayer.

"Lord? I ain't never had much. Seems as if I take one step forward, I get knocked back two. But Lord, I've had food to eat. I've had a roof over my head and I have a family that loves me. I knew if you took her life that I would see her again shortly, but I just wanted to thank you for letting us have a few more years here together. I can count all the bad turns that come our way, the times when I lacked the trust I needed in You, but Lord, I can't count all the blessings. It's just too many. Thank ya' Lord. In Jesus' sweet holy name I pray. Amen."

### From The Mind of



Chuck Lee

## Biblical blunder at White House briefing

**WASHINGTON** - It was a blunder of biblical proportions.

White House spokesman Jay Carney invoked scripture yesterday to back up President Barack Obama's suggestion that God wants policymakers to get busy and create more jobs.

Carney said Obama was trying to make the point that "we have it within our capacity to do the things to help the American people." Carney said there was a Bible phrase stating "The Lord helps those who help themselves."

Someone caught the goof. A White House transcript of Carney's briefing issued later in the day included the disclaimer: "This common phrase does not appear in the Bible."

Obama referenced faith earlier in the day when he took note of House action reaffirming "In God We Trust" as the country's motto. He said he trusts in God, but God wants to see Washington helping put people back to work.

Crampton credits Bickner for pointing out that if prayers were moved up an hour, the sessions with teacher participation could continue without conflict. However, Pastor Baker fears such action would end the students' participation.

## Digging Out Our Numbers?

continued from page 3

When a church fails to send in a completed church letter, it leaves a gap in describing the work of that church, the work within our state, and the BMAA work as a whole. No, I'm not going to give anyone "what for" if they don't send in their church data. But I hope we are concerned enough about our churches and denomination's health and impact that it motivates us to jump in and do the needed data mining to complete our annual church letters.

So, let's make our numbers known! Our work is important! Collect and send in your church numbers so we can see the impact we are making for our Lord.

I hope you will excuse me now while I dig out my blood pressure meter and start collecting the numbers that show how healthy I am. I hope your church will dig out your numbers, too, and include them in your annual church letter!

DiscipleGuide's standardized church letter form can be completed and submitted online at [www.DiscipleGuide.org/ChurchLetter](http://www.DiscipleGuide.org/ChurchLetter). This data will be used in the BMAA Directory and Handbook.

## One Smooth Stone...

A shepherd boy stood before the challenge of the giant. The boy had one shot to make a difference. He selected one smooth stone and with great precision defeated Goliath. Like that one smooth stone, a timeless truth communicated in a timely fashion can slay giants.

# Renewing Our D.R.I.V.E. for Ministry

## Part 4: Focusing on the Future

by Kirk Shelton

DiscipleGuide Church Growth Consultant

How can we renew our drive for ministry, especially when a slow fade and steady decline of ministry vitality has set in? While most of us may never be guilty of one of the "big uglies" of moral or ethical indiscretion, we will most certainly come face-to-face with the midyears malaise that drains us of a fervent "first love" for God and His church. We are giving attention to the last two keys necessary for renewing a D.R.I.V.E. for ministry:

- Daily devotion — don't neglect your first love
- Readiness for life-long learning (L3) — don't ever stop growing
- Invest in right relationships (R2) — don't isolate yourself; you need people in your life
- Visioning for the future — don't quit the race before the finish line!
- Exercise and eating — taking care of the temple

In addition to a healthy "first love" relationship with Jesus, a commitment to L3 (Life-Long Learning), and investing in right relationships, we add two necessary ingredients for renewing our D.R.I.V.E. for ministry. These two ingredients are both forward looking.

One of the greatest enemies to ministry passion and vitality is the backward glance. The problem with the backward glance is that it often becomes a gaze which causes us to lose our way. In ministry, the hurts

and disappointments are many. Over time they become our focus as we turn inward and protective of ourselves and our families. Before we know it we are either living off past successes or wallowing in past failures.

As someone has said, "Familiar pain becomes preferable to uncomfortable and unknown change." This is where visioning for the future comes in. Servant of the Most High, don't quit the race before you reach the finish line! One of the worst things that could ever happen would be to have the designation beside our name: DNF (did not finish). God is not finished with you. If He was, you would be at home in heaven! Always believe your best days are before you, not behind you. I fear that many pulpits are filled each Sunday with men who have already quit on the inside. Don't quit! Don't ever quit!

The fifth ingredient necessary for renewing ministry vitality is to take care of the temple God has given us. Let me be the first to confess that I have failed miserably at this. As Mickey Mantle (one of my lifelong heroes) said before dying, "If I'd known I was going to live so long, I would have taken better care of myself."

Preachers, let's be honest. We are some of the world's worst at taking care of our bod-

ies. We even attempt to sanctify it with statements like, "Better to wear out than to rust out!" I would rather not do either one. It cannot be argued that the most important thing we can do to take care of our temples is to eat right and exercise. It is amazing how the right foods and a little exercise can affect how we feel — physically, emotionally, relationally, and even spiritually. Take care of what God has given you; it's a matter of good stewardship.

"Father, thank you that you are not finished with us yet. Forgive our malaise and half-heartedness brought on by our neglect of the fundamentals we know but have for so long ignored. For your servant who has long felt unwanted and unneeded, infuse him with a sense of purpose and destiny, with a vision for the days ahead. For those who have grown complacent, may your Spirit spur them on to renewed passion and vitality. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## Shepherd Bags™ Ministry

continued from page 8

Spanish sitting in the warehouse and another 33,000 books in the process of being printed. So plans are being made to get another shipment out as soon as we can build another 33-38,000 bags for a 40 ft. container. However long that may take, we'll work until it's done.

So my answer is emphatically, NO, the Shepherd Bags™ Ministry is not seasonal. I have always said and will continue to do so: we will make bags as long as we have funds and sup-

plies to make bags. That is the only thing that determines our work load. God's people have been so faithful so we continue to work. And as I said earlier, I guess we'll rest when we get to Heaven. But that's not really true as Bro. Rocky and I have said many times because we know we'll stay very "busy" praising King Jesus!!

Thank you again, we love you all. Please pray for us as we continue to try and serve Him in the Shepherd Bags™ Ministry.

## TAKE TIME TO PRAY

**Editor's Note:** My friend Dr. Tony Cleaver is a prolific writer and is gracious in his sharing his thoughts with us. We are highlighting excerpts from a project he is working on. As you read these prayers, let them be an inspiration to you to strengthen your own prayer life.

**Hear my prayer, God who is constantly and lovingly calling me to follow.**

I have read the account of Abram or Abraham many times. I read it again this morning. Thank You for Your words to me and those like me who want to be Your children. You said to Abraham: "Walk before me and be blameless." That was a tough thing to do so far as Abraham was concerned. It is a demanding thing for me to do in order to be like Abraham.

By Your Spirit as I read, this is the truth of my relearning from the passage: it is not the blamelessness that interests You; it is the walking. For my life to be in constant walk with You is the important thing. You will take care of the blameless part. If I walk in the rain, I will get wet. I can't help but getting wet because I am out in the rain.

I cannot be blameless. Sometimes I think of "goody-good, so called-Christian stuff" and confuse it with righteousness. By being with You in a daily walk, I will be righteous! If I am engaged in the walk on a daily basis, the result is that I will, through no goodness on my part, be what You want me to be - blameless.

I guess the part of this walking and blameless part of Abraham's life might be said in other words: "He believed God. God counted it as righteousness." His belief in being with God made him righteous. This was his practice: he walked before God. This was the result: he was blameless. Lord who asks me to walk with You today, may I get my walking shoes on, may I get in step, and may I walk before You today.

Amen.



Tony Cleaver

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Kirk & Toni Shelton



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Larry Geraldson  
Director

As the Apostle Paul would say, "Grace be to you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." I consider it a great honor to have this opportunity to express my appreciation to our Heavenly Father and to you, for the privilege of serving as the Director of Missions for the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi.

I accepted this position with a deep awareness and respect for the faithful "labor of love" by those who have come before me and the churches they served. I, like many of you, mourn the loss of Dr. Vern Holifield who passed away recently.

I am sure that my coming to this position has some excited and some apprehensive. That is natural when there is a change of leadership in any organization. Change that is ill-defined and unclear moves people from apprehension to anxiety while clearly defined

change can lead to hope and enthusiasm. Job said, "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." It is clear that Job understood what change he was speaking of and enthusiastically waited for it to come as do all of us who share in the hope of the resurrection. Change is not antithetic to the Christian. We are introduced to it at Salvation and move through it in Sanctification and look forward to it in Glorification. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Some change is good and some change is bad.

Ungodliness, wickedness, perversion, corruption, filthiness, and immorality, are all on the rise. Church attendance and long term commitment are in decline. The societal infra-

structure that once supported the coexistence of Christian culture in our country has been breached and there is little argument that an all out attack on all things Christian is underway.

Though our motive: the glory of our Lord; our message: the gospel of Jesus Christ; our method: gospel preaching; our means: the grace of God; our mission: church planting (churches planting churches), has not and must not change, the influence and impact these guiding principles have upon the encroaching trends of an ungodly world must be met with greater results. Though we are under attack, we are not giving up. I am reminded in Deuteronomy 9:1-3 "Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before

thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee." Much has changed since this passage was written, the enemy has changed, the church has taken up the spiritual battle, but the God that goes before us is the same today as yesterday. Hebrews 13:8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." The bottom-line is that we must fight back and we need God to go before us!

There is an initiative being considered in Mississippi called Initiative 26, which, in my opinion, every Christian should vote "Yes" on. In addition to serving as a great opportunity for the folks in Mississippi to make a difference nation wide, it also serves as an example of how opportunity should never be neglected just because you're not the biggest or strongest. This example is also true for the churches of the BMA of Mississippi. When I shared my vision to double the number of BMA of Mississippi churches in the next twenty years, doubt and skepticism emanated from some like heat from a warm carcass on a cold day. My response is simple, Proverbs 29:18 "Where there is no vision, the people

perish: ...".

Let me close with this excerpt from a Puritan Prayer: "Thou art the blessed God, happy in Thyself, source of happiness in Thy creatures, my maker, benefactor, proprietor, upholder. Thou hast produced and sustained me, supported and indulged me, saved and kept me; Thou art in every situation able to meet my needs and miseries.

May I live by Thee, live for Thee, never be satisfied with my Christian progress but as I resemble Christ; and may conformity to His principles, temper, and conduct grow hourly in my life. Let Thy unexampled love constrain me into holy obedience, and render my duty my delight. If others deem my faith folly, my meekness infirmity, my zeal madness, my hope delusion, my actions hypocrisy, may I rejoice to suffer for Thy name."

I realize that this is not a battle that ends until our Lord returns, but I also know that it is a battle that we must fight faithfully until that time. We need to work together. I need your help. If you would like to know more about how you or your church can get involved, please contact me at 601-428-8616 or come by and visit us.

## Shepherd Bags™ Ministry 2011 Update and Looking Forward to 2012!

by Fonda Norris, Coordinator

*Evangelistic International Ministries Shepherd Bags*

"We'll rest when we get to Heaven" is what we tell ourselves here at EIM when speaking of the Shepherd Bags™ Ministry! When a shipment goes out, we think maybe we'll rest up before getting ready for the next shipment but there's always too much work that needs to be done. Then we realize, "it's the bags that God uses as the tool to open the door to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" and so we gear back up, take a deep breath and start up again. It's been a wonderfully, busy year.

We've recently been asked several times about how things are going with the Shepherd Bags™ Ministry. So we thought we better update everyone.

We are amazed at what God has accomplished and the things He's allowed us to get done. In August, 35,174 Shepherd Bags™ were loaded, bound for the schools of Honduras. This is the largest single

shipment we've ever had to go out in our history of making bags! To God be the glory! Combining the numbers from this shipment and the total of our October 2010 shipment, we've sent over 55,000 Shepherd Bags™ for our Honduras school campaign!

Our Honduras Shepherd Bags™ School Campaign continues to allow us the freedom to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the schools of Honduras. The invitation from the President of Honduras wife to go into the schools has opened many doors. This year we've had six Shepherd Bags™ Distribution Teams as well as two Overseas Bible Schools Teams to go into many schools to present the Gospel and hand out bags. They've gone from large schools with several hundred children to high up in the mountains to very small, poor schools to share the love of Christ. May we pray and beg for that freedom to be restored in our schools here in America!

For 2012, we have approximately 8-10 dates available for Shepherd Bags™ Distribution

Teams. These teams will distribute the bags that we're sending to Honduras for the schools. If 4-6 individuals from a church would be interested in putting a team together, you can go online at our website ([www.eimworldwide.org](http://www.eimworldwide.org)) to see the dates available. I am currently working on updating our Shepherd Bags link and hopefully will have all of our new information available in a couple of weeks.

In addition to the largest container in our history being sent out in August, we will be loading approximately 15,000+ more bags on a shipment to go the Philippines in mid-November. We've never had shipments that close before. What started out as plans to send a 20 ft. container of dehydrated food turned into a 40 ft. container of food, plus Shepherd Bags as well as bicycles to be given to pastors/workers who need them. We're excited as many of the bags will have our EIM 7 inch Frisbee with John 3:16 printed on them as well as a Gospel Story Coloring Book in Ilonggo,

the native dialect where most of the bags will be distributed. So everyone is working very hard around here to make the shipment date. The work that goes into a shipment cannot be described. We have so many faithful workers and church groups that contribute.

And how can we express our thanks to the hundreds of faithful churches, WMA's, Awana, VBS, Youth, Galilean/GMA's and other church groups and individuals who have partnered with us and continue to give so faithfully so the Shepherd Bags™ Ministry can continue. We've said it a thousand times and will continue to do so, God has allowed EIM to do this but without His continued blessing and "You", EIM's faithful giver, it could not happen. It would end tomorrow.

So thank you from each of us at EIM, we couldn't do it without you! And thank you from each school, town and village that Shepherd Bags have been distributed in. They are the lives that are being changed through your burden for lost souls around the world.

For a very personal testimony of how lives are being affected, I hope you take the time to read Francisco's Story, a policeman from Honduras, who had a personal encounter with the Savior while going up into the mountains with a Shepherd Bags™ Distribution Team.

Finally, I'd like to try and answer a question we get asked all the time. Is the Shepherd Bags™ Ministry a seasonal ministry? My answer to you is this. We had a shipment of over 35,000 bags go out to Honduras in August. We're currently working on a shipment for mid-November to the Philippines. When that shipment leaves, we will start back to work on another 40 ft. container, resuming our Honduras School Campaign. I currently have supplies for over 2,000 Shepherd Bags™, including our new 7 in. Frisbee with John 3:16 in Spanish on them that we put into all of our unisex bags. I have 7,000 Gospel Story Coloring Books in

continued on page 7