

## Dates To Remember

October 9-11, 2007

### Pastors Oasis

Hilton Branson Convention Center  
Hotel  
Branson, Missouri

October 22-24, 2007

### BMA of Mississippi

Annual Meeting  
Southeastern College  
Laurel, Mississippi

October 30 - November 1, 2007

### National Senior

### Adult Conference

Hilton Convention Center  
Branson, Missouri

January 7-8, 2007

### BMAA Missions Symposium

Temple Baptist Church  
Little Rock, Arkansas

## Inside This Issue

### Annual Meeting Issues

Reports from two committees  
on issues to be considered  
at the 2007 Annual Meeting  
of the BMA of Mississippi  
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# Mississippi Baptist

JOURNAL OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI

## Every Pastor A Missions Director

By Dr. Tony Cleaver

### Southwest Missions Symposium

Cleaver is a former BMA of America sponsored U.S. Army Chaplain and is currently serves as professor at Jacksonville Baptist College, Jacksonville, Texas.

(Sermon Courtesy of the Baptist Trumpet)

I lived in a military environment for many years. My home in Ding Dong, Tex. is located near the largest military base in our nation and there are many retirees in the area. I hear a lot of talk about, "If they would let me run the Army I would..." Time and

again I hear the "Old Sarge" say something like, "Well, I tell you 'whut,' if the Colonel had listened to me..." It seems that everyone who has retired from the Army is a military expert on all matters.

Perhaps we need to call "Old Sarge" back to active duty and place him at the head of the



Dr. Tony Cleaver

Department of Defense so we can have an Army with no problems. After all, "Old Sarge" knows exactly what to do, when it needs to be done and how to accomplish the task.

I also hear many pastors at conferences talking about the flaws they perceive in the Missions Department. I hear Pastor Blowhard saying things like, "Well, I tell you 'whut,' if they would let me in the Missions office for about 10 minutes, I would... If they would simply listen to me, we would have all our missions problems solved because I have all the answers to what is wrong with our program."

The fact of the matter is that "Old Sarge" does not have a clue as to how to run the Army, although he really likes to talk about it. If "Old Sarge" would return to active duty and take care of his area of responsibility, the Colonel would have a much smoother running operation and the Army would, indeed, have fewer problems. However, "Old Sarge" is not about to let his pet gripes stop coming from his flapping lips.

And the fact of the matter is that Brother Blowhard does not have a clue as to how to "run the Missions program" his lips flap so much hot air about either. He really likes to dwell on the "shortcomings" of our Missions programs to the exclusion of being the missions director (pastor) at his local church.

I believe every Baptist church is a local church with a worldwide mission. I believe the Lord has established his local church to carry out the Great Commission. The book of Acts and the New Testament are both a descriptive and a proscriptive textbook of how we are to accomplish missions in and through the local church.

Colossians 4:2-4 says: Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

If you pastor a local church, you are a missions director of that local congregation. Some see their place as pastor in the local church as something to occupy them until

## Supreme Court asked to hear case involving tougher FCC broadcast standards

**OneNewsNow.com** - A special counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is encouraged that the Bush administration will ask the Supreme Court to reinstate stricter broadcast decency policies.

In June, a federal appeals court struck down tougher broadcast standards adopted by the Federal Communications Commission, which banned the broadcast of certain expletives. Now, FCC chairman Kevin Martin says U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement will ask the nation's highest court to review the appeals court decision.

"I am pleased that the Solicitor General will be seeking Supreme Court review of the Second Circuit's decision," Martin said in a statement. "I continue to support the Commission's efforts to protect families from indecent language on television and radio when children are likely to be in the audience."

ADF special counsel Pat Trueman says while there is no guarantee the Supreme Court will even hear the case, the request is valid. "We do need a clarification of the authority of the [FCC] because, though we thought all along for decades that they had the authority to stop indecency, they haven't exercised that authority well," he says. "And

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Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary

## Paschal Bible Lectures set

The Thirty-Seventh Annual William N. Paschal Memorial Bible Lectures will be held October 9 and October 11, 2007 in the Dorman Memorial Chapel on the campus of Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary in Jacksonville.

The speaker will be Dr. Paige Patterson, who is currently President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He will lead three sessions on "Speech Gifts of the New Testament." Lecture sessions will be held at 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday and at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday. Tuesday's lectures will be "The Intangible World of the Spirit" and "A Football for My Wife." Thursday's lecture will be "The Tongues of Men and Angels."

Dr. Patterson's educational background includes a B.A. degree from Hardin-Simmons University, Th.M. and Ph.D. degrees in Theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He served as president of Criswell College for 17 years, and he served 11 years as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently in his fourth year serving as president of Southwestern



Dr. Paige Patterson

Baptist Theological Seminary.

He was twice elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, serving Southern Baptists in that role from 1998-2000. During those years he appointed a committee to revise the Baptist Faith and Message, the confession most widely employed by Southern Baptist, and also presided over the historic session of the convention in which this revised confession was adopted.

William N. Paschal, a successful businessman and pastor, passed away in 1978. In 1984, Dessarine (Paschal) McNeill of Waldo, Arkansas, and Kathleen (Paschal) Fullenwider of Magnolia, Arkansas, established an endowment to fund the William N. Paschal Bible Lectures in honor of their father. Among his grandchildren are Dr. Harold McNeill, Jr., retired mental health chaplain at Rusk State Hospital and Professor of Christian Education at BMA Seminary and Norita (McNeill) Higgs, whose husband, Grady Higgs, is Executive Director of the Department of Missions for the BMA of America, Little Rock, Arkansas.

The public is invited to attend.

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## CHURCH NEWS



News articles should contain information that will be of interest to the general public who are not members of the church that is reporting.

**Bethel, Fulton**

Hope this newsletter finds all of our churches on fire "for the Lord." Crossties, a Bible Study for young adults, meets each Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Youth Center.

Bro. Charles Costa, missionary in Beirut, Lebanon, brought the message on the 9th and showed slides of his work. The Awana program is going strong and presented, "Down By the Creek Bank" in the evening service on September 30.

Pictures were taken on the 18th-22nd for our new church directory. The Brotherhood had a fund-raiser on the 30th to help with their projects. Our theme for the new church year is "Deepen Your Commitment." If you are in the area and want to visit a friendly and God-loving church, our doors are always open.

There have been 6 additions since last report.

Dr. Martin Jameson, pastor  
Joyce Cooley, reporter

**Westover, Hattiesburg to hold revival**

Westover Baptist Church will hold its Fall Revival November 4-7. Bro. Ed Steele will be preaching the Sunday morning message and Bro. Corby Jones, Pastor of Good Hope Baptist Church in Stringer, will be preaching Sunday night through Wednesday night. Services will be at 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Sunday and at 7:00 p.m. Monday through Wednesday. We invite you to come and join us as we seek a heartfelt revival from the Lord.

Sam Oglesby, pastor

**Wilderness, Vicksburg**

Wilderness Baptist Church welcomes two by letter and offers praise to the Lord for His blessings on our services. We are enjoying visitors in our Sunday services and feel the Lord is moving in our community.

We are planning an "Olde Time" Revival to start Wednesday Evening, November 7 through the 11th. The Saturday night and Sunday morning services are our annual homecoming with an afternoon of singing on Sunday. We will also have dinner on the grounds. We are celebrating 25 years as a church. Bro. Michael Moore, pastor of Oak-

**Church Seeks Pastor**

Hopewell Baptist Church in Dorsey, Mississippi, is in search of a Pastor. If you are interested please send a resume or contact James McMillen, 1132 Hopewell-Keyes Road, Fulton MS 38843 or call 662-862-9819.

land Baptist, Vicksburg will be bringing the messages as well as the Sunday morning worship-revival-Homecoming message.

Bro. Ken Gibson of Mounds, Louisiana, will be leading the music. We are planning cottage prayer meetings, much special music, and are preparing for a tremendous outpouring of the Lord's Spirit on our church and the community. Pray for our services and join us if you can.

Bob Conrad, Pastor

**East Central Annual Meeting**

The East Central Association held its annual meeting on September 8. The annual message was brought by Bro. Howard Rogers, pastor of Zions Rest Baptist Church. All nine churches were present for the meeting and regular business was cared for. All mission projects were continued with the exception of the support sent to the Mississippi Baptist Paper. This was rejected by the Committee.

Workers from Southeastern College, Prisoner's Bible Crusade and State Missions were present and reported on their work. Officers of the Association were elected as well as the Youth in the harvest. The 2008 meeting will be held at Calvary Church, Leakesville. Greg Hillman will bring the annual message.

David Daw, reporter

## Missions Director

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another church comes along. If your church is not big enough, then make it so! If your church is not one of the "important" churches, then make it so! If your pulpit is not prestigious enough for you, then make it so! Pastor, you are the missions director of that local church.

**Right Priorities**

Those verses in Colossians tell us that missions directors (pastors) of local churches must have their priorities straight in their devotional life. My priority is not meeting with the committee to select the new grass for the lawn. It is not my priority to make sure the coffee is made for the men's Sunday School class. It is not my priority to fix the lawn mower. All of these have a place and can be

Short Message Series by Rev. Grover Laird

## The Lord is on the Side of Right

"...Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good." -II Chronicles 19:11b

Our text records the words of King Jehoshaphat when he was encouraging his Judges in Judah. In explaining their duties, he had warned them that they "trespass not against the Lord" (Verse 10). Then he assures them that "the Lord shall be with the good," or the Lord will be on the side of right. These words are so comforting and reassuring to the righteous. May we consider them further in this little preachment.

These words of our text are not comforting, however, to the disobedient and sinner. They are frightening to them. Our text is saying that a person whose life is out of line with the Bible is on the losing side. He stands in conflict with the God who holds his breath and destiny in His hands, and he will therefore be the loser. For you see, God is the all-powerful One, and He will always have the final word.

But may the righteous be encouraged by the words of our text, as well as other verses. Many are the times that the Bible assures us

that when we stand for what is right, the Lord will be with us. The prophet Azariah preached it this way--"...The Lord is with you while ye be with him..." (II Chronicles 15:2).

We see an example of the Lord being on the side of right when Moses went down to Egypt to deliver Israel from their bondage. At first, Moses got into a frightening conflict with Pharaoh, King of Egypt. Yet, when the conflict ended, Egypt was destroyed, their army was washed up on the shore of the Red Sea, and Israel was singing praises to God on the other side (Exodus 14:25-15:1). The Lord was on the side of right.

The truth of our text shows up again in the days of Daniel. Daniel had some enemies who sought to destroy him. (Daniel 6) Their plan called for tricking King Darius into casting him into the lion's den that he might be killed. Yet, God was on the side of right and turned it all around. Daniel was delivered, and



Grover Laird

his wicked enemies were crushed in the den of lions.

We will need to remember, however, that help may not always come when we expect it. Our patience may be tested. Israel's deliverance from Egypt surely came slower than Moses expected it (Exodus 5:22,23). But God was on the side of right.

Also, help may not come the way we look for it. Abraham expected God to work for him when he offered up Isaac his son. (Genesis 22) However, help did not come in the way he had it figured out. He expected God to raise up Isaac from the dead. (Hebrews 11:17-19) Instead, God provided a substitute which Abraham surely liked better. (Genesis 22:10-13) But either way, God being on the side of right met Abraham's need.

In these last days we can expect to get deeper into a conflict with the powers of darkness. It may appear at times that the forces of evil have the upper hand. It may even get more involved and drawn out than we expect. But regardless of what may come, we should never get discouraged and faint. "The Lord shall be with the good." Right will win in the end (1 Samuel 17:45,50; Acts 1:14;2:41; Acts 11:19-21).

-from "Sermons, Devotionals, Thoughts"

important, but, as pastor, these activities are not my priority. I must, without question, have unhurried time with God each and every day — that is a priority!

When the local church missions director (pastor) prays like this, something is terribly wrong: "O, hello. I mean hello, Lord God. I am having a busy day. I have a lot of things to do, so I don't have much time to chat just now. Bless me, my and mine. Oh yes, bless Mrs. Jones' gallbladder too. Toodleloo; gotta go now. Bye. I mean, in Jesus' name, Amen."

The church where I pastor is in a town full of people who are lost and have no hope except in Christ. The local church is the only hope of the community and the world. If my prayers are that way, I am not serving as the pastor, much less the missions director of the church. Shame on me, and may God forgive me.

I need to find my way to the place of the bended knee and bowed heart in prayer time for the needs, hurts and sins of my mission field that are within a two, three or four mile circle of my church.

**An Open Door**

Missions directors (pastors) of local churches must have their eye on the open door. "When I saw him,

I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Rev. 1:17-20)

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (Rev. 3:7-8)

The local pastor is the messenger to the local church. His message is that "We have a job to do here in our town and we have a job to do in our world. That job is missions. As your

pastor, I am the missions director. Let's go and get the job done."

The key to the Kaaba (Ka'bah), the most holy place in Islam, was kept in Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. Only the potentate of the Ottoman Empire could open that door. Today that key is in Mecca under the control of the Saudi Arabian royal family.

Only this One who is in the line of David controls the key John speaks of in this passage. He alone locks and unlocks the doors to service. The Lord opens the door for opportunity for churches and only He can do that. He will not open a door to people who are not able to go through it and He will supply the energy to do so.

**The Mystery Of Christ**

Missions directors (pastors) of local churches must have as their message the mystery of Christ: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of

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## Mississippi Baptist Children's Home

### Annual Special Emphasis - Our Needs - \$30,000

Greetings from your  
Mississippi Baptist Children's Home:

There is nothing that brings more excitement and joy in a loving home than the birth of a child. Jewish people always rejoiced at the birth of a baby, because they looked upon children as a heritage from the Lord. Psalm 127:3; 128:3.

In today's society it is so sad that many times babies are looked upon as burdens to bear rather than blessings to share, tumors to be removed and destroyed, instead of persons to be received and enjoyed. It is so good that the ministry of the Mississippi Baptist

Children's Home is able to have a part in taking care of God's heritage. Our reason and purpose for existing is to receive these gifts from God and to help train them up in the ways of the Lord.

As you are aware, October and November are Special Emphasis months for the Children's Home each year. Your help during this Special Emphasis is important to the ongoing operation of the Home. Our goal this year is \$30,000 and we are encouraging each church to consider taking part in this Special Emphasis.

Be assured that your gift will help

provide young people from unstable homes a life of stability and structure that they so desperately need. Through your gift you help young boys and girls to have a safe and loving haven during their difficult growing up years. Your donation helps provide it so that children can find the loving warmth of Christian life and upbringing in an atmosphere that brings glory and honor to the Lord.

Thanking you in advance for helping us as we share together the responsibility of ministering to children in need.

*Helping Children Understand Their Heritage, Psalm 127:3*

Sidney D. Davis, Director



Helping Children Understand Their Heritage, Psalm 127:3

# Mississippi Baptist | Opinion Page

Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi

## Annual Meeting Near Important Issues On The Table

Our state association of churches will convene at Southeastern Baptist College on October 22-24 to care for annual business. A number of issues will be discussed and are slated to be addressed.

Two important committees were elected at our midyear meeting in May and have prepared reports and will be making recommendations.

While some of these reports address controversial issues, it is imperative that we assemble in Laurel without controversial attitudes.

There are differing opinions about almost every task that any organization undertakes and the methodology with which tasks are addressed. Let us meet in Laurel with the 'mind of Christ' and a unity of spirit that will propel us into the future to reach the world for Christ. This is our ONLY goal and commission - Let us be faithful and diligent in our pursuit of His will.



Don Brown  
Editor

### Reports Presented

Printed below are reports from the two aforementioned committees. Let us consider them prayerfully and seek God's leadership.

**Editor's Note:** *The following letter was mailed to each church in the BMA of Mississippi. The letter contains the findings and recommendations of an Investigative Committee appointed at the midyear meeting last May.*

### Report from Appointed Investigative Committee

To the churches of the BMA of Mississippi,

I have been asked by the Appointed Investigative Committee to share with you the findings and follow-up of the task assigned to us during our state mid-year meeting.

After extensive interviews with Bro. Rayburn Freeman, John Prickett, Nicki Prickett, and auditor from Horne CPA, Melissa Randolph, it is the finding of this committee that the allegations against Bro. Freeman did not involve any acts of fraud.

The question regarding the amount of \$9,466.96 was found to include only \$3,597.38 of mishandled funds (\$2,487.93 as reported by the Revolving Loan Fund in letters to our churches; \$1,109.45 in receipts received by the Missions Office after the letters had been mailed, but taken

care of before the appointing of this committee). In an effort to repay the Revolving Loan Fund the misappropriated funds, there was no fraudulent activity found on the part of Bro. Freeman, but lax business practice was discovered.

The committee would like to assure the Association that the Revolving Loan Fund is strong and growing, as well as offer the following recommendations regarding the business practices of the Missions Office and the Revolving Loan Fund:

1. We recommend that an assistant be hired who will work under the direction of the Missions Director. This assistant would be directly responsible for the financial oversight of the Revolving Loan Fund. The RLF trustees would set the job description for this position. The assistant position could be part-time.

2. We recommend that separate bookkeepers be used for the Missions Department and the Revolving Loan Fund. The bookkeeper for the Revolving Loan Fund would answer to the Missions Director's assistant (as mentioned in (1)). This, too, could be a part-time position.

3. We recommend that the Revolving Loan Fund trustees establish clearer guidelines for dealing with contracts and conflicts of interest. These should include:

a. All contracts (i.e. rental agree-

ments, etc.) must be in writing.

b. Any business dealing with any employee of the Missions Office or their family must be presented to the trustees for approval.

4. We recommend that the Revolving Loan Fund trustees develop guidelines for the trustees so that each trustee will understand his responsibility more clearly.

These recommendations will be presented at the state meeting in October and the prayerful consideration of each church is greatly sought and greatly appreciated. May we find strength for the work, encouragement for the workers, and share the gospel with all the world, as we come together under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For His Glory,  
Shane Singleton, clerk (AIC)

From the July 1, 2007 Issue of *Mississippi Baptist*

### Special Committee issues report

**Editor's Note:** At the Midyear meeting of the BMA of Mississippi held in May at Midway First Baptist Church, Sumrall, a committee was established to address the concerns of some regarding the use of Scripture when meeting in Associational capacity and at events sponsored by the Association and its departments and commissions.

A committee consisting of Brethren Arthur Smith (Chairman), Frank Panzrino, Cedric Lumpkin, Tommy Watts, Coy Rice, and Ed Steele met at the Mission's Office to prepare a recommendation concerning the use of the King James Version of the Bible in Associational meetings. Bro. Smith opened the meeting with the reading of scripture from Matthew 5:1-12. Bro. Lumpkin led in the opening prayer.

Ed Steele was elected to serve as Clerk for the committee.

A motion was made by Bro. Panzrino and seconded by Bro. Rice that the following addition be made to the end of the Doctrinal Statement of the Baptist Missionary Association

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## Church of the Covered Dish BY THOMAS TAPP



" You need to cut down on stress. I suggest you quit preaching and join the bomb squad."

## Missions Director

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faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. (Rom. 16:25-27)

When we come to the table of the Lord in the Lord's Supper or Communion, we hold in our hand the cup and the bread. That is the mystery of Christ and the gospel — His blood shed for our sins; His body broken, torn and wounded for our sins.

We are to proclaim this mystery with no addition to it or nothing taken from it. We may have our pet theological slant on this or that, but the mystery of the gospel of Christ is contained in the pages of Holy Scripture. God moved through men to write the words of Scripture that we are to proclaim.

### The Message — Clear And Plain

Missions directors (pastors) of local churches must have their message clear and plain. Once, in far eastern Anatolia, I sat on a dirt floor

in my Army uniform at the shop of a man who lived in Erzerum. On my hat was a cross, the symbol of my being an Army chaplain. My host, through the interpreter, asked, "What does that cross mean on your hat?"

Through the interpreter I answered, "It is the symbol of the Christian faith. I am a Christian."

"My grandfather told me about Christians," he said. "But you are the first one I have ever seen or talked to in my life. What does it mean to be a Christian?"

Do you think I began my conversation with him about the version of Bible he needed to carry or what kind of hymnbook he needed to sing from in his church? Do you think I began my conversation by telling him how he should dress when he came to the mandatory Wednesday night prayer meeting? No, and a thousand times, No!

I began, "This cross reminds me that Christ died for my sins according to the Scriptures. He was dead, buried and on the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

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## CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION

Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi  
 Dr. John M. Adams, Director  
 P.O. Box 88, Mantachie, MS 38855 - 662-231-3863  
 Email - fbcdjmaj@yahoo.com



John Adams

### One Year of Service

This month of October, I celebrate one year as the Director for the C.A.C. It has been a very enlightening year, as I have adapted to a new work and areas of concern for our Association.

This year has involved a great deal of reading, research, and investigating in the moral and political arena. We have met the spiritual enemies of Christ's work, face to face. But, pleasantly, we have found hundreds of God's people who are workers and politicians. They are committed Christians and wish to stand up for Christ in an immoral society.

### Jackson, the Capitol

During this year, I have represented the B.M.A. of Mississippi on six different occasions at the State Capitol. I feel this is one of the primary goals and needs of the C.A.C. department. Our goals are to meet, greet, and inform our State Political workers of our Baptist Churches moral and spiritual positions on the issues.

During these six visits, I have had the distinct honor to open the legislative sessions twice in prayer. I have had free opportunity to meet many Senators and Representatives on the floor of the chambers. I have discussed our concerns and prayers regarding gambling, abortion, smoking, pornography, and the school

## Committee Reports

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tion of Mississippi Number 3. This is the portion of the statement that is not binding to the local churches.

*"Whereas most of our people believe in and use the King James Version as the Word of God, we ask that any speakers at any associational meeting, camp or conference sponsored by any department of the association use the KJV."*

The motion passed unanimously. The committee will present this statement to the messengers of the churches at the annual meeting in October as a change to the Doctrinal Statement.

The meeting was closed in prayer led by Bro. Rice.

Arthur Smith, Chairman  
 Ed Steele, Clerk

drop-out rates in Mississippi.

### Annual Message for the B.M.A. of Mississippi

The state messengers once again have afforded me the high honor of sharing the message for the Annual State meeting. I joyfully represent my wonderful congregation of First Baptist Church, Mantachie and as Director of the Christian Action Commission. I recognize that I will represent my church congregation, the C.A.C. Board of Trustees, you the state churches, and my own pre-

vious family, as I speak God's word. I plan to share a message entitled "Three Moral Killers Lurking in Our Homes and Churches" Pray for me please, in advance, as I prepare this sermon from the awesome Word of God. This is a part of a thirteen "Judeo-Christian Sermon Series" that I have shared around the state at associational meetings and camps, as well, as my own congregation.

### Associational Leaders

It is a wonderful joy to work, cooperate and encourage our State

## Out of the Mouth of Babes

It is amazing to me the things that little kids say. They have very little concept of deliberate deception and they certainly have no grasp whatsoever on tact (one of the little boys at church once told me that he'd love for me to come and play at his house one day, but I couldn't go in his tree house because I'd fall through the floor since I was fat). If a grown-up, other than a doctor, had told me that it might have hurt my feelings (and I would wonder why a grown-up

was playing in a tree house, but that's another story), but Drew simply didn't want me to hurt myself or his tree house floor.

Kids are great because they simply are who they are. They see the majesty of God's Creation every day and are fascinated by it. When is the last time you saw a caterpillar and was in awe? After all, it's just a fuzzy worm and sometimes a pest. But if you happen to be six years old and enjoying your first days at

## Missions Director

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He sits in Heaven at the right hand of God, awaiting His return to this earth to judge the living and the dead."

The people whose lives are bent, crooked and filled with sin — and those who are in agony of everyday living — are asking our churches the same question this man once asked me: "What does that cross mean?"

I must respond clearly about the cross of Christ. That is my work as missions director or pastor of a local church. I must enable my congregation to be missionaries in the world in which they live. The people in need, the people in desperate situations surrounding my parish mission field, do not care if I have worship at 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. These people who want to know about Christ do not care about my views on the millennium. They want to know plainly about the mystery of the gospel of Christ.

### Conclusion

Yes, "Old Sarge" certainly has a lot of lip flap time about how the Colonel "should" run this outfit. "Old Sarge" cannot seem to remember that the importance of his primary work was the motor pool section one, two or three. He cannot remember that his primary focus was the supply room or the welfare of his soldiers in second platoon. Perhaps he was too busy with the issues the Colonel got paid to look after and forgot his own job.

The same is true of Pastor Blowhard. He is so busy with lip flap time about the "problems with our missions" that he forgets he, as pastor, is the mission director of a local church. He is responsible to God for the souls in his care.

I like the term "parish." Around your church building there is an area (a parish) that is your mission field where you should direct your church to win the hearts, souls and lives of men, women, boys and girls.

May God enable each and every pastor, in these days before His glorious return, to be missions directors.

Department leaders. We have such a dedicated group of leaders in our work and they have many special gifts. Have you stopped and prayed for them lately?

### Vote for the Person

I encourage our Baptist congregations to carefully consider your November candidates for the local and state officers. I admonish you to vote for the PERSON and not just the political PARTY. Research the candidates faith, morals, convictions and pledges that they make. "Values Voter Summit" is a conference set in Washington, D.C. for October 19-21. This is a thought related to this conference: "The cultural issues facing our nation require an informed and active response from the Christian community."

### How To Contact State and Federal Officials

[www.capwiz.com/afanet/home.org](http://www.capwiz.com/afanet/home.org) is a link to contact information for federal and state officials.

### To contact President George W. Bush, Jr:

The President  
 The White House  
 Washington, D.C. 20500  
 Salutation: Dear Mr. President  
 comment telephone line: 1-202-456-1111  
 E-mail address:  
[president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

### Highlighted Churches that Support the C.A.C.

O'Neal Road, Gulfport  
 Oak Grove, Mantachie  
 Parkview, Laurel  
 Pleasant Hill, Tupelo  
 Paramount, Perkinston

school, a caterpillar is amazing! One day while I was working on the windows of my home, Cameron, another boy from our church was in our backyard and he had found a



### Shane's World

Shane Singleton

caterpillar. He called me over to look at this wonder of nature. "Bro. Shane, did you know that caterpillars could spin themselves a little room of their own called a cocoon. And that they live there for a little while. And then they turn into a butterfly so they don't have to crawl around anymore - they can fly!" And to think all I saw was a fuzzy worm.

Then there are those young kids that have no idea that what you say is not always what you mean. Riding home from a parade one day with yet another of our church children, I was picking at him and he at me, until I got the last word in - sure, Grayson was only three at the time, but it is so rarely I get to have the last word with anybody - and I told him, "Grayson, how do you like them apples." Grayson sat quietly a moment and then looked at me in all seriousness and said, "What apples?"

And it is not always the boys that consider the safety of others, consider the majesty of God in the small-

est things, or think that what you say is what you mean. Little girls do it too. Being a Baptist preacher, I sometimes stray from the main subject and follow 'rabbit trails'. To be fair to my people, I usually tell them when I'm going down a rabbit trail. One night at Bible Study, Lindsey heard me give the warning and her little head rose above the pew (she had been on the floor coloring - she was at the time, only two), looked around expectantly, and with a very disappointed tone said, "He ain't got no rabbits", and disappeared back behind the pew again.

What happens to us as adults that we lose such wonder at the simple things, that we stop expressing our love for each other in simple terms, that we stop looking for what is clearly stated and start 'reading between the lines' or looking for that hidden motive? Whatever it is, it's a shame.

The 'adult' attitude that takes that childhood innocence from our daily living is a huge hindrance in our relationship with one another and certainly our relationship with God. His wonder is all around us, His love is given in the simplest of ways and is to be accepted the same way. He has clearly said what He means regarding who we are and Whose we are and what we are to become. Jesus said that out of the mouth of babes praise is perfected. Can we be that childlike without becoming childish? I hope so - in my case, and in yours - because few things have more or express more joy than a child!



# A Despicable Attitude

Ingratitude is a despicable attitude. I do not know of any more intolerable attitude than ingratitude. The noun 'ingratitude' describes the stance of heart, mind, and lifestyle along with the action (or lack of it) of a person who is an ingrate. The word pictures one who is not grateful. The opposite of ingratitude is grateful. Grateful has to do with living a life that shows appreciation for the benefits God, through his open hand, has given us - being thankful. Grateful expresses a life that praises and thanks God for affording pleasure, comfort, and circumstances that are agreeable and satisfying.

Ingratitude is a despicable attitude. I have incurred a great debt to the Lord Jesus. He paid for my sins with his own life on an altar in the shape of a cross. He died that I might live and has raised me to sit with him in the highest places. He has restored the image of God in my life because with his stripes I am being healed to enjoy health, wholeness, or salvation. I am now subject

to him as a result of his finding me in the act of salvation. I have brought upon myself by my public profession of faith and my public declaration at baptism that I have been brought into a Godly circumstance. I owe my life to God. Ingratitude is a despicable attitude. It was the purpose of God's creation of Israel that the people serve and worship "I am



## Leave It To Cleaver

Tony Cleaver

that I am." The same is true of God's creation of my fragile life. How much more is it true that God expects of me his regenerated creation that I serve and worship him! I ask myself in times of quietness this question: "Are you grateful? Does your life show your gratitude?"

Ingratitude is a despicable attitude. It is when I get so busy with the nothings of life I find myself with

ingratitude. My day planner and palm pilot overflow with activities. I have proceedings scheduled. I have plans made. I have things to do, people to see, deals to close, details to complete, things to cross off my list, and miles to go before I sleep. My children have demanded of me certain things. My job has placed great constraints upon me. The chores at home are contained on a list of fine print several pages long. My social calendar is full and running over. I have to exercise and make time for doing the number one priorities. My life at this point is so crowded with the good that I forget the best. I have lost sight of the God of Heaven coming upon me.

Ingratitude is a despicable attitude. It is usually at a time of crisis that I come again to see gratitude of the heart is an important process as I breathe the breath God gives me minute by minute. Sometimes I realize this in a sickness, trauma, tragedy, catastrophic event, or some crisis of a family member. At this point I come to ask God to forgive me of the attitude that leads to the actions of ingratitude.

"God, how wonderful it would be that I would inculcate day by day the attitude of gratitude in my living for you. Give me wild abandonment to be free in seeking the place of mind, heart, spirit, and lifestyle gratitude to you. Don't let it be at the bed if sickness that I remember to have a grateful heart. Forbid that some ill wind blows through my family to drive me to life-living gratitude to you. Your hand is open to me without limit. May I open without limit my gratitude to you. Ingratitude is a despicable attitude. Lord, let me not be guilty if ingratitude. I pray through Jesus the Risen Christ, the First and the Last, the one who was dead and who is now alive forever more; world without end. Amen."



LATRELLE WINDHAM  
DIRECTOR

ABS \* Camp Ministry

P.O. Box 4247, Laurel, Mississippi 39441 • (601) 649-0502  
Email - bmayouth@comcast.net

Theme 2008: "Missions" – Matthew 28:18-20  
Children's Aim: A Heart For God  
Scripture: II Timothy 3:14, 15  
Youth Aim: Define Your Mission  
Scripture: II Peter 3:9

Our 2008 theme for our Department will be Missions. We will have one main theme and two different aims for the two groups that participate in our summer camp programs. The aim for the Junior Age (6th Grade and Down), will be "A Heart for God". The Aim for the Older Youth will be "Define Your Mission".

How can we give our Juniors and younger a Heart For God? A model home is one area of expertise. Knowledge about God and His love is another way. Learning is knowledge acquired through experience or instruction. Wisdom is knowledge guided by understanding. About 85 percent of your child's adult personality has been formed by their sixth birthday.

Some examples would be to read books about missionaries with our kids. The Gleaner is a good magazine to read with your kids. Invite missionaries into your home and church to share about their missionary experiences.

Helping teenagers to define their

mission in life can be done if we have taught them early in life. Giving our teenagers guidance to define their mission in life is a must for parents.

Expose your kids to our summer camp programs. Our teenagers must learn to stand on their own. Our teenagers will question much of what he or she has previously accepted. Don't give up! Pray and involve your teenagers in church activities and our Associational activities. Be open to talk with and listen to your teenagers. Working with your kids when they are young and leading them in life has a promising joy and eternal rewards.

## Supreme Court from page 1

now that they are doing that, under Chairman Martin of the FCC, he should have full authority to move ahead and clean up network television."

Trueman says should the Supreme Court take the case, one Supreme Court justice is cause for concern. "I've always been troubled by the fact that Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas is routinely on the wrong side of pornography cases. So what will he be like on an indecency case presented before him?" wonders the attorney. "I'm not sure, and I don't think court observers could say for certain just what he will do -- but he could be the swing vote on this decision."

He says one appeals court should not have the authority to give networks the green light to broadcast indecent material into Americans' private homes.

The case before the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals involved "fleeting" instances of profanity uttered during 2002 and 2003 broadcasts of the Billboard Musix Awards on the Fox Network. The court ruled that the FCC's rulings against Fox were "arbitrary and capricious."

## Mississippi State W.M.A.

**Mrs. Jean Knight, President**  
27 Paramount Church Rd.  
Perkinston, MS 39573  
601-928-3764

**Corresponding Secretary**  
Mrs. Shirlene Smith  
730 Hwy 533  
Laurel, MS 39443

## Northeast District WMA Meets

East Amory welcomed the Northeast District WMA on August 14, 2007, with a meal of salads, sandwiches, and desserts. The meeting theme of "Reflecting Jesus" was portrayed with candles and mirrors. We chose to support Homestretch Mission in Cleveland for our quarterly project. Officers were elected as follows:

President, Patti Harlow; First Vice, President, Elaine Smith; Second Vice President, Dot Emison; Third Vice-Presidentn, Doris Bottorff; Secretary/Treasurer, Linda Daughtry; Asst. Sec/Treas., Jessica Haden; Song Leader, Lennie Thompson; Asst. Song Leader, Dianne Hall; Pianist, Anita Akers; Asst. Pianist, Teresa Taylor; Youth Promoter, Donna Lawrence; Promoter, Charlotte Jones; Historian/Reporter, Beth Haden; Asst. Hist/Rep, Krystal Kuykendall; Nominating Committee, Patti Harlow, Elaine Smith, Dianne Hall, Charlotte Jones, and Teresa Taylor; and Advisory Committee, Brethren Roger Akers, Lavon Haden, and Gary Smith.

East Amory ladies installed the officers with an impressive program emphasizing that these officers should reflect God's holiness in every action. Each officer was presented with a mirror. Bethel Baptist Church at Fulton will host our next meeting on November 13 at 6:00 P.M. Come and be a part of promoting missions.

Patti Harlow, president  
Beth Haden, reporter



## AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE

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

### John Mills

Bro. John is available for pulpit supply or anywhere the Lord may lead. He has been married for eight years and has a six year-old son and a four year-old daughter. He is a member of Bethel Baptist Church in Bassfield where he surrendered to the ministry July 26, 2007. He may be contacted by cell at 601-408-0537 or home at 601-731-9810.

### Freddy Mills

Bro. Freddy Mills is available for pastoral or pulpit supply. He is

57 years old and has been preaching for 22 years. He is a member fo Bethel Baptist Church, Bassfield and may be reached at 601-441-4057.

### Scott Downes

Scott Downes is available for service. He may be reached at 601-749-0951 or 601-916-0486.

### Alan Smith

Alan Smith of Laurel is available for pastoral work or pulpit supply. He may be reached at 601-422-9641.

### Dale Wyrick

Dale Wyrick is available for pulpit supply. He is a member of Faith Baptist Church, Escatapaw, Mississippi, and may be reached at 228-369-1419.

*Marriage Makers and Breakers - Continued*

## Breakers #2 and # 3

Over the course of our married life, we are either building it up, or busting it down. We always have a choice in everything we do. Married couples need to choose to work on making things better, while simultaneously avoiding the things that hurt the union God has placed them in. Here are a couple of other things that break down and bust the marriage. Be cognizant and vigilant to keep these out of your marriage. Don't wish that your spouse would not do them. You focus on what you can do yourself to not do them.

Breaker Number Two is being critical of your spouse. Contrary to your opinion, it is not your job to lift this poor slob out of their darkness into your marvelous light. Only Jesus has the ability to take people out of darkness into his marvelous light. The rest of us are all in the same boat. Imperfect. When you got married, you were not marrying a perfect person. You were making an unconditional commitment to an

imperfect person. Your spouse is just like you - Human.

When you can't stand the way other people do things, you become a jerk real quickly. This is because you are intolerant of other people and their own unique ways of living. Chances are excellent that you also are full of pride and arrogance. It is pride and arrogance to think that you always know the best way to do something, and everyone else should abide by the way you see things. In a marriage partnership, this won't work. Some spouses read in the Bible that "the two shall be as one" and they think "Yes, and it is talking about this one", meaning me. The two shall be like me. But God in His wisdom has brought two people together and joined them as one for His glory and His purposes, not yours.

You are going to have to start looking for the diamonds in your spouse and quit digging around and just seeing dirt. We can always fo-

cus on the bad habits and weaknesses. Everyone has them. What you focus on, is what you get. Focus on your spouse's weak areas, and that is all you will see of them. Focus and appreciate their strengths, and watch them grow before your

from your spouse by being critical. You will just drive them further away from you. Honey works a lot better in marriage than vinegar. Keep being critical and your spouse will eventually become depressed. Now you shall know misery.

Embarrassing your spouse in front of others amounts to verbal bullying. The saddest part of this is the fact that you usually embarrass them over something they have no control over like a physical feature on their body, or something they did that made them feel stupid. Now your goal as a spouse is to bring it up in front of everyone so your spouse can feel stupid all over again in front of a crowd. How cruel? Even if it is family. Even if you say you are teasing. It still hurts.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Matthew 12:34-37. You don't have a mouth problem. You have a heart problem. You better take that heart to the heart doctor ( Jesus ) and let him fix you before you destroy the most prized relationship between humans on this earth - the marriage. Your criticism or embarrassing remarks towards your spouse is like a weed killer to the family garden. Pray to stop it now.

Speak in uplifting tones of your gift from God. Your spouse. You might be surprised how much they grow before you.



### Family Ark Ministries

Travis Plumlee

[www.travisplumlee.com](http://www.travisplumlee.com)

eyes. Criticism is not welcome. All it does is tear down. Over the years in a marriage, the spouse who is criticized will eventually just give up. The marriage will die a slow death. You may stay married, but the life is gone out of the relationship.

Catch yourself. Stop before you speak. Ask the holy spirit to prompt you as to what to say. I Thessalonians 5:11. Encourage one another. Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another. Ephesians 4:29. Edify one another. Build up or hush up. You will never get the response you want

Breaker Number Three is embarrassing your spouse. Here is the one word rule for this:

DON'T! Consciously or subconsciously, you mean to tear your spouse down. You may not recognize it, but that is what you are doing. You are embarrassing them to make yourself feel better. Trying to improve your own sagging self-esteem at the expense of your spouse is a poison to your marriage. Neither of you will grow from this. Maybe you need to do some self-exploration through scripture or biblical counseling. Why do you have to use hostile humor to get your point across? Why does putting your life mate down make you feel better? If you are trying to be funny; forget it. Sarcasm and humor at someone else's expense is never funny, nor welcome. Your spouse may not ever tell you, but they really do mind.

# Stepping on Snakes

I have never stepped on a snake, but have come close a couple of times. I have actually had something worse happen to me. One night, I went into an empty house we owned, checking it out because of



### miniedition

Joseph Harris

[www.miniedition.net](http://www.miniedition.net)

recent robberies in the area. When trying to close the back door after entering, I noticed the door would not close all the way. I had been having trouble with the striker plate on the door and thought it just needed an extra push. I pushed and shoved and the door still would not close. Irritated, I yanked the door open to see if the head of a screw was sticking out. I immediately found what was keeping the door from closing. As the door flew open, a four foot rat snake fell down on my head. He had been wedged at the top, in between the door and the casing, keeping the door from closing. As he fell down on my head and slid down my face and on to my arms, I yelled and jumped backwards several feet in one leap. That's a pretty good feat, when you weigh 240 pounds and stand at 5'9. I had a pistol on me, but by the time I got it out and ready, the

snake was gone and I wouldn't have been able to hit him anyway. That was too close to a snake, for me.

Would you rather err on the side of righteousness or unrighteousness? Would you rather get close to a snake or remain at a distance? Christian liberty may say, "I can do it, I have a right, it's allowed", but Christian maturity says, "For me to live is Christ and I love God and want to protect my testimony." It has always amazed me at the length to which people will go to get near sin, but won't even begin to pay the price to get near God. If you are more interested in getting closer to sin than in getting closer to God, something is wrong. Getting near a snake doesn't guarantee you will be bitten, but it increases your chances.

I am concerned when Christians spend more time looking for loopholes that allow them freedom to indulge in, or partake of, or associate with that which is questionable for Christians. It is an indictment that they are more focused on themselves than on God. Plus, there is always potential danger, for sin can bite like a snake.

I spoke at a church this past Summer and was grieved at what I saw. There were several women there

who were not dressed modestly. These were decent and attractive women. We sometimes use the phrase "good looking". It was more than that. These were nice looking women who were "hot", to use a description of today. Their attire, which was skimpy and tight, made



Beware of Snakes!

them hot. If their dress had been decent and modest, the word "hot" would not be appropriate and they would have just been nice looking, Godly women. I am not judging their character, because they were probably moral women, but it was difficult to see Godliness with so much skin showing.

People who know me will say, "Well there he goes again, harping

on dress, when there are more important things." There certainly are more important things, but dress and appearance also have a place of importance. Loophole seekers are always turning attention away to "more important" things. And even if I DO harp on certain things, it's usually because everyone else's harp is broken, and they are silent on certain issues. There is a direct connection between immodest dress and inflamed lust and increased sexual desire in today's society. There is also a direct connection between going into the woods or to a lake and finding a snake. Going where snakes live increases the chance of finding and even stepping on snakes. Staying away from snake habitations decreases the possibility of seeing and stepping on snakes.

Hungering and thirsting after God, with a desire to please Him decreases opportunities to sin and dishonor Him. WHY are Christians so concerned with this world, it's styles and fashions, programs and all it has to offer when they could feast on the things of God and the genuine peace, joy and fulfillment that comes only from dedication to Him?

Legalist? Legalism? The word has to do with adhering to law. I'll take law any day over lawlessness. And watch out for snakes.

## Ely Semedo available for service

I would like to take this opportunity to recommend Bro. Ely (pronounced L.E.) Semedo and his wife Ana to our churches. Bro. Ely served a number of years as a church planter



in Cape Verde before immigrating to the U.S.

He and his wife are currently enrolled at Central Baptist College as they seek to better prepare themselves for ministry. Ely is available to preach and share the work in Cape Verde with your church. You can contact Bro. Ely directly at 501-442-1673, or you may contact him through the missions office at 501-455-4977.

John David Smith

Children's Home  
Special Emphasis  
October - November

## BMA of Mississippi MISSIONS DEPARTMENT

4226 HIGHWAY 15 NORTH, LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI 39440 - (601) 428-8616  
Rayburn Freeman, Director



Lifepoint Mission, Hernando  
Missionary Kevin Marr

We had an exciting, yet difficult month, as we enjoyed a great Back-to-School Bash, but saw another beloved member of our church step out of this life into eternity. As the pastor of this incredible church, I jumped at the number of people that God brought to our "Bash" and to our High Attendance Sunday that followed, but I also wept with this family who loved their husband, father, son, and brother so dearly, yet knew that God was calling him to heaven.



Bro. & Mrs. Kevin Marr

Our goal for the high attendance Sunday campaign was to fill every chair in our Worship Center. While we did not quite fill the house, we did have a nice crowd with several first-time guests. More than anything else, we once again put it on the hearts and minds of our people that it is our responsibility to invite others to come with us to church each week. On Saturday, we had a Back-to-School Bash which included some fun in the sun and a good potluck meal in the shade. It was a great time for all, and one that opened the door for some of our guests to come to

church on Sunday.

Only a few weeks after such a great time, our church lost its second member in less than a month. Mike Gross, a forty year old man who battled cancer for about a year, passed away on Thursday, August 23rd. I was able to be with the family in the hospital when Mike went home to be with the Lord, and it was beautiful to hear his family talk about where Mike was and how he was no longer suffering. The funeral was an incredible time of worship that was planned by Mike, himself, who called me a few weeks earlier to come to his home so that we could plan the service which was to focus completely on His Lord! Even in tragedy, God can do the most incredible things!

Pray for the last few weeks of September and the month of October as we kick off our fall schedule with a Wild West Fall Festival. We are praying that God will bring us a new family through this event and open new doors for us to reach more people in our community for Him. Our deepest desire is to see God build His church at LifePointe, and we are ready and willing to do what is needed to see that happen!

Homestretch Mission, Cleveland  
Missionary Edward Duvall

I hope that my letter finds you and the rest of the Saints doing well. As I write this letter, I am reminded of the introduction to all of Paul's letters. He always began his letters

with (1) his name, (2) his position, (3) who called him. Whenever Paul had to introduce only himself, he always reminded himself that it was God who called him into His service. I write this because there are times when I have to remind myself that my calling to be a state missionary is by the will and command of God. When I fail to meet expectations of myself and others, God reminds me that it is He who has called me.

Paul tells us that there is one who plants and one who waters, but it is God who gives the increase. The work that is going on here in Cleveland is one of tilling. There is some planting, but the bulk of the work is breaking up parched and fallow ground.



Ed Duvall Family

Last Sunday at our morning worship service an elderly woman attended the service. She had heard about our ministry and wanted to hear sound teaching instead of the big show. I found that encouraging that the word is getting around about our ministry and it confirms what I already know - there are a lot of people who are just tired of being entertained. Continue to pray for us as we faithfully labor in trying to reach this city and area. I believe that God is going to do (rather is doing) a great work here.

Thank you for all your support, remember us always in your prayers.



## Sofilthy's Attic

by Barbara  
White

### Way Too Much Time!

Have you ever been around somebody (children or adults) who seemed to be bored out of their gourd? In most instances they just have "way too much time". I've little patience with someone who is bored! There is so much to do and see and learn that I don't understand the concept of being bored!

There are accounts in the Bible of people who were bored. How about Joseph's brothers? Now those boys had "way too much time". They used it to hatch up a plan for selling their brother.

King David had "way too much time" up on that roof looking down at the bathing beauty. Just think about where that led!

So when you feel bored - get out and do something for somebody - visit someone who can't visit you - or call someone who might need someone to talk to - or read your Bible - it'll give you plenty to think about.

Just don't ever let me hear you say you are bored!

## Concealed Deliverance

By Diane Betts  
Columbus, Mississippi

I have a close and dear friend who has shared much wisdom, both practical and spiritual, with me over the years. She first told me years ago, and I've heard her say it countless times since, that we may never know what God spares us from in His mercy. I have recalled that to mind many times over the years whenever I've met with unpleasant circumstances that put a crimp in my plans or even at more serious times when I suffered grief over the death of a loved one. It gives me comfort because it turns my focus to God and reminds me that my Father—El Shaddai, the Almighty One—watches over me. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

I suppose it's a good thing for our own sanity that we don't know about all the things the Lord spares us from. I hope we all realize that His unseen hand protects us daily from we know not what; and if we did know, we would probably be nervous wrecks. On the other hand, if we knew these things, perhaps we would be more mindful of His goodness and more grateful for His faithfulness. Perhaps we would serve Him better and give Him more of ourselves.

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all

things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." That verse contains a little three-letter word that is of great significance. The word is "all" and everyone knows what it means. Nevertheless, I think we sometimes just apply it to things in general and we don't think about it including bad things; but "all" means EVERYTHING—the total sum of things. When our plans are disappointed, such as when we can't carry through with trips we've excitedly looked forward to or we miss appointments because our cars break down, we don't know but that God is orchestrating those "unexpected" events to protect us from something much worse than disappointment and frustration.

God may even allow pain and heartbreak into our lives to spare us from suffering a far worse plight. We seldom hear a trumpet announcing God's protection through the changing circumstances. Yet, sometimes God does see fit to reveal to us, after the fact, a particular instance wherein He, in His infinite wisdom, worked out specific events for our good. I believe that this is precisely what happened in the example that I'm about to relate to you.

Recently, someone in my family learned of a series of events that might have ended in an unspeakably horrendous tragedy for our family had God not (in previous years)

worked to change some of the circumstances. The thought of how God spares us really hit close to home when I heard this news. I have been contemplating intently upon God's mercy ever since, and it has caused my heart to swell with thanksgiving to God repeatedly for delivering my family from the events that transpired. Sadly, another family suffered the tragedy that might have been ours. Only God knows the answer to "Why?"

I believe though that God specifically wanted us to know what had happened so that we would reflect on His grace and protection. The news came to us seemingly by what some people would call "coincidence." I have never believed in things like chance, luck, or twists of fate. Since I believe in my Sovereign LORD — the very One Who created and sustains the universe, the same One who made provision for our redemption before creating the world — I am persuaded that He by design brought that information to the very one in our family that he had delivered from danger a few years ago.

It isn't necessary to delineate the details here; but I felt compelled to share this much as a testimony to God's goodness and mercy (Psalm 23:6) toward His children. Whether the danger is something totally beyond our knowledge and control or something that results from our own poor judgment, God cares intimately for His children. Sometimes He allows us to taste bitter fruit in order that we might learn to choose our

actions more carefully. Other times, He shields us from the dire consequences that might easily follow. Whichever He chooses, it is always in perfect righteousness, although we may not understand.

The unseen hand of our heavenly Father shields us from many perils throughout our lives, some of them life threatening. Above all, He gave His Son to die on the cross so that we might be spared eternal damnation! Let us not forget to meditate worshipfully on our great God's power and mercy. Let us remember to give Him thanks for His loving eye that guards our lives and His faithful hand that stays the sword more often than we know. Let us give Him glory along with the prophet (Jeremiah 3:22-23) who said:

It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed,

Because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning:

Great is thy faithfulness!

## Gary Smith available for revivals

Bro. Gary Smith has re-entered full-time evangelism after several years of pastoral work. He is living in the Fulton, Mississippi area and is currently booking revivals for 2008. He may be reached at 662-322-6974.



Gary Smith