

*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 2 Chron. 7:14*

# Mississippi Baptist

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## A Call - National Day of Prayer & Fasting

by Jeff Swart, President  
BMA of America

Several have called for Thursday, September 24, 2020, to be set aside as a National Day of Prayer & Fasting asking God to forgive our sins and have mercy upon our land. National days of prayer and fasting are not new. In fact, on three occasions, President Abraham Lincoln declared a day of fasting and prayer by Americans for America. On March 30, 1863, he proclaimed, "A National Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer" for the following reasons, "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers,

...we must come confessing our own personal sins, the sins of our nation, and begging God to extend mercy and forgiveness...

wealth, and power ... But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us ... Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that



Jeff Swart  
BMAA President

made us."

If that was true in 1863—how much more so today!

I think it is fair to say that all true believers realize that America is in trouble. The pandemic, racial tension, violence on our streets, rampant crime rates, the secularization of America, the rise of socialists in the public arena, and in less than two months, the most controversial election in America's history are just a few of the issues facing us. The time could not be more urgent.

God has established four barriers to protect a society from

morally destroying itself.

(1) The first barrier is the conscience of the individual (Romans 2:14-16). By repeatedly sinning, Americans as a whole, no longer experience guilt for their sin and have absolved themselves from any and all responsibility for their actions. The moral compass of most of our citizens is no longer in alignment with biblical morality.

(2) The family is the second moral barrier. In the past several decades, the family unit as designed by God has been obliterated. Therefore, a family is whatever the government says it is. It is no exaggeration to say that the American family unit is on life support.

(3) The third moral barrier is the government. God established human government to protect the good and punish the evil (Romans 13:1-7). Today in our country, just the opposite is occurring. Evil people are being protected and the good are being punished. This is the motive behind the effort to defund the police.

(4) The final moral authority is the church. There is no doubt that we are living in the Laodicean age of church history (Revelation 3:14-22) where the church as a whole is "lukewarm." So, who is the enemy coming to silence next? Every church who has not already capitulated to the mores of our age is the next target set for destruction.

And if this were not enough, according to the Barna Research Group, 1 in 5 churches will permanently close in the United States within the next 18 months due to the COVID-19 shut down and the weekly at-

tendance of those who remain open will be 1/3rd lower than pre COVID-19 levels. No one knows if these statistics are true, but the mere thought should scare believers into action.

At this time in our history there is no one who can save us other than the True and Living God. But he will not answer our pleas unless we come before him with "clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:4). Therefore, to approach God, we must come confessing our own personal sins, the sins of our nation, and begging God to extend mercy and forgiveness to his people and the land in which we live.

The very future of our nation—the future we leave to our children and grandchildren, and the first amendment rights to free speech, public assembly, and the right to worship God according to the dictates of our heart, are at stake.

Therefore, I encourage every pastor of every BMA of America church to declare a day of prayer and fasting in the local church. If you cannot do this on September 24th, please set another date. The date is not important, but the fact that we do it is!

Claim this promise God made to ancient Israel for America today, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14).

If you need help in knowing what to pray for or how to fast, please email me and I will gladly send you the tools you need. Maranatha,

Our Lord is coming! (I Corinthians 16:22)

(Email address is jeffswart@jeffswart.com)

## At Lifeword, We Tell The Story!

by Donny Parrish  
from Lifeword Ministries

In a day when hate and anger are raging and all that has been nailed down in our world seems to be coming undone, where can the world look for peace? Who can bring this tumult and turbulence to an end? What is the ultimate answer to the world's problems?

### Jesus is the answer.

Since 1965, Lifeword has been inviting people to come close and look at the Savior. Beginning with one media format (radio), in one language (English), and to one country (America) Lifeword broadcasted the gospel of Jesus to a broken world.

But fifty-five years later technology has grown that number to more than 100 unique programs in 85 languages and to 123 countries. Over two billion



Evangelistic Bible Study. in Myanmar

people can now hear, watch, and understand a Lifeword broadcast every day. Cloud technology has recently caused an explosion in the number of new broadcasts, new languages, and new lives changed by the gospel message.

Lifeword's more than 300 glo-

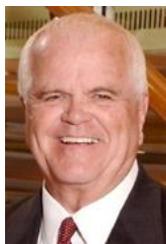
bal partners are sharing that message to their people groups, many of whom are unreached with the gospel.

In the Buddhist-controlled country of Myanmar Lifeword partner Rama Bochung must

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# Mississippi Baptist

Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi



Don Brown  
Editor

## If the People Would Only...

I enjoy a good adventure or crime novel. I read for relaxation and would rather read a novel than watch the movie. Reading allows the reader to visualize in his own mind the settings, the action, and the characters. A movie does all that for you. A book allows you to be part of the action.

I am currently reading a book of Christian fiction that has the President of the United States realize his need for Christ and how far the nation has drifted from the founding principles of our nation. The President turns his life over to Christ and abandons his liberal policies and tries to lead the nation according to God's Word. The author takes current issues and trends in our country and world, along with a terrorist plot, to weave a story that many of us could only hope would come true. He challenges the citizens of the United States to choose between a Biblical World View or continue on the humanistic path that it currently travels.

I have not finished the book - it is a very long one - so I do not know how it ends. What I do know is that the situations it highlights and the current conditions of our nation are very similar and as a believer in Christ, I can only pray that this would be a path that our leaders would take.

BMA President Jeff Swart and others are calling for a National Day of Prayer and Fasting. Please read his statement on our front page.

I know most of our readers are keeping up with the news and are well aware of the problems our country faces. When people go their own way and abandon God's laws and His direction - well, we end up in the conditions and attitudes that currently consume our land.

O, that our national leaders would lead us to a more righteous path! Waiting and praying for that we must do our part...

*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 2 Chron. 7:14*



## The Preacher's Wife

by Paul Gauntt  
Pastor of First Baptist Church  
Palmer, Texas  
from *Baptist Progress*

The position of preacher's wife is not a slot on the church staff—it's not even mentioned in the lists of spiritual gifts. In fact, the Apostle Paul seemed to indicate that he could manage as a man of God without a helpmeet. If he said anything at all about a wife, his words were that if a person cannot harness the lusts of their flesh, then marriage is a wonderful safeguard against infidelity (1

Corinthians 7:9). Otherwise, he personally favored the single life as being the life in which the most time could be devoted to God. But Paul was keenly aware that most men were not cut out to go it alone in ministry. Preachers are human—they are men. They experience loneliness and the same physical and emotional needs any other man experiences. They desire companionship and the opportunity and privilege of being "...fruitful and multiply(ing) and replenish(ing) the earth" (Gen-



Paul Gauntt

esis 1:28). That's what most preachers would like to include in their lives.

In addressing those God-given rights by the Father to God's man concerning marriage, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:5, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" He wasn't advocating bringing his wife and his sister, but to explain that his wife is a sister in Christ. So, a wife—especially a wife who has a relationship with Jesus, is very beneficial to the pastor. In fact, you may be certain that sooner or later spiritual chaos will prevail in the parsonage if she is not a believer.

But the opposite is true—Paul modeled the truth that a man of God could remain single. But I think we as modern day Baptists have virtually written a law into the New Testament that simply is not there—that is

continued on page 3

### Former Pastor's Wife Dies

Mary Ann (Sumrall) Bullock, 87, of Ellisville, died Sunday, August 30, 2020. She was born November 6, 1932, in Jones County. Graveside services were held at Springhill Cemetery in Laurel. Rev. Cliff Jenkins and Rev. Ed Steele officiated.

Mary Ann was a member of Temple Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday school teacher, organist and pastor's wife for 36 years.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Cecil Clayton Sumrall and Verlie Mae (Davis) Sumrall. Survivors include her loving husband, Rev. Robert "Bob" Bullock, Sr.; children, Robert (Suzi) James Bullock, Jr. and Susanne (Greg) Bullock Stenzel. Grandchildren, Bobby (Sara) Bullock, Katie (Hans) Wolf, Becky (Layne) Collins, Betsy (Blake) Powell, Mollie Stenzel and Annie Stenzel. Great grandchildren include Caroline, Jonah, Oliver, Sawyer, Evelyn, Blakely, Charlie, Anna Clayton and Brinley. Mary Ann's brothers include, Charles Clayton (Mildred) Sumrall and Thomas Edward (Elaine) Sumrall and numerous nieces and nephews.



### Church seeks pastor

East Fulton Baptist Church in Fulton, Mississippi, is seeking a senior pastor. Resumes should be sent to the church at 105 Digby Drive Fulton, MS 38843 or contact Larry Quinn at (662) 871-5545.

## Lifeword, We Tell The Story!

from page 1

obey "rules" imposed by local officials restricting unapproved buildings. He doesn't even bother applying for a church permit, so members meet in homes that change location occasionally so they're not accused of unlawful gatherings.

But Rama's gospel content and online video presence spreads the word about these meetings, which is where they hear about the unconditional love of Jesus, a concept that is foreign to Burmese. Lifeword technology also helps Rama produce content about spiritual growth and discipleship for new

believers in this creative access country.

Rama's story is one that is repeated all around the world every day through the ministry of Lifeword.

Once people take a close look at Jesus, their lives will never be the same. Lifeword is making the name of Jesus famous to every nation of the world! Jesus changes lives! To invest in the ministry of Lifeword is to invest in eternity for those who will hear. Text lifeword20 to make your \$20 investment or visit our website at lifeword.org

*At Lifeword, We Tell The Story!*

### Submission Policies

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

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

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

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

# Mississippi Baptist

Don J. Brown, Editor

E-Mail - [editor@msbaptist.org](mailto:editor@msbaptist.org)  
Web site [www.msbaptist.org](http://www.msbaptist.org)

USPS 353-960  
P.O. Box 8181  
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## MINISTERING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

by Anders Lee

# Your Identity in Christ!!!

One of the biggest problems that youth today are facing in our culture is an identity crisis! Our liberal culture is teaching them that they have to define who they are. They are no longer taught that they are individuals uniquely made by God for specific purposes! They erode the foundations of humanity by telling them they need to make up their mind about what sex they are. Teens are actually having “gender reveal” parties at age 13 or 16.... Yes that is happening in America. They announce on social media what sexuality they have chosen for themselves!



Anders Lee

The alarming thing is, this is IN the church today! Many youth in OUR churches, yes churches in the BMA, are manifesting these types of worldly struggles. Teens at camps and in youth group are sharing with

youth leaders their personal struggles. We KNOW this stems from the indoctrination of this culture on the youth of our day which I have fully discussed in other articles! If the teens in your church aren't showing these signs in their life, they are around teens in their subdivisions and schools and perhaps their families who are not hiding these kind of things! Teens today are facing this.

The church must respond! HOW? What is a way to deal with this identity crisis in the youth culture? BIBLICALLY! Teens who are saved need to know who they are IN CHRIST!!! They need to know how Christ has changed them and how that translates into their life! The world is feeding them with what they want to be true of them... we need to feed them a good diet of God's Word and what God says about them as a child of His! So who are they in Christ! Look no further than Ephesians chapter 1!!! In that chapter there are nine times that Paul refers



to who we are “in Christ” or “in Him.” I don't have room in this article for all nine, here are five important ones!

In Christ we are:

### 1. SAINTS OF GOD!

Eph. 1:1 calls believers “saints.” In a culture that wants to teach teens that they have to embrace the sinful ways of everything wicked, believers know we have been sanctified from the things of this world! We are set apart to the Lord! We want to live for Him and honor Him!

We are no longer enslaved to the sin of the world and all the garbage that Satan offers us! Even though we still struggle with sin while you live in this fallen world, your core identity as a Christian is as a saint, not a sinner – and you can always count on Jesus' help to overcome sin in your life. Rely on His help to resist temptation. When you do sin, confess and repent. Maintain attitudes of humility and gratitude for God's grace. Eph. 2:19 also says “Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and the household of God.”

### 2. WE ARE BLESSED!

Eph. 1:3 says that God through Jesus “has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.” WOW! Other than being the child of God, we have many spiritual blessings! We have the Holy Spirit who fills our lives with His presence and direction! We have the Word of God that gives clear instruction for all that we do or face in the world! We have prayer that gives us access to the very throne of God! We have the church who loves us and supports us, they are our spiritual family in this world! Teens need to know they

are blessed unlike those in the world who are alone! They are NOT!

### 3. WE ARE ADOPTED!

Eph. 1: 5 says “he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ!” As a Christian, you've been adopted into God's family. The work of your big brother—Jesus—on the cross has made it possible for you to become one of the sons or daughters of God the Father. So make your main goal of life learning how to know, love, and trust God as your Father. YOU BELONG TO HIM NOW!!! The world makes you feel alone and abandoned! But GOD has made you HIS OWN!!!

### 4. WE ARE LOVED!

Teens feel hopeless and unloved! Eph. 1:6 says that God has “blessed us in the Beloved.” Who is the “Beloved?” It's Jesus! He has made us like His beloved... we have the same position (because of Jesus) as His Son! WOWOWOW!!! He loves us and His love never changes for us despite our failures! Teens in this world know that the love and commitment of their parents change through time. It definitely changes in their relationship with their friends. Friends walk away in a heartbeat. Family will fail them and leave them lost at times. BUT GOD!!! He loves us eternally!!! He loves us like His Own Son! Nothing can separate us from the love of God! Take them over to Romans 8 and let them see how faithful God's love is! When they compare the love and commitment of God to the love of this ole world, they are bound to want Him more than it!

### 5. WE HAVE AN ETERNAL HOME!

Eph. 1:10 says God has a “plan” and it will play out “in heaven and earth.” Verse 11 says “we have obtained an inheritance!” WOW! Teens need to know that everything this world offers them is temporary! What God offers us is eternal!!! Eternal life! Eternally being in His presence! Eternally enjoying all that He has prepared for us!!!

We need to hit this subject head on in our youth groups! They need to be taught biblically WHO THEY are IN CHRIST in this culture!

If we don't teach them, the culture of our day will! Schedule a time to teach your teens their IDENTITY IN CHRIST this fall!

Lee is a pastor and former youth minister and may be contacted at anders.lee571@gmail.com

## The Preacher's Wife

from page 2

that the preacher must have a wife. When I was 20 years old, and single, I asked a missions director, “What do I need to be qualified as a missionary?” The answer was simple: “Get a wife.”

Young ladies may fall in love with a young man who has already given his life to preaching the gospel. If so, she has the option to go with it, or bail out before walking down the aisle.

On the other hand, many women married a layman who works at a 9 to 5 job, thinking they were going to have a regular, obscure, normal life - that is until he surrenders to preach. Then, she's “locked in.”

Some women will gladly assume the role and be the helpmeet her husband/pastor needs—but it has been the heartbreaking experience of some pastors that their wives could not accept the new role and abdicated the parsonage. Some women feel the call to be a helper to her husband almost as strongly as he feels the call to lead the church. They are right at home serving as the pianist,

maybe even the choir director, preparing food for grieving families, teaching in Sunday school and Vacation Bible School and being right by his side at the hospitals and nursing homes. If she has a desire to be her pastor/husband's assistant in many areas, that is fine. But the problem comes when the church expects the label of “pastor's wife” to be a 24/7 staff position.

Years ago, a good lady of our church stopped by my office one day and told me in no uncertain terms that my wife should be the president of the WMA. I was informed that the wives of the former pastors served in that capacity. I promptly told her that she is free to serve in any place God's opens a door for her, just as any other woman was free to do so. I also told her that I had no greater expectations from her as a church member than any other woman in the church.

Her major responsibility was to care for her children, her household, be a godly wife to her husband, and to hold down a job if she so chose.

Church, there are plenty of pressures heaped upon your pastor's home without issuing impossible demands on your pastor's wife as though she was a staff member.

Church, I hate to break the news to you, but you simply do not have the “hold” on your pastor's wife that you think you have on the pastor. If there is great joy, fulfillment, happiness and contentment in the pastor's family, then it will have a wonderful effect on the overall spiritual health of the church.

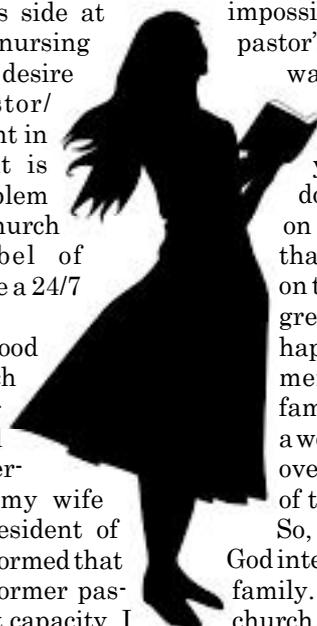
So, pastor's wife, be all God intends you to be to your family. Serve Him in His church as He leads you. But don't be pressured by anyone in the church or community to be on a pedestal God didn't design for you.

Pastor protect your wife from those who would try to set the agenda for her. Let the church know, in a loving way, that her

primary function is her own relationship with her Lord, and wifely and motherly duties at home. If you and she decide that she can work outside the home, that is strictly between you, her, and the Father.

And church—if you will work to ensure the contentment, happiness and spiritual welfare of your pastor's family, including his wife, you will be astounded at the spiritual yield it will bring to your fellowship.

The key to determining how much something is worth is how much someone will pay for it. That makes me want to shout because Jesus thought I was worth so much that He gave His life for me.



# Southeastern Baptist College

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

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

## President's Perspective

"Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." Micah 7:7

About 15 years ago, I was assigned as a Deputy Command Chaplain for the largest U.S. Army garrison area of responsibility in the world. I went into that job with no previous garrison administrative experience. I had much to learn and I was often very confused and without answers to difficult issues. It became my most challenging job I had while I was in the Army.

Our office would receive "taskers" from the commander's staff. These were mandated requests for my office to respond to, for an administrative product within a certain time frame,

known as a *s u s p e n s e* date. Invariably, the tasker would vaguely instruct us concerning the product expectations. I later compared the headquarters' staff instructions as "giving us a bowl of water and expecting us to make a sandwich." We all did a great deal of praying! I, and the team of chaplains and chaplain assistants that I led, usually had no idea what we were doing. We relied on the Lord and put together a framework that to me, seemed only a faint shadow of what they were requesting.

After many months of work-



Dr. Scott Carson  
President

ing these projects, I was presented with my performance report card. On it, the commander described me as his top staff officer. I was astounded! I really felt I had no idea what I was doing and the product my team and I produced, was surely inferior to anything that a trained administrative officer would create. I questioned my commander about his shining description of my accomplishment, and he revealed to me that nearly every product I had turned in was used as the framework upon which he built his entire project. All the while I was leading my team in toil and anguish on these plans, I had no idea this was happening. All I knew was that my staff and I were relying on the Lord to help us come up with some sort of coherent document

that might meet the intent of the commander. I always figured the commander's staff laughed at them and tossed them aside for the work of other, more experienced officers.

I sometimes feel the same as president of SBC. I came into this job not really knowing what I was doing, but with a great deal of experience in doing just that; figuring out complex and vague situations that demanded solid answers. I and the SBC staff have been praying while relying upon the Lord for guidance. He has not disappointed us! He has come through for us in the most amazing ways.

Only a few months ago I crunched some financial numbers and concluded we were going to experience an \$86,000 shortfall for fiscal year 2019-2020. I immediately informed the Board of Directors and we all began praying about this situation. As Dean Walker said, "God has all the money. We just need to ask Him to send some our way!" So we did just that.

Soon after COVID 19 hit, the

Small Business Administration allowed charity organizations to participate in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) forgivable loan initiative. We applied for it and were approved for... you guessed it, \$86,000!

We asked, and the Lord answered! God is blessing SBC way beyond our human expectations. He has sent our way the largest full-time student body population this semester in over 34 years and the most classroom hours taken, perhaps in the history of the college! The dormitories are filled to capacity. Our professors have shared with me how this year's student body is more respectful and passionate for Christ. I can personally attest to the wonderful spirit of fellowship that has developed among our students. Please continue keeping them, our faculty, and the staff in your prayers.

"But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer." Psalm 66:19

Equipping the Saints!  
Dr. Carson

## Special Emphasis

Southeastern Baptist College's Special Emphasis Month wraps up on September 1 for focused donations from churches and individuals. Thank you to all the churches and individuals that participated in this year's fund raising activity! As a reminder, Southeastern Baptist College is a 501(c)(3) certified tax deductible charity.

## Not Fully Funded:

### Hilbun Dorm Renovation

Renovation is complete on the upstairs of Hilbun Hall dormitory and students have already fully occupied them! We still need donors to help pay for the rooms. This is a tremendous opportunity for your church, yourself, or an organization to adopt as their contribution to the growth of SBC. Four of the rooms are financed by generous donors. There is still an opportunity for you to donate toward one or more of the remaining four rooms. For each full sponsor, the sponsor's name will be placed on a plaque on the door of the suite. Each suite will cost \$7,200 to renovate. Please refer to the adjacent flyer for more details.

## TNT

Each Tuesday evening, we bring the student body together for a meal and a spiritual lesson. We invite churches and ministries to sponsor a Tuesday Night Talks (TNT) by providing a nutritious catered meal with a person bringing the 15-minute devotion. This program was a huge success last year and we already have six churches signed up for this important ministry. Contact Dr. Carson soon to schedule your night of ministry. A big thank you to Salem Heights and Sharon Baptist Churches, both of Lau-

rel, Mississippi, for recently supporting TNT!

## The Danny Pitts Lecture Series

Mark your calendars! We have set the dates of September 28-30 for the Danny Pitts Lecture Series here on the campus of SBC with Dr. Kevin Clayton, Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church of Fulton, as our guest speaker. Dr. Clayton will preach at a special pre-seminar program hosted by First Baptist Church of Shady Grove in Laurel on Sunday evening September 27 at 5 p.m.

## Lighthouse Café is OPEN!

There are COVID 19 protocols in place, however, the café is open Tuesday through Friday, 11-2. Closed Saturday, Sunday, and Monday.

## Amazon Smile

Anyone shopping on Amazon can select Southeastern Baptist College as your charity. When you do this, a portion of

your purchase price will go directly to SBC as a donation from Amazon! Thank you for those who are already using this unique method to benefit SBC.

## Golf Tournament

The Southeastern Baptist College Golf Tournament will be held at the Laurel Country Club on Thursday, September 24, 2020. Proceeds will go toward SBC Scholarship fund. This tournament will be a 4-man scramble.

### SPONSORSHIPS

*Super Charger Sponsor* \$5,000 - Includes 8 Players and 2 Hole Sign

*Gold Sponsor* \$1,000 - Includes 4 Player and 2 Hole Sign

*Silver Sponsor* \$500 - Includes 4 players and 1 Hole sign

*Team Sponsor* \$400 - Includes 4 players

*Individual Player* - \$100

*Mulligans* \$5 each

*See the adjacent flyer for more information.*



Students begin their Christian service hours working with the BMA's Christmas Shoebox Ministry.



New SBC Baseball Coach, Jody Babineaux, was recently promoted to Major in the U.S. Army Reserves in the SBC multi-activity room



Ministry student, Thomas "Jess" Jackson, of Midway 1st Baptist Church, Sumrall MS, brings God's Word to the student body during chapel.

# America's mayhem and massive decline in Christianity

by **Bill Connor**

**OneNewsNow** - We shouldn't be surprised at what we're witnessing in major urban areas like Seattle, Portland, and Chicago. The increasing anarchy and corresponding calls to upend the American republican system (and to move toward socialism) could not occur without the massive decline in Christianity in America.



Connor

Only a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic, a groundbreaking poll was published highlighting the shocking pace of decline of Christianity in America. The Pew research poll included the following alarming statistics: In the last 10 ten years, the

percentage of Americans identifying as Christian has dropped from 77% to only 65%.

During that same time, the percentage of those unaffiliated with religion skyrocketed from 17% to 26%.

Protestant Christian Americans plummeted from over half of Americans (51%) to only 43% by 2019.

The percentage of atheists doubled during that period from 2% to 4%.

As would be expected, the younger age cohorts, and particularly the Millennials, saw the steepest decline. Coinciding with the decline in Christianity has come the burgeoning support for socialism over capitalism by the Millennial age cohort, with over half supporting socialism over capitalism. The consequences of this upheaval explain much of what we are witnessing in society, and this

should motivate Christians to reassert themselves in American life. Let me explain.

Most have witnessed the increasing and continuing anarchy and anti-police rioting (Note: This is not to diminish the presence of those truly peaceful protesters, whom we support in their right of assembly) in major urban areas like Seattle, Portland, Minneapolis, Chicago, New York, and others, to a level of violence not seen previously.

This anarchy has brought tens of billions of dollars of destruction in both private and public property, accompanied by rhetoric of ending the system of property rights and capitalism in America. A leading protest organizer in Portland went so

far as to call for not only the abolition of police, but the "abolition of America" to the cheers of crowds.

The head of the greater New York BLM threatened to "burn down this system" in a Fox News interview. BLM activist Ariel

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. – those involved have made direct attacks against the Christian church. Most are aware of the well-publicized Bible-burning demonstration in Portland. What has not received as much coverage are the many other attacks against the Christian church, including its sacred symbols.

Catholic Action League executive director C.J. Doyle wrote:

"Given that there were four attacks on Catholic churches nationwide over a 48-hour period, from July 10 to July 12, suspicion, obviously, turns toward the left-wing extremists who have been toppling statues of Saint Junipero Serra and attempting to remove a statue of Saint Louis."

Christians praying in front of the statue of a Christian saint in St. Louis were subject to potential hearing loss by protesters disrupting prayers with air horns – air horns blown near the ears of the women and men praying. The examples of anti-Christian radicalism abound,



Atkins supported "100%" the looting of private businesses in Chicago as an alleged form of reparations. The rhetoric and corresponding actions appear incomprehensible to many quietly watching throughout America, and yet continues virtually unabated.

In addition to the destruction of property and violence – which acts as a clear repudiation to Christian teachings followed by

**continued on page 8**

## Graham, Evangelistic Association to pray for the land

**OneNewsNow.com** - Franklin Graham is asking Christians to join him in Washington, DC on September 26th for a prayer march.

Graham recently told the "Washington Watch with Tony Perkins" program that the event will feature no speakers or music; "We're going to pray," he said.

The plan is to begin at the Lincoln Memorial and march to the Capitol, "praying as we go," Graham continued. "Some people may walk faster. Some may go slower. It doesn't matter. Let's just fill the mall in Washington with people of prayer."

The march begins at 12:00 p.m. Eastern. It will last two hours and cover a distance of 1.8 miles.

"Task people as they leave the city or as they come into the city, go down different streets and pray for those people in those buildings, and pray that our leaders would turn back to God," said Graham. "The only hope for this nation is God."

Participants are expected to follow applicable health and safety protocols, including the use of social distancing and a face mask, while in public and to monitor government orders

that may impact travel. Anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should refrain from

**The only hope for this nation is God**

participating in person.

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is organizing the event.

"This is a dedicated prayer march," BGEA says on PrayerMarch2020.com, the website for the prayer march. "[This is] not a protest [and] not a political rally supporting any candidate or political party."

## More From Southeastern



Mathew Olsen, Pastor of Sharon Baptist Church, Laurel, MS, bringing the Bible message at TNT (Tuesday Night Talks).



Derek Fretwell, Student Minister of Salem Heights Baptist Church, Laurel, MS, engages the students at TNT (Tuesday Night Talks).



SBC Professors Sean Piper (L) and Justin Rhodes (R) recently graduated with their Master's Degrees from the Baptist Missionary Association Theological Seminary.

## The 2nd Annual Southeastern Baptist College Classic at Laurel Country Club

Benefiting the Southeastern Baptist Scholarship Fund  
Thursday, September 24, 2020

### SPONSORSHIPS

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Registration 7:30 am - 8:45 am

Tee off at 9:00 am / Lunch Provided

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To sign up, donate items or for more information please call Buddy Duke at 601-577-2673 or email at [bduke@southeasternbaptist.edu](mailto:bduke@southeasternbaptist.edu)  
Entries may be mailed in advance to Southeastern Baptist College, ATTN: ATHLETICS, 4229 Hwy 15 South, Laurel, MS 39440.

Lifeword Ministries

# The Pandemic Opened New Doors of Service

by Donny Parrish

On March 13, 2020, the Lifeword Board met at the BMA Global Missions Center for the second of four annual meetings. It was an exciting day.

New broadcasts were introduced and ministry plans had been approved by the Board. A challenging fiscal year budget was presented and approved. Plans and dreams were prayed over,



Parrish

input from our Board had been given and all hearts were settled that God's will had been done. We all shared a meal together then left thankful for what God was doing through the ministry of Lifeword and with anticipation of much fruit from his great plans for the future.

Fast forward to March 17 . . .

In response to directives from the Governor of Arkansas, the Lifeword team and everyone serving in the Global Missions Center were told to gather everything they needed from the their offices and prepare to work

Almost four years ago Lifeword made the strategic move to dive headlong into internet broadcasting, turning our ministry emphasis away from radio

from home until further notice.

It was a kick in the stomach for me. Everything that had been planned and approved by the Board on Friday seemed to be put on only hold just four days later. How could we produce new programming when we had no recording studios? All the computers, cameras, lights, teleprompters, sets, everything we depended on to broadcast the gospel were now off limits! I began to pray and ask God, "Did I make a mistake here, Lord? Are you telling me to back up or back out? What in the world are you up to?"

It was just a few days later that God's plans become clear: He wasn't putting Lifeword on hold. He wasn't putting the plans we had prayed about on a shelf. God was using the pandemic to open doors for Lifeword in ways I could never dream.

He was using the pandemic to force our team to begin to do ministry in new ways and to think in new and exciting ways. Incredibly, God's plan was to use the pandemic to expand our borders and increase our effec-

tiveness as a ministry like never before.

For several years God had been moving behind the scenes to prepare Lifeword for this day. Almost four years ago Lifeword made the strategic move to dive headlong into internet broadcasting, turning our ministry emphasis away from radio. It was a seismic shift for a ministry that for 50 years had focused on radio as her primary delivery platform.

Some people didn't agree with the move at that time, but the Lifeword leadership team and the Lifeword Board forged ahead, believing that this was God's direction for the ministry. God was now going to bless that decision in unimaginable ways. He had raised up the ministry of Lifeword for such a time as this.

Our team began to meet daily via Zoom to talk about how we could best serve our pastors and churches and how we could best equip our producers around the world to continue their broadcasts. We talked about the need for timely broadcast content and how to tailor our messaging to

best present Christ during this unusual time.

Then the internet began to light up all around the world! People were stuck in their homes. They were frightened. They had questions about God and his plan for the world and for their lives. The Lifeword Cloud and all social media platforms Lifeword had invested in began to pay off in huge ways. Traffic to Lifeword.org doubled overnight and thousands of people from around the world began to tune into Lifeword programming.

The ministry of Lifeword was speaking to more people about Jesus than at any time in her history.

Churches from across the BMA began calling to ask our team how to live stream their services each Sunday. The Lifeword and BMA Productions teams consulted with multiple pastors and church staffs, helping them use technology to continue ministry each week. All of a sudden God's church was forced out of their buildings and into the streets. The technology

that many churches had avoided had now become their lifeline for ministry. The Lifeword and BMA Productions teams were there to help BMA churches fulfill their mission.

I asked the Lifeword team to help me encourage BMA pastors and church members each day by filming a short morning devotional. Everyone on our team became experts in iPhone broadcast production and willingly stepped out of their comfort zones behind the camera to become on-air personalities.

The results were amazing. People from across the country, both inside and outside the BMA, began to message us about their gratitude for the encouragement! They also began sharing those messages with family and friends via social media. Those short devotionals opened up opportunities for gospel conversations all across America.

As I'm writing this today, things are not back to "normal" around Lifeword. Learning to produce broadcasts while observing social distancing guidelines has been a challenge. Some of our staff continue to work

continue on next page

*Lifeword has long been an important part of our lives, and we are more excited than ever for the way God is using this ministry in fresh and creative ways to introduce Jesus to cultures that are not really acquainted with the peace and deliverance He brings to those who turn to Him in repentance and faith. Will you join us and hundreds more across the BMA in giving a generous offering on Lifeword Sunday to keep the Good News going forth in ever-widening circles?*

**Lifeword Sunday**  
**10-18-20**

*George and Jerene Reddin*  
*Lifeword Executive Director 1986-2011*

# PHILIPPINE MISSIONS

**Editor's Note:** For a number of years several families have served as missionaries in the country of the Philippines. Several native Mississippians have served and continue to serve in this country. We have reports from some of them in this issue. They are dealing with the Covid virus just like the U.S. and rest of the world. their work continues and is worthy of support.

## Blessings - both material and spiritual

by Danny & Rita Ballard  
Missionaries to Philippines

The Lord gave us a tremendous blessing this past July by allowing us to purchase a vehicle. Many of you know one of our needs that was presented to the churches and individuals while on furlough this past year was the need for a reliable vehicle. Thanks to many churches and individuals along with the Lord's provisions, we were able to purchase one. The Lord worked it out for us because the car was not in our price range, but we continued to pray and watched how the Lord arranged things to make it possible for the purchase.



The Ballards

tion. She stopped cleaning and began listening to our conversation. I looked at her and began sharing with her how she could also know for certain she would spend eternity in heaven. The Holy Spirit had prepared her heart for this very moment. When I asked her if she would like to pray and accept Christ as her Lord and Savior right then, she replied, "Yes!" What a beautiful sight to behold as she prayed and accepted Christ as her Savior! Right then she wanted to join our ladies Bible study and asked me for a Bible.



New Believer

Pray that as she grows in her faith she can reach her husband and children for Christ.

### Home Bible Study

We are thankful that the home Bible studies are still up and going strong. We have been talking with others in our subdivision about joining and are praying they will decide to come



and be a part of the study. We are currently going through the book of Mark. The kids are beginning to lead the group in praise and worship. Some are still a little shy but they are doing a great job.



Our new car

Thank you again to all who graciously donated toward the purchase of this vehicle. Thank you for your prayers and support! We are so blessed and appreciate each and every one of you. Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time also.

### Praising the Lord

I was recently at my friend's house who lives nearby and there was also a lady named Ghe there who was doing some cleaning. My friend, who I led to Christ last December, and I were talking about the joys of salva-

## Freemans Look Forward to Furlough

It is hard to believe that our current mission term is almost over. Lord willing, November 2, 2020, our family will arrive stateside for a time of furlough. We are looking forward to spending time with our family and friends. (The boys and I are ready to hunt and fish some as well.) It is also a wonderful time for us, as we get to travel all over the South and visit our supporting churches, and hopefully meet with some new churches who feel God leading them to support missions. This month as I began calling pastors, I prayed that God would just open the doors for us to have the right meetings with the right people. As God does so many times, He

answered quickly, as it only took a couple days and our entire 6-month schedule was booked. We are thankful our schedule is set and are looking forward to seeing many of you soon.

Would you pray for us as we prepare for furlough? Please pray specifically that on November 1 we can fly from our island to Manila, then on November 2, we can leave Manila for the States. We have done all we can, it is all now up to Him. We truly desire all of you to cover us in your prayers and lift us to our heavenly Father.

Bro. Sam Freeman & family

Continued on page 8

## Lifeword

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from home. We are still producing many of our over 100 gospel programs in circumstances that are less than ideal. But while we are dealing with Coronavirus inconveniences in the U.S., many of our broadcasters, producers and writers around the world are dealing with daily struggles of how to find food to put on the table.

While we are dealing with simple inconveniences, they are dealing with life and death. As we talk to them, we quickly understand how to put things into a proper perspective.

The ministry of Lifeword was speaking to more people about Jesus than at any time in her history

No, things are not back to normal. The fact is, the old normal may be gone. There could be a new normal that will emerge. Whatever the situation and whatever the circumstance, God will be more than faithful to meet our needs. He had already prepared Lifeword to meet the challenge of Covid-19 before the virus had appeared.

I'm grateful for the BMA churches, individuals and friends who have been faithful to provide for the broadcast needs of Lifeword through difficult times. God is using you to

give billions of people the answers they are looking for during these challenging days.

Luis Ortega, Lifeword's Director of Operations and Jon Dodson, Director of Internet Broadcasting and Digital Strategies, are two of the team members that have done a great job guiding Lifeword through this crisis. God has and is using them and lifeword.org to share the love of Christ around the world through media.

And we are still anticipating much fruit from his great plans for the future.

## BMA Bible College... Celebrating 44 Years

by Diane Lee

As we begin the 44th year of the BMA Bible College, it is the most unique and unprecedented year in the history of the school. With the pandemic, quarantines, and lock downs, it has been most challenging and many adjustments to be made. As Doug prepared the devotional for our first chapel service, God placed it on his heart to speak to our students about change. "Nothing Changes if Nothing Changes." He used the analogy of the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly. His scripture text was Romans 12:2. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."



Missionary Doug Lee in first chapel session for Fall Semester

While he was preparing his power point, I opened up my e-mail and discovered the latest issue of the Mission World was available online. The first thing I read was Dr. John David Smith's article regarding change. What a coincidence! Great minds run together as the old adage says.

## WOMEN'S MISSIONARY AUXILIARY

President Theresa Reus

264 Dean Nursery Rd., Lucedale, MS 39452 - 601-508-9697

Treasurer Mrs. Shirlene Smith

730 Hwy 533, Laurel, MS 39443 - 601-729-5638

### Philippine Missionary Thanks State WMA

by Sam Freeman

Our family would like to thank the ladies of the BMA of Mississippi WMA for all of your efforts in helping us raise the funds to renovate the Publications Building to use also as the BMAP Missions Department Training Center and Missionary Apartments.

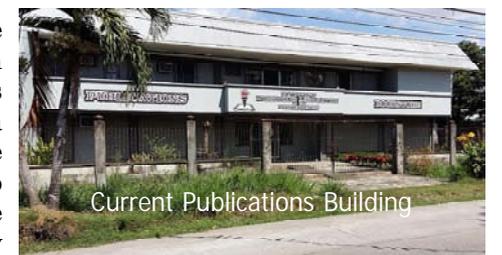
We fully recognize the unique challenges each of you have faced this year with the onset of a global pandemic, and we trust that God who knows all will continue to uplift your Auxiliary in all its endeavors.

Since we are scheduled for furlough beginning in November and returning to the field in May of 2021, we are praying that enough funds will have been given, so we can begin the renovations upon our return. We will do whatever the Lord allows us to do and trust Him for the rest.

As I have said many times before, "We cannot do what we do without you." I hope you understand where our heart is when we say that. You are so very special to us, and we cannot thank you enough for your help with this project.

We look forward to seeing y'all soon,

Bro. Sam Freeman & family



Current Publications Building

PHILIPPINE MISSIONS from page 7

## Waiting To Return

by Stan & Donna Scroggins  
Missionaries to Philippines

It has been one month since our first departure back to the Philippines was canceled. Donna and I are doing our best to stay in contact with all our ministry partners in the Philippines and even started "on-line" classes this week. We will keep everyone updated as to our status. As soon as the door opens to return we are "out of here". Pray with us that it will not be too long.

The Fall semester has begun at the Bible College. How we wish we could be there with them, but we are teaching our classes on line. That means a class that begins at 8:00 AM in the Philippines begins at 7:00 PM the night before here in the United States. Donna is teaching typing and research and I am teaching Worship Leadership and Apologetics.



teaching our classes on line

We are so grateful to our friends at the BMA Theological Seminary for making one of their campus apartments available to us while we wait to return to the Philippines. Our daughters insisted we continue staying with them, but you know what "fish and guests" have in common? They stink after three days.



## Poirier's in Canada

We praise the Lord for our partners in the work through prayer and financing during the quest to reach souls for Christ.

### Quebec

We have an increase in our attendance due to immigrants that come to work or to find a safe refuge in our country. This opens the doors for Bible teaching one on one on the subject 'God's Principle of Christianity'. Many that come to us with strange beliefs from their coun-



Our Church Auditorium in Levis Qc. try have mostly a Pentecostal background. It is important to teach and expose those that come to good Baptist doctrine.

### Haiti

Going to Haiti at this time is closed. Danger in the country is

rising, not so much because of the virus, but because of hostil-



Our Church in Cameroon received new songs book

ity by the street gangs. Murder is on the rise, people are afraid for their life, there is no rest, no peace, no security, no food. People send me email every week asking for help to get food, and every month I send money so our two church can survive through famine.

Almost 350 people attend church every week and every time they attend church the family received a survival kit. Inside is a bag of rice and beans, and small bottle of oil, to help them to survive till the next Sunday. How are we suppose to react when someone is suffering because he or she do not have bread in their home to eat?

Missionaries understand this situation because it's a constant reality they face with God's people in need. How long can we provide food for the needy? I think the answer is as long the Lord provides. Pray for Haiti, last month 14 people walk in the water of baptism in obedience to God word. God is at work. AMEN!

### Cameroon Africa

About 80 people come to church regularly. They are receiving new immigrants from the north of the county who flee because of instability. The need

for food is also real with the people of Cameroon. New people are coming to church and some don't have much.

Many are waiting for baptism at this time and we pray for an open door to go in the near future. We have at the church 23 people who received a songbook, what a joy it was for them to be able to sing to Christ at church. Shipping is very expensive, for example just a little box of 23 books was \$350.



Water filter are in great need in Cameroon Africa

We are praying for more water filters and Lord willing, a well to be dug for the people. Our teaching through Facebook is doing good. We have 4 men in the Bible institute and they are doing well.

### Prayer requests

Liberty to preach the Gospel of Christ in our town and through media.

Protection for our churches in other country.

Provision of food for the needy.

For the cause of Christ Thank you.

Michel & Ruth Poirier  
pasteur.poirier56@gmail.com  
Jer: 33:3

## decline in Christianity

from page 5

while calls for moving to socialism become more strident.

We should not be surprised at the increasing anarchy and corresponding calls for socialism, as Christianity plummets. Most of our founding fathers spoke about the prerequisite of religion among the American people in order for the constitutional system to work. John Adams put it perfectly:

"This Constitution was made for a moral and religious people, it is wholly unsuited to the governance of any other."

Famed Christian biographer Eric Metaxas had this to say about the connection of Christianity and anarchy within a historical context:

"I think a lot of the nastiness that's being directed at these statues, it really has to do with something deeper. ... You saw this with the French Revolution. There was a hatred at the bottom of it of God, of any kind of authority, and these people are drunk with the idea that they can somehow be an authority themselves, they can seize power. ... you go right for God, you go right for the Virgin Mary, my goodness, you go for churches."

Metaxas also provided this warning for Christian leaders:

"Any Christian leader who doesn't understand that this is a Marxist, violent organization – this has nothing to do any more with George Floyd, they've hijacked this, and they want to burn down everything that has been built by good people over centuries, most of whom, of course, were Christians."

It's important to remember that the forefather of socialism, Karl Marx, claimed religion was the "opiate of the people" and that the future worldwide communism must take the place of religion. The Soviet Union persecuted Christians, as does Communist China to this day.

Marx claimed his primary goal in life was to "dethrone God, and destroy capitalism," as they go together. Marx also attacked the biblical "nuclear family" as a hindrance to socialism, and so it's not a coincidence that a goal of BLM is to "disrupt the nuclear family."

Pastor Marc Little has warned:

"We are witnessing a Marxist takeover ... fighting a new religion disguised as racial justice ... (this is) the unveiling of

what has been percolating against the church ... Make no mistake: The body of Christ is the target of the Marxists, for it cannot succeed when morality stands in the way."

Peaceful protesters have every right to peacefully assemble for their cause under the First Amendment to our Constitution. I acknowledge that many are not aware of the ulterior Marxist and anti-Christian motives of those involved in the mayhem. Regardless, anarchy and calls to upend the American republican system (to move to socialism) could not occur without the massive decline in Christianity in America.

It is time Christians come together, pray together and act to move America to that nation Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about in his famous treatise "Democracy in America":

"There is no nation on Earth in which the Christian religion holds greater sway over the souls of men than in America."

May that become the Christian future of America.

*Bill Connor is an Army Infantry colonel, author, and South Carolina attorney. He has deployed multiple times to the Middle East. He is the author of the book "Articles from War." This column appeared originally at The Christian Post.*

## Sofilthy's Attic by Barbara White

### WELCOME COOLTH



Well, I read somewhere the other day that someone asked if you could compare the year 2020 to a drink, what it would be. The person answered, "The stuff you have to drink to prep for a colonoscopy!"

It has been a tough year for many people but when I went outside this morning and felt the coolth in the air I got a welcome jolt back to reality (we look for warmth in spring and coolth in fall). No matter what happens, God is in control.

Two things came to mind. One was Ecclesiastes the third chapter. (You would benefit by going and reading it now.) The second was a song, "Great is Thy Faithfulness" especially the second verse:

*Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.*