

SEPTEMBER 15 2021

Volume 75 No. 18

www.ms baptist.org

Church Letters Needed for Annual Meeting

The 2021 BMA Church
Letter is available online....

by Justin Rhodes, Clerk
BMA of Mississippi

The BMA of Mississippi Annual meeting is fast approaching. The annual letters have been mailed out to our churches. I encourage each church to complete the simple form and bring it to the meeting with you. If your church is unable to attend the meeting, please return the completed form to the return address provided on the letter. It is hard to keep accurate contact information and such when our churches do not respond.

Please help us this year to make sure the associational officers and directors are up to date on your church's information. If for some reason your church does not receive a letter by October 1, please contact me at 601-498-6692 and I will get one to you. Thanks for your help, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our annual meeting on October 19, 2021, at First Baptist Church of Shady Grove in Laurel.

A copy of the letter may be downloaded by going to the following link - <http://www.bmaofmississippi.com/church-letter---bma-of-mississippi.html>.

Applications Being Accepted Baptist Publishing House Seeking New Director

by Justin Rhodes, Chairman

At the last BPH Trustee meeting, Dr. Charley Holmes recommended to the Board of Trustees that we begin the search process to fill the position of Executive Director of Baptist Publishing House. Dr. Holmes and his team have certainly done an excellent job in transitioning the ministry of publishing quality Bible study literature for our churches, and we could not say thank you enough to him for taking on this ministry. The time has come, however, for him to focus his full attention back to the BMAA Theological Seminary.

For anyone who may be interested in this position, please send a resume' to the Baptist Publishing House Board of Trustees no later than December 10, 2021. You may send your resume' through email (pastorjustinrhodes@gmail.com) or by

Baptist

Mississippi

JOURNAL OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF MISSISSIPPI

Annual Meeting Site Moved

2021 Theme - "No Other Name"

by Greg Medenwald, Moderator
BMA of Mississippi

The members of the Program Committee have prayerfully completed their work, and preliminary plans are now set and available for the 215th Annual Session of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, and Wednesday, October 20, if necessary.



Greg Medenwald

The venue has changed in that the opening session will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the auditorium of Big Creek Baptist Church in Soso, Mississippi (28 Big Creek Church Road off Hwy. 84 west of Laurel). Current BMA of America President Justin Rhodes will be the host pastor, and we appreciate him and the members of Big Creek for their cordiality in hosting the meeting.

The members of the Enrollment Committee (Scott Kirkland, Chad Cummings, Wesley Martin) will greet you in the foyer of the church building prior to the first session to assist in enrollment proceedings.

The Covid-19 pandemic, unfortunately, is still a threatening reality. So voluntary social distancing protocol will be encouraged and in effect throughout the meeting. However, the Program Committee has suggested that we go back to the pre-pandemic days of having three sessions on Tuesday, with music and the President's Message being the first item in the Tuesday morning session, and music and the Annual Message by Pastor Dennis Knight being the last and highlighted entry of the Tuesday evening session.

The business of the state association will be conducted in between the two

regular mail to Justin Rhodes, 18 Big Creek Church Rd, Soso, MS 39480. Above all, we ask that you pray for the Board of Trustees as we walk through this process in preparation for the 2022 meeting of the Baptist Missionary Association of America.



messages, with the reports of our state departments and commissions coming first, and any reports from our national work occurring at the end of the afternoon session, or as a first item of business on Tuesday evening.

Southeastern Baptist College President Dr. Scott Carson has some plans to share about a special meal on Tuesday at noon, and host pastor Justin Rhodes will also share information about food and accommodations in an upcoming issue of the Mississippi Baptist and on

the paper's website.

For now, hopefully, each church of the BMA of Mississippi will elect three messengers, invite visitors, and begin preparing for the October 2021 meeting of the state association. The theme, taken from Acts 4:10-12, will be "No Other Name". From our first meetings of more than two centuries ago, to 2021, it is under the name of Jesus Christ that we are associated for the purpose of telling the world the Good News that Jesus saves!

Help and support needed Just The Crumbs Ministry Hurricane Response In Action

The BMAA Disaster Relief/Just the Crumbs are making preparations to respond to the devastation caused by Hurricane Ida. We are initially setting up at TFA Church, 1150 Highway 3185, Thibodaux, Louisiana 70301. We will be feeding God's Pit Crew, first responders, and members of the community



TFA Church Thibodaux, Louisiana

continued on page 2

MINISTERING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

by Anders Lee

What's Wrong With Youth Ministry Today?

In my last two articles we discussed how some want to end youth ministry in churches today. They have taken to heart Voddie Baucham's mentality of doing away with it altogether. I defended youth ministry in those two articles... but now I'd like to put the shoe on the other foot. There are a lot of things that need to be fixed in youth ministry today. I certainly can't exhaust the list in one article but here are a few things that need to be addressed.

1. No Connectivity

When I look at some great youth ministries here in Desoto County, groups that run 50 to 100 and even sometimes 150 teens; one of the problems I notice is that on Sunday mornings for worship, there are only 20 or 25 of those teens in church. I realize that a



Anders Lee

lot of churches aren't that large. In the BMA we may have 15 or 20 youth for student meetings and 6 or 8 on Sunday mornings. There are a lot of reasons for that. I won't get into them - it's not the point of the article. Yet, one of the chief reasons this is true is there are no intentional plans to connect them, no clear steps. Every youth leader should have a way they connect teens to the whole body of Christ. This is one of the goals of youth ministry, to win them to Christ and bring them into being a part of the whole. So, ask yourself, how are you doing that in your church body as a youth leader/pastor?

2. Lack of Depth

When my family was in between churches in 2012, we visited around to some Baptist churches here in Desoto County. One of the churches was known to have an amazing youth ministry. I was excited to get my two oldest plugged into it. They went for three weeks and afterwards I would ask them what they had learned or what they were doing in the meetings. My oldest said, not much. WHAT? The next week I went in and ask if I could sit in on it. They graciously allowed it. There was food, music, games, they have an awesome youth room. Almost an hour after it got started the youth guy sat them all down, a song was played, and he shared about 10 minutes from a verse.

Here were 100 plus teens and he had missed a golden opportunity to teach & preach to them! After discussing it with others I came to know that this was the pattern of each week with the teens. WOW! The guy spent more time getting games together and food set up than he had preparing to teach God's Word and it showed. What a tragedy to have the opportunity to influence teens for Christ only to blow it!!! Makes me furious!

This is true of so many groups. Entertainment, social club mentality, lack of bible preaching, bad doctrine if any at all, over-emphasis on the music & atmosphere and only talking about things teens want to hear. This leads to kids conforming to the world not being transformed by Christ! How are you avoiding this pitfall in youth ministry?

3. Void of Discipleship

The thought flows from the last point. If your youth meetings are like what I described in #2, I dare say there is a true effort to disciple and grow teens in the faith. The youth guy that plans in that way is a mile wide and an inch deep in his efforts. This is the youth ministry problem Voddie was agitated about. Youth guys getting paid a weekly salary who sit around planning far more fun stuff than making an intentional effort to grow teens in the faith! If you aren't having solid group times, there is surely a void of one-on-one discipleship! A lot of youth ministries have a hurried evangelism mentality. Let's get them

intentionally doing to disciple your group?

4. Poorly Planned Meetings

Folks, I've seen the worse. I've been BMA all my life. So, I believe I can speak the truth about us BMAers. I've lost track of how many youth revivals I've done through the years. Yet one thing that happens too often, I get to the church for this "youth revival" and they have woefully planned and prepared for the event. The mentality is we are just gonna see how many show up and see what happens. Listen, if you plan for nothing... nothing will happen!

Many times, it's evident they had something in mind but they waited until the very last minute to pull it off. We all have our moments when something doesn't come together on an occasion, but if the pattern is walking through the door and figuring it out, that must stop and major changes must be made!

5. Spending Money

Many times, youth ministries blow money on anything and everything except for the key things. If you are spending more money on donuts for Sunday mornings, food on Wednesday nights, videos, games, and youth group t-shirts than you are on discipleship and equipping your teens to walk with Christ... you have missed it!!! I'm not against some doughnuts at church on Sunday, but when your donut budget exceeds your discipleship budget, you have spoiled teens who are spiritually inept!

I love trips with my youth group. But have you ever asked yourself how much you've spent on going to Six Flags comparative to ministry efforts? Just some food for thought.

Well, I've been the "sour Sam" enough... I think you get the point! We need to honestly evaluate what we do and why as well as being honest about what we aren't doing well at all!

Lee is pastor of Central Church, Southaven, Mississippi and may be contacted at anders.lee571@gmail.com

Laurel Walk of Faith Set for October 13

'Walk For the World' With Lebanon Baptist Church, Laurel

Lebanon Baptist Church in Laurel, Mississippi, would like to invite you to our annual Walk for the World event on Wednesday, October 13th. It has been our joy to host this event each year and have so many of the



local churches join us. This event is held at West Jones High School at the football stadium. It starts at 6:00 pm with a devotional then the walk and fellowship will follow at 8:00 pm. All we ask is that each church bring some finger foods and drinks. Lebanon Baptist will provide everything else.

This event is a joy to have with a great time of fellowship while walking for a good cause. We hope your church can join us this year. If you have any questions please contact Bro. Adam Parker (Youth Minister) at 601-498-0546.

Just The Crumbs

from page 1

effected by the storm. We plan to begin feeding Tuesday, September 7.

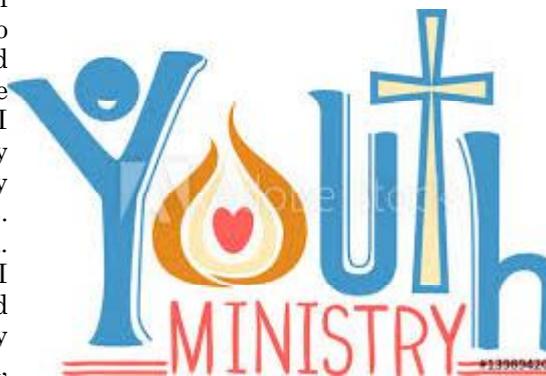
We will provide food and supplies for as long as there is a need and we have the resources. We need volunteers, food and supplies, and more than anything, prayers for guidance as we attempt to bring aid to the victims. Please help us give aid to these victims.

You can send supplies from Walmart directly to our location listed above. You can donate monetarily through PayPal

at justthecrumbs21@gmail.com. You can send a donation by mail to Just the Crumbs, 10 Wagon Trail, Sumrall, MS 38482 or to The BMA Mission Department, P.O. Box 878, Conway AR 72033. Please, designate to Just the Crumbs.

Recent Needs from Facebook page

Just the Crumbs is finding that to-go plates are difficult to find. The 1000-2000 meals per day that we package and hand to Ida victims require to-go plates. We are getting low and have found nowhere for a dependable supply. Any help that can be given will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.



saved and baptized and then, yup, their good now! True discipleship starts with making it absolutely clear what it means to follow Christ! What are you

Texas Church Seeking Pastor

First Baptist Church of Palmer, Texas, is a family of faithful people that are prayerfully seeking the leadership of a pastor. If interested, please email your resume to pastorsearch@fbcpalmer.org or mail it to P.O. Box 70, Palmer, TX 75152.



Journal of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi



Don Brown Editor

Trustees

Adam Sloan - Jean Jeffcoat
Danny Bartlett - Clell Allen
Corbey Jones - Anders Lee

E-Mail - editor@msbaptist.org
Web site www.msbaptist.org

Content may be copied or reprinted without prior permission

USPS 353-960
P.O. Box 8181
Laurel, Mississippi 39441-8000
Phone 601-426-3293

PRICE

\$20.00 Per Year by Mail
\$15.00 Per Year by Email
CHURCH PLAN
\$ 1.50 Per Month per Family

Published on the 1st and 15th of each month by the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi. Periodical postage paid at Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

Postmaster

Send address changes to Mississippi Baptist Paper P.O. Box 8181, Laurel, MS 39441

In His Grip by Carolyn Hagler

Carolyn Hagler is a retired educator and a member of Westover Baptist Church in Hattiesburg. You may contact her via email at cmhagler@bellsouth.net



So Blessed

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:8). What comforting words.

Losses come in many shapes, sizes, and forms; and most of them are difficult, some more than others. The Lord blessed us here in Hattiesburg through Hurricane Ida while He’s still blessing others who are dealing with the aftermath of the storm. He blessed us today when my nephew (by marriage) died suddenly. Home at last. Heaven got a little sweeter for those of us who wait.



Carolyn Hagler

I’ve known James since he married Pam while she was in college living with me. Through marriages, deaths, hard times, and good times, they’ve been together. I will always remember his infectious laughter because he laughed a lot. You had to laugh with him.

When they married, she went from being a city girl to a country girl. They started out in the dairy business 40 plus years ago, and she was as much a farmer as he was. Their life was one of

hard work and family, raising three children while all grew up working in the dairy.

When Katrina created havoc in all our lives, James and a friend came and helped me by working in my yard, even though their farm was in worse shape than my home. His nature was to help others who needed help.

The sisters and I spent time with them each year at Kristi’s Trail Ride, which their family hosted for ten years raising money for the Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children in Jackson. In fact, they raised over \$100,000 to benefit Mississippi children. I only learned of the hospital through their association.

The Sisters would camp out in the RV and had the task every year of making potato salad. We were specialized even then: Sister No. 1 was charged with boiling eggs and potatoes, I helped with the peeling and the stirring, and Middle Sister made the potato salad. The many sacks of potatoes and many dozens of eggs were unending, which made the task last hours and hours. Despite sore fingers and back aches, we laughed the

time away.

The Trail Ride was a family affair and was hard work for the entire family plus friends. Everyone was involved from young to old. As I walk through my garden, my “cowboy” reminds me of the Trail Ride. A part of the event was an auction to raise additional money for the Hospital; my great niece outbid the group for my cowboy. Memorial Day Weekend always spelled “Trail Ride” in South Mississippi. The memories came full circle when I met Kristy’s grandmother at James’ homegoing



Kristi’s Trail Ride

celebration.

Over these last few years after Middle Sister died, Sister No. 1 and I got to spend a lot of time with the family and came to love them even more. I discovered why people love their grandchildren so much, because Pam and James’ grandchildren became my “surrogate great grands.” And they are grand!

Their home has always been open to family and friends. So many birthday parties and happy events have been celebrated in their home on the lake. Sounds of children’s laughter as they swam, rafted, fished, inhaled Pam’s homemade ice cream, and opened presents provide sweet, sweet memories.

Four of their grandchildren (Rowdy, Cage, Emmie, and Harper) have special memories today because their papaw and mamaw took them to the Ark

Adverting Judgement

A revival of religion is indispensable to avert the judgments of God from the Church...The fact is, Christians are more to blame for not being revived, than sinners are for not being converted. And if Christians are not awakened, they must know assuredly that God will visit them with His judgments.

—Selected

Encounter this summer, days that will always be a part of them. James said afterwards, “We were the only grandparents there with grandkids without the parents along.” He was probably the only grandfather who did the zipline with a granddaughter because Emmie was too young to do it without him.

I loved to see James’ spending time with them, teaching them to work, play, and worship. Each Sunday morning, I would get a group text when he would say, “Who needs a ride to church?” Last Sunday is even more special, little knowing it would be the last one. It always brought a smile to my face, and I will remember him and his family on Sunday mornings.

While Daddy was never seen outside without his hat, James was a “cap” guy. He wore his cap always when he was out and about. Isn’t it strange what things remind you of people?

One of the last times I visited them, James was teaching the grandchildren how to split wood for the winter. Each had a job based upon his or her age and abilities. It did my heart good to see children being taught to work responsibly. He taught them also how to play whether fishing, hunting, or swimming. I’m certain he was responsible for teaching the young ones to say the blessing over meals. They usually say it in unison in loud voices.

Middle Sister and I even took classes to get certified for concealed carry at their farm. Of course, we were the oldest ones there, but they looked after us and made sure we got certified. No one laughed too hard when I hit the PVC pipe support rather than the target!

But I’ve remembered today once again that we don’t grieve as those who have no hope. One special day a few years ago, I learned that James had been saved, and I was there that

spring day to see him baptized outside in a cattle trough. What a day that was! Shaking from the cold, he was filled with joy. I saw the change in him from that day on. He never hesitated to talk to anyone about the Lord. And I was there to see his joy when his two grandsons, who later followed him in salvation, were baptized.



My Cowboy

With the dairy business for small business owners declining, James and Pam sold the business. He took a job with the county driving a garbage truck. And it became a ministry for him. Pam told me today, “He loved his job.” And he did. Working with prisoners, he looked after them, often feeding them and providing basics like shoes when they needed them. He found many opportunities to tell them and show them about the Lord. He was busy about his Father’s work.

His legacy of faith lives on in his family. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Psalm 116:15). And my timeless and lingering memories of James remind me that we’ll be together again. And may my memories remind you of your loved ones and point you toward new memories. Until that day, his family and I remain in His grip.

Plans being made for Annual Meeting Meals

by Pastor Justin Rhodes

Big Creek Baptist Church will be hosting the annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. Our church is delighted to welcome the messengers of our churches from across the state. To make it convenient for our messengers and guests this year, plans are being developed to try and provide lunch for those attending.

Big Creek Baptist Church will provide an evening meal. We encourage those who attend the meeting to stay and enjoy the provided meals throughout the day as we meet to conduct business and hear the Word of God proclaimed. We hope this will be a blessing and benefit to those who attend the meeting. We look forward to seeing you at Big Creek Baptist Church for the annual meeting of the BMA of Mississippi.



Sofilthy's Attic

by Barbara White

Surprises Help!

During these crazy, secluded days that we have all been enduring, God sends special blessings to brighten our days. For instance, a few days ago I had a very special thing happen to me.

I pulled up to a gas pump and in my slow-motioned getting out of my car, a friend of mine (whom I had not seen since this secluded lockdown began) was getting out of his car. I noticed how prim and proper he looked. (I’m sure he just came from a thrift store) He had on a starched shirt AND a good-looking sport coat here in this Mississippi August heat.

But that’s all beside the point, what he did is the point. While I’m struggling to get the cap off my gas tank he is over there putting his credit card in the pump to pay for my gas. It was so unexpected! It made my day! And it makes my day every time I think about it.

So, thank you, sir and may “the LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.”

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

"For a great door and effectual is opened unto me... I Corinthians 16:9

I thank you all for the privilege to lead Southeastern Baptist College! It continues to be an amazing adventure as we experience the Lord's blessings upon this institution. Four years ago we were down to 36 students, all online with no in-classroom courses. We had completely shuttered all our dormitories with no one living on campus and had leased the classroom spaces to a home school organi-



Dr. Scott Carson
President

zation.

Today, we are at maximum capacity with every dormitory full and the President's Residence has been expanded to accommodate 14 additional students! We have started men's and women's basketball, women's softball, men's baseball, and a golf program. Our classrooms are full of students and we've reached a 73 year, historical high in the number of full-time students and number of hours attempted.

But all of this pales in comparison to the ministry taking place on our campus. In the last couple of years, we have seen 35 students saved through the chapel program. So far this semester, we have witnessed ten responding to a gospel invitation and 14 students rededicat-

ing their lives to living for the Lord!

Some may read this and think, shouldn't those coming to SBC already know the Lord? We do indeed ask every appli-

we've reached a 73 year, historical high in the number of full-time students . . . we have seen 35 students saved through the chapel program.

cant to write their personal testimony and require references from their pastors. But we all should know that as church going Christians, there are those who are saved in our churches and there are those who are only "churched". Jan Walker, our Dean of Academic Affairs, recently gave her personal testimony in chapel where she describes how, as a young girl in elementary school, she went for-

ward during an invitation in her home church in order to trust in Jesus. But when she got down front, the pastor did not talk to her about faith in Jesus and what He did for her on the cross, but rather, just proclaimed she was saved and set up a baptism for her. It wasn't until many years later that she came to know the saving grace of our Savior. She had been "churched", but not saved in her adolescence.

pus and we ask our professors and coaches to encourage their students to build their own strong, spiritual foundation.

SBC is a Bible college. In a time when conservative, biblical Christianity is becoming more and more suppressed, the faculty, coaches, staff, and Board of Trustees continue to put God's Word first by encouraging our students to live their lives with a biblical world view.

Thank you to all the BMA of Mississippi churches and every individual who are making this ministry possible! If you are not an active contributor to SBC, will you consider partnering with us in this essential ministry? We are making big plans for the future as God continues to increase the enrollment of students at SBC. God bless you all.

"But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." Psalm 68:3

Equipping the Saints
Dr. Carson

Many come to SBC having been churched. We ensure they hear a clear gospel presentation and we also challenge the students to begin to not only grow in their relationship with the Lord, but seek His wisdom through prayer and personal devotional time. We encourage them to attend church and to actively get involved with their church programs. Bible studies have been established on cam-

Special Emphasis

Southeastern Baptist College's Special Emphasis Month wrapped up on September 1. Thank you to all the churches and individuals that participated in this year's fundraising activity! To date, the following have graciously donated to the 2021 SBC Special Emphasis Month:

- Bethel, Seminary
- Temple, Biloxi
- Judson Baptist Association
- First of Shady Grove, Laurel
- Spring Hill, Ocean Springs
- Cypress Creek, Brooklyn
- Forked Oak, Booneville
- Frank Panzrino
- Central, Corinth
- Palestine, Bay Springs
- Paramount, Wiggins
- Big Creek, Soso
- South Green, Tupelo
- Day Star, Sumrall
- East Amory, Amory

- Rock Hill, Union
- Washington, Neely
- Hopewell, Laurel
- Westover, Hattiesburg

Student Loans

Whereas SBC does not participate in the U.S. Government's guaranteed student loan program, several financial institutions have recently begun providing private student loans to individuals. Contact our Financial Aid Officer for more information at 601-426-6346.

Holloway's Dairy Bar

Holloway's Dairy Bar is open and the public is welcome! The Dairy Bar is located in the same location as was the Lighthouse Café. There is an expanded menu and it is open Monday thru Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come support SBC and Holloway's! Note the pictures of Holloway's Grand Opening Event.

Coffee with the President

An SBC alumnus suggested we begin a "coffee with the president" program where we invite folks, and especially alumni, to meet with Dr. Carson to discuss any topic that might be on their mind. If you are interested in meeting with Dr. Carson, contact him at 601-426-6346 to make an appointment.

Amazon Smile

Christmas will be upon us before we know it! As you begin to make lists and purchase gifts from Amazon, remember, 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.

Need a Preacher?

Dr. Carson is available to fill the pulpits or to make a presentation about the work and vision of Southeastern Baptist

College. Thank you BMA of Florida for recently allowing Dr. Carson to report on the college and preach their annual message! In addition, Chaplain (Colonel) Carson can provide an update on the BMAA Chaplaincy and deliver a related message. You can reach him at 601-433-4736 or at scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu

The Jones County Economic Development Area and Laurel Chamber of Commerce hosted a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Holloway's Dairy Bar on the campus of SBC



Southeastern Baptist College
to host
Pastor and Spouse Appreciation Luncheon
Free
Location to be determined with notification in the October 1st issue
October 19 at 12 noon
To reserve your spot please
RSVP at 601-426-6346

JUST FOR OUR SENIOR ADULTS

When I get old, how I do not want to be...

by Joe McKeever, from his online blog

Hey, I'm only 81. But common sense and regular observation assures me my time is coming. Anyway, here's what happened...

The old man stood at the checker's station in my grocery store. The line behind him stretched out for a half-dozen people.

He'd bought a few things, but the process of paying for it was taking forever. He fumbled around in his pocket for his wallet, then struggled with it in search of his debit card. Only with the checker's help was he able to insert it into the machine and complete the transaction. In the process, the old guy flirted with the lady behind him, the one just ahead of me, and made friendly comments to anyone else who might be overhearing this.

I was interested to see that both the checker and the woman customer were patient with him.

When he finished, the man seemed in no hurry to pick up his purchase



Joe McKeever

and move out of the way for the next customer. He looked at the line forming behind him and muttered something about being 82 years old, as though this were an achievement for which he was being honored.

You will not believe this since I'm writing about it, but I was not impatient with him, and said nothing to anyone. I did not roll my eyes, did not even react, but sent up a quick prayer for the old gentleman.

But I was warned.

"There," everything inside me shouted, "is how you do not want to be when you get old."

I smile at that. "When I get old." I'm only twelve months behind that fellow. So, am I old yet? And when will I know?

When a local woman was injured in a traffic accident, our newspaper headlined "Elderly woman victim of hit and run." Elderly? She was only 76. I suspect the writer of that choice morsel of the editor's art was a whipper-snapper the age of my grandchildren. He/she will learn in time. They will, that is, if they are blessed.

Not everyone is blessed to live into

these higher numbers. To survive into the sunset years. The golden age. To "play the back nine," as Professor Dan Crawford puts it. Or to use a football analogy, "to live into life's red zone."

Often, when I address a group of



senior adults I will begin with something like: "I've driven over from Jackson, Mississippi, this morning to congratulate you on the two greatest blessings in your life: Number one, you are saved. You are born again, your name is written in the Book of Life. You are going to Heaven. And number two...."

"You're old."

They will laugh.

I will add this: "Maybe you don't think of that as a blessing. But most of us have had friends who would have given all they owned to have lived as long as we have, to have seen their children grow into adults, to have given their daughter in marriage, to have held their grandbabies in their arms. Not only have many in this room done those very things, some of us have seen our grandchildren grow into adulthood. Some have even been privileged to hold your great-grandchildren in your arms. Are you blessed or what? It doesn't get any better than that."

Of course, this is no excuse for expecting the world to congratulate us on having not died. It wasn't exactly something we did, but rather something God chose to do for us.

Back to my story...

When I got to the checker with my groceries, the clerk—a grandmother herself—said, "That poor old man. He's so lonely." I said, "Lonely?" "Yes. He comes in here every day and buys something just to have someone to talk with."

Oh my.

If I had my choice, which of course I may not, I would choose in my old age not to be lonely, not to get in people's way, not to be senile, not to flirt with younger women, and not to expect people to be impressed that I haven't died yet.

But, if the Lord chooses—the choice is always His, of course—not to grant those desires of my heart, I would hope He will surround me with patient people, generous friends, kind workers, and indulgent neighbors.

God bless that old man. If I see him again, I'll try to be aware and kind to him.

But I'm going to do all I can not to be him.

I hope that's not unkind.

I'm remembering a bumper sticker from our years in the Carolinas. "When I get old, I'm going to retire and move up north and drive slowly in the left lane."

Maybe it's a universal thing, I don't know.

I pray the Lord will grant me a sense of humor in my sunset years, then give me special wisdom on when to rein it in as well as when to turn it loose and let it all hang out.

"Lord, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." Psalm 90:12.

Joe McKeever is a retired pastor living in the Jackson, Mississippi area.

Dean of Student Affairs & staff hosted an SBC Back to School Bash at the great facilities of the Mississippi Baptist Children's Home



Ben East, College and Youth Minister of West Side Baptist Church of Ellisville, brings a powerful message at chapel



Derek Fretwell, College and Youth Minister of Salem Heights Baptist Church, Laurel, Mississippi, engages SBC students at the weekly chapel program

MORAL ACTION

Baptist Missionary Association of America

Dr. John M. Adams, Director

P.O. Box 305, Mantachie, MS 38855 - 662-231-3863

On The Web at www.macbma.net/

Email - fbcjdmaj@yahoo.com

Morality and Purity

Proverbs 15:26

“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but the words of the pure are pleasant words.”

Let us remind ourselves that the purity we seek can never be our own achievement. There is a strange paradox here—only the pure in heart shall see God; only those who see God shall be pure in heart. Morality stems from purity!

Without self-discipline and the leadership of the Holy Spirit there can be no divine deliverance. For the attainment of that Christian purity, from the indulgence of the flesh:

1. Read no books and see no pictures which inflame desire. If the book you have innocently purchased is doing that, throw it away; if a picture is the of-

fender, get up and leave the place.

2. Indulge in no stories nor listen to any that have uncleanness or ugly sexual preference. Turn away from the company where these are the vogue.

3. Avoid anything that lowers your inhibitions, especially alcohol and drugs.

4. Set a watch at the door of your eyes. Lust-ing often begins by looking.

5. Let your thoughts dwell on what to do and be, rather than running into temptation.

6. Keep your mind occupied with Christ and the pattern he has given us.



Dr. Adams

Who could hope for fellowship with God, if he were living an unchaste life. Purity is a discipline of the more abundant life with Christ. It means freedom from anything foreign to the essential Christian character. So a pure person is one in whom is nothing alien to the character which was God's intention for him.

I. Purity of heart – Matthew 15:8-20 - *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall*

into the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.”

Purity of the heart means getting rid of everything that is unlovely or unloving, everything that is unjust, contentious, wrathful, uncharitable, resentful, fearful, snobbish, opinionated, prejudiced, arrogant, sluggish, sectarian, racial, fanatical, and unreal. Purity's single motive is to please God from the heart.

II. Purity of thought – Matthew 6:22-24 – *“No man can serve two masters for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the*

one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Banish wayward thoughts that would occupy the mind. As Albert Edward Day puts it, “Do not pasture your sheep just anywhere.” Avoid the company, the conversation, the thoughts, the pictures, the movies, the readings which stimulate such ungodlike ambitions.

III. Purity of intentions – Matthew 5:8 – *“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”*

Take away from your prayer time and time of meditation in the Word some thought or purpose to help sanctify the rest of the day. Sometimes during each day, pause and close your eyes and let your mind rest upon God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Instead of throwing up our hands in despair or throwing away our hunger for God in reversion to some lesser idol, seek Him intently. We need to seek God for ten years, twenty years, and for all our life.

If you will make the purity of God your earnest quest, the God of Morality will give Himself to you in fullness.

Ministry Changes

by Sam Freeman
BMA Missionary to the Philippines

We want to take a moment to share with our family, friends, and supporters an update on our ministry.

Over the last several months, due to the ongoing Covid-19 global pandemic, we have had to face the realization that the world as we know it has changed. A simple thing like travel, which we once took for granted, has now become filled with restrictions, requirements upon requirements and protocols unlike many of us have ever seen or experienced. While “difficulty” is something missionaries accept as “just another part” of the missions experience, what has become the new normal is becoming harder and harder to navigate.

As we began to face these facts, our prayers through this have been twofold: First off we desire to be used by God to the best of our abilities and capabilities to continue the work He has begun. With that prayer in our hearts, God began showing us that even though things were changing in what our ministry was going to look like moving forward, He was working things out to help us remain impactful for the mission work He had partnered us to. Secondly, we wanted to make sure that we were faithful with the resources that God's churches were investing not only in our ministry, but the ministries in the Phil-



The Freeman Family

ippines, will directly impact and support those ministries.

We believe that God reveals His will to us through our obedience, and we have been amazed at how God began revealing our next moves once we were willing to open our hearts to His leading. What God has shown us over the last few months has truly been a blessing to us.

Let me begin by saying we are not quitting the mission field, but rather God is changing the approach and scope of our ministry. After much prayer a couple months ago I spoke with the BMAP leadership about what God was stirring

in my heart, and although I should not have been surprised, the leaders told me they too believed that this new approach would be more impactful and beneficial for the work there as we continue to navigate uncertain times and events.

Once I had spoken with them, I also spoke with the leadership team at the BMAA Missions Department about the possibilities before us. It was exciting as Bro. John David Smith and others began praying with us about how God would continue to complete the work He had begun in our hearts seven years ago.

After much prayer and a few meetings we have agreed to continue our work in missions by serving as a Missions Coordinator for the BMAA and BMAP. This position will allow me to continue serving as an Advisor to the BMAP Missionary Committee, BMAP Missionary Trainer, Director of the BMAP Publications Department, and Chairman of the BMAP Board of Directors. I will fulfill these roles via multiple monthly online meetings with various pastors, missionaries, and associational leaders in the Philippines. This will also allow me to serve as a liaison officer between both the BMAA and BMAP Missions Departments as we continue to cultivate and strengthen current and future Missionary partnerships in the Philippines. It is my belief that this will bring clarity, accountability, strength and understanding to both sides of this partnership.

In addition I will make trips to the Philippines twice a year, where I plan to bring trainers and speakers from our churches here to help equip our missionaries, pastors, and lay workers in the Philippines. We are already praying and preparing that if the country is reopened by next May, we will have a training team in place ready to make the trip. If you feel God leading you to join one of these teams, please contact me.

Seeing God moving and arranging our steps, our family began praying about how best God could use us here in the USA while we continue to remain involved in our role with foreign missions. I questioned God whether entering the pastorate here was a viable choice since I knew that I would also be pulled in my heart for the mission field, but God assured me once again that, “missions is the heartbeat of the church”. I believe that leading a church as a pastor and focusing its attention towards missions can be a catalyst to propel a church forward in local and worldwide ministry opportunities.

With that assurance, we began praying that God would lead our family to a church that was looking for this kind of special opportunity. Little did we know that God was already preparing us and that church for this ministry. A couple months ago I met with the pulpit committee and Deacons of Campground Baptist Church in Gulfport, Mississippi.

see Freemans on page 8

The Blessings and Adventures of Foreign Missions

by Doug & Diane Lee
BMA missionaries to the Philip-
pines

One of our BMA churches has a mission point in a village that is only accessible by barge. The pastor recently invited us to visit their Sunday afternoon service. After traveling through sugar cane fields for what seemed like twice as long as the actual hour it took, we reached the river. The only way to cross was a small barge on a rope extended across the river. About 15-20 people could ride at one time, but it was a frightening experience, knowing if in some way the weight was shifted, the barge would easily tip over dumping us in the river.

After we reached the shore, we walked uphill and then had to climb a rocky path. When the children saw us coming, they ran from their huts to the bamboo church where we met. Some of our Bible College students and alumni conducted the children's Sunday School class and worship.



Our river crossing barge



Helping us off barge

pastors taught the Adult SS class and led the worship service.

It was extremely hot with industrial-strength humidity, but it was an incredible experience to worship with these won-



Off to the other side of the river

derful people who don't have the convenience or amenities of sidewalks, cars, parking lots, padded pews, or air conditioning. It was pure worship with no one in a hurry and we were blessed beyond measure as we worshiped in song and in spirit and listened to the gospel being preached in this secluded but peaceful place.

God continues to bless the work in the Philippines.



Children's Sunday School



Church building

Stop Playing the Comparison Game

from Lifeword
by Katy McCown

I'm waiting for the day I become suitable for God. I hear about these good works He's prepared for me, and it all sounds great in theory. But surely I have a long way to go until God changes me into something He can use.

I read the words, "we are God's masterpiece," (Ephesians 2:10), but there's no way He means right now. Just as I am. Today. Right?

I for sure don't look like her. You know "her." The super Christian. She loves Jesus and, by all accounts, spends her whole life fasting, praying, serving, loving, and solving world hunger. She gets up at 4 a.m. to knead bread and milk goats. She sews and knits and whistles while she works.

That girl God can use. What an example to learn from. I watch her and admire her.

But there's a point where admire turns into desire. Desire to be like her, not like Christ. Desire to structure my every move after her example. And when my loud mouth doesn't match her soft words or my pizza night looks really bad next to her raw veggies, I attack.

What once was a beautiful

example of God's work in someone's life morphs into the club in my hand and I beat myself up over everything I'm not. All the while God knows what He's doing. Yes, He's shaping, pruning, molding me to be more like Him... but not like her, like Him.

The fact is there is no mold, no rigid form we will all fit into. Instead, But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particu-



NFL quarterbacks
Josh & Luke McCown

lar. 1 Corinthians 12:18-19, 27 These two guys are my favorite example of this.

The guy on the right is my hubby, Luke. The guy on the left is his older brother, Josh.

On paper these two men are a lot alike. Similar size, speed, and skill set. Same parents. Same hometown. Same "little dribblers" team. And as adults, God called them both to play quarterback in the NFL. But it only takes a tiny bit of time to notice that with all the sameness going on, these two guys are nothing alike.

Luke is a bonafide country boy with a tractor to prove it. Josh tends to test the trends, like capri pants and an occasional change in hairstyle. Josh once sent Luke a new pair of blue jeans after he realized his little bro still sported the Levi's from his college (maybe even high school) days.

In a crowded room Josh doesn't meet a stranger. Luke picks a chair and sits down almost unaware of the crowd around him. But Luke watches Josh and how he connects with so many people in so many different ways. It challenges Luke to scoot out of his comfort zone a little. He learns from Josh, but he doesn't try to be Josh.

And, as I understand it, Josh

watches Luke. He admires Luke's confidence in Christ and his boldness no matter the circumstance. It challenges Josh and he learns from Luke, but he doesn't try to be Luke.

Two men, so much alike, but so very different, serving Jesus in the same role, but in very different ways.

And I believe God wouldn't have it any other way.

... Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:21

God will continue to make you more like Himself, but He already made you in His image. Will you be content with his workmanship?

Submission Policies

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

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

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

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

DISCIPLESHIP DASHBOARD

by Larry Barker
Director of Church Planting & Church Health
BMA of America

Cars have a dashboard with gauges that keep you informed of oil pressure, water temperature, fuel level, and other important data. What does a discipleship dashboard look like and how can you gauge your progress from the first encounter you have with someone who is far from God? Should our approach be 100% organic, or should there be more intentionality involved in the process?

Spiritual endeavors require the Holy Spirit's presence and direction. Prayer is not an optional component in the making of disciples. You must be obedient in doing what God guides you to do then ask God to do what you cannot do.

In his book *New Wave*—Discovering the 21st Century Church, Steve Pike builds metrics based on Luke 19:10 where Jesus makes it clear that His mission was to seek and to save the lost. Everything Jesus did as God incarnate can fit into one of these two categories: He was either deliberately connecting with people who were lost (seeking) like Zacchaeus and the woman at the well, or He was deliberately helping followers (saving) to grow in grace and truth like the twelve disciples, Mary, and her sister Martha. Jesus said He had come to do the Father's work, which was helping people find and follow Him.

Steve Pike gives us excellent dashboard metrics and gauges that help us track progress. The purpose is not to count the numbers but to focus on doing what Jesus called us to do: make disciples. How do we get the 99 sheep that have already been found to focus on seeking the one lost sheep?

Too often we bypass the awareness, connections, and relationship stages to jump right into spiritual conversations.

Trust has not yet been built because they do not know us and are unsure of our motivation. It can sound more like a sales pitch where you need to seal the deal rather than the love of Christ compelling you to share the gospel. Our discipleship metrics dashboard requires us to look at the following gauges:

First is the Awareness Gauge:

To how many people in the last week have you made yourself or your church aware of in a positive way? This is the hardest metric to measure because it's difficult to get a "real" number, but strive to track it anyway.

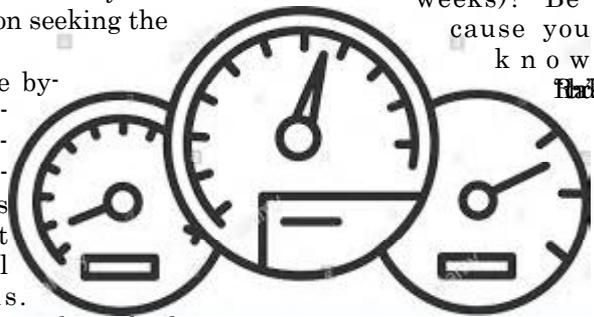
Next is your Connections Gauge:

In the last week, how many

people from your awareness category do you know by name, they know your name, and you are praying for them on a regular basis? You have learned their names, remembered their names, and you are praying for them by name!

Now, as the Holy Spirit directs you, be watching the Relationships Gauge:

For how many people in the connections category do you know their story, they know you know their story, and you connect with them on a regular basis (at least every two to three weeks)? Because you



name, you have a cup of coffee together! Because you know "Betty's" name, you go shopping together! Because you know the neighbors' names and stories, you invited them over for dinner.

The Spiritual Conversations Gauge asks this:

How many from the relationships category know that you know Jesus and know you want them to know and/or grow in Jesus?

A great metric for all of us is this: How many spiritual conversations did you have in the last month that were built on awareness, connections, and relationships. The more you make lost people aware of you, the more you are connecting with them by praying for them,

the more you are building relationships with them, the more spiritual conversations you will have with them. They will not be as awkward or contrived because in the natural flow of life, you cared enough to get to know them for who they are and remained engaged with them.

These four gauges lead us into the other six gauges on the discipleship metrics dashboard:

The Belong Gauge - How many from the "spiritual conversations" category are you gathering together regularly in community?

The Believe Gauge - How many from the "belong" category have made a public profession of faith?

The Engage Gauge - How many from the "believe" category are engaged in the everyday life of the community of believers?

The Grow Gauge - How many from the "engage" category are intentionally seeking to mature in their walk with Jesus?

The Minister Gauge - How many from the "grow" category have found a place of regular ministry and service in the community of disciples?

Then the most often overlooked gauge, The Multiply Gauge - How many from the minister category have become activated disciple makers by doing the following:

- making people aware of them in a positive way
- praying for people by name
- cultivating redemptive relationships
- enjoying spiritual conversations
- inviting outsiders to belong
- helping believers believe
- enabling believers to engage

- encouraging the engagers to grow
- challenging the growers to minister
- inspiring those ministering to multiply?

This is why in missions we talk about Go, Disciple, Plant, and Repeat. Are we seeing discipleship occur to the fourth generation (2 Timothy 2:2)?

Thanks again to my friend Steve Pike for building a dashboard that enables us to gauge whether or not what we are doing is what Jesus called us to do: Making Disciples!

"Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion; it is like a daily process whereby you grow to be more and more like Christ."

— Billy Graham

Freeman Report

from page 6

After several months of interviews and earnestly seeking God's will and direction, God has made it abundantly clear to the church family and us that this is His perfect will.

After meeting and spending time with this church family, we know that God is going to use this church to help continue the work He has begun in us in the Philippines, and to grow the local scope and vision of ministry for Campground Baptist Church as well. The church extended the call to us to serve as their pastor, and we have accepted that position.

I will continue to travel over

the next couple months to share with our churches and associations about this new role God has brought us to, and we tentatively plan to come off Missionary status in December. We are praying that during this time of transition we will get to return to the Philippines to settle our personal affairs, get other associational affairs transferred over to our Filipino counterparts, and begin laying the groundwork for how the ministry will function moving forward. We are trusting God to help us make that happen, and ask you to pray with us towards these goals.

We want to take this oppor-

tunity to ask our faithful ministry partners to continue your prayerful and financial support so we can continue to maintain and grow the BMAP National Missionary partnerships, BMAP Tribal Missionary Coordinator partnerships, BMAP Local Association Missionary partnerships, BMAP Missionary Apprenticeship partnerships, and BMAP Publication Printing partnerships.

Without your continued support, we will be unable to continue these programs that are seeing churches planted, disciples made, Indigenous people groups reached with the gospel, and future missionaries and pastors trained and prepared to serve the BMAP Association of churches into the future. Your contributions have made these

partnerships possible, and we believe that God will bless as you continue to faithfully partner to see even more of the Philippines reached with the Good News of the Gospel.

I look forward to sharing these things with our churches and associations over the next few months, and if you would like to speak with me personally, I can be reached at 601-795-3990, or by email at freemans.philippines@gmail.com.

Please pray for us as we continue to serve the Lord faithfully through His churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of America, Philippines, Mississippi, and the Ten Mile Baptist Association. We are excited about these new opportunities.

Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi
www.bmaofmississippi.com

DEPARTMENTS & COMMISSIONS

Mississippi Baptist Paper
P.O. Box 8181
Laurel, MS 39441
601-426-3293

Southeastern Baptist College
4229 Highway 15 North
Laurel, MS 39440
601-426-6346

State Youth Department
4226 Highway 15 North
Laurel, MS 39440
662-397-6832

Baptist Children's Home
118 Lowe Rd.
Laurel, MS 39443

Missions & Revolving Loan Fund
4226 Highway 15 North
Laurel, MS 39440
601-428-8616

Commission on Senior Adults
4226 Highway 15 North
Laurel, MS 39440
601-426-3293

History & Archives Commission
4226 Highway 15 North
Laurel, MS 39440

Moral Action
P.O. Box 88
Mantachie, MS 38855
662-282-7425