

# Baptist

## Mississippi

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## VSM: Not Just For Sun and Selfies

by Holly Meriweather  
BMA Global Content Coordinator

In our BMA Global family, ministry happens everywhere and all around the globe. And we're not just talking at churches, worship services, and discipleship groups. Sometimes ministry happens during basketball in the park, a hula hoop game, or face painting. More organically but intentionally and relationally, just like Jesus modeled. One example of that kind of ministry is VSM (Volunteer Student Missions), and on a recent trip, thirteen students and four adults used those exact activities and others to minister in Costa Rica.

Jairo Bonilla coordinates the work there with the help of Luis Ortega (not to be confused with Lifeword Director of Operations Luis Ortega here in the States). One of the many ways Luis serves is by managing VSM teams that host Bible schools for children. The VSM Costa Rica team was blessed to have him as a local contact, interpreter, "transportation director," and so much more. One thing is



for certain: He is a great example of godly leadership.

Well before the team left from the States, they met at VSM weekend in the spring for team building, security training, dos and don'ts on the mission field, and cultural education. Team Costa Rica decided to use David and Goliath and Daniel in the Lions' Den for their skits, then leaders purchased supplies for the props and decorations. In one week, they held four Bible schools at two churches and a community center.

The team spoke very little, if any, Spanish, but there didn't seem to be a language barrier as I watched these young high school and college students find the shyest, the smallest, or the most scared children and made them feel special. There were fist bumps, hugs, high-fives, and water balloon fights that left children breathless and laughing. And I watched the children as they listened to the story about a giant who was defeated and a lion whose mouth was shut, both because of a loving "Dios."

Despite the language barrier between us and the children, it was clear that the story captured their attention. Seeds were planted that day, and the gospel was shared, but only God knows what will take root.

VSM is not a vacation. It's the life-changing fulfillment of a calling to serve. And every student on the team understood that it was not about selfies, which there were plenty of when the children noticed our cell phones and wanted to see themselves in a photo.

As summer winds down and VSM trips conclude, BMA Global personnel like Angela Rice and Margaret Anderson are already planning 2024 trips. If you're considering joining one, don't hesitate to let us know so you can experience the amazing things God can do with construction paper, a sword made from balloons, and a plastic slingshot.

## A View of the Acts 1:8 Conference



Allen family bringing specials and leading worship at Act 1:9 Conference

**By Bro. Adam Sloan, Pastor**  
Big Creek Baptist Church, Soso  
*Adam also serves as a trustee  
for the Publications Department*

The recent Acts 1:8 Conference organized by the Missions Department and hosted at Magnolia Baptist Church and First Baptist Church of Mantachie brought together missionaries, pastors, and church members from across the state. The Conference was a time of worship, fellowship, and biblical training designed to equip churches with tools and training beneficial to "Reach our Jerusalem" with the desperately needed Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Conference attendance was good and served as a platform for inspiration, training, fellowship, and a renewed passion for reaching the lost and strengthening the health of our churches, ministries, and ministers.

The conference featured a dynamic lineup of speakers, singers, and interactive breakout sessions delving into a wide range of topics relating to church ministry. Attendees were blessed with thought-provoking discussions, eye-opening presentations, and engaging activities leaving no one empty handed.

A highlight of the conference was the Allen family leading worship each night and teaching about their missionary ministry in Uganda, Africa named Hope's Cry International. This is a non-profit, Christian-based aftercare center for survivors of human trafficking in one of the poorest areas of Africa. The Hope Center sits on 10 acres of land bordering Karamoja, a sub-region of Uganda and can house more than 20 survivors at a time. They have plans and hopes to expand and increase that capacity. The Allens seek to reintegrate rescued survivors of human trafficking back into society as well as share the gospel with

them. More about their ministry can be found at [www.hopescry.com](http://www.hopescry.com). Donations may be made there as well. Please pray for them as they endeavor to bring God's message of salvation that breaks every chain of bondage to these broken and hurt people.

Each night after worship, keynote speakers Dr. John David Smith, Bro. Larry Barker, and Bro. Chris Yager brought God's message to those in attendance. Dr. John David Smith preached on reaching your Jerusalem. Bro. Larry Barker preached on the Health of the Local Church and Bro. Chris Yager preached on Re-establishing Life Into a Dying Church. The message of God was powerful and resonated with the hearts of those able to attend emphasizing the need for our churches to pray for a revival of evangelistic ministry in each of our current churches as we continue to plant new churches.

The breakout sessions highlighted a wide array of topics. Dr. John David Smith taught several classes on the causes of decline in the local church, assessing the need for revitalization, the causes of revitalization, and concluded with a forum of discussion for ideas for revitalization. Bro. Larry Barker brought lessons reminding ministers of the importance of our own spiritual health and leading revitalization from the pastor's perspective. Bro. Chris Yager taught classes on creative youth ministry, how to be a successful associate pastor, and how to take youth ministry to the next level.

Bro. Sidney Farmer, pastor of South Forrest Baptist Church near Hattiesburg, taught three classes on evangelism and a final class titled Discipleship: The Missing Ingredient in the Modern Church. Dr. Paul

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# Mississippi Baptist

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## Reflections on Times and Blessings

We are living in different times. I personally have begun to dread watching the news of the day. The changes we see in our nation, our churches, even in our association, are mind boggling. Who would have ever thought that our society and the mind-set of the average American would change so rapidly and certainly not for the better.

In politics, religion, economics, social morals, personal, and even church beliefs - in every area of our modern, everyday lives - we see what we have never seen before. When I think of our changing times I must think about human history and how other societies, peoples and nations felt when their world was seemingly turned upside down. Consider how the people in the American colonies felt in their revolution against British rule. Surely there was much uncertainty. And then consider Israel as they were invaded, conquered, and taken away by pagan rulers.

The phrase "things change" has been proven true throughout human history. Change in the negative can be laid at the actions,

and mostly the wrong actions, of mankind. We are truly fallen creatures and we pay for the actions we take. Satan is 'alive and well' on planet earth. The need to obey our Savior and live by His standards becomes more evident as things spiral out of control.

Now, more than ever, we must put our trust in Him. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16. May we all find ourselves faithful and obedient servants.

### Upcoming

By all reports the recent Acts 1:8 Conference was a success and blessing to those attending. See a report in this issue. Each person I spoke to and reports from others confirm the benefits and needs presented. Congratulations to Bro. Chris Yager and all involved in producing a great and needed conference.

Another important event is the 2023 Annual Meeting of the BMA of Mississippi. We will meet at historic Parkview Baptist

Church in Laurel in October. The WMA and Brotherhood meet on Monday evening October 16 with the messenger body meeting on Tuesday October 17. Business will be considered, reports will be given, and the body will worship! Make your plans to attend and represent your church.

2023 marks the 75th anniversary of Southeastern Baptist College. The school was begun in the facilities of Parkview Church with her pastor, Dr. D. N. Jackson, serving as the first president. A day of celebration and recognition is on hand. The college will hold a gala that evening with entertainment and celebration of its ministry. See that notice elsewhere in this issue.

### Blessings

*God is good all the time...All the time God is good.* Bro. Sidney Davis used that phrase at the beginning of each service he preaches. God IS good and He is good all the time. He has been good to this association and as we enter another year let us remember His goodness and strive to reflect it "all the time."

## Conference Report from front page

Spurlin taught classes on proper perspectives of money in the church, how to protect the church financially, how to create church budgets, and also shared principles of investment. Bro. Jared Meyers shared different technologies that are beneficial to the church and being good stewards of the technologies God has provided. Those in his classes walked away with solid knowledge on hardware, software, and strategies for sharing the gospel through different social media.

Mrs. Dawn Freeman and Mrs. DeeDee Yager presented classes for the women in attendance. Dawn Freeman taught classes on Women's Counseling and Serving at Your Husband's Side. DeeDee Yager taught classes on reaching women in your community and organizing a successful church office. She and Dawn Freeman led a forum discussion on successful ladies ministry ideas.

Feedback from those attending was very positive with gratitude to the host churches, and all who participated in bringing this much needed training, time of worship, and fellowship to our state. A special thanks to the keynote speakers and to the Allen family for leading our worship. Much effort and cooperation is needed to plan and organize such a successful event. Our Mission's Office and staff did an incredible job.

As the conference ended, attendees traveled back to their homes and churches refreshed and reinvigorated with new ideas to inspire and lead God's people and to serve their local church with

vision and purpose. May we all pray for souls to be saved and for another opportunity next year to come together in even greater numbers.



Pictured above one of the many breakout sessions provided at Acts 1:8 conference  
Below folks singing and worshipping



## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

I want to thank our BMA family for your prayers and love, through my recent kidney transplant. Continue to keep my donor, Madison Loden, and our families in your prayers.

Isaiah 40:31

John "Trey" Adams

## Church, We Must Get Israel Right: Because We Haven't

by Jake McCandless

from Arkansas Baptist Trumpet

I imagine, for many of you, the first article in this series was likely a surprise. I shared how Israel's National Holocaust Museum begins with an exhibit on the foundation of the Holocaust and claims the teachings of the church laid the groundwork which eventually swelled into the horror of Hitler's Final Solution. It may not merely be surprising, but that statement may even make you angry. I know because as I have shared this from the pulpit, I've had people stand up in the congregation and tell me I was wrong. That response is far better than those who mutter under their breath, "Who cares about Israel anyway," or "The church was right to teach what it did because God is done with Jews." Even though good support is given to Israel, it's also often given without a full understanding of God's continued plan for Israel.



Jake McCandless

I want to share how the misunderstanding of the church has contributed to the persecution of Jews throughout the past 2,000 years. But before I move on, I want to make sure we feel the devastation from the Holocaust and what consequences can be for incorrect teachings.

From 1933 until 1945, six million Jews were killed.

I'm writing this in Arkansas and many of you are reading this there. In 2021, the population of the state was three million. So, two times the total population of Arkansas was killed in the Holocaust.

Six million was over a third of the total population of Jews on earth in 1933, where it was estimated there were 16.6 million.

The picture above is from Yad Vashem. At the end of the museum's path, there is a room called the Hall of Names. Those black books seen in the picture are binders full of pages of testimonies. Each page in the binder represents someone killed in the Holocaust. It's overwhelming to see the many binders, but even in all those there are only 2.7 million pages.

On the grounds of Yad Vashem is a children's memorial. The memorial was constructed in memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children who were killed. In the exhibit, a recording reads through the known names of those children, not even the full 1.5 million, but each reading — which includes the child's name, location of their death and their age — takes four seconds, and it takes three years for the list to loop all the way through. Three years.

The Holocaust was just one instance of persecution over 2,000 years. Most of this persecution took place in Europe, which was the Christian stronghold. Therefore, much of the persecution came from "Christianity."

Regardless of the ethnicity of any group of people, Christian teachings shouldn't even brush the possibility of being a cause.

See Israel on page 8

## Annual Brotherhood to Meet at Parkview Church

by Mark Jones, President

The BMA of Mississippi Brotherhood will meet Monday night, October 16th, 2023, at 7:00 PM at Parkview Baptist Church in Laurel, Mississippi. We need our pastors and the men of the BMA to come to our meeting and support the Brotherhood. Last year's attendance was low. Just a reminder, the Brotherhood supports the departments and ministries of the BMA of Mississippi. Now we need you to support the Brotherhood.

Our project this year is Missionary Scott Brocius. Bro. Scott is our missionary at Canaan Land Baptist Church in Buckatunna, Mississippi. We need our churches and local Brotherhoods to help. We also need men who are willing to step up and be an officer. Remember, we are serving Jesus and we want His church grow.





Anders Lee

Anders Lee - Director - 901-343-3293 - anders.lee571@gmail.com

## Wonderful Things Happening!!!

### ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

I am looking forward to visiting as many local associations as I can this fall. If you are a moderator of a local association, would you please contact me ASAP so I can hopefully work it out to be at your meeting soon! My number is 901-343-3293.

Being part-time in this position limits me some. It is my intention to make as many as possible, however, please realize some will not be feasible to make. In that case I would love the opportunity to at least share with you via a phone call to your churches. I've been blessed to be able to do that on some occasions with some meetings I was not able to make.

### CHURCH SUPPORT

It is that time of year when many of you are setting a budget for the next calendar year. Knowing that some go from September 1 to August 31, I want to ask you to present and discuss what your church can do to help us in the next year. Many of you are already giving and we are thankful!

To do what we are praying to do in the next year will literally take a minimum of \$85,000.00!!! That is up from what we

previously estimated, because we had such a huge response to teen camp. We camped 100 more than we originally hoped for... which was awesome! But it is also costly! That's OK!!! I want to invest in these events to reach these teens and kids!!! RIGHT!!! We send money to missions all around the world and we have one right here in Mississippi, our teens! I certainly want us to support missions. I'm not saying don't send your money for missionaries or reduce what your sending, but I am saying let's come together and put aggressive support towards the Youth Department! So, pray and talk about how your church can give each month. If you can't give monthly, the please take up a one-time offering to help and plan on giving next year to our Latrelle Windham Special Emphasis offering in March.

FYI... I mailed out thank you letters to all who do support this work, I hope you received yours! If not, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your generous support of all our youth events!

How do you give? You can give by going to our website [www.bmamsyouth.org](http://www.bmamsyouth.org). Click on the donate tab and give online, or you

can mail in support by check to Brandy Riley, 454 Lebanon Rd., Laurel MS 39443.

### RENEW IS COMING – TIME TO REGISTER

RENEW winter conference is set for December 27-29, 2023, at Bethel Baptist Church in Fulton, Mississippi. There will be four sessions of worship & preaching very similar to camp! WE WANT YOU TO COME!!! Whether you bring 5, 15 or 25 teens... BRING THEM!!! Registration can be done on our website that I mentioned above in this article. This conference is FREE!!! Everything we do on site will be funded by the Youth Department.

Tracy McMillen is our speaker and Preston Jones, who leads worship for SOAR, is our worship leader. He was also at camp this summer and many of

Late Night in Bethel's gym and it will be loaded with fun events for everyone!!! Again... its... FREE!!!

Lodging, however, will be YOURS to pay for! I have secured a block of 70 rooms with a booking rate with Holiday Inn Express in Fulton and Holiday Inn Express in Tupelo. Soon we will have a link to book on our website. You can call now and reserve your rooms at either hotel. The number of the hotel in Fulton is 662-862-5505. The number of the hotel in Tupelo is 662-620-8184. The name of our block of rooms is BMA YOUTH. For two nights the total for one double queen hotel room is \$238.17. The rooms will hold four and you can divide the cost per youth. Basically, their lodging is \$60.00 each. That's not bad at all for a three-day conference! There are some King

have booked Waukaway Springs near Meridian, Mississippi, for **June 10-13, 2024!** We are sharing early so churches can plan to come.

Our speaker is **Brody McCool**, youth pastor of First Baptist Bay Springs. **Maverick Hendricks**, a recent graduate of Central Baptist College and member at Bethel Baptist in Fulton, Mississippi, will be our worship leader. Since this will be the first camp for this age group since 2019 we will use the theme "**A NEW BEGINNING**" with them as we did the teen camp this year.

Registration began August 15, 2023. Registration deadline is February 1, 2024. A 35% of balance fee is due no later than February 1, 2024. This is a requirement of Waukaway Springs that will be paid to them before February 15th by the Youth Department. What your group pays will be credited to your overall balance, of course. The youth trustees will finalize the cost soon. Registration will be available on our website soon!

We will max out 200 for this camp. Registration is on a first come, first served basis. So, book now and book early!!! IF you have any questions about this please contact me!

### TEEN CAMP INFORMATION

We are planning for between 400 – 500 campers next year. Our location has not yet been nailed down, but we are working hard to do so! Hopefully by the next paper it will be included! For now... REGISTER for RENEW... lets pack out the sanctuary at Bethel this December!!!

Thank you all for your prayers and support! By the way I have had churches tell me since camp more have been saved right after camp of the teens who attended! Now... that makes me SHOUT!!!



you met him. Each night there will be a catered meal. On December 27<sup>th</sup> **DO RIGHT BAR BQ** will be serving Pulled Pork Sandwiches, Potato Salad, Baked Beans, Banana Pudding and Peach Cobbler! YUM! On December 28<sup>th</sup> **The CHICKEN MAN** will be serving Chicken Tenders, Green Beans, Loaded Mashed Potatoes, with strawberry & chocolate cake! These kids will NOT go hungry! Each night after worship will be

rooms at that rate also. First come first serve to these rooms, once they are gone, they are gone, and you will pay a normal rate, not our booking rate. I am working on more rooms at another hotel... stay tuned.

### KIDS CAMP IS BACK

We are thrilled to announce that Kids Camp, for kids coming out of 1st - 5th grades, has been scheduled for our churches! We

## SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST COLLEGE

# 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SCHOLARSHIP GALA

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17 2023; DOORS OPEN AT 6PM

THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER OF BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY CHURCH  
849 LAKE COMO RD., LAUREL, MS

\$1000 PER TABLE  
\$100 PER SEAT

We look forward to hosting our local donors, friends (near & far), pastors, business owners, and department personnel during this monumental event!

6PM

Doors will open

6:30PM

Meal Begins

7:00PM

Alumni Music Presentation



Dr. Dennis Swanberg begins



## Church ministers to local athletes

by Brody McCool  
Youth Pastor

First Baptist Church of Bay Springs



On Thursday, August 3, 2023 First Baptist Church of Bay Springs, Mississippi, had the opportunity to host an FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) rally for all the football teams in the county. All four schools in Jasper County - Bay Springs, Sylva Bay Academy, Heidelberg, and Stringer - were present, and heard the gospel message! Please continue to pray for each student and coach. Thank God for the Godly coaches he has placed in these young men's lives and ask God to continue to work in the lives of these Jasper County football players! It is a wonderful sight to see a church packed with young men!





# SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST COLLEGE

Serving Christ With A Biblical World View In A Christian Atmosphere

4229 Highway 15 North, Laurel, Mississippi 39440 - 601.426.6346

## President's Perspective

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," Philippians 3:13

This semester is up and running and we are excited to have received numerous new students onto our campus and into our classrooms. The Lord is doing amazing things at Southeastern Baptist College, and we invite you to be part of this invaluable ministry of the Baptist Missionary Association of Mississippi. I wish to thank every church and individual that contributed towards our Special Emphasis Months of July and August. It is not too late to support your college and to be included in our Special Emphasis Fund Raising Campaign. So much has been accomplished in upgrading our infrastructure over the past few years, but there is more to be done. Your contributions



Dr. Scott Carson  
President

help to keep SBC competitive both academically and aesthetically. Help us make SBC the first choice for those seeking a Christian college education.

The faculty and staff are encouraged by the new students who have entered this semester. They are eager to learn God's Word in the classrooms, in dormitory Bible studies, and at events specifically designed to help each one grow spiritually in their personal walk with the Lord. The campus of SBC is truly a transformational ministry in the lives of the student body!

Our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary is quickly approaching, and we are working to make it a special time for our alumni and friends of the college. As part of the annual meeting on October 17, the program committee has graciously set the schedule to accommodate the Southeastern Baptist College 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scholarship Gala that will be held the same night beginning at 6 p.m. We have arranged for Christian comedian, Dr. Dennis Swanberg to be our guest entertainment for the evening. This is a semi-formal dinner and show. RSVP's are required. The cost is \$100 a plate for individuals or \$1,000 for a group to reserve a table. Please

note the adjacent flyer near this article for more information. I am looking forward to seeing you at this great event!

These are exciting times on the campus of SBC. As we approach our 75<sup>th</sup> year of operation, it is clear that the Lord's hand is upon Southeastern Baptist College and the financial needs have become greater to keep this school as a leading accredited Bible college in Mississippi. Please consider increasing your regular giving to this great institution. SBC is a 501c3 fully approved tax-deductible charity.

Remember, this is your college that God has established! Everyone in the BMA of Mississippi who may be seeking a college education needs to first and foremost, consider attending Southeastern Baptist College!

Whether online or in the classroom, we invite you to join us in your own academic journey here at Southeastern Baptist College and be a part of its grand legacy.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14  
Equipping the Saints,  
Dr. Scott R. Carson



A busy day during registration



Professor Molly Hanberry teaching the first day of English class

## Sign Upgrade



A huge thank you to Ramsey Creek Baptist Church of Saucier, Mississippi, for their generous donation to help refurbish our street sign.



President Carson saving SBC thousands incarpent cleaning expenses



First semester chapel was well attended



Dr. Matt Olson, Dean of Student Affairs, delivering a dynamic chapel message

More college information on page 5



## College Report

Continued from page 4

### Special Emphasis

Southeastern Baptist College's Special Emphasis Months are July and August for focused donations from churches and individuals. Although our dates for this year's Special Emphasis are now past, we will continue to accept Special Emphasis gifts as they come in. God bless you as you respond to God's leading as a donor to SBC. As a reminder, Southeastern Baptist College is a 501(c)(3) certified tax-deductible charity. The following are churches and individuals contributing through August 17:

Bethel, Seminary  
Pine Ridge, Laurel  
Campground, Gulfport  
Frank Panzrino  
Rock Creek, Union  
Mount Glory, Tishomingo  
Caledonia, Columbus  
Paramount, Wiggins  
Forked Oak, Booneville  
First Baptist, Bay Springs  
Gulf Baptist Association  
Big Creek District WMA  
New Bethany, Seminary  
Parkview, Laurel  
Tombigbee, Mantachie

### Online Bible Degrees

Did you know you can earn your accredited Bible college degree in the comfort of your own home? You can take one class (3 hours) or up to 18 hours, completely online each semester at Southeastern without even residing in Mississippi! You may want to have a discussion with your children or grandchildren today about taking classes

## SBC Trio recently performed at the Ark Encounter in Kentucky



with SBC. Qualified students can take classes while still in high school and get a head start in their college studies with our dual enrollment program. We are conservative and Bible centered, and our credits are transferable to other accredited colleges. Go to our website at <https://southeasternbaptist.edu/future-students/> application to begin your college education journey today! Or call SBC at 601-426-6346.

### Estate Planning

Does your personal estate planning include a donation to Southeastern Baptist College? Contact Rosemary Davis at 601-426-6346 discuss with her how you can bless SBC with your special gift.

### Available Scholarships

The Arnold Knight Memorial RLF Scholarship is available to Baptist Missionary Association ministers who take

classes at Southeastern Baptist College. These funds are administered by the BMA of Mississippi Revolving Loan Fund. Contact our Financial Aid Officer for more information.

### Veterans Benefits

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

### Foundations in Ministry Certificate

SBC has fielded a certificate for new ministers who are interested in gaining knowledge in the basics of theology and church ministries. This is a 23-hour program, and the student may take one class

or a full load. Numerous ministers throughout Mississippi have already begun their studies and the classes can be completely online. Once the certificate is earned, all credits are transferable toward an associate or bachelor's degree should the student desire to continue in their education with SBC. Contact our Admissions Officer today! 601-426-6346, or apply online at [www.southeasternbaptist.edu](http://www.southeasternbaptist.edu).

### Need a Preacher?

Dr. Carson is available to fill the pulpit and, or to make a presentation about the work and vision of Southeastern Baptist College. Chaplain (Colonel) Carson can also provide an update on the BMAA Chaplaincy and deliver a related message. Thank you to Paramount in Perkinston and New Fellowship Baptist Church in Seminary for inviting Dr. Carson to preach. You can reach Dr. Carson at 601-433-4736 or [scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu](mailto:scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu).

## Former SBC Graduate Honored for Service

Manuel "Don" Biadog Jr., a 1981 graduate of Southeastern Baptist College, was named the Chaplain of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) during a July 20 ceremony at Post 7907 in Poway, California, where he is a member. Many of our BMA folks will remember him as Dondoy. He came to SBC from the Philippines and Tanguib Missionary Baptist Church, Bacolod City, Philippines, a BMA mission begun by former missionaries Bro. and Mrs. Ray Freeman. After Southeastern he continued his education receiving degrees from both William Carey College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He retired from the Navy after 30 years of service. He and his wife Kathy have two grown children and one grandchild and live in San Diego, California.



## Former Missouri Missions Director Dies

Danny R. Kirk, age 67, of Bella Vista passed away July 22. He served as a pastor and church planter for 42 years in Arkansas, Texas, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri. He also coached and mentored pastors and church leaders all over the world and served as the director of missions for Missouri.

Survivors include his wife of over 47 years, Carolyn; three children, Amy (Kevin) Perry of Bella Vista, Angela (Brandon) Cox of Rogers and Joshua (Caron) Kirk of Phoenix, Ariz.; six brothers, Jimmy Kirk (Tami Ellis) of Rochelle, Ill.; Jeffrey (Dori) Kirk of Las Vegas, Nev.; Clifford (Cheryl) Kirk of Jewel, Iowa; Roger (Tammy) Kirk of Clinton, Iowa; Todd (Wendy) Kirk of Huntsville, Ala.; and Roy (Arieta) Kirk of Orlando, Fla.; two sisters, Rose Gordon of Clinton, Iowa and Lisa (Matthew) Brady of St. Charles, Mo.; eight grandchildren and one great grandson.

A celebration of his life was held July 26 at New Testament Baptist Church in Sullivan, Missouri.



## SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST COLLEGE 75th ANNIVERSARY SCHOLARSHIP GALA

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THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER OF BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY CHURCH  
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\$100 PER SEAT

We look forward to hosting our local donors, friends (near & far), pastors, business owners, and department personnel during this monumental event!

6PM

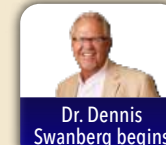
Doors will open

6:30PM

Meal Begins

7:00PM

Alumni Music  
Presentation



Dr. Dennis  
Swanberg begins





# BAPTIST MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION MISSIONS OF MISSISSIPPI

4226 Highway 15 North, Laurel, MS 39440

Phone: 601-428-8616 Email: missions@bmams.org

Chris Yager, Director

Souls Saved, attendance up, constant visitors, evangelism being accomplished, and God's presence felt – these are statements that I am seeing, hearing, and experiencing from our missions across the state. As you read the excerpts from our missionaries, you are going to agree with me that God is mightily blessing our missionaries and our mission churches. Thank you for praying,



Chris Yager

giving, and participating in missions; this is fruit to your account!

### Article Spotlight

I have introduced the Revolving Loan Fund to our Local Associations as our best kept secret. It is not that we haven't heard about the Fund, but many within our churches do not understand what all it accomplishes. As I have gotten more and more familiar with our RLF, I have found it a phenomenal tool that God is using to accomplish great things for His glory!

Matthew 25 gives the parable of the talents. In that parable, our Savior praises

two servants who wisely invest the talents (or money) that the lord had left for them, but he chides the one servant who buries his talent/money. The accolades that were given to the two servants who invested their talents from the Lord are words that every servant longs to hear: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." This parable teaches us that our Lord desires us to invest the talents that He has given us. Whether it is the spiritual gift that He has given to us or the finances that He has blessed us with, faithful stewardship is what He requires, and what we should return to Him.

The RLF provides you with the means to faithfully steward the talents/finances that the Lord has entrusted to you. It gives you the opportunity to double your talents like the two servants of the parable. How? In the RLF, you can add an interest rate to your savings that is competitive with many banks. But the doubling of your talents/finances is accomplished when those talents are then invested into missions, missionaries, churches, and pastors to accomplish the work of the ministry. Your investment into the RLF is truly an "Investment into Eternity"!

The RLF takes your investments and turns them into low cost loans that mission

churches, established churches, missionaries and pastors can afford. Buildings are built, missions are established, and renovations are made with the express purpose of reaching the lost for Christ and discipling the saints in the faith. WOW!!! What an investment! What an opportunity!

This is available for you! This is your RLF. This is your opportunity to invest in Eternity, and to faithfully steward the talents/finances that the Lord has blessed and given to you.

Our Rates are as follows:

- 9 month lock is at 5%
- 12 month lock is at 4.5%
- 18 month lock is 4.25%
- 2 year lock is at 4%
- immediate access is at 2.5%.

We would love to help you invest as a wise steward knowing your investment allows missionaries and missions, as well as pastors and churches to effectively reach their Jerusalem with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is an incredible secret that we love to see become a household name within our association. Come invest with us!!

### Hispanic Missions Report by Estuardo Marroquin

It has been very exciting to see God's blessings in recent weeks in Hispanic missions. The gospel of Jesus continues to be shared in the fields and we see God's answer to prayers because people are still saved. The Hispanic mission field in Canton, Mississippi, continues forward. Recently one person joined the congregation through baptism. Lucas Gomez, missionary on this field, gave to the new member his baptism certificate and the whole congregation enjoyed along with Ivan Morales originally from the country of Panama.



Estuardo Marroquin

We ask that you continue to pray for this mission field and that God will continue to open doors to win more people to Jesus. As coordinator of Hispanic missions, I thank you for your prayers and your support of our work in the mission field. God bless you!



### Refuge Baptist Mission Bro. Josh Daniels

"Greetings churches and associations of the BMA of Mississippi. It is an honor to announce that Refuge Baptist Mission is moving right along in a great direction. Church life is in full swing and getting organized a little better each week. We are now in our 4th month of services in the new building and God continues to bless each week with new visitors, many returning visitors, and some making professions of faith in Jesus. Currently we are having regular Sunday services at 10:30 am with two classes being taught at 9 am. Wednesday nights offer an adult class and two other youth classes for middle/high school combined class and a 5th grade and under class. God is growing His church through these extra opportunities of fellowship, worship, and discipleship. It is a great feeling to be able to finally have these available for the people of Refuge.

We are coming off a very busy summer of church camp, VBS, baptisms, & ministry. It was a blessing to take a group of students to youth camp at Shocco Springs for Global Youth Ministry. The camp highlights on the word of God with scripture memory and bible reading being a big part of the camp experience. We had multiple students step up and learn verses as well as read scripture out loud in front of the other students at camp. A couple of our students were saved, and some are also seeking baptism. Camp was a wonderful experience for our new group of youth.

As camp ended, we prepared for a weekend of VBS. This year we decided to do a Friday and Saturday VBS with a closing on Sunday. We had around 70+ kids throughout the weekend and lots of adult volunteers to serve and show love to the kids. The Sunday



closing was phenomenal. We had standing room only because of the many guests. We also had baptism service afterward with full family fellowship day. We baptized 8 people and spent the rest of the afternoon fellowshiping together over meals and conversations. The summer was full of growing moments for Refuge. The youth, children, and many families have grown in their own relationships with Christ, but also with one another.

We are preparing now for the fall activities, evangelism opportunities, outreaches, and new upcoming classes. Please pray for God to continue to give wisdom and guidance each step of the way. We desire to be obedient to the two



"GREAT" things of scripture: the GREAT COMMANDMENT & the GREAT COMMISSION. We pray that our love for God will grow our love for others and that our love for others will direct us to share the gospel with the lost, baptize the converted, and teach the saved the great things of God's word.



God has been good to Refuge Baptist Mission. We are thankful for all that the BMA of Mississippi has done for us. We recognize that associational work accomplishes great things. We appreciate all the support from each church and association. We ask for your continued support for at least one more year as we work toward organization and some debt reduction. We always welcome guests and visitors to stop by and see what has been happening at Refuge. Come see what you have been supporting for four years.

Decreasing for HIS Increase,  
Bro. Josh Daniels



# Missions

Continued from page 6

## Restoration Ministries-Paul Spurlin

Please allow me to step away from updating you about the jail ministry this month and inform you about two interactions I had with men outside of the jail.

First, you may recall from an update a few months ago that the Lord opened the opportunity for me to give a ride to a man I met in the jail as a prisoner, but who had recently been released. It gave me the opportunity to speak to him again about the gospel that had been presented to him at the jail. Well, I ran into him again in the Walmart parking lot as he was talking to a friend. I had another chance to bring his mind back to the



Paul Spurlin

gospel. If you ask me, God is continuing to draw this man's attention to the gospel. Please pray for Thomas.

On another recent occasion, I was leaving a coffee shop in Laurel and handed a gospel tract to a man who was sitting there with full intentions of this being my only interaction with him. By the time I got to my vehicle, I could not get rid of the impression from the Lord that I needed to spend some time speaking with him, so I went back into the coffee shop. It turns out this man was reared in church but is now an atheist. We had a lengthy conversation and the gospel was presented to him. Based on our talk, I think the door is still open for God to enter this man's life. Please pray for Austin.

## Blessed Be the Name of the LORD

Living Hope Baptist Mission Update  
by Sam Yager

This phrase is the conclusion that Job came to after hearing that he had lost everything. He said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Recently at Living Hope, we have experienced the exact inverse of Job's situation in this verse. For God took away, and He has given again. If Job could come to the conclusion of praise in His situation, we at Living Hope ought to be able to say, "blessed be the name of the LORD."



Sam Yager

For over a year, God had blessed Living Hope with a young couple that was faithful both to be in God's house and to serve in every way possible. They were involved in children's ministry, teen ministry, and outreach ministries; and their hearts had truly been knit together with our own. Sadly, we knew our time with this couple was limited, for the husband was a marine in flight school. It was only a matter of time before he got his wings and moved on to his next training base. As the time of their move grew closer, it became more and more evident just how much of a hole would

be left when they moved. I then began asking God to bring a family to Living Hope that would be able to fill the hole that this young couple would leave. For, it is God that builds His church.

When the last Sunday before their move had arrived, I had almost forgotten about my prayer. That Sunday was characterized by an abundance of love being poured out on this couple as we prepared to send them forth with our blessing. However, in the middle of conversations before worship services began, my attention suddenly changed. A new family had just walked in. As I greeted this family and got to know them, my prayer came to the forefront of my thinking. Here we were sending a beloved family to the next place God had for them, and that same day God had brought a family that was eager to get involved in the very ministries that were losing laborers. Our God is so good to us! He was taking away, but He also was giving again.

It is incredible to watch how God continues to answer prayer and to show Himself strong. From the greatest triumphs to the saddest days, He has been faithfully at work in Meridian. I am so thankful to get to be a part of His amazing plan to continue to bring people to Himself. Knowing that our God is the God Who answers prayer, I do ask that you would continue to pray for us at Living Hope as we strive to continue to reach Meridian with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I cannot thank y'all enough for your continual prayer and support!

## Canaan Land Mission

by Scott Brocious

Greetings from Canaan Land Baptist Mission! We have had a great summer and the Lord is continuing to bless! We finished up the month of July with a wonderful 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday service. We had 40-plus in attendance and our youth led the services. The young men of our youth led song service, gave a devotion, played a special, took up the offering, and said a prayer before preaching started. It was so great to see these young men take on a major role of services. They all did a great job and I am excited to see them continue to grow within the church!



Scott Brocious

We have a couple of outreaches coming up soon. Our first will be a Back-to-School bash. This will be our second-year hosting this for our community. Last year was a great success and we are praying this year will be just as great! There are several activities planned - volleyball, a waterslide, and haircuts to name a few! This event will be on September 2. Our second outreach will be September 30. This outreach will be in Fruitdale, Alabama, at the Jeep show. We will have our tent set up and will be giving away popcorn as well as gift bags filled with our church information and tracts. These events are always a great way to meet people from nearby communities and plant seeds. If you would like to participate in either outreach with us, please do! Being apart of an outreach is such a blessing!

As always, please continue to keep the mission in your prayers. God is so faithful, and your prayers are being answered daily.

## BMA OF AMERICA CHAPLAINCY

In coordination with BMA Missions, the Chaplaincy endorses and cares for chaplains, both civilian and military, as they carry the Gospel

Dr. Scott Carson, Director

4229 Highway 15 North, Laurel, MS 39440

601-426-6346 - Email - scarson@southeasternbaptist.edu



Carson

## BMA Chaplaincy News

Chaplain Ryan Burchett (1LT - TXSG)

Operation Border Health Preparedness (OBHP) took place from July 23-29 along our southern border. OBHP is an annual humanitarian mission offering a variety of medical services to the public in six different border towns. The goal is to prepare citizens for hurricane season. As the season ramps up, the risk increases for displacement which escalates the potential for disease to spread. OBHP functions to prevent that spread.

Chaplain (1LT-TXSG) Burchett recently served the OBHP mission at Rio Grande City and Hidalgo, both in Texas. Tasks included patrolling the extremely long lines of people waiting for services, providing spiritual and mental/emotional counsel as needed, and offering a presence in uniform to deter any criminal activity. Being a joint operation, Chaplain Burchett, serving the Texas State Guard, worked alongside the Texas Army National Guard, Border Patrol, local law enforcement, FEMA, and some from the Chilean Army.

In a five-day span, all six checkpoints combined saw over 5,000 people; some were citizens, but many were not. Of those 5,000+, checkpoint Hidalgo, Chaplain Burchett's primary station, saw around 3,500. The border and those border towns are busy places.

With everything going on at OBHP, God allowed Chaplain Burchett a unique opportunity to turn the operation into a mission trip, of sorts. During OBHP, he was able to hand out 300 Gideon Bibles to those willing to take one. The Gideon New Testaments were offered in both English and Spanish. One praise to be noted was a Mexican vendor who passed through and noticed the Bibles. She asked Chaplain Burchett if he had any spare Spanish Bibles to donate to a church in Mexico that desperately needed them. He was able to give her a box of 100 Spanish New Testaments to be taken across the border. God is good!

Along with handing out Bibles, God allowed Chaplain Burchett multiple opportunities for spiritual conversations with fellow troops and local law enforcement. He provided spiritual/biblical guidance, as well as marital counsel and sharing the Gospel during those conversations.

All service members, including Chaplain Burchett, received commendations for their efforts on OBHP '23, including the State Guard Association of the United States Meritorious Unit Citation and the Humanitarian Service Medal.

Chaplain Burchett serves as the pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church, Winnsboro, Texas, and as the President of the BMA of Texas.



## Erickson elected Jacksonville College president

By Charles Johnson  
Jacksonville College Trustee

The trustee board of Jacksonville College have named Dr. David Erickson as the new president. He assumed his duties on July 31.

Dr. Erickson is a native of Missouri and his family has been in the BMA since its founding. He is a graduate of Central Baptist College in Conway, has a Master of Divinity degree from BMA Theological Seminary in Jacksonville, and received a PhD in Baptist Studies from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

For the last 14 years, Dr. Erickson has served as a professor of Theological-Historical Studies at BMA Theological Seminary. He also served the seminary for eight years as associate dean.

Dr. Erickson and his wife Amanda have been married for eighteen years and have two sons: Ezra and Elijah. They are members of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Jacksonville and reside in rural Cherokee County near Jacksonville.



Dr. David Erickson



# Senior Adult Ministry

Commission on Senior Adults - 8 Reagan Lake Road, Laurel, MS 39443 - 601-426-3293

## Greetings to all of our PrimeTimers!

Boy is it ever HOT! And as I write these words the weatherman tells me that for the next few weeks it is still going to be hot and dry - at least in south Mississippi - and I suspect in many other places as well. What do we seniors do about it? We stay inside where it is cool, stay hydrated, and do not 'over do' anything. This is tough weather and it is very dangerous for anyone, but especially for some of us older folks. I just took a short break from this article to stretch and walk outside with our little dog. I just needed to stretch and move a little. As I went out the door I noted to my wife that on our carport "in the shade" it was an even 100 degrees.



Don Brown  
Director

I said, "I will be back in a few minutes. I just need to move a little and stretch". HA! I was back in about 5 minutes. I say all of this to remind everyone, but especially our

senior adults, that these conditions are very dangerous. Let's be careful!

## How about a Day Trip?

I know it is hot, but our vehicles are air-conditioned, and we can travel in comfort. I recently received a notice highlighting some places that would be good destinations for a day trip in our great state. We have museums, aquariums, unique towns with unique histories, some great restaurants that are often hidden and overlooked by the general public. Again, you will be inside and cool once you get to your destination. You can do just a little inquiring and searching for interesting places to visit and places with good food. The trip alone provides good fellowship and opportunities to connect with others. I have always wanted to visit the Nissan plant north of Jackson and watch them build cars. The Toyota plant in North Mississippi also would be a good visit. I wonder if they have tours? Have any of you ever visited either of these? Let me know if you have!



Challenge the seniors or senior groups in your church to step up and make plans to get involved. Don't forget to pray for each other and find out if there are senior adults in your church that need some help. Mow their yard, clean their house, take them a meal, take them grocery shopping, provide an in-home Bible study....the opportunities are endless.

## Israel from page 2

As you're aware, Christianity began as a sect of Jews who lived in Israel and heard the message of a Jew who declared that He was the promised Jewish Messiah who would one day rule a Jewish Kingdom headquartered in Jerusalem. Eventually, Jews took the message of their Jewish Messiah to Gentiles (non-Jews) and Gentiles came to believe in and follow the Jewish Messiah. These Gentiles were adopted and grafted into a Jewish family. The Jewish history became their history because that history led to the arrival of the Jewish Messiah and pointed to the future Jewish Kingdom.

As this message went forth to Gentiles, in a letter written to Gentile believers living in Rome and written by a Jewish man named Paul, he warned the Gentiles not to be conceited in their faith over Jews. It was advice that was not received.

As early as 115 A.D., only 80 years into Christianity, we find evidence of Gentiles beginning to break away from the Jewish foundation of the gospel in the writings of one of the early church fathers, Ignatius. This trail grows throughout the succession of church fathers. Just over 100 years later, Origen's teachings drove a huge wedge between Gentile believers and Jews. Origen wrote and taught that Jews had been forever rejected by God. He, in a sense, moved to remove the Jewishness of Jesus. He also shifted to a form of Bible interpretation that allowed for the spiritualizing of the Old

Testament and extracting the gospel from the context of God's history with His people. In the early 300s, a church council restricted Christians from interacting with Jews. The Edict of Milan in 315 A.D. even forbid Jews from living in Jerusalem.

This was a quick rundown of a much deeper history of the church accepting what is called "supersessionism," which holds that the Christian church has superseded or replaced Israel as the people of God. Supersessionism holds to thoughts such as these (list is from author Joel Richardson):

- The church is the new and true Israel.
- Israel is no longer the people of God.
- The destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was God's public demonstration of His rejection of Israel as His people.
- Israel's national rejection is permanent.

## Support

I want you all to know that we are already making plans for our 2024 Senior Adult Conferences. There are some new things that I have in mind and maybe they will come together and be a blessing to our folks. If you have suggestions about our meetings or anything you think could be a blessing, please let me or one of our trustees know.

This section is titled "Support". Yes, many churches and two local associations support us well financially and we are so grateful for that. But we need more! We are asking each of our BMA churches who do not currently have us in their monthly budget to consider adding this ministry to your financial support for at least \$25.00 per month. If enough of our churches do this, it will give us the ability to have better conferences and minister to our senior adults more adequately. It only takes one person in your church to suggest that your church put us in your regular monthly budget! Would you be that person???

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Psalm 91:1-2*

• The suffering of the Jews since 70 A.D. (including the Holocaust) is the result of God's righteous judgment due to their collective guilt for their unbelief in rejecting and killing Jesus.

• The Jews are under God's divine curses for their disobedience.

• The people who call themselves Jews today are the enemies of the gospel and the church.

Hopefully, you know these statements are not true. Several are directly refuted in Scripture, nevertheless they still permeate and hide behind our current understanding and treatment of Israel within modern Christianity.

We need to realize that we have gotten Israel wrong.

And in case we think this was only an ancient problem or one from the Catholic church, let me close with words from the hero of Protestantism and father of the German church, Martin Luther, from his book *On The Jews and Their Lies*:

"They (Jews) are venomous, bitter, vindictive, tricky serpents, assassins and children of the devil, who sting and work harm stealthily wherever they cannot do it openly... next to the devil, a Christian has no more bitter and galling foe than a Jew. What then shall we Christians do with this damned, rejected race of Jews? .. We must prayerfully and reverentially practice merciful severity... Let me give you my honest advice... First, their synagogues should be set on fire... Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed... Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayer books and Talmuds... Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach any more... Fifthly, passport and traveling privileges should be absolutely forbidden to the Jews... To sum up, dear princes and nobles who have Jews in your domains, if the advice of mind does not suit you, then find a better one so that you and we may all be free of this insufferable devilish burden — the Jews."

## Scripture Thoughts by Cleaver

Dr. Tony Cleaver is a retired U.S. Army Chaplain and Director of Distance Learning for BMA Seminary. He may be contacted at [jstmcleaver@gmail.com](mailto:jstmcleaver@gmail.com)

### What Should the Preacher Wear?

Psalm 132 verses 9 and 16: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy... I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy".

This is the thirteenth of the Psalms of Ascent sung or recited as the Hebrew people with boundless joy went "up to Jerusalem" for a feast day. I understand repetition. I use it many times in speaking. My wife speaks with repetition when I seem not to be listening to her instruction, or at least not responding in a way appropriate to what she has told me.

The people were expecting the priests to "be clothed with righteousness" as they came to the Temple mount to worship. The Lord Himself said of that clothing "I will clothe its priests with salvation." As it was in those days, so it is today, Dear Pastor, people expect you to be shrouded with righteousness as men, women boys, and girls come to the church house to worship. Clean hands and a pure heart clothe the pastor. There can be no smudge of misconduct, no hint of impropriety, and no wickedness of behavior in your life!

When the people have as a model the pastor with a genuine heart of godliness, the people can respond, as stated twice in this Psalm: "...your faithful people shout for joy... its faithful people will shout for joy." Of course, the pastor is held to a higher standard. That is simply the way it is as a requirement. The priests of the Old Testament had a standard to measure up to be ready to lead worship for the pilgrims. It is proper for us as congregants to pray that our pastor's moral compass be always turned toward Jesus as we come to His house to worship. Let us shout for joy as we come into His presence!



Dr. Tony Cleaver



# Good Grief!

If I had a “hit parade” of favorite preachers, Adrian Rogers would be on it; he had a way with words. His quotes still show up in many places today, but no one says them with quite the pizzazz he did. He is quoted as saying, “God does not change us in order to love us. He loves us in order to change us.” Every time I say, “I hate change,” my mind seems to pause until I remember Who is in control.

God certainly brings many events, situations, and people in and out of our lives bringing change. I’ve found that losses have brought the most opportunities for change in me.

When we lost the Diva and my Gabi 2 the same day, I soon tired of crying and being sad. One of my expressions then was, “I’m ready to divorce myself.” That definitely was an impossibility. Instead, I started developing my attitude of “practice today for what you’d like tomorrow to be.” I certainly didn’t want to be miserable tomorrow, so I needed to find a way to practice not being miserable. I just don’t think a “doom and gloom” Christian is what God wants us to be. Jesus wept, but He never lost sight of His purpose.

Through losses of every size and intensity, my practicing has evolved. Let me give you some examples: You may not remember, but the Gaither Homecoming videos helped Daddy especially after the Diva died. “Let’s watch some music”

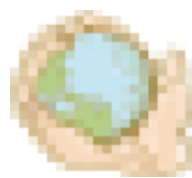


Southern Gospel Media

helped him deal with his sorrow. When we lost him, I knew Southern Gospel music would continue to help me.

When that loss seemed overwhelming to me, I told JB, “Let’s do something we couldn’t do if Daddy were still alive; let’s go to some gospel concerts.” And we did—to Houston, Birmingham, and Slidell. I learned to practice overcoming sadness with music that provides joy along with the gospel message.

The loss of our parents led to the sisters’ determination to have a relationship



# 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*

and let nothing separate us. I found a note from Middle Sister recently that reminded me our lives could have been different. “Thank you for calling; it sure made me feel better. I knew when Daddy died, I would not only lose him, but also my two sisters.” I don’t even remember that phone call or her feelings back then. But I’m thankful for the McKey Sisters’ closeness over the years. The three of us never lost our desire to keep our family connection. We did have to work at it sometimes, though!

I don’t know if I’ve mentioned before, but Daddy and JB died about a year apart, leading to the biggest changes in my life. Those of you who have lost a spouse know that surviving a day at a time is an accomplishment. Sometimes it seems surviving ten minutes at a time is all you can manage. But my attitude kicked in my first day home after his death. He really liked country music (when country music was country), and our alarm woke us to a country station every day. My thought that first morning was, “At least I don’t have to listen to country music anymore.” I practiced smiling through my tears.

I also have noticed over the years that many people, when hard times hit, choose to stay away from church. I’ve got to admit going by myself without JB was difficult, but I needed the encouragement of my

## “practice today for what you’d like tomorrow to be.”

church family. How long did it take to quit crying during the service? A while. Mr. Dub, who sat behind me, never tired of getting a Kleenex out of Jan’s purse and handing it to me.

The sisters told me I had a year to get over it; most people think so, too, whether they say it or not. I’ve got to tell you, though, that’s not true. Most of the time you get **through it**, but certainly **not over it**. And no one can tell you how to cope. I practiced coping by learning to journal my thoughts for the first time and working in my yard.

Southern Gospel music has comforted me all these years (even putting me to sleep many nights). You’ll find Southern Gospel

artists still encouraging me at home, on the road, and at concerts.

And the traveling together started, sometimes in combination with concerts and sometimes not.



Great, great nieces and nephew

Then we lost Middle Sister. Change, once again. Maybe that loss made me realize that God gives us memories to help celebrate our past and remember love while looking forward to what He has for us in the days ahead.

Losing my Koda, the last of the



Daddy's dress

Schnauzers, made me do something I had never done before: invite the great, great nieces and nephews for a sleepover. Because Koda didn’t like them and they thought she was mean, I never thought about having them for a visit. I even wondered if maybe I had “cracked up” when I had three of them with me overnight recently. I’m not telling you how long it took me to recuperate, but it brought a lot of noise and joy to a quiet home.



Three sisters in Jackson, Wyoming



My old trunk

The girls explored inside and out and found things I had forgotten I had. Emmie and Harper loved the old trunk with its treasures: My grandmother’s shoes and dresses were great, but the locket of hair was gross. I’m not sure they had ever seen two-dollar bills.

My bride doll scared them, so she “slept” in the closet. When they found a child’s dress hanging in the pie safe, they were surprised to hear it was one of Daddy’s when he was a toddler. A teachable moment of the old days. They were most captivated with the cordless phones for my landline. I felt like an antique. Am I the only one who still has a landline?

Rowdy helped take care of the girls, but he was shocked at my early Sunday



My box turtle

morning rising for my coffee. I got him up much earlier than his normal by telling him, “Come see my turtle.” A budding biology major, he’s interested even in backyard turtles. I thought he would get to see my geckos, but that was not to be.

I’m just saying...

Change is not my favorite thing in life; but through it all, God has taught me that no matter how dark it seems, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5). All the ways I’ve coped over the years have been covered by faith and trust in the One, who has promised that “all things work together for good...” (Romans 8:28). During hard times, I find myself reading the Psalms over and over again finding comfort in the Word.

When you hear me say, “good grief,” it usually means that I can’t believe what I just saw or heard. But good grief also reminds me that because of the wonderful change in my life in August many years ago, I’ve learned to accept that change is just a part of our lives. We might not understand all the journey, but God helps all of us continue with joy no matter what.

Practice today for tomorrow really means being grateful today for what we have and for the journey ahead. In the best of times and the worst of times (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities), good grief helps me to remember that I am firmly in His grip on the journey He has for me.



Joy comes in the morning



## First day of school 2023/24

We have hope in the Lord of our salvation! This is the theme of the conclusion of Psalm 33, *"Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, Upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, Because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, According as we hope in thee."* A psalm that begins with the command to rejoice for God's creative power ends with rejoicing over his redemptive power. We are singing these praises at the Children's Home as we transition from Summer to the new school year.

In our earlier article we asked for prayer through the Summer camp season, as we knew the Lord appeared to be dealing with the hearts of some of our kids. We are thankful for answered prayers. Two of our children have professed faith in Jesus Christ this summer. There is no better news to report from this ministry than the salvation of souls. One made a profession after attending SOAR and the other at the end of State Youth Camp. We want to express our thanks to God for His saving grace and to all those who have joined us in this ministry through prayer.



# Mississippi Baptist Children's Home



Dwight Lindsey

118 Lowe Road, Laurel, Mississippi 39443 - (601) 426-3928  
Dwight Lindsey - Director

Believers know that salvation is the beginning of an eternal relationship with our creator, sustainer, and ruler Jesus Christ. The moment of salvation is irreplaceable in importance, but not the end of the journey. Pray with Lindsay and me as we embark on the discipleship journey with these two during this phase of their life. We work with them daily trying to exemplify Bible study, prayer, and loving others as a part of Christian life dedicated to the Lord. As we do our best to lead them to the peace of 2 Peter 1:10, *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."*

Join us now in praying for the new school year. You can partner with us by

praying for the kid's education, commitment, and perseverance to excel. We are proud of so many of their accomplishments last year with nearly all our students reaching the honor roll by the end of the year. The one who didn't quite reach that plateau battled through being behind multiple grades in school, to catching up one whole grade level from January to July. They all put in so much work to be proud of, but now they cannot rest on past accomplishments. Pray they will see the value of the work done in the past to propel them to another great year, not only in academics, but in character as well.

Finally pray for our continued support from churches, individuals, and businesses. We have had a good but tough



year with much maintenance and more on the horizon. If your church would like us to come and report on our work at the home and preach one Sunday, Wednesday, or another special event please don't hesitate to reach out. We would also be glad to fill the pulpit for pastors who are taking much needed vacations, or churches without a pastor in need of pulpit supply. You can reach us at [info@msbch.org](mailto:info@msbch.org) or 662-605-0996 on my personal cell phone.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing what God has in store for the Children's Home and our churches in the future.

## Glorying in Shameful Things

A devotional by Bro. Ed Steele  
[www.edsteeleministry.com](http://www.edsteeleministry.com)

*"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"* (Philippians 3:18, 19).

The Apostle Paul was shedding tears when he penned these words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in describing people who are enemies to the cross of Jesus Christ. He wrote four descriptions of those who are enemies of the cross. First, he wrote their end is destruction. Secondly, he stated their God is their belly as they seek to indulge in what they eat and drink. The fourth thing concerned with how they are only concerned with earthly things. It is the third phrase that I want to deal with in this devotional - they glory in their shame. We live in a day when some people are glorying (or bragging) about things they once were ashamed of and tried to keep hidden.

Both Old and New Testaments describe the practice of homosexuality as an abomination to the Lord (Leviticus 18:22) that leads one to having a reprobate mind (Romans 1:26-32). What we have seen in the past few years is similar to what Jeremiah dealt with in his day, as he described in 6:15, *"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD."*

A few years ago, the phrase 'came out of the closet' was frequently used to describe someone who decided to reveal this lifestyle to others, but now they want to be on a pedestal and the word 'pride' is used to describe them. Anyone who disagrees with their lifestyle is accused of having hatred. Their parades often have signs that say "Love not Hate". Those who glory in the cross of Jesus do not hate others! We just love the Lord and His Word and

are committed to being faithful to Him and obedient to His Word! *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"* (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18). The statement is often made that God makes people the way they are. We cannot be certain how God allows people to have desires that He calls unnatural, but we do know that He DOES NOT make them do the things His Word calls sin! God's Word clearly teaches that sexual intimacy should only be between a husband and wife in the bonds of holy matrimony.

Recently, we have been confronted with those who want to change their gender. God knew their gender before an ultrasound revealed it, or it was written on a birth certificate! The Psalmist David wrote, *"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, when as yet there was none of them"* (139:16). The gender of a person was decided at conception

and nothing an individual can do will change it! Once again, if you as a Christian oppose all that is going on in our world described as 'transgender', you will be condemned as having hatred. Just keep on loving God and being obedient to His Word!

There is only one reason why people glory in things they should be ashamed of and it is given in Romans 1:28, *"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."* I will not be an enemy to the cross of Jesus! Like Paul, I will glory in the cross! *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Galatians 6:14).

The only hope for this sinful world is for people to stop being enemies to the cross of Jesus and put their faith in the only One who can save and change them!

**Those who glory in the cross of Jesus do not hate others!**

## Progress in the Philippines



Missionaries Cris and Alicia Samson serve in the Philippines mentoring young pastors and helping with church planting in San Carlos. The people there are impoverished and have little access to the gospel but are open and interested to learn about it. The Samsons are working with Pastor Sander and Romeo who have a heart for people and the families in San Carlos that are showing excitement about the gospel. Pray as they seek God's will about a permanent location.

*"WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, I WANTED TO BE A FIRE FIGHTER. THEN I BECAME A PREACHER. SAME DIFFERENCE."*





## PAST AND PRESENT, PEOPLE AND PROFILES, PLANS AND PLACES

# NOW THEN WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

by Holly Meriweather

### My Story

In 1976, I was invited to join a group of girls at my church called GMA – Girls Missionary Auxiliary. I was excited to join: Hanging out with my friends on a Sunday night sounded like just another chance to be with friends. My family didn't attend church, but my parents were happy to take me to church any time I asked. They were all for me going, but it just wasn't their thing.

Through GMA training, I learned that my life was all about Jesus. He came. He died. He had saved me at the age of seven. Now I would learn what that meant exactly. What a gift God gave me through his perfect will and plan! And it was through GMA counselors that I would be equipped to be an "ambassador for Christ." It was the first of MANY verses I would put to memory.

But I am not the only one who was profoundly affected by this auxiliary.

### Her Story

AJ is one of many young ladies called to the mission field because of GMA.

In middle school, she learned about the world through an improv team competition that introduced her to Mexican, Chinese, Korean, and Qatari culture. Her view of the world and people was expanded. In the fifth

grade, she began GMA and learned about God's heart for the nations through study, scripture memory, and learning about missionaries. AJ explains her calling this way:

"It was in GMA where I really started to think about God's purpose for me. Throughout my life, God used His Word and His people to place a burden on my heart for the lost. Recently, that burden is specifically for people who have never heard the gospel or don't have access to the gospel. The salvation of unreached people groups has been weighing on my heart for quite some time."

### God's Plans

AJ earned a master's degree in speech/language pathology and worked as a speech therapist while raising support for ministry abroad. Her prayer is that God might even use her degree and experience in some way when she reaches the mission field to which she is called. She is attending a missionary training program that equips students for cross-cultural church planting ministry to unreached people/language groups. For nine months, she will receive very intensive training in all aspects of life on the mission field: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

She is so grateful for God's work in her life and his faithfulness. With a team of prayer warriors, her home church, and the endorsement and support of the BMA, AJ is ready to begin this chapter in her life. She says,



"God placed a wonder in me for cultures and languages. Little did I know, He was working to pair that with my love for Him and a desire to see people come to Christ."

Girls Missionary Auxiliary played a role in AJ's calling, particularly her awareness of missionaries around the world, their unique challenges, and an understanding of cultural context. She understood what an "ambassador for Christ" meant, and answered the call to missions.

AJ will be back to finish out deputation when her training is complete in June 2024. She would love to contact churches to share what God is doing. Her email address is arkslp@protonmail.com.

## Mississippi GMAs

Lakelan Jenkins, GMA Promoter  
P.O. Box 1694, Collins, MS 39428  
lakelanflynt@gmail.com - 601-517-1476

### GMA Project Information

Hey everyone! My name is Rayleigh Phelps, and I am a GMA committee member. I attend Campground Baptist Church and have been involved in GMA's for only a few months. Today I'm going to be telling y'all about our project for this year, fundraisers, and National GMA week.

Our project is 75% for the Bible Institute in Mexico, and 25% general fund. Our project goal is \$5,000 total and \$200 for individual churches. For some fundraising ideas, things like a bake sale or a craft table would be an easy way to raise money. For example, my church GMA group did a bake sale. Our girls got together and baked goodies and held our sale the next day after church. You could also design some nice T-Shirts and advertise them to your congregation. Another easy fundraiser would be to host a simple dinner, where you could either sell plates or just accept donations. These are also great ways to bond with your GMA group and get involved with the people at your church. If you were wanting to do something to celebrate National GMA week, a sleepover/mini camp at your church with your group would be a fun idea. You could get together with your GMA group and spend the night at your church, like a lock in, and play games and fellowship with each other.

We ask that each church remember the GMA program in their prayers as we work to achieve our project goal and continue to plan our 2024 camp. We GMA girls thank you so much for your support!

### "Mark Your Calendars"

by Abigail Jenkins  
Corresponding Secretary

Are you a girl 9-18 years old, looking for friendship and fun with other Christian girls? Do you want to grow in your relationship with Christ? Do you want to learn about missionaries and how you can be a missionary? If so, MARK YOUR CALENDARS for our next GMA camp. We will meet at Campground Baptist Church, March 15th-16th, 2024. Our theme for camp is "Highway to Heaven" (Matthew 7:13,14). In preparation for camp, we are encouraging each girl to read "The Pilgrim's Progress" book by John Bunyan.

We had our first planning meeting on July 15th at Ruby Hickmans home and began laying out plans for camp. It's going to be another great camp this year! Your church doesn't have the GMA program? That's ok, we want all girls to join us and have a great time learning more about our walk with the Lord.

We pray that you all make plans to join us this year.

## A Testimony and Encouragement

**Editor's Note** - I ran across this post on Facebook and have permission to print. I know this will be an encouragement to some who may be striving for God's will and blessings.

by Makayla Burns

Makayla is the daughter of Philip and Dawn Burns where Philip serves as pastor of Day Star Baptist Church, Sumrall, Mississippi

I don't usually post First Day of School Pictures... especially if they are a selfie. But today is different. Here I am doing just that. The picture on the left (not shown) is a quick picture I took before going to class for my first day of nursing school. I was optimistic, excited, and 100% sure God was calling me to be a nurse. The girl on the left didn't see the obstacles ahead. The hard things ahead that would absolutely test her limits. The concept of really putting faith in the Lord was vague for her.

The picture on the right was taken today as I'm beginning my last first day of nursing school. The girl on the right has had to let go and let God. She has learned to trust God in the waiting. She has been able to experience the peace of God that surpasses our understanding. She has seen God work miracles in her life and the lives of those around her. God has grown her through the things she's gone through and is continuing to.

I am sharing this because the girl on the left prayed for a stronger relationship with Christ. The girl on the right has one because she leaned on Him through it all. This isn't to boast, this is to tell you that where you are, may not be where you want to be. Your plan may not be the same as God's plan, but I can assure you His Plans are always better.

Don't give up on God's Purpose for your life! When life gets hard don't throw in the towel. Lean on Christ, He can give you all the strength you need! Don't forget He's the one who formed you and knows your every thought. He is with you even when you're all "alone." He's only ever a prayer away.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths." - Proverbs 3:5-6

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." - Hebrews 11:1





## Women's Missionary Auxiliary

WMAofMS20@gmail.com  
 President Dawn Freeman  
 cdfreeman7327@gmail.com  
 601-325-7226



Dawn Freeman  
President

Treasurer Mrs. Theresa Reus  
 1264 Dean Nursery Rd.,  
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## Drawing Closer to God (Part 3): Are You Listening?

by Valarie Fish

When both my boys were toddlers, they would often not pay attention to me when I gave an instruction, especially an instruction they didn't want to follow right at that moment. Sometimes they would respond, but I knew they weren't really listening. The parenting books all agree that when talking with children you should get down to their level. "Look right here, at my face," I would say, and then make eye contact. Often, I would make them repeat what I said so I knew they understood.

Early on, toddlers also learn "face time" means you are listening to them. If I were distracted, they would get up in my face, sometimes to the point of holding their little hands on each side of my cheeks, looking me right in the eye and saying, "Mommy, you have to listen!"

God took on human flesh as Immanuel — God with us — so He could come down and get on your level. He says, "Look right here, at my face..." and He gives clear distinct instructions. Sometimes He waits for you to repeat the instructions back to Him, so He knows you understand.

"I love the Lord because He has heard my voice... because He inclined His ear to me..." (Psalm 116:1-2).

Each day, if you take a few moments to commune with your Father, you can be certain He hears you. The above passage says He inclined His ear, which means He leans in and gives you His

undivided attention! If you have ever experienced this, then you understand why the Psalmist wrote the next phrase — "Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live." When you really know God is listening, you will learn to take every concern and every care and crawl up into His lap to talk to Him.

Even as my children got older, giving too many instructions at a time could be a problem. So, with my youngest son, we started what we called "practice listening." I would give an instruction and say "now, practice listening" and he would reply with "so what you are saying is..." and repeat back what he understood the instruction to be. Finally, the most

important step is following through with the instruction given. That is how I know my son really heard me — when he follows the instruction! James 1:22 says "be doers of the Word and not hearers only...."


Sometimes, God takes this approach with you and me. He has given all the instructions. He wants you to read them and then practice listening! Repeat back the instruction so He knows you understand. That is what makes studying the written Word of God so important. You must read it to hear it. You must understand it to be able to follow. You must follow through to prove you heard the instruction in the first place.

Beloved, are you listening?




**Ladies Ministry**  
 Reminder of our state WMA project  
**Hope for India**  
 Funds are due the last of September.  
 This is a very deserving project to support.  
*Pray and give!*  
 Mail to:  
 Theresa Reus  
 1264 Dean Nursery Road

**National WMA Project**  
**Jeevan Prakash School**  
 Gulbarga, India




The school is in great need of renovations. With almost 1000 students and 40 staff members they share just 2 toilets. They have no source for clean drinking water. Walls need reinforced & repaired, room ventilation, desks and furniture need repairs.



**Our goal is \$75,000**

Your help is needed to reach this goal and make these much needed repairs.

Send your donations to:  
 Janet Widger, Treasurer  
 P.O. Box 23  
 Salem, MO 65560  
 (please note for project)



## Everlasting Smiles Underway

A look at our first day to have volunteers in our new warehouse working on Everlasting Smiles Shoeboxes! We are so excited about this!

This year, we stepped out on faith and are sending boxes to Cape Verde, Honduras, and Ukraine. We need 4,000 more boxes than last year to reach this goal! Will you help us?  
[bmamissions.org/Christmas-shoeboxes](http://bmamissions.org/Christmas-shoeboxes)



## Sofilthy's Attic

By Barbara White

### Us and Our Animals



Well, I woke up one morning thinking about some people's inordinate affection for their animals. I like animals, God likes animals as was proven when he specifically told Noah to make sure all the animals were safely aboard the Ark before it was scheduled to float. But some people spend more time and money on their pets than they do on their lonely family members and neighbors. I think about the many lonely people who sit at home all day wishing someone would call or come by. Almost daily I talk to someone who says, "I wish someone would call or come by for a minute."

While I think loving animals is certainly okay with me AND God, I do think we sometimes get the priority confused. As James defined pure religion he never mentions animals. Think about it.

James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."



## Update From Daniel Springs Camp

by Charles Johnson

The summer camp season at Daniel Springs Baptist Camp Ministries has been a very successful time with over 1100 campers attending five different camping sessions in June and July.

A closing camp season banquet and award ceremony was held in the cafeteria on Thursday evening, July 27. The full-time staff, summer "missionaries" (teen and college workers), cafeteria and medical workers, and camp trustees were recognized after a delicious BBQ brisket meal prepared and served by camp director Jason Prewitt and his wife Jessica.

Director Prewitt announced the camp continues to rebound from the devastating effects of the COVID pandemic in 2020-2021. Notable improvements in the past year include major lake renovations and several new water game events. There are always special projects available on the 54-acre campus and facilities, so if your church is looking for a ministry opportunity, give the camp a call at 903-685-2433.

Daniel Springs Baptist Camp, established in 1965, is owned and operated by Churches of the BMA of America as the national camp ministry. Jason Prewitt has been director of this ministry since January 1, 2015.



Morgan Standifer, Jessica Prewitt and Jason Prewitt